



Parks & Recreation

Master Plan (DRAFT)

May 2024





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May 2024



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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the corporation of the Town of Whitby is located on the Lands of the Great Mississauga Nations who are signatories to the Williams Treaties. These communities include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, First Nations of Alderville, Beausoleil, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Chippewas of Georgina Island and Rama. We believe it is important that we learn, and work to reconcile the impact we, and those before us, have had on the original inhabitants. On behalf of the Town of Whitby, we want to thank them for sharing this land and all its resources. At the Town of Whitby, our goal is to respectfully share in the responsibility of the stewardship and protection of these ancestral lands and waters and continue towards truth and reconciliation as we move forward as friends and allies with all First Nations, Inuit and Metis people.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Parks & Recreation Master Plan for Whitby

The Parks & Recreation Master Plan (the “Master Plan”) guides the Town in providing a range of healthy and active choices that engage all residents and ensures that Whitby continues to grow as an inclusive, environmentally sustainable, vibrant and economically strong community towards 2031. Whitby is projected to experience significant population growth over the planning period and its demographic profile will continue to evolve. The Master Plan will ensure that the Town’s parks and recreation opportunities are positioned to respond to these changes and address other driving factors, including a growing emphasis on personal health and wellbeing, climate change and environmental sustainability, economic development, inclusivity, and a greater desire to create a healthy, sustainable, and complete community. Access to a high-quality parks and recreation system has never been more important as the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the benefits that parks and recreation services have on mental and physical health and their contribution to quality of life, sense of place and social cohesion.

Whitby proudly offers a range of parks and recreation programs, facilities and services that enrich the lives of residents and tourists. The Town demonstrates its continued commitment to providing high-quality parks and recreation experiences with notable examples, including reinvestment in the waterfront, park and trail development projects, climate change and environmental sustainability initiatives, and accessibility retrofits to include people of all ages and abilities. The Master Plan builds upon these and other initiatives by establishing strategies to address the parks and recreation needs of current and future residents based on local demographics, trends, utilization data, community input and more. The Master Plan explores:

- Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas and pools;
- Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, playgrounds and splash pads;
- Parks, trails, open space, waterfront; and
- Service delivery policies, programs, and practices.

To ensure that the Master Plan responds to new opportunities and evolving community needs, periodically reviewing and updating recommendations will be required. The Master Plan aligns with community priorities and should be implemented in conjunction with the Town’s Official Plan and other related studies. Full implementation of the Master Plan will require the Town to work with community stakeholders and optimize external funding opportunities.



1.2 Master Plan Approach

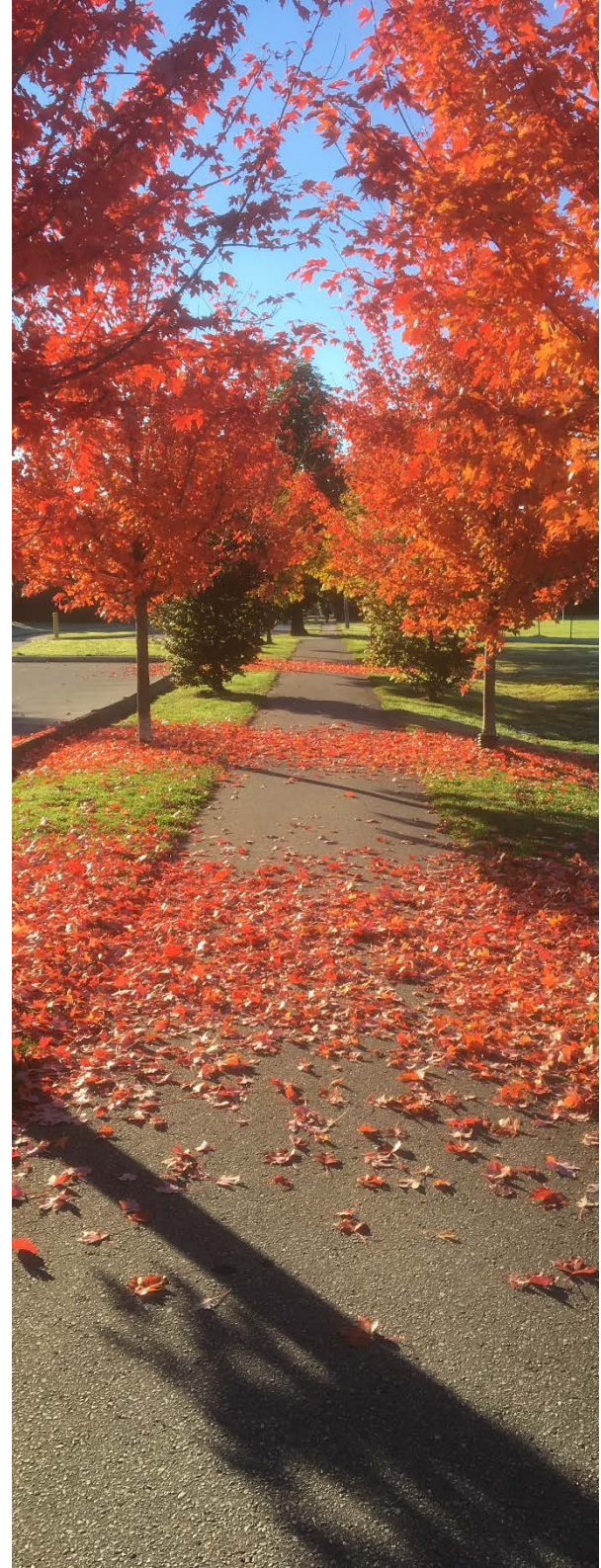
The Master Plan is being developed through a four-phased approach. The first phase consisted of a background review to understand what municipal initiatives have been completed and what, if any, processes may influence the outcome of the Master Plan. Reviewing key parks and recreation trends, understanding the Town’s current and future community profile to identify who lives in Whitby, now and in the future, and where and establishing a foundation of local parks and recreation facilities are all key aspects of the first phase of the Master Plan’s development.

Community engagement is a vital component of the Master Plan to ensure that recommendations are responsive to community needs. A number of engagement activities were used in the second phase to capture public input, including a community survey, pop-up events, interviews, stakeholder forums, and workshops.

The inputs collected in the first and second phase informed the needs assessments and development of recommendations, which was compiled into the draft Master Plan. The draft Master Plan will be tested with the public, refined, and finalized in the fourth and final phase. A summary of the master planning approach is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Town of Whitby Parks & Recreation Master Plan Approach

Phase 1	Background Review
	Community Profile and Trends
	Inventory Review
	Data and Gap Analysis
Phase 2	Community Engagement Strategy
Phase 3	Vision and Guiding Principles
	Parks and Trails Assessment
	Recreation Facility Assessment
	Service Delivery Assessment
	Draft Master Plan
	Council Presentation
Phase 4	Community Engagement
	Finalize Draft Master Plan
	Council Presentation



1.3 Alignment with Strategic Documents

Understanding guiding strategic directions, findings and recommendations is crucial to ensure that the Master Plan is in alignment with other guiding documents. Whitby's **Community Strategic Plan** clearly defines the priorities of the current term of Council and will guide decision making between 2023 and 2026. The Community Strategic Plan identifies four strategic pillars that speak to key actions to achieve desired objectives. Relevant actions have been considered in preparing this Master Plan and are identified below.

Strategic Pillar 1 – Whitby's Neighbourhoods: Safe, Healthy & Inclusive

- Develop the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and deliver identified recreational programs.
- Expand recreation opportunities and increase participation in recreation programs and activities, specifically for 55+ and youth.
- Work with partners to address food security.
- Provide accessible and inclusive municipal services and programming.

Strategic Pillar 2 – Whitby's Natural & Built Environment: Connected & Resilient

- Improve wayfinding, including signage at parks and trails.
- Increase active transportation facilities, including trails, multi-use paths, and bike lanes across the community, considering the Active Transportation Plan.
- Invest in public art.
- Maintain and enhance parks, trails, tree canopy, and green spaces and identify opportunities to connect existing and currently underutilized open space areas.
- Construct the Whitby Sports Complex.
- Implement recreational infrastructure enhancements as identified in the Sports Facility Strategy and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Invest in upgrades at the Marina.

Strategic Pillar 3 – Whitby's Economy: Innovative & Competitive

- Implement actions to enhance Whitby's tourism sector, including a focus on the waterfront.

Strategic Pillar 4 – Whitby's Government: Accountable & Responsive

- Advocate for funding from upper levels of government and other partners to support and advance current and anticipated community priorities.
- Strengthen existing and build new partnerships.
- Deliver services that respond to community needs while balancing the impact to taxpayers.
- Deliver exceptional customer service and community engagement.

Several other national, provincial, and municipal documents have been reviewed as part of the Master Plan. These documents are referenced in the Master Plan and relevant information from these materials are embedded throughout the document, where appropriate.

Community Vision

Whitby – naturally beautiful green spaces, a vibrant waterfront, thriving downtowns, and a safe community – the heart of Durham Region, an exceptional place to live, work, and explore.

Mission

Together, we deliver services that make a difference in our community.

Town of Whitby
Community Strategic Plan

2.0 Community Profile

Figure 1: Town of Whitby Local Context Map

Understanding who lives in Whitby now and who may be living in the Town over the next 10 years is important to ensure that the parks and recreation system responds to local needs. This section summarizes the Town's community profile based on available information, including the 2021 Statistics Canada Census and other resources such as Durham Region's 2022 Growth Management Study, undertaken as part of Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Durham Region Official Plan, and biannual population growth trends reported by Durham Region.

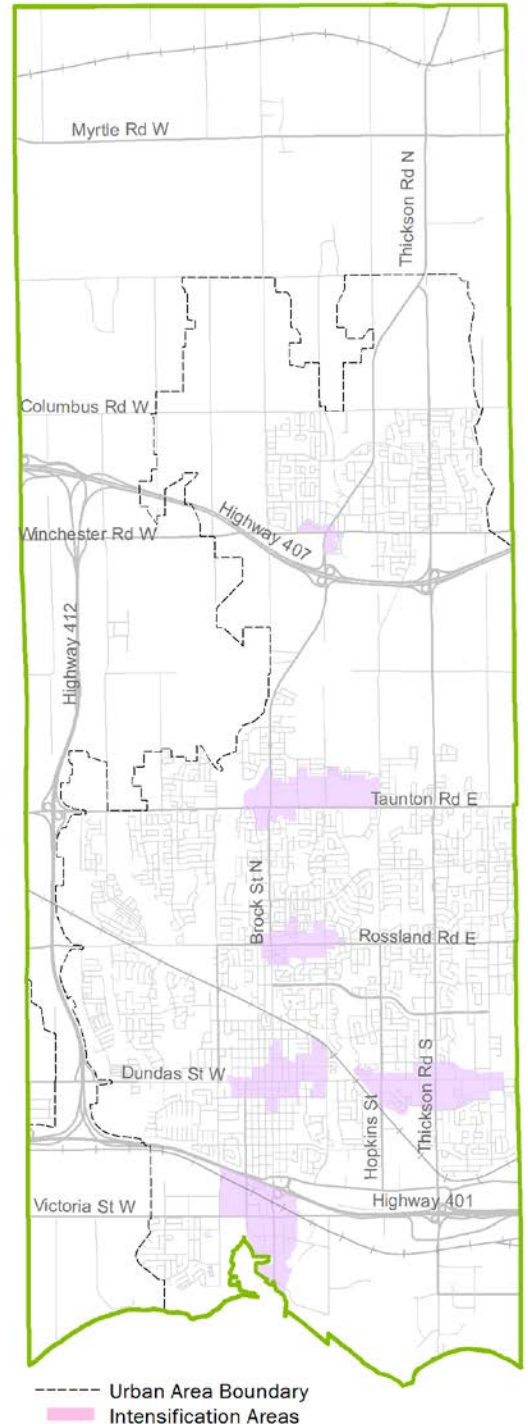
2.1 Local Context

The Town of Whitby is located along Lake Ontario in Durham Region adjacent to Pickering and Ajax to the west, Oshawa to the east, and Scugog to the north (Figure 1). As the second largest municipality in Durham Region after Oshawa, Whitby offers a mix of urban and rural living and strives to be a healthy, sustainable, and complete community providing its residents with a high quality of life. The Town's diverse range of leisure opportunities plays a key role in achieving this vision, including the parks and trails system, recreation facilities, programs and services, and waterfront and access to Lake Ontario.

Whitby is expected to experience population growth over the next 10 years, particularly in West Whitby and Brooklin, as well as in established areas of Whitby through intensification. Between 2021 and 2031, Whitby is projected to add more than 38,000 new residents, which will place pressure on Whitby's parks and recreation system. This Master Plan will provide a roadmap to prioritize and address community needs effectively.

2.2 Historical & Projected Population

Statistics Canada reported that Whitby experienced steady growth over the past decade. Between the 2011 and 2021 Census periods, Whitby's population increased by 14% to 138,501 residents.¹ Durham Region estimates that Whitby's population in December 2022 was 151,500 residents (including Census undercount).² Given that this is the most recent population data available, it will be used as the basis for the Master Plan. By 2031, The Town estimates that its population is expected to grow by 25% to 190,000 residents (rounded).³



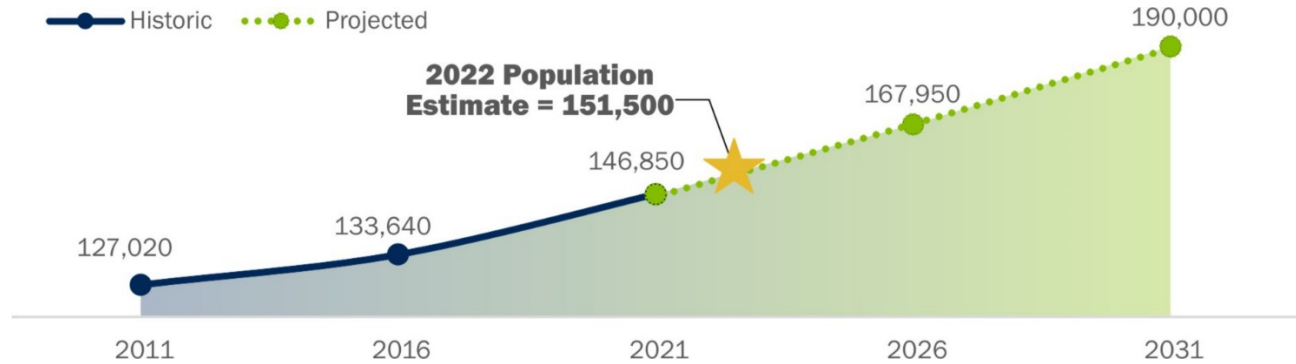
¹ Statistics Canada 2011 and 2021 Census.

² Durham Region. (2022). Monitoring of Growth Trends, File: D01-02-01. Retrieved from <https://www.durham.ca/>

³ Hemson Consulting. (2021). 2021 Consolidated Development Charges Background Study. Retrieved from <https://www.whitby.ca>

Future population growth is expected to be driven by greenfield development in West Whitby (west of Cochrane Street) and Brooklin (north of Highway 407) with higher density development to occur within established areas of Whitby. Planned residential development is anticipated to consist of a mix of single, semi-detached, row and apartment units. With this level of projected population growth and expected development patterns, Whitby is expected to experience pressure for a range of parks and recreation opportunities that respond to a variety of household types.

Figure 2: Historical & Projected Population Growth, 2011 to 2031



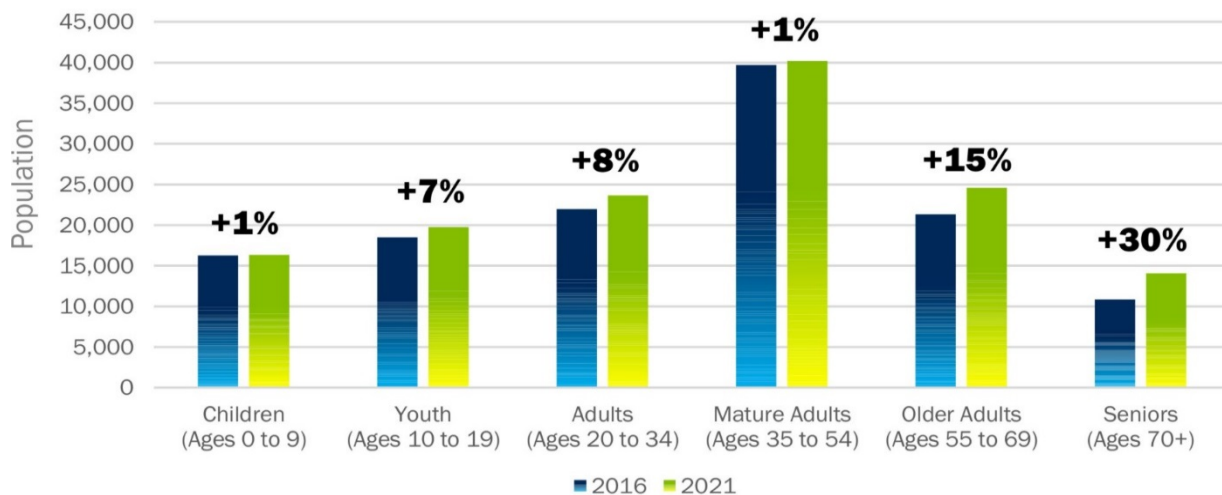
Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. Durham Region Growth Management Strategy Phase 2 Area Municipal Growth Allocations and Land Needs 2051. Hemson Consulting 2021 Development Charges Background Study.

2.3 Population by Age Group

Whitby is an aging community, which is a trend consistent with regional municipalities in Durham Region and across Ontario. Between the 2016 and 2021 Census, Whitby’s median age increased marginally from 39.5 years to 40.0 years, which is on par with Durham Region and lower compared to the Province (41.3 years).

Population growth by age group reinforces Whitby’s aging population profile. Between the two Census periods (2016 and 2021), the number of seniors (ages 70+) and older adults (ages 55 to 69) grew by 30% and 15%, respectively. All other age groups grew by one percent to 8%. While it can be expected that Whitby’s population will continue aging over the next ten years, planned housing stock in the community and the Town’s shift towards creating complete communities suggests that there will be growth among all age groups. As a result, there will continue to be a need for parks and recreation opportunities that appeal to all age groups.

Figure 3: Population Growth by Age Group, Statistics Canada 2016 to 2021 Census



Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016 to 2021

2.4 Income & Education

Costs associated with recreation programs and user fees, transportation and equipment may be barriers to participating in parks and recreation activities, particularly for households experiencing financial barriers. Income levels have been found to influence (or at least be an indicator of) participation levels. Higher income levels tend to correlate to higher levels of participation.

The 2021 Census reported that the median income of Whitby households in 2020 was \$123,000, which was higher compared to Durham Region (\$107,000) and the Province (\$91,000). Whitby has a slightly lower proportion of the population that are living below the low-income measure after-tax (LIM-AT) (5% compared to 6% in Durham Region and 10% in Ontario). These findings may suggest that based on income alone, Whitby residents may participate more in parks and recreation activities compared to their regional and provincial counterparts. Nevertheless, removing financial barriers to parks and recreation activities is key to ensuring that all residents have an opportunity to participate, regardless of income level. In particular, the importance of having access to affordable parks and recreation services is heightened due to the recent increase in the cost of living across Ontario, including in Whitby.

Similarly, research has found that parks and recreation participation is correlated to education attainment. The 2021 Census reported that 60% of Whitby residents have a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, which is higher compared to Durham Region (49%) and the Province (58%). Based on education levels, Whitby is more likely to participate in parks and recreation compared to the Region and Province.

2.5 Immigration & Diversity

Immigration levels can also be an influencing factor in parks and recreation interests and participation. Municipalities across the Greater Toronto Area have experienced a diversification of their resident populations, including Whitby. The 2021 Census reported that 28% of residents are immigrants, which is generally on par with Durham Region (27%) and Ontario (30%). Major countries of origin included the United Kingdom, India, Jamaica, China and Philippines. These findings suggests that residents are likely to have interests in a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional parks and recreation activities, emphasizing the need to ensure that the Town provides opportunities that appeal to broad interests and abilities.



3.0 Parks & Recreation Trends

3.1 General Participation Trends

3.1.1 Demand for Drop-in and Unstructured Activities

Lack of free time is commonly identified as a barrier to recreational participation. Activities such as organized sports, particularly at competitive levels, often require considerable time commitment for training, practices, travel, and other league activities. With increasingly busy lifestyles, competing interests, and an inability for people to commit to structured activities, there is a growing interest for casual drop-in and unstructured activities that do not require advanced registration and can be self-scheduled.

Municipalities are evolving their service delivery models to respond to this trend by extending operating hours and expanding the range and frequency of drop-in programs. Whitby promotes several drop-in and unstructured activities such as public skating and swimming, drop-in sports, playgrounds, and youth rooms to respond to the time crunch experienced by residents.

3.1.2 Active Living and Wellness

Research suggests that there is a growing emphasis placed on active living and wellness as it is closely linked to living longer and healthier lives. The Healthy Communities movement recognizes that recreation opportunities are vital contributors to social and personal health, thereby improving overall quality of life and enhancing the attractiveness of communities to live in. This is recognized in the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada as active living is one of five key goals.

Whitby and other municipalities are focusing on strategies to improve activity levels, health, and well-being of their residents by providing a broad range of activities and interests. The aging baby boomer population is a notable segment of the population who are remaining active later in life as their interests are shifting away from traditional seniors' activities and towards recreation opportunities focused on wellness and active living. Whitby's Age Friendly Action Plan recognizes that the parks system is highly valued among older adults and seniors. There is also a strong desire for comfortable places to sit and enjoy the surroundings.

3.1.3 Skill Development and Competition

Several sport governing bodies in Canada have been implementing a Long-Term Athlete Development model that emphasizes athletic growth, maturation and development. This model identifies the needs of athletes at various stages of their development, including training and competition needs and addresses the appropriate stages for the introduction and refinement of technical, physical, mental, and tactical skills.

As a result, competitive development experiences and opportunities are in demand. The higher level of play and the greater the focus on athlete development, the more time that is required for practices, games, and training camps. The emphasis placed on skill development has driven the need for specialized, year-round facilities such as aquatic centres with 25-metre pools and indoor artificial turf fields, and gymnasiums. In evaluating the need for these types of facilities, municipalities must factor in existing and future demand, local and regional demand, and opportunities for sport tourism. Sport tourism offers economic benefits or spin-offs to services such as hotels and restaurants.

3.1.4 High Levels of Physical Inactivity

The 2019 and 2020 ParticipACTION report cards on physical activity graded overall physical activity levels a “D+”⁴ for children and youth and “D” for adults, which is a marginal improvement compared to previous years. The findings from these studies suggest that there has been limited improvement overall to physical activity levels. Research suggests that this trend is primarily driven by a lack of free time as people are leading busier lifestyles with competing interests. Low physical activity levels also negatively impact the health of Canadians, placing pressure on local healthcare systems.

Statistics Canada reports that 60.1% of residents within Durham Region area are considered overweight or obese, which is higher compared to Ontario (52.6%).⁵ Additionally, 58.5% of residents within the same catchment area reported that they are active or moderately active in their leisure time, compared to 53.8% at the provincial rate. While Whitby has a limited ability to influence the daily schedules of individuals, communities can make efforts to facilitate physical activity opportunities such as providing drop-in activities, offering extended facility hours, and promoting the benefits of staying active.

3.2 Parks & Facility Trends

3.2.1 Multi-Use Recreation Facilities & Community Hubs

In this era of user convenience and cost recovery, many municipalities are centralizing multiple recreational facilities. Experience in communities across Canada supports the finding that multi-use recreation facilities can provide a great number of benefits, including the creation of a destination where all household members can gather and engage in recreation activities, thereby contributing to sport development, tourism, and operational efficiency.

The creation of “community hubs” has also been a recent focus in many communities as it offers tremendous social benefits, strengthens community cohesion, and fosters enhanced quality of life by providing a central location to deliver a range of services. A community hub is a central access point for a range of needed health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life. The Brooklin Community Centre and Library, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, and the Civic Recreation Complex, are three local examples of community hubs where residents can access a variety of civic opportunities and services.

3.2.2 Multi-Use Parks

There is a growing demand for parks that contain something for everybody, rather than those designed solely for singular uses. While single use parks still have merit in appropriate locations (e.g., sports field complexes), parks that provide opportunities for a range of ages, family/household types, and abilities are viewed as spaces for inclusive activity. Furthermore, there has been a considerable trend province-wide towards participation in non-programmed (spontaneous) outdoor activities such as pick-up sports, picnicking, family gatherings, special events, community gardens, etc. In this sense, parks can be viewed as “outdoor community centres” that combine a number of programmed and non-programmed uses. Consideration is also being given to supplementary amenities such as washroom facilities, covered shelters, Wi-Fi, sport-friendly features, etc. Incorporating natural areas and linkages to the trail network are also becoming increasingly important in serving local needs.

⁴ The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults (2019) and Children and Youth (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.participaction.com>

⁵ Statistics Canada Health Profile (2013). Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/>

Multi-use parks can achieve efficiencies similar to multi-use community centres by sharing common infrastructure (such as irrigation, lighting and drainage systems, and common parking areas) and centralizing operations and maintenance activities. In addition, the ability to offer cross-programming opportunities and their responsiveness to a 'time crunch' make multi-use parks an attractive 'one-stop shopping' destination, particularly among households with a wide range of outdoor interests; for example, while one household member attends a baseball practice, another can partake in a leisurely walk in the park or make use of outdoor fitness equipment provided these amenities exist.

3.2.3 Sports Competition & Development

Organized sport, in general, but particularly at high-performing levels, requires access to specialized facilities whether they are aquatic centres, arenas, sports fields or others. While some communities make full use of large competition facilities such as stadiums, there are many ways for recreation facilities to support the needs of athletes and competition. To address these needs, consideration needs to be given to future facility design and retrofitting of existing facility spaces to create increased opportunities for organizations to use facilities for training and/or competition. Examples of how recreation facilities can be sport-friendly are highlighted below:

- **Aquatic centres:** Modifications of traditional 25-metre pools can support athletic development. Ensuring a water depth of 1.25 metres at the shallow end to accommodate flip turns. The addition of bleacher seating can also create opportunities for local competitions. The Whitby Sports Complex is planned to have a 25-metre pool with 10 lanes and spectator seating.
- **Arenas:** Ensure that athletes are training, practicing, and playing on a regulation-size rink. The provision of bleacher seating allows for spectators during practices and competition.
- **Sports Fields:** Co-locating regulation size sports fields at a park ensures that sports teams are able to meet their practice and competition needs. This can be further enhanced through the development of dedicated sports field complexes to relieve pressure from Town and District Parks, particularly those that are located within residential areas of Whitby where there may be conflicts between sports users and local residents or park users. Supporting sports field amenities also support games and competition such as field lighting, parking, seating, change facilities, and more.

3.2.4 Multi-Seasonal Parks

While the majority of park usage occurs in the summer months, many communities are creating formal and informal year-round opportunities within their parks system. Berms and hills can be used for tobogganing while recreational infrastructure such as hard surface courts (e.g., tennis or basketball) can be flooded during the winter to provide outdoor ice skating, although the warmer winter weather has made it more challenging to maintain natural ice rinks. Some municipalities have constructed refrigerated skating pads and/or skating trails within parks, which are also used as sport courts or trails during the warmer seasons. The supply of multi-season outdoor facilities may, however, reduce the lifespan of infrastructure due to increased wear and tear requiring higher levels of year-round maintenance.

Positioning parks to be year-round destinations is a way to maximize physical activity goals and encourages recreation in all weather conditions. Strategic tree planting and landscaping can create wind buffers to offset the winter wind chill and blowing snow, while ensuring that internal park walking circuits are free of snow and/or creating cross-country ski paths can facilitate greater year-round use. Strategically locating supporting amenities that are designed for year-round use such as winterized washrooms can also draw park users during the colder season. The provision of washrooms that are intended to be used year-round tend to be located at higher order parks that receive a greater level for use such as at Town Parks. While there are inherent costs associated with winter maintenance (even if it is limited to plowing of parking lots), the availability of no-to-low cost activities throughout the year is a benefit to the community and encourages equitable access to parks and trails.

3.2.5 Aging Infrastructure

The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card found that approximately one-third of Canada’s sports and recreation facilities were considered to be in “Fair” condition or worse. This suggests that municipal sports and recreation facilities require attention, show signs of deterioration, or have deteriorating components.⁶ Provincially, many municipal facilities were constructed in the 1950s and 1960s and since this period, infrastructure province-wide has been underfunded. These pressures have been somewhat alleviated through various provincial and federal stimulus plans. Initiatives such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) will see up to \$30 billion in funding allocated to various community, culture, and recreation projects across the country.

Whitby has facilities from different time periods such as the Brooklin Community Centre that was originally constructed in 1876 to newer facilities such as the Brooklin Community Centre and Library, which opened in 2010. The Town’s 2017 Municipal Asset Management Plan reported that 77% of Whitby’s parks and 71% of facilities are in “Very Good” or “Good” condition. The Town’s 10-year capital forecast identifies over \$27 million to replace aging infrastructure at Whitby’s community facilities, including the Brooklin Community Centre and Library, Civic Recreation Complex, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, Luther Vipond Memorial Arena and McKinney Centre. This amount also includes over \$10 million towards repurposing the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena to address growth-related needs. Additional asset management investments are also identified for other public facilities across Whitby.

3.2.6 Environmental Sustainability

According to national polling conducted by Ipsos, climate change was identified as the second most important issue facing Canadians in 2019, which is an increase from previous years. As people become more aware of the benefits of environmental protection, demand for passive settings that connect people to nature is growing. Many communities are placing a greater emphasis on the development of passive park space (e.g., woodlots, prairie grasslands, flower gardens, civic gathering spaces, etc.), often ensuring that a portion of new active parks remain in a natural state, which typically involves reduced grass cutting, planting of native species, community gardens and public education to create awareness in the community. Interpretative signage and public art in appropriate areas can help park patrons understand the significance of indigenous or significant plants and habitats.

Stewardship initiatives can also include shore-line restoration, enhancing wildlife habitats, tree plantings, restoring local ecosystems with native plant species, and education to share ideas about the environment. Many of these initiatives are being implemented or are planned in Whitby as identified in the Town’s 2021 Sustainability Report. Whitby is also proud to be recognized as the 10th Bee City in Canada and the first in Durham Region. An urban beehive is located at the Town Hall, which was part of Whitby’s commitment to become a “Bee City” to protect local bees and pollinators around the Town. Additionally, the Town has taken the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge to help protect monarch butterflies through investing in restoring habitats and raising awareness about how residents can help. The Town is also one of the first communities to be recognized as one of the Tree Cities of the World through the Arbor Day Foundation and plans are in place to undertake an Urban Forestry Master Plan in the short term to provide guidance on managing Whitby’s urban forest and how to respond to evolving urban development, climate, invasive species and more.



⁶ Canada Infrastructure. 2019. Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. Retrieved from <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca>

3.2.7 Climate Change

Intricately linked to sustainability and environmental goals are efforts to promote urban design features that integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation. Since Whitby declared climate change an emergency in 2019, the Town has been involved in a variety of initiatives at the municipal level through its Climate Emergency Response Plan, which outlines a plan for the Town to adapt to the changing climate and minimize its impact on climate change. Relevant actions include ensuring that Whitby offers a network of cooling centres, splash pads and drinking fountains; developing shade structures; promoting urban agriculture; incorporating green infrastructure in design; protecting and preserving natural spaces and urban forests, and more.

Other initiatives include the Zero Carbon Whitby Plan, which serves as the Town's Energy Management Plan. The Zero Carbon Whitby Plan establishes an action plan to reduce corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 4.3% per year in order to achieve net zero by 2045. In addition, Whitby has established programs related to tree planting and natural area stewardship, and community gardening. Council approved a four-year community greening program with LEAF (Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests), committing the Town to host two volunteer tree and shrub planting events each year. The Town's Green Standard Guide was also created to assist developers and landowners achieve more sustainable site and building design through a checklist divided into four tiers (tier 1 is mandatory and tiers 2 to 4 are voluntary that may be tied to financial and non-financial incentives). As an ongoing commitment to sustainable transportation, the Town has established an Electric Vehicle Charging network for public, employees, and fleet vehicles. As well, the new Whitby Sports Complex will be LEED Gold and Zero Carbon Building Certified and will have 20 Dual Port Level 2 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

Stewardship objectives can also be facilitated by incorporating sustainable design features into new and existing parkland development. Green infrastructure such as onsite stormwater ponds, bio swales, low impact design features, pervious trails and parking areas can enhance ecological functions. Increasing tree cover and canopies, as well as creating 'urban forests' that take into account and prioritize areas in Whitby that experience the Urban Heat Island Effect. Engineered wetlands can also be an effective design tool to create carbon sinks, offer shade to park users and surrounding residences, provide habitat opportunities for select wildlife, and contribute to naturalization or reforestation objectives. Furthermore, incorporating energy efficiency and water conservation measures into park and facility designs (e.g., LEED or Green Globes certification) can contribute to the overall greening of the community and showcase leadership in climate change resiliency.

3.2.8 Back to the Waterfront

Historically, waterfront properties across Ontario were primarily home to industry as it provided access to important infrastructure and transportation corridors such as shipping ports and railways. More recently, municipalities have recognized the value of having a publicly accessible waterfront. More people have been observed using it for stand-up paddle boarding, kayaks, and canoes. Kiteboarding and windsurfing seem to be more common, even during the winter season. Many communities are making major investments to get back to the waterfront as they offer many community benefits, including supporting community growth and development, connecting people with the environment, providing enhanced parks and recreation activities, fostering economic development and recreational tourism, alignment with corporate sustainability initiatives, and more.

Many communities have prepared site-specific waterfront master plans to provide a roadmap for renewal. Whitby's Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan is the Town's guiding document that establishes a 20-year vision for the waterfront area. The Waterfront Master Plan identifies six sites, each with a specific vision and strategy for enhancements, which may include parks and recreation, environmental and natural heritage restoration and more. Additional details regarding relevant sections of the Waterfront Master Plan that pertain to parks and recreation are highlighted in Section 5.10.

3.2.9 Marinas and Boating

The National Marine Manufacturers Association Canada last prepared “The Economic Impact of Recreational Boating in Canada” in 2016 that found:

- Over 43% of Canadians (15 million people) went boating.
- Recreational boating adds \$5.6 billion to Canada’s GDP with over \$10 billion in revenues.
- 59% of Canadian boat owners had a household income of less than \$100,000.
- More than 85% of the 4.3 million boats in Canada are under 26 feet and towable.

Marinas overall have been reporting that fewer people are leaving the docks and rather spending time in their boat while still moored. Marinas need to be more than a place to dock a boat but rather a place where everybody can come to enjoy and partake in community amenities and services. From the Boating Industry’s “Building a Better Marina” report, one of the top amenities most important to boaters, aside from ample power and water, is access to internet and cable TV at the slips and convenient sewage pump out. In addition, smart technology is being embraced in forward-thinking marina management systems. Better connectivity is being offered to boaters via reservation sites and apps that facilitate management tasks and give the customer better access to marina services. There is also a rising demand for transient slips as well. The growth in online transient slip booking services reflects an emerging sector of the market that won’t necessarily be looking for seasonal slip rental or storage at a marina.

Whitby Harbour is one of the busiest recreational ports on Lake Ontario featuring an award winning 420 slip, full service marina, and boat ramp. Port Whitby Marina serves as a community hub, a tourist attraction, and a significant gateway for visitors to enjoy local businesses, services, and amenities. The Whitby Yacht Club offers 250 slips, sailing school, youth camps, guided paddle tours, and hosts events, including international regattas. The Gordon Street Public Boat Ramp is the largest facility of its kind in Durham Region, drawing paddlers and trailer-launched boaters from Southern Ontario, Quebec, and the United States. A new Harbourfront Master Plan is being prepared within the next year, which will identify potential harbour and marina enhancements.



3.3 Service Delivery Trends

3.3.1 Inclusive Service Delivery

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability found that approximately 22% of Canadians are living with some form of disability. Applying the national average to Whitby's population suggests that there could be nearly 35,000 residents living with some form of disability.

Inclusive service delivery is a key goal for municipal recreation departments, including in Whitby. To ensure that programs and services are inclusive of all residents, consideration needs to be given to the following factors: economic (e.g., costs associated with participation); information (e.g., knowledge and information sharing about available opportunities); geographic (e.g., equitable distribution of facilities and services), and inclusivity (e.g., ensuring all participants feel welcomed and supported).

Whitby has demonstrated its commitment to minimizing barriers for the diverse population by working on a number of initiatives with the Town's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee. Such initiatives include implementing a diversity and inclusion training plan for Council and staff. The Town also recently completed a study known as the IDEA Project, Whitby's Journey to Inclusivity, which contains strategies to make the Town a more inclusive place to live. Key strategies identify expanding recreation opportunities to include non-traditional sports and activities, establishing a process for residents to request new types of activities, and ensuring that user fees are fair for all. Additionally, the Town offers inclusion services to provide additional support to children with special needs who are registered in camp programs.

Several initiatives to minimize physical barriers are also identified in the Town's 2019 – 2022 Accessibility Plan. It identifies that new or redeveloped parks and facilities are to be designed with accessibility in mind, with input from the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Other projects include facility and playground retrofits, accessible trail development projects and customer service training. It's also notable that Durham Region's first accessible ball diamond is located at Willow Park in Whitby, which features a rubberized surface and accessible dugouts. In addition, the Town has completed an Accessible Wayfinding and Signage Study in 2022, which established a standard for wayfinding and signage that will be implemented over the next many years.

The Town's efforts in providing inclusive services are complemented by other community providers such as the Abilities Centre, which is a significant community hub that provides a range of inclusive community programs and services, as well as leading research and advocacy on accessibility issues and providing program development frameworks for communities across Canada.

Town of Whitby Statement of Commitment to Accessibility, 2021

The Town of Whitby is committed to:

- Ensuring that decisions, actions and planning for the community apply the principles of dignity, equal opportunity, independence and integration;
- Identifying, removing and preventing barriers to our programs, services and facilities; and,
- Providing an inclusive community in which employees, residents and visitors have equitable access for all ages, abilities and circumstances.

The Town strives to deliver an inclusive and welcoming environment for all community members and visitors.

3.3.2 Volunteerism

Volunteers are essential to the operation and delivery of high-quality programs and services where communities rely heavily on their assistance. Statistics Canada estimates that 47% of Canadians over the age of 15 volunteer,⁷ but experiences in many communities suggest that volunteer groups still struggle to find enough volunteers.

Seniors currently represent the most active volunteer group; however, it is anticipated that this group will soon move on from the volunteer workforce, resulting in greater pressures on the delivery of services and negatively impacting program capacity. This gap in the volunteer base opens opportunities to attract new volunteers, particularly among youth, which represents the smallest proportion of volunteers. While volunteering is required as part of required community service for secondary school graduation, youth note that barriers to volunteering include a lack of time, unable to find opportunities or they are unsure of how to get involved.



Whitby recognizes that volunteers are valuable assets that make many community services and events possible. The Town promotes many volunteer opportunities for advisory committees, events, recreation, Port Whitby Marina, Adult 55+ activities, Youth Council and more. The United Way Durham Region also maintains an online volunteer database that connects people with organizations looking for assistance.

3.3.3 Technology

The use of technology has revolutionized every industry in multiple ways. From a parks and recreation perspective, these changes are being brought about by the growing demand to deliver holistic, outcome driven programming and services that meet the diverse needs of the community. The integrated application of technology in service delivery can assist in enhancing client experience beyond the walls of community facilities; engaging a wider segment of the population; and enabling staff to make informed decisions on the current needs and demands of the community. Whereas digital use can be targeted towards personalized services inside facilities, technology can also be used to connect and engage with individuals during their daily routine using social networks, programs, and services.



Current trends towards the application of technology in parks and recreation can include the use of wearable technology, online bookings and registration, interactive fitness, virtual programming, connecting with nature through mobile applications, Heritage interpretive applications, Wi-Fi in parks, and social networking. Many of these technology solutions are used by Whitby to engage as many residents as possible.

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2012. Volunteering in Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca>.

3.4 Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the demand for, and delivery of, parks and recreation services. While Whitby resumes offering a large range of programs and services, the ultimate impact on the scope and scale of the pandemic is still unknown. Long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that the parks and recreation sector plays in personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.

During the planning period, the Town will need to closely monitor demand, participation and usage levels of its facilities, programs and services and adjust resource allocation, as necessary. Working with local community organizations as the Town recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic will be critical to ensure that these groups continue to be successful over the long-term. The following are some potential impacts the pandemic may have on the sector in the short- to longer-term.

- Emphasis on access to parks and trails;
- Growing interest in unstructured, individual, and small group activities;
- Desire for outdoor recreation (including four seasons use), placing pressure on trails, parks, waterfront, washrooms, etc.;
- A possible shift in prime-time demand as people work more flexible hours;
- Volatility in volunteers;
- Greater challenges in securing part-time facilities and recreation staff;
- Changes to operations (e.g., demand for touchless services, cleaning, visitor management, staff training, etc.), possibly requiring higher levels of subsidy;
- Impacts on building design (ventilation, spacing, access/egress, mid-door spaces, etc.);
- Constant engagement and communication – need accurate and real-time information;
- Rethinking of some third-party partnerships (schools, etc.); and
- Greater use of technology to help support changes (virtual programming, etc.).



4.0 Community Engagement

Engaging the community is an important component of the planning process to ensure that the Master Plan responds to the needs and priorities of the public. To guide this process, Community Engagement Strategy was developed outlining the consultation tactics planned for collecting input from residents, stakeholders, Town staff and Council, and others to ensure that their voices are heard. To support and raise awareness for the Master Plan, a project portal was created on Connect Whitby, along with a project e-mail, and other promotional tools, including social media, banners, posters, news articles and more.

The following consultation activities were held; each technique has been proven to be an effective, accessible, and efficient method of communication and deliberation. Additional public consultation will be held once the draft Master Plan is available for public review and feedback.

- Initial Master Plan Virtual Launch
- In-person Pop-up Events
- Community Survey
- Parks & Recreation Community Stakeholder Focus Groups and Survey
- Staff Workshops
- Council Interviews
- Virtual Public Consultation Sessions

School boards were invited to participate in the consultation process but they have not provided input to date. The draft Master Plan will be circulated to school boards to request input/feedback prior to finalization.

4,700+

Participants Engaged

Consultation with residents, stakeholders, staff and Council helped shape the Master Plan. Input was received through the following ways.

 <p>Public Awareness and Promotion</p>	 <p>Virtual Community Engagement and Pop-up Events</p>
 <p>Community Survey</p>	 <p>Stakeholder Focus Groups and Questionnaire</p>
 <p>Staff Workshop</p>	 <p>Council Interviews</p>
 <p>Written Submissions</p>	 <p>Final Public Open House (to be completed)</p>

4.1 Summary of Key Consultation Themes

To date, over 4,700 people have been engaged, including the general public, community organizations, staff, and Council. Common themes heard through the consultation activities are highlighted below in no particular order:

- Emphasis should be placed on maximizing the use of existing parks and facilities, which may require consideration for park and facility renewal.
- Requests were made for recreation facilities including, but not limited to, cricket pitches, pickleball courts, trails, indoor swimming pools, gymnasiums, adult ball diamonds, off-leash dog parks, outdoor skating rinks/trails, program rooms, and more.
- Whitby's waterfront is highly valued by the community and there is potential for enhancements to encourage greater use such as passive recreation opportunities, including trails and outdoor event space, supporting amenities (e.g., seating and shade), environmental preservation, and strategic residential and commercial development within walking distance of the waterfront.
- Bill 23 and amendments to the Planning Act will have significant impact on how much parkland and cash-in-lieu the Town is eligible to receive as part of development.
- Parks and recreation facilities, programs and services should be inclusive of all residents, regardless of age, income, ability, background, and orientation.
- There is a strong demand for casual, unstructured activities for residents of all ages.
- There is a desire for the Town to offer more popular recreation activities at convenient times that work for families to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in registered programs.
- Enhancing communication and marketing of parks and recreation opportunities was suggested to raise awareness about what is available in the community.
- There is a desire for more indoor recreation facilities in Brooklin and on the east side of Whitby, although it is noted that the Civic Recreation Complex and completion of the Whitby Sports Field Complex will address some of the current pressures.

4.2 Virtual Community Engagement & Pop-up Events

Virtual public information panels were prepared and displayed on the dedicated project page on Connect Whitby at the beginning of the planning process to raise awareness about the Master Plan. The information panels highlighted the purpose of the Master Plan, summarized the Town's community profile, as well as relevant trends impacting the parks and recreation sector. Opportunities for the public to get involved were also promoted, including the community survey.

Informal pop-up events were held throughout the Town to promote the Master Plan, encourage residents to complete the community survey and engage the public in brief one-on-one discussions about their preferences, opinions and ideas about parks and recreation in Whitby.

4.3 Community Survey

A community survey was conducted in the fall of 2022 to collect input about parks and recreation needs and priorities in Whitby. The survey gathered information about participation and barriers, facility use, suggested improvements, priorities for investment, and opinions on various statements.

The community survey was available online and by hardcopy for respondents to complete. A total of 1,431 responses were received, representing over 4,600 people, including children, youth, adults, and adults 55+. As a voluntary, self-directed survey, respondents were not required to answer every question. The survey was promoted through the Town’s website, Connect Whitby, social media, community groups, word-of-mouth, and more.

4.3.1 Summary of Survey Respondents

The following is a high-level summary of the demographic profile of responding households.

- The median age of respondents was 46 years, which is higher compared to the 2021 Census (40 years).
- Households with children and youth were more likely to complete the survey.
- Nearly one-third (35%) of respondents lived in the L1N postal code area, 27% of respondents live in the L1R postal code, 20% lived in the L1P postal code, 16% lived in the L1M postal code, and less than one percent lived in the LOB postal code. 2% of respondents were non-residents; however, these results have not been removed from the sample as it would not result in any significant changes to the survey results.

4.3.2 Participation in Parks & Recreation Activities

Enjoying parks and open spaces (77%) was identified as the most popular activity that respondents and/or their households participated in. Other popular parks and recreation activities that were identified included walking and hiking for leisure (74%), enjoying or using the Whitby Waterfront (73%), recreational swimming (62%) and attending a community event (54%). Figure 5 summarizes participation in parks and recreation activities.

What’s common among these top activities is that they are all unstructured and self-scheduled activities, which is consistent with broader participation trends. These activities tend to rank highly as they can be undertaken by all ages and stages of life. Organized sports such as hockey, soccer and baseball ranked lower as they tend to be played by a subset of the community. Specialized or age-specific activities such as disc golf and lawn bowling ranked lowest.

Figure 4: Distribution of Survey Respondents

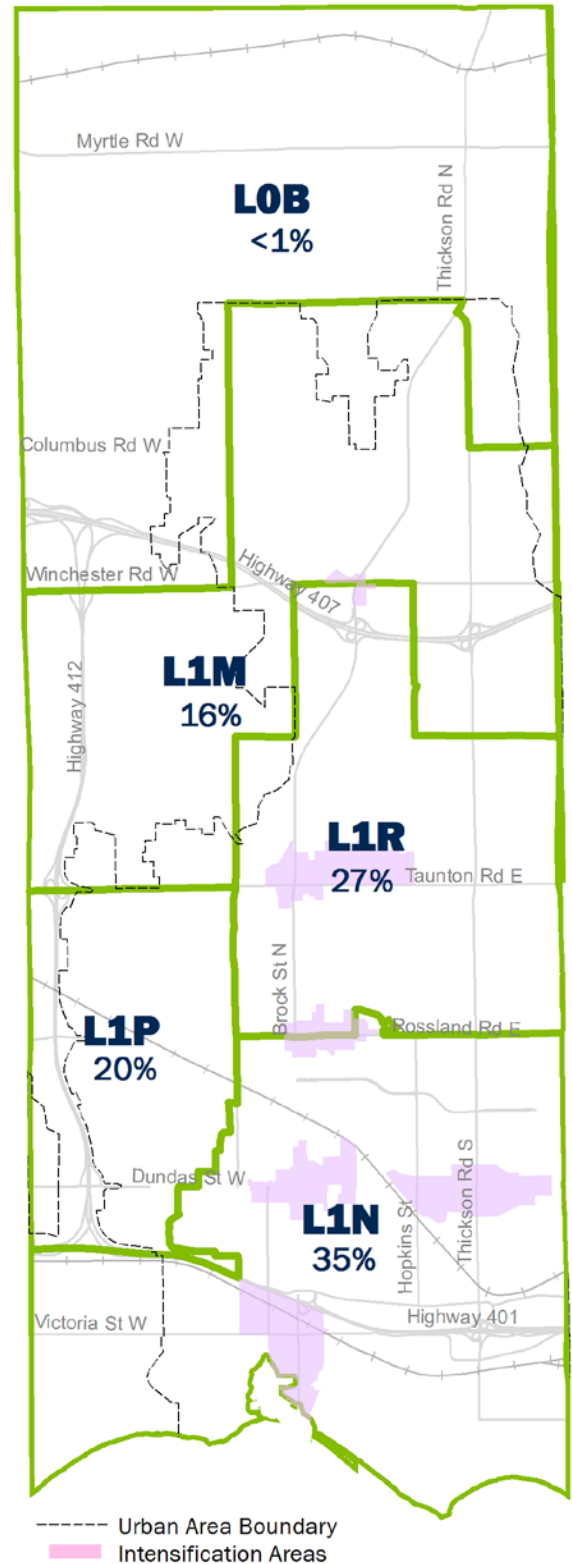
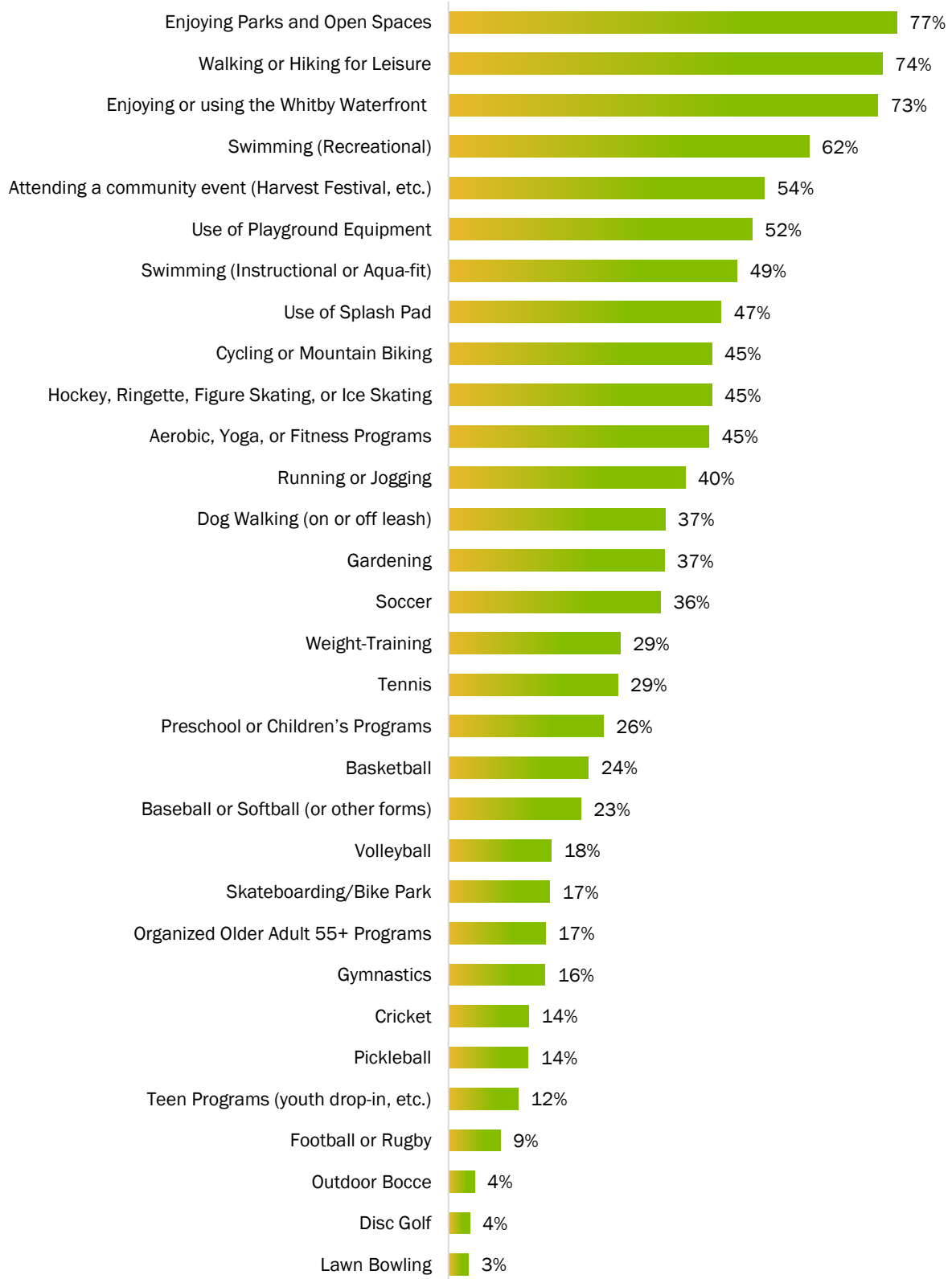


Figure 5: Participation in Parks & Recreation Activities



n=1,431

4.3.3 Barriers to Participation in Parks & Recreation Activities

Respondents identified that the most common barrier to participation in parks and recreation activities was the lack of desired facilities or programs (38%). Other barriers reported by respondents included the program not being offered at a convenient time (29%) and being unaware of opportunities (23%). The lack of personal time or being too busy was also identified as a barrier (22%), although this is a barrier that municipalities generally have little control over. A summary of participation barriers identified by respondents is contained in Figure 6.

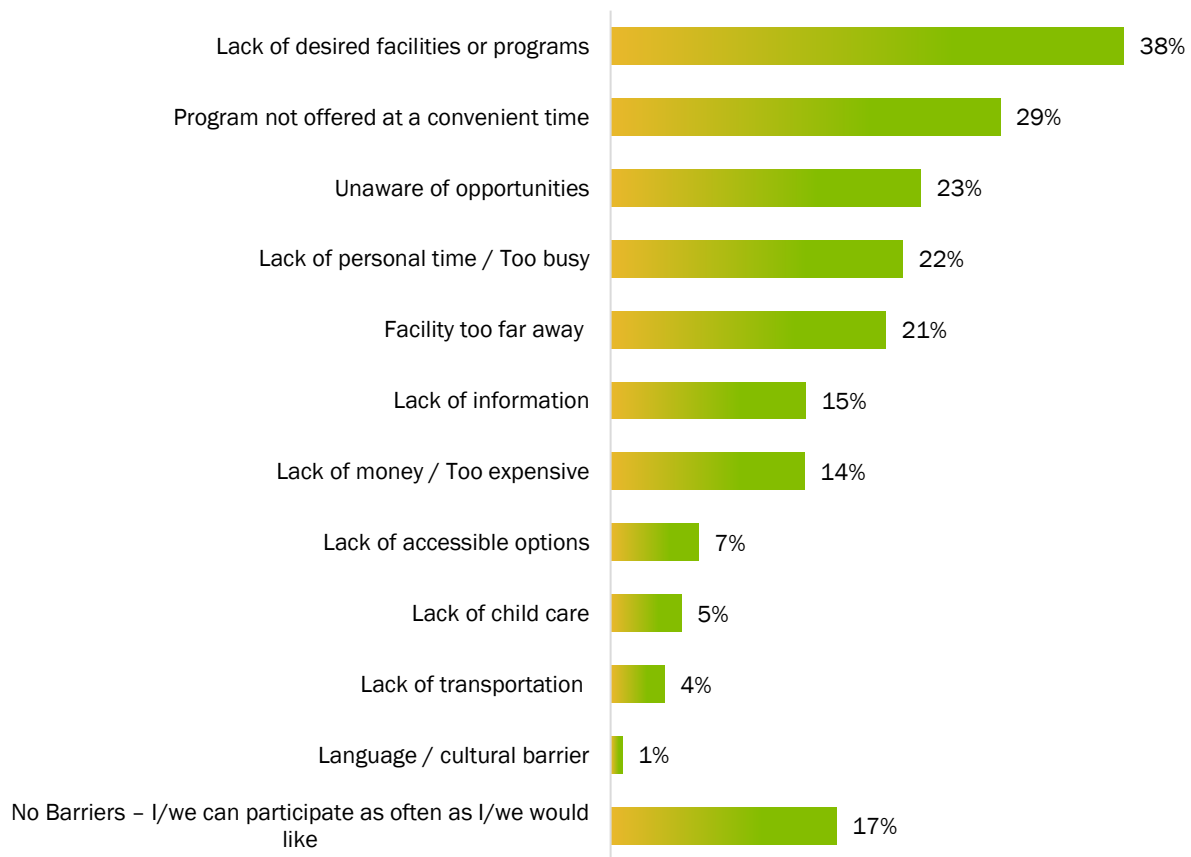
“I’d like to see more pickleball courts in Whitby.”

“Please open more spaces for swim lessons and at times that work for families.”

“The community is changing and there is a demand for cricket fields.”

Select Comments from Community Survey Respondents

Figure 6: Participation Barriers in Parks & Recreation Activities



‘Don’t Know’ responses not shown. n=1,264

4.3.4 Requests for Parks & Recreation Opportunities

Respondents were provided with an opportunity to request parks and recreation activities they would like to see (some may already be offered in Whitby). Table 2 highlights the top 10 requests that were made by respondents. A broad range of suggestions were received, including swimming lessons and pools, cricket fields, outdoor skating, pickleball courts, and tennis courts. These requests are consistent with broader leisure trends that point towards a high demand for casual, unstructured, and social activities, as well as requests for outdoor winter facilities and activities, and facilities that are geared towards non-traditional Canadian sports to reflect Whitby’s culturally diverse community. Request for a variety of recreation programs were also identified, including, but not limited to, arts and cultural activities, gymnasium sports (e.g., basketball, badminton, pickleball, etc.), fitness, and general programs across all age groups. The desire for offering more popular recreation programs, or at better times of the day, was also identified.

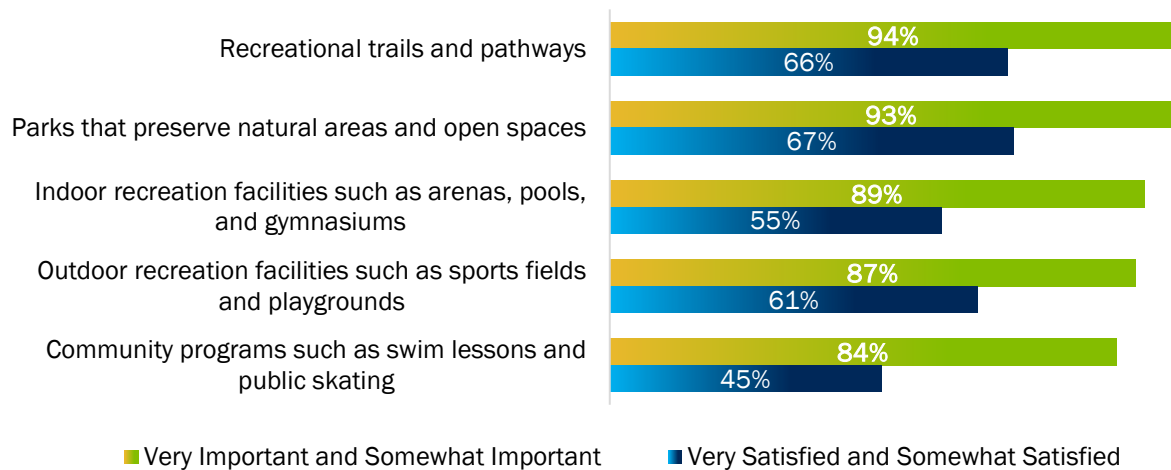
Table 2: Top 10 Most Comment Requests for Parks & Recreation Opportunities

Top 10 Requested Parks & Recreation Opportunities	
1. Swimming pools/lessons	6. More recreation programs (e.g., arts, gymnasium sports, EarlyON, fitness, drama, 55+, drop-in, adults, children, teenagers, etc.)
2. Cricket fields	7. Trails (walking, hiking, and biking)
3. Outdoor skating rinks/trails	8. Basketball courts
4. Pickleball courts	9. Waterfront enhancements
5. Tennis courts (indoor and outdoor)	10. Soccer activities

4.3.5 Importance & Satisfaction Levels

Respondents were asked to rate their level of importance and satisfaction with respect to parks and recreation facilities, including indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, parks and trails, and open spaces. Generally speaking, high levels of importance paired with high levels of satisfaction suggests that expectations are being met. With this in mind, expectations are falling short in community programs, as well as indoor recreation facilities, although the findings suggest that there is room for improvement in all areas (Figure 7).

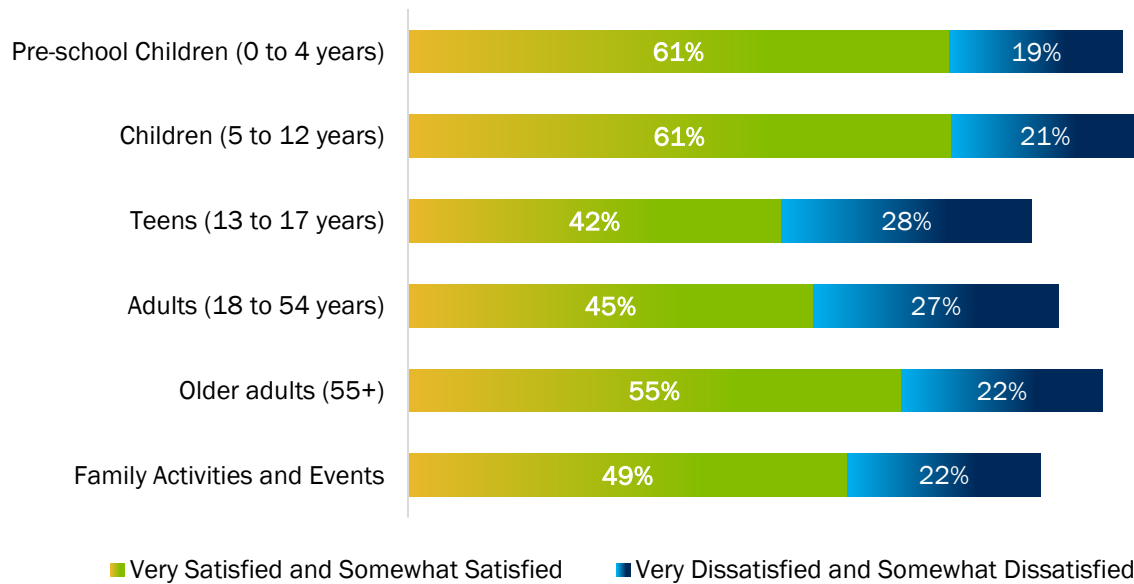
Figure 7: Importance & Satisfaction in Parks & Recreation Facilities



‘Neutral’ and ‘Don’t Know’ responses not shown. n=1,077 to 1,413

Figure 8 illustrates respondents' satisfaction levels with parks and recreation opportunities by age group. Respondents were most satisfied with parks and recreation opportunities for pre-school children (ages 0 to 4) (61%) and children (Ages 5 to 12). The lowest satisfaction levels were reported for teens (ages 13 to 17) (42%) and adults (ages 18 to 54) (45%). This is a common finding in many communities as there is often a perception that there are not enough opportunities for these age group. These findings suggest that there are opportunities to improve satisfaction levels among all age groups.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with Parks & Recreation Opportunities by Age Group



'Neutral' and 'Don't Know' responses not shown. n=619 to 1,053

4.3.6 Priorities for Investment

Figure 9 illustrates respondents' level of support for spending additional public funds on improving existing or developing new parks and recreation facilities. Consistent with trends in the sector, facilities that generally support unstructured and self-scheduled activities were most supported for additional spending. The top supported spaces were new parks and open spaces (86%), indoor pools (85%), beach (85%), waterfront (84%), and paved multi-use trails (81%).

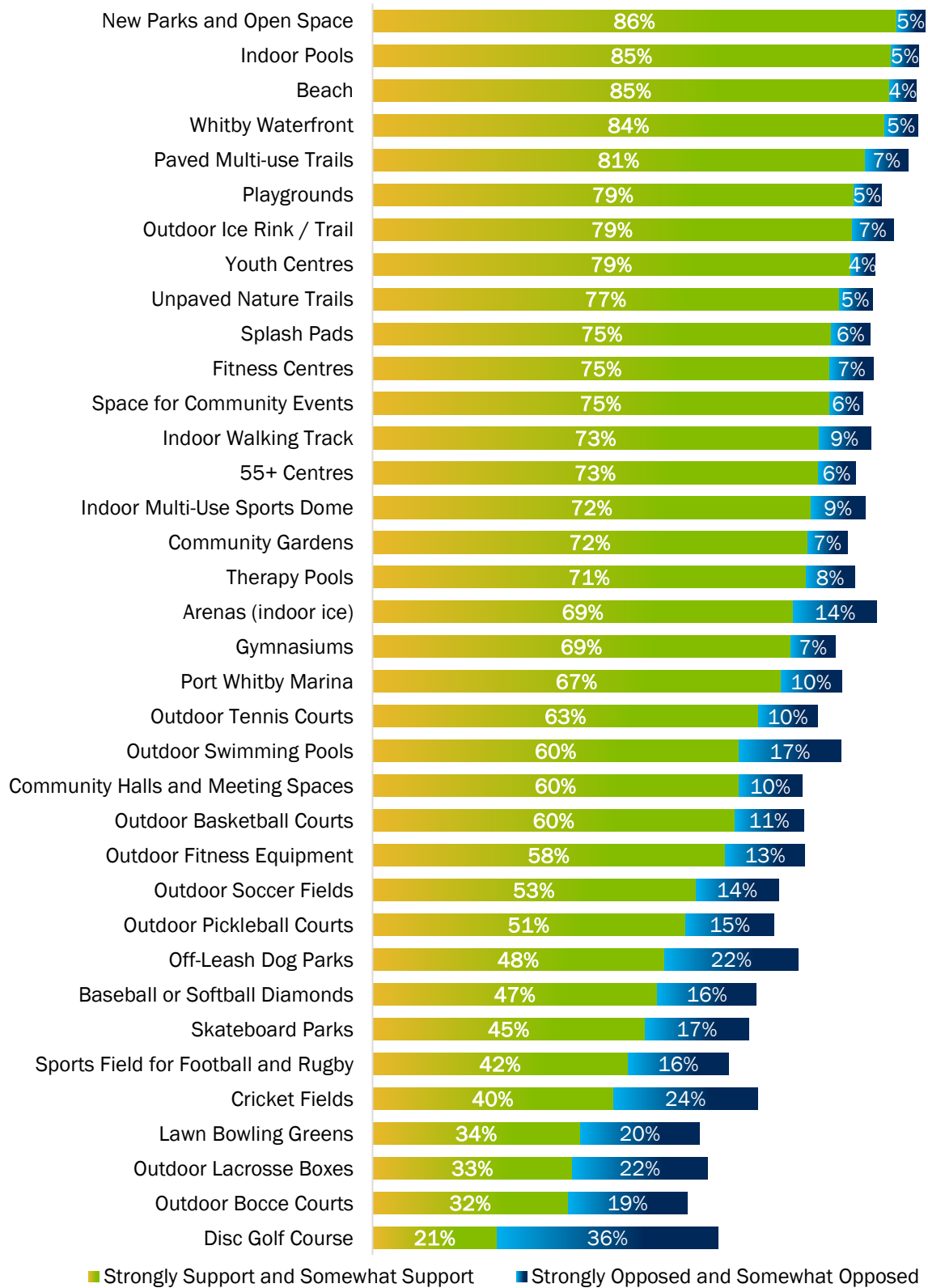
“We would like to have a developed waterfront area with some dining options. A waterfront restaurant with outdoor seating would be great, or even if a canteen area and better washroom facilities could be developed around the Heydenshore Pavilion.”

“Splash Pads provide great relief for families that don't have access to swimming pools. Whitby does an amazing job creating unique splash pad experiences at each park!”

“I would just like to emphasize that it would be very helpful for many seniors to have more benches for resting, which would enable many more people to enjoy the wonderful trails and parks that we have. Having some benches located in shade would be helpful too.”

Select Comments from Community Survey Respondents

Figure 9: Investment Priorities in Parks & Recreation Opportunities



'Neutral' and 'Don't Know' responses not shown. n=984 to 1,409

4.4 Parks & Recreation Community Stakeholder Focus Groups

Five stakeholder focus groups were held with community organizations to participate in discussions on a range of topics related to enhancing parks and recreation opportunities in Whitby. Nearly 100 stakeholders, including indoor and outdoor sports organizations, service clubs, and others were invited to participate in the focus groups. The sessions were attended by 23 individuals representing 22 groups. A Stakeholder Questionnaire was also circulated to all community organizations to collect any additional comments, including from groups that were unable to attend the focus groups to ensure that all organizations had an opportunity to provide input. Input was received from the following groups:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Abilities Centre | 12. Whitby Cricket Association |
| 2. Brooklin Agricultural Society | 13. Whitby Eagles Rep Fastpitch Association |
| 3. Brooklin Lacrosse Club Senior A Team | 14. Whitby Fire Girls Ball Hockey |
| 4. Brooklin Ladies Fun League | 15. Whitby Girls Softball Association |
| 5. Royal City Soccer Club & Camp | 16. Whitby Men's Slo-Pitch League |
| 6. Durham Oldtimers Soccer Club | 17. Whitby Men's Three Pitch League |
| 7. Durham Warm Water Aquatic Program | 18. Whitby Minor Baseball Association |
| 8. Lady Blue Knights Field Lacrosse | 19. Whitby Minor Hockey Association |
| 9. Pickleball Representative | 20. Whitby Ringette Association |
| 10. Scarborough Cricket | 21. Whitby Swimming Club |
| 11. Vikings Rugby Club | 22. Whitby Yacht Club |

The following is a summary of key themes from the input that was received from the Stakeholder Focus Groups and Questionnaire.

4.4.1 Indoor Arena and Aquatic Users Focus Group

Support for Arena Users	Requests were made for dry-land training space at the arenas as groups currently reported using non-Town facilities for warmups and training. Greater flexibility with the Town to allow change in ice time bookings was also mentioned, or groups should have the ability to give booked ice time to another user. Requests were also made for barrier-free and dedicated change rooms.
Demand for Aquatic Facilities	Organizations recognized the development of a future aquatic centre and made requests for a 50-metre pool to host competitions, warm water tanks, spectator seating, providing Town-owned equipment (e.g., diving blocks, ropes, etc.) and ensuring that the Town's existing pools and support spaces are barrier-free. Additional aquatic centres were also requested to alleviate current program pressure and waitlists.
Responding to Indoor Recreation Requests	It was identified that there is a demand for recreation facilities such as a gymnasium to respond to community requests for indoor recreation programs such as pickleball and other indoor sports, as well as an indoor walking track.
Accessibility and Inclusion	Attendees identified that an emphasis should be placed on ensuring that the Town's programs, services, and facilities are accessible to all residents. In particular, it was mentioned that the Town should communicate what parks and recreation facilities, services and programs are barrier-free, so residents are aware of what's available.

4.4.2 Indoor Floor Users and Community Services Focus Group

Indoor Facility Enhancements	There is a desire to access year-round, indoor floor space to offer indoor sports such as lacrosse and ball hockey and to ensure that adequate facility times are available for groups. Other suggested facility enhancements included air conditioning or large fans to cool down the arena during the summer season, painting sport court lines, and carpet flooring to minimize slipping hazards. Requests to serve food and alcohol, particularly during events, were also put forward, as well as to bring in external service providers such as music. It was also raised that the cost of facility rentals is a concern.
Outdoor Facility Requests	Requests were made for an outdoor, multi-use, gymnasium-type space similar to the Town's existing outdoor lacrosse boxes with a roof and lights.
Communication and Marketing	There is a desire for enhanced support from the Town, particularly with respect to communication and marketing. Enhanced promotion and awareness are needed to attract more interest in lacrosse and ball hockey organizations and activities as it was felt that residents may not be aware of these opportunities in Whitby, such as using the Town's website. It was identified that advertising costs were not affordable for community groups.
Streamlining Processes	It was mentioned that processes should be simplified to make it easier for volunteers to provide their programs, services, and events, as well as to book facilities. It was identified that the amount of work required to run an event is too great for volunteers to handle, resulting in "burnout".

4.4.3 Outdoor Ball Diamond Users Focus Group

Ball Diamond Participation Trends	While the COVID-19 pandemic impacted ball diamond organizations, groups reported that participation and interest is on the rise, particularly among younger age groups. Older age groups and adult ball groups reported challenges with retaining players that joined other leagues that have access to appropriately sized ball diamonds.
Enhancements to Whitby's Ball Diamonds	Requests were made for more adult-sized ball diamonds. It was reported that many adult groups are playing at locations that are undersized for their needs, such as at Peel Park. Locating ball diamonds at appropriate locations was also identified as some groups are playing at ball diamonds within neighbourhood parks, which may not have adequate amenities such as washrooms and parking. The desire for permanent washroom facilities was expressed. Field subdrainage was also identified as an issue, such as at Cachet Park and at Iroquois Park Sports Centre. Other requests were made for home run fencing, lighting, storage space, and electric and water servicing.
Access to Indoor Space	There is a desire for access to indoor field house space to support winter training. Some organizations reported that they currently use indoor facilities in other municipalities, but access to these spaces is not always guaranteed.

Town Support	Greater support from the Town was suggested such as staffing to assist with diamond lining, particularly to prepare for tournaments. Reviewing ball diamond scheduling to minimize overlapping games and prohibiting use of diamonds before permitted times was also suggested. Ball diamond rental fees was also identified as a concern.
Other Recreation Requests	Requests were made for dedicated pickleball courts with painted lines and coated playing surface.

4.4.4 Outdoor Sports and Activities Focus Group

Participation in Field Sports	Organizations reported that participation among their organizations is strong and has nearly recovered to pre-pandemic numbers.
Sports Field Scheduling	Concerns were raised about the Town’s current approach to sports field scheduling. It was noted that scheduling is based on historical bookings which is a challenge for some groups to get additional time or for new organizations to find available field time. One group identified that games have been canceled due to the inability to find available field time. In order to meet field requirements, some groups reported using school fields.
Enhancements to Whitby’s Sports Fields	Suggestions to enhance Whitby’s sports fields included providing a rugby field with goal posts. It was reported that the Town’s fields are undersized for rugby and that the only field that is suitably sized for the activity is at the Brooklin High School. Requests were also made for more artificial turf field, potentially at a multi-field complex and permanent, barrier-free washrooms.
Access for All	Organizations identified the importance of including all residents regardless of ability. One group also identified that they welcome participants from communities beyond Whitby. One group expressed that they have worked with other organizations to provide financial aid to minimize financial participation barrier, while another group worked with the Abilities Centre to create an adaptive sports program for persons with disabilities.

4.4.5 Youth and Emerging Activities Focus Group

Growth of Cricket in Whitby	The popularity of cricket in Whitby is growing. Local cricket players had previously travelled to Scarborough to play in an established organization; however, they were unable to be accommodated. Thus, there is a desire for a cricket field in Whitby to support and grow local playing opportunities. Due to the lack of field space, it was reported that recreational games may take place within parking lots.
Cricket Facilities	There is a desire for a cricket field in Whitby to support competitive play, recreational cricket, and practices, which would require the Town to construct a field with appropriate design standards. Field design needs to be carefully planned to accommodate the different types of cricket play. Supporting amenities include a warmup and practice area, parking, washrooms, scoreboard, seating, shade, and painted lines.

Town Support	It was suggested that the Town meet with organizations on a regular basis to ensure that there are open lines of communication to discuss challenges, potential enhancements, marketing, and opportunities to work together. Continuing to work with community organizations to promote and enhance the waterfront area was also identified.
Whitby Marina Enhancements	To respond to increased use of the waterfront and marina, suggested enhancements included more seasonal waste receptacles, parking by-law enforcement, mooring balls, expanding temporary boat docking, and more.

4.5 Staff Workshops

Four staff workshops were held with Town staff to capture their valuable, knowledge, insights, and experiences to be considered as a part of the Master Plan. Workshops were organized by senior management, front-line parks and recreation staff, and Senior Leadership Team. Discussion topics were wide-ranging and key themes are highlighted in this section.

Inspiring a Strong Community Through Community Services	Community programs and services are provided across Whitby’s public spaces, including parks, trails, sport amenities, community centres and schools making services accessible at the neighbourhood level. There is a high level of utilization resulting in an active and engaged public. It is inspirational to see individuals and families gain the benefits of the parks and recreation system. The Town regularly engages the public to understand priorities and inform corporate initiatives and found that greenspace and enhancing the quality of indoor spaces ranked 2 nd and 3 rd , respectively, after downtown revitalization which ranked first.
While There are Many Strengths; There are Challenges	<p>All staff groups felt that the strengths of the Community Services Department include strong evidence of a high utilization rate of programs and services, high satisfaction levels, a positive relationship with community organizations, a demonstration of innovation and collaboration and generally a high performing organization.</p> <p>Current challenges include meeting parkland needs due to Bill 23, meeting sustainability targets, turnover and expertise of part-time and full-time staffing, the 24/7 demands of monitoring social media, lack of volunteers post-COVID, and meeting increasing demands and expectation within budget allocations. Costs for materials, construction, energy, and supplies are increasing. The subsidization of community services is increasing due to rising costs. Questions were raised about whether the Town should continue to provide services that are underutilized or not in high demand.</p> <p>From a social perspective, staff are experiencing more mental health issues and aggressive behaviours in public spaces.</p>

<p>The Facility Mix is Important in Meeting Community Needs</p>	<p>There is a strong indication that the Town provides a strong supply of recreation facilities across Whitby. Previous Facility Plans have looked at population growth, demographics, socioeconomics, facility capacity and utilization trends to recommend these placements. The utilization of Community Connection in 6 community schools has augmented facilities at the neighbourhood level. The Iroquois Park Sports Centre is well utilized, and new residents look to gather information about recreational opportunities from customer service staff. There is an expectation that there should be a large, Town-owned gymnasium in the south end of the Town. Most facilities are well utilized. With the Civic Recreation Complex being closed for renovations, the Anne Ottenbrite Pool is at capacity with pent up demand. As the public returns to play post-COVID, staff report that the fitness memberships have been slow to return to historical levels as fitness/lifestyle routines have changed due to the pandemic, although staff are making efforts to increase memberships.</p>
<p>Asset Management and Long-range Capital Planning Ensure Well Maintained Facility Stock</p>	<p>Whitby is working to complete an Asset Management Plan which will help to refine the Long-range Capital Plan, along with the findings of this Master Plan. Other corporate initiatives will also guide the design of new and renewal of parks and facilities such as the Town’s Corporate Climate Action Plan.</p>
<p>Whitby Plays Its Part in Climate Action</p>	<p>Whitby has developed a Corporate Climate Action Plan to become more resilient to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Town established a target to reduce GHG emissions to zero by 2045 although funding sources have not yet been identified. Community engagement efforts are underway to inform, educate and work with the development industry. All new corporate buildings will have a sustainability lens with a LEED standard for net zero carbon emissions.</p>
<p>Legislative Compliance, Current Policies and Quality Assurance Ensure Safe and Enjoyable Experiences</p>	<p>Staff work to undergo regular inspections to comply with legislative requirements and compliance falling under the respective parks and recreation disciplines. Quality assurance models include Parks and Recreation Ontario High Five, Playworks for Youth Friendly Communities (2016), the Clean Marine Program, and is an Age Friendly Community. The Town undertakes a customer satisfaction survey to best understand current strengths and challenges.</p> <p>Some Policies and Standard Operating Procedures require development and review, including, but not limited to, operating procedures, ice allocation policy, articulating levels of service, performance measures, asset management, a pricing policy, parkland development standards and guidelines and the use of technology. There is recognition that policies and procedures must be documented; however, there is a concern about staff capacity to complete this work.</p>
<p>Partners and Volunteers Increase our Programs and Services</p>	<p>The Abilities Centre operates independently of the Town to provide fitness, sport and training for persons with disabilities. It was suggested that more could be done to share resources and reduce duplication.</p> <p>Youth volunteer opportunities exist, including the Youth Council, camps, and aquatics. Special Events engage volunteers for major events. The 55+ Centre also utilizes volunteers for programs and events and the 55+ Advisory Committee. There has been a decline in volunteerism since the pandemic. Sport and community organizations rely on volunteers to manage and promote sport opportunities and are also noticing a decline in volunteerism.</p>

Diversity is Our Strength

The Town is placing greater emphasis on including underrepresented populations. The Town surveyed the community to understand residents' priorities surrounding diversity – results centred on race, colour, origin, ethnicity, and disability. The Town is guided by an Accessibility Plan and works with the Accessibility Advisory Committee and Accessibility Coordinator to ensure that facilities are physically accessible and beyond, including inclusive programming, customer service, information and communications and employment. The Town has hired an internal facing diversity position to develop policies and best practices related to diversity. Staff would like the Master Plan to provide more guidance as to identifying, engaging, and better including marginalized populations.

Staff's Top Priorities

- Maximize use of facilities and ensure facilities and parks are available across the Town
 - Address emerging sports and pent-up demands
 - Address Development Charges and park policies and review use of Community Benefit Charges
 - Develop levels of service, metrics and performance measures and tracking moving forward in Parks and Recreation Department
 - Provide advice on including all residents (DEI)
 - Staffing and recruiting full and part-time staff to deliver on these priorities and needs
 - Staying current with recreation needs
 - Open space – a lot of pressure on development – taking over public lands
 - Waterfront is under pressure – need to understand the future and plan for a waterfront that protects the priorities of the community
 - With increasing demand, consideration needs to be given to program pricing and cost recovery strategies to off-set increased requirements for tax funding
-

4.6 Council Interviews

Individual interviews with each member of Council were undertaken to understand their perspectives on parks and recreation in Whitby, high priorities, how these features can be enhanced to strengthen the quality of life for current and future residents, and their expectations for the Master Plan. The following is a summary of key themes from the discussions.

Impact of Bill 23	Bill 23 is a concern as it is expected to impact how much parkland is eligible to be conveyed to the Town. It was identified that the Town may need to consider other strategies to acquire parkland and explore redevelopment of existing parks.
Investing in Whitby's Waterfront	Whitby's waterfront is viewed as a strength of the community, although it was felt that there is untapped potential that should be considered. Enhancements that could be considered include enhancing trails and connectivity, public art, creating outdoor special events space (e.g., bandshell), expanding and providing public access to the marina. The need to support strategic residential and commercial development was identified to bring residents, tourism, and investment to the waterfront, including exploring hospitality and convention space opportunities in partnership with others. The future of the Heydenshore Pavilion was discussed with potential for private-sector partnerships. Public ownership of the waterfront was noted as a priority.
Trail Use	Trails for walking and cycling are important amenities in Whitby and continuing to enhance these features should continue to be encouraged to ensure that there are safe and accessible east-west and north-south connections across the Town, including utilizing the hydro corridor. Comfort features along trails need to be considered such as paving and seating. Winter trail maintenance is important to support year-round activities and park use, although consideration should also be considered to supporting cross country skiing and snowshoeing activities.
Enhancing Recreation Facilities	Enhancing the use of existing indoor recreation facilities, including strategies to increase the use of underutilized facilities, promotion or adding programming, and or seeking alternative uses. It was noted that the Master Plan should assess potential facility needs, including, but not limited to, cricket fields, pickleball courts, gymnasiums, adult ball diamonds, off-leash dog parks, outdoor skating rinks, indoor walking tracks, multi-purpose space, community gardening, and indoor aquatic facilities. It was also felt that the Master Plan should assess needs in the east end of Whitby due to increased housing development, including indoor recreation facilities, particularly as residents are older and desire local recreation opportunities. Additionally, opportunities to reimagine the Heydenshore Pavilion for community use was identified.
Recreation Programming	Concerns were raised about the availability of popular recreation programs that are booked quickly. It was also identified that some programs are not offered at a convenient time for youth and children as some activities are held during the day or evening. Specific concerns were expressed regarding the limited availability of swim programs, particularly due to the temporary closure of the Civic Recreation Complex pool.

Park Renewal and Development	Strategic park renewal or development was suggested including re-envisioning Brooklin Memorial Park and that the Master Plan should determine the need for a new sports field complex to centralize activities and consolidate fields and other facilities at a single site. Potentially re-locating and re-purposing the Victoria and Gordon Street Soccer Fields to accommodate potential waterfront enhancements was also identified.
Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change	The parks and recreation system should be viewed with an environmental sustainability and climate change lens. This includes incorporating shade structures in parks, investing in trails, use of solar panels and other technologies, and preserving naturalized areas along the waterfront.
Inclusion and Access	Parks and recreation in Whitby should be inclusive of all residents, regardless of age, income, ability, orientation, and background.

4.7 Virtual Public Consultation Sessions

Three virtual public consultation sessions were held to provide an open forum for residents to provide input to be considered as part of the Master Plan development process. The virtual sessions were held over three days at different times to provide residents with flexibility in when they could participate. Each virtual session guided attendees through an overview of the Master Plan process and project status, followed by a discussion period. In total the virtual sessions were attended by 23 members of the public. Representatives from the Town's advisory committees were invited to attend, as well as school boards and other community stakeholders. Town staff were also in attendance to provide local context and respond to questions. The following is a summary of input that was received through the discussion.

Parks and Recreation Strengths	Whitby provides a strong parks and recreation system that is well maintained. The availability of community partners was mentioned such as the Abilities Centre. It was mentioned that there are a variety of recreation programs for children and families, and that the Town is making efforts to create year-round recreation opportunities such as winter park maintenance and snow clearing in some parks and trails.
Enhancing Indoor Recreation Facilities	Requests were made for indoor walking tracks and gymnasiums for indoor sports activities (e.g., pickleball). Creating comfortable gathering areas within lobby and viewing areas within indoor recreation facilities was also suggested, with consideration given to concessions.
Enhancing Outdoor Recreation Facilities	There is a desire for ball diamonds in the north end, ultimate frisbee, and winter activities such as outdoor skating, snow shoeing, and cross-country skiing. Recognizing future population growth in the north and west end, outdoor recreation opportunities should be considered in these areas.
Enhancing Parks, Trails, Waterfront and Marina	<p>Suggestions to enhance the parks and trails system included accessibility features, expanding trail connections, paving trails, drinking water stations, public art, Wi-Fi, tree plantings, and comfort amenities such as shade, seating and portable washrooms. Interactive features such as incorporating technology (e.g., QR codes) was also suggested for education, music, and games. Preserving the natural environment should also be a priority.</p> <p>Opportunities to invest in the waterfront was identified, including holding special events, enhancing the marina, harbour dredging, watercraft launch, and outdoor fitness equipment. Park cleanliness and more waste receptacles were also suggested.</p>
Enhancing Recreation Programs	<p>The timing of daytime recreation programs is not convenient for families that work during the day. The need to increase the number of popular recreation programs was suggested, particularly for swimming. Expanding the variety of non-sport recreation programs was suggested such as activities centred around academics, education, and arts and culture, as well as outdoor summer programming.</p> <p>New or enhanced events should be considered such as farmers markets, art in the park, etc.</p>

4.8 Future Community Engagement Activities

Future community engagement opportunities will be available during the draft master plan process, including a virtual public information centre and Council presentations to receive feedback on the Draft Master Plan.

5.0 Park System

5.1 Key Parks Documents

5.1.1 Parks for All

Parks for All is **An Action Plan for Canada’s Parks Community**, published in 2017 through a collaboration between the Canadian Parks Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. This document aligns with and supports the Framework for Recreation in Canada, particularly the FRC’s third goal of “Connecting People and Nature”.

Parks for All focuses on how all Canadians benefit from healthy parks and natural areas and shares the community’s vision and goals for our parks. It includes a variety of perspectives that helped form a distinct set of responsibilities and practices moving forward. The plan is intended to unite the parks community through specific actions, priorities, and strategic directions. It is guided by four strategic directions: **Collaborate, Connect, Conserve, and Lead**.

Specific actions that may be considered through the Master Plan process or subsequent implementation initiatives are highlighted in Table 3.

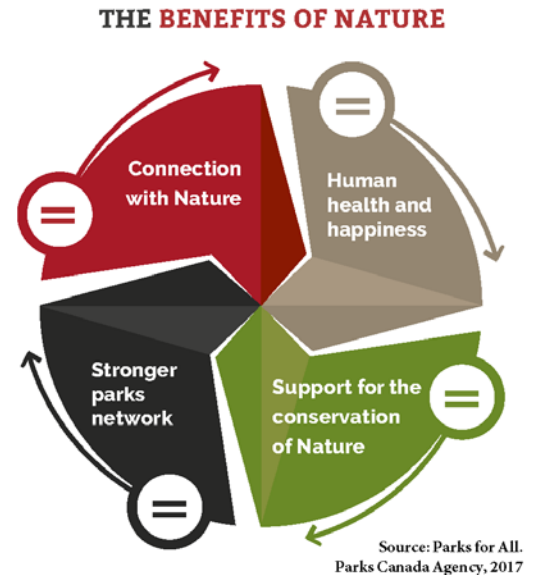


Table 3: Summary of Strategic Directions and Actions, Parks for All

Strategic Direction	Strategic Actions
Collaborate	Reach out to unconventional partners and organizations that could creatively contribute to the Parks for All vision.
Connect	Forge connections between community parks and less accessible wilderness parks by sharing information and coordinating activities and campaigns. Support the creation of new parks and the expansion of current parks to offer more opportunities for local connections.
Conserve	Share expertise and best practices among the parks community. Champion the economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits provided by healthy ecosystems. Ensure these are accounted for in decision-making as contributing to stronger economies.
Lead	Invest time and money in employees for the development of high-performing, dynamic, and caring leaders.

5.1.2 Various Whitby Park Plans

Whitby recognizes the important role that parks play in enhancing local quality of life and supporting community growth, economic development, and environmental sustainability. The Town has been actively developing and redeveloping parks and has been regularly engaging residents along the process to gather input and refine the vision established for each park project. The Town is commended for recently completing several park plans, which have led to the development of new park sites, all of which have been completed and are open to the public. Parks include (the amenities planned to be located in these parks have been incorporated into the recreation facility inventory in Section 6.2):

- Des Newman WhitBEE Park (District Park)
- Lynde Creek Park (District Park)
- Greenfield Park redevelopment (Local Park)
- Micklefield Park (Local Park)
- Chelsea Hill Park (Local Park)
- Unnamed Park (Coronation Road) (Local Park)

In addition to these plans, Whitby also completed a 2016 Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan, which is discussed in Section 5.10.

5.2 Defining Parkland

For the purposes of the Master Plan, a focus is placed on municipal parkland, which is defined as follows:

“Parkland” refers to all lands owned, leased, and/or managed by the Town and classified in Whitby’s Official Plan as Town Parks (including waterfront parks and off-leash dog parks), District Parks, and Local Parks (including parkettes and tot lots). Parkland consists of table land suitable for the development or installation of built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, etc.) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities. Excluded from this definition are open space lands such as cemeteries, stormwater management ponds and other natural areas; however, it is recognized that they are important assets that form part of the Town’s greater parks and open space system.

Whitby’s parks are important public spaces that are vital to improving and sustaining the physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing of residents in the community, as well as the local environment and economy. Whitby’s well-planned parks provide extensive benefits to its residents and can attract tourism, business, industry, and residential development. They also provide places of respite, improved air quality, venues for physical activity, and help the Town achieve its environmental objectives as outlined through the Community Strategic Plan.

Whitby’s residents place a high value on the Town’s parks system and there is a strong desire for continued investment. The Master Plan community survey found that 86% of respondents supported investment in improving or developing new parks and open spaces and 93% felt that parks and recreation opportunities should be a high priority for Council. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated just how critical these spaces are to the community and their impact on quality of life is undeniable.



5.3 Parkland Classification System

A robust parkland classification system is critical to guide communities in park development and to convey what the public may expect for different types of parks. The Town of Whitby Official Plan establishes a parkland classification system in Section 4.9.3.22. There are three types of parks, including Town Parks, District Parks and Local Parks (including parkettes and tot-lots). A description of each park type is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Existing Town of Whitby Official Plan Parkland Classification System

Park Type and Description
<p>Town Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are intended to serve recreational needs on a Town-wide basis and include major recreational and cultural heritage resources and municipally owned open space along valleys, the Waterfront and the former Iroquois Beach. • They may include active recreation/community centres, ball courts, playgrounds, community gardens, landscaped and passive recreation areas, and parking areas. • Provided at a rate of 0.4 hectares per 1,000 residents
<p>District Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are intended to serve the recreational needs in a community area or series of neighbourhoods with outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities. • They shall be primarily active recreation areas with illuminated major sports fields and facilities, recreation/community centres, ball courts, playgrounds, community gardens, landscaped and passive recreation areas, and parking areas. • Provided at a rate of 0.8 hectares per 1,000 residents and shall generally be 4 hectares in size.
<p>Local Park (including parkettes and tot-lots)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are intended to serve the recreational needs of the immediate neighbourhood for active and passive recreational opportunities. • Facilities may include sports fields, landscaped areas, walkways, ball courts, playgrounds, community gardens, and similar facilities. • Provided at a rate of 0.8 hectares per 1,000 residents and shall generally be 1.5 hectares in size; parkettes or tot-lots may range in size between 0.1 hectare and 1.0 hectare.

Recent Provincial legislation, particularly Bill 23, has required the Town to rethink its approach to planning and designing parkland. While the next section provides further details on the impact of Bill 23 on the Planning Act in relation to parkland dedication, the result is a reduction in the amount of land (and cash-in-lieu) the Town will be eligible to receive as part of development. Going forward, it is expected that the Town will primarily receive smaller park sizes that will accommodate a narrower range of outdoor amenities.

Historically, to meet service level requirements, it has been the Town's practice to incorporate a minimum of two sports fields in District Parks and one sports field in Local Parks. As the Town receives smaller dedicated park sizes, it is not likely that the Town will be able to incorporate sports fields within these parks, as well as accommodate other outdoor recreation facility needs (e.g., playgrounds, hard surface courts, trails, etc.) without creating conflict between uses and park users. As such, the Town will need to secure additional parkland through alternative means to meet Whitby's sports fields needs and then potentially develop multiple sports fields at a single site(s).

The Town is also undergoing intensification, particularly in the areas of Downtown Brooklin, Brock/Taunton, Rossland/Garden, Downtown Whitby, Dundas East, and Port Whitby. As population growth continues to gain traction in these areas, there will be an increasing need for walkable parkland. Recognizing that the majority of these areas are already established, intensification is anticipated to occur through redevelopment and infill and it is not expected that the Town will receive parcels of land that would fit within Whitby's current park classification system. Many municipalities experiencing significant intensification have adopted a new urban park typology to guide the development of parkland within these areas.

Urban parks are specialized public open spaces that are pedestrian-friendly and facilitate social gatherings and outdoor enjoyment in denser urban areas. This can include hardscape features and small-scale, programmable spaces and amenities that may include performance space, partner-operated vendors, courts, games areas, outdoor fitness equipment, water features, seating, public art, and other comfort amenities. Urban parks should continue to be municipally owned and maintained, although alternative strategies may also include strata parks (e.g., overtop a parking garage) and privately-owned public spaces (POPS). The risks and long-term financial costs of these alternatives required further evaluation that is beyond the scope of this plan.

As part of an Official Plan Review, it is recommended that the Town review and revise its parkland hierarchy to ensure it accurately reflects the Town's current approach to planning, acquiring, designing, and developing parkland. Consideration should be given to creating a classification system based on Town Parks, Sports Field Parks, District Parks, Local Parks, Parkettes, and Urban Parks (including urban squares). This hierarchy acknowledges that, following the legislated reduction in parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication, sports fields will no longer be accommodated in District and Local Parks. Consequently, the Town will need to pursue new means to meet its sports field going forward.

Recommendations – Parkland Classification System

1. As part of an Official Plan Review, review and revise the Town's Parkland Classification System to ensure that it reflects the current parkland planning framework. Consideration should be given to the creation of a hierarchy based on Town Parks, Sports Field Parks, District Parks, Local Parks, Parkettes, and Urban Parks.

5.4 Parkland Dedication Policies

Section 4.9.4.2 of the Official Plan identifies that the Town may acquire land for parks, cycling and trails, recreation and open space purposes as permitted by the Planning Act (including through parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu of parkland). Section 4.9.4.3 of the Official Plan identifies that the following strategies to acquire parkland can be pursued, at no cost to the Town (these policies are implemented through the Town's Conveyance of Parkland and Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland By-law (#7733-21):

- a) For the development or redevelopment of land uses for residential purposes, up to 5.0% of the total land holdings, or cash-in-lieu equivalent. Alternatively, the Town may require the conveyance of land for park or other public recreational purposes at a rate of 1 hectare for each 312 dwelling units proposed, or cash-in-lieu equivalent, or at such lesser rate as may be determined by the Town.
- b) For the development or redevelopment of land for commercial or industrial purposes, up to 2.0% of the total land holdings or an equivalent amount of cash-in-lieu of land.
- c) For the development or redevelopment of land for mixed-use development, the lands for park or other public recreational purposes shall be calculated at the rate of 1 hectare for each 312 dwelling units, or the cash-in-lieu equivalent, or at such lesser rate as may be determined by the Town. However, in no case shall such contribution be less than 2.0% of the land area or the cash-in-lieu equivalent, assessed on the basis of the percentage of the total floor space used for non-residential purposes.
- d) Where new development is proposed on lands, part of which is identified as Natural Hazards or Natural Heritage, or a significant woodlot then such lands shall not be acceptable as part of the dedication of parkland for public recreation purposes or cash-in-lieu payment under the Planning Act.

In addition, the open space setbacks from the top-of-bank, as required by Section 5.3.10.6 of the Official Plan, shall not be included as part of the dedication of parkland or cash-in-lieu payments under the Planning Act.

Section 4.9.4.5 also identifies that the Town shall focus the acquisition of land for parks, recreation, and open space in areas of greatest deficiency. Priority areas shall be based upon master plans with the following considerations:

- a) Existing and proposed population densities;
- b) Existing facilities and their accessibility to the neighbourhood residents;
- c) The availability of funds for acquisition
- d) The availability of land on the open market; and
- e) The necessity to expropriate.

Additionally, the Official Plan identifies that where practical, new parkland development will be acquired in cooperation with others, including school boards, Conservation Authorities, and other public agencies.

In November 2022, the Province of Ontario enacted the More Homes, Built Faster Act. This Act (also referred to as Bill 23) made adjustments to the parkland dedication requirements of the Planning Act, among amendments to several other regulations with this and other statutes. The recent changes introduced by Bill 23 will result in reductions to parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu requirements compared to the previous legislation, especially for areas of higher density. A summary of some of these recent changes is provided below:

- The **maximum alternative dedication rate** has been reduced to 1 ha/600 units for parkland and 1 ha/1000 units for cash-in-lieu. Further, the legislation caps the maximum alternative dedication rates at 10% of the land for sites under 5 ha and at 15% for sites greater than 5 ha.
- Affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential unit developments are **exempt** from parkland dedication requirements.
- **Parkland rates** are frozen as of the date that a zoning-by law or site plan application is filed. The freeze is effective for two years after approval.
- To take effect at a future date, developers will be able to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland. These lands may include **encumbered lands** and privately-owned public space (POPs). If agreement cannot be reached, the Town or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This may result in less suitable lands being accepted as parkland dedication.
- There is a new requirement for the Town to **spend or allocate** at least 60% of the monies in their parkland reserve account at the beginning of each year. It is recognized that as of December 31, 2022, the Town's Park Reserve Fund balance was \$9,149,775 and \$6,949,278 (or 76%) has been committed or allocated to ongoing capital projects that have been approved or are identified in the Town's 10-year capital forecast.⁸ Thus, the Town is in alignment with this requirement.
- The Town must develop a **Parks Plan** prior to passing a parkland by-law. Previously, this requirement applied only to those municipalities that authorized use of the Section 42 alternative rate, but now includes those that include the standard rate (e.g., 5% of lands as per Section 51.1). Local school boards were invited to be engaged through the Master Plan process, but they have not provided input to date. Local school boards will be invited to provide feedback on the draft Master Plan prior to finalization for this document to serve as the Town's Parks Plan to satisfy the requirements of the Planning Act.

⁸ Town of Whitby, June 12, 2023. Annual Statement of Development Charge and Parkland Dedication Cash-in-Lieu Reserve Funds as of December 31, 2022 – Staff Report FS 19-23.

In addition to these changes, development charge rates will be phased in over a five-year period, and costs for land and studies are no longer recoverable. The maximum charge for community benefit charges is also capped at 4% of the value of land, and then multiplied by a ratio based on floor area; Whitby does not currently have a Community Benefit Charges By-law but plans to undertake one in the future to create another tool to generate funds for infrastructure in areas of intensification. The result of these legislated changes will be less funding for growth related needs.

The Town's Official Plan will require updating to address the legislative changes introduced by Bill 23. These changes will result in reductions to parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu requirements, particularly for areas of higher density. Striking an appropriate balance across the Town's urban structure is vital, particularly within the Town's intensification areas and the MTSA (Major Transit Station Area). Planning, designing, and maintaining parks in densely populated areas present several new challenges, including smaller parkland blocks that are used more intensely and are thus more costly to construct and maintain. As previously mentioned, new approaches are required to both acquire suitable land for parks and to program these parks to meet the unique range of needs given the scarcity and higher cost of land in these areas. Incorporating policies that support the dedication of programmable parkland and minimize long-term risks to the Town are recommended.

Recommendations – Parkland Dedication Policies

2. Update the Town's Official Plan to align with amendments to the Ontario Planning Act and Bill 23 and incorporate policies to support the dedication of programmable parkland and minimize long-term risks to the Town.
3. Continue to monitor changes to the Planning Act related to parkland dedication and update the Town's Parkland Dedication By-Law as required.



5.5 Parkland Supply, Needs and Acquisition

5.5.1 Current Parkland Supply

The Town’s parkland inventory identifies that there are approximately 897 hectares of greenspace in Whitby, including 243 hectares of parkland and 655 hectares of open space. A summary of active parkland by park type is contained in Table 5.

Table 5: Town of Whitby Parkland Summary

Park Type	Number of Parks	Supply (ha)	Current Service Level (2022 Population = 151,500)	Official Plan Recommended Service Level
Town Park*	15	50.8	0.3	0.4 ha/1,000 residents
District Park	22	95.0	0.6	0.8 ha/1,000 residents
Local Park**	89	97.0	0.6	0.8 ha/1,000 residents
Total Active Parkland	123	242.8	1.6 ha/1,000 residents	2.0 ha/1,000 residents
Total Open Space***		654.6		
Total Greenspace		897.4		

*Town parks include waterfront parks and off-leash dog parks

** Local parks include parkettes

*** Open space includes cemeteries, stormwater management ponds and other natural areas.

Whitby’s park supply translates into a service level of 1.6 hectares per 1,000 residents, which is less than the Town’s recommended target contained in the Official Plan (2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents). This shortfall is driven by the fact that the parkland dedication tools provided under the Planning Act have historically not been adequate to meet the Town’s target, particularly as the land development industry tends to provide the minimum amount of parkland (or cash-in-lieu of parkland) to satisfy requirements. Following recent amendments to the Planning Act as a result of Bill 23, it is anticipated that the Town’s parkland deficit will grow as the population increases.

5.5.2 Future Parkland Needs

Application of the standard and/or alternative rate established through the Bill 23 provisions that are now in force within the Planning Act will generally result in a parkland dedication ratio of about 1.0 hectare per 1,000 residents or less. The actual ratio will vary depending on the density of the development and the number of persons per unit. This is lower compared to Whitby’s current target and while the Town has not been able to achieve this goal, reducing this target is not recommended as it is generally considered to be the minimum ratio required to address land-based recreation needs, particularly as the Town is already targeting parkland on the lower end of the spectrum compared to other communities that range between 2.0 and 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents.

The Town previously explored reducing its parkland level of service as a potential option to respond to Bill 23 but ultimately recommended against this strategy, recognizing that there is a high demand for various outdoor recreation amenities and needs, as identified through the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy and this Master Plan, as well as open space to support casual uses, to serve current and future residents. The community survey also found that nearly nine-in-ten (86%) of respondents supported investment in acquiring new parks and open spaces, which was identified as the highest priority among 36 types of facilities and amenities. As a result, continuing to target a parkland target of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents is recommended.

With a projected population of 190,000 residents by 2031, there will be a need for 380 hectares of parkland, which is 137.2 hectares more than what is currently provided. As of April 2024, there were 53.2 hectares of future land that the Town was expected to receive as parkland dedication or through other means, the majority of which are Brooklin and on the west side of Whitby. This total reflects reduced parkland sizes to collect cash-

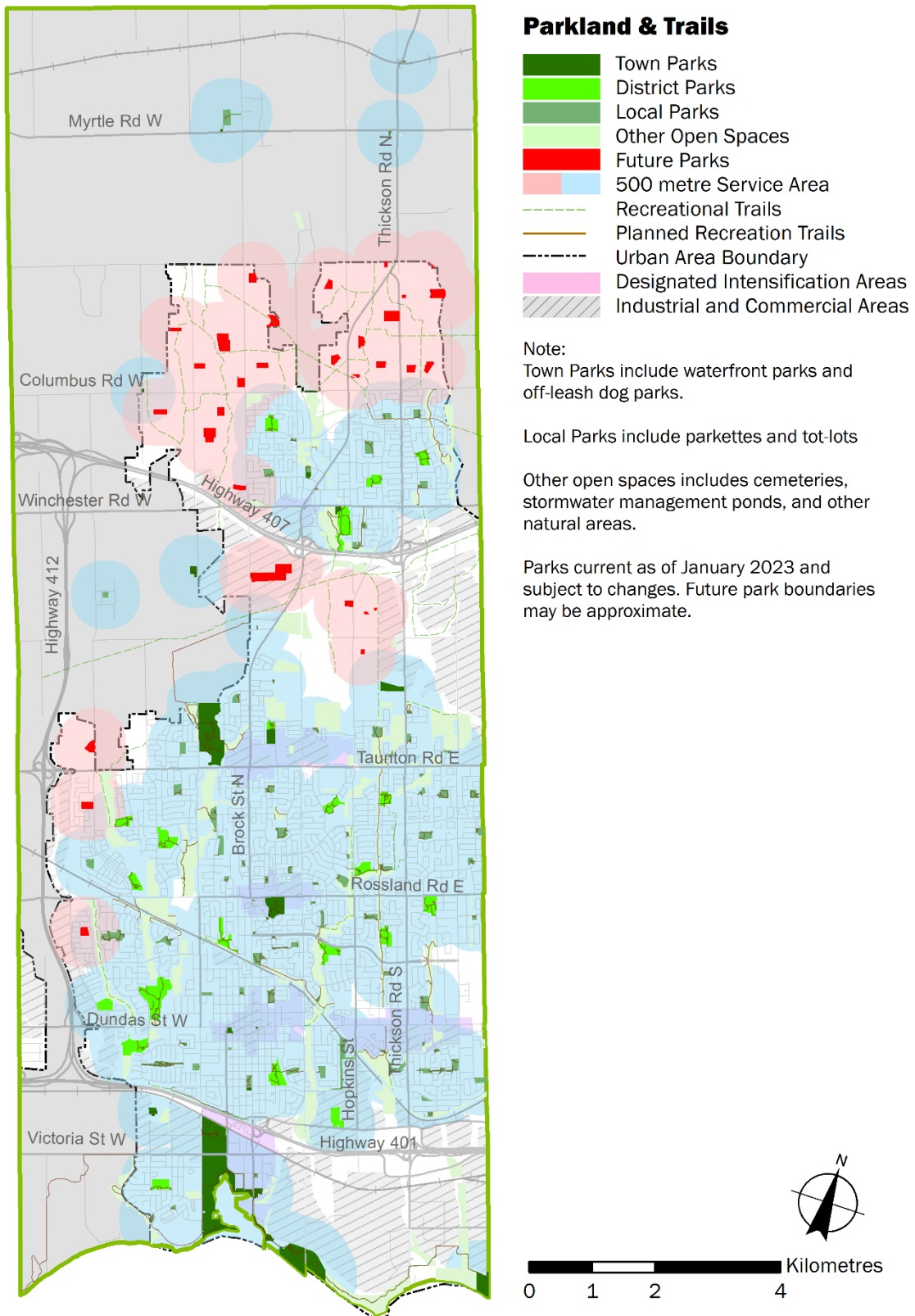
in-lieu of parkland to be used towards future land acquisition. This suggests that there will be a need for approximately 84 hectares of new parkland. This number will be refined through negotiations for parkland between the Town and landowners in the Brooklin Secondary Plan Area and confirmed through the execution of Master Park Agreements. Strategies for acquiring this quantum of land is discussed in the next sub-section.

The provision of parkland in Whitby is both a measure of parkland service level and physical access. A distributional analysis was undertaken to better understand geographic accessibility to parks and to identify where future parkland acquisition should be targeted. A service area of 500 metres was applied to each active park, which is generally equivalent to a 10-minute walk and is consistent with the Town's Official Plan for providing local parkland and encouraging the development of walkable communities. Application of this service area revealed that Whitby provides a strong level of parkland coverage across the Town. Future parkland is expected to address growth related needs in Brooklin and West Whitby. The most notable gap was observed along the easterly perimeter of Whitby, south of Rossland Road East, north Dundas Street East, and west of Thickson Road South. This area of the Town is already well established and thus new parkland in this area would be a challenge to provide, although future parkland may arise through infill development as opportunities become available. It is recognized that this area is served by Scott Trail, which connects to Prince of Wales Park, which provides residents with some level of parkland and outdoor amenities. Other minor gap areas exist in other areas of Whitby. As prospective lands become available, opportunities to provided parkland within these areas should be explored. This should be supplemented with exploring parkland acquisition opportunities within areas of intensification as it is expected that existing parks in these areas will experience pressure over time. It will be important to ensure that an adequate supply of parkland is available within these areas, or within walking distance, to respond to an increase in population over the long term.

The recommended target is greater than what can be achieved solely through the provisions of the Planning Act and will require other means of acquiring parkland, which is described in the next sub-section. It is also important to recognize that Whitby's parks are complemented by other open spaces that are not defined as parkland, but they contribute to the broader natural environment system and include Town and non-Town owned land such as conservation areas. These spaces generally refer to sites with no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as provincially significant wetlands, environmentally significant and sensitive natural areas, watercourses, and floodplains. Due to the lack of development potential of these lands, they can be used for passive recreation activities; however, some lands may not be suitable for public access as they are meant for preserving environmentally sensitive areas, pose user risks, are hazard lands, or serve servicing purposes. School properties also provide valuable contributions to community life, although it is recognized that access tends to be limited in the daytime during the school season.



Figure 10: Distribution of Parks and Recreational Trails



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

5.5.3 Parkland Acquisition

Through future development applications, the Town will have the potential to add to Whitby's parkland supply in greenfield and intensification areas, including the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA). Changes in Provincial legislation (e.g., Bill 23), Whitby's urban structure and increasing land valuation will mean that these opportunities will become fewer and are less likely to result in large blocks of parkland. To help achieve the desired parkland target, there will be a need to balance physical parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu of parkland. The following will need to be considered when evaluating parkland dedication/acquisition:

- Parkland is encouraged when development will result in a park block that: (i) is at least 0.4 hectares in size (minimum size for parkettes) or 0.25 hectares in intensification areas or the Major Transit Station Area; or (ii) expands an existing park site.
- The Town may continue to accept cash-in-lieu of parkland when it is determined to be more beneficial in instances where development proposals cannot physically accommodate a park block or if the surrounding area is already served by a park.
- The Town should strive to ensure that lands dedicated for park purposes are suitable for the development of recreation amenities. Accepting environmentally sensitive areas, hazard lands, steep slopes, contaminated lands, easements, encumbrances, stormwater management ponds, etc. should not be credited/counted as Parkland Dedication.
- Work with school boards and other service providers to maximize community access to quality outdoor parks and recreation amenities at non-municipal sites through permitted, long-term access agreements, awareness, etc.

As previously mentioned, it is also the Town's current practice to require a combination of land for park purposes and cash-in-lieu of parkland, in strategic areas. For example, the Town may negotiate smaller park blocks as part of the development process, but also accept cash-in-lieu parkland to build up a reserve fund to acquire land elsewhere for the purpose of establishing a sports field complex or complexes. There are benefits to this strategy as it allows negotiated parks to be developed to accommodate a range of outdoor recreation amenities, including those recommended through this Master Plan, as well as provide open spaces for casual use, while centralizing organized sports activities at a dedicated facility. The disadvantage is that the Town will be required to acquire and develop a sports field complex (or complexes) to address the needs identified through this Master Plan and no known sites have been identified to date. Given that supply of sports fields required to meet future needs and the inability to accommodate them within Whitby's existing and planned parks, the Town's current parks planning framework continues to be recommended. This should be done in strategic areas. For example, the Town may consider taking smaller park blocks and cash-in-lieu of parkland if the area is already served by some level of parkland (provided the new park block would address a gap area) or if the higher value of land would be financially advantageous to bolster the reserve fund.

The Planning Act can only deliver on a portion of the Town's future parkland needs. A growing focus will need to be placed on municipal acquisition and other tools to meet the Town's parkland provision goals. The Town will need to utilize alternative parkland acquisition approaches and financial tools beyond traditional parkland conveyance mechanisms, including (but not limited to):

- Municipal land purchase or lease (with a focus on priority areas and recreation needs, expansion of existing park sites, or land-banking), funded from the Park Reserve Fund, Community Benefit Charges, general tax funding, grants, donors, etc.;
- Land exchanges or swaps;
- Off-site conveyance of parkland;
- Establishment of a Parks Foundation (e.g., community, corporate, or municipal donations towards parkland acquisition);
- Reallocating surplus municipal lands (or purchasing surplus school sites) for park use;

- Leased lands (e.g. Hydro Electric Transmission Corridor for Sports Fields);
- Partnership/joint provision of lands with local partners under agreement; and/or
- Although not land-based expansion, enhancements to existing parks to increase recreation opportunities within proximity to intensification areas and the Major Transit Station Area may also be considered.

Recent Provincial legislation (e.g., Bill 23) has required the Town to rethink park planning framework. It is expected that the Town will only be able to negotiate smaller parcels of parks, which will need to be supplemented with land using the acquisition tools described above. This Master Plan identifies a number of outdoor parks and recreation facilities that are needed to support the Town's growing population. However, based on the existing park supply and future park development opportunities, it will be a challenge to accommodate all facility needs, particularly sports fields. As previously mentioned, the Town has historically had challenges meeting its sports field needs within its parks, while ensuring that there is sufficient open greenspace to accommodate casual uses, as well as supporting amenities. This challenge is expected to continue based on current and future park supplies.

It is recommended that the Town acquire land to create a major sports field complex (or complexes) to accommodate the sports facility needs identified in this Master Plan. This approach is highly desired by local sports organizations and with shrinking opportunities to meet these needs, this is a common strategy in many municipalities as it provides an opportunity to co-locate sports field activities at a common site that creates a destination for users, allows for concurrent programming, supports tournaments, and provides an enhanced experience for participants, spectators, and residents. From an operational perspective, creating a sports field complex (or complexes) will allow the Town to provide a high-quality facility and achieve efficiencies in construction, operations, and management. By directing sports activities to this site, it will alleviate pressure at existing parks and conflicts with other uses and users, providing the Town with greater flexibility in how these parks are planned and designed to accommodate other outdoor uses.

Key Location Objectives

To provide a basis for identifying site evaluation criteria, the following high-level objectives are suggested for the recommended sports field complex (or complexes) and a point of departure for further study.

1. The site should have sufficient space and servicing for the base design.

Based on a review of sports field land area requirements from other municipalities, a minimum land area of 22 hectares is recommended to accommodate the number of outdoor sports facilities identified in this Master Plan, which includes replacing the Gordon Street and Victoria Street soccer fields. This land estimate includes the sports field footprint, parking, and other ancillary features including, but not limited to, spectator seating and pathways. Additional site area will be required for appropriate setbacks and to accommodate other outdoor recreation facilities and amenities, such as decisions to relocate existing sports fields to this sports field complex. Site efficiencies may also be achieved by reducing setback requirements, although actual site needs should be confirmed through a facility fit exercise. Site needs may also be influenced by scope and form of development, potential partner services, long-term expansion opportunities, and other factors. Opportunities for servicing infrastructure will also need to be considered to accommodate amenities such as field lighting and support buildings. Ideally, establishing a single sports field complex is recommended to centralize organized sports activities, as well as municipal operations and management.

Table 6: Recommended Sports Field Complex Facility Needs

Recommended Sports Field Complex Facility Needs	Estimated Area Per Facility*	Facility Area
4 Lit Senior Rectangular Sports Fields	1.5 Hectares	6 Hectares
5 Lit Senior Ball Diamonds (minimum of one hardball)	2.0 Hectares	10 Hectares
1 Cricket Field (Lit)	4.0 Hectares	4 Hectares
	Sub-Total Facility Area	20 Hectares
	Miscellaneous Space Requirements (10%)	2 Hectares
	Total Facility Area	22 Hectares

*Estimated area per facility includes sports field footprint, parking, and other ancillary features including, but not limited to, spectator seating and pathways. Additional site area will be required to accommodate setbacks, and other outdoor recreation facilities and amenities. Actual site requirements are subject to facility fit exercise. Total sports field needs and site requirements may be impacted by the Town’s ability to accommodate user groups at existing locations through other means such as scheduling and sports field lighting.

2. The site should be accessible for all residents.

Proximity is one of many factors that can increase physical activity. Generally speaking, organized sports field users are willing to travel to about 15 minutes to access activities that they participate in the most, with longer travel times (25 minutes or more) tolerated for regular participation in competitive activities and high-quality sports facilities. While it is expected that the majority of users will drive to this site, equity, physical accessibility, and convenience are key considerations to ensuring that the sports field complex is well used. This includes ensuring that the location is accessible by public transit and active transportation choices (e.g., walking, cycling, etc.).

3. The site should have user group and community wide support.

The project’s objectives and recommendations may be used to guide site selection and design, but these are decisions that need to be made with the benefit of public and stakeholder engagement.

4. The site should support strategic investment opportunities and offer value-added benefits.

The Town is encouraged to consider sites that offer value-added benefits to the community. This may include (but not be limited to):

- Community pride and promoting the Town’s high quality of life;
- Prominent and visible locations that offer potential for facility expansion;
- Partnerships that maximize public access, affordability, and service;
- Alignment with other corporate objectives and civic projects (e.g., environmental sustainability and climate change resiliency goals); and
- Timeliness (e.g., sites that can be readily developed in-line with community needs).

Suggested Site Selection Criteria

Evaluating and selecting a preferred site, or sites, for the recommended sports field complex(s) is vitally important to its ultimate success. The location needs to be chosen with care, so as to embody as many key characteristics as possible. Maximizing accessibility to as many residents and users as possible should be one of the key objectives. There is also a need to ensure that the site can be properly serviced, is compatible with adjacent land uses, can be cost effectively developed, etc. The site can also have a dramatic impact on

construction costs. Servicing potential, stormwater management, traffic and road access, soil conditions, available infrastructure, and other variables can all result in significant budget implications.

The following criteria provide strong basis for evaluating potential sites. While it is preferable for the selected site to demonstrate all the criteria, it is possible that they may all not be able to be met.

a) Location & Access

- The site is within reasonable proximity to existing and future residential areas.
- The site can be accessed from an arterial or collector road, is in the vicinity of a public transit route and connected trail network and has barrier-free access.
- The site is in a visible location within the community or has the potential to be a community focal point.

b) Constraints and Development Potential

- The site area and shape are sufficient for the proposed use and provide a reasonable level of flexibility and design.
- The site can accommodate enough on-site and/or nearby parking for staff and site users.
- Suitable infrastructure exists on site or can be reasonably extended to the site.
- The site is not unduly impacted by geographic barriers (e.g., watercourse, railway, etc.), is not restricted by easement/obstructions, does not require decommissioning (e.g., brownfield), and is relatively flat.
- The site does not require the demolition of a heritage-designated building or elimination of any vital land use.

c) Availability, Compatibility, and Planning Status

- The site is owned by the Town or can be acquired for a reasonable price.
- The proposed use can be provided in a manner that is compatible with adjacent land uses.
- The site can comply with applicable planning policies.

d) Expansion and Amenity Opportunities

- The site possesses long-term expansion potential for other uses and outdoor amenities/features.
- The site could enhance and support other outdoor recreation facility needs and amenities (e.g., sport courts, community gardens, leash free dog parks, trails, outdoor fitness equipment, etc.), accommodate potential partners, encourage sport tourism, and generate increased usage due to proximity to other locations.
- The site offers the potential for economies of scale in construction and/or operation due to the co-location of other municipal and/or community services.

Recommendations – Parkland Supply, Needs and Acquisition

4. Acquire 84 hectares of additional active parkland by 2031 to achieve a parkland service level target of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents.
5. Develop a Land Acquisition Strategy to investigate how best to achieve the recommended parkland service target through parkland dedication and other best practices including land purchase/lease (e.g., acquiring surplus school sites), land exchanges, partnerships, land banking, reallocation of surplus lands, etc.
6. In strategic areas, continue to accept a combination of land for park purposes and cash-in-lieu of parkland.
7. Accept cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication when it is determined to be more beneficial in instances where development proposals cannot physically accommodate a park block or if the surrounding area is already served by a park.
8. Investigate opportunities to acquire a site (or sites) to establish a sports field complex(es) to accommodate future outdoor sports facility needs, with consideration given to the key location objectives and site selection criteria contained in this Master Plan. As a guide, the Town should target a site area of approximately 22 hectares. Determination of the programming requirements, ancillary facility and amenity needs, along with the development of a facility design concept should be undertaken to confirm land requirements. Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
9. Work with school boards and other service providers to maximize community access to quality outdoor parks and recreation amenities at non-municipal sites through permitted, long-term access agreements, awareness, etc.

5.6 Parkland Design and Amenities

Access to quality parks is an important aspect of complete communities and allows people to spend more time in their neighbourhoods. While there will continue to be demand for traditional forms of parks for recreation and sport, these public spaces are being increasingly recognized for their contributions toward healthy communities, community greening, urban renewal, placemaking, public art and expression, and more. Whitby's parks are needed to fill these community roles and the Town has responded to this through greater diversity in park designs and amenities.

Observations at Whitby's parks revealed that they boast strong park design attributes with a variety of amenities that increase the usability of parks for all residents. The majority of parks have paved pathways that connect users from the sidewalk or parking lot to onsite amenities. Many parks have shade coverings (including pavilions and gazebos), seating, parking, a permanent or portable washroom, and accessibility features that create welcoming and inviting park spaces for all residents. Some parks also offer unique features such as the story walk at Whitby Civic Park. The public consultation process revealed that there is a greater desire for more of these types of amenities.

The Town of Whitby's Official Plan indicates what features and amenities may be included in different types of parks. In addition, the Town has a Parkland Dedication and Open Space Policy that



sets out general construction and design standards for parks and amenities. The Policy also addresses the Town's trail system, but it does not provide specifications such as for trail width and surfacing. The Policy dates from 2002 and should be updated to address changing user needs, new construction techniques and material, and Town practices that have evolved over the last two decades. It is also recognized that the Town completed an Accessible Signage and Wayfinding Implementation Study in 2022 to create consistent and cohesive signage and wayfinding, ensure that the Town's branding is applied to establish visual unity, and conveys important information and the location of key destinations to residents and visitors.

In addition to updating the Parkland Development and Open Space Policy, it is recommended that the Town develop a Development Manual to guide the design of Whitby's parks (and trails). This will help to ensure that the quality of Whitby's parks and trails, as well as their amenities and features, are consistent across the Town, meet the needs of users and are equivalent to, or exceed the offerings by peer municipalities. The creation of a Parks and Trails Development Manual is a significant undertaking but as a starting point, this Master Plan advances some general principles and park design standards that should be considered in preparing this document, which is contained in Appendix B. At a high level, the following should be considered in the preparation of a Development Manual (the creation of specific policies may also be required):

- Establish General Principles for design and development of parks and trails in Whitby as a foundation for the Parks and Trails Development Manual.
- Review current waste receptacles in use, and methods of collection with a view to improving efficiency and providing more opportunities for recycling in parks. Options may include mechanical emptying of receptacles, enclosed receptacles to keep out moisture, and two-stream collection for garbage and recyclables. Provisions for recycling should keep in mind recent provincial requirements for producers to manage recycling and waste diversion in public spaces.
- Determine a standard as to where skate parks should be located, considering appropriate catchment areas and ease of travel to locations for younger users.
- Develop a standard (and guiding policy) as to where lighting should be installed in parks and along trails, giving consideration to CPTED principles.
- Develop standards for placement and design for shade structures and drinking fountains/filling stations in parks and adjacent to trails.
- Include a review of current specifications for park fencing.
- Incorporate culture and traditions of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) into the design of appropriate parks and public spaces to promote Reconciliation and showcase the positive contributions of these communities to Whitby. Initiatives to be considered include (but are not limited to) designing selected parks to reflect planning principles used in other cultural communities, naming parks after BIPOC individuals, and integrating public art and/or park furniture created by BIPOC artists and designers.
- Ensure that parkland designs reflect ties to the local natural and built heritage of Whitby. Doing so can involve a variety of means ranging from designating cultural landscapes or buildings in parks under the Ontario Heritage Act, use of interpretive signage, and conserving and integrating historical features into parkland design.
- Guided by the Town's Accessible Signage and Wayfinding Study, incorporate direction to ensure that clear graphic standards and guidelines are used for the placement of signage.
- Establish a sports field classification system to facilitate design standards for fields and ensure that field specification and maintenance levels are appropriate for users and level of play.
- Develop a policy as to where and in what type of park future splash pads will be located ensuring designs incorporates water use efficiency.
- Review current policy, potentially supported by a study, that addresses criteria for locating and constructing permanent washrooms or installing portable toilets to serve parks and trails in Whitby.

- Work cooperatively with all groups involved to develop a coordinated plan to address priorities and standards for the design and maintenance of horticulture and plantings on Town managed or owned lands.

Recommendations – Parkland Design and Amenities

10. Update and revise the Parkland Development and Open Space Policy and develop a Parks and Trails Development Manual to formalize guiding principles and design standards for parkland to ensure that they are inclusive of all residents. The Manual should contain design parameters on a range of areas including, but not limited to, park furniture, trails, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, splash pads, skate parks, signage and wayfinding, lighting, washrooms, shade, drinking fountains, natural and cultural heritage, horticulture, fencing, public art, recognizing of Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation, and other relevant areas. Supporting policies, criteria, placement, financial implications, and other considerations should be developed and/or identified as part of this process.

5.7 Strategic Parkland Renewal and Re-envisioning

The renewal of existing parks and park infrastructure will become a greater concern over time and the allocation of resources needs to be examined with this lens. For example, existing parks in established areas of Whitby are critical for building a sense of community and social belonging, although they may not be achieving their full potential because they may no longer contain the amenities that people are seeking as surrounding households evolve and residential intensification occurs. Fortunately, some of these parks are well suited to accommodate or be renewed to respond to the growing demand for unstructured activities and casual uses, subject to available budget resources.

To respond to future residential intensification, the Town must be creative with existing spaces and seek new ways of doing things to bring new life to the parkland system. There may be opportunities to make strategic investments to key parks serving these areas to intensify the use of the park by adding new features, renewing aging recreation facilities, or repurposing underutilized spaces. For example, the Town's Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan, identifies that repurposing of the Gordon Street and Victoria Street soccer fields and development of other key outdoor spaces along the waterfront to provide enhanced public spaces within the MTSA, which continues to be encouraged.

The 2015 Sports Facility Strategy identified potential opportunities to renew Brooklin Memorial Park as part of a major project to construct a multi-use facility on site. While the indoor facility is now being constructed at another location (Whitby Sports Complex), continuing to create a new vision for this park continues to be supported, which should include, but not be limited to, renewal of the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena for indoor programming and rentals, trails, playground, splash pad, outdoor fitness equipment, basketball and tennis courts, and other enhancements to support special events, an indoor farmer's market and large gatherings. Decisions to maintain, expand or relocate the existing sports fields should be based on the development of the Town's new parkland classification system as well as consideration of how to accommodate the requirements of the Brooklin Spring Fair.

Renewal at other parks could also be explored such as at Whitby Civic Park, Brooklin Memorial Park, Vanier Park, Hobbs Park, Fallingbrook Park, Ash Creek Park, Kinsmen Park, Prince of Wales Park and Willowbrook Park. These parks are located close to designated intensification areas, including the MTSA and recognizing that the Town will have limited opportunities to provide traditional parkland and open spaces for residents within these areas, it can be expected that the above noted parks may face increased use. As these areas intensify, the Town will need to rethink how these parks are being used and what other outdoor recreation amenities are needed in these areas to respond to community needs including, but not limited to, outdoor fitness equipment, community gardens, off-leash dog parks, and other amenities such as seating and shade structures. It is also recognized that some of these parks also have sports fields that are consuming a large amount of land and there may be opportunities to relocate some of these facilities to reclaim parkland for other in-demand uses or to create passive gathering areas. Other opportunities may include:

- Enhancing or renewing existing parks, public spaces, and streetscapes;
- Developing parks with urban qualities (e.g., civic parks, urban squares, etc.) that are built to higher design standards and that integrate multi-functional spaces and public art;
- Improving pedestrian connectivity and access to nearby parks and facilities;
- Promoting innovation and excellence in park design; and
- Making use of less conventional spaces (e.g., streets, cemeteries, greyfield sites, etc.), including opportunities through partnerships.

Recommendations – Strategic Parkland Renewal and Re-envisioning

11. Develop a parkland renewal and re-envisioning plan to identify strategic locations that would benefit from park enhancements to promote usage by people of all ages and abilities. A focus should be placed on aging parks and parks located close to intensification areas and the MTSA (e.g., Gordon Street and Victoria Street soccer fields, Whitby Civic Park, Brooklin Memorial Park, Vanier Park, Hobbs Park, Fallingbrook Park, Ash Creek Park, Kinsmen Park, Prince of Wales Park, and Willowbrook Park, etc.). Consideration should be given to the park design guidance contained in this Master Plan and community consultation.

5.8 Climate Change Resiliency and Environmental Sustainability

Whitby’s Community Strategic Plan recognizes the importance of building resiliency to climate change, and the park system plays a key role in this regard. As previously identified in this Master Plan, the Town has declared climate change an emergency and has prepared design guidelines and action plans to address this growing issue, including a commitment to reduce the Town’s greenhouse gas emissions by 85% by 2050. The new Community Strategic Plan also identifies key actions, including increasing active transportation infrastructure and enhancing parks and tree canopy. Climate risk, adaptation, resilience, and carbon emission reduction strategies may be addressed through parks and trail design, and through maintenance and operations practices.

The Town incorporates design features and amenities within its parks that contribute to being more resilient to climate change and environmentally sustainable. This includes the outdoor education space at Carnwith Park and the bioswales, solar panels and pollinator gardens at Jeffery Park. Other examples of park design that helps the Town address its climate change objectives include the integration of:

- Drinking fountains and filling stations;
- Splash pads;
- Shade structures and strategically located shade trees (as well as minimum standards for shade areas);
- Green infrastructure and design - rain gardens, bioswales, pollinator gardens, and other Low Impact Development (LID) features;
- Naturalization of groomed park areas;
- Low maintenance landscape design;



- Tree planting and selection of native tree and shrub species which will tolerate warmer temperatures and periodic drought conditions;
- Use of permeable pavers (or other permeable hard surfaces) where practical for parking lots and other hard surfaces; and
- Lighting – sports fields and park/trail areas – conversions to LED lighting.

As opportunities become available, incorporating these amenities within Whitby's parks should continue. While initially, focus will likely be on the design of new parks and trails, there will also be a need to retrofit these amenities into existing parks to ensure that they are available and are provided at a high standard to ensure that they are effective in mitigating the effects of climate change and support environmental sustainability.

There are also opportunities to further the Town's environmental goals through staff maintenance and operations. This includes:

- Invasive species control;
- Assessment of irrigation protocols and irrigation system adjustment or retrofitting to ensure that water is being used efficiently and being applied only where and when needed;
- Fleet and equipment specifications and operations (reduced idling of vehicles, "right-sizing" of fleet, alternative fuels, conversion from 2 stroke to 4 stroke or electric small engines where practical);
- Fleet Strategic Master Plan – move to electric or other low emission alternative fleet and equipment units;
- Snow and Ice Control – salt use reduction or elimination where possible;
- Reduced energy and water consumption;
- Naturalization, Mulching, Composting; and
- Waste management – availability of recycling in parks and trails.

Recommendations – Climate Change Resiliency and Environmental Sustainability

12. Ensure that standards established for the design of parks, trails and open spaces, and the Parks and Trails Development Manual support and include climate change mitigation and adaptation, measures such as standards for shade structures (and minimum standards for shade areas), and use of permeable paving for hard surface areas.
13. Examine current operations and maintenance practices for parks, trails, and forestry to identify and implement changes to facilitate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and improved climate change mitigation and adaptation.

5.9 Recreational Trails

Whitby provides approximately 70 kilometres of recreational trails across the Town. This includes 18 kilometres of multi-use trails such as the Hydro Corridor Trail, Pipeline Trail, and Scott Trail, 15 kilometres of the Waterfront Trail, and 39 kilometres of park pathways. These trails feature paved and unpaved surfaces for walking, cycling and other non-vehicular modes of transportation. These trails are complemented by the Town's extensive sidewalk system that spans nearly 580 kilometres, as well as 162 kilometres of on-road cycling lanes. In addition, the public has access to trails managed by other organizations such as the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority.

Whitby's 2021 Active Transportation Plan is a long-range plan that promotes active movement and furthers the Town's goal of becoming a walkable and complete neighbourhood. The vision for the Active Transportation Plan is to create a network that is a "convenient, comfortable and safe alternative for people to get to and from work, school and other frequent destinations for people of all ages and all abilities". The Active Transportation Plan recommended over 300 kilometres of additional routes to be developed over a 10-year period, including 80 kilometres of multi-use pathways, 61 kilometres of off-road trails, and 90 kilometres of sidewalk. The Town's Tourism Strategy also identifies enhancements to Whitby's walking and cycling trails, as well as

supporting infrastructure and amenities, to promote use among visitors. Whitby's Accessible Wayfinding and Signage Study, also brings further awareness of the Town's trails system within the community.

Over the Master Plan period, Whitby's 10-year capital forecast allocates approximately \$18M towards adding nearly 70 kilometres of new recreational trails. Future trail projects are aimed at strengthening connections within the Brooklin community and along the waterfront area. Existing and planned recreational trails in Whitby are illustrated in Figure 10.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, municipalities across Ontario, including Whitby, experienced a strong increase in trail usage, highlighting the importance of providing a connected trail network. The community survey found that 74% of responding households participate in walking and hiking for leisure, which was the second most popular recreation activity. Four-out-of-five community survey respondents supported additional investment in paved multi-use trails, while 77% of respondents supported additional investment in unpaved nature trails. Several requests were received through the public consultation process for enhancing Whitby's trail system. The public expressed the desire for enhanced trail connections throughout the Town, with supporting amenities such as seating. Winter trail maintenance was also supported. It was mentioned that an emphasis should be placed on ensuring that there are east-west and north-south connections, including linking residents to Whitby's waterfront area.

Residents' strong support for recreational trends lends support to the Town's past and planned investments in the trails network. A strong trails system provides countless social and environmental benefits through promotion of physical activity, connecting people to nature, enabling unstructured and affordable recreation opportunities, and contributing to the development of a sustainable transportation system. Research has also found that trails heighten community vibrancy by encouraging compact development and more livable communities where people are more likely to socialize and interact with each other. Through these benefits, Whitby's recreational trails contribute to an improved quality of life for its residents.

The key to the continued development of an effective and robust trail network will be to ensure that Whitby's trail system is safe, accessible, and continues to conveniently link users with between communities and to key destinations such as the waterfront, community centres, parks (and within parks), etc. With a diverse range of trail routes already in place, Whitby and its partners are in a position to build upon the existing network and to strengthen connections between trails through a combination of developing on and off-road active transportation infrastructure as identified through the Town's Active Transportation Plan.

To guide implementation and development of the trails network, a trails hierarchy has been developed that recognizes that there are different types of trails, trail users and intended functions (Table 7). Previous standards and guidelines for trails were established in the Town's 2010 Cycling and Leisure Trails Plan. The hierarchy in Table 7 builds on the 2010 study. The classification system designates permitted uses and identifies surface types, widths, amenities, and other design considerations to guide implementation of the trail network and will assist in developing trail design and maintenance standards based on the intended uses of various trails.

The trail design standards discussed in this section are limited to those away from road rights-of-way (e.g., trails in parks or other open spaces that connect parks). Designs for trails within the road right of way are assumed to be the responsibility of Road Operations as part of their road design and construction program. Having said that, designs for on-road and off-road trails should be consistent. In addition, the design standards discussed here include those for park pathways and walkways which are located within a park, but do not necessarily connect to a larger trail network.

Off-road trails may have asphalt (or other types of hard surface paving), granular (limestone screenings) or wood chip or other natural surfaces. The proposed level and type of use will determine the width and cross section of these trails. Park pathways and walkways may have asphalt, concrete, or paver surfaces, or use limestone screenings. Cross section and width will vary by use and the overall park design context. In addition, specifications should be developed for gates and other barriers to controls access and traffic.

Parks Operations has established formal service level standards for parks and forestry, maintenance standards. For off-road trails, winter trail maintenance standards are in place and summer maintenance standards are currently being developed. Trail maintenance standards should address (at a minimum):

- Regular inspection;
- Minor repairs (heaving, potholes, other hazards); and
- Winter maintenance - overall policy (which trails will be kept free of ice and snow) and standards for service during the winter months.

Table 7: Recommended Off-Road Trail Hierarchy

Trail Hierarchy	Description	Permitted Uses	Design Characteristics
Primary Multi-Use Trail	Multi-use off-road trails which connect communities or major destinations. They support recreational use and active transportation year-round	Walking, cycling, running, roller blade, XC skiing, snow shoeing, and other forms of non-motorized transportation	Surface: Asphalt or other hard surface Width: 2.5 metres minimum depending on anticipated traffic levels May have markings or signs to control traffic.
Secondary Trail	Off-road pathways providing linkages within communities or neighbourhoods and serving as feeders for primary trails and internal park pathways	Walking, running, cycling	Surface: Asphalt or other hard surface depending on traffic level and type Width: 2.5 metres minimum depending on anticipated traffic
Nature Trail	Trails located in natural and wooded areas. Design should minimize impact on the surrounding area.	Walking, running, mountain biking may be permitted where conflicts with other trail users and damage to the trail surface can be sufficiently mitigated.	Surface: dirt, gravel mulch, boardwalk. Width: 1.0 - 2.5 metres depending on primary use, volume of users, typography, site conditions, environmental sensitivity.
Park Pathway / Walkway	Recreational trails providing circulation routes within Town owned or managed parks. May run through a park, in a loop or link on-site amenities or features	Walking, running and cycling	Surface: asphalt, concrete, pavers, limestone screening or other hard surface Width: 1.8 metres minimum

Recommendations – Recreational Trails

14. Implement the Town’s Active Transportation Plan to improve connectivity throughout Whitby within an emphasis on linking users with between communities and to key destinations, including the waterfront, community centres, parks (and within parks).
15. Classify existing and planned trails based on the recommended trail hierarchy to guide design, construction and permitted uses. The recommended trail hierarchy should be used as the basis for creating the Parks and Trails Development Manual.
16. Create formalized levels of service standards for seasonal and year-round trail maintenance.

5.10 Whitby Waterfront, Marina, and Harbour

The Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan (“Waterfront Master Plan”) establishes a 20-year vision to enhance Whitby’s waterfront area, including heritage, recreation, cultural and natural features. “Bring People to the Waterfront” was the mission statement and key guiding principles to achieve this vision included being environmentally responsible, fostering partnerships, accessibility, supporting educational experiences and active living, multi-modal connections and waterfront trail development, protecting and preserving the environment, and supporting recreation and tourism.

The Waterfront Master Plan divides Whitby’s waterfront into six precincts – Cranberry and Lynde Marshes, Lynde Shores, Port Whitby Community, Pringle Creek, (Former) Dupont and Gerdau Shoreline, and Corbett Creek Marsh. Each of these unique areas boasts unique natural features that have their own distinct vision, which includes initiatives to protect and preserve sensitive areas, develop recreation amenities that are compatible with the waterfront, expand trails, strengthen connections to key destinations and more.

The Port Whitby Community area is recognized as the “heart of the waterfront”, which was envisioned as a destination for active and passive recreation (Figure 11). This vision was reconfirmed through a Waterfront Master Plan Update undertaken in 2020 (which included a public survey) to recognize the growing popularity of Whitby’s waterfront and to gain a better understanding of emerging priorities and needs that were not considered when the Waterfront Master Plan was prepared in 2016. The Waterfront Master Plan Update (staff report CMS 04-20) highlighted notable waterfront initiatives such as the redevelopment of the Heydenshore splash pad with new play features and accessible components (completed), repair and restoration of the Heritage Pump House (completed), and redevelopment of the waterfront trail between Heydenshore Park and Intrepid Park, including accessibility enhancements, widening, and the replacement of the existing bridge and boardwalk (ongoing). Future Waterfront Projects include the following (dates are subject to change):

- Re-envision the Victoria Street soccer fields to create an urban waterfront park (**Victoria Waterfront Park**). Proposed features include an accessible playground, splash pad, outdoor skating rink, open lawn and picnic areas, trails, pathways, and a special event area. Working with the Whitby Iroquois Soccer Club and others to relocate the existing soccer fields will be required. Planned for 2028.
- Development of **Intrepid Park** with enhanced pathways. Planned for 2029.
- Redevelopment of the **Waterfront Trail** between Gordon Street to South Blair Street; including accessibility enhancements and widening. Planned for 2029.
- Enhancements to **Iroquois Beach**, including developing trails, picnic areas, shade, and seating. Planned for 2027.
- Expansion to the **Whitby Water Supply Plant**. Initiated in 2023 and planned to be completed by 2030.
- Development of **Dupont Land** with waterfront parking, pathways, open space, sand volleyball courts, shade structures and picnic areas. Planned for 2026.
- Development of **Shirley Scott Park** with pathways, shade, seating, landscaping and a designated fishing area. Timing not defined.
- Improvements/Urbanization of **Water Street** to become more pedestrian friendly and facilitate safety movement for automobiles and active transportation users. Timing not defined.
- Redevelopment of the **Heydenshore Pavilion** to enhance this space for programming, rentals, and special events. Timing not defined.
- **Residential intensification** on the east and west side of Brock Street South, south of the Pringle Creek Bridge. This high-density residential area known as “Dockside Whitby” is planned to accommodate 1,500 residential units, in addition to commercial and retail space, and outdoor space including shoreline to be dedicated to the Town for the development of the Waterfront Trail. Timing not defined.

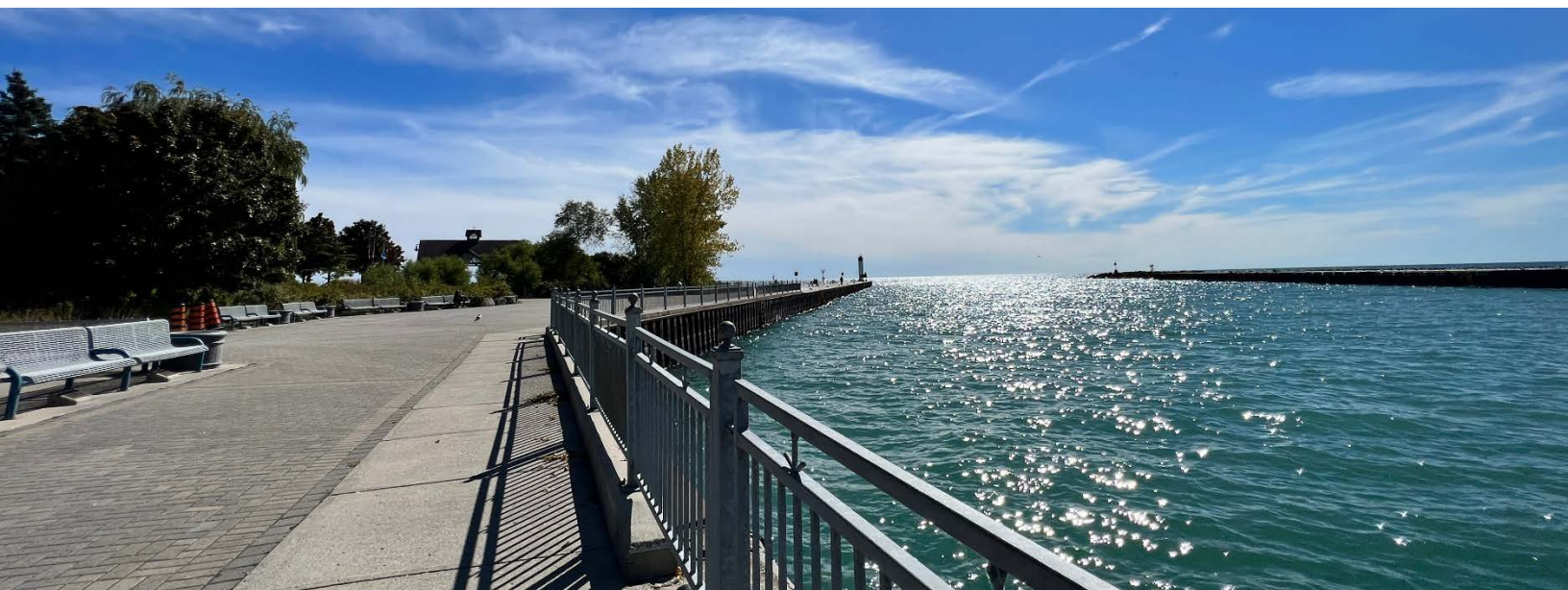
Enhancements to the **Port Whitby Marina** and related facilities have also been identified through the Waterfront Master Plan. This includes new commercial uses, a marina services building, landscaping, open

lawn area, and streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian realm (Figure 13). The Town has consistently experienced strong dockage and indoor space utilization with full capacity for boat storage (there is a waitlist). A new Marina Master Plan will be prepared that will explore marina improvements as well as the potential to enhance the use of surrounding lands. As part of this process, it will be important to examine opportunities to increase the number of boat slips, future development strategies, new partnership opportunities and revenue streams, potential land acquisition, and other areas to strengthen the marina and harbourfront for boaters and general public use.

Input received through the consultation process reinforced the importance of the Town's waterfront area. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of community survey respondents identified that they have enjoyed Whitby's waterfront, which was the third most popular activity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town experienced a strong increase in the number of visitors to Whitby's waterfront. This trend was observed in municipalities across Ontario as Provincially mandated restrictions on the use of public indoor facilities and gatherings drove people outdoors. This created a renewed interest in connecting with nature and the outdoors and it is expected to continue in future.

There was a consensus that the waterfront is one of the Town's greatest assets and it should be protected and preserved, although there is untapped potential to enhance public use in appropriate areas. A variety of suggestions were received, which were primarily centred around passive recreation opportunities. This included developing the trail system (including ensuring that residents in Whitby are connected to the waterfront), creating an outdoor event space, and providing amenities including, but not limited to, shade, seating, barbeques, storage lockers, waste receptacles, pathway lighting, signage, and more. Small-scale active recreation amenities were suggested such as playgrounds and outdoor skating. Access to indoor public space was also suggested and it was felt that the Heydenshore Pavilion could play a role in this regard. To accommodate some of these ideas, repurposing and relocating the Gordon Street and Victoria Street soccer fields was suggested.

To draw people to the waterfront and stimulate economic development, a greater commercial presence in the area was suggested such as restaurants, retail, hotel, and convention centre, which would be amenities that could be used by residents and visitors from Durham Region and beyond. Supporting and encouraging residential intensification was also suggested. Additionally, the need to address parking issues along the waterfront was identified. The community survey found that 84% of respondents supported additional investment in the Whitby waterfront, ranking fourth out of 36 facility types.



In 2019, the Town undertook a waterfront-specific survey to solicit community feedback about the use and future vision of the waterfront. The input received through this process echoed what was heard from the Master Plan consultation activities. The Town's survey findings revealed that there is a strong desire for more passive recreation opportunities along the waterfront, including the suggestions mentioned above, and that a priority should be placed on maximizing and protecting public access to the waterfront.

The Town is moving in the right direction to develop the waterfront. There are many examples in other waterfront communities that have endorsed similar visions that support public access to the water and to invest in, promote, and encourage passive leisure opportunities such as trails, gathering areas, event space, public art, open greenspaces, and more. Some of these waterfront communities also support shifting major outdoor sports facilities away from the waterfront to accommodate passive recreation uses, and encourage commercial and retail opportunities in appropriate areas, including working with partners.

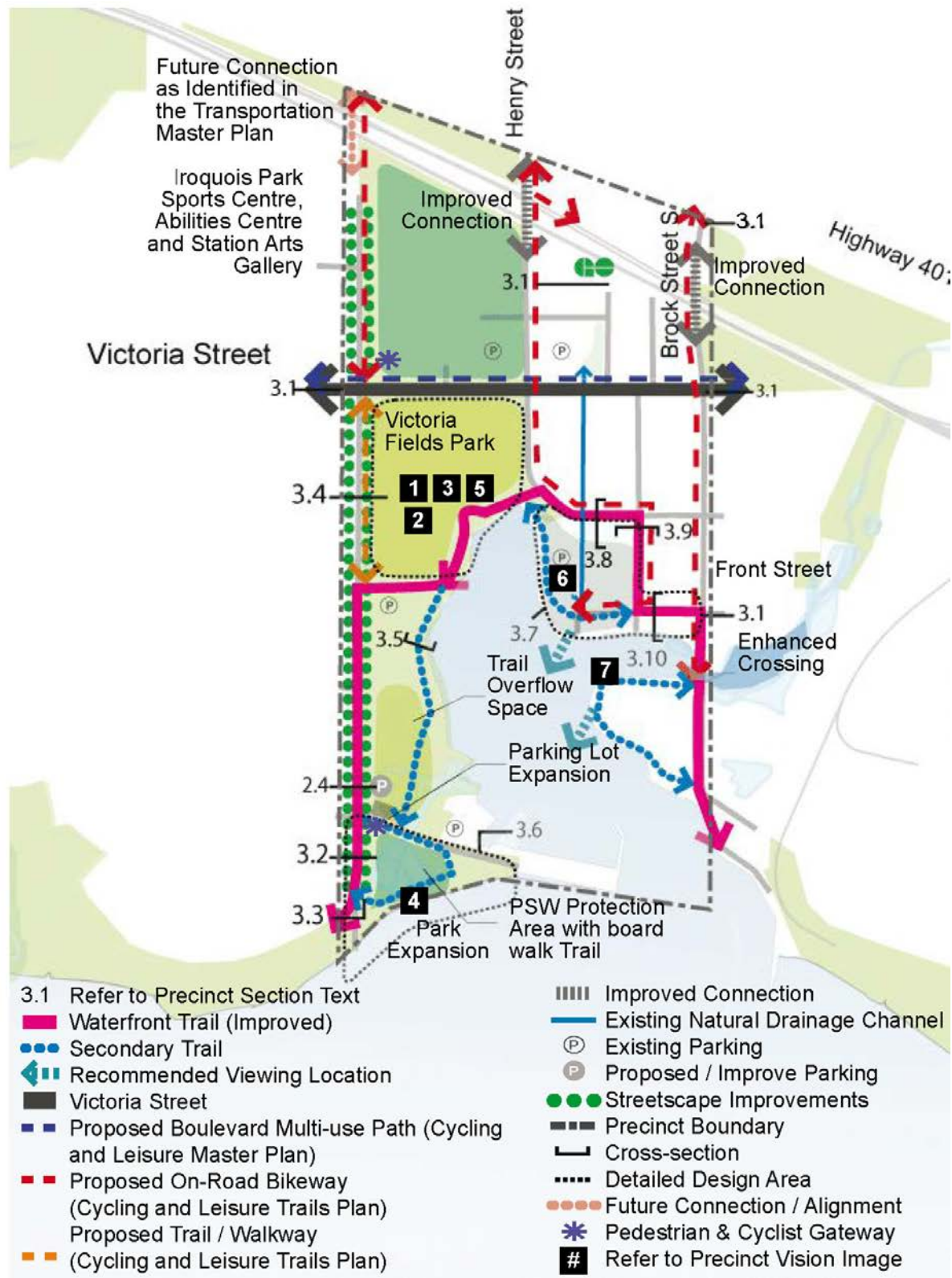
There is a clear public desire for continued progress in developing Whitby's waterfront and it should be a high priority for the Town. Given that there are already several planned projects that are consistent with the findings of this Master Plan, it is expected that the waterfront will experience significant changes over the next 10 years and beyond that will further activate one of the Town's most valued assets that will attract greater numbers of residents and visitors to the waterfront. It is recommended that the Town continue to implement the Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan, with consideration given to the public suggestions identified above, together with relevant recommendations identified in this Master Plan that have regard for the waterfront, including supporting trail development (and connecting residents to the waterfront), enhancement of the Heydenshore Pavilion, relocating sports fields, playground and splash pad development, high quality design, and more.

With a continued emphasis on directing investment and appropriate recreational activity towards Whitby's waterfront, the Town can expect to experience ongoing pressure for parking, which was a concern heard through the consultation process. This is common in many waterfront communities that draw residents and visitors seeking to enjoy the natural amenity, facilities, and services that are offered. Whitby's Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan speaks to increasing parking capacity in strategic areas along the waterfront, although there may be additional strategies that the Town should explore to help manage parking constraints. For example, other municipalities have offered free parking permits for local residents (paid parking rates apply for non-residents) and constructed public parking garages. These and other strategies should be explored to determine potential solutions to address ongoing parking concerns. Ensuring that there are alternative transportation options to access the waterfront will also be important such as strengthening trail connections and working with Durham Region Transit to enhance services during peak periods.

Recommendations – Whitby Waterfront, Marina and Harbour

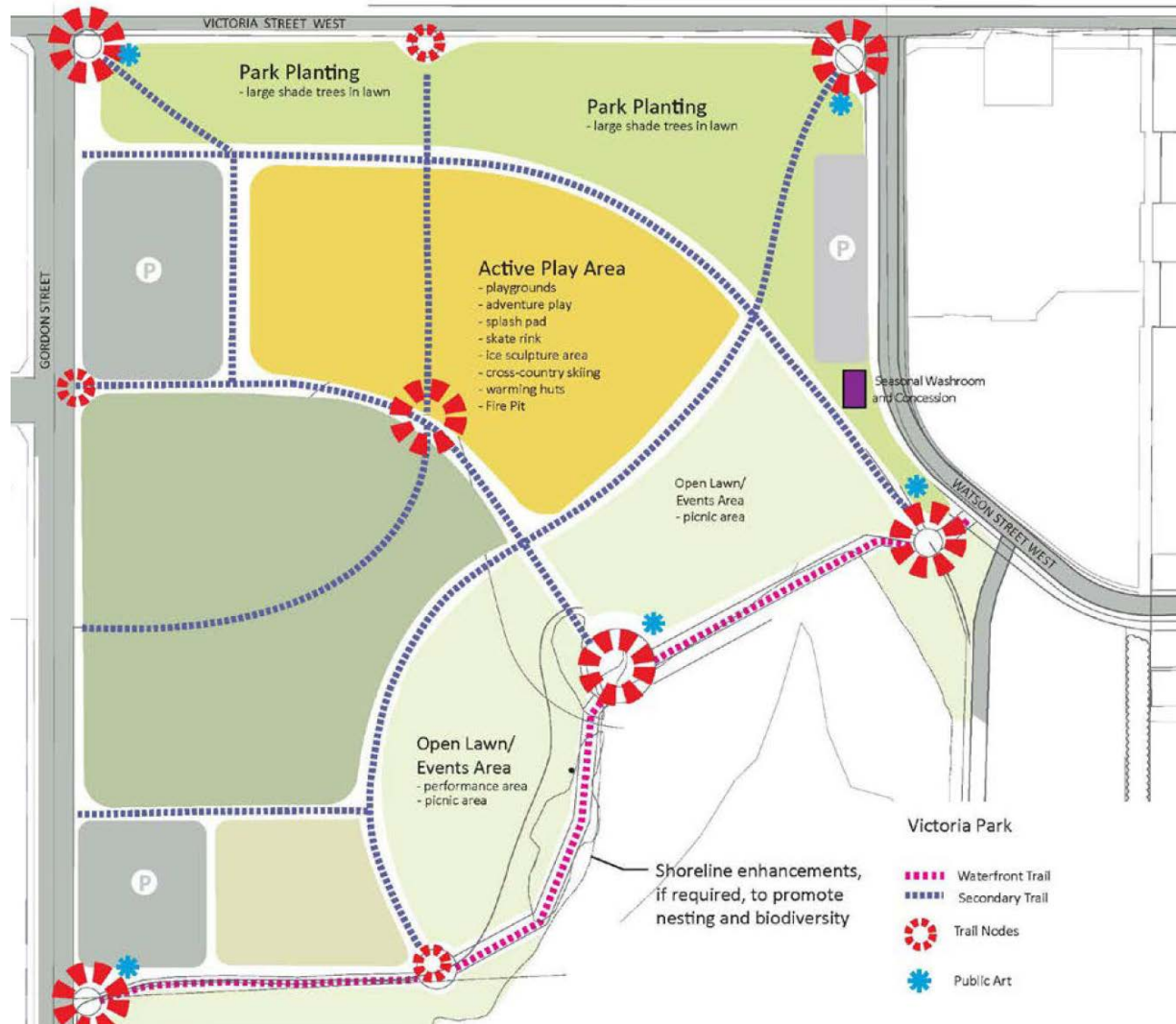
17. Continue to implement the Town's Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan to maximize public access and protect and preserve the natural environment. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing appropriate areas along the waterfront areas for recreation uses, including festivals and events, and working with others to support strategic development within proximity to the waterfront to facilitate economic development and attract local and regional visitors.
18. Undertake a Marina Master Plan to guide future enhancements to Port Whitby Marina that explores future development opportunities (including around the harbour), increasing the number of boat slips, new partnership opportunities, revenue streams, and other strategies to strengthen the marina and harbourfront for boaters and general public use.
19. Investigate strategies to address ongoing parking concerns along the waterfront, with consideration given to best practices in other municipalities including, but not limited to, free resident parking passes (paid parking rates apply to non-residents), public parking garages (including as part of condominium developments), and other potential solutions. This should be complemented with encouraging alternative methods of accessing the waterfront including strengthening trail connections and working with Durham Region Transit to enhance services during peak periods.

Figure 11: Port Whitby Community, Excerpt from the Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan



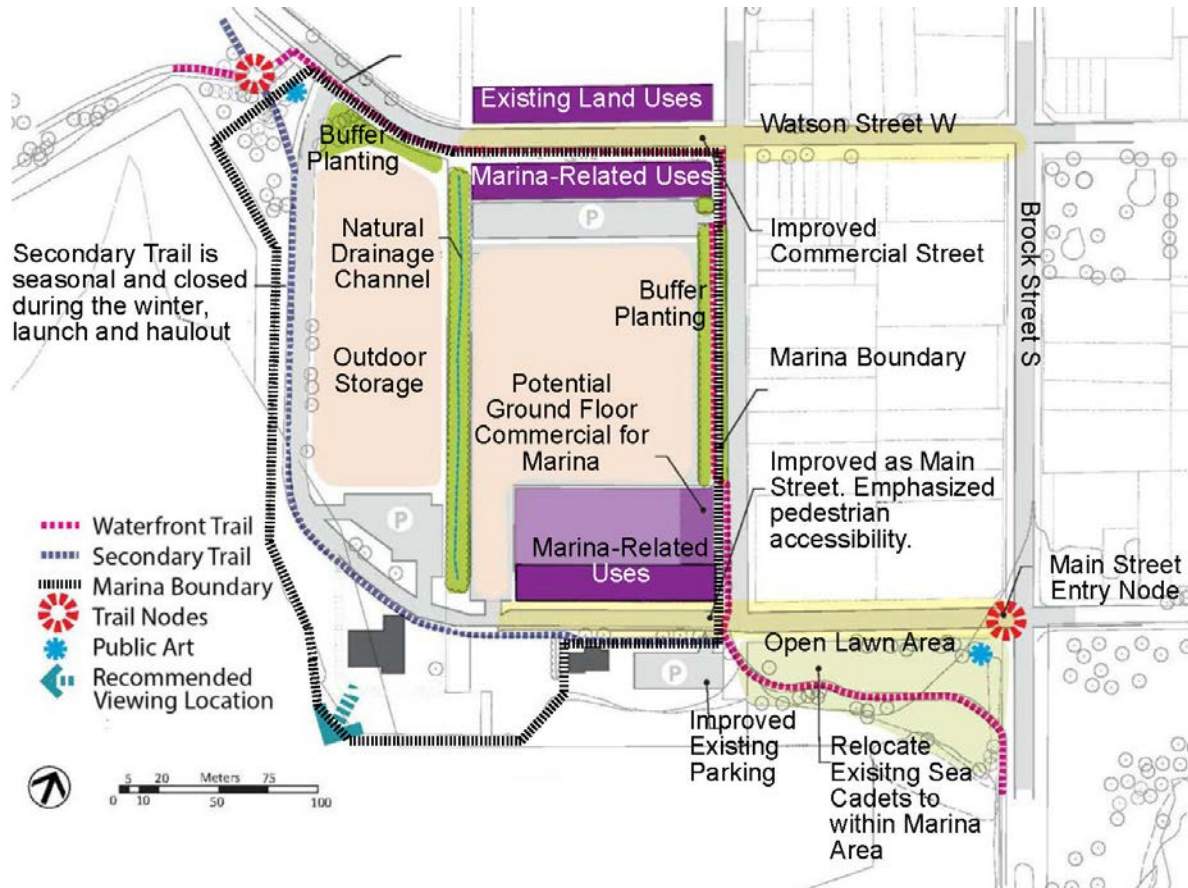
Source: Port Whitby Community, Excerpt from the Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan, 2016

Figure 12: Proposed Victoria Waterfront Park, Excerpt from the Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan



Source: Port Whitby Community, Excerpt from the Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan, 2016

Figure 13: Proposed Whitby Marina Enhancements, Excerpt from the Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan



Source: Port Whitby Community, Excerpt from the Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan, 2016

6.0 Recreation Facilities

6.1 Key Recreation Documents

6.1.1 Framework for Recreation in Canada

Guided by significant public consultation, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association – in collaboration with the senior levels of government and the Provincial Recreation and Parks Associations – developed a Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC). The FRC provides a renewed definition for recreation, highlights the benefits of recreation and parks (including the economic impacts) and identifies five evidence-based goals for communities to strive towards, including:

- Goal #1: Active Living
- Goal #2: Inclusion & Access
- Goal #3: Connecting People & Nature
- Goal #4: Supportive Environments
- Goal #5: Recreation Capacity

The Parks & Recreation Master Plan will be prepared with FRC goals in mind.

6.1.2 Sports Facility Strategy

Whitby's 2015 Sports Facility Strategy provided the Town with a guide to plan and manage the development of sports facilities towards 2031. The need for the Strategy was driven by population growth and related factors that influence sports participation and usage and a roadmap was prepared to address traditional and emerging preferences for physical activity. Key indoor and outdoor facility recommendations included:

- A new multi-use recreation facility that would include a twin pad arena, indoor aquatic centre, active living studio, multi-purpose space and an indoor artificial turf field.
- 11.5 unlit soccer field equivalents
- 13 unlit ball diamond equivalents
- 1 multi-use field
- 11 tennis courts
- 4 pickleball courts
- 10 multi-use courts for basketball and ball hockey
- 2 skateboard parks

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Renewed Definition of Recreation.
Framework for Recreation in Canada.

6.2 Summary of Recreation Facilities

Table 8 summarizes the Town's inventory of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in Whitby. Figure 14 illustrates the distribution of indoor recreation facilities, while the distribution of outdoor recreation facilities can be found in their respective sub-sections. At the time of preparing this Master Plan, the Town has begun the construction of the new Whitby Sports Complex and park, which was rationalized in the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy to address the needs of the growing community. The Whitby Sports Complex and park will include the following recreation components:

- A twin-pad arena;
- An indoor aquatic centre with 10 lanes, separate leisure pool and second floor viewing area, which will be the largest indoor pool in Durham Region;
- A double gymnasium with a three lane indoor walking track;
- Multi-purpose program spaces;
- A full-size, outdoor lit artificial turf sports field;
- A skateboard park and pump track
- Three lit multi-purpose courts (e.g., basketball and ball hockey);
- Three lit tennis courts;
- 14 lit pickleball courts;
- A playground;
- Open greenspace;
- Plaza space capable of hosting community events; and
- Ancillary outdoor space adjacent to the Whitby Sports Complex to accommodate future interior program space.

Expected to be completed in 2025, the Whitby Sports Complex will be designed to be a Zero Carbon building and LEED Gold facility and create a multi-purpose gathering space for active recreation, sports, community programming and passive park enjoyment for all ages and abilities. The Whitby Sports Complex is expected to satisfy many of the indoor recreation facility needs over the planning period and will be referenced in relevant sub-sections of the needs assessments.

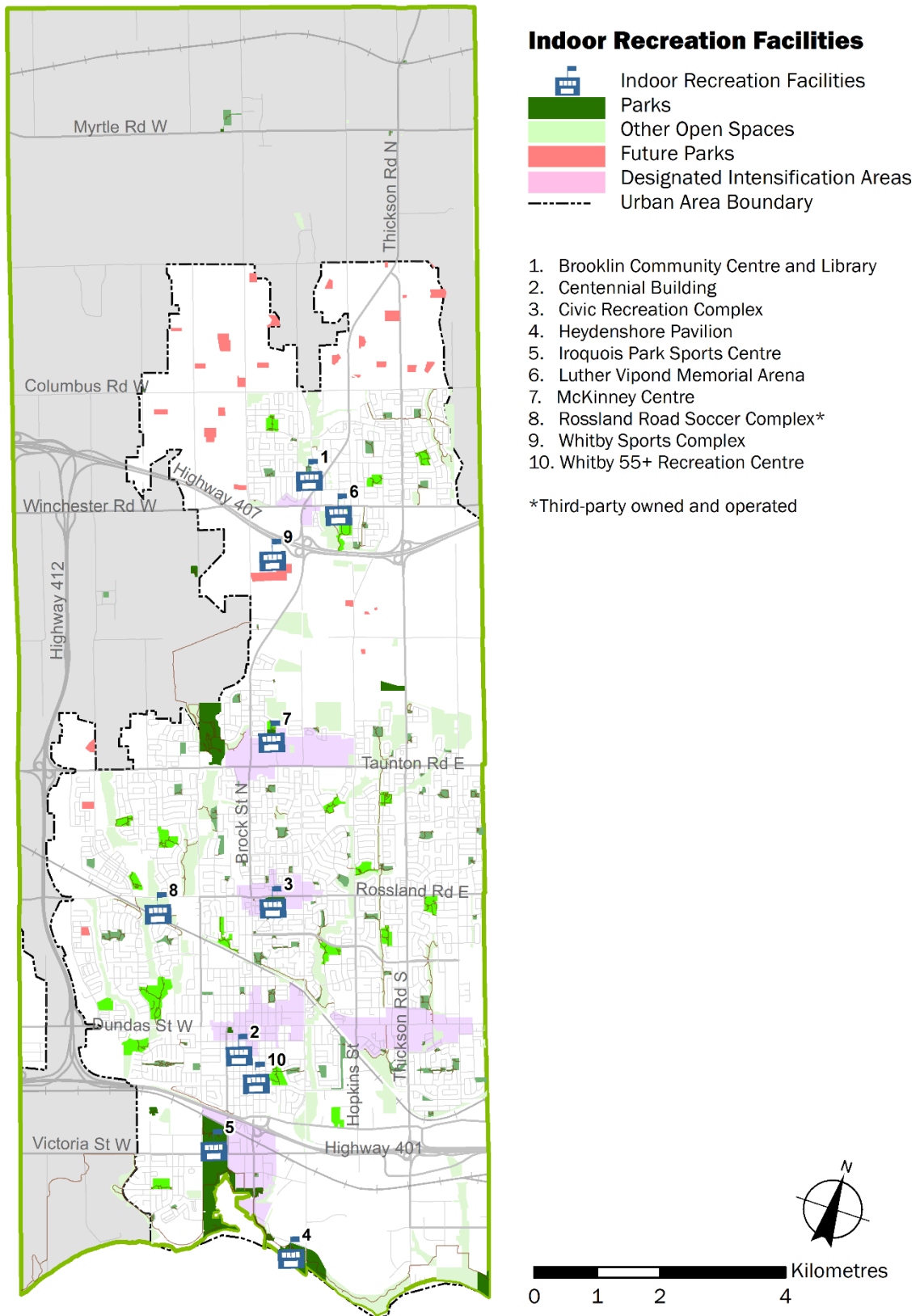
In addition to Whitby's comprehensive portfolio of recreation facilities, Whitby's close partnership with Community Connection provides access to 6 schools for neighbourhood-level programming, including at, Brooklin Village Public School, John Dryden Public School, Meadowcrest Public School, Ormiston Public School, Pringle Creek Public School, and Sinclair Secondary School. The facility supply summarized below excludes non-municipal facility providers such as the Abilities Centre, schools, etc.

Table 8: Summary of Recreation Facilities

Recreation Facility	Supply	Location(s)
Arenas	10	Iroquois Park Sports Centre (6), Luther Vipond Memorial Arena, McKinney Centre (3)
Aquatics	2	Iroquois Park Sports Centre, Civic Recreation Complex
Fitness Centres	1	Civic Recreation Complex
Gymnasiums	1	Brooklin Community Centre and Library
Multi-Purpose Spaces	13	Multi-Purpose Rooms: Brooklin Community Centre and Library (3), Centennial Building, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, McKinney Centre (3)
Multi-Purpose Rooms	8	Community Halls: Brooklin Community Centre, Centennial Building (2), Heydenshore Pavilion, Iroquois Park Sports Centre
Community Halls/Theatres	5	
Youth Spaces	3	Brooklin Community Centre and Library, McKinney Centre, Henry St. High School Youth Hub
55+ Adult Spaces	2	55+ Recreation Centre, Brooklin Community Centre & Library
Indoor Artificial Turf Fields	1	Rossland Road Soccer Complex
Rectangular Fields	53	Lit Multi-Use: Des Newman WhitBee Park
Lit Multi-use	1	Lit Senior: Consumers Soccer Field, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, Lynde Creek Park, Peel Park
Lit Senior	4	Unlit Senior: Annes Park, Baycliffe Park, Brooklin Optimist Park, Carnwith Park (2), Consumers Soccer Fields, Darren Park, Forest Heights Park (2), Gordon Street Soccer, Guthrie Park, Huron Park, Jack Wilson Park (2), Jeffery Park (1), Medland Park, Palmerston Park, Pringle Park, Victoria Street (2) Unnamed Park (Coronation Road)
Unlit Senior	21	
Junior	9	
Mini	18	
		Junior: Cullen Central Park, Divine Park, Guthrie Park, Lady May Park, Lupin Park, Micklefield Park, Portage Park, Selkirk Park, Whitby Optimist Park
		Mini: Fallingbrook Park (3), Gordon Street (5), Prince of Wales (2) Rolling Acres Park (2), Victoria Street (3), Willow Park (3)
Ball Diamonds	37	Lit Hardball: Iroquois Park Sports Centre, Portage Park, Pringle Park, E.A Fairman P.S., Whitby Optimist
Lit Senior Hardball	5	Lit Senior Softball: Brooklin Memorial Park
Lit Senior Softball	1	Unlit Senior Softball: Hannam Park
Unlit Senior Softball	1	Lit Junior Softball: Cachet Park, Country Lane Park (2) Iroquois Park Sports Centre (2), Kelloryn Park (2), Peel Park
Lit Junior Softball	8	
Unlit Junior Softball	22	
Cricket Pitches	2	Brooklin Memorial Park (temporary pitch), Jeffery Park (temporary pitch)
Outdoor Lacrosse Facilities	2	Peel Park, Willow Park
Tennis & Pickleball Courts	37	Lit Tennis Courts: Brooklin Memorial Park (2), D'Hillier Park (2), Iroquois Park (6), Kelloryn Park (3), Lupin Park (2), Palmerston Park (2), Peel Park (3)
Lit Tennis Courts	20	Unlit Tennis Courts: Central Park (2)*, Chelsea Hill Park (2), Folkstone Park (2), Huron Park (2), Willow Park (2)
Unlit Tennis Courts	10	
Lit Pickleball Courts	4	Lit Pickleball Courts: Des Newman WhitBEE Park (4)
Unlit Pickleball Courts	3	Unlit Pickleball Courts: Cullen Central Park (3)
		*Lined for Pickleball

Recreation Facility	Supply	Location(s)
Basketball & Multi-Purpose Courts	35	Full Basketball Court: Annes Park, Ashburn Park, Cachet Park, Carnwith Park, Country Lane Park, Folkstone Park, Jeffery Park, Norista Park, Phillips-Kozaroff Park, Whitburn Park
Full Basketball Court	10	Half Basketball Court: Davies Parkette, Des Newman WhitBEE Park, Front Street Park, Glenayr Park, Harold Park, Jack Wilson Park, Kelloryn Park, Portage Park, Whitby Optimist Park, Forest Heights Park, Pinecone Park, Rosedale Park, Sato Park, Tom Edwards Park, Teddington Park, Whitby Kinsmen Park Multi-Purpose Court: Baycliffe Park, Brooklin Optimist Park, Carnwith Park, Darren Park, Des Newman WhitBEE Park, Lady May Park, Lynde Creek Park, Oceanpearl Park, Unnamed Park (Coronation Road)
Half Basketball Court	16	
Multi-Purpose Court	9	
Splash Pads	19	Baycliffe Park, Cachet Park, Carnwith Park, Country Lane Park, Darren Park, Des Newman WhitBEE Park, Folkstone Park, Jeffery Park, Kiwanis Heydenshore Park, Lynde Creek Park, Micklefield Park, Norista Park, Peel Park, Portage Park, Rotary Centennial Park, Vanier Park, Watson Park, Whitby Kinsmen Park, Willow Park
Skate Parks	3	Brooklin Memorial Park, Folkstone Park, Iroquois Park Sports Centre
Playgrounds (Locations)	94	Refer to Section 6.19 for locations
Off Leash Dog Parks	2	Cochrane Street North Off-Leash Dog Park (Heber Down Conservation Area), Jeffery Street South Off-Leash Dog Park
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	4	Baycliffe Park, Des Newman WhitBEE Park, Kiwanis Heydensore Park, Lynde Creek Park
Outdoor Bocce Courts	4	Cullen Central Park (4)
Lawn Bowling Greens	1	Whitby Lawn Bowling Club
Outdoor Skating Rinks	2	Brooklin Memorial Park (temporary), Peel Park (temporary)
Horseshoe Pits	6	Whitby Kinsmen Park

Figure 14: Distribution of Indoor Recreation Facilities



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.3 Arenas

6.3.1 Current Supply

Whitby provides 10 ice pads at three arena locations. Six ice pads are located at the Iroquois Park Sports Centre, three are located at the McKinney Centre and one is located at the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena. The Town's ice pad supply translates into a service level of one per 15,150 residents, which is the highest level of service compared to benchmark municipalities (Table 9).

Table 9: Service Level Comparison, Arenas

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	5	1 : 25,400
Hamilton	569,400	25	1 : 22,776
Markham	338,500	10	1 : 33,850
Oshawa	175,400	7	1 : 25,057
Pickering	99,200	5	1 : 19,840
Richmond Hill	202,000	8	1 : 25,250
Vaughan	323,100	8	1 : 40,388
Average	262,086	10	1 : 27,509
Whitby	151,500*	10	1 : 15,150

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.3.2 Market Conditions

While Canada is internationally regarded for ice sports such as hockey and figure skating, there are signs that the participation in these sports has been waning. Data from Hockey Canada indicates that participation in minor hockey has been steadily declining since 2009 although there was a slight uptick in the number of players for the 2019/2020 season. Minor hockey registration has been supported by increasing participation among females. Hockey Canada reports that females make up 21% of registration among affiliated organizations in Ontario, which is an increase from 16% reported in 2014/2015 season. Anecdotally, the increasing popularity of female hockey has negatively impacted ringette, which has seen declining participation in some communities. The growth in female hockey is driven by a variety of factors such as changing lifestyle and personal commitments, efforts to break free from stereotypical gender roles and promoting sport participation among females.

As a result of increased participation in female hockey, there is greater competition for prime-time ice, placing renewed pressure on municipal arenas. However, this trend has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic as a study conducted by Canadian Women & Sport found that nine in ten girls decreased or stopped participating in sports during the pandemic and one in four girls are not expected to return to sport post-pandemic.⁹ Reasons for not returning include the lack of self-confidence and the lack of opportunities (e.g., organizations no longer active). The study identified strategies to ensure that there are opportunities available for females to remain in sport, including involving females in the development of return to play plans and creating supportive environments that foster healthy social connections among participants and leaders.

Participation in figure skating has also declined from historic levels. While the number of figure skaters registered with Skate Canada and Skate Ontario are not at levels experienced in past decades, Skate for Life

⁹ Canadian Women & Sport. (2021). COVID alert. Pandemic impact on girls in sport. Retrieved from <https://womenandsport.ca/>

registrations reported for 2020 (which include CanSkate and PowerSkate) have grown by 2% nationally since 2014 and provincial figures have rebounded to reach 2014 registrations.

The decline in hockey and figure skating participation over the past decade was driven by factors such as the escalating cost of equipment and travel, the increasing cost of ice, time commitments, and immigration trends since the country's growth is being driven by newcomers arriving from countries that do not have strong ice sport programs (e.g., Asian, Caribbean and South American nations) or are not familiar with arena activities.¹⁰ Additionally a survey commissioned by Hockey Canada and Bauer Hockey Inc. for non-hockey playing families found that one of the top reasons for not playing the sport is due to safety concerns (e.g., concussion risk).¹¹

The impact of COVID-19 has created an uncertain future for arena participation, particularly team-based sports such as hockey. Governing sport bodies have released protocols guiding practices and play that reduce the number of players on the ice at a given time, reducing, or eliminating physical contact, and encouraging skaters to come to the arenas dressed to avoid use of dressing rooms.

Whitby's arenas are used by key groups including Whitby Minor Hockey Association, Whitby Girls Hockey Association, Whitby Ringette Association, Whitby Figure Skating Club, Whitby Synchronized Skating Team, and the Durham Crusaders, which had a combined membership of 4,840 players for the 2019/2020 season.

6.3.3 Community Input

Discussions with arena users revealed requests for dry-land training space at the arenas as groups currently reported using non-Town facilities for warmups and training. Greater flexibility with the Town to allow change in ice time bookings was also mentioned, or groups should have the ability to sell booked ice time to another user. Requests were also made for universal and dedicated change rooms. The community survey found that 45% of responding households participated in ice activities, while 69% of respondents supported additional investment towards arenas, which ranked 18th among 36 facility types.

6.3.4 Usage Profile

Whitby reported a total of 11,800 prime-time hours booked for the 2018/2019 ice season, translating to a system-wide arena usage rate of 91%. This represented a marginal decline from 12,200 hours (or 92% utilization) from the 2016/2017 season (Figure 15). Despite demand softening to a degree, a Town-wide usage rate greater than 90% is indicative of an arena system that is operating at full capacity and one that is under pressure as there are limited opportunities to accommodate additional usage.

Figure 16 highlights total prime time arena utilization by ice pad between the 2016/17 and 2018/19 season. Generally speaking, McKinney ice pad #3 has the most available capacity during the prime-time period given that it is a boarder-less figure skating pad, which limits its use. Available capacity also exists at the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena, although it is recognized that single pad arenas generally have lower usage levels as groups tend to have a preference for multi-pad arenas that are co-located with recreation centres. Preference is also typically given to newer facilities and the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena is the Town's oldest arena at 50 years old, which is reaching the end of its useful life.

¹⁰ Urciuoli, A. (2020). Fewer Canadians are playing hockey, but does it matter? Retrieved from <https://quickbitenews.com/>

¹¹ Hockey Canada. (2013). Bauer Hockey, Hockey Canada research shows that growing the game is achievable. Retrieved from <https://www.hockeycanada.ca/>

Figure 15: Summary of Arena Prime Time Utilization, 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 Ice Season

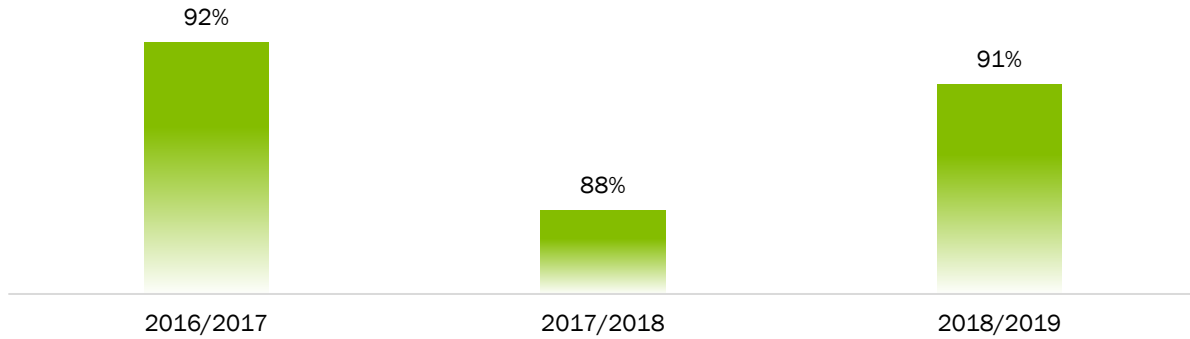
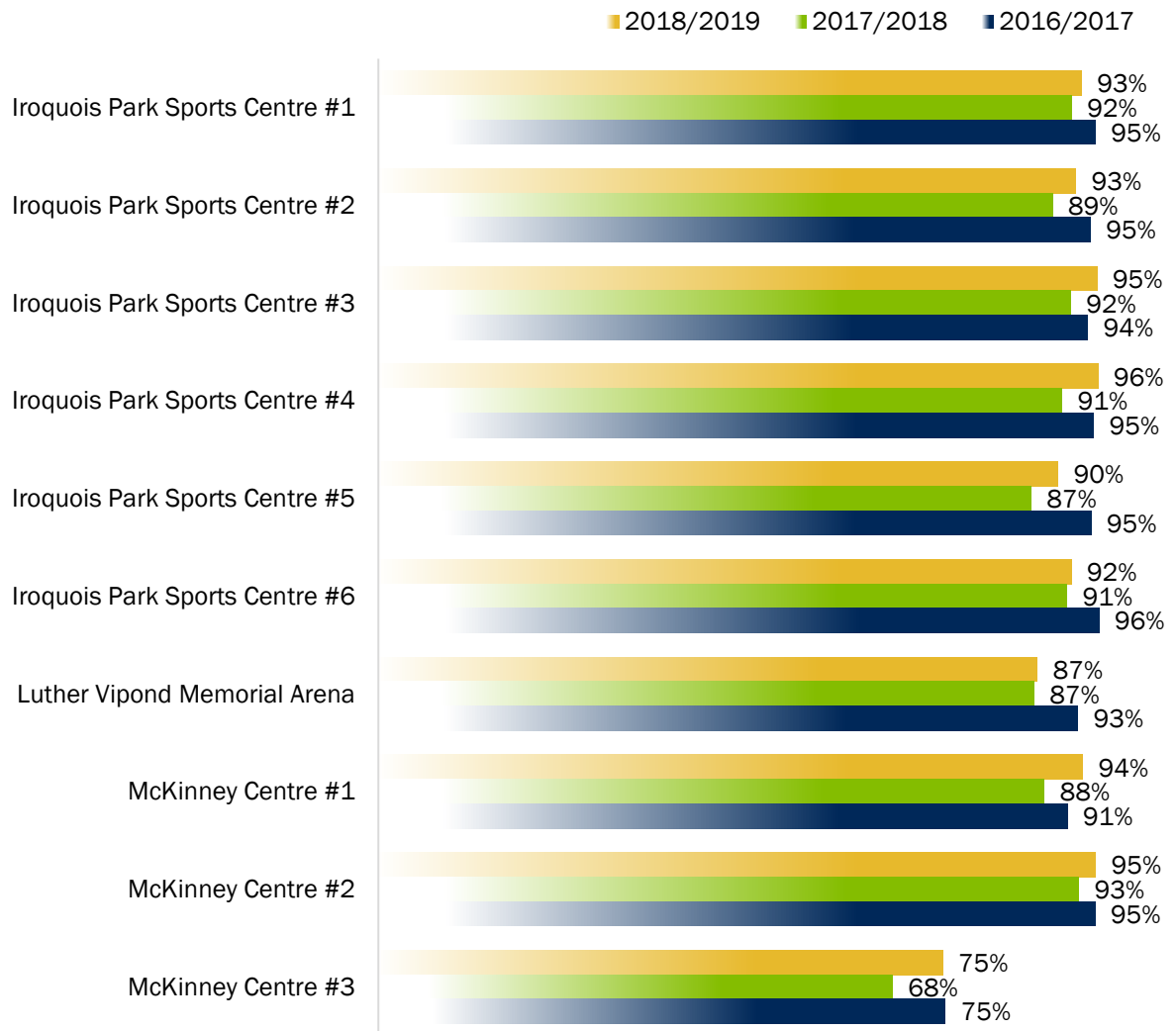


Figure 16: Summary of Arena Prime Time Utilization by Ice Pad, 2016/2017 to 2018/2019 Ice Season



Notes: Prime time hours include 5 pm to 11pm from Monday to Friday and 7 am to 11 pm from Saturday to Sunday during the ice season (end of September to the end of February).

6.3.5 Analysis

The Town is currently in the advanced stages of developing a new twin pad arena at the Whitby Sports Complex, which was recommended in the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy. This new development is intended to replace the aging Luther Vipond Memorial Arena, which is the Town's only single ice pad facility. Thus, the new twin pad arena will result in a net addition of one new pad to the Town's arena inventory to alleviate capacity pressure from the existing supply in the south end of Whitby and accommodate growth-related needs.

Like many communities in Durham Region and throughout the GTA, community demographics are changing. Whitby's population is aging and becoming more diverse, and residents are seeking a broad range of recreation opportunities that are less focused on ice sports, which is not expected to drive demand for additional ice pads beyond what is currently planned. As such, no additional ice pads are recommended during the planning period. Efforts should be made to continue accommodating the needs of ice users through its existing and planned arena supply to optimize utilization and access.

On a regular basis, continued dialogue with groups is recommended to identify challenges and collectively create solutions to ensure adequate access to ice is achieved, with consideration given to establishing a process for shifting unused ice time to other groups who may be in need. Through the consultation process, user groups identified the desire for access to dryland training space. This will be addressed through the completion of the Whitby Sports Complex, which will also include an indoor walking track. The Town is encouraged to explore opportunities to provide dryland training space, such as utilizing multi-purpose spaces that are co-located with Whitby's other arenas.

Once the new twin pad arena is operational, the Town should move forward with repurposing the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena to another use. While the arena is aging, the facility is an important asset for the Brooklin Agricultural Society, who has hosted the annual Brooklin Spring Fair at the current location for over a century. The arena building is used for several events during the fair, including opening ceremonies, competitions (e.g., spelling bee), shows (including live music), dances, arts and crafts sales, displays, and more. Maintaining access to this facility in some form is vital to ensure that a venue is available to support this local event, as well as broader indoor programming and rental needs throughout the year. A facility renewal strategy for the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena should be prepared to update and modernize the building for year-round use. Consultation with the public and community stakeholders should form part of this process and may be undertaken in coordination with the broader visioning exercise for Brooklin Memorial Park.

Recommendations – Arenas

20. Undertake a facility renewal strategy to investigate the feasibility of updating and modernizing the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena for indoor programming and rentals, including supporting the Brooklin Spring Fair. This should involve input from community stakeholders and the public and may be undertaken as part of a broader visioning exercise for Brooklin Memorial Park.
21. Explore opportunities to provide arena groups with dryland training space using existing multi-purpose spaces that are co-located with Whitby's arenas.

6.4 Aquatics

6.4.1 Current Supply

There are two indoor aquatic centres in Whitby – the Iroquois Park Sports Centre (known as the Anne Ottenbrite Pool) and the Whitby Civic Recreation Complex. Both locations offer a 25-metre rectangular tank and a separate toddler pool. The Civic Recreation Complex also offers an indoor spray pad and leisure slide. These two locations yield a service level of one indoor aquatic centre per 75,750 residents, which is the lowest service level compared to benchmark municipalities (Table 10). An indoor aquatic centre is currently planned to for the new Whitby Sports Complex (recommended in the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy). In addition to this supply, indoor aquatic centres are also provided by the private sector, including Goodlife Fitness (which offers swim lessons), L.A. Fitness (members only), and Trafalgar Castle School (no public access).

Table 10: Service Level Comparison, Aquatics

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	3	1 : 42,333
Hamilton	569,400	23	1 : 24,757
Markham	338,500	7	1 : 48,357
Oshawa	175,400	8	1 : 21,925
Pickering	99,200	2	1 : 49,600
Richmond Hill	202,000	6	1 : 33,667
Vaughan	323,100	9	1 : 35,900
Average	262,086	8	1 : 36,648
Whitby	151,500*	2	1 : 75,750

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.4.2 Market Conditions

Pools can deliver programs for a wide range of age groups, interests, and abilities. A report on Canadian youth sports found that over 1.1 million youth between the ages of 3 and 17 were enrolled in a swimming program, making this the most popular organized recreation activity.¹² Indoor pools deliver year-round aquatic programming and are venues for residents to form community ties. Notwithstanding such benefits, indoor aquatic centres are among the most intensive and expensive recreation facilities to operate.

The most common design template for a municipally operated indoor pool is a 25-metre rectangular tank with a minimum of six swimming lanes, as is found at Whitby’s two indoor pools; the indoor aquatic centre at the future Whitby Sports Complex will have 10 lanes and will be the largest in Durham Region.

Trends in pool construction and retrofitting have seen an evolution in public pool design that offers more variety and that accommodates a growing diversity of users, thereby raising the bar in facility quality. Municipalities across Canada are responding to user demands for modern amenities including, but not limited to, family or gender-neutral change rooms, warmer pool temperatures, spray features,



¹² Solutions Research Group Consultants Inc. 2014. Canadian Youth Sport Report. Retrieved from <http://www.srgnet.com>

updated viewing galleries, and universal design elements. Smaller leisure tanks are sometimes incorporated into facility design to support warm water therapy, training, and lessons for young children, adults 55+, or persons with disabilities. As is the case with the Town’s indoor pools, they are frequently co-located with other recreation facilities such as ice pads, gymnasiums and fitness space to bolster overall usage, provide opportunities for cross-programming and cross-subsidization among facility operating units, and creating a holistic and convenient experience at a single destination.

6.4.3 Community Input

The community survey found that 62% of responding households have participated in recreational swimming, which was the fourth most popular recreation activity. Nearly half (49%) of responding households also participated in instructional swimming or aqua-fit, which was the seventh most popular activity. More than four-of-five (85%) respondents supported investment in indoor pools, which was ranked as the second highest facility type. Requests for additional indoor pools were received throughout the consultation process, with many residents noting challenges with limited access to swim lessons, which is partly due to the fact that the indoor pool at the Civic Recreation Complex is temporarily closed due to renovations. Re-opening of the Civic Recreation Complex and the development of the Whitby Sports Complex is expected to alleviate pressure and position the Town to meet current and future aquatic needs.

6.4.4 Usage Profile

Whitby provides a variety of organized aquatic programs such as swim lessons, aquafit, and leadership training for residents of all ages. During a typical operating year, Whitby’s registered organized aquatic programs draw nearly 13,000 participants. The Town’s registered swim lessons are well attended as program fill rates have increased from 74% to 76% in the three years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 11). It should be noted that fill rates for swim lesson vary by program level. For example, swimming lessons for younger participants (pre-school and learn to swim) are typically seen a levels at or near 100% capacity. Excess capacity tends to increase as children progress through the levels. Similarly, programs such as aquatic leadership, adult swim lessons, and aquafit are generally registered at capacity with a waitlist. As programming returned in 2022 following the pandemic, aquatic programming experienced increasing demands as a result of population growth that occurred between 2020-2022 as well as water safety concerns for children who missed out on swimming lessons/water safety during their early years of life. The reopening of the Civic Recreation Complex and the addition of the Whitby Sports Complex will better position the Town to meet current and future aquatic needs.

Table 11: Summary of Aquatic Program Registration, 2017 to 2020

Year	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Total Program Capacity	16,708	16,926	7,609
Total Registration	12,288	12,764	5,813
Total Fill Rate	74%	75%	76%

Note: Excludes programs where registration did not meet minimum requirements. 2019/2020 swim season shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Drop-in times are also available to provide residents with flexible swim opportunities that do not require advanced registration or long-term commitments, including lane swimming, recreational swimming, family swim, parent and tot swim, senior swim, and physio swim. Drop-in swims are the Town’s most popular type of aquatic program, which draws approximately 30,000 participants a year. Between 2018 and 2019, attendance in drop-in swimming declined by 9%. This is attributed to a closure of the pool for maintenance at the Civic Recreation Complex for the winter session. As a result, attendance at the remaining location (Anne Ottenbrite Pool) drew 3,542 people in 2019, which was an increase of 8% from 2018 (Table 12).

Table 12: Summary of Drop-in Swim Attendance, 2018 to 2019

Drop-in Swim Attendance		2018	2019	Change
Anne Ottenbrite Pool	Drop-in Participants	2,800	2,916	4%
	Membership Participants	478	626	31%
	Sub-Total	3,278	3,542	8%
Civic Recreation Complex*	Drop-in Participants	17,796	16,738	-6%
	Membership Participants	10,302	8,209	-20%
	Sub-Total	28,098	24,947	-11%
Total		31,376	28,489	-9%

*Note: Attendance in drop-in swims at the Civic Recreation Complex declined in 2019 due to its closure for pool maintenance in the winter session.

The Town's indoor pools can be booked for private activities, events, and other rentals. Between 2018 and 2019, rentals of Whitby's pools declined by 7% to 1,119 hours due to maintenance at the Whitby Civic Pool. The Anne Ottenbrite Pool was the most popular location for rentals in 2019, which made up over 90% of all hours booked (Table 13) due to increased use by Swim to Survive and Swim Club rentals.

Table 13: Summary of Indoor Pool Rentals by Hour, 2018 to 2019

Year	2018	2019	Change
Anne Ottenbrite Pool	1,067	1,032	-3%
Civic Recreation Complex*	138	87	-37%
Total	1,203	1,119	-7%

*Note: Rentals at the Civic Recreation Complex declined in 2019 due to its closure for pool maintenance in the winter session.

6.4.5 Analysis

At the time when Whitby's Sports Facility Strategy was being prepared, the Town was providing indoor aquatic centres at a rate of one per 65,700 residents. This is on the lower end of the benchmark spectrum where service levels range from one indoor aquatic centre per 35,000 to 60,000 residents. With a current service level of one indoor aquatic centre per 75,750 residents, Whitby is currently falling short of its historical level of service.

A visual scan of existing indoor aquatic centres revealed that the majority of residents residing within Whitby's urban area is located within a 10-to-15-minute driving distance of the Iroquois Park Sports Centre or the Civic Recreation Complex, which is a similar drive time found in other GTA communities. Residents in Brooklin are currently a gap area that is not served with an indoor aquatic centre; however, this will be addressed with the construction of the new indoor aquatic centre at the Whitby Sports Complex, which is expected to be completed by 2025. With the completion of this new location, the Town's supply will increase to three indoor aquatic centres, resulting in a projected service level of one per 63,333 residents by 2031, which aligns with Whitby's historical level of service. The new Whitby Sports Complex Pool will feature a 10-lane tank and will be recognized as Durham Region's largest indoor pool and thus, the Town will be providing a slightly higher level of service given that the larger tank size will be able to accommodate more programming opportunities for swim lessons, public swim, lane swims, rentals, etc.

It is recognized that the Town is experiencing pressure within its indoor aquatics system as its residents are currently being served by one indoor pool at the Iroquois Park Sports Centre while the Civic Recreation Complex is undergoing renovation with full completion in 2023. Together with the opening of the Whitby Sports Complex location, the needs of current and future residents are expected to be satisfied. It is particularly notable that the Whitby Sports Complex will be recognized as the largest pool in Durham Region as it will

feature a 25-metre tank with 10 lanes and thus it will be able to accommodate a larger programming capacity compared to traditional aquatic templates. No additional indoor aquatic facilities are recommended at this time.

It should also be noted that the City of Oshawa is currently recommending an indoor aquatic centre to be included as part of a future northwest community centre, which is located within a 10-minute drive of the Whitby Sports Complex. While the City's plans are currently preliminary, there may be merit in holding future discussions to explore potential access agreements for Whitby residents. This may be particularly important over the long-term due to rapid population growth, finite land base, and escalating construction costs that make constructing new indoor aquatic centres more challenging.

6.5 Fitness Centres

6.5.1 Current Supply

Whitby provides a full-service fitness centre at the Civic Recreation Complex with cardio and strength training equipment. Whitby's fitness centres are complemented by active living and wellness programs that are provided in other public spaces, including the multi-purpose rooms and gymnasiums.

The Town's supply translates into a service level of one per 151,500 residents, which is the lowest level of service compared to benchmark municipalities that provide equipment-based fitness centres (Hamilton does not provide this level of service). The provision of public fitness centres varies in each community due to a range of factors such as municipal decisions to provide the service and taking into account the number of private fitness providers within the community. In Whitby, private fitness providers include Goodlife Fitness, LA Fitness, F45 Training Whitby West, Crunch Fitness, Fit4Less, Move365 Everyday Performance Centre, Planet Athlete, Curves, and Canada Christian College.

The Abilities Centre is a not-for-profit service provider unique to Whitby that provides a state-of-the-art facility for all abilities, which offers a cardio and free-weights area, aerobics and specialty fitness rooms, high performance training, medical clinics, and a six-lane, 200-metre, IAAF-approved indoor track.

Table 14: Service Level Comparison, Fitness Centres

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	3	1 : 42,333
Hamilton	569,400	0	0
Markham	338,500	5	1 : 67,700
Oshawa	175,400	3	1 : 58,467
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	2	1 : 101,000
Vaughan	323,100	6	1 : 53,850
Average	262,086	3	1 : 70,425
Whitby	151,500*	1	1 : 151,500

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.5.2 Market Conditions

Physical fitness and individual wellness are top of mind issues among many Canadians, resulting in a greater emphasis being placed on personal health. This has translated into increasing use of private and public sector fitness services, including active living programming centred on general health and wellness, weight-training, cardiovascular training and stretching activities (e.g., yoga and Pilates).

While many municipalities provide group fitness programming through fitness studios (with hardwood and spring floors and mirrored walls) or through flexible multi-purpose program space, some municipalities, such as Whitby, provide public equipment-based fitness centres. Public fitness centres are not typically intended to be direct competitors with the private sector as they tend to provide an affordable fitness alternative. Municipally provided fitness centres also align with overall community health goals as well as a holistic wellness experience given that municipalities have historically operated gymnasiums, indoor pools, and more recently indoor walking tracks, which are all complements of fitness centres. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the fitness industry and led to closing of some private sector clubs, particularly smaller and niche-training venues; as a result, there may be more pressure placed on municipal fitness services, at least in the short-term.

With greater emphasis being placed on health and wellness, group fitness programming has become one of the fastest growing segments of the fitness sector, more so than traditional weight-training, as these programs are designed to be fun and social activities. Municipalities are also keeping pace with fitness trends such as functional training (e.g., TRX, Cross-Fit, and High Intensity Interval Training) based on scientific evidence documenting its benefits but also in response to client demands.

According to recreation surveys across the province, walking is typically identified as the most popular recreation pursuit given that it is a self-structured activity that residents can engage in at one's leisure. This is one reason, among many, that has resulted in the growing popularity of indoor walking tracks as they offer several benefits such as year-round training for sport organizations and providing a safe and controlled environment for walking. Canada's varied climate conditions provide further support for walking tracks within community centres. Intangible benefits are also achieved as walking tracks promote physical activity and encourage users to remain active during the winter months. The Town has positioned itself to respond to these trends through the integration of an indoor walking track at the future Whitby Sports Complex.

6.5.3 Community Input

The community survey found that 45% of responding households participated in fitness programs, while 29% participated in weight-training activities. Three-quarters of respondents supported additional investment in fitness centres, which ranked 11th out of 36 facility types. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents also supported additional investment in indoor walking tracks and 58% supported additional investment in outdoor fitness equipment.

6.5.4 Usage Profile

A membership is required to access Whitby's fitness centre at the Whitby Civic Recreation Complex. Memberships are available on an annual or three-month basis, although residents can also purchase a one-day pass. Purchasing a membership allows residents to access all fitness amenities, including swimming, skating, health club equipment, sauna, stretching room and more. Usage data provided by Town staff found that the fitness centre was accessed by over 188,000 users in 2019, which was a marginal increase of one percent from 2018. This finding highlights the public's desire for physical fitness and popularity of staying active in the community.

6.5.5 Analysis

The provision of fitness centres is based on several factors, including the municipal desire to offer this service, ability to be incorporated within a multi-use community centre with complementary facility components, geography, and private sector interest. Whitby has made a conscious effort to provide and maintain an affordable fitness centre experience at the Civic Recreation Complex. The Town's fitness centre complement's private sector providers, of which there are many and as Whitby continues to experience intensification, it is anticipated that the supply of non-public fitness opportunities will grow as it can be expected that fitness opportunities may be incorporated a part of condominium developments to serve owners and tenants. With this in mind, no new fitness centres should be provided during this planning period. It is noted that the planned Whitby Sports Complex does not contain a fitness centre, although it does include an indoor walking track, which was recommended in the Sports Facility Strategy.

The recommended approach moving forward is to continue to operate the Civic Recreation Complex as the Town's central hub for equipment-based fitness activities, while providing group fitness opportunities within the gymnasium at the Brooklin Community Centre and Library, at the 55+ Recreation Centre, and within the Town's multi-purpose spaces that are distributed throughout Whitby. There is also potential associated with the recommended facility renewal strategy for the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena. This strategy ensures that there continues to be a strong distribution of programming across Whitby and that residents have reasonable access to a range of active living choices.

6.6 Gymnasiums

6.6.1 Current Supply

One municipal gymnasium is located at the Brooklin Community Centre and Library, which can be divided in half to support simultaneous programming. This supply translates into a service level of one per 151,500 residents (Table 15). Whitby works with Community Connection, a non-profit organization that provides recreation programs in the community. This partnership is dependent on the ability to provide programs at 10 local school gymnasiums through the Durham District School Board. In addition to the Town's supply, there are other non-municipal gymnasiums located across Whitby, such as the three FIBA basketball courts at the Abilities Centre, LA Fitness, and school gymnasiums (including at Canada Christian College).

Table 15: Service Level Comparison, Gymnasiums (Municipal and Non-Municipal Gymnasiums with Public Access)

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	2.75	1 : 46,182
Hamilton	569,400	16	1 : 35,588
Markham	338,500	8	1 : 42,313
Oshawa	175,400	5	1 : 35,080
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	9	1 : 22,444
Vaughan	323,100	9	1 : 35,900
Average	262,086	7	1 : 45,244
Whitby	151,500*	1	1 : 151,500

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.6.2 Market Conditions

Gymnasiums facilitate a variety of indoor sports and recreation opportunities that require a hard surface, large open space, and high ceilings. Gymnasiums support both organized and drop-in activities, including basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball, group fitness, and other active programs. While many other activities may take place in these facilities, such as special events and large social gatherings, non-sport related rentals tend to be given lower priority to ensure that gymnasiums are used for high demand recreation uses and to protect floor finishes from damage.

As gymnasiums accommodate broad opportunities, they are designed with adaptability and flexibility in mind. While there is no standard template, gymnasiums are typically influenced by community needs, although the minimum gymnasium size should be large enough to accommodate a school-sized basketball court with high ceilings. The Brooklin Community Centre and Library is a good example of a well-designed gymnasium, and the future Whitby Sports Complex is planned to be a double gymnasium with a dividing wall and other supporting amenities. Municipal gymnasiums typically feature amenities such as storage, change rooms, seating areas, a stage, and/or kitchen.

The supply of municipal gyms is often bolstered by school boards that provide afterschool access to their gyms through the Province's Community Use of Schools initiative. There are a number of school gymnasiums across Whitby that the public can book through this program, although school boards have complete control over rentals and there is no requirement to provide local users with priority bookings. Municipalities across the Province, including Whitby, have experienced challenges in accessing school gymnasiums, which can often create pressure for municipalities to provide or find space for groups.

However, this approach continues to have strong merit, in principle, as it reduces the need for municipalities to construct facilities and avoid tax-funded duplications in service, while maximizing geographic distribution due to the nature in which schools are located throughout a community. Certain school gyms are of an older and smaller design that may not be conducive to quality sport and recreation activities (e.g., elementary schools may not be regulation court size or have enough 'run out' space between the court and the walls). Individual schools may have discretion about the type of activities that can take place (e.g., some prohibit ball hockey to protect their floors) and can bump regular renters for school programs, thereby creating uncertainty.



6.6.3 Community Input

Requests for additional gymnasium facilities were made throughout the consultation process to support the desire for more programs such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, pickleball and other indoor recreation activities. In particular, requests were made for a gymnasium in the south end of Whitby. More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents to the community survey, which ranked 19th out of 36 facility types.

6.6.4 Usage Profile

Whitby's gymnasium at the Brooklin Community Centre and Library can be booked as a full or half gymnasium. In 2019, the gymnasium was booked for 3,511 hours, which was an increase from 3,056 hours booked in 2016. The full gymnasium was the most popular configuration, which accounted for more than half of these bookings in 2019. The large majority of gymnasium use is attributed to Town programming, followed by rentals.

The weekday evenings (after 5:00 pm) was the most popular time when the gymnasium was in use. During this period, the full gymnasium had a usage rate of 66% (excluding set-up time and maintenance), which was an increase from 57% in 2016 (Table 16). There was a moderate level of use during the weekday daytime (before 5:00 pm) with a usage rate of 43% in 2019, which was an increase of 20% from 2016. The gymnasium had a low to moderate level of use during the weekends and in half gymnasium configurations. While the Town has been successful in increasing the use of its gymnasium over this three-year period, there continues to be available capacity to increase utilization, particularly during the weekdays and weekends.

Table 16: Summary of Gymnasium Usage, 2016 to 2018

Year	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend
Full Gymnasium								
Before 5:00 pm	34%	23%	46%	27%	43%	34%	43%	41%
After 5:00 pm	57%	11%	68%	14%	66%	10%	66%	11%
Gymnasium A								
Before 5:00 pm	26%	27%	34%	34%	28%	30%	26%	30%
After 5:00 pm	2%	2%	1%	5%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Gymnasium B								
Before 5:00 pm	15%	23%	19%	34%	23%	24%	23%	24%
After 5:00 pm	6%	2%	2%	4%	1%	0%	1%	0%

Note: Usage excludes time required between rentals for activity set-up and gymnasium maintenance.

6.6.5 Analysis

Municipalities generally target providing gymnasiums at a rate of one per 35,000 to 50,000 residents. The target is considered with other factors such as opportunities to co-locate gymnasiums as part of multi-use community centres to support cross-programming opportunities. The new gymnasium that will be located at the Whitby Sports Complex is an example of this approach. The level of access to school gymnasiums is also an influencing factor, which varies in each municipality. Whitby has historically provided a lower level of service in relation to other communities as the Town has maintained a strong partnership with Community Connection to provide residents with recreation programming within 6 schools, including gymnasiums. This has been a successful partnership with no indication that this relationship will change during the planning period, although the Town will continue to be heavily reliant upon access to these school gymnasiums. Should the Town lose access to these school gymnasiums, Whitby may be faced with public pressure to seek alternative locations to provide gymnasium-based, community programs. Maintaining positive dialogue with the Durham District School Board and Community Connection to ensure continued school access is paramount. Exploring similar access agreements with other gymnasium providers is encouraged to enhanced access to non-municipal spaces.

There is a strong distribution of gymnasium facilities across Whitby, although there will be a heavy emphasis of Town-operated gymnasiums in the north end at the Brooklin Community Centre and Library and the future Whitby Sports Complex. Redeveloping the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena to support indoor programming and rentals may also provide an opportunity for gymnasium-based activities. School gymnasiums programmed by Community Connection are distributed throughout central and south Whitby, resulting in a gap of Town-owned gymnasiums in this area. This Master Plan recommends using the Heydenshore Pavilion for gymnasium-based programs, which would satisfy needs in the south end. An opportunity also exists to include a gymnasium at the Civic Recreation Complex to serve residents in central Whitby, which was recommended in the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy. Recognizing that the Town is currently undertaking a renovation of this facility, this should be considered as a long-term opportunity, particularly as the Civic Recreation Complex is located within an intensification area. A gymnasium at this location would be a beneficial addition to facility active indoor programming in this emerging area.

Recommendations – Gymnasiums

22. Explore community access agreements with non-municipal gymnasium providers to enhance public access to gymnasium spaces for indoor community programming.
23. Investigate opportunities to include a gymnasium at the Civic Recreation Complex as residential intensification is expected in this area over the long-term.

6.7 Multi-Purpose Spaces

6.7.1 Current Supply

Whitby provides 15 multi-purpose rooms within its facilities. These spaces consist of meeting rooms, halls, activity and crafts rooms, general program rooms, and a theatre that are suitable for a range of activities and community functions. Multi-purpose spaces vary in size and amenities including, but not limited to, storage, kitchens, counters with sinks, tables and chairs, audio and visual equipment, and more. The current supply translates into a service level of one per 9,300 residents. A service level comparison with benchmark municipalities was not undertaken given the variation of multi-purpose spaces found in other communities, including type, configuration, range of amenities, and other factors that would result in a meaningful comparison. Four multi-purpose spaces are also planned to be located at the future Whitby Sports Complex.

6.7.2 Market Conditions

Incorporating multi-purpose space within community facilities has been an ongoing best practice in modern facility planning and design due to efficiencies in cross-programming, staffing, construction, and other factors. The new multi-purpose spaces planned for the Whitby Sports Complex will achieve these benefits. In light of the benefits associated with co-locating multi-purpose space in community facilities, the construction of new stand-alone program spaces is generally discouraged as they tend to be underutilized, have higher operational costs, and exhibit program limitations when compared to multi-purpose spaces within community centres.

Municipalities that have historically provided stand-alone multi-purpose space are trending towards re-purposing opportunities to better utilize space or decommissioning them completely as they reach the end of their useful lifespan. Whitby has experienced this firsthand with the Heydenshore Pavilion as the Town is in the early planning process of redeveloping this facility to make it more appealing for programming, rentals, and special events, as identified in Whitby's Waterfront Parks & Open Space Master Plan and staff report CMS 04-20.

6.7.3 Community Input

There was a general desire from the public and stakeholders for more multi-purpose space to accommodate a greater range of activities and rentals, particularly large spaces. It was suggested that providing more gathering spaces would allow the Town to offer more programming, which are in high demand. More meeting spaces would enhance opportunities for community groups to book space, particularly during prime-time hours. Suggestions were received for a greater number of large, multi-purpose spaces that are suitable for large gatherings and indoor events. The community survey found that three-quarters (75%) of respondents supported additional investment in space for community events and 60% supported additional investment in community halls and meeting spaces, which ranked 12th and 23rd out of 36 facility types.

6.7.4 Usage Profile

Whitby's multi-purpose spaces generally have a moderate level of use, which is typical as these facility components are not intended to be high demand spaces, but rather they are provided as a community benefit to ensure that there are affordable, public meeting spaces that can also accommodate a range of recreation programs. The Town's multi-purpose spaces were booked for nearly 18,000 hours in 2018, yielding a Town-wide usage rate of 27%. This was a decrease from 26,500 hours booked in 2016, which was primarily due to fewer bookings at the Centennial Building. With over 47,000 hours of unbooked space, there appears to be ample capacity to accommodate additional usage within the Town's multi-purpose spaces.

6.7.5 Analysis

It is a best practice to consider opportunities to incorporate multi-purpose space as part of new facility development or redevelopment, which is currently being done at the Whitby Sports Complex. This will result in expanded programming spaces and responds to the public's desire for more gathering and activity rooms, and further strengthen access and the distribution of space across Whitby.

There is merit in considering enhancements to existing spaces to optimize how they are used and to bolster the Town's programming and rental potential. The Heydenshore Pavilion is an aging facility (constructed in 1972) that contains a community hall with a stage and kitchen. It is uniquely located along Whitby's waterfront area and is primarily used for adult 55+ programming such as pickleball, with limited rentals for meetings and social gatherings. The Town's 2016 Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan recommends enhancements to the Heydenshore Pavilion to strengthen the waterfront area as a destination.

The Master Plan continues to support redevelopment of the Heydenshore Pavilion to achieve the Town's vision of activating the waterfront. Maintaining the Heydenshore Pavilion for community use is particularly important as it is the only large, indoor multi-purpose meeting space that is Town-owned in the south end of Whitby; retaining this facility is also well supported by public. To serve the community over the long-term, the Town

should undertake a building condition study to assess the feasibility of updating and modernizing the Heydenshore Pavilion through redevelopment or new construction. Key design considerations should be given to its strategic location along the waterfront (specifically its picturesque view of Lake Ontario), durable flooring to support gymnasium-type programs and general community activities), and appropriately sized kitchen.

There may be other opportunities to create new multi-purpose spaces. For example, the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena will be surplus to the Town’s ice needs once the Whitby Sports Complex is completed and it is recommended that the Town investigate the feasibility of using the existing space for indoor programming and rentals, including supporting the Brooklin Spring Fair. Exploring opportunities to remove the existing wall between the two multi-purpose spaces at the Whitby Centennial Building to create one large meeting space should also be explored to enhance gathering and programming space in the Town’s central area; any enhancements to this facility should be mindful of its status as a designated heritage building.

Over the long-term, the Town may face pressure for community meeting spaces within areas of intensification. As population growth occurs within these areas, it is expected that there will be growing expectations for affordable spaces for residents to gather, socialize and participate in activities. With limited opportunities for large, traditional multi-use recreation facilities in intensification areas, municipalities are exploring new solutions to provide indoor public space such as working with condominium developers to acquire community space. As part of these discussions, consideration should be given to factors including, but not limited to, ease of public access, availability of parking for users and staff, and the need to ensure that spaces are flexibly designed and sized appropriately to accommodate a range of uses.

Recommendations – Gymnasiums

24. Undertake a building condition study to assess the feasibility of updating and modernizing the Heydenshore Pavilion through redevelopment or new construction. Key design considerations should be given to ensure a large flexible multi-purpose space which prioritizes recreation programming and activities (gymnasium-type programs and general community activities) with appropriate storage for related equipment.
25. Investigate the feasibility of removing the wall between the two multi-purpose spaces at the Whitby Centennial Building to create one large space and, if feasible, undertake removal of the wall. Necessary renovations should be mindful of the facility’s status as a designated heritage building.
26. On a case-by-case basis, in areas of intensification, explore opportunities to increase access to multi-purpose program spaces to support indoor community gatherings, programs, activities and events such as working with condominium developers, community service providers and agencies, and the private sector.

6.8 Youth Spaces

6.8.1 Current Supply

There are three dedicated youth spaces in Whitby, including the Town-owned Brooklin Community Centre and Library and the McKinney Centre. The Youth Hub is also located at the Henry Street High School, which was made possible by a partnership between the Durham District School Board, Town of Whitby, Province of Ontario and community partners. These youth spaces feature a lounge with a television, seating, video games, pool table, computers and more. This supply results in a service level of one per 6,600 youth residents between the ages of 10 and 19. This level of service is on the higher end of the spectrum compared to benchmark municipalities, although the provision of youth spaces is based on factors such as opportunities to provide space within multi-use recreation facilities, distribution, and the availability of youth opportunities within other multi-purpose spaces. For example, Whitby offers youth programming and events at its youth spaces, as well as at parks and facilities across the Town.

Table 17: Service Level Comparison, Youth Spaces

Municipality	2021 Youth Population (Ages 10 to 19)	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	16,870	3	1 : 5,623
Hamilton	63,245	4	1 : 15,811
Markham	41,315	4	1 : 10,329
Oshawa	20,025	3	1 : 6,675
Pickering	11,530	2	1 : 5,765
Richmond Hill	26,160	2	1 : 13,080
Vaughan	43,270	0	n/a
Average	31,774	3	1 : 12,356
Whitby	19,730	3	1 : 6,600

6.8.2 Market Conditions

Whitby is proud to be recognized as a Platinum Level Youth Friendly Community (2016) and strives to engage its younger population through activities and key decision-making. Whitby's Youth Council provides a voice for youth in Whitby, while advising Council on important issues relating to the Town's younger population. The Youth Council primarily focuses on events, outreach programming and celebrating and recognizing the achievements of youth in the community.

Addressing the needs of the younger population is crucial as research suggests that access to parks and recreation services plays a key role in the physical, mental, and emotional development of youth. Research suggests that youth prefer unstructured activities, which emphasizes the need to ensure that youth spaces are flexibly designed to allow for a broad cross-section of structured and unstructured activities. Not only are youth spaces important to provide a safe meeting space, but they can also facilitate positive reinforcement to combat concerns surrounding mental and physical health among youth. Whitby's youth spaces are examples of such positive, flexible spaces.

In 2019, the youth space at the McKinney Centre was the most popular location with nearly 2,600 visits. The youth space at the Brooklin Community Centre and Library was the second most popular location (1,882 visits) and the Youth Hub at the Henry Street High School had 800 visits.

Whitby's Youth Strategy contains recommendations to support the healthy development of local youth, including prioritizing the development of recreation facilities that are important to the younger population (e.g., indoor pools, sports fields, E-Sports facilities, performing arts, skate parks, etc.), working with community organizations and the private sector to develop new facilities, engage youth in the development of capital projects, strengthen support for volunteerism and community events, and more.

6.8.3 Community Input

The consultation process found that there is support for youth space in Whitby to ensure that they have safe public spaces to gather in the community. Nearly four-out-of-five respondents supported additional investment in youth centres, which ranked 8th out of 36 facilities. Support was also received for other facilities that complement youth spaces such as indoor pools, fitness centres, gymnasiums, basketball courts and more.

6.8.4 Analysis

There is no industry standard for the development of youth spaces. Instead, it is recommended that where possible, the development of multi-purpose spaces should incorporate dedicated youth space and youth-friendly design such as lobby areas to support casual gatherings. This approach is common in many communities as the creation of youth space within a multi-use community centre achieves benefits and efficiencies in staffing and cross-programming opportunities. This aligns with the strategies outlined in the Town's Youth Strategy and is consistent with local practices that are demonstrated through the development of the .

With the exception of the future Whitby Sports Complex, no new multi-use community centres are recommended during this planning period, additional dedicated youth spaces are not recommended at this time. The distribution of the Town's existing youth rooms is strong, serving residents in the north, central and south areas of Whitby. These spaces are complemented by youth-oriented spaces provided by others such as Community Connection, as well as the broad range of indoor and outdoor recreation facility opportunities geared towards youth, including those recommended in this Master Plan.

6.9 Adult 55+ Spaces

6.9.1 Current Supply

Whitby provides two dedicated spaces for older adults and seniors at the 55+ Recreation Centre and the Brooklin Community Centre & Library. These spaces are gathering places for residents to socialize, learn skills, access resources, and make new connections. Recreation programs that may be offered at these locations include fitness, arts, dance, computers, general interest, discussion groups, events and more. The Town's supply of 55+ adult space results in a service level of one per 19,300 residents ages 55+ (Table 18). This level of service is on the lower end of the spectrum compared to benchmark municipalities. Providing adult 55+ space is typically based on factors such as opportunities to provide space within multi-use recreation facilities, distribution, and the availability of adult 55+ opportunities within other multi-purpose spaces. The Town offers programs geared towards adults 55+ in other public parks and facilities such as Heydenshore Pavilion, Iroquois Park Sports Centre and at the Centennial Building.



Whitby's capital forecast allocates approximately \$565,000 in various 55+ asset management projects over the next 10 years. This includes renewing building components, replacing aging furniture and appliances, and safety and accessibility enhancements.

Table 18: Service Level Comparison, Adult 55+ Spaces

Municipality	2021 Adults 55+ Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	33,990	5	1 : 6,798
Hamilton	183,265	12	1 : 15,272
Markham	109,275	5	1 : 21,855
Oshawa	53,075	4	1 : 13,269
Pickering	31,305	3	1 : 10,435
Richmond Hill	64,345	3	1 : 21,448
Vaughan	97,005	20	1 : 4,850
Average	81,751	7	1: 11,005
Whitby	38,635	2	1 : 19,300

6.9.2 Market Conditions

Statistics Canada reported that the population of Whitby's adults ages 55+ grew by 45% between the 2016 and 2021 Census periods, while the Town's median age also increased marginally from 39.5 years to 40.0 years. Whitby's population is getting older, which is consistent with broader aging trends across Ontario. It is expected that this trend will continue over the next decade and beyond, which is being driven by the aging baby boomer generation. This is anticipated to drive the demand for activities and services geared towards this age cohort as research found that the baby boomer population are generally wealthier compared to previous generations due to a number of factors such as stock market booms, economic growth, pension plans, and real estate.¹³ It is also recognized, however, that older age groups are more vulnerable to experiencing low-income, particularly those living on fixed income. The 2021 Census found that the number of Whitby residents ages 65 and over who are considered to be low-income decreased from 7.9% in the 2016 Census to 7.6%.¹⁴ Research also found that older adults are more physically active than previous generations as many seek low impact fitness activities rather than traditional activities such as cards, although there is a need to provide a range of affordable activities for all interests. Whitby recognizes these trends and works with the 55+ Recreation Advisory Committee to encourage all older adults to get active.

As a result of the many physical and social benefits produced by dedicated spaces for adults 55+, these assets are generally regarded as an important part of the health care and recreation sectors. In general, these centres province-wide have been most successful in attracting individuals from lower- or middle-income brackets, including a very high portion of single women. Because these spaces are designed to appeal to such a wide age range, members tend to stay involved for a very long time. Research has found that members of centres for the 55+ age group tend to be healthier and have strong activity patterns that help them remain physically well (55% of members described their level of physical activity as fair/moderate, and 33% as good/excellent).¹⁵

As a result of a more active 55+ population, there is a shift away from traditional programs such as playing cards and reading. Instead, many adults 55+ are seeking activities that focus on active living, health and wellness, education, and other activities that centre upon cognitive stimulation and socialization, although a balanced program offering is necessary to ensure that there is something for all interests and abilities. Residents in Whitby who are aged 55+ benefit from access to the 55+ Recreation Centre and the programs available across the Town.

¹³ McMahon, Tamsin. (2014). Seniors and the generation spending gap. Retrieved from <https://www.macleans.ca>.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. 2021 and 2016 Census

¹⁵ Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario. 2010. Building Bridges to Tomorrow: User Profile of Older Adults Centres in Ontario. p.4, p.68.

From a parks and public space perspective, Whitby's Age Friendly Action Plan outlines strategies to make the public realm more age friendly. Key initiatives include making parks and public spaces more comfortable by incorporating shade and seating, encouraging the development of community gardening, making community events more accessible, developing trails and sidewalks, snow clearing, wayfinding signage, and more.

6.9.3 Community Input

As Whitby's 55+ population continues to grow, the public recognizes that there is a need for more recreation opportunities geared towards this age group. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in adult 55+ spaces, which ranked 14th out of 36 facility types. Requests were also made for enhancements to other areas of the parks and recreation system that encourage use among adults 55+ including, but not limited to, paved pathways, park shade and seating, pickleball courts, indoor walking tracks, and enhanced waterfront.

6.9.4 Analysis

Many municipalities have traditionally provided stand-alone senior centres where all programming takes place at one location. There has been a noticeable shift away from this model towards integrated space within community centres. Whitby operates a blend of these two models and a continuation of this approach is recommended for the Town. Whitby's 55+ Recreation Centre served over 4,500 members prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and as of July 2026, there are approximately 2,600 members. This decline in membership is due to two reasons: (i) The Town no longer offers a membership to use the walking track at the Abilities Centre, and (ii) the Town no longer requires that residents age 55+ must have a membership for swimming, aquafit and fitness discounts (now all residents age 55+ are eligible for the discount).

Despite the change in how the Town tracks its adult 55+ memberships, the large number of facility users is creating pressure on the 55+ Recreation Centre. With the Town's aging population, it is expected that there will be a growing demand for programming and gathering spaces. While some pressure will be alleviated through the Town's program offerings at other locations (including the Brooklin Community Centre), the 55+ Recreation Centre will continue to be an important gathering location serving the central area.

The 55+ Recreation Centre currently faces constraints that limit the Town's ability to accommodate current and future program demands. For example, the Town cannot expand programs at this location due to the lack of available space and as a result, programs are being held in common areas (e.g., lobby) and activities are being offered at other locations, including the Whitby Centennial Building and Heydenshore Pavilion. Concerns were also raised about the ability to control temperatures within specific spaces that makes programming a challenge, particularly when the kitchen is in use.

With consideration given to the factors noted above, renewal of the 55+ Recreation Centre is recommended to alleviate current pressure and position the facility to respond to future needs by undertaking enhancements to update and modernize the existing space. There is currently limited potential to expand the building footprint. The only opportunity that currently exists is to potentially repurpose the Whitby Lawn Bowling Club, which is in an aging clubhouse and has approximately 40 members. This Master Plan recommends that the Town monitor use of this facility and its membership levels and should interest in the sport remain steady or decline, consideration should be given exploring repurposing the lawn bowling green and clubhouse to accommodate an expansion of the 55+ Recreation Centre. This Master Plan also recommends facility improvements at key locations to enhance multi-purpose spaces that will support the delivery and distribution of 55+ programming.



Recommendations – Adult 55+ Spaces

27. Identify and undertake enhancements to the 55+ Recreation Centre to update and modernize existing spaces.
28. Monitor use of the Whitby Lawn Bowling Club and should membership levels remain steady or decline, explore opportunities to repurposing the lawn bowling green and clubhouse to accommodate an expansion of the 55+ Recreation Centre to provide additional multi-purpose space.

6.10 Indoor Artificial Turf Fields

6.10.1 Current Supply

Indoor artificial turf fields in Whitby are provided by non-municipal providers such as the Whitby Soccer Centre. Two indoor fields are located at this location, including one 9v9 field (or two 7v7 fields) and one full size, 11v11 field (or three 7v7 fields). The Canada Christian College also provides an indoor 6v6 field. Municipally owned and operated indoor artificial turf fields are found in the benchmark municipalities of Markham, Oshawa, Pickering, and Richmond Hill (Table 19). The provision of public indoor artificial turf fields may vary in other communities depending upon the availability of private-sector providers, local demand, and access to existing indoor fields in adjacent municipalities.

Table 19: Service Level Comparison, Indoor Artificial Turf Fields (excludes non-municipal locations)

Municipality	2021 Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	n/a
Hamilton	569,400	0	n/a
Markham	338,500	5	1 : 67,700
Oshawa	175,400	1	1 : 175,400
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	2	1 : 101,000
Vaughan	323,100	0	n/a
Average	262,086	1	1 : 110,825
Whitby	151,500*	0	n/a

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.10.2 Market Conditions

Indoor artificial turf facilities provide enhanced recreation experiences that complement outdoor fields and respond to increasing demand for year-round play. While the primary use of artificial turf fields is for soccer, these facilities can also accommodate other field sports such as rugby, lacrosse, football, baseball, team conditioning and training, and fitness pursuits.

Indoor turf fields are typically provided by a municipality, the private sector, a community group, or a combination of the three to share financial and operating responsibility. Many municipalities that have constructed permanent structures have tended to do so by integrating them with other municipal recreation facilities and usually operate such facilities autonomously given that there are already municipal staff onsite to schedule, maintain, and provide access to the fields while overhead costs are usually built into the entire facility budget.

The size of indoor turf fields varies considerably. Some municipalities have designed fields around the dimensions of an ice pad (including some that have converted surplus ice pads) while templates employed by other communities take the shape of a rectangular field. Even the size of an indoor rectangular field differs by community as some provide a full-size field that can be divisible into smaller fields such as four fields while others provide fields are divisible in two (or are not divided at all).

6.10.3 Community Input

Requests were received through the consultation process for additional indoor fields to support year-round activities such as baseball, cricket, and other field sports. Some groups mentioned that they currently use indoor fields in other municipalities, but access to these spaces is not always guaranteed as they are competing with organizations that are local to those communities. 72% of community survey respondents supported additional investment in indoor artificial turf facilities, which ranked 15th out of 36 facility types.

6.10.4 Analysis

Municipalities generally provide indoor artificial turf fields based on a target of one per 100,000 residents, although there are examples of smaller communities that provide this type of facility. While the two indoor artificial turf fields at the Whitby Soccer Centre are not owned by the Town, they are a significant part of the community infrastructure as they are primarily programmed for minor sports activities, which alleviates pressure for the Town to provide this type of facility. Whitby enjoys a strong level of service as the two indoor artificial turf fields translates to a ratio of one per 75,750 residents. This service level will decrease to one per 95,000 by 2031, although it will continue to be higher compared to the industry standard.

While some requests were received for an indoor artificial turf field, it is insufficient to justify or project the development of a third indoor field at this time. It is known that local sports groups travel outside of Whitby to access other indoor turf facilities in other municipalities, including approximately 400 hours per year at the Civic Fieldhouse in Oshawa, which is common as these types of facilities tend to serve regional users. As non-resident users, concerns were raised about competing for field time with local users in those communities, although it is recognized that Oshawa is currently planning for the development of a new indoor artificial turf field at a new community centre in the northwest end of the City, which will be a 15 minute drive from the Whitby Soccer Centre. Ajax is also exploring the possibility of constructing its first indoor field. Given the existing and planned supply of regional indoor fields, it is expected to be sufficient to address local needs that cannot otherwise be met at the Whitby Sports Complex. However, on-going monitoring of local and regional usage and demand should continue as a best practice.

6.11 Outdoor Rectangular Fields

6.11.1 Current Supply

Whitby permits 53 outdoor rectangular fields (Figure 17), which is highlighted in the following table. The supply includes recently completed fields including the lit multi-use fields at Des Newman WhitBEE Park, lit senior field at Lynde Creek Park, and unlit senior field at the Unnamed Park (Coronation Road).

Table 20: Outdoor Rectangular Field Inventory by Type

Type	Lit	Unlit	Total Supply
Senior Multi-Use Field (Approximate Dimensions: 144 by 70 metres)	1	0	1
Senior Soccer Field (Approximate Dimensions: 100 by 60 metres)	4	21	25
Junior/Mini Field (Approximate Dimensions: 55 by 28 metres)	0	27	27
Total	5	48	53

The supply of physical rectangular fields represents a service level of one rectangular field per 2,900 residents. As an industry best practice, an equivalency factor of 1.5 unlit rectangular field is applied to lit natural fields to recognize the fact that they can generally accommodate additional playing capacity during the evenings. With one lit multi-use field and four lit senior fields on natural grass, Whitby is providing an effective supply of 55.5 unlit rectangular and a service level of one rectangular field per 2,730 residents, which is slightly lower than the benchmark average (Table 21). In addition, there are other rectangular fields in Whitby, including those at the Whitby Soccer Centre, which are used exclusively by the Whitby Iroquois Soccer Club, and school fields. A lit artificial multi-use sports field is planned at the Whitby Sports Complex.

Table 21: Service Level Comparison, Outdoor Rectangular Fields

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	54.5	1 : 2,330
Hamilton	569,400	203	1 : 2,805
Markham	338,500	137.5	1 : 2,462
Oshawa	175,400	59.5	1 : 2,948
Pickering	99,200	46	1 : 2,157
Richmond Hill	202,000	52	1 : 3,885
Vaughan	323,100	146	1 : 2,213
Average	262,086	100	1 : 2,686
Whitby	151,500*	55.5	1 : 2,730

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.11.2 Market Conditions

Registrations in Ontario Soccer's affiliated organizations have been declining for well over a decade. In 2019, Ontario Soccer reported approximately 272,000 players which is 28% below registrations from 10 years prior.¹⁶ The regional soccer affiliate that covers Whitby is the Durham Region Soccer Association, where registration declined by 37% during the same period. The local affiliate is the Whitby Soccer Club, which boasted 5,849 players in 2019.

Ontario Soccer's declining registration is driven by factors such as aging demographic trends, growing competition from other sports and activities, and the emergence of elite soccer clubs and academies that are not affiliated with provincial governing body. Despite declining participation trends, soccer continues to be a popular sport due to its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate. The popularity of the sport drives the demand of soccer fields in most municipalities.

Since Ontario Soccer adopted its Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model, organizations have been evolving the delivery of their programs. With less emphasis on scoring and winning, LTPD focuses on improved coaching, fewer games, more ball time, and skill development. New standards specific to each age group were developed, which included varying coaching styles, number of players per team, playing time, field sizes, and other variables. Some of these new standards have a direct impact on the provision of soccer fields, particularly with respect to standards for field sizes and the number of players per team, which has influenced the demand for field time.

6.11.3 Community Input

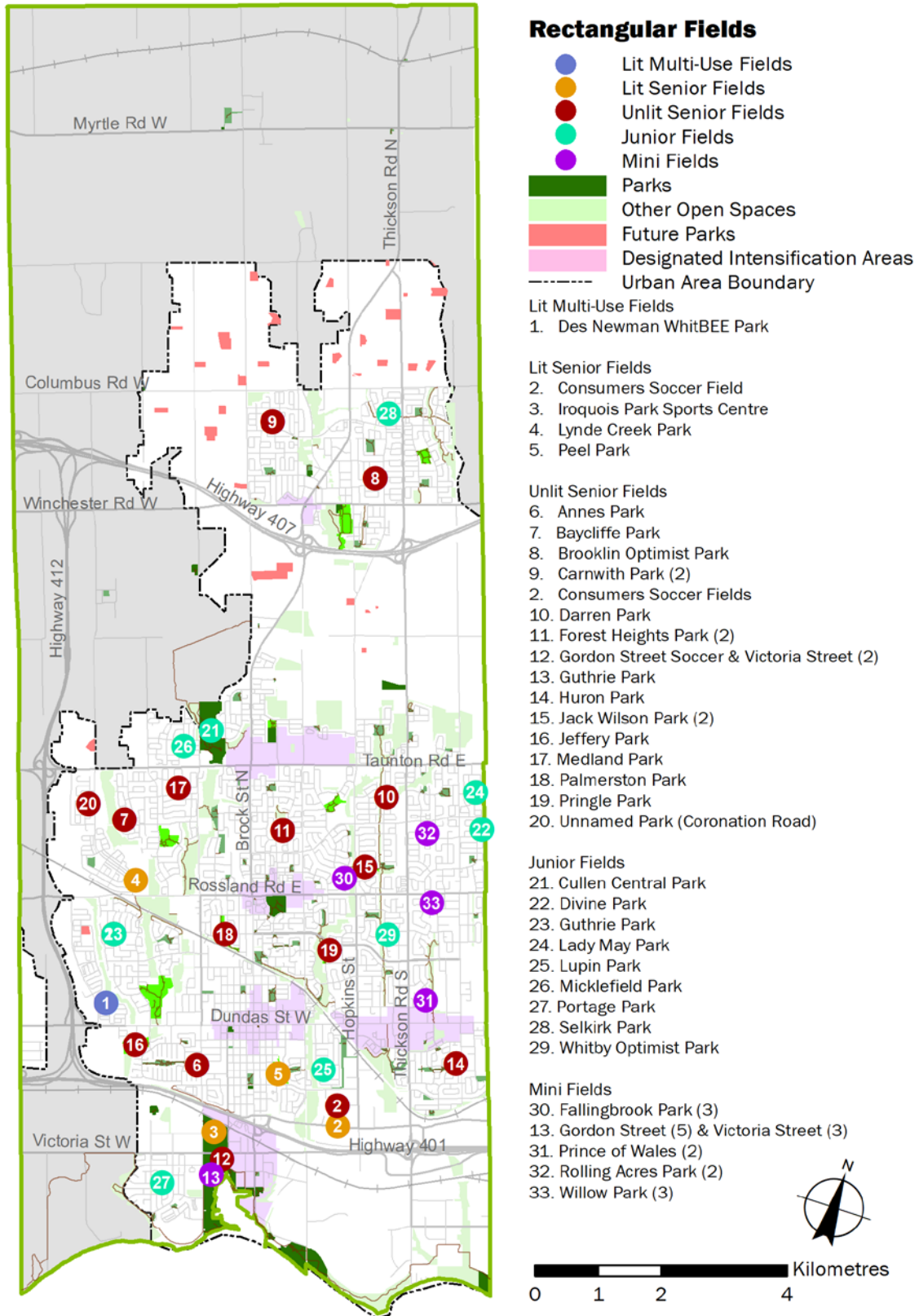
Concerns were raised about the Town's current approach to sports field scheduling. It was noted that scheduling is based on historical bookings which is a challenge for some groups to get additional time or for new organizations to find available field time. One group identified that games have been canceled due to the inability to find available field time. To meet field requirements, some groups reported using school fields.

Suggestions to enhance Whitby's sports fields included providing a rugby field with goal posts. It was reported that the Town's fields are undersized for rugby and that the only field that is suitably sized for the activity is at the Brooklin High School. Requests were also made for more artificial turf field, potentially at a multi-field complex and permanent, barrier-free washrooms. The recently constructed natural grass field at Des Newman WhitBEE Park accommodates rugby.

Approximately half (53%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in outdoor soccer fields, while 42% supported additional investment in football and rugby fields, which ranked 26th and 31st out of 36 facility types, respectively.

¹⁶ Ontario Soccer Association. Annual General Meeting Reports.

Figure 17: Distribution of Outdoor Rectangular Fields



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.11.4 Usage Profile

System-wide prime time¹⁷ usage of Whitby’s rectangular fields declined from an average of 71% to 16% between 2017 and 2019. This was primarily due to the introduction of field permit fees that were introduced after 2017 that resulted in a more accurate reflection of required field time in the Town. Since this occur, field bookings remained stable between 2018 and 2019. During the prime-time weekday period, lit senior fields were used the most in 2019 with 63% utilization, while all other fields were used between 37% and 22%, utilization (Figure 18). The fields had lower levels of use during the weekend, which ranged between 25% at lit senior fields to 7% at mini fields (Figure 19).

Figure 18: Summary of Weekday Prime Time Rectangular Field Utilization, 2017 to 2019

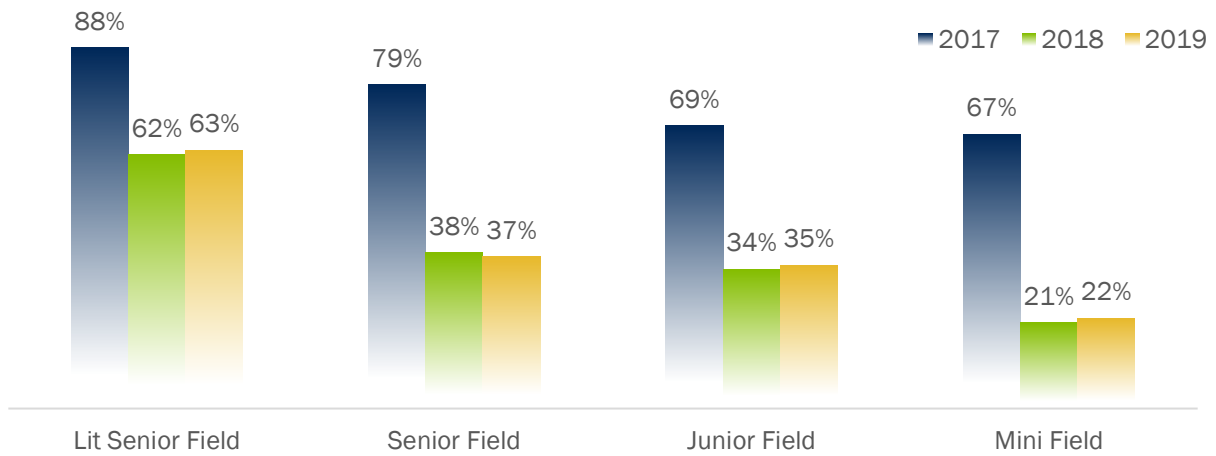
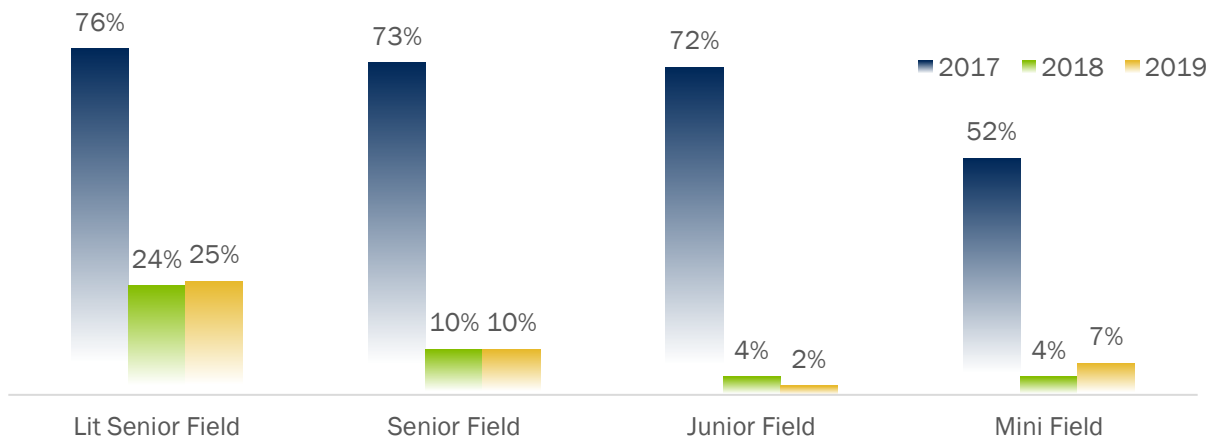


Figure 19: Summary of Weekend Prime Time Rectangular Field Utilization, 2017 to 2019



¹⁷ Prime time hours include 6 pm to 8:30 pm during the weekday (or 6 pm to 11 pm for lit fields) and 8 am to 8:30 pm during weekend (or 8 am to 11 pm for lit fields)

6.11.5 Analysis

The Sports Facility Strategy recommended a provision target of one per 3,200 residents. The Master Plan process revealed that there is a desire for a greater level of access to field time, although there are limited opportunities to construct new fields and with the aging population, exponential growth in soccer participation that groups historically experienced is not expected. These factors have a degree of validity today and while Whitby will continue to experience an aging population, the Town is also expected to attract young families seeking recreation activities, including sports, and given the affordable nature of soccer and its high fitness quotient, continuing to maintain the existing provision target is recommended.

Applying the recommended target to Whitby’s current population suggests that the Town is providing a surplus of fields, which is confirmed given that there is ample capacity within the existing supply. By the end of the planning period, there will be a need for 59 unlit equivalent fields, which is 3.5 unlit equivalent fields more than what is currently provided. This will partially be addressed through the construction of a lit artificial turf field at the Whitby Sports Complex, which will add 2.0 unlit equivalent fields to the Town’s supply and thus there will be a need for 1.5 unlit equivalent fields.

Whitby’s Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan recommends repurposing the 11 Gordon and Victoria Street Soccer Fields to other recreation uses, requiring that these existing fields be replaced to another site; this site currently has three senior fields and eight mini fields, which is equivalent to six senior fields as three mini fields can be accommodated on each senior size field. **As a result, the long-term need is for 7.5 unlit equivalent fields to accommodate all new field needs (+1.5 unlit equivalent fields) and to replace the Gordon and Victoria Street Soccer Fields (+6 unlit equivalent fields).**

Table 22: Projected Outdoor Rectangular Field Needs

Type	2022	2026	2031
Population	151,500	167,950	190,000
Existing Outdoor Rectangular Field Supply (unlit equivalents)	55.5	55.5	55.5
Projected Outdoor Rectangular Field Needs (1 per 3,200 residents)	47	52	59
Surplus (Deficit)*	8.5	3.5	(3.5)

*In addition to projected outdoor rectangular field needs, the Town will be required to replace the Gordon and Victoria Street Soccer Fields, which is equivalent to six unlit equivalent fields.

To optimize the use of land and programming opportunities, all new rectangular sports fields should be a senior field size that can also accommodate smaller field sizes (junior/mini). In accordance with the Town’s new parks planning framework, all new sports fields should be directed to a future sports field complex to optimize space at District and Local Parks for other outdoor recreation uses. Four lit senior fields should be constructed, which is equivalent to six unlit equivalent fields. The remaining 1.5 unlit equivalent fields that are required to satisfy needs could be accommodated by adding lights to an existing senior field, with potential locations being the north field at Consumers Soccer Fields, Annes Park, Baycliffe Park, Carnwith Park, Jack Wilson Park, and Jeffery Park. Depending on how many existing fields could be lit, this could potentially impact the number of fields that would need to be located at the proposed sports field complex. As an alternative strategy, exploring potential opportunities to establish partnerships and lease agreements with entities may also be considered to establish or gain public access to non-municipal lands for outdoor rectangular fields.

Potential opportunities to enhance the existing supply of outdoor rectangular fields is also encouraged. Over the long-term, consideration may also need to be given to repurposing soccer fields in strategic areas that are located within close proximity to intensification areas to reclaim park space for other active and passive outdoor uses to respond to the needs of residents within these growing areas such as at Prince of Wales Park, Huron Park and Palmerston Park, which generally have lower levels of utilization.

Through the consultation process, requests were made for a rugby field and artificial turf fields. It is anticipated that these needs will be met through recently completed or planned sports field projects at the Whitby Sports Complex, which will have a lit artificial multi-use turf field and at Des Newman WhitBEE Park, where there is a lit grass multi-us field.

Recommendations – Outdoor Rectangular Fields

29. Construct four lit senior grass fields (equivalent to six unlit fields) at a future sports field complex to accommodate future field needs and the replacement of the Gordon and Victoria Soccer Fields. As an alternative strategy or in conjunction, exploring potential opportunities to establish partnerships and lease agreements with entities may also be considered to establish or gain public access to non-municipal lands for outdoor rectangular fields.
30. Investigate the feasibility of adding lights to increase playing capacity, with potential locations being the north field at Consumers Soccer Fields, Annes Park, Baycliffe Park, Carnwith Park, Jack Wilson Park, and Jeffery Park.
31. Monitor the use of the fields at Prince of Wales Park, Huron Park, and Palmerston Park to inform long-term decisions to relocate these fields to reclaim park space for other active and passive outdoor recreation uses to support growth within designated intensification areas.



6.12 Ball Diamonds

6.12.1 Current Supply

Based on the Town's sports field inventory, Whitby permits 37 physical ball diamonds (Figure 20) (including public school diamonds), which are highlighted in the table below.

Table 23: Ball Diamond Inventory by Type

Type	Lit	Unlit	Total Supply
Hardball (Approximate Foul Line Distance: 97 metres)	5	0	5
Senior Softball (Approximate Foul Line Distance: 80 metres)	1	1	2
Junior Softball (Approximate Foul Line Distance: 60 metres)	8	22	30
Total	14	23	37

The supply of physical ball diamonds represents a service level of one ball diamond per 4,095 residents. As an industry best practice, an equivalency factor of 1.5 unlit ball diamonds are applied to lit diamonds to recognize the fact that they can generally accommodate additional playing capacity during the evenings. With 14 lit ball diamonds, Whitby has an effective supply of 44 unlit ball diamonds and a service level of one ball diamond per 3,443 residents, which is slightly higher compared to the benchmark average (Table 24).

Whitby's capital forecast allocates budget for improvements to the diamonds at Brooklin Memorial Park and Pringle Creek Park. Projects include adding safety netting, irrigation, and field lighting, as well as full redevelopment. A refurbishment of the fieldhouse is also planned at Brooklin Memorial Park.

Table 24: Service Level Comparison, Ball Diamonds

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	30	1 : 4,233
Hamilton	569,400	223	1 : 2,553
Markham	338,500	71	1 : 4,768
Oshawa	175,400	60	1 : 2,923
Pickering	99,200	38	1 : 2,611
Richmond Hill	202,000	46	1 : 4,391
Vaughan	323,100	76.5	1 : 4,224
Average	262,086	78	1 : 3,672
Whitby	151,500*	44	1 : 3,443

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.12.2 Market Conditions

After being considered a sport in decline for the better part of the past two decades, baseball and its variations (including softball, fastball, etc.) are experiencing a resurgence. Baseball Ontario reported nearly 16,000 competitive participants in 2019, which was a growth of 39% compared to 2009,¹⁸ though that figure excludes recreational/house leagues and non-affiliated ball groups (thus actual participation figures are greater). Baseball Ontario's regional affiliate – the Eastern Ontario Baseball Association – also grew at a higher rate, increasing by 48% during the same period. Whitby's primary ball groups include the Whitby Girls Softball Association, Whitby Minor Baseball Association, and the Brooklin Whitby Girls Rep Fastball Association, who, according to Town staff, had a combined membership of 2,318 players in 2019.



Regional growth in the sport is also being driven by efforts to be more inclusive of all residents. Organizations such as the Durham Region Challenger Baseball League was instrumental in establishing Durham Region's first accessible diamond, which was constructed at Willow Park in Whitby in 2019. The accessible diamond features a rubberized surface with large, accessible dugouts. The project was made possible with funding from Canadian Tire Jumpstart and other donors.

Interest in ball diamond sports is driven by factors such as a greater focus on skill development, and grassroots programs to engage children and youth at a young age to participate in the sport. The popularity of the Toronto Blue Jays is also a contributing factor. Since Baseball Canada adopted the Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model, organizations have focused on developing and honing skills and coaching styles, while fostering leadership. Suitable competition formats and facility types are also core components of the LTPD model, which has implications on ball diamond types and sizes that are required.

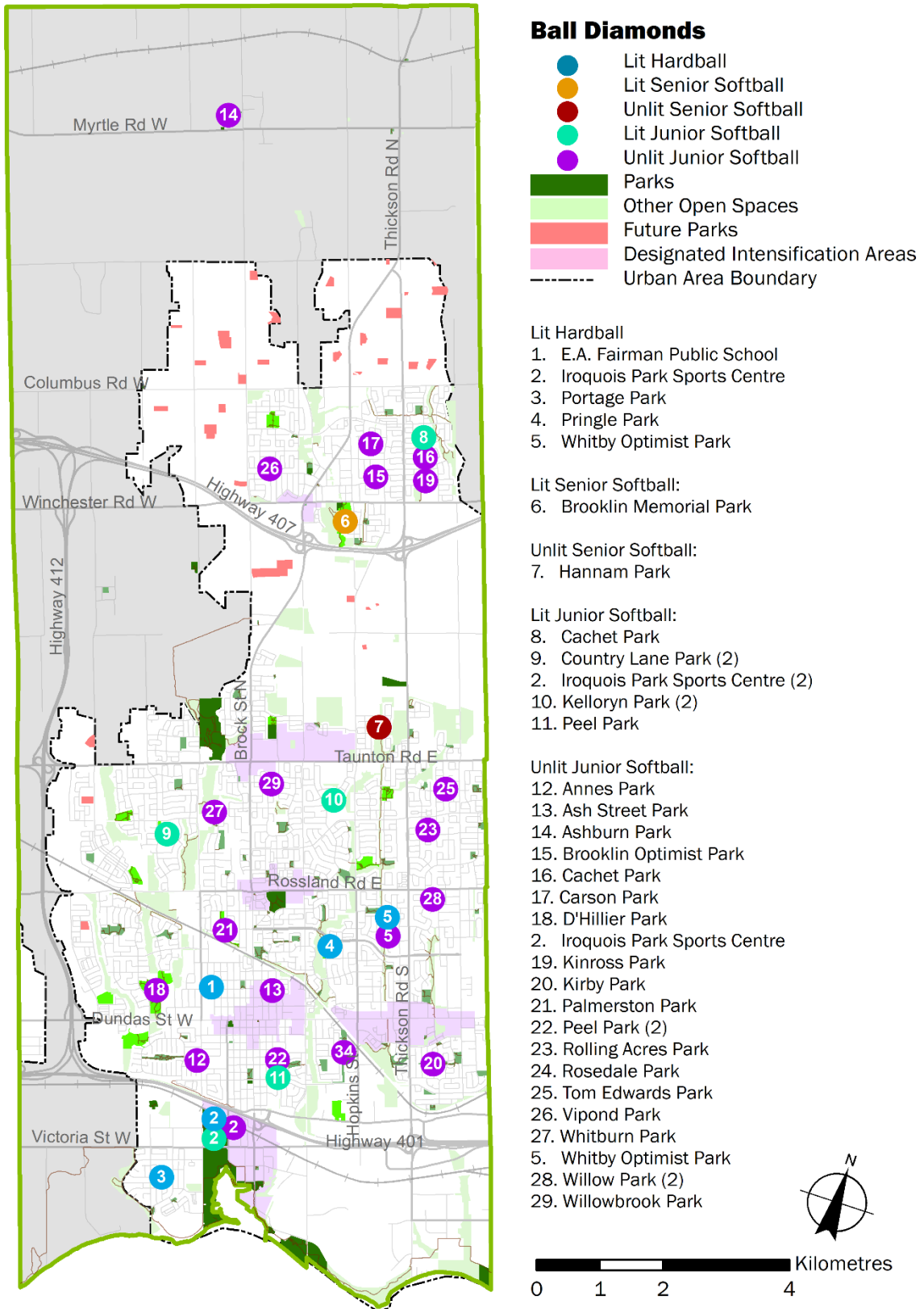
Ball diamond design is a key consideration for many municipalities and user groups to ensure that facilities are appropriate for their intended use. The emphasis placed on training and advancements in equipment has resulted in increases in performance, particularly among younger age groups. This has resulted in players hitting the ball further beyond the outfield or foul ball fencing, potentially creating hazards for other park users. This has resulted in a growing demand for senior-sized diamonds (e.g., diamonds with a minimum foul line distance of 80 metres for softball and 97 metres for baseball) that are large enough to accommodate adult and youth players. Location is also a key consideration as multi-diamond sites tend to be preferred among user groups where concurrent games and practices can take place at a single site, such as a sports field complex, which may also offer supporting amenities such as parking, lighting, spectator seating, change facilities and more. This approach also provides opportunities for tournaments and supports potential sport tourism and economic development, while reducing sports facility pressures at Whitby's Town and District Parks where compatibility challenges have been experienced with other park amenities and users.

6.12.3 Community Input

Requests were made for more adult-sized ball diamonds, preferably at a multi-diamond site that could support games and tournaments. It was reported that many adult groups are playing at locations that are undersized for their needs, such as at Peel Park. Locating ball diamonds at appropriate locations was also identified as some groups are playing at ball diamonds within neighbourhood parks, which may not have adequate amenities such as washrooms and parking. The desire for permanent washroom facilities was expressed. Water draining was also identified as an issue, such as at Cachet Park and at Iroquois Park Sports Centre. Other requests were made for home run fencing, lighting, storage space, and electric and water servicing. Nearly half (47%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in ball diamonds, ranking 29th out of 36 facility types.

¹⁸ Baseball Ontario. Annual General Meeting Reports.

Figure 20: Distribution of Ball Diamonds



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.12.4 Usage Profile

Between 2017 and 2019, system-wide utilization of Whitby’s ball diamonds declined from 65% to 58% during the prime-time period¹⁹. Ball diamonds were most used during the prime-time weekday period. In 2019, lit senior hardball diamonds were in high demand, which had a utilization rate of 86% during the weekday. Lit senior and junior softball diamonds also had relatively high usage levels at 78% and 74% utilization, respectively. Unlit senior and junior softball diamonds had lower usage levels at 64% and 57%, respectively (Figure 21).

During the weekend, lit senior hardball diamonds were in high demand at 81% utilization in 2019. Unlit senior softball diamonds were also well used at 77% utilization. All other ball diamonds had lower levels of use that ranged between 46% and 58% utilization. These results suggest that on a Town-wide basis, there is capacity to accommodate additional usage within the existing supply, recognizing that some locations may not be desirable to users due to diamond sizes and quality, access to amenities, and other factors, including a preference for booking diamonds during the weekday period (Figure 22).

Figure 21: Summary of Weekday Prime Time Ball Diamond Utilization, 2017 to 2019

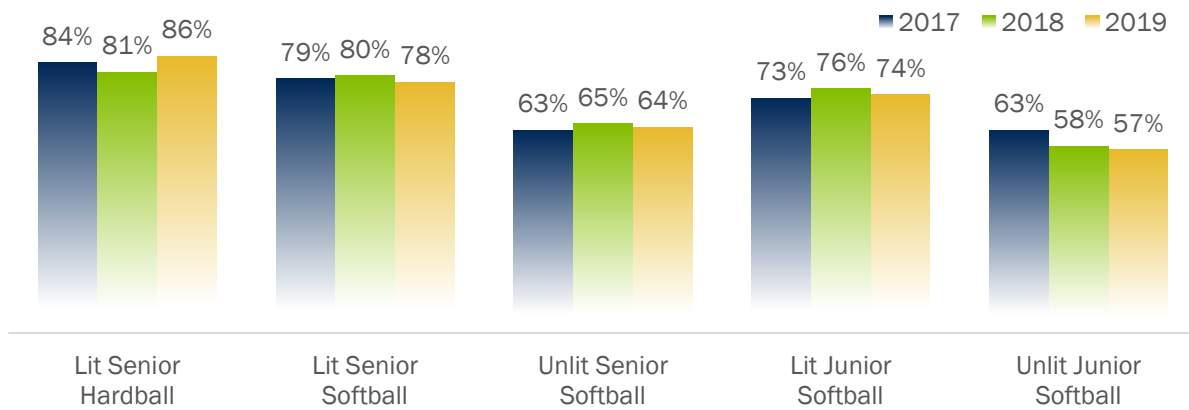
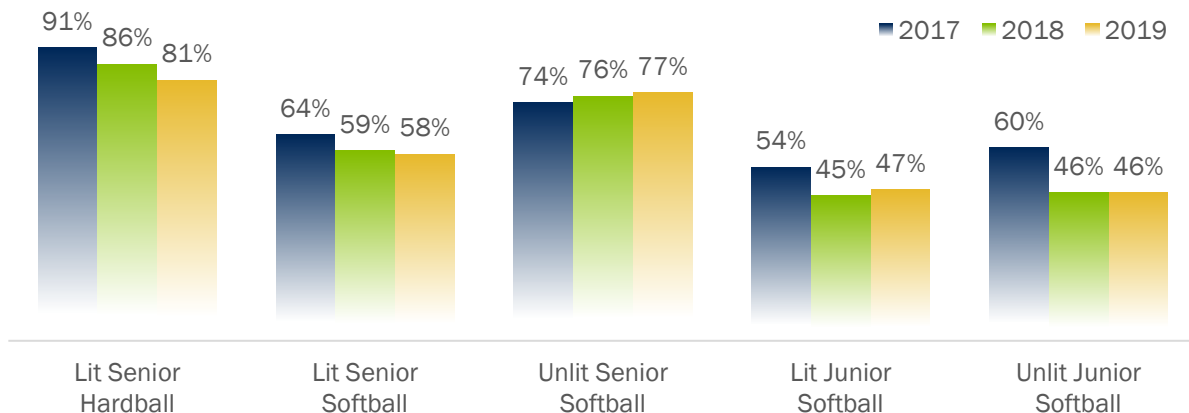


Figure 22: Summary of Weekend Prime Time Ball Diamond Utilization, 2017 to 2019



¹⁹ Prime time hours include 6 pm to 8:30 pm during the weekday (or 6 pm to 11 pm for lit diamonds) and 8 am to 8:30 pm during weekend (or 8 am to 11 pm for lit diamonds)

6.12.5 Analysis

The Sports Facility Strategy recommended that the Town adopt a population-based target of one per 3,500 residents to guide ball diamond needs. It is recommended that this target continue to be used as many of the factors considered in this target continue to be relevant today. The current level of service aligns with benchmark municipalities, and it recognizes that the Town provides a number of high-quality diamonds across Whitby. It is known that user groups utilize school diamonds that assists the Town with minimizing land consumption, although it is not always ideal as the quality of play at these diamonds tends to be sub-par compared to Town-maintained diamonds.

While it is recognized that Whitby's population is aging and there is a growing shift towards non-sport activities, baseball is a cyclical sport and through the Master Plan consultation process, there was a strong desire for more senior-size ball diamonds (e.g., minimum foul ball distance of approximately 80 metres for softball or 97 metres for baseball), noting that many of the Town's existing diamonds are undersized. While users have been experiencing facility constraints, they have done well to manage the use of available diamonds. Given the pressure for larger sized ball diamonds, new diamonds should be senior size to accommodate both adult and youth play. The development of junior size diamonds is not recommended.

Application of this target suggests that there is a need for 54 unlit equivalent ball diamonds by 2031, which is 10 more than what is currently available. Given the pressure for larger sized ball diamonds, new diamond should be senior size to accommodate both adult and youth play. The development of junior size diamonds is not recommended. This will be partially addressed through the planned development of future ball diamonds including one lit and one unlit ball diamond at future parks in West Whitby, which will be equivalent to 2.5 unlit fields. As a result, the long-term need is for 7.5 unlit equivalent diamonds.

Table 25: Projected Ball Diamond Needs

Type	2022	2026	2031
Population	151,500	167,950	190,000
Existing Ball Diamond Supply (unlit equivalents)	44	44	44
Projected Ball Diamond Needs (1 per 3,500 residents)	43	48	54
Surplus (Deficit)*	1	(4)	(10)

Consistent with the Town's new parks planning framework, new ball diamonds should be directed to a future sports field complex. The development of a multi-diamond site strengthens Whitby's ability to accommodate growth related needs for community games, while supporting tournament opportunities and achieving operational efficiencies for Town staff and user group volunteers. To optimize the use of land, five lit senior ball diamonds are recommended at the sports field complex (equivalent to 7.5 unlit diamonds). At least one lit diamond should be designed for hardball, recognizing that the Town's existing hardball diamonds are the most utilized locations and are under pressure. Additional hardball diamonds should be considered subject to monitoring usage to inform future decisions.

While all new ball diamonds are recommended to be located at a single site, maintaining access to ball diamonds at existing parks is encouraged to ensure that there is access to neighbourhood level ball diamonds to support casual play and organized programming youth programming, although it is known that diamond users generally drive to the facilities that they use and are likely to travel further distances to access higher quality, multi-diamond sites, particularly for competitive players. As a result, the use of existing, smaller diamonds continues to be suitable for younger, recreational league players at appropriate locations.

Additionally, the Town should explore opportunities to undertake strategic improvements to its existing ball diamond supply to facilitate a greater degree of use as user groups expressed the desire for various enhancements such as drainage, fencing, lighting, safety netting, and storage. Opportunities to enlarge undersized ball diamonds should also be explored.

Recommendations – Ball Diamonds

32. Construct five lit senior diamond (equivalent to 7.5 unlit diamonds) at a future sports field complex. At least one lit diamond should be designed for hardball. Additional hardball diamonds should be considered subject to monitoring usage to inform future needs.
33. Initiate a review of existing ball diamonds and undertake strategic improvements to facilitate an enhanced playing experience and strengthen utilization. This may include addressing drainage, fencing, storage, lighting, and installing safety netting. Opportunities to enlarge existing diamonds should also be explored.

6.13 Cricket Fields

6.13.1 Current Supply

There are two temporary cricket fields in Whitby at Brooklin Memorial Park and Jeffery Park, which provides a service level of one per 75,750 residents and is the highest level of service compared to the benchmark average (Table 26).

Table 26: Service Level Comparison, Cricket Pitches

Municipality	2021 Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	1	1 : 127,000
Hamilton	569,400	2	1 : 284,700
Markham	338,500	3	1 : 112,833
Oshawa	175,400	2	1 : 87,700
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	0	n/a
Vaughan	323,100	1	1 : 323,100
Average	262,086	2	1 : 172,422
Whitby	151,500*	2	1 : 75,750

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.13.2 Market Conditions

Cricket is experiencing strong growth in Canada, which is being driven by immigration from countries where the sport is played such as South Asia and the Caribbean. Cricket Canada estimates that there are approximately 130,000 players and over 800 clubs across the country, with the largest concentration of players residing in the Greater Toronto Area, particularly in Brampton which is the “Cricket Capital of Canada” that provides 19 cricket pitches (including one tapeball grounds) for approximately 9,000 Brampton residents. Locally, the Whitby Cricket Club has approximately 250 players.

Cricket is played with a bat and ball between two teams, each composed of 11 players. There are multiple formats/styles of play that vary in duration and rules. At the international level, there are three variations known as Test Cricket, One Day Internationals, and Twenty20 (T20) Internationals. At the community level, playing formats vary considerably with altered rules. Common forms of the played sport are described below:

- Long-format cricket is typically played over an 8-hour period (40 to 50 overs) and is played for competitive purposes.
- Short-format cricket allows the game to be played within a one-to-four-hour period. This is the fastest growing format in Canada, usually in the form of T20/T25 (e.g., 20 to 25 overs).
- Tennis ball / Tape-ball cricket uses a tennis ball, or a tennis ball wrapped in tape to add additional weight. Given that a tennis ball is not as hard as a cricket ball, safety equipment is generally not worn.

6.13.3 Community Input

Several requests were made through the consultation process for cricket pitches to support local growth and playing opportunities. Discussions with cricket organizations found that local players would previously travel to other municipalities to play in different organizations; however, those groups are generally unable to accommodate Whitby players. It was reported that some casual games take place within open fields, parking lots or other informal spaces. 40% of community survey respondents supported additional investment in cricket pitches, which ranked 32nd out of 36 facility types.

6.13.4 Usage Profile

The Town's two cricket field schedules revealed that both locations are well used with a total of 67.5 hours per week. During the playing season, both locations are used daily during the evenings throughout the week from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm (or 8:30 pm on Friday). Both locations are also fully booked during the weekends from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm and as a result, there is no available time to accommodate additional use. The Whitby Cricket Club is the primary user of the Town's cricket fields, although there are also groups that book time, including the Scarborough Cricket Association. It should be noted that cricket groups and members are not tied to play in their communities of residency like traditional sports leagues such as baseball, softball, and soccer. As a result, organizations and players may book time across the GTA.

6.13.5 Analysis

At the time when the Town's Sports Facility Strategy was prepared, cricket was a relatively new sport in Whitby, and it has continued to gain traction over the years. Provision models vary by municipality that have demonstrated sustained demand. Some communities target a service level of one per 75,000 to 150,000 residents, while other municipalities consider factors such as local demand, cultural diversity and immigration levels, current usage levels, the presence of an active cricket group, and land availability given major site requirements associated with these types of facilities. Many municipalities, including Whitby, have been required to respond to pressure for organizations to provide cricket facilities, often as a temporary measure to monitor demand to inform decisions related to constructing a permanent facility.

Due to the ad hoc nature of providing temporary cricket facilities, they may not always be ideally designed, sized, or located. One of the primary challenges with providing these types of facilities is the availability of land to construct an appropriately sized cricket field that is suitable for community and adult league play. As a best practice, municipal providers design cricket fields with a diameter of 130 to 150 metres, which often requires a land area of approximately 2.2 hectares, although this does not account for ancillary space such as warm up areas, spectator seating, and parking. The fields at Brooklin Memorial Park and Jeffery Park are undersized based on these standards. The quality of facilities has also been a challenge for users. For example, concerns have been raised about the quality of the cricket pitch at Brooklin Memorial Park, although the Town completed improvements in upgrading the playing surface in 2023. The Jeffery Park location is also not ideal due to the proximity to the abutting residential area and the presence of Lynde Creek that often results in lost

cricket balls. Due to the size, the Jeffery Park location is generally only suitable for casual cricket play and youth programming.

The availability of time has also been a concern for users. As previously mentioned, the Town's two temporary cricket fields are fully booked throughout the evening and during the weekends. Groups have expressed the desire for more playing hours, although there is no more capacity at the two locations. As a result, groups have resorted to casual play and practices at other sports fields and ball diamonds, but this is often in conflict with permitted users.

Given the above noted constraints, constructing a new lit cricket field is recommended that will assist users with attracting youth and adult participants, expanding programming and achieving long-term growth and success. This is particularly important as Whitby's population continues to diversify and attract residents from cricket playing countries, driving interest in the sport either as a participant or spectator. Locating the new cricket field at a future sports field complex is recommended approach as there are no viable locations within the Whitby's current park supply that would be suitable to accommodate a facility of this size, along with supporting amenities. Engaging cricket users is encouraged as part of the design process to ensure that the new field responds to their needs. As a best practice, and to optimize the use of land, the cricket field can be developed as a dedicated field or integrated with two outdoor sports fields. Once the new cricket field is in place, it would allow the existing fields to continue to be programmed for practices and youth programming to ensure that there is a good distribution of cricket opportunities across the Town.

As a best practice, the development of future multi-field or multi-diamond sports facilities should be designed with the ability to accommodate cricket pitch overlay if additional cricket facilities are required to meet additional needs, particular peak demand periods. Monitoring use of existing cricket fields will help inform future needs.

Recommendations – Cricket Fields

34. Construct a lit cricket field at a future sports field complex that is suitably designed for adult play. Consultation with the cricket community is encouraged to inform the design process. Once established, continue to maintain the existing cricket fields for casual play, practices, and youth programming.
35. The development of future multi-field soccer or baseball facilities should be designed to allow for a cricket pitch overlay that spans adjacent sports fields. This overlay will permit the future conversion of these fields to cricket plan to address changing needs, which should be informed by monitoring use of existing sports fields.

6.14 Outdoor Lacrosse Boxes

6.14.1 Current Supply

Whitby offers two lacrosse boxes at Peel Park and Willow Park. Both locations offer an asphalt playing surface with supporting amenities, including rink boards, and seating for players and spectators; lighting is also available at Peel Park. This supply results in a service level of one outdoor lacrosse box per 75,750 residents. Whitby is the only benchmark community that provides an outdoor lacrosse box (Table 27).

Table 27: Service Level Comparison, Outdoor Lacrosse Boxes

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	n/a
Hamilton	569,400	0	n/a
Markham	338,500	0	n/a
Oshawa	175,400	0	n/a
Pickering	99,200	0	n/a
Richmond Hill	202,000	0	n/a
Vaughan	323,100	0	n/a
Average	262,086	0	n/a
Whitby	151,500*	2	1 : 75,750

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.14.2 Market Condition

Lacrosse is one of North America's oldest sports and is primarily played by youth and young adults. According to the Canadian Lacrosse Association, the most common types of lacrosse are box lacrosse (played indoors or outdoors on a hard surface), field lacrosse, and inter-lacrosse (an introductory-level non-contact form of lacrosse that uses modified equipment).

The Whitby Minor Lacrosse Association is the local organization that provides local lacrosse activities to youth and young adults. The organization reported that while interest in the sport has declined in previous years, recent efforts to promote the sport to attract new players has resulted in a slight increase in participation. Participation in house league lacrosse also increased following the Ontario Lacrosse Association's move to relax border restrictions, which has allowed the organization to draw players from other centres such as Oshawa and Clarington.

6.14.3 Community Input

Limited community input was received regarding the Town's outdoor lacrosse boxes. One-third (33%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in outdoor lacrosse boxes, ranking 34th out of 36 facility types. While the Town does not have any dedicated lacrosse fields, a community organization reported that they have used Gordon Street fields in the past for practices only, as they were not used for games. The local organization reports that efforts are being made to increase their programming by attracting new players, including from other municipalities, although it is recognized that adjacent communities also have established lacrosse organizations in Oshawa and Clarington, as well as regional organizations.

6.14.4 Usage Profile

Booking schedules between 2017 and 2019 were reviewed, which revealed that the Town's two outdoor lacrosse boxes were generally booked between April and October. During this three year-period, the total number of booked hours declined by more than two-thirds (37%) to 204 hours in 2019. The outdoor lacrosse box at Peel Park was booked more than Willow Park in 2019, which made up approximately 90% of all booked hours. The majority of booked hours took place during weekday evenings (6:00 pm to 8:30 pm) and the weekend (8:00 am to 8:30 pm).

Willow Park in particular has had limited use where the number of permitted hours declined from 75 to 20 hours between 2016 and 2019. By contrast, use at Peel Park increased from 157 hours to 184 hours during the same time period. It is clear that the outdoor lacrosse box at Peel Park is the preferred location. It offers a higher quality playing experience with a concrete surface, spectator seating, arena boards and lighting to support late night play (which is a contributing factor to a higher utilization level compared to Willow Park). By contrast, Willow Park is an older facility with an asphalt surface with wooden rink boards and seating.

6.14.5 Analysis

Outdoor lacrosse boxes are generally provided to respond to community needs, rather than to meet a service target. Generally speaking, lacrosse boxes are primarily played indoors on arena floor pads during the spring and summer seasons when the ice is removed. Outdoor lacrosse boxes are provided to a lesser extent, which was demonstrated earlier as Whitby is the only community that provides this type of facility compared to benchmark municipalities. Whitby Minor Lacrosse Association uses all three of Whitby's arena floor pads for their programming, as well as the outdoor lacrosse boxes at Peel Park and Willow Park, although use of the two outdoor box locations have been declining. It is recognized that the supply of indoor locations for lacrosse will increase further with the completion of the Whitby Sports Complex, which may further reduce the use of the Town's outdoor lacrosse facilities.

With an increase in indoor locations to play lacrosse and declining use of outdoor box locations, it is recommended that the Town should decommission the outdoor lacrosse box at Willow Park and direct outdoor bookings to the Peel Park location. Visual observation suggest that the asphalt surface is in good condition, and it could be repurposed for other in-demand uses identified through this Master Plan such as a basketball court or pickleball courts.

Recommendations – Outdoor Lacrosse Boxes

36. Decommission the outdoor lacrosse box at Willow Park and re-purpose the surface for other in-demand uses such as a basketball court or pickleball courts.

6.15 Racquet Sport Courts

6.15.1 Current Supply

There are 30 tennis sport courts in Whitby, including 20 lit and 17 unlit courts, which achieves a service level of one per 5,050 residents and is on par with the benchmark average (Table 28). Two of the Town's tennis courts are multi-lined for pickleball. This is a practice that many benchmark municipalities have employed to respond quickly to the growth of the sport. Whitby also provides seven dedicated pickleball courts, resulting in a total of nine pickleball courts when including the two multi-lined court locations which achieves a service level of one per 16,833 residents (Table 29). While this is slightly lower compared to the benchmark average, Whitby is planning for the development of 14 new dedicated pickleball courts at the Whitby Spots Complex. The distribution of tennis and pickleball courts is illustrated in Figure 23.

Table 28: Service Level Comparison, Tennis Courts

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Dedicated Courts		Multi-Lined Courts		Total Courts	
		Supply	Service Level	Supply	Service Level	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	10	1 : 12,700	7	1 : 18,143	17	1 : 7,471
Hamilton	569,400	67	1 : 8,499	12	1 : 47,450	79	1 : 7,208
Markham	338,500	71	1 : 4,768	5	1 : 67,700	76	1 : 4,454
Oshawa	175,400	15	1 : 11,693	8	1 : 21,925	23	1 : 7,626
Pickering	99,200	20	1 : 4,960	4	1 : 24,800	24	1 : 4,133
Richmond Hill	202,000	89	1 : 2,270	4	1 : 50,500	93	1 : 2,172
Vaughan	323,100	115	1 : 2,810	19	1 : 17,005	130	1 : 2,411
Average	262,086	55	1 : 6,814	8	1 : 35,360	64	1 : 5,068
Whitby	151,500	28	1 : 5,410	2	1 : 75,750	30	1 : 5,050

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

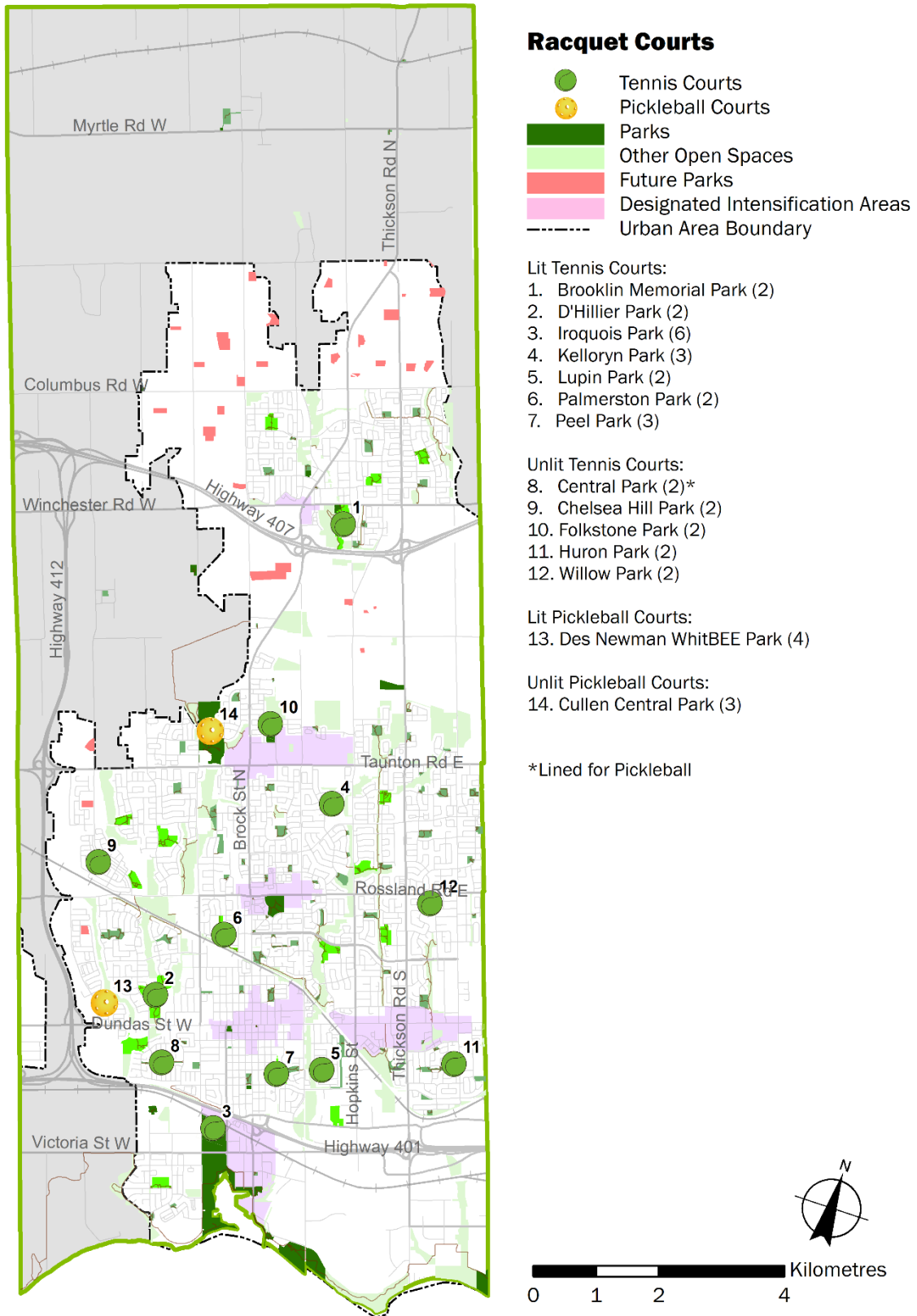
Table 29: Service Level Comparison, Pickleball Courts

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Dedicated Courts		Multi-Lined Courts		Total Courts	
		Supply	Service Level	Supply	Service Level	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	0	7	1 : 18,143	7	1 : 18,143
Hamilton	569,400	24	1 : 23,725	12	1 : 47,450	36	1 : 15,817
Markham	338,500	14	1 : 24,179	5	1 : 67,700	19	1 : 17,816
Oshawa	175,400	8	1 : 21,925	8	1 : 21,925	16	1 : 10,963
Pickering	99,200	0	0	6	1 : 16,533	6	1 : 16,533
Richmond Hill	202,000	12	1 : 16,833	4	1 : 50,500	16	1 : 12,625
Vaughan	323,100	0	0	19	1 : 17,005	19	1 : 17,005
Average	262,086	8	1 : 12,380	9	1 : 34,179	17	1 : 15,557
Whitby	151,500	7	1 : 21,643	2	1 : 75,750	9	1 : 16,833

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).



Figure 23: Distribution of Racquet Courts



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.15.2 Market Conditions in Tennis

Research suggests that tennis is experiencing a resurgence over the past several years. Tennis Canada reported that 6.6 million Canadians played tennis at least once in 2018, a growth of more than 23% since 2014. Nearly 3 million Canadians are frequent players – those who play at least once a week during the tennis season – which is twice as many compared to 2014.^{20, 21}

The popularity of tennis can be attributed to a number of factors such as the growing segment of baby boomers that seek social, and to some degree, lower impact activities. There is also a focus on promoting the sport at the grassroots level. Tennis Canada reported that in 2018, more than 200,000 children under the age of 12 were considered frequent tennis players, which was an increase of 40% compared to 2015.²² Part of this growth can also be linked to the success of Canadian men and women currently competing on the professional tours, including Bianca Andreescu's US Open championship win in 2019.

Additionally, the tennis-playing community has been working diligently to generate interest in the sport. In 2017, Tennis Canada hosted Tennis Day across the country, which had activities such as clinics, lessons, exhibitions, and 'bring a friend' events. The purpose of Tennis Day was to introduce the sport to people that have never played before and to show them how easy it is to learn the game. Following the event, Tennis Canada indicated that 80% of tennis clubs reported an increase in participation. The Town offers tennis lessons to all age groups, which are complemented by programming provided by the Whitby Tennis Club.

6.15.3 Market Conditions in Pickleball

Pickleball is a lower intensity sport that can be played indoors in a gymnasium or outdoors on dedicated or multi-use courts that are shared with tennis. As improved data on utilization and participation levels becomes available, some municipalities have been constructing dedicated pickleball courts with appropriate specifications given that they are smaller in size and have a lower net height compared to tennis. Adults 55+ wishing to remain physically active are driving participation growth in pickleball to levels where it is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada (although it is recognized that the sport is also attracting younger players). The popularity of pickleball continues to spread across the Province and its prominence is further bolstered by being played at the Ontario 55+ Summer Games.

Pickleball Canada states that the number of players across Canada has grown ten-fold from 6,000 to 60,000 between 2012 and 2018, and the number of members with the governing body now stands at more than 22,000 individuals. Whereas Pickleball Canada recorded fewer than 500 pickleball courts in 2014, this number increased to more than 2,000 courts nation-wide in 2017.²³ What once was a casual, energetic activity, pickleball has grown in popularity as many adults 55+ (including baby boomers) seek active leisure opportunities, along with pickleball organizations also placing a focus on recruiting younger ages to participate as well. Whitby has responded to the growing popularity of pickleball through the completion of three new dedicated pickleball courts at Cullen Central Park and four at Des Newman WhitBEE Park; an additional 14 dedicated pickleball courts will be constructed at the Whitby Sports Complex.

²⁰ Tennis Canada. 2018 Annual Report.

²¹ Charlton Strategic Research. 2014 Canadian Tennis Brand Health Study.

²² Ibid.

²³ Pickleball Canada. April 2018 Newsletter. p.3

6.15.4 Usage Profile

All courts are available for public use, although the Town permits time to community organizations during specific time periods. Booking schedules from 2017 to 2019 reveal that the tennis courts at the Iroquois Park Sports Centre are well used by the Whitby Tennis Club between May to September. The courts at this location are booked at near capacity (90%+) during weekday evenings from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm. Lower usage levels were observed during weekday daytime, late evenings (after 8:30 pm) and during the weekends. The Town also permits time at Brooklin Memorial Park, Folkstone Park, and Peel Park for tennis programming, although usage at these locations range from low to moderate (50% or less).

6.15.5 Community Input

Many requests were made throughout the consultation process for more pickleball courts in Whitby. Half (51%) of the community survey respondents supported additional investment in outdoor pickleball courts, which ranked 27th out of 36 facility types. To a lesser degree, requests were received for more tennis courts. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in tennis courts, which ranked 21st out of 36 facility types. To complement the Town's outdoor courts, requests were also made for indoor tennis and pickleball courts. The public and stakeholders mentioned that they currently travel to other municipalities such as Ajax, Oshawa, and Pickering for winter tennis activities.

6.15.6 Analysis

Tennis Courts

Whitby's Sports Facility Strategy adopted a target for tennis courts at a rate of one per 5,000 residents, which is consistent with other municipalities across Ontario. Carrying this target forward is recommended to continue guiding tennis needs over the next 10 years. This would require the Town to provide a total of 38 tennis courts by 2031, which is eight more than what is currently available. The Town currently has plans to construct nine new tennis courts at future District Parks, which is one more than what is currently required, but is deemed to be appropriate to strengthen the distribution of courts. Three of these planned tennis courts will be lit and located at the Whitby Sports Complex. Recognizing that the Town currently provides a strong distribution of tennis courts in established areas of Whitby (south of Highway 407), the remaining number of planned tennis courts should be located in Brooklin to serve growth related needs. Ideally, the Town should aim to provide two courts at three District Parks in Brooklin to provide a strong geographic distribution of tennis courts. Alternatively, tennis courts could also be accommodated at a new District Park in West Whitby.

Table 30: Projected Tennis Court Needs

Type	2022	2026	2031
Population	151,500	167,950	190,000
Existing Tennis Court Supply	30	30	30
Projected Tennis Court Needs (1 per 5,000 residents)	30	34	38
Surplus (Deficit)*	1	(4)	(8)

Whitby is well served with tennis courts across the Town and opportunities exist to enhance the quality of existing locations to strengthen the playing experience. The Town is currently planning to renew aging lighting components at D'Hiller Park and Brooklin Memorial Park; the latter location may be subject to a major park renewal and at this time, the merits of continuing to provide courts and the abutting skate park should be examined. The Town should review the condition of lighting fixtures at other tennis court locations to identify additional locations that may warrant renewal. Upgrading tennis courts with painted coating should also be considered to enhance the playing experience. The Town currently offers this at Iroquois Park, Peel Park, Folkstone Park, and Palmerston Park. The Town should monitor the use of its tennis courts to identify other high demand locations that may benefit from painted surfaces or other related amenities.

Pickleball Courts

Due to the rapid rise of the sport, very few municipalities have established targets for outdoor pickleball courts. Most municipalities provide pickleball courts on an ad hoc basis to respond to demand, monitoring use and adding more courts and locations along the way. Initially, communities (including Whitby) painted pickleball lines on outdoor tennis courts. However, this approach has limitations (e.g., net height, line confusion, and conflicts over access) and is not recommended as a long-term solution where there is sustained demand for tennis. Some municipalities have also established temporary pickleball courts on a variety of other locations such as ball hockey rinks, arena floors, and parking lots (e.g., temporary pop-up pickleball courts are located in Richmond Hill and Markham). Consistent with Whitby's current practice, constructing dedicated pickleball courts is the preferred approach.

Municipalities generally have not adopted a standard level of service for outdoor pickleball courts. Sector research revealed that Pickleball British Columbia recommends a target of one pickleball court per 10,000 residents; however, there are qualitative factors that are also considered such as the quality and location of the facilities and the playing experience as research suggests that there is a desire for high quality, multi-court facilities that can support league play rather than just having a strong supply of pickleball courts. In fact, it is known that users are willing to travel past lower quality courts, such as shared courts or locations with one or two pickleball courts, to access higher quality courts that can support league play and the social aspect of the game.

Whitby is currently providing pickleball courts at one per 16,833 residents, which is expected to improve during the planning period. With 14 pickleball courts planned to be located at the Whitby Sports Complex, the Town's total supply will increase to 23 courts by the end of the planning period, yielding a service level of one per 8,260 residents (based on a projected 2031 population of 190,000). This will be higher than the target recommended by Pickleball British Columbia, suggesting that Whitby will be providing a strong level of service, although future opportunities should continue to be explored to strengthen distribution and respond to the popularity of the sport. A high-level review suggests that there is a gap on the east side of Whitby, where there may be opportunities to accommodate courts at Willow Park, potentially through re-purposing of the underutilized outdoor lacrosse box.

The Town's approach to creating a major pickleball complex aligns with the growing trend of constructing large scale, multi-court facilities. Whitby follows other communities that have completed or are in the process of developing similar projects. Markham and Hamilton currently provide an eight and 12-court facility, respectively. This approach not only addresses the users' desire for quality playing experiences, but it also addresses increasing challenges with finding appropriate locations for these types of facilities as communities are facing growing public concerns with pickleball courts being located too close to residential areas due to both the racket noise and the social nature of the game. As a result, some communities have been required to stop using pickleball courts or prohibit pickleball activities on tennis courts with shared playing lines due to the noise impacts. Providing noise barriers and screening can be an option but this may not always be effective, will have cost implications, and may disrupt sightlines resulting in potential safety hazards.

To alleviate noise issues, consideration needs to be given to setback distances. A review of facility design guidelines from other municipalities suggests that pickleball courts should have a separation distance that ranges between 20 to 25 metres, or 30 metres for lit courts. These guidelines predate the growing noise concerns many municipalities have been experiencing and enhanced setback requirements need to be contemplated. The British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association recommends a minimum setback from residential property lines of 50 metres for two pickleball courts, increasing to 75 metres or more for four or more pickleball courts. Reduced setbacks are permitted when noise abatement measures are used such as landscaping, berms, and attaching noise barriers to fencing.

Adopting an enhanced setback distance is recommended for Whitby to address noise concerns. This will need to be considered in the design of future pickleball courts. While these setback requirements may limit opportunities to accommodate pickleball courts at existing parks, they may be incorporated in future parks through thoughtful design, as well as through park renewal projects. To further minimize noise concerns, users could also be encouraged to use foam balls and/or “green zone” paddles that are recognized in the industry as approved paddles that reduce noise.

As a best practice, the Town should target to provide a maximum of two pickleball courts at local parks and four or more courts at Town or District Parks with enhanced setback distances and noise abatement measures. Other supporting amenities should be considered at each location including, but not limited to, painted acrylic playing surfaces, wind screening, shade, seating, etc.

Recommendations – Racquet Sport Courts

37. Construct six lit tennis courts at three District Parks (two courts at each location) in Brooklin and West Whitby. Painted surfaces should be considered at strategic locations.
38. As part of renewing Brooklin Memorial Park, examine the merits of continuing to provide tennis courts and the abutting skate park at this location or if they should be relocated.
39. Investigate opportunities to provide pickleball courts on the east side of Whitby, potentially at Willow Park.
40. When providing pickleball courts, limit the number to a maximum of two pickleball courts at Local Parks and four or more courts at Town and District Parks with consideration given to enhanced setback distances and noise abatement measures (e.g., landscaping, berms, and other noise barriers). Consideration should also be given to other supporting amenities, including painted surfaces, wind screening, shade, seating, etc.

6.16 Basketball & Multi-Purpose Courts

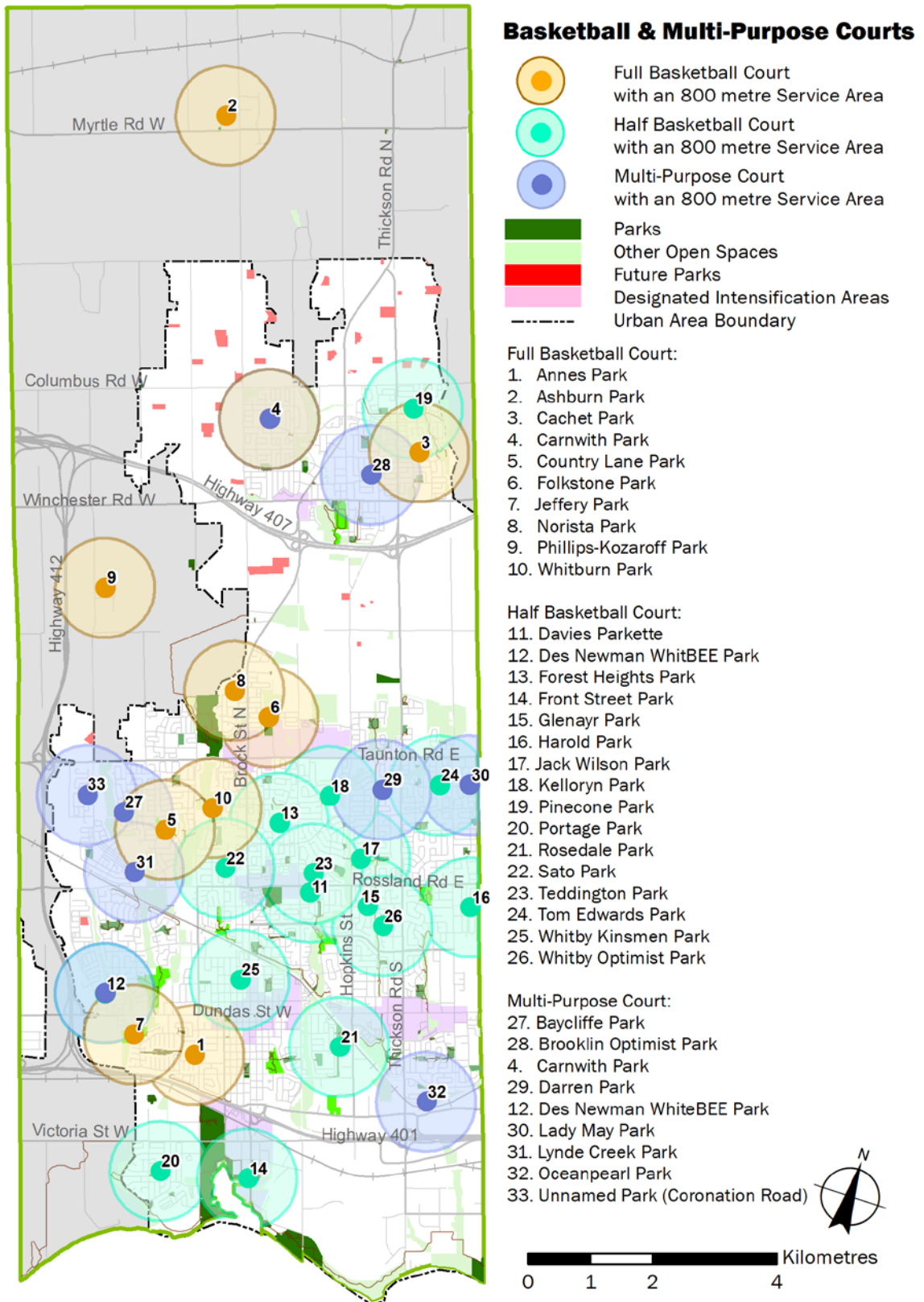
6.16.1 Current Supply

Whitby has 35 hard surface courts, including 10 full-size basketball courts, 16 half-basketball courts and nine multi-purpose courts that are lined for basketball and ball hockey (Figure 24). This supply translates into a service level of one per 4,328 residents or one per 617 youth residents (Table 31).

Table 31: Service Level Comparison, Basketball & Multi-Purpose Courts

Municipality	2021 Youth Population (Ages 10 to 19)	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	16,870	19	1 : 888
Hamilton	63,245	126	1 : 502
Markham	41,315	24	1 : 1,721
Oshawa	20,025	28	1 : 715
Pickering	11,530	12	1 : 961
Richmond Hill	26,160	46	1 : 569
Vaughan	43,270	75	1 : 577
Average	31,774	47	1 : 674
Whitby	21,609	35	1 : 617

Figure 24: Distribution of Basketball & Multi-Purpose Courts



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.16.2 Market Conditions

While outdoor hard surface courts are primarily used for basketball, some can be used as multi-purpose courts that can accommodate a variety of informal and unstructured activities such as ball hockey, outdoor skating, basketball, soccer, etc. The Ontario Basketball Association reports that since 2015, the number of affiliated organizations has doubled from 484 to 900 teams.²⁴ While these groups have placed pressures on indoor gymnasiums, the popularity of the sport has also driven the demand for outdoor basketball courts. The popularity of basketball can be attributed to factors such as affordability and access to free outdoor basketball courts, as well as its national appeal and the Toronto Raptors championship victory in 2019. Compared to other sports such as hockey, basketball is easy to learn, safe, affordable to play, and can be played with one person or in small groups. Best practices observed across the Province have found that municipalities are trending towards the provision of multi-use courts that facilitate a variety of activities that require a large, hard surface such as basketball, ball hockey, etc.

Outdoor courts are generally rudimentary in design, ranging from simple asphalt to acrylic colour coated surfaces (such as at Folkstone Park) with removable equipment such as net posts, boards, and hoops. Certain municipalities, such as Windsor and Clarington, are beginning to employ a unique approach in the renewal of older courts by installing a plastic tiling system above the older surfaces; compared to standard asphalt, these “Flex Court” systems can defer asphalt/concrete resurfacing costs, minimize noise of bouncing balls, absorb physical impacts and reduce stress on the body, as well as offer environmental benefits such as reduced heat radiation and issues with standing water. From a maintenance perspective, the Flex Court system comes with a warranty and requires less intensive maintenance since they do not need to be repainted, while broken tiles are easily replaced.²⁵



6.16.3 Community Input

A number of requests were made for more outdoor basketball courts in Whitby to ensure that youth and young adults have access to active recreation activities within parks. Enhancements to aging basketball courts was also mentioned, including court resurfacing, and replacing worn basketball nets. The community survey found that 60% of respondents supported additional investment in outdoor basketball courts, ranking 24th out of 36 facility types.

6.16.4 Analysis

It is recommended that the Town target providing basketball and multi-purpose courts at a rate of one per 650 youth (ages 10 to 19). This target is slightly higher compared to the 2015 Sports Facility Strategy recommended a service target of one court per 750 youth, although it aligns closely to the existing service level (one per 636 youth residents). Maintaining a higher service level also continues to ensure that there is a strong distribution of basketball courts that are within walking distance of residential areas and supports the demand for casual outdoor recreation activities. This is particularly important as growth among the youth population is expected over the planning period.

While age-specific population data for the Town is not available, applying the existing proportion of the youth in Whitby (14%), who are the primary users of basketball courts, to the projected population suggests that there could be 27,100 youth or more living in the community by 2031. Based on the recommended target, Whitby would require a total supply of 42 basketball courts by this period, which is seven more than what is currently provided. This need will be partially met through two new courts that are being planned to be constructed at the Whitby Sports Complex and at College Downs Park.

²⁴ Ontario Basketball Association Annual Reports.

²⁵ Flex Court Canada. Retrieved from: <http://www.flexcourtcanada.ca>

Table 32: Projected Basketball & Multi-Purpose Court Needs

Type	2022	2026	2031
Population of Youth (Ages 10 to 19)	21,609	23,950	27,100
Existing Basketball & Multi-Purpose Court Supply	35	35	35
Projected Basketball & Multi-Purpose Court Needs (1 per 650 youth residents)	33	37	42
Surplus (Deficit)*	2	(2)	(7)

To determine where the remaining six courts should be located, an analysis of geographic distribution was undertaken recognizing that youth are the primary users of basketball courts, who are typically limited in the distance that they can travel. Consistent with industry best practices, Whitby aims to provide basketball courts located within 800 metres of residential areas. Applying this service area to existing basketball courts reconfirms the fact that there is strong coverage across Whitby. The most notable gaps where courts are not currently planned to be provided exist in Brooklin, West Whitby, north of Taunton Road East and Thickson Road South, as well as certain pockets in the southern portion of the Town.

An emphasis should be placed on providing new basketball courts to address growth related needs, particularly within new parks serving Brooklin and West Whitby. To address gap areas within the established areas noted above, courts could also be located at Brooklin Memorial Park, Hannam Park, Bradley Park, Prince of Wales Park, D'Hiller Park, and Guthrie Park. It is recognized that this will result in a higher level of service compared to what the Town is accustomed to providing, but it is deemed appropriate on the basis on ensuring that users have access to basketball courts within walking distance of residential areas.

Where possible, all new basketball courts should be designed to be full size with multi-lining to support a variety of activities (basketball and ball hockey) that require a large, hard surface, as well as other features and amenities such as coloured coatings (such as at Cachet Park) and combination goal posts for basketball and ball hockey (such as at Country Lane Park). An appropriate setback distance from residential areas should also be considered in the design process to minimize noise concerns. For basketball courts, a review of best practices found that other municipalities such as Brampton and East Gwillimbury target a minimum setback of 20 metres to residential areas, which is recommended for Whitby.

Rejuvenation of existing basketball courts is also recommended to provide an enhanced playing experience. Plans are currently in place to redevelop the courts at Portage Park and Phillips-Kozaroff Park. Site visits revealed that some locations could benefit from asphalt surface renewal or replacement of aging basketball posts including, but not limited to, Baycliffe Park, Folkstone Park, Eric Clarke Park, Whitburn Park, and Forest Heights Park.

There may also be opportunities to enlarge smaller, half basketball courts to provide an enhanced playing experience. Nearly half of the Town's supply of basketball and multi-purpose courts are half courts, which are primarily concentrated in the central area and east side of Whitby. The Town historically provided half courts due to constraints with park size and the need to accommodate other park amenities, although there may be opportunities to enlarge courts where there is adequate room to do so such as at Glenayr Park and Rosedale Park. Other locations may also be considered as opportunities become available such as through park renewal initiatives. As a best practice, there is merit in decommissioning and removing aging half courts in areas that are not in appropriate locations, such as courts that are too close to residential areas or are in areas that are served by more than one basketball court. This could also be an opportunity to reclaim park greenspace for passive use. Locations that could be removed from the Town's inventory may include Davies Parkette and Teddington Park.

Recommendations – Basketball & Multi-Purpose Courts

41. In addition to planned multi-use courts at the Whitby Sports Complex and College Downs Park, construct multi-use courts to serve growth areas of Brooklin and West Whitby and in established areas including Brooklin Memorial Park, Hannam Park, Bradley Park, Prince of Wales Park, Peel Park, D'Hiller Park, and Guthrie Park. New basketball courts should be full size with multi-lining to support a variety of activities, as well as other features and amenities such as coloured coatings and combination goal posts for basketball and ball hockey. An appropriate setback to residential areas should also be considered (e.g., 20 metres).
42. Undertake renewal of aging basketball courts including, but not limited to, Baycliffe Park, Folkstone Park, Eric Clarke Park, Whitburn Park, and Forest Heights Park.
43. At the time of renewal, investigate opportunities to enlarge half basketball courts, such as at Glenayr Park and Rosedale Park. Evaluate locations to decommission half basketball courts that are too close to residential areas or to minimize service duplication, such as at Davies Parkette and Teddington Park.

6.17 Splash Pads

6.17.1 Current Supply

There are 19 splash pads located across Whitby (Figure 25). Each splash pad features a variety of components, including spray nozzles, dump buckets, sprinklers, shower head and other amenities such as shade and seating. The Town's splash pad supply results in a service level of one per 7,973 residents or one per 900 children (ages 0 to 9), which is the second highest service level after Hamilton (Table 33).

Table 33: Service Level Comparison, Splash Pads

Municipality	2021 Children Population (Ages 0 to 9)	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	15,235	6	1 : 2,539
Hamilton	59,795	69	1 : 867
Markham	33,125	15	1 : 2,208
Oshawa	20,465	9	1 : 2,274
Pickering	10,785	2	1 : 5,393
Richmond Hill	17,545	15	1 : 1,170
Vaughan	32,320	17	1 : 1,901
Average	27,039	19	1 : 1,423
Whitby	18,180	19	1 : 900

6.17.2 Market Conditions

Outdoor aquatic facility models have changed substantially over the past 20 years due to the growing number of indoor pools that have been constructed and aging outdoor pool infrastructure. Municipalities have been phasing out outdoor swimming and wading pools in favour for splash pads as they have proven to be more cost effective to build and operate as they can be integrated into most park settings, are accessible, and do not require intensive staffing as there is no standing water to supervise.

The design of splash pads can vary with different components and spray functions to create unique and engaging experiences. For example, the Town constructed a bee-themed splash pad at Des Newman WhitBEE Park in recognition of the Whitby being a “Bee City”. There are three types of splash pads – freshwater (or flow through) systems that drain directly to municipal sewers, recirculating systems that filters, collects, treats, and re-uses the splash pad water, and greywater systems that collect splash pad water for other public uses such as irrigating greenspaces and landscapes, as well as watering gardens. The design of freshwater systems is generally the most cost effective to construct when compared to recirculating and greywater systems that require infrastructure for filtering, treating water and storing water, as well as additional costs for purchasing chemicals. While recirculating and greywater systems are beneficial in reducing water consumption, greater oversight is required to ensure that water chemistry is maintained to allow for proper disinfection. Examples of different types of splash pads exist throughout the GTA. For example, splash pads in Pickering use freshwater systems, while the Town of Halton Hills uses recirculating systems.

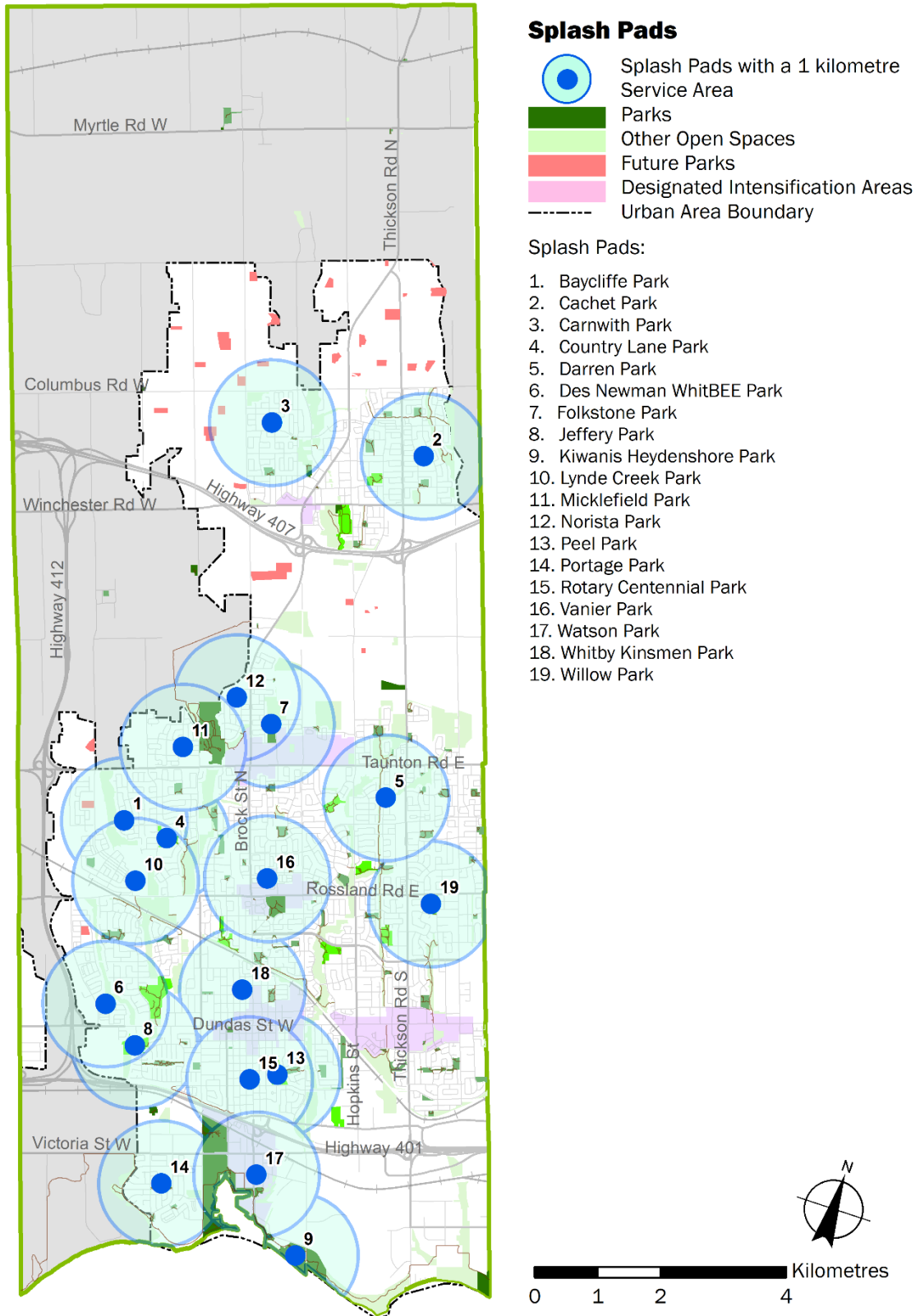


Splash pads have gained in popularity in recent years, sought after by young families seeking affordable and accessible opportunities to cool down on a hot day. The Town recognizes this as one of the initiatives of Whitby’s Climate Emergency Response Plan is to ensure that there is a network of splash pads (as well as cooling centres and drinking fountains). Splash pads tend to be located at District Parks as they serve multiple neighbourhoods and are complementary to other on-site amenities such as parking and playgrounds, although they are also found at Local Parks to ensure that residents can access these amenities. Water efficiency of splash pads is to be considered during the design process.

6.17.3 Community Input

Requests were made for splash pads within Whitby’s parks. Three-quarters (75%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in splash pads, which ranked 10th out of 36 facility types. Some residents expressed that there should be greater investment in constructing more splash pads as they feel that there are limited aquatic opportunities in the Town.

Figure 25: Distribution of Splash Pads



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.17.4 Analysis

Whitby is providing a high level of service for splash pads at one per 900 children between the ages of 0 and 9. By comparison, municipalities in the GTA target to provide splash pads at a rate of one per 3,000 to 5,000 children, with consideration also given to geographic distribution of prioritizing high needs areas. Recognizing the popularity of splash pads in Whitby and a strong desire continued investment in this area (as identified in the Town's Climate Emergency Response Plan), continuing to maintain the current level of service is recommended. By applying the proportion of children from the 2021 Census (12%) to the projected 2021 population, it is estimated that there will be approximately 22,100 children by the end of the planning period. To maintain Whitby's current service level, the Town would be required to provide 25 splash pads, six more than the existing supply. Future splash pads are currently planned to be located at Pringle Creek Park, Cullen Central Park, Victoria Waterfront Park, and in the intensification areas of Downtown Brooklin, Brock/Taunton and Dundas Street East.

Table 34: Projected Splash Pad Needs

Type	2022	2026	2031
Population of Children (Ages 0 to 9)	18,180	20,183	22,100
Existing Splash Pad Supply	19	19	19
Projected Splash Pad Needs (1 per 900 child aged 0 to 9)	20	22	25
Surplus (Deficit)*	(1)	(3)	(6)

The geographic analysis of Whitby's splash pads was undertaken to identify gap areas where new installations should be considered. An emphasis should be placed on developing splash pads at major parks where existing infrastructure and servicing can be leveraged such as parking lots and washrooms. A service area of one kilometre was applied to the Town's splash pads, which is a common catchment area used in other municipalities. Application of this service area demonstrated that Whitby has a strong distribution of splash pads, particularly on the west side of Whitby. A major gap exists on the east side of the Town, which will be partially addressed through the future splash pads at Pringle Creek Park and in the Dundas Street East intensification area.

From a distribution perspective, gap areas exist in Brooklin and given that future growth is expected in this area, new splash pads should be directed to this area, preferably at each District Park. One splash pad should also be developed at Brooklin Memorial Park that may form part of the redevelopment of the site. The Town's splash pads should also be complemented with small-scale spray features and cooling stations (e.g., spray posts, water fountains, public art, etc.), which could be established in strategic locations such as in Local Parks such as Kirby Park and Prince of Wales Park, and in public spaces within intensification areas (e.g., MTSA). For example, Oshawa has four cooling stations in neighbourhood-level parks that have one spray feature. Barrie also provides a water feature at their destination park along the waterfront that has spray nozzles incorporated into boulders and concrete pad.

Strategic renewal of the Town's existing splash pads is also recommended to ensure that they continue to offer exciting and engaging experiences. This would also provide an opportunity to refresh the Town's current installations with new features and themes as the technology and design of splash pads is continually improving. Site observations of the Town's splash pads revealed that some locations feature a limited number of spray features such as Norista Park and other locations may benefit from modernized installments such as Carnwith Park. The Town has identified the planned redevelopment of the splash pad at Kinsmen Park.

Recommendations – Splash Pads

44. In addition to existing planned splash pads, construct splash pads at each future District Park in Brooklin and at Brooklin Memorial Park.
45. Augment the Town’s splash pads with small-scale spray features and cooling stations (e.g., basic spray posts and nozzles, water fountains, public art, etc.) in strategic locations, including in Local Parks such as Prince of Wales Park and Kirby Park and in public spaces within intensification areas (e.g., MTSA).
46. Undertake strategic renewal of existing splash pads to update and modernized installations to engage users. Consideration should be given to incorporating a variety of spray features, themes, scale, supporting amenities such as shade, and integrate water-saving measures into the design.

6.18 Skate Parks

6.18.1 Current Supply

Whitby has three skate parks at Brooklin Memorial Park, Folkstone Park and Iroquois Park, which results in a service level of one per 50,500 residents or one per 7,201 youth (ages 10 to 19), which is lower compared to the benchmark average (Table 35). The Town’s skate parks feature a variety of components including bowls, elevation changes, ramps, rails, stairs and more. Hamilton is the only benchmarked community that provides a pump track.

Table 35: Service Level Comparison, Skate Parks and Pump Tracks

Municipality	2021 Youth Population (Ages 10 to 19)	Skate Parks		Pump Tracks	
		Supply	Service Level	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	16,870	3	1 : 5,623	0	0
Hamilton	63,245	8	1 : 7,906	1	1 : 63,245
Markham	41,315	6	1 : 6,886	0	0
Oshawa	20,025	3	1 : 6,675	0	0
Pickering	11,530	1	1 : 11,530	0	0
Richmond Hill	26,160	2	1 : 13,080	0	0
Vaughan	43,270	9	1 : 4,808	0	0
Average	31,774	5	1 : 6,950	0	1 : 63,245
Whitby	21,609	3	1 : 7,201	0	0

6.18.2 Market Conditions

Skate parks are now considered to be a core recreation facility in most municipalities across Ontario, recognized for their ability to provide children and teens (and even younger adults) with a positive place to participate in skateboarding, BMX biking, rollerblading, scootering, and other wheeled action sports. While historically associated with negative youth behaviour, skate sports have become mainstream. Skateboarding was introduced as part of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics for the first-time lending further credibility to the sport. This has the potential to drive interest and participation in skateboarding even higher which in turn could lead to greater demands for future spaces for wheeled action sports. Skate parks are opportunities through which to encourage greater physical activity among children and youth – particularly since these activities typically viewed as affordable physical opportunities and social activities that can be pursued as part of ‘hanging out’ with friends.

The design and scale of skateboard parks may vary from concrete forms featuring bowls and stairs – such as at Folkstone Park – to modular components (that may be movable and/or temporary) such as at Brooklin Memorial Park and Iroquois Park. While the Whitby’s skateboard parks are located at Town and District Parks that serve a broad geographic area, many municipalities have integrated skate features within local parks to help improve geographic distribution for a demographic that usually relies on active transportation rather than cars to reach destinations and can be placed where novice to intermediate skill levels can practice and build confidence before using the major skateboard parks. Neighbourhood serving parks that integrate ‘skate spots’ with only one or two elements – such as a rail and/or a grind box to practice skateboard tricks – in a small area of a park can appeal to young children learning to skateboard or bike.



In alignment with urban design and/or urban art objectives, some municipalities have constructed ‘plaza style’ skate parks that mimic a civic streetscape by integrating tree planter boxes, stairs and rails, curbs, etc. The scale of plaza style skate parks can be large or small making them suited to both major and minor skate parks and lend themselves well to areas of intensification and other built-up areas where parkettes or urban parks are more common.

6.18.3 Community Input

Requests were received for skateboard parks, and it was suggested that they should be located in parks that are within walking distance to high concentrations of youth. Nearly half (45%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in outdoor skateboard parks, which ranked 30th out of 36 facility types.

6.18.4 Analysis

Whitby is currently providing skate parks at a rate of one per 7,201 youth between the ages of 10 to 19, which is lower compared to the Town’s target (one per 6,500 youth). This target is consistent with municipalities, including those within Durham Region and it continues to be recommended going forward. It is estimated that there will be approximately 27,100 youth in Whitby over the next 10 years. Based on the recommended target, a total of four skate parks are required, which is one more than what is currently provided. With a new skate park (including a pump track) planned to be located at the Whitby Sports Complex, no new skate parks are recommended during the planning period, although renewal of existing sites may be considered such as at Brooklin Memorial Park. As previously identified (Recommendation #37), the merits of continuing to provide a skate park at this location should be examined as part of a broader park renewal project together with the abutting tennis courts, or if they are better served at another location.

Table 36: Projected Skate Park Needs

Type	2022	2026	2031
Population of Youth (Ages 10 to 19)	21,609	23,950	27,100
Existing Skate Park Supply	3	3	3
Projected Skate Park Needs (1 per 6,500 youth residents)	3	4	4
Surplus (Deficit)*	0	(1)	(1)

While the provision of four skateboard parks provides a sufficient level of coverage for higher order facilities, the Town’s skate parks are ideally supplemented with small-scale “skate spots” in a small area of new and existing parks for the benefit of young children and novice skaters. This may include basic elements such as a rail and/or modular components to practice that are not typically capially intensive to provide in the context of park development/redevelopment budgets or require a large amount of space. These installations may be most suitable in neighbourhood-serving parks, including areas of intensification. The development of skate spots may also serve as pilot projects to test demand in areas of Whitby where a major skate park may be considered over the long term. Potential skate spot locations may include, but not be limited to, Darren Park, Prince of Wales Park, or a future of existing park in West Whitby and the Brooklin Development area.

Recommendations – Skate Parks

47. Explore the potential to incorporate small scale “skate spots” at Neighborhood Parks with basic elements for young children and novice skaters to augment the Town’s major skate parks and further strengthen distribution. Potential locations may include, but not be limited to, Darren Park, Prince of Wales Park, or a future or existing park in West Whitby.

6.19 Playgrounds

6.19.1 Current Supply

Whitby provides playgrounds at 94 parks across the Town (Figure 26). Some sites have more than one playground structure that combine junior and senior play components and are complemented with swing sets. The playground supply results in a service level of one per 1,665 residents or one per 200 children (ages 0 to 9), which matches the benchmark average (Table 37).

Table 37: Service Level Comparison, Playgrounds

Municipality	2021 Children Population (Ages 0 to 9)	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	15,235	80	1 : 190
Hamilton	59,795	256	1 : 234
Markham	33,125	155	1 : 214
Oshawa	20,465	110	1 : 186
Pickering	10,785	58	1 : 186
Richmond Hill	17,545	127	1 : 138
Vaughan	32,320	164	1 : 197
Average	27,039	136	1 : 200
Whitby	16,300	94	1 : 200

6.19.2 Market Conditions

Playgrounds benefit childhood development, foster cognitive development and social skills, and encourage physical activity. Modern playgrounds are designed to offer creative play experiences and often integrate accessible features, which are more engaging than traditional play sites where features are usually limited to swings, slides and climbing structures.

Accessible playgrounds and playground components are becoming standard elements of playground design. Whitby's new or redeveloped playgrounds are being constructed with accessibility in mind, such as at Willow Park, Lynde Creek Park, Portage Park, Folkstone Park and Jeffery Park, with some locations going above and beyond the minimum safety and accessibility requirements. In accordance with the Design of Public Spaces Standard contained in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the construction of new or redeveloped playgrounds must incorporate accessible playground features. Such requirements include:

- Incorporating accessibility features such as, but not limited to, sensory and active play components for children and caregivers with various disabilities;
- Providing a ground surface that is firm and stable to accommodate users with mobility devices, yet resilient enough to absorb impact for injury prevention in the area around the play equipment;
- Providing sufficient clearance in and around the play space to allow children with various disabilities and their caregivers room to move around the space; and
- Consulting with Accessibility Advisory Committees and with persons with disabilities prior to designing, building, or redeveloping playgrounds.

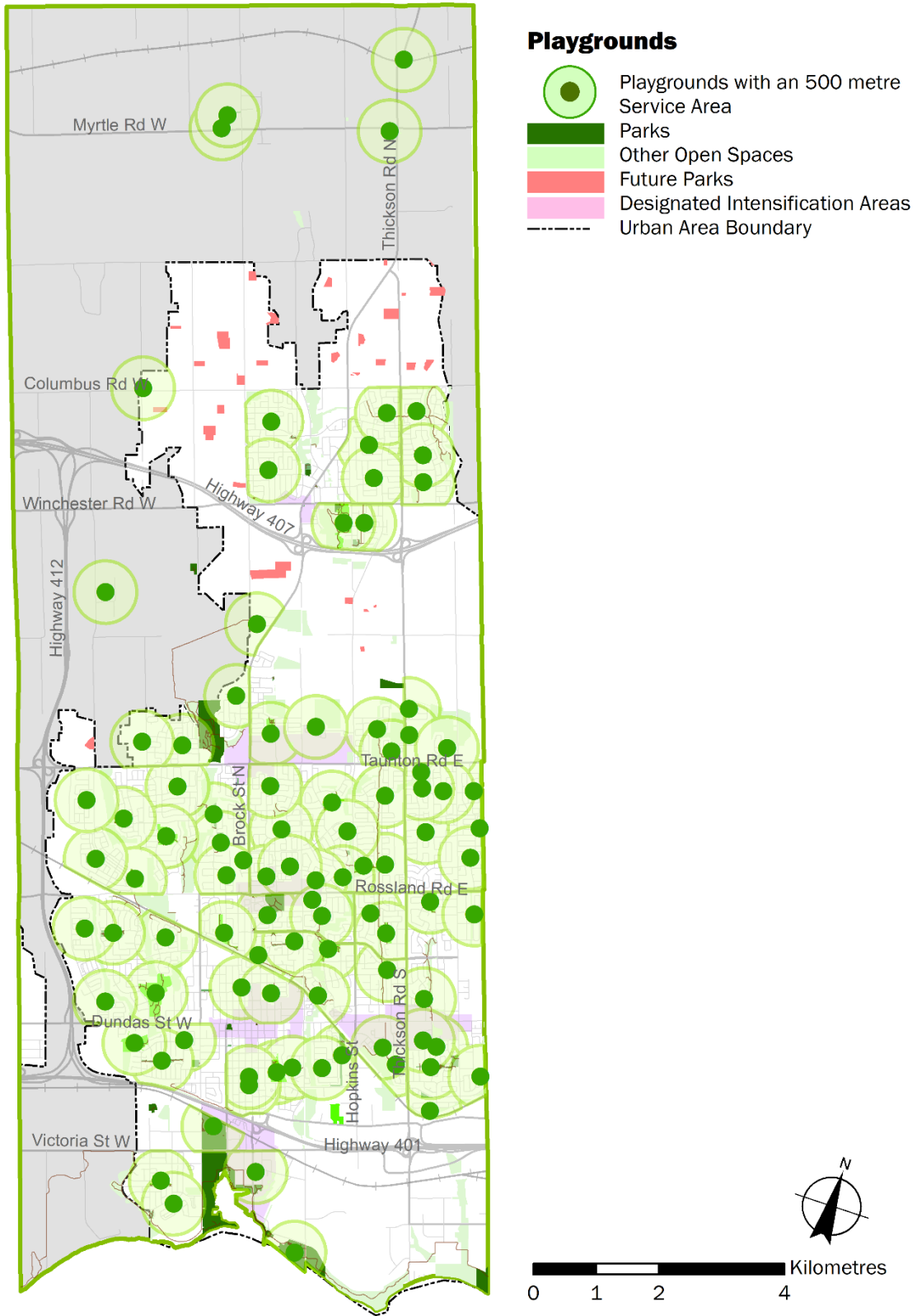
As an alternative to the traditional and creative playground model, natural and adventure playgrounds are becoming more popular around the world, and they are gaining traction in Canadian municipalities. These playgrounds encourage play and interaction with landscape and natural materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders to allow users to create more daring opportunities. Still designed in compliance with CSA Z614 standards, natural/adventure playgrounds are proven to stimulate greater sensory and imaginative play compared to typical creative structures; research also shows that children's immune health can benefit from exposure to natural materials. These playgrounds are designed to appear more precarious, which aligns to the concept of "risky play" to encourage children to take more risks through climbing, exploring, moving vigorously, and creating their own activities using their imagination.

Other play-oriented approaches observed in municipalities in Ontario include the addition of toys within playgrounds such as play kitchens, dump trucks, tricycles, etc. to capture children's imaginations and increase their outdoor play time. For example, the City of Toronto added a simple dirt pile at Trinity Bellwoods Park where children and caregivers alike augment their time at the playground by playing in the sand pile and digging, building, climbing, sliding down, etc. This solution is a simple low cost one to encourage caregivers and children to stay outside longer and engage in creative play.

6.19.3 Community Input

A number of requests were made for playgrounds, particularly to replace aging playgrounds or to ensure that they are fun and engaging for users. It was also mentioned that playgrounds should be accessible for persons with disabilities, with consideration given to the use of firm surfaces and play features, as well as accessible adult swings. More than half (52%) of the community survey respondents identified that at least one member of their household have used playground equipment, which was the sixth most popular recreation activity. About four-out-of-five (80%) respondents supported additional investment in playgrounds.

Figure 26: Distribution of Playgrounds



Source: Map created using Town GIS Database, 2022

6.19.4 Analysis

The provision of playgrounds is typically guided by proximity to residential areas. As a best practice, playgrounds are best provided within 800 metres of residential areas, without being obstructed by major barriers such as railways and arterial roads. Whitby's playground distribution achieves a strong level of coverage. Applying an 800-metre service area to the Town's playgrounds revealed that there are gap areas in Brooklin and West Whitby. The Town's capital forecast identifies that a number of future parks are planned to be developed to serve growth-related needs in these areas. In planning and designing these parks, consideration should be given to the potential to incorporate play structures to ensure that residents have reasonable access to a playground within walking distance.

Continued re-investment in the Town's existing playgrounds is recommended to renew aging structures and create unique and exciting experiences for users. Whitby's Municipal Asset Management Plan recommends that playgrounds are replaced approximately every 15 years based on the equipment's overall condition, serviceability, play value and level of accessibility. The Town generally aims to replace up to five playgrounds per year and play structures are inspected regularly for accessibility, surface and equipment condition, drainage, and other factors. Over the next 10 years, the Town's capital forecast allocates funding towards replacing 61 play structures with modernized structures that meet accessibility requirements.

New and redeveloped playgrounds should continue to integrate Whitby's best practice of incorporating diverse elements such as barrier free and inclusive designs. Consideration should also be given to natural play structures and features (e.g., logs, boulders, ropes, etc.) to promote adventure and imaginative play; this may be considered at strategic parks such as in prominent locations or within naturalized settings.

Consistent with ongoing practices, incorporating accessible features should continue to meet the Town's legislative requirements. Historically, the Town's 2006 Accessible Playground Distribution Strategy was the primary guiding document that identified where accessible play structures should be located in Whitby. This strategy has served the Whitby well and while it has been a key resource to guide the planning, design and development of inclusive play structures, the Town has shifted its playground model to incorporate accessible features at all new playgrounds and at replacement locations to ensure that play structures are inclusive.

Recognizing that the scale and design of playgrounds vary based on the type of park that they are located in and the area they are intended to serve, the extent of accessible features incorporated into play structures should also vary. A higher level of accessibility is recommended at Whitby's higher order parks, which is a best practice that many other municipalities are applying. For example, rubber playground surfacing should be provided at Whitby's Town and strategically located District Parks, while engineered wood fibre should continue to be used at all other Parks.

Recommendations – Playgrounds

48. Incorporate playgrounds within future Brooklin and West Whitby parks to ensure that play structures are located within 800 metres of residential neighbourhoods, unobstructed by major barriers such as arterial roads.
49. New and redeveloped playgrounds should incorporate diverse elements and creative designs that are barrier free and inclusive. A high level of accessibility should be applied to Town Parks and District Parks compared to Local Parks with consideration given to rubberized play surfaces and other inclusive features.
50. Evaluate opportunities to incorporate natural play structures and features (e.g., logs, boulders, ropes, etc.) that promote adventure and imaginative play at strategic parks such as prominent locations or within naturalized settings.

6.20 Off-Leash Dog Parks

6.20.1 Current Supply

There are two off-leash dog parks in Whitby. The Cochrane Street Off-Leash Dog Park is located in the north end of Whitby within the Heber Down Conservation Area and the second location is in the south end of the Town at the Jeffery Street Off-Leash Dog Park. Both locations have fenced areas for large and small dogs with supporting amenities, including seating, trees, pathways, signage, and parking. The Town’s supply of off-leash dog parks results in a service level of one per 75,750 residents, which is higher compared to the benchmark average (Table 38). The Town’s capital forecast allocates funding towards new leash free areas, although specific locations have not been identified.

Table 38: Service Level Comparison, Off-Leash Dog Park

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	4	1 : 31,750
Hamilton	569,400	12	1 : 47,450
Markham	338,500	1	1 : 338,500
Oshawa	175,400	1	1 : 175,400
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	2	1 : 101,000
Vaughan	323,100	1	1 : 323,100
Average	262,086	3	1 : 159,486
Whitby	151,500*	2	1 : 75,750

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.20.2 Market Conditions

With by-laws regulating the use of leashes, off-leash dog areas provide owners an opportunity to exercise and socialize with their dogs in a controlled area. Off-leash dog areas should not be viewed strictly for pets as best practices suggest that they are also beneficial for residents and community interaction among those who share a common interest. Off-leash dog areas have proven to be very successful, particularly in highly urbanized communities that tend to have several such facilities as opportunities for dogs to run freely may be limited.

For many municipalities, off-leash dog parks can be opportunities for community organizations or the private sector to get involved through assisting with operations, fundraising or partnerships. While off-leash dog parks are popular amenities for pet owners, finding the right site for the development of new locations can be a challenge due to noise concerns. Careful consideration, planning and consultation is a best practice when identifying new off-leash dog park locations with consideration given to a range of factors. As a best practice, municipalities should evaluate factors, including, but not limited to, setback and layout requirements, accessibility, site buffers, impact on the natural environment, future development potential, compatibility with other users, and more.



6.20.3 Community Input

The consultation process found that there were requests for off-leash dog parks, as well as the need to enhance enforcement to ensure that dogs remain on leashes in parks. The public expressed that there is a gap area in the central area of Whitby as the existing locations are in the north and south part of Town. As a result, the public identified that many parks are used informally as off-leash dog parks. The community survey revealed that 48% of respondents supported additional investment in off-leash dog parks, ranking 28th out of 36 facility types.

6.20.4 Analysis

Off-leash dog parks are provided to respond to public demand and/or if there is a willing community organization open to taking on responsibilities to assist with day-to-day maintenance and operations. Whitby's off-leash dog parks are popular amenities given the aforementioned benefits associated with these types of facilities. The Town's two off-leash dog parks provides a location for dog owners in the north and south areas of Whitby. These locations are excellent examples of traditional off-leash dog parks; however, future population growth is planned to occur within Whitby' central area, south of Taunton Road and north of Dundas Street. It is expected that the Town will experience greater pressure for off-leash dog parks in this area, particularly given that pet owners living in higher density areas would not have access to private space or have transportation to off-leash dog parks. The Town will have limited opportunities to establish a traditional off-leash dog park in the central area and as a result, consideration will need to be given to establishing smaller off-leash dog parks or neighbourhood parks and intensification areas.

The Town should consider the site selection criteria as noted in the following table to guide the site selection process to identify locations for off-leash dog parks, which is based on a review of best practices and criteria established in other municipalities such as Markham, Richmond Hill, and Burlington. Public consultation should also form part of the site selection process.

Table 39: Site Selection Criteria for Off-Leash Dog parks

Site Criteria	Description
Size	Off-leash dog parks in Town and District Park should have a minimum area of 3,000 square metres and 500 square metres for Local Parks. Smaller off-leash dog parks should be permitted in intensification areas such as the MTSA.
Setbacks	Residential Uses: 50 metre minimum setback from residential uses, although a reduced setback is permitted when separated by a public street or other buffer. Park Amenities (e.g., playground, etc.): 15 metre minimum setback
Site Access	Off-leash dog parks in Town and District Park should have on-site parking and be accessible by transit. Off-leash dog parks in Local Parks or intensification areas should be accessible within a 10 to 15 minute walk and transit.
Natural Environment and Site Conditions	Off-leash dog park should be located outside of environmentally sensitive areas on generally flat land with sufficient drainage
Waterfront Access	Off-leash dog parks should not be located at waterfront parks.
Year-Round Use	Off-leash dog parks should be available to the public for year-round use.

Recommendations – Off-Leash Dog Parks

51. Guided by public input and the site selection criteria identified in this Master Plan, identify opportunities for an off-leash area in the central area (south of Taunton Road and north of Dundas Street), which should have regard for size, setbacks, site access, natural environment and site conditions, and other criteria.

6.21 Outdoor Fitness Equipment

6.21.1 Current Supply

Outdoor fitness equipment is located at four locations, including Des Newman WhitBEE Park, Kiwanis Heydensore Park, Baycliffe Park and Lynde Creek Park, resulting in a service level of one per 37,875 residents, which is higher compared to the benchmark average (Table 40).

Table 40: Service Level Comparison, Outdoor Fitness Equipment

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	8	1 : 15,875
Hamilton	569,400	9	1 : 63,267
Markham	338,500	20	1 : 16,925
Oshawa	175,400	1	1 : 175,400
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	9	1 : 22,444
Vaughan	323,100	4	1 : 80,775
Average	262,086	7	1 : 67,698
Whitby	151,500*	4	1 : 37,875

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.21.2 Market Conditions

Municipalities have been integrating outdoor fitness equipment within parks in response to growing demands for outdoor exercise opportunities. Popular throughout the United States and Europe, Canadian municipalities have begun introducing outdoor fitness equipment that allow people to participate in free outdoor activities and engage more people in the public realm. It is common for municipalities to work with the community to develop outdoor fitness equipment locations through partnerships and fundraising. For example, the Town worked with the Rotary Club of Whitby and the Rotary Club of Whitby Sunrise to construct the outdoor fitness gym at Kiwanis Heydensore Park. The new outdoor fitness equipment installation at Des Newman WhitBEE Park was donated by Mattamy Homes.



6.21.3 Community Input

Several requests were made for outdoor fitness equipment, with suggestions made for adding more equipment locations along the waterfront and along trails and at other key parks in Whitby. 58% of community survey respondents supported additional investment in outdoor fitness equipment, ranking 25th out of 36 facility types.

6.21.4 Analysis

There is no industry standard for the provision of outdoor fitness equipment. The Town generally considers opportunities to incorporate outdoor fitness equipment as part of park design or renewal, which is a best practice in other municipalities. Outdoor fitness equipment is typically provided in prominent locations to encourage physical activities such as at major parks that have other active recreation facilities or along trails – either centralized as specific locations to create “fitness stations” such as at Heydenshore Park or through “fitness trails” to facilitate interval training. This should continue to be the recommended approach going forward, with additional consideration given to incorporating outdoor fitness equipment within open public spaces in intensification areas. With the above considerations in mind, potential locations for new outdoor fitness equipment may include, but not be limited to, additional locations along the Waterfront Trail, Hydro Corridor Trail, Ash Park, Cullen Central Park, and Brooklin Memorial Park and at parks serving intensification areas and the Major Transit Station Area.

Recommendations – Outdoor Fitness Equipment

52. As part of the park design and renewal process, consider opportunities to incorporate outdoor fitness equipment in strategic areas to encourage outdoor physical activity and fitness, including at major parks and destinations, trails and intensification areas. Potential locations may include, but not be limited to, additional locations along the Waterfront Trail, Hydro Corridor Trail, Ash Park, Cullen Central Park, and Brooklin Memorial Park, and parks serving intensification areas and the Major Transit Station Area.

6.22 Outdoor Bocce Courts

6.22.1 Current Supply

Whitby provides four outdoor bocce courts at Cullen Central Park. This supply results in a service level of one per 37,875 residents, which is the second lowest level of service, although Ajax, Markham, and Pickering do not provide outdoor bocce courts (Table 41).

Table 41: Service Level Comparison, Outdoor Bocce Courts

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	0
Hamilton	569,400	39	1 : 14,600
Markham	338,500	0	0
Oshawa	175,400	6	1 : 29,233
Pickering	99,200	0	0
Richmond Hill	202,000	5	1 : 40,400
Vaughan	323,100	59	1 : 5,476
Average	262,086	16	1 : 12,816
Whitby	151,500*	4	1 : 37,875

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.22.2 Market Conditions

Outdoor bocce is predominantly played by adults 55+ and the Italian Canadian community. There are currently no trends that suggest that there is an increase in youth participation. Decommissioning and re-purposing

outdoor bocce courts has been the trend observed over the past decade. However, Whitby recently doubled its supply of outdoor bocce courts at Cullen Central Park, expanding from two courts to four courts.

6.22.3 Community Input

Limited comments were received about outdoor bocce courts; a comment was received suggesting that the outdoor bocce courts at Cullen Park are not used and should be removed or re-purposed. About one-third (32%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in outdoor bocce courts, ranking 35th out of 36 facility types.

6.22.4 Analysis

Similar to other niche type facilities, there is no guiding service target for outdoor bocce courts. These facilities are primarily provided in response to demonstrated demand. However, the use of outdoor bocce courts has traditionally been low. At this point, there is no evidence that suggests that there is a need for additional outdoor bocce courts. Observing and monitoring the use of the Town's existing courts is recommended to inform the decisions to adjust the current supply.

Recommendations – Outdoor Bocce Courts

53. Monitor the use of the Town's outdoor bocce courts to inform decisions to adjust the existing supply.

6.23 Community Gardens

6.23.1 Current Supply

The Town worked with the King Street Co-Operative Community Garden group to establish Whitby's first community garden at King Street Park. The garden features eight gardening plots and an edible forest with a selection of fruit trees and bushes. The supply yields a service level of one per 151,500 residents. This is lower compared to benchmark municipalities, although it is noted that the number of gardening plots vary at each location. The supply also excluded non-municipal community gardens, such as those located at churches.

Table 42: Service Level Comparison, Community Gardens

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	1	1 : 127,000
Hamilton	569,400	14	1 : 40,671
Markham	338,500	1	1 : 338,500
Oshawa	175,400	5	1 : 35,080
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	8	1 : 25,250
Vaughan	323,100	4	1 : 80,775
Average	262,086	5	1 : 106,639
Whitby	151,500*	1	1 : 151,500

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

Note: The number of gardening plots vary at each location. Supply excludes non-municipal community gardens.

6.23.2 Market Conditions

Community gardens are popular outdoor amenities in highly urbanized areas that are experiencing intensification where residents may not have access to personal gardening space. A greater emphasis being placed on social justice and food security, healthy eating, increasing physical activity, and providing a healthy and sustainable food source are also driving the popularity of these amenities. Research conducted in diverse communities revealed that community gardens allow residents to cultivate, preserve and prepare cultural produce. Moreover, community gardens foster social interaction and horticultural education.

6.23.3 Community Input

Public requests were made for community gardening opportunities in Whitby and nearly three-quarters of community survey respondents supported investment in community gardens, ranking 16th out of 36 facility types.

6.23.4 Analysis

As the Town's population continues to age and diversify, it is anticipated that the demand for community gardens in Whitby will rise, offering improved food security and healthy food options for residents. The demand for community gardening will be further heightened as the Town continues to shift towards more compact and high-density development where residents may not have access to private gardening space. Monitoring the use of and interest in the Town's recently completed community garden is encouraged to guide future decisions for potential expansion and/or the development of future community garden sites in partnership with other groups. New locations should be guided by the Town's Community Garden Policy and Procedure Checklist, which encourages the development of community gardens in partnership with community groups and establishes criteria that the site must meet the following requirements:

- Free from hazards;
- A level or not excessively sloping terrain;
- Adequate sun exposure;
- Adequate drainage;
- Adequate water source;
- Access for emergency vehicles;
- Accessibility for community users;
- Availability and accessibility of parking, where applicable; and
- Not located in close proximity to stormwater management ponds or drainage swales.

Recommendations – Community Gardens

54. Establish a system for monitoring the use existing Whitby Community Gardens including annual reporting to guide future decisions for potential future expansion and/or the development of future community garden sites in partnership with other residents and community groups.

6.24 Lawn Bowling Greens

6.24.1 Current Supply

The Whitby Lawn Bowling Club is the Town's only outdoor lawn bowling facility, which is located at the 55+ Recreation Centre. The Whitby Lawn Bowling Club is operated independently by a community organization and results in a service level of one lawn bowling green per 151,500 residents, which is the second lowest level of service, although Ajax, Markham, and Vaughan do not provide lawn bowling greens (Table 43).

Table 43: Service Level Comparison, Lawn Bowling Greens

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	0
Hamilton	569,400	4	1 : 142,350
Markham	338,500	0	0
Oshawa	175,400	2	1 : 87,700
Pickering	99,200	1	1 : 99,200
Richmond Hill	202,000	1	1 : 202,000
Vaughan	323,100	0	0
Average	262,086	1	1 : 75,893
Whitby	151,500*	1	1 : 151,500

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.24.2 Market Conditions

Lawn bowling is a popular activity among older adults and seniors; however, some organizations have had success in introducing the sport to younger generations. This is partly due to its social nature and the Ontario Lawn Bowling Association's buddy program that partners entry-level players with experienced members to enable skill development and overall understanding of the game.

6.24.3 Community Input

No public comments were received about lawn bowling greens. One-third (34%) of community survey respondents supported additional investment in lawn bowling greens, ranking 33rd out of 36 facility types.



6.24.4 Analysis

There is no service target guiding the provision of lawn bowling greens. These amenities are primarily provided based on community demand and there is currently no evidence to suggest that there is a need for additional lawn bowling greens. The Town's facility is operated by the Whitby Lawn Bowling Club, which is a long-standing group that has existed for nearly 100 years. The group has maintained stable participation with approximately 40 members and hosts a variety of events, including lawn bowling games, open houses, tournaments, dinner, bingo, cleanups, coaching clinics, and more. Over the past four years, the group has been successful in receiving grants towards programming, replacing equipment, and undertaking enhancements to the green and clubhouse, although the facility is aging. Prior to any future reinvestment, the Town should work with the club to increase participation and utilization through promotion and greater awareness to evaluate long-term

community demand. It is noted that the club currently offers discounted rates for new and social members to attract new participants. Encouraging the club to establish beginner leagues to draw interest from residents who may not be familiar with the sport could be explored to help bolster and sustain long-term memberships. If demand does not support ongoing operation of the lawn bowling club, consideration should be given to repurposing this space to support an expansion to the 55+ Recreation Centre.

Recommendations – Lawn Bowling Greens

54. Work with the Whitby Lawn Bowling Club to bolster participation and utilization to evaluate long-term community demand.

6.25 Outdoor Skating Rinks

6.25.1 Current Supply

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town created two natural ice rinks at Peel Park and Brooklin Memorial Park to test demand for offering outdoor skating on a permanent basis. The Town has continued to provide natural rinks at these locations during the most recent winter season. The Town's supply translates into a service level of one per 75,750 residents, which is on par with the benchmark average. Ajax is the only municipality in Durham Region that offers a refrigerated ice rink.

Table 44: Service Level Comparison, Outdoor Skating Rinks

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Natural Supply	Refrigerated Supply	Total Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	1	1	1 : 127,000
Hamilton	569,400	0	4	4	1 : 142,350
Markham	338,500	5	1	6	1 : 56,417
Oshawa	175,400	2	0	2	1 : 87,700
Pickering	99,200	7	0	7	1 : 14,171
Richmond Hill	202,000	3	1	4	1 : 50,500
Vaughan	323,100	8	0	8	1 : 40,388
Average	262,086	4	1	5	1 : 74,075
Whitby	151,500*	2	0	2	1 : 75,750

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)). Excludes volunteer rinks. The availability of municipally operated natural rinks vary depending on weather conditions.

6.25.2 Market Conditions

Outdoor skating has been a Canadian tradition for many generations, although the ability to maintain outdoor rinks has become increasingly difficult due to climate change. Whitby experienced this challenge first-hand as the warmer winter weather made it difficult to operate the Town's natural rinks. They can be cumbersome when temperatures are near or above the freezing mark during warmer days or weeks, although they are the most affordable method to build and maintain given that expenses are largely relegated to water and operational time. As an alternative, municipalities may construct refrigerated outdoor rinks, although this approach is more costly to build, maintain and operate.

6.25.3 Community Input

Several requests for outdoor skating rinks or trails were received throughout the consultation process with some indicating that there is a desire for more outdoor winter activities. From the community survey, 79% of respondents supported investment in outdoor skating rinks or trails, ranking 8th out of 36 facility types.

6.25.4 Analysis

Outdoor skating opportunities regained popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic as it was one of the few outdoor recreation activities that could take place during the wintertime in communities across Ontario. With the maintenance of natural/non-refrigerated ice surfaces being notoriously difficult to maintain, leading municipalities have considered and installed refrigerated rinks and/or covered roof systems that can add cost but reduce day to day operations. Capital and operating costs for both natural and refrigerated rinks can vary widely depending on the size and scale of the design, as well as the winter conditions.

Given these challenges and the local requests for this popular winter activity, it is recommended that the Town provide a permanent refrigerated outdoor skating location, potentially as a rink or trail. The preferred site should be in a prominent location that serves all residents, and potentially visitors, such as at a Town Park or District Park. Potentially locations may include, but not be limited to, Cullen Park, Brooklin Memorial Park, and along or near Whitby's waterfront. Once completed, monitoring its use is encouraged to guide decisions to construct additional locations to provide a good distribution of outdoor skating opportunities.

Complementing the refrigerated outdoor skating rink or trail, supporting neighbourhood-based outdoor skating rinks are encouraged if the Town is approached by volunteers that are interested in creating and operating a natural rink, which should be located at Local Parks. As a best practice, the Town would be responsible for working with volunteers to identify a suitable location and providing equipment, while the group would be responsible for day-to-day maintenance and operations.

Recommendations – Outdoor Skating Rinks

55. Provide a refrigerated outdoor skating rink or trail at a Town or District Park, potentially at Cullen Park, Brooklin Memorial Park or along Whitby's waterfront. Once completed, monitor its use to guide decisions to construct additional locations to provide a good distribution of outdoor skating opportunities.

6.26 Toboggan Hills

6.26.1 Current Supply

The Town does not provide any official toboggan hills on municipal property, which is similar to other benchmark communities including Ajax, Oshawa, Markham, Pickering, and Richmond Hill, although unofficial locations may exist within these communities Whitby. Hamilton and Vaughan are the only two benchmark municipalities that provide designated tobogganing locations.

Table 45: Service Level Comparison, Toboggan Hills

Municipality	2021 Census Population	Supply	Service Level
Ajax	127,000	0	0
Hamilton	569,400	5	1 : 113,880
Markham	338,500	0	0
Oshawa	175,400	0	0
Pickering	99,200	0	0
Richmond Hill	202,000	0	0
Vaughan	323,100	2	1 : 161,550
Average	262,086	1	1 : 39,347
Whitby	151,500*	0	0

*Population as of December 2022 (Source: Durham Region Monitoring of Growth Trends (D01-02-01)).

6.26.2 Market Conditions

Tobogganing is a popular winter pastime in Canada, but it can be a dangerous activity, so much so that some communities have banned tobogganing on municipal property. Other municipalities practice risk management with establishing designated hills, providing public education and signage, regular inspections, maintenance, and monitoring use. Designated hills should have long runoffs (allowing sledders to come to a natural stop), be free from obstacles such as rocks, fences, and trees, and do not end on roads, parking lots, sidewalks, or frozen bodies of water.²⁶

6.26.3 Community Input

Limited input was received from the public regarding tobogganing. Some requests were received for tobogganing hills, as well as more winter activities in general.

6.26.4 Analysis

While some municipalities have explored banning tobogganing hills outright, this was often faced with public criticism, which was experienced in other Durham Region municipalities, including in Oshawa and Clarington. However, both of these communities faced public pushback and ultimately, they were not Council-supported decisions, and they continue to be a “use at your own risk” activity.

While some municipalities have taken the appropriate steps to mitigate the risks associated with tobogganing by directing use to designated locations, there are also challenges with this approach given that tobogganing tends to be a neighbourhood-based activity that are primarily pursued by children and youth who are limited in the distance that they can travel. Designated hills may also result in higher levels of use, potentially resulting in a higher level of risk, as well as generate increased vehicular traffic and parking.

Identifying a suitable location with the appropriate slope and runoff area that’s free of obstacles would also be a challenge as there are currently no known viable locations and constructing one would likely be a costly endeavour. It would also be an operational challenge as a risk assessment undertaken by the Durham Municipal Insurance Pool recommended that to minimize risks, designated toboggan hills should be regularly inspected, maintained, and monitored, which all require staffing and resources, which Oshawa estimated would add approximately \$30,000 in annual operating costs.

²⁶ Intact Insurance. Risk Management Considerations for Tobogganing as Municipal Liability. Retrieved from https://www.intactpublicentities.ca/storage/media/files/COE/Risk_Management_Considerations/Risk_Management_Considerations_for_Tobogganing_as_Municipal_Liability.pdf

With the above noted factors in mind, tobogganing could continue to be a “use at your own risk” activity on public property. In consultation with the Town’s Legal and Enforcement Services Department, consideration should be given to installing appropriate signage and updating necessary policies (e.g., Public Park and Park Buildings By-law #7419-18).

Recommendations – Toboggan Hills

56. Tobogganing should be a “use at your own risk” activity on public property. In consultation with the Town’s Legal and Enforcement Services Department, consideration should be given to installing appropriate signage and updating necessary policies (e.g., Public Park and Park Buildings By-law #7419-18).

6.27 Other Recreation Facilities

Whitby may receive requests for parks and recreation facilities that are not currently provided through its core service mandate. For example, some requests were received for a disc golf course in Whitby, which is an outdoor sport that is increasing in popularity as people seek more affordable, casual and active outdoor physical activities that are social. The Town must be prepared to respond appropriately to these types of requests with consideration given to Whitby’s evolving community profile, prevailing market conditions related to emerging sports and activities, future participation trends and preferences, funding and partnership opportunities, and other demands that may arise for existing facilities.

The Town should evaluate the merits of providing or supporting the provision of new facilities and amenities on a case-by-case basis when community requests are brought forward. At a minimum, this should include consideration of the following:

- Local, regional and provincial trends pertaining to usage and popularity of the activity/facility;
- Examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- Local demand for the activity/facility;
- The ability to accommodate the new service within an existing Town facility or park;
- The feasibility of the Town to provide the service and/or facility as a core service, and be able to do so in a cost-effective manner;
- The willingness and ability of the requesting organization to provide the service and/or operate space if provided with appropriate municipal supports, with consideration given to sound business planning;
- Available funding sources, including financial contributions from the potential partner; and
- The availability of Town resources (e.g., staffing) to deliver or to assist with the delivery of the new service or facility without impacting existing obligations, or understanding the scope and scale of new resources that would be required.

Recommendations – Other Recreation Facilities

57. Public requests for new parks and recreation facilities should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to proponent led business planning, trends, examples in other municipalities, local demand, the feasibility of using existing public space, the willingness of an organization to partner in providing the facility or service, and other relevant factors as may be determined to be appropriate.

7.0 Service Delivery System

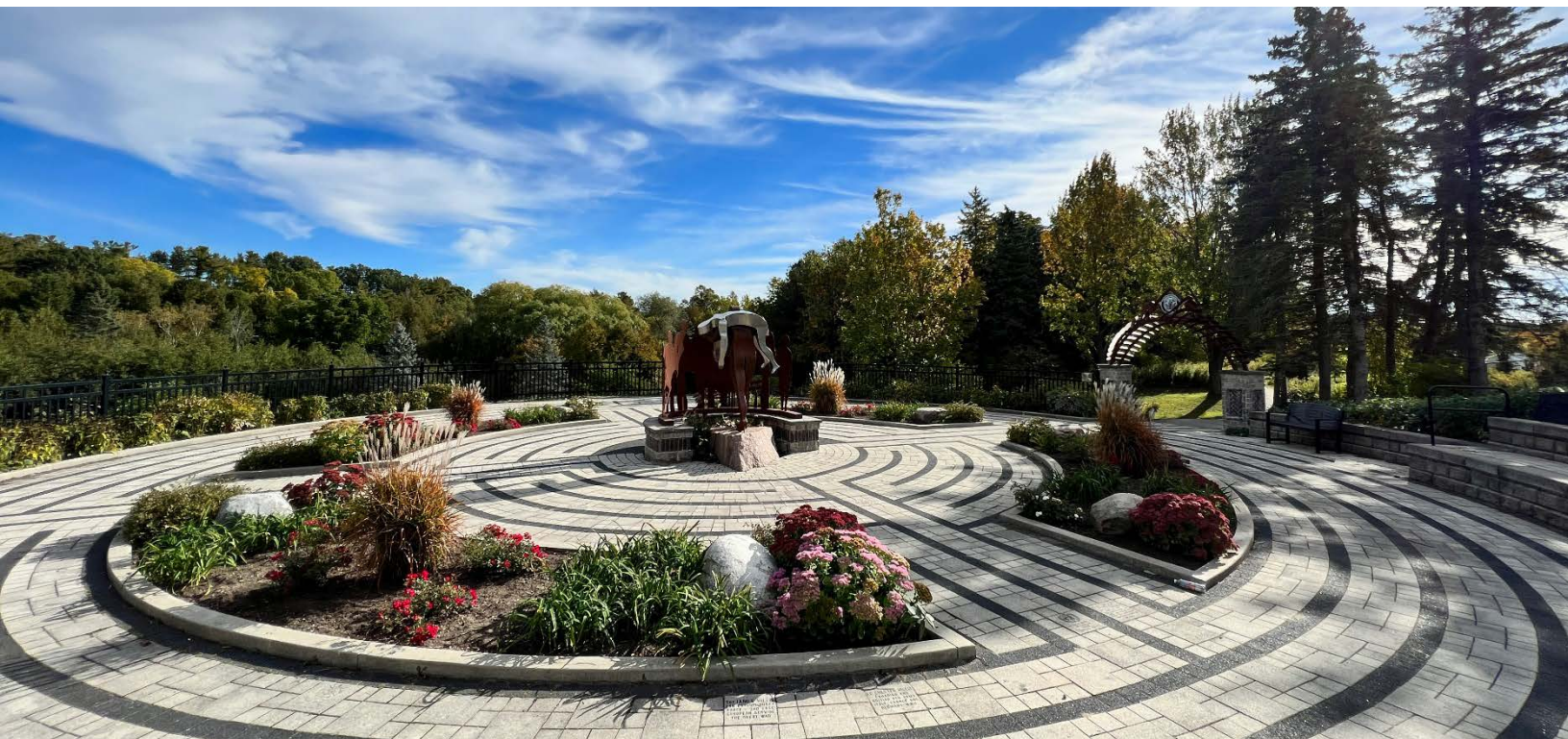
7.1 An Integrated Service Delivery System for Community Services

The role of a municipality in offering parks and recreation services is to maximize participation in all age groups and include residents from all backgrounds. Whitby has long recognized that residents gain health-related benefits, including emotional, physical, and social wellness through active and engaged lifestyles. Maximizing participation and the use of public spaces is achieved through good governance practices by involving the community to assist in assessing needs, by offering programs and services directly and by partnering with sport and other community organizations to provide a broad range of choices. Coordinated service delivery with other providers ensures that a broad range of services is offered and that everyone has choices. Consistent promotions, messaging, and communications to be active ensure that there is encouragement and support for active lifestyles. In Whitby, people can learn about all opportunities through the Town’s website and readily register for a program, activity, or sport of choice.

7.2 A Vision for Community Services

A vision statement describes a compelling, conceptual image of a desired future state. In the context of the Community Services Department, this vision is intended to identify what the Town wants in terms of what the public and staff’s aspirations are. The following vision for community services in Whitby is proposed:

Together we deliver services that make a difference in our community.



7.3 Guiding Principles in Service Delivery

Guiding principles provide the public, staff, and volunteers with a clearer understanding of what each service and program is setting about to achieve. These principles can be utilized when staff are setting up new programs and evaluating existing ones. The Community Services Department embraces the following principles in the delivery of parks and recreation services.

1. Residents consider funding for parks and recreation services a **sound investment** toward the health and wellness of residents, families, and the community at large.
2. All **residents have a choice** and therefore a range of parks, recreation and cultural services are provided for all age groups including active, creative, sport, general interest, and STEM (Science, Technology, Environmental and Mathematics).
3. Community Services **work in partnership** with a range of service providers to reduce duplication and share resources enabling an efficient service delivery system.
4. Community Services **maximizes the use of public spaces** ensuring that public funds are utilized wisely.
5. Special efforts are made to **include marginalized and underrepresented populations**.
6. Quality Assurance and compliance with legislative and industry standards is valued in providing **safe and enjoyable experiences**.
7. Engagement of residents to assist in volunteering, evaluate services and provide constructive feedback is part of Whitby’s aim to **continuously engage and improve**.
8. A **range of price points** for services include free universal programs, low-cost opportunities, and a range of fees. This approach provides universal access and funding for those experiencing low income. In general, daily access to parks and trails is low-cost (free).

The following illustration demonstrates the notion that residents have a choice of services and service delivery organizations. The responsibility of Community Services staff is to ensure that overall, there is coordination amongst these organizations, a central repository of opportunities in the provision of a range of services, a collective focus to include marginalized residents and measurement in the performance of the integrated system.



7.4 Programs and Services

7.3.1 Current State

Access to affordable and high-quality parks and recreation programming is essential to a healthy and engaged community. Whitby is proud to provide a broad range of direct programming that promotes physical activity, health and wellness, sports, creative pursuits, and general interest opportunities. Whitby’s programs are complemented by activities provided by others such as Community Connection, a non-profit organization whose Board of Directions are appointed by Council and provides affordable recreation programs for residents. Community Connection works with the Town and Durham District School Board to offer evening programs, including sports, karate, dance, drama, music, language, science, and art. During the summer, Community Connection offers day camp and specialty camps, including kinder camp, sports camp, young chefs' camp and arts and crafts camp. The organization uses local school facilities to host programming and all profits are invested back into schools, projects, initiatives, and special events in the community.

Station Gallery is another community partner, which is a public art gallery and registered charity that provides arts and culture programs for all ages through classes, workshops, performances, and special events. Table 46 summarizes the variety of recreation programs offered by age group; program availability may vary each season.

Table 46: Summary of Town-run Recreation Program Offering, including Community Connection Programs

	Arts	Camps	General Interests	Sports	Fitness	Swimming/ Aquafit	STEM
Preschool (Ages 0 to 5)	●	●	●	●		●	●
Children (Ages 5+)	●	●	●	●		●	●
Youth (Ages 11+)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Adults (Ages 14+)	●	●		●	●	●	
Adults (55+)	●		●	●	●	●	
Family (All Ages)					●	●	
Drop-in				●	●	●	

Notes: Arts programs include creative and fine arts such as crafts, writing, dance, drama, music, etc. General interest programs include playgroups, technology, coding, leadership, language, cooking, science, etc. STEM programs include science, technology, coding, 3D printing, environmental opportunities (The Library System also offers some STEM program opportunities for all ages).

Table 47 summarizes program registration over three program seasons from Spring/Summer 2018 to Spring/Summer 2019. The Town’s programs are well attended overall, with a total system-wide fill rate that ranges between 74% and 85%. The Town’s camps are the most popular program that is offered and draw over 7,000 children and youth. Camp fill rates ranged from 89% to 99% of capacity. By contrast, the Town’s adult programs have lower attendance levels with fill rates between 38% and 40%.

In addition to registered programs, Whitby also offers drop-in programming. For example, a range of drop-in activities are offered at the 55+ Recreation Centre such as cards, bingo, shuffleboard, and other traditional senior’s activities. Between 2017 and 2019, participation in drop-in 55+ programming declined by 17% to approximately 25,000 participants per annum. This may be because many residents in the baby boomer

cohort do not fit the typical senior profile as they may prefer low impact and active recreation activities, which is a common trend seen across the Province.

Table 47: Summary of Registered Program Participation, Spring/Summer 2018 to Spring/Summer 2019

Program Season	Spring/Summer 2018			Fall/Winter 2018/2019			Spring/Summer 2019		
	Cap	Reg	Fill Rate	Cap	Reg	Fill Rate	Cap	Reg	Fill Rate
Camps	7,492	7,324	98%	62	55	89%	7,713	7,611	99%
Preschool	530	427	81%	1,011	805	80%	612	462	75%
Children	665	415	62%	557	341	61%	669	443	66%
Community Connection Children	1,027	966	94%	1,590	1,416	89%	888	832	94%
Adults	1,104	415	38%	1,531	660	43%	1,268	503	40%
Adult Community Connection	249	153	61%	528	347	66%	170	93	55%
Adults 55+	5,293	4,318	82%	7,349	5,917	81%	5,758	4,596	80%
Station Gallery	902	661	73%	1,204	745	62%	935	707	76%
Total Fill Rate	17,262	14,679	85%	13,832	10,286	74%	18,013	15,247	85%

Cap = Program Capacity

Reg = Program Registration

Note: Excludes programs where registration did not meet minimum requirements.

Comparing the spring/summer 2018 to 2019 statistics, there is an overall fill rate of 85%. This is an indicator that staff have reviewed programs that are successful and have culled programs with consistent lower levels of registration. Specific to participation by program types, one can observe:

- There were slight increases in registrations in camps, pre-school, children’s programs, adults, adult 55+ and programs at the Station Gallery from 2018 to 2019.
- There were 134 fewer children’s registrants and 60 fewer adult registrants through the Community Connection Offerings from 2018 to 2019.
- More program spaces (+751) were offered in spring/summer 2019 with an increased participation rate (+568) as a result in programs overall.

Through the public consultation process, suggestions were made for offering more popular recreation activities as residents raised concerns about being unable to register for classes due to limited program capacities and choices or challenges with the online booking system. The desire for more swimming programs was identified given that the pool at the Civic Recreation Complex is temporarily closed (at the time of writing) due to renovations. It was mentioned that popular programs should also be offered at different times, some of the daytime programs are held at times that are not convenient for them.

7.3.2 Satisfaction in Parks and Recreation Opportunities

A summary of the survey question responses with respect to the current satisfaction levels is pertinent to the evaluation of the service delivery system. While not scientifically defensible, the community survey provides some indication of the strengths and challenges of certain programs and services.

The public survey asked residents as to their opinion regarding the importance of community programs and subsequently the satisfaction rating for the same services. The results are a clear indicator of where a focus might be employed to improve service delivery. A healthy indicator would exist if these similar services received high ratings in both importance and satisfaction levels. People would be showing that these services are clearly needed and delivered effectively. The survey results indicated that these services receive a rating of 84% in terms of importance while receiving a 45% rating in terms of satisfaction levels. Municipalities generally strive

to have importance and satisfaction levels rest between 85 and 90%. There is a differential and lower ratings in satisfaction – greater work must be done to increase the effectiveness of program delivery through user input. Residents feel that the program service is important and are expecting some modifications or improvements.

The respondent satisfaction levels are 52% over all age groups which is a significant decrease from a previous survey indicating a higher level of satisfaction. By individual age cohorts – teens from the ages of 13 to 17 years have the lowest satisfaction level at 29% while the highest level of satisfaction rests with pre-schoolers at 54%. A target of 80% to 85% typically holds municipal recreation providers in good standing. It must be noted that these findings are relatively consistent with other municipal survey supporting master planning. These can be considered as one input and satisfaction levels gathered at the completion of camps and programs must also be taken into consideration. A lower satisfaction level could also reflect the recovery from the pandemic with not all programs and services being offered.

Table 48: Satisfaction Levels in Parks and Recreation Opportunities by Age Group

Age Group	Satisfaction Level
Preschool (Ages 0 to 4)	61%
Children (Ages 5 to 12)	61%
Teens (Ages 13 to 17)	42%
Adults (Ages 18 to 54)	45%
Adults (Ages 55+)	55%
Families	49%
Overall	52%

Reasons with respect to barriers to participation that could impact satisfaction levels included a lack of desired facilities and programs, convenient times and those programs are often full. Further, this rationale were offered as part of the survey choices. Other general comments made about the delivery system cited affordability, program times for working persons, cleanliness and difficulty navigating the booking/registration system. These comments are general in nature and give indicators as to where staff might focus on a broader range of inputs by participants possibly by age groupings.

The community survey found that 38% of respondents were not able to participate in recreation activities as often as they would like because the facility or program is not available; 29% of respondents also identified that their desired program was not offered at a convenient time. Requests were made for a variety of recreation programs including, but not limited to, more swimming, arts, gymnasium sports, fitness, drama, and general programs for toddlers (e.g., EarlyON), children, teenagers, adults, and adults 55+.

Stakeholders and the public expressed a desire for enhanced communications and marketing so that residents and groups have greater awareness about what is available. Knowing what is available was one of the barriers cited as a barrier to participation. Suggestions were made as to informing community stakeholder groups so that they could in turn pass information on to their members or participants. Further suggestions centred on ensuring greater exposure to the Town’s event calendar. Some groups indicated that the cost of advertising was not affordable and would look to the Town to assist in promoting their opportunities as well.

Many of the comments heard during the community consultation sessions to support the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan centred on relying on the Community Services Guide for information about opportunities, noting that residents kept in the guide within their homes for continued reference. While many residents reference information online – with an aging population, the Community Services Guide may be considered for limited printing for distribution in community centres and libraries. An initiative to look at the costs as compared to benefits of increased participation should be undertaken.

7.3.3 Community Connection

Community Connection provides a unique approach to offering programs and services at the local level. This partnership between the Durham District School Board and the Town of Whitby to utilize the use of schools to provide neighbourhood level programs and services that are accessible within walking distance. It has been a successful way of engaging volunteers to assess community recreation needs and offer localized programs based on localized needs. This community use of schools initiative has been a very successful model over decades. Community Connection is overseen by an Executive Board of Directors to ensure that community participation is maximized. Observations include declining participation, and fewer schools involved in 2023. The number of schools involved has been reduced from 10 to 6 schools town wide. Program offerings decreased by 200 program spaces from spring/summer 2018 to spring/summer 2019. Participation rates decreased by 194 potential registrants. These are indications that the program model requires review and some refinements.



Promising Practices to Encourage Physical Activity

Canada’s 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Canada’s 24-Hour Movement Guidelines have replaced Canada’s Physical Activity Guidelines. The new guidelines were introduced in 2020 and depict the amount of time various age groups should “Sweat, Step, Sleep and Sit” in a 24-hour period. This is viewed as more a helpful tool for Canadians as the new guidelines speak to the amount of recreational screen time that is appropriate from a health perspective each day. For example, Table 49 highlights the daily movement guidelines for children and youth between the ages of 7 and 17.

Table 49: Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Activity	Time / Day
Sweat	60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity
Step	Several hours of moderate physical activity
Sleep	9-11 hours for 5 – 13-year-olds
Sit	8-10 hours for 14 – 17-year-olds

These new guidelines have been developed for all age cohorts and should be communicated and promoted to the public within facilities, online and in promotional materials. Discussions with community partners to introduce Physical Literacy, promoting active opportunities in increasing the frequency, duration, and intensity of physical activity all play a part in addressing this chronic inactivity issue. Whitby has played an ongoing role in increasing physical activity through the built environment and through the provision of sport, fitness, and physical activity programming and drop in opportunities. Online opportunities promoted family and active opportunities during the pandemic prompted residents to be active together and at home when they could not go to public facilities.

Physical Literacy

One approach to increasing physical activity is to ensure that community members have the basic physical skills to participate in active opportunities. The Canadian Sport for Life Movement has developed a Physical Literacy program for all age groups to ensure that they can run, throw, catch, etc. Physical literacy can be taught in existing programs and environments such as in daycares, seniors centres, schools, sport clubs etc.

Once people are comfortable with the skills to be more active, it is hoped that some barriers to their participation in physical activities will be alleviated.

The ParticipACTION Community Better Challenge – Top Prize \$100,000

ParticipACTION hosts an annual Community Better Challenge to encourage Canadian communities to get more active. It is open to all communities and residents are encouraged to track minutes of activity on the ParticipACTION App or website during the month of June. Total minutes achieved per capita count toward the national winner and a top winning community is identified within each province and territory. The fifty finalist communities are asked to apply explaining why they deserve to be Canada's Most Active Community. This initiative has helped community groups and organizations join in and improve activity levels. The prize of \$100,000 often helps to improve infrastructure, program, and equipment levels. With a population of 16,000 residents, the eastern Ontario community of North Grenville was the recipient of this prize and was recognized as Canada's Most Active Community in 2022. The community achieved over nine million physical activity minutes. Some events included a 12-hour tennis marathon and a cartwheel contest lead by the Mayor.

Communities and organizations can apply for grants and event tool kits at the beginning of each year to assist with events and challenges. This is a way to animate the neighborhoods and community groups in Whitby to improve fitness levels for all age groups and abilities and possibly become an annual event. Further, it is a way to capture how active residents already are in Whitby.

Recommendations – Programs and Services

58. Undertake a review of the Community Connection recreation program delivery model in Whitby schools, including a review of historic participation patterns by age group, input of users and non-users, ways of working closely within neighbourhood catchment areas, promotion of activities and increasing participation in services.
59. Promote Canada 24-Hour Movement Guidelines.
60. Regularly engage community stakeholders to connect with organizations, share information, promote and raise awareness about opportunities and resources, understand challenges, and collectively brainstorm solutions to address concerns.
61. Consider the costs and merits of reinstating a limited printing and distribution of the Community Services Guide.
62. Consider working with community partners in becoming Canada's Most Active Community through ParticipACTION.
63. Employ Physical Literacy in existing programs and camps for all age groups to increase resident's ability to become more active.

7.5 Focus on Youth – Whitby’s Youth Strategic Plan

Whitby Youth Strategic Plan was developed in 2019 and has a span of recommendations up to and including 2023. Many very positive initiatives have been implemented and / or enhanced because of the plan recommendations and include but are not limited to:

- Formation of the Whitby Youth Council which provide advice on programs and services for youth ensuring that the youth voice is honoured and valued. The Council also assists with community events and seeks the assistance of additional youth through volunteerism.
- The continuation and enhancement of youth rooms throughout Whitby. These rooms provide youth centric spaces and activities.
- Youth fitness membership for youth 14-17 years of age.
- A Community Youth Awards programs which recognizes the contribution of youth in Whitby.
- Youth week activities including “Art Attack” which highlight youth contributions to the visual arts.
- The provision of other supports and links to agencies/resources that can provide individual guidance and assistance such as counselling, 211, the Youth help Line, specific assistance to the youth LGBTQ2S+ community, assistance with transportation and the encouragement to volunteer in various opportunities.

Whitby is recognized at the Platinum Level as a Youth Friendly Community and has demonstrated application of the 10 criteria in supporting youth leadership and engagement in recreation. Whitby works with partners to address these quality assurance standards to validate a real commitment toward youth. Communities are awarded Youth Friendly Community status at varying levels by demonstrating their provision of services and youth engagement efforts. While the criteria for Youth Friendly Communities is under review and redevelopment by Parks and Recreation Ontario, using these criteria will ensure quality experiences for youth and promote its dedication to engagement and positive life chances. Some criteria include:

- Youth have options for play.
- Youth are formally connected community wide.
- It is easy for youth to find information about activities in the community.
- The community recognizes and celebrates youth.
- The community formally commits funding for youth play.
- The community supports positive youth development.
- Youth feel valued by their community; and
- Schools and school boards support the youth friendly application.

This is a commendable accomplishment in serving youth in concert with community partners in Whitby. With the Youth Strategy reaching its horizon, refreshing the strategy will ensure that youth engagement and service provision is meeting current and future needs.

Recommendations – Focus on Youth

64. Refresh Whitby’s Youth Strategy, overseen by the Youth Council with the horizon extended to 2031.

7.6 Focus on Adults 55+

Whitby has historically served adults 55+ well and have invested in the health and well-being of this age group. The 55+ Recreation Centre is a community hub designed to serve many needs of older adults.

- The 55+ Recreation Advisory Committee provides advice the Town on recreation and social needs and promotes activity choices to potential participants.
- Through purchasing a membership for an annual amount older adults can access a choice of programs and services which serve to enhance physical, social, and emotional health outcomes.
- Many of the programs and activities are funded by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility through a grant program distributed to older adult activity centres in Ontario.
- A full range of social, creative, and active programs are provided for a minimal drop-in fee of \$2.00 as well as a myriad of registered programs.
- The Dining Room service provides daily lunches and 55+ members gain from these nutritional lunches and the social advantage of dining in a common space.
- June is Seniors Month in Ontario, and many activities are developed to celebrate these recreational opportunities and contributions that elders make to the community.
- The Centre is operated to a great extent through volunteerism with 250 volunteers at its peak. The number of volunteers has declined since the COVID-19 pandemic and very slow progress being seen since that time. Greater volunteer needs are discussed in Section 7.7.1.

Very few concerns were raised with respect to the current program provision for adults 55+. The only consideration that must be made from a service provision perspective will be the space, program expansion and staffing needs as the older population increases.

Recommendations – Focus on Adults 55+

65. Determine the program participation rate for the 55+ population and project the program, staffing and volunteers needed to serve an increased older adult population to start building capacity.

7.7 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Inclusive service delivery is a key goal for municipal community service departments, including Whitby. To ensure that services are inclusive of all residents, consideration continues to be given to the following factors: economic (e.g., costs associated with participation); information (e.g., knowledge and information sharing about available opportunities); geographic (e.g., equitable distribution of facilities and services), and inclusivity (e.g., ensuring all participants feel welcomed and supported). Most importantly, underrepresented populations should be identified, and discussions had about how barriers to participation can be addressed.

Whitby has demonstrated its commitment to minimizing barriers for diverse populations by working on several initiatives with the Town's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee. Such initiatives include implementing a diversity and inclusion training plan for Council and staff. The Town also recently completed a study known as the IDEA Project, Whitby's Journey to Inclusivity, which contains a literature review and strategies that could make the Town a more welcoming place to live. Key strategies identify expanding recreation opportunities to include non-traditional sports and activities, establishing a process for residents to request new types of activities, and ensuring that user fees are fair for all. Additionally, the Town offers inclusion services to provide support to children with exceptionalities who are registered in camp programs. The Town's efforts in providing inclusive services is complemented by other community providers such as the Abilities Centre, which is a significant community hub providing a range of inclusive community programs and services. The Centre works with partners to conduct research and advocacy initiatives on inclusion issues and provides program development frameworks for communities across Canada.

7.6.1 Equity vs Equality

Taking different approaches to ensure that varying underserved populations can be included begins to define taking an equitable approach. For example, Community Services has an Access Policy (Access to Affordable Recreation) to provide funding for persons experiencing low income.

7.6.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a term being used to ensure that there is an understanding of how residents define themselves. Residents don't typically define themselves as a singular identity and staff and volunteers must be aware to provide welcoming environments overall. One might define themselves as Indigenous, non-binary and with a physical disability or one might define themselves as female, experiencing low income. Needs won't often be met in a linear fashion, and therefore all programs and services must be welcoming and consider potential barriers to participation.

7.6.3 A Framework toward Greater Inclusion in Community Services

Municipalities are making intentional efforts to ensure that public spaces are welcoming to all residents and programs and services reflect the fuller needs of a diverse population. Typically, departments employ Inclusion Coordinators to identify ways of ensuring that programs and services are welcoming, that staff are trained, and that spaces and programs are provided with modifications if required. Historically the focus has been directed to persons with disabilities and those experiencing low income, however the focus has expanded to include all marginalized groups.

7.6.4 Create the Toolbox

The development of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Outreach Guidelines and training will ensure that staff and volunteers understand their role in welcoming all residents and the efforts that will be made to do so. Efforts to ensure that there is equitable representation within the staff and volunteer team will provide diverse input into the delivery and enabling and participation in programs and services.

7.6.5 Listen, Learn and Act Together - Nothing about Us without Us

Developing meaningful approaches to including diverse populations must embrace the notion of "Nothing About Us Without Us" Each community is different with unique community service needs. Staff cannot act alone in developing inclusive approaches without listening and working closely with the groups who these approaches affect and have lived experience. Often diverse communities are independent and offer their own programs and simply require space and/or other support. Needs may change over time and continued engagement will allow all allies to understand trends and modify service provision. The Town of Whitby has Council appointed Committees to hear these diverse voices to provide and broaden timely input.

7.6.6 Create a Sense of Belonging

With Whitby's diverse population, staff have clear target markets to engage and serve. Initial discussions should focus on what is in place to support their recreation and sport needs. What are the barriers to participation and how the parties can work together to increase participation? There are options to discuss with diverse groups as to whether they need assistance accessing and feeling welcomed into the current program and service mix, or if they need access to space to offer preferred activities. It is important to assess if residents would like to learn some skills to participate or if the fulsome service mix should include some more diverse program offerings.

7.6.7 Initiate More Meaningful Conversations

During the staff engagement sessions, discussions centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Staff indicated that the approach to being more inclusive was currently organic; meaning that staff respond as opportunities arise and discussions occur. Staff have been successful when they have developed and executed specific policies and plans and are proud of the work that has been completed to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities, persons experiencing low income and some racialized groups. There is a clear aim to be more inclusive but there has been no direct and intentional path developed to date to reach out to other identified and underserved populations. Municipalities can play a strong role in facilitating community discussions and identifying and prioritizing policies and programs to meet their mandate of increasing participation.

7.6.8 Collective Impact - A Framework for Social Change

Working together promotes the sharing of knowledge, and resources toward a common end. It takes the responsibility for change from one organization to many. One very effective social change framework where there are multiple parties involved that are all working toward a shared vision is the Collective Impact Model. The model encourages multiple participant groups all working with varying approaches toward one end. This model can be applied to increasing representation in recreation and sport by diverse and underserved populations in Whitby. This tactic has proven successful in other municipal applications to increase diverse engagement in recreation services, to increase the number of women in sport, community safety strategies, and to increase the number of residents experiencing low income to participate in recreation. The framework typically involves the engagement of a diverse steering committee of users with a common agenda.

Staff would first spend time understanding the task at hand and working to articulate and build a strong culture of trust, cooperation, and respect. A good discussion about shared values and behaviours and importantly, what behaviours are not acceptable is time well spent. Preliminary meetings may involve opportunities to learn about groups backgrounds and to share some research, best practices and learning from other municipal experiences. Data collection and sharing will be part of developing a strong collective.

7.6.9 Current State in Diversity Equity and Inclusion in Whitby

Whitby has made a clear commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion by joining 82 other Canadian municipalities in the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. The purpose of this organization is to take action and improve policies against racism, exclusion and intolerance. The collective's aim is to promote social inclusion and eradicate racism. Minimizing barriers is critical to ensure that all residents in Whitby have an opportunity to participate, regardless of income, ability, background, and orientation. Whitby seeks to provide inclusive opportunities in several ways, including removing physical barriers from public facilities and offering a wide variety of programs to appeal to a variety of abilities and interests. The following highlights some of the other ways Whitby is currently providing inclusive community service opportunities.

Income

While Whitby has a higher median household income compared to Durham Region and the Province, the 2021 Census found that 5% of the population were experiencing low income in 2020. The Town recognizes the need to engage all residents including those who may not have disposable income to participate in recreation programs. Whitby's Access Program provides funding to residents to participate in recreation programs and in 2019, the Town had distributed over \$130,000 to nearly 1,300 recipients (average of 100 per participant). This was an increase from \$45,000 and 400 recipients in 2017 (average of \$113 per participant). In addition to the Town's subsidy, Whitby also promotes the use of other financial assistance programs, including Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Durham Region Social Services. Funding from Canadian Tire Jumpstart has declined over the three-year period due to a change in how the funding was allocated and administered. A summary of how much these programs have benefited Whitby residents is highlighted in Table 50.

- Whitby has increased their funding levels to accommodate those experiencing low income by \$85,000 or by 190% from 2017 to 2019 demonstrating a true commitment to including those experiencing low income.
- In total, all three funding programs accommodated 2200 recipients in 2019 which equals approximately 32% of the residents experiencing low income (assuming that each client is unique). This represents an impressive effort to be inclusive. The typical goal is to benchmark participation with the general population which is generally identified as 15% of the population. Whitby’s efforts to include persons experiencing low income in services is a promising practice that is shared with other municipalities to emulate.

Table 50: Summary of Recreation Fee Subsidies, 2017 to 2019

		2017	2018	2019	Change
Whitby Access Program	Funding	\$45,000	\$99,000	\$130,000	+ 189%+
	Recipients	400	1,000	1,300	+ 225%
Canadian Tire Jumpstart	Funding	\$80,000	\$49,000	\$38,000	- 53%
	Recipients	800	500	300	- 63%
Durham Region Social Services	Funding	\$39,000	\$54,000	\$58,000	+ 49%
	Recipients	300	400	600	+ 100%

Notes: Funding rounded to the nearest \$1,000. Recipients rounded to the nearest 100.

Promising Practices in Minimizing Financial Barriers

Lending Libraries offer equipment loans such as skates, park games, paddle boards and canoes in strategic locations. This approach offers families the opportunities to broaden their recreation experiences where the cost of equipment is a barrier.

Transportation to Facilities – The Age Friendly Strategy in Mississauga directed staff work with transportation providers to ensure that transportation does not remain a barrier to participation. Some municipalities have negotiated bus stops at community centre sites and at the front door of the community centre where feasible. This barrier of not having transportation and relying on public transit is a barrier for persons experiencing low income and if addressed could enhance participation to a greater extent.

Seamless Approvals – Working with Ontario Works staff to promote the Access to Affordable Recreation Policy and the benefits of recreation to their clients and provide seamless approvals has shown a greater uptake in recreation participation in Durham Region.

Persons from Diverse Backgrounds

Municipalities across the Greater Toronto Area boasts some of the most diverse communities in Canada. This is reflective of Whitby’s community as the 2016 Census reported that 25% of the population are represented by visible minorities such as Black, South Asian and Chinese. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of Whitby’s population are also immigrants, the majority of whom arrived before 2000. As many residents have been established in Canada, they are likely familiar with traditional recreation activities, although it is important to provide a balance of non-traditional sports and pursuits to ensure that a variety of opportunities are available, particularly as Whitby continues to attract newcomers to the community. The Town constructed a temporary cricket pitch at Brooklin Memorial Park in 2022 to accommodate the needs of the growing Whitby Cricket Club, until a permanent location is found.

Promising Practices in Including Persons from Diverse Backgrounds

The City of Markham was one of the first communities in Ontario to host a “Race Relations” Community conference in 1989 to respond to the beginnings of greater diversity within the community. The ongoing work to support a diversity and staff has resulted in the development of an internal staff team to ensure that the workforce is welcoming, reduces barriers to advancement and creates a culture of inclusion. All staff receive anti-racism training that has been developed online and includes components on:

- Terms and definitions
- Individual and systemic racism
- The history of Black racism in Canada; and
- Steps that you can take.

Persons with Disabilities

Based on national statistics from the 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability, it is estimated that more than 35,000 residents in Whitby living with some form of disability. The Town is committed to making its facilities accessible.

Whitby offers an inclusive services membership, which allows residents to apply program support, camp support and discounted rates for swimming lessons. Participants may also bring their own personal support worker and recreation programs can be adapted to meet the needs of individual users. It is difficult to calculate the number of residents who participate in integrated programs and programs designed for those with disabilities. Further casual and drop-in programs encourage residents to participate with caregivers at no cost if they are needed. From a facility perspective, an accessible ball diamond is located at Willow Park.

LGBTQ2S+ Communities

Statistics Canada reports that approximately 4% of Canadians ages 15 and over identify as members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Applying this rate to the Town’s population suggests that there could be approximately 6,000 LGBTQ2S+ residents in Whitby. Trends suggests that the LGBTQ2S+ community is more likely to face exclusion. However, participation in the community is critical as LGBTQ2S+ advocacy groups attribute exclusionary attitudes with mental health issues, homelessness, suicides, and harmful practices. Whitby celebrates the LGBTQ2S+ community with its annual Pride Week and promotes various events and activities run by the Whitby Library and Durham Region (e.g., Youth Pride Durham).

Community service providers can play a strong role in creating a sense of belonging, increasing physical activity levels and engaging youth in leadership opportunities. While some service providers position their programs and services as open to all – specific efforts must be made to provide/enable a choice of opportunities to this community based on existing gaps and the critical need for safe spaces.

Promising Practices in Welcoming the LGBTQ2S+ Community

Toronto’s 519 Community Centre is a community hub for the LGBTQ2S+ residents where recreation, sport and programs for all ages are delivered/enabled. These municipally supported spaces ensures that LGBTQ2S+ residents feel welcomed and have opportunities to become part of the leadership to develop program initiatives.



Montreal's West Island LGBTQ2+ Centre serves Montreal's west island by providing safe spaces for gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people. Programs and drop-in opportunities are provided for various age groups.

Youthline Resources is a confidential online database of services and organizations that serve LGBTQ2S+ youth across Ontario. Confidentiality is a key component of this service to protect users and programs from harassment and illegal actions. Users and support organizations must register themselves and as well to post recreation and sport opportunities.

Camp Firefly is Canada's only national leadership retreat for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, asexual, intersex, queer, questioning, and allied youth ages 14 to 24. The camp is offered at a purposefully undisclosed and confidential location in southern Alberta. The camp provides youth with the opportunity to explore their identity, build resilience and enhance self-esteem while engaging in camp and outdoor experiences. The camp was developed in partnership by the University of Alberta and the Calgary Sexual Health Centre.

OK2BME a choice of support services for LGBTQ2S+ youth in the Region of Waterloo including events, a youth group, games nights, musical opportunities and other opportunities identified by youth.

Indigenous Peoples

The 2021 Census identifies that there are over 2,000 residents who identify as Indigenous in Whitby. Indigenous awareness, recognition, understanding, and reconciliation are addressed through several sectoral documents, such as Parks for All (2017) and the calls to action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. All communities have a role to play in recognizing the importance of Indigenous voices in parks, recreation, and culture. It is important for all disciplines to understand the contributions of Indigenous Peoples and work with community stakeholder groups to increase this understanding to share cultural history, and better understand preferred leisure activities and norms.

The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada** provides guidance to municipalities in terms of sport and recreation and providing welcoming environments with communities. Key calls to action related to parks and recreation includes:

87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

Through this Master Plan and other initiatives, Whitby can further demonstrate its commitment to reconciliation.

IndigenACTION

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national organization representing First Nations in Canada. The AFN has developed an IndigenACTION Strategy which serves to develop partnerships with community level sport and recreation leaders to ensure that First Nations youth can live healthier lifestyles and overall well-being through recreation and sport.

Indigenous Cultural Competency Training

The Indigenous Cultural Competency program is provided by Indigenous organizations and businesses. The program provides organizations that work with Indigenous peoples and groups to obtain the skills, knowledge, and respect for the history, terminology, values, and behaviours of Indigenous peoples. It is invaluable as communities begin to develop strong relationships built on respect.

Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation

Participation in sport and recreation by girls and women (including those who identify as girls or women) is on a downward trend in Canada. Canadian Women and Sport in concert with the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities released a report on a national study entitled The Rally Report in June of 2019 regarding sport participation for girls aged six to eighteen. The findings noted that girls' participation in sport is much lower than boys at the same age and that girls experience a significant drop out rate by late adolescence. One in three girls leave sport as compared to one in ten boys.

Among the barriers cited, girls stated low levels of confidence, low body image, lack of skills and feeling unwelcome in a sport environment. In 1992, over half of females over fifteen participated in sport. By 2019, 28% of females participate in sport, while 62% do not. Current studies are demonstrating that 25% of girls are not committed to returning to sport after the Pandemic. This declining participation rate is alarming, and the Federal government has declared that we will achieve gender equity in sport by 2035 in Canada.



The Canadian Women and Sport (CWS) supports and enables girls, women and gender diverse people in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, and keeps women actively engaged in building community capacity. CWS priority and focus is to develop and support welcoming environments and sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. They have many resources that are readily available to audit policies and practices and help to build capacity within community organizations - (The Temperature Check and Game On). Female participation in community-driven sport and recreation should be identified as a priority in Whitby as it would serve to engage 51% of the population and all the underserved populations as identified by Council. Female and gender diverse participation in sport and recreation warrants assessment and the development of a multi-year Plan.

Promising Practices to Encourage Girls and Women in Sport and Recreation

Brown Girls Outdoor World – Demeisha Dennis a Toronto resident originally from Jamaica was used to being in the outdoors and didn't see herself or the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) in the outdoor activities in Canada. Her goal is to change that narrative by increasing and promoting outdoor experiences for visible cultures. She has created a website whereby BIPOC females can sign up and learn to experience non-traditional outdoor activities such as: fly fishing, ice fishing, winter camping, ice climbing, skiing, paddleboarding. Brown Girls Outdoor World has been highlighted in Canadian Geographic, Breakfast television, the CBC, the Toronto Star, and a commercial article developed by NIKE Canada. The organization fundraises and seeks corporate sponsors and partnerships, is self-sustaining through user fees and is an excellent example of opportunities that should be promoted and supported within local communities.

7.6.10 A Need for Tools for Localized Outreach

Staff input sessions centred on not having the tools and knowledge to be more inclusive and focus on underserved populations. This goal is highly endorsed, and staff suggested the development of standardized tools to reach out and better serve underserved populations at the local level would prove to be an asset. This assistance will provide frontline staff with the mandate and tools to have discussions with underserved groups

as to what exists, the gaps and the empowerment to develop and partner on local solutions. Innovative programs and initiatives built with community partners that share one vision and joint responsibility has proven to be a winning formula in other similar municipal endeavours.

Community Services will continue to support and address the needs of underrepresented populations. Some of these needs identified may be supported through direct programming, partnerships, one-on-one support, or a combination of the three. It is important to continue to listen and strengthen ongoing communications with Council's Advisory Committees and representatives of underserved groups and support organizations.

One suggested area to focus on is the development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework for Community Services that speaks to the steps that the Department will take in advancing and supporting under-represented populations in Whitby including but not limited to:

- Identify potentially marginalized groups in Whitby who may be underrepresented in parks and recreation.
- Convene focus group meetings to identify barriers that residents may have in participating in Community Services pursuits.
- Work to ensure that staff and volunteers represent the community that they serve.
- Review all named facilities, public art, and statues to ensure that they are relevant to current social mores and standards.
- Convene meetings with the organizations in Whitby that support persons with disabilities to review the supports that the municipality provides and to determine any enhancements that would serve to increase participation.
- Work with community partners and persons experiencing low income to review the current Access to Affordable Recreation Policy.
- Meet with Indigenous Peoples and support organizations to discuss opportunities to be more inclusive within Community Services and to better recognize contributions to the Town of Whitby.
- Train staff in providing Positive/Safe Spaces and supports for the LGBTQ2S+ community and meet with residents and support groups to discuss any barriers to participation and program ideas.
- Complete regular observations of public places and spaces to ensure that participation/use reflects the community make-up.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are continually trained and are Diversity Competent in supporting the work of Community Services.
- Complete an analysis of the number of females and those identifying as females participating in community service pursuits by age group involving community partners. Address gaps through community discussions with females and those who identify as female to address barriers to participation.
- Work with other organizations supporting female participation to work toward increasing continued participation of females in leisure pursuits.

Recommendations – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

66. Develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework for Community Services to support and better include under-represented populations in Whitby.

7.8 Departmental Capacity

Building capacity within Community Services focuses on addressing internal processes to strengthen service delivery. This assessment to enable the department to deliver on the Master Plan recommendations identified:

- a) Volunteerism
- b) Costing of Services & Pricing Policy
- c) Performance Measures and Targets
- d) Organizational Structural Refinements; and
- e) Confirming Levels of Service and Resourcing Requirements

7.7.1 Volunteerism

The success of the recreation and sport service delivery model in Whitby relies on volunteerism to expand on opportunities offered by the Town and beyond programs offered by the Town. Volunteers are needed to provide good governance and leadership to not for profit community stakeholder groups as well as coach, manage, organize tournaments and competitions etc. The community survey to support the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan indicated that volunteerism is decreasing within community stakeholder groups, making it difficult for organizations to achieve their fullest potential.

Volunteers are essential to the operation and delivery of high-quality programs and services where communities rely heavily on their assistance. Statistics Canada estimates that 47% of Canadians are over the age of 15 volunteer,²⁷ but experiences in many communities suggest that volunteer groups still struggle to find enough volunteers. Staff have indicated a lack of volunteers in the 55+ Centre and other applications.

Seniors currently represent the most active volunteer group; however, it is anticipated that some from this group will soon move on from the volunteer workforce, resulting in greater pressures on the delivery of services and negatively impacting program capacity. This gap in the volunteer base opens opportunities to attract new volunteers, particularly among youth, which currently represent the smallest proportion of volunteers. While volunteering is required as part of required community service for secondary school graduation, youth note that barriers to volunteering include lack of time, unable to find opportunities or they are unsure of how to get involved.

Whitby recognizes that volunteers are valuable assets that make many community services and events possible. The Town promotes many volunteer opportunities for advisory committees, events, recreation, Port Whitby Marina, Adult 55+ activities, Youth Council and more. The United Way Durham Region also maintains an online volunteer database that connects people with organizations looking for assistance.

The Ontario Network for Non-Profits, a 7,000-member strong provincial network representing over 300 organizations has dubbed issues arising from the Pandemic on Non-Profit groups “The HR Crisis”. Input from volunteers and staff within the network indicates that the urgency within communities (e.g., waiting lists, unmet needs, rising community demands, etc.) is placing the need for more volunteers and staff. The impacts have included and continue to include resignations and turnover at the board and leadership levels and rationing, reducing, and shutting down services.

In 2021, a third quarter Business Conditions Survey developed by Statistics Canada found that the top obstacles for non-profits sector across Canada included the rising costs of insurance (49%), government regulations (37%), recruiting skilled employees (34%). As well the top recruitment and retention plans for non-profits was to increase wages for current employees (62%). These fiscal pressures are affecting non-profit community stakeholder groups in addition to attracting adequate number of volunteers.

²⁷ Statistics Canada. 2012. Volunteering in Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca>.

While communities have witnessed a decrease in volunteerism in the last decade, the Pandemic has exacerbated this trend. Part of the recovery efforts to normalize the recreation and sport delivery system must include volunteerism. Evidence-based Examples of interventions and strategies to increase volunteerism include:

- Identifying the skills and competency gaps
- Assisting with Police Reference and Vulnerable Populations Checks
- Municipal wide online volunteer software – to list volunteer opportunities and match volunteers with opportunities (also tracks volunteer hours)

7.7.2 Costing of Services & Pricing Policy

The Town of Whitby has a lengthy history of offering/enabling a broad range of quality parks, recreation, and cultural services to its citizenry. Whitby Council believes that participation results in many benefits to individuals, families, and the community. The evidence is clear, engagement prevents isolation in our elders, provides leadership opportunities to our youth, prevents harmful activities, and ensures that children can master new skills in safe, welcoming, and enjoyable environments. While most of the costs to provide recreation services are funded through the municipal tax base, levying user fees allows for a sustainable menu of services and ensures that services can be readily expanded when direct costs are recovered. A Pricing Policy provides a framework with which fair-minded and equitable decisions can be made with respect to costing as well as rates and fee development.

Ontario Regulation 584/06 issued under the authority of the Municipal Act specifically governs the role of the municipality in imposing fees and charges. With respect to recreation there is a limit to not include the capital costs when programs and services are costed. The Town of Whitby approves a rates and fees schedule for services and fees are posted for public information as per the legislated requirements for all municipal departments. Council has typically supported making programs and services affordable so as not to create a significant barrier to participation.

Consultation with staff revealed that there is a desire for greater guidance in the setting of fees. A Pricing Policy would outline the purpose and guiding principles in setting balanced rates and fees, a high-level costing methodology, a categorization of the types of programs and services and a target as to the percentage that should be recovered through the fee structure per program and service type. The point of the policy would be to define the value of various program or service types in terms of what they contribute to the community good and individual good. Pricing typically seeks to gain greater cost recovery of programs that benefit fewer numbers of residents (private lessons for example) versus gaining lower cost recovery levels for programs that contribute to the greater number of residents (public skating and swimming for example).

The purpose of the Community Services User Fee and Pricing Policy is to provide a defensible fee framework while setting a standard methodology for costing and pricing recreation services. Specifically, the policy strives to ensure that:

- a) Participants contribute to the sustainability of recreation through contributing to the cost to provide the program or service.
- b) Ensure that user fees are not a barrier to participation in all recreation programs and services offered (by ensuring that an Access Policy welcomes residents experiencing low income).
- c) There is a balance between no fee/low fee and fee-based programs and services so that residents have a range of choice.
- d) User Fees are developed in a fair, defensible, and equitable fashion.
- e) User Fees generally capture a prescribed amount of the *Direct Cost* to provide a recreation program or service.

- f) Program offerings that contribute to the public good and are accessible to all residents will be subsidized to a greater extent compared to program offerings that benefit an individual or a smaller group of residents at a more advanced level.
- g) The local market is considered to ensure that fees are comparable to providers of similar services within the surrounding vicinity.

The scope of a policy should include the costing and pricing of all programs and services that are within the authority of the municipality. The policy applies to all residents, community groups, businesses, and non-residents participating in programs (registered and drop-in) and the rental of facilities. The policy addresses the cost of provision and the respective fees associated with all recreation programs and services, including:

- a) Fees for directly offered programs and services including aquatics, general interest programs, fitness classes and memberships, camps, sports programs, March Break and Holiday Break programs, drop-in opportunities and any other services offered and organized through the municipality.
- b) Fees for municipal services offered through the municipality including hourly costs for ice, pools, gymnasiums, community centre halls, meeting rooms, sports fields: and
- c) The use of recreation facilities and public spaces for commercial and private functions.

The categorization of programs and services assists staff in providing a broad range of choice to meet community interests and needs. The following presents four categories of recreation programs and services and provides selected examples of programs and services currently provided by municipalities. The setting of rates and fees will generally capture a defined percentage overall direct costs (staff equipment/program supplies and a facility cost allocation) and may include a contribution to replacements and future capital costs.

Table 51: Examples of Community Services Service Categories and Cost Recovery Rates

Program Type	Program Examples	Example of Cost Recovery Rates
Universal, No Fee/Low Fee programs and services set out to include the widest range of residents participating in parks, recreation, and culture. Participation is universal and all residents are welcomed to enjoy these opportunities. <i>User Fees</i> are generally minimal or not applied.	Public skating, public swimming, shinny hockey, special events, trails, use of skate parks, indoor teaching pools, splash pads, public tennis courts, sports courts, drop-in use of gymnasiums, Youth and Older Adult club memberships, etc.	0 – 25%
Introductory programs and services include an introduction to a recreational or sport opportunity, a learning or developmental continuum in either of active, creative, STEM (Science, technology, environment, mathematics) or general interest programs and services. These opportunities are generally geared toward children, youth, and older adults/seniors.	Learn-to-swim programs, physical literacy, active living and fitness courses, aquatic fitness classes, camps, March, and Holiday Break programs, etc.	25 – 50%
Value Added programs and services offer a continuum of learning and more advanced instruction.	Aquatic leadership training, fitness memberships, fitness classes, etc.	50% - 75%
Premium and Commercial programs and services are specialized or are advanced in nature, requiring specialized instruction and/or access to specialized facilities or equipment. Generally, these programs serve a smaller number of participants with specific higher-level skills. These are sometimes offered by the commercial/private sector on a for-profit basis.	Semi-private or private swim lessons, specialized camps and break programs, exclusive use of facilities, exclusive use of facilities with higher level amenities, use of facilities or amenities for commercial purposes.	75 – 100%+

Costing and Setting Fee Structures for Programs and Services

a) A Community Reference Committee and Public Engagement

Best practices in the development of a Pricing Policy include the engagement of a community reference group to oversee the development of guiding principles, review of the community survey questions and results, consideration of the current costs and cost recovery levels as well as a fair-minded framework for the levels of cost recovery that should be achieved over time.

b) Develop Common Costing Principles and Assumptions

Common costing principles ensure that allocation of costs is completed in a standard fashion for all departments and services. For example, overhead costs may be distributed as a percentage of the whole based on gross budget size. The assumption might be that larger departments require a greater amount of centralized assistance. However, some municipalities feel that central services such as the Clerks Department, Finance, the CAO's office etc. are central to the business of operating a municipality and are sometimes not allocated out to costing of the departmental services. Another costing principle might be that an hour of ice time will include all costs to maintain the ice but divide the costs by revenue producing hours only. The clear point is that these assumptions need to be decided upon at the outset of the costing exercise by the full senior management team.

c) Identify the Units that will be Costed

Each Department should be costing units of production within their services and all departmental costs should be allocated out to provide these service units. In a Parks, Recreation and Culture setting Unit costs might include:

- Cost per hour to maintain an hour of pool time, ice time, community spaces
- A set of swim lessons
- A week of day camp
- A kilometre of trail maintenance
- Cost per hour of tennis or pickleball
- Cost of a membership for various activities
- Cost per average number of attendees / special event

d) Costing Services and Service Units

Develop a formula that speaks to identifying full-service provision costs and allocating them out to specific service. For example, the process to offer a swim lesson includes scheduling of pool time, developing courses based on utilization, marketing aquatics services, registering participants, hiring, and onboarding of staff, staff salaries and supply costs, an allocation of pool time etc. Costing the process forces staff to look for efficiencies to reduce the overall cost of provision. Quantifying the number of units produced will assist in developing unit costs. Again, the costing methodology needs to be agreed upon to ensure that results are meaningful, and these principles are applied consistently in all services.

e) Identify Cost Recovery Levels Where Appropriate

Some of the services including ice rentals, camps, swimming lessons and public swimming etc. employ a revenue stream and therefore it will be important to understand the level of cost recovery for each revenue producing service and by age group.

f) Consider the Value of the Service – Categorize the Service

Services and programs that generally serve a broad population bring benefits to the community and a larger number of residents are subsidized to a greater extent as these programs and services are considered to have community-wide benefits. Services that serve a few residents or that are specialized/private and benefit individuals are not subsidized and work toward full cost recovery.

g) Current and Desired Levels of Cost Recovery

Baseline data must include a reflection of the current levels of cost recovery with the fee structure that is in place. More recently there is a requirement to defend the pricing of services based on recovering a percentage of the actual cost to provide them. A delineation of the current cost recovery levels of the services under study will provide the baseline data that is required to determine reasonable cost recovery levels for the future.

h) Comparison to the Market

Before an achievable draft Pricing Policy and structure can be formulated, a look to other fees levied for similar services in surrounding municipalities and other service providers must be undertaken. This will allow staff, and Council the ability to better understand the potential impacts of the set of proposed fees.

i) Consideration of Phasing

Often municipalities will consider phasing in user fees over several years to lower any negative impacts to participation in recreation programs and services. This approach is especially useful if the current cost recovery rates are low. Many municipalities include an inflationary increase to accommodate annual increases in costs to provide programs and services.

7.7.3 Performance Measures and Targets

Whitby staff collect data for analysis and prepare reports as part of the budget and planning processes to measure performance against the previous years attendance, participation, utilization rates etc. This is completed to demonstrate that there has been movement in addressing key goals and initiatives and that there is a good return on the investment of tax dollars. Annual attendance and registration statistics are captured and shared with staff, to allow improved planning for the next session and accommodate any pent-up demands. This is meaningful data and allows staff to analyze trends and gaps in service and make plans for improved performance. Staff posed the question in the planning sessions to support the Master Plan “What are our targets and how do we know when we have been successful?” and “What are the clear expectations?”

In a community services delivery system such as Whitby articulating specific targets and measures provides clarity and focus on key deliverables. Setting targets allows staff to share clear expectations with all full and part-time staff and volunteers so that everyone is working toward the same goals. This approach will set a common Town-wide agenda. This exercise to measure performance against targets is to simplify expectations in a complex delivery system. Further, developing a one-page illustration shares the findings with staff and the public. Once service levels are stabilized, targets should centre on program and service participation levels, facility and field utilization, volunteer engagement and the value of volunteerism, outreach to underserved groups and organizations, participation rates with other partners, satisfaction levels in programs, services, customer service and facilities cleanliness. In year one data collection will develop baseline levels and meaningful targets can be set in subsequent years. It should be noted that these targets and the number performance measures should be kept to a minimum and reflect service priorities. Some municipalities post their quantified achievement in community spaces for users to better understand the focus of their work.

Examples of Performance Measures in Community Services

In a municipal setting there is a need to demonstrate to the public and other funders that the investment in services is allocated toward worthwhile ends and that these investments are utilized efficiently and effectively. This data can also ensure that decisions are evidenced-based. Typically, data is collected to measure inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness. The public, staff and volunteers would like to know both what is expected, and that performance is measured. No one person is responsible for delivering and a sense of team is created to ensure that everyone has the tools to play their part. Measures and targets must reflect what is important to public and should reflect operational priorities.

Current priorities within Community Services centre on recovering service participation to pre-Pandemic levels and responding to staffing and supply shortages. Normalizing services will take time and setting targets/

measuring performance to this degree will also take some time to implement by agreeing to the targets/ measures, setting up data collection methodologies, discussing baseline data, and refining subsequent service improvement approaches.

Table 52: Sample of Performance Measures and Targets in Community Services (Departmental Level)

Type of Measure	Examples of Performance Measures	Suggested Target
Inputs Resources that are applied to the service(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per capita per service type in Community Services • Full Time Equivalents per service type • Summary spaces and places administered (total square feet by facility type) 	These will differ as per the operational methodology but are expected to reflect an increase/decrease in service levels, in relation to an increased population, inflation etc.
Outputs Measures performance against targets and could also emphasize work on key strategies and directions (females in sport for example or number of residents participating with a disability or # of resident participation under the Access to Affordable Recreation Policy etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity and fill rates of programs • Capacity and fill rates of facilities/fields • Quantify participation of specific underserved groups • Value (ROI) of partnerships, volunteers, and sponsorships • Ongoing results of directed initiatives 	80-90% of prime-time hours and 50-70% of non-prime hours 80-90% of capacity of programs and services based on facility time available and budget parameters Number of registrants, partners, community groups, volunteers, special events etc.
Efficiencies Measures the cost of various service units to demonstrate where efficiencies have been made, maintained or are under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per hour of ice time • Cost per camp session • Cost per hour of pool time • Cost per outdoor facility type • Cost per swim lesson set • Cost per public swim, public skate 	An indication of cost avoidance, increased funding through alternate revenue sources, reaching greater participation through partnerships etc.
Effectiveness Measures the ability to meet targets and user satisfaction levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance achievements as compared to annual targets • User and participant satisfaction levels 	80-90%

7.7.4 Levels of Service

Further setting levels of service in Parks and Recreation departments will serve to ensure that public expectations are articulated and sets more rigorous standards as to how services are delivered. Setting and gaining approval for levels of services will assist in defending how resources are allocated as the need for programs and services expand due to the growth of the community. The process to set levels of service involves engaging the public in determining how often services are offered and considers duration, legislative compliance, quality industry standards and the ideal target conditions that should exist. Setting service levels requires continual public input in terms of satisfaction levels and changing levels as the community changes

and grows. Staff must continue to be nimble and change the levels and provision of services as community needs change.

Once levels of service and other considerations are confirmed, the Town will confirm the time that it takes to complete the scheduled and on-demand actions on an annual basis. This analysis will determine how many full-time equivalents and other resources it takes to provide these levels of service. As demand for services increase due community growth and increased participation – any requests for additional resources will be defensible and based on approved levels of service.

Actions Required in Developing and Refining Levels of Service

Municipalities in Ontario typically provide a similar range of parks, recreation, and culture services to the public. Often this range of services is based on tradition, trends, public expectations, participation levels and demographics. Staff serve to refine the range of services and levels of service based on public satisfaction levels and utilization; pent up demands will require an increase in the service and lower demands may require greater promotional efforts and or eliminating the provision of that service all together. Levels of service are articulated to obtain public agreement and Council approval on the type of service and the way that it is provided. The following illustration provides a continuum on the development of levels of service, the identification of the resources needed to provide them, and refining services based on utilization – always keeping services citizen centred. Staff’s role is to continually determine the most effective and efficient method of providing these levels of service while maintaining high public satisfaction.

Steps for Developing and Refining Levels of Service:

1. Define citizen-centered services, levels of service and ideal conditions, and who should provide them.
2. Identify what actions are required to deliver the level of service.
3. Identify opportunities to improve the level of service.
4. Determine the work hours required to deliver the level of service.
5. Confirm the number of FTEs and other resources required to deliver the level of service.
6. Evaluate satisfaction levels and pent up demands to improve the level of service.

Each service is described by a classification of sub-activities or services, and service is further described by depicting the ongoing actions that it takes to provide this service. Further work required by staff to quantify the time it takes to undertake the actions required to provide the levels of services (often using work effort tracking). Defining the levels of service and the resources that it takes to deliver the service is baseline work in determining staffing requirements for the future. For example, once Council approves a level of service and the population increases to demand an increase in the frequency or scope of the service – additional staffing requirements can be better justified.

Recommendations – Departmental Capacity

67. Develop a Volunteer Strategy that employs meaningful practices to increase the number of volunteers and volunteer hours needed to sustain and enhance the work of the Community Services Department.
68. Develop a fair-minded Pricing Policy to determine program/service costs and defensible cost recovery levels with the assistance of a Community-based Reference Group.
69. Develop a Performance Measure Metric that reflects targets and measures in alignment with community and service priorities based on capturing Inputs, Outputs, Efficiencies and Effectiveness in Community Services.
70. Articulate Levels of Services in Community Services to ensure that services are being provided most efficiently and that the allocation of resources is equitable, and evidence based.

8.0 Implementation Strategy

8.1 Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

Active implementation of the Master Plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and commitment from Council, Staff, stakeholders, and the public, as well as a variety of funding options to implement certain aspects of the Master Plan.

The Town should regularly review and assess – and periodically revise – the recommendations of this Master Plan to ensure that they continue to reflect local conditions and that they are responsive to the changing needs of the community. This will require monitoring population projections and growth patterns, tracking activity trends and user satisfaction levels, coordinating with community organizations and the public, reporting on progress, and undertaking a comprehensive 10-year update to the Master Plan. Through these strategies – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Master Plan may be required.

This Master Plan should be reviewed annually as part of the Town’s budget cycle – the following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan.

- Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.);
- Identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, etc.);
- cursory review of the Master Plan for direction regarding its recommendations;
- Preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the following year based on criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- Communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the following year; and
- Budget requests/revisions as necessary.

Recommendations – Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

71. Regularly monitor Master Plan progress, including tracking of growth and demographic characteristics, activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends, and completed recommendations. Prepare annual status reports to Council and the community.
72. Establish annual work plans to identify Master Plan recommendations requiring implementation within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, etc.
73. Undertake a mid-cycle refresh within five years and a full update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 10 years. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.

8.2 Financial Considerations

The Master Plan calls for continued financial investments and outlines a series of planning priorities for the provision of new and upgraded parks and recreation infrastructure. The Town has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires, underscoring the importance for undertaking the Master Plan. Although Whitby may experience various challenges in providing the applicable financial and human resources to achieve the Master Plan's recommendations, it is expected that the Town will make every effort to implement these strategies through appropriate means.

Full implementation of the Master Plan will require the use of numerous funding sources, including (but not limited to):

- Development charges
- Community Benefits Charges (the Town does not currently have a Community Benefits Charges By-law in place, although one is planned to be prepared in the future)
- Parkland cash-in-lieu for land purchases
- Municipal taxation and reserves
- Fundraising, donations, and sponsorships
- User fees and surcharges
- Debenture financing
- One-time grants
- Ongoing government programs, such as Provincial Gas Tax Revenues (for active transportation projects)
- Partnerships and sponsorships

Recommendations – Monitoring and Updating the Master Plan

74. Where appropriate, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches, including (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and other strategies to provide the best value to residents.
75. Use this Master Plan as a resource in establishing the Town's annual budget documents, Development Charge Background Studies, and other related studies.
76. Assess and ensure that operating budget implications are identified and appropriately resourced prior to approving major capital projects.
77. Conduct feasibility studies and business plans (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.

8.3 Summary of Recommendations

The section contains a summary of the recommendations contained within this Master Plan. By approving the Master Plan, the Town is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount, or timing indicated; rather this Master Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for action to meet the needs of residents as they are presently defined.

The timing of the recommendations proposed in this Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation and/or outside funding sources as some recommendations are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what may be financially achievable at the present time. As part of the annual budget process, this Master Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Analysis of implementation options and budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects. As previously identified, the implementation of this Master Plan will require the use of various funding sources and partnerships.

To guide the annual budget process, high level costs are identified for capital recommendations in this Master Plan. These costs are intended to be a guide only and Town staff will be required to refine these estimates as recommendations are brought forward with consideration given to operating impacts. It is expected that the Town will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually at budget time.

Priority is often, but not always, aligned with timing – the higher the priority, the sooner the action should be implemented. Priorities have been established based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (e.g., including public engagement, trends, demographics, assessment of amenities and services, etc.). Municipalities generally seek to address the widest range of needs and achieve maximum community benefit through the efficient use of resources. Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the Town's capital and operating budget process. In addition to funding availability, factors that might change priorities year to year may include:

- Capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- Legislation and mandated requirements;
- Changes to service standards;
- Public input and community interests;
- Emerging trends and changes in participation rates;
- Availability of alternate providers; and
- Socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts.

The priority and timing of recommendations are organized into the following categories:

Priority

- High Priority: Immediate attention is strongly suggested during the planning timeframe.
- Medium Priority: Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.
- Lower Priority: Attention is required when high and medium priority recommendations have been initiated/completed.
- Ongoing: This represents a best practice or guideline that is to be followed on a continual basis.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
Park System			
1.	As part of an Official Plan Review, review and revise the Town's Parkland Classification System to ensure that it reflects the current parkland planning framework. Consideration should be given to the creation of a hierarchy based on Town Parks, Sports Field Parks, District Parks, Local Parks, Parkettes, and Urban Parks.	High	To be undertaken as part of an Official Plan Review.
2.	Update the Town's Official Plan to align with amendments to the Ontario Planning Act and Bill 23 and incorporate policies to support the dedication of programmable parkland and minimize long-term risks to the Town.	High	To be undertaken as part of an Official Plan Review.
3.	Continue to monitor changes to the Planning Act related to parkland dedication and update the Town's Parkland Dedication By-Law as required.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
4.	Acquire 84 hectares of additional active parkland by 2031 to achieve a parkland service level target of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 residents.	Ongoing	Internal driven strategy.
5.	Develop a Land Acquisition Strategy to investigate how best to achieve the recommended parkland service target through parkland dedication and other best practices including land purchase/lease (e.g., acquiring surplus school sites), land exchanges, partnerships, land banking, reallocation of surplus lands, etc.	High	Internal driven strategy or External consultant required.
6.	In strategic areas, continue to accept a combination of land for park purposes and cash-in-lieu of parkland.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
7.	Accept cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication when it is determined to be more beneficial in instances where development proposals cannot physically accommodate a park block or if the surrounding area is already served by a park.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
8.	Investigate opportunities to acquire a site (or sites) to establish a sports field complex(es) to accommodate future outdoor sports facility needs, with consideration given to the key location objectives and site selection criteria contained in this Master Plan. As a guide, the Town should target a site area of approximately 22 hectares. Determination of the programming requirements, ancillary facility and amenity needs, along with the development of a facility design concept should be undertaken to confirm land requirements. Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.	High	External consultant required.
9.	Work with school boards and other service providers to maximize community access to quality outdoor parks and recreation amenities at non-municipal sites through permitted, long-term access agreements, awareness, etc.	Ongoing	Partnership potential

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
10.	Update and revise the Parkland Development and Open Space Policy and develop a Parks and Trails Development Manual to formalize guiding principles and design standards for parkland to ensure that they are inclusive of all residents. The Manual should contain design parameters on a range of areas including, but not limited to, park furniture, trails, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, splash pads, skate parks, signage and wayfinding, lighting, washrooms, shade, drinking fountains, natural and cultural heritage, horticulture, fencing, public art, recognizing of Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation, and other relevant areas. Supporting policies, criteria, placement, financial implications, and other considerations should be developed and/or identified as part of this process.	High	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
11.	Develop a parkland renewal and re-envisioning plan to identify strategic locations that would benefit from park enhancements to promote usage by people of all ages and abilities. A focus should be placed on aging parks and parks located close to intensification areas and the MTSA (e.g., Gordon Street and Victoria Street soccer fields, Whitby Civic Park, Brooklin Memorial Park, Vanier Park, Hobbs Park, Fallingbrook Park, Ash Creek Park, Kinsmen Park, Prince of Wales Park and Willowbrook Park, etc.). Consideration should be given to the park design guidance contained in this Master Plan and community consultation.	High	Park-specific analyses supported by public input.
12.	Ensure that standards established for the design of parks, trails and open spaces, and the Parks and Trails Development Manual support and include climate change mitigation and adaptation, measures such as standards for shade structures (and minimum standards for shade areas), and use of permeable paving for hard surface areas.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
13.	Examine current operations and maintenance practices for parks, trails, and forestry to identify and implement changes to facilitate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and improved climate change mitigation and adaptation.	Medium	Internally driven strategy.
14.	Implement the Town's Active Transportation Plan to improve connectivity throughout Whitby within an emphasis on linking users with between communities and to key destinations, including the waterfront, community centres, parks (and within parks).	High	Internally driven strategy.
15.	Classify existing and planned trails based on the recommended trail hierarchy to guide design, construction and permitted uses. The recommended trail hierarchy should be used as the basis for creating the Parks and Trails Development Manual.	High	Internally driven strategy.
16.	Create formalized levels of service standards for seasonal and year-round trail maintenance.	Medium	Internally driven strategy.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
17.	Continue to implement the Town’s Waterfront Parks and Open Space Master Plan to maximize public access and protect and preserve the natural environment. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing appropriate areas along the waterfront areas for recreation uses, including festivals and events, and working with others to support strategic development within proximity to the waterfront to facilitate economic development and attract local and regional visitors.	High	Internally driven strategy.
18.	Undertake a Marina Master Plan to guide future enhancements to Port Whitby Marina that explores future development opportunities (including around the harbour), increasing the number of boat slips, new partnership opportunities, revenue streams, and other strategies to strengthen the marina and harbourfront for boaters and general public use.	High	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
19.	Investigate strategies to address ongoing parking concerns along the waterfront, with consideration given to best practices in other municipalities including, but not limited to, free resident parking passes (paid parking rates apply to non-residents), public parking garages (including as part of condominium developments), and other potential solutions. This should be complemented with encouraging alternative methods of accessing the waterfront including strengthening trail connections and working with Durham Region Transit to enhance services during peak periods.	High	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
Recreation System			
20.	Undertake a facility renewal strategy to investigate the feasibility updating and modernizing the Luther Vipond Memorial Arena for indoor programming and rentals, including supporting the Brooklin Spring Fair. This should involve input from community stakeholders and the public and may be undertaken as part of a broader visioning exercise for Brooklin Memorial Park.	High	Additional study required.
21.	Explore opportunities to provide arena groups with dryland training space using existing multi-purpose spaces that are co-located with Whitby’s arenas.	Ongoing	Partnership potential.
22.	Explore community access agreements with non-municipal gymnasium providers to enhance public access to gymnasium spaces for indoor community programming.	Lower	Internally driven strategy.
23.	Investigate opportunities to include a gymnasium at the Civic Recreation Complex as residential intensification is expected in this area over the long-term.	High	Additional study required.

<p>24. Undertake a building condition study to assess the feasibility of updating and modernizing the Heydenshore Pavilion through redevelopment or new construction. Key design considerations should be given to ensure a large flexible multi-purpose space which prioritizes recreation programming and activities (gymnasium-type programs and general community activities) with appropriate storage for related equipment.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Internally driven strategy.</p>
<p>25. Investigate the feasibility of removing the wall between the two multi-purpose spaces at the Whitby Centennial Building to create one large space and, if feasible, undertake removal of the wall. Necessary renovations should be mindful of the facility’s status as a designated heritage building.</p>	<p>Lower</p>	<p>Partnership potential.</p>
<p>26. On a case-by-case basis, in areas of intensification, explore opportunities to increase access to multi-purpose program spaces to support indoor community gatherings, programs, activities and events such as working with condominium developers, community service providers and agencies, and the private sector.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Internally driven strategy.</p>
<p>27. Identify and undertake enhancements to the 55+ Recreation Centre to update and modernize existing spaces.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Internally driven strategy.</p>
<p>28. Monitor use of the Whitby Lawn Bowling Club and should membership levels remain steady or decline, explore opportunities to repurposing the lawn bowling green and clubhouse to accommodate an expansion of the 55+ Recreation Centre to provide additional multi-purpose space.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Internally driven strategy.</p>
<p>29. Construct four lit senior grass fields (equivalent to six unlit fields) at a future sports field complex to accommodate future field needs and the replacement of the Gordon and Victoria Soccer Fields. As an alternative strategy or in conjunction, exploring potential opportunities to establish partnerships and lease agreements with entities may also be considered to establish or gain public access to non-municipal lands for outdoor rectangular fields.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>A phased approach should be considered to achieve recommended supply.</p>
<p>30. Investigate the feasibility of adding lights to increase playing capacity, with potential locations being the north field at Consumers Soccer Fields, Annes Park, Baycliffe Park, Carnwith Park, Jack Wilson Park, and Jeffery Park.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Cost varies subject to needed enhancements</p>
<p>31. Monitor the use of the fields at Prince of Wales Park, Huron Park, and Palmerston Park to inform long-term decisions to relocate these fields to reclaim park space for other active and passive outdoor recreation uses to support growth within designated intensification areas.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Internally driven strategy.</p>
<p>32. Construct five lit senior diamond (equivalent to 7.5 unlit diamonds) at a future sports field complex. At least one lit diamond should be designed for hardball. Additional hardball diamonds should be considered subject to monitoring usage to inform future needs.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>A phased approach should be considered to achieve recommended supply.</p>

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
33.	Initiate a review of existing ball diamonds and undertake strategic improvements to facilitate an enhanced playing experience and strengthen utilization. This may include addressing drainage, fencing, storage, lighting, and installing safety netting. Opportunities to enlarge existing diamonds should also be explored.	Medium	Cost varies subject to needed enhancements
34.	Construct a lit cricket field at a future sports field complex that is suitably designed for adult play. Consultation with the cricket community is encouraged to inform the design process. Once established, continue to maintain the existing cricket fields for casual play, practices, and youth programming.	High	Estimate cost: \$300,000 to \$900,000
35.	The development of future multi-field soccer or baseball facilities should be designed to allow for a cricket pitch overlay that spans adjacent sports fields. This overlay will permit the future conversion of these fields to cricket plan to address changing needs, which should be informed by monitoring use of existing sports fields.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
36.	Decommission the outdoor lacrosse box at Willow Park and re-purpose the surface for other in-demand uses such as a basketball court or pickleball courts.	High	Internally driven strategy.
37.	Construct six lit tennis courts at three District Parks (two courts at each location) in Brooklin and West Whitby. Painted surfaces should be considered at strategic locations.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$300,000 to \$450,000 per location
38.	As part of renewing Brooklin Memorial Park, examine the merits of continuing to provide tennis courts and the abutting skate park at this location or if they should be relocated.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$300,000 to 600,000
39.	Investigate opportunities to provide pickleball courts on the east side of Whitby, potentially at Willow Park.	High	Estimate cost: \$300,000 to \$450,000 per location
40.	When providing pickleball courts, limit the number to a maximum of two pickleball courts at Local Parks and four or more courts at Town and District Parks with consideration given to enhanced setback distances and noise abatement measures (e.g., landscaping, berms, and other noise barriers). Consideration should also be given to other supporting amenities, including painted surfaces, wind screening, shade, seating, etc.	High	Estimate cost: \$300,000 to \$450,000 per location
41.	In addition to planned multi-use courts at the Whitby Sports Complex and College Downs Park, construct multi-use courts to serve growth areas of Brooklin and West Whitby and in established areas including Brooklin Memorial Park, Hannam Park, Bradley Park, Prince of Wales Park, Peel Park, D'Hiller Park, and Guthrie Park. New basketball courts should be full size with multi-lining to support a variety of activities, as well as other features and amenities such as coloured coatings and combination goal posts for basketball and ball hockey. An appropriate setback to residential areas should also be considered (e.g., 20 metres).	Medium	Estimate cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000 per location

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
42.	Undertake renewal of aging basketball courts including, but not limited to, Baycliffe Park, Folkstone Park, Eric Clarke Park, Whitburn Park, and Forest Heights Park.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000 per location
43.	At the time of renewal, investigate opportunities to enlarge half basketball courts, such as at Glenayr Park and Rosedale Park. Evaluate locations to decommission half basketball courts that are too close to residential areas or to minimize service duplication, such as at Davies Parkette and Teddington Park.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000 per location
44.	In addition to existing planned splash pads, construct splash pads at each future District Park in Brooklin and at Brooklin Memorial Park.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$200,000 to \$450,000 per location
45.	Augment the Town's splash pads with small-scale spray features and cooling stations (e.g., basic spray posts and nozzles, water fountains, public art, etc.) in strategic locations, including in Local Parks such as Prince of Wales Park and Kirby Park and in public spaces within intensification areas (e.g., MTSA).	Medium	Estimate cost: \$200,000 per location
46.	Undertake strategic renewal of existing splash pads to update and modernized installations to engage users. Consideration should be given to incorporating a variety of spray features, themes, scale, supporting amenities such as shade, and integrate water-saving measures into the design.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$200,000 to \$450,000 per location
47.	Explore the potential to incorporate small scale "skate spots" at Neighborhood Parks with basic elements for young children and novice skaters to augment the Town's major skate parks and further strengthen distribution. Potential locations may include, but not be limited to, Darren Park, Prince of Wales Park, or a future or existing park in West Whitby.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$150,000 per location
48.	Incorporate playgrounds within future Brooklin and West Whitby parks to ensure that play structures are located within 800 metres of residential neighbourhoods, unobstructed by major barriers such as arterial roads.	High	Estimate cost: \$150,000 to \$200,000 per location
49.	New and redeveloped playgrounds should incorporate diverse elements and creative designs that are barrier free and inclusive. A high level of accessibility should be applied to Town Parks and District Parks compared to Local Parks with consideration given to rubberized play surfaces and other inclusive features.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
50.	Evaluate opportunities to incorporate natural play structures and features (e.g., logs, boulders, ropes, etc.) that promote adventure and imaginative play at strategic parks such as prominent locations or within naturalized settings.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
51.	Guided by public input and the site selection criteria identified in this Master Plan, identify opportunities for an off-leash area in the central area (south of Taunton Road and north of Dundas Street), which should have regard for size, setbacks, site access, natural environment and site conditions, and other criteria.	Lower	Partnership potential.
52.	As part of the park design and renewal process, consider opportunities to incorporate outdoor fitness equipment in strategic areas to encourage outdoor physical activity and fitness, including at major parks and destinations, trails and intensification areas. Potential locations may include, but not be limited to, additional locations along the Waterfront Trail, Hydro Corridor Trail, Ash Park, Cullen Central Park, and Brooklin Memorial Park, and parks serving intensification areas and the Major Transit Station Area.	Medium	Estimate cost: \$100,000 to \$150,000 per location
53.	Monitor the use of the Town's outdoor bocce courts to inform decisions to adjust the existing supply.	Lower	Internally driven strategy.
54.	Establish a system for monitoring the use existing Whitby Community Gardens including annual reporting to guide future decisions for potential future expansion and/or the development of future community garden sites in partnership with other residents and community groups.	Medium	Partnership potential.
55.	Work with the Whitby Lawn Bowling Club to bolster participation and utilization to evaluate long-term community demand.	Short	Partnership potential.
56.	Provide a refrigerated outdoor skating rink or trail at a Town or District Park, potentially at Cullen Park, Brooklin Memorial Park or along Whitby's waterfront. Once completed, monitor its use to guide decisions to construct additional locations to provide a good distribution of outdoor skating opportunities.	Medium	Costs vary based on scale and scope of project.
57.	Tobogganing should be a "use at your own risk" activity on public property. In consultation with the Town's Legal and Enforcement Services Department, consideration should be given to installing appropriate signage and updating necessary policies (e.g., Public Park and Park Buildings By-law #7419-18).	High	Internally driven strategy.
58.	Public requests for new parks and recreation facilities should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to proponent led business planning, trends, examples in other municipalities, local demand, the feasibility of using existing public space, the willingness of an organization to partner in providing the facility or service, and other relevant factors as may be determined to be appropriate.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
Service Delivery System			
59.	Undertake a review of the Community Connection recreation program delivery model in Whitby schools, including a review of historic participation patterns by age group, input of users and non-users, ways of working closely within neighbourhood catchment areas, promotion of activities and increasing participation in services.	High	Partnership potential.
60.	Promote Canada 24-Hour Movement Guidelines.	Lower	Internally driven strategy.
61.	Regularly engage community stakeholders to connect with organizations, share information, promote and raise awareness about opportunities and resources, understand challenges, and collectively brainstorm solutions to address concerns.	High	Internally driven strategy.
62.	Consider the costs and merits of reinstating a limited printing and distribution of the Community Services Guide.	High	Internally driven strategy.
63.	Consider working with community partners in becoming Canada's Most Active Community through ParticipACTION.	Lower	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
64.	Employ Physical Literacy in existing programs and camps for all age groups to increase resident's ability to become more active.	High	Internally driven strategy.
65.	Refresh Whitby's Youth Strategy, overseen by the Youth Council with the horizon extended to 2031.	High	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
66.	Determine the program participation rate for the 55+ population and project the program, staffing and volunteers needed to serve an increased older adult population to start building capacity.	High	Internally driven strategy
67.	Develop a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework for Community Services to support and better include under-represented populations in Whitby.	High	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
68.	Develop a Volunteer Strategy that employs meaningful practices to increase the number of volunteers and volunteer hours needed to sustain and enhance the work of the Community Services Department.	Medium	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
69.	Develop a fair-minded Pricing Policy to determine program/service costs and defensible cost recovery levels with the assistance of a Community-based Reference Group.	High	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
70.	Develop a Performance Measure Metric that reflects targets and measures in alignment with community and service priorities based on capturing Inputs, Outputs, Efficiencies and Effectiveness in Community Services.	High	Internally driven strategy.
71.	Articulate Levels of Services in Community Services to ensure that services are being provided most efficiently and that the allocation of resources is equitable, and evidence based.	High	Internally driven strategy.
72.	Regularly monitor Master Plan progress, including tracking of growth and demographic characteristics, activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends, and completed recommendations. Prepare annual status reports to Council and the community.	Ongoing	Internally driven strategy.
73.	Establish annual work plans to identify Master Plan recommendations requiring implementation within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, etc.	Ongoing	Coordination with other Departments required.
74.	Undertake a mid-cycle refresh within five years and a full update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 10 years. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.	Long	Internally driven strategy or external consultant required.
75.	Where appropriate, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches, including (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and other strategies to provide the best value to residents.	Ongoing	Coordination with other Departments required.
76.	Use this Master Plan as a resource in establishing the Town's annual budget documents, Development Charge Background Studies, and other related studies.	Ongoing	Coordination with other Departments required.

#	Recommendation	Priority	Resource Implications
Implementation Strategy			
77.	Assess and ensure that operating budget implications are identified and appropriately resourced prior to approving major capital projects.	Ongoing	Coordination with other Departments required.
78.	Conduct feasibility studies and business plans (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.	Ongoing	Additional studies may be required.

Appendix A: Community Survey Results

1) What are the first three digits of your postal code?

	#	%
L1N	493	35%
L1R	380	27%
L1P	292	20%
L1M	224	16%
LOB	4	0%
Other	33	2%
Total	1426	

2) How many people, including yourself, live in your household?

	#	%	Number of People
1 Person	95	7%	95
2 People	398	28%	796
3 People	289	20%	867
4 People	428	30%	1712
5 People	143	10%	715
6 People	49	3%	294
7 People	17	1%	119
8 People	5	0%	40
9 People	3	0%	27
10 People	1	0%	10
Total	1428	100%	4675
Average Household Size			3.3

3) Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.

	None	1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People or More
0 to 4 Years	588	234	48	12	4	10
5 to 12 Years	434	240	170	16	2	12
13 to 17 Years	453	212	65	10	0	7
18 to 54 Years	111	172	744	109	44	20
55 to 69 Years	345	236	257	2	1	8
70+ Years	402	151	103	2	0	9

4) In what year were you born?

Median Year (Age)	1976 (47 Years)	Average Year (Age)	1973 (50 Years)
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5) Please select any of the following activities and/or facilities that you or anyone in your household have ever actively participated in, either at home, a Town facility or another location (select all that apply).

	#	%
Enjoying Parks and Open Spaces	1096	77%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	1061	74%
Enjoying or using the Whitby Waterfront	1050	73%
Swimming (Recreational)	882	62%
Attending a community event (Harvest Festival, etc.)	773	54%
Use of Playground Equipment	743	52%
Swimming (Instructional or Aqua-fit)	706	49%
Use of Splash Pad	667	47%
Cycling or Mountain Biking	644	45%
Hockey, Ringette, Figure Skating, or Ice Skating	644	45%
Aerobic, Yoga, or Fitness Programs	637	45%
Running or Jogging	579	40%
Dog Walking (on or off leash)	530	37%
Gardening	528	37%
Soccer	519	36%
Weight-Training	420	29%
Tennis	414	29%

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	#	%
Preschool or Children's Programs	379	26%
Basketball	342	24%
Baseball or Softball (or other forms)	324	23%
Volleyball	251	18%
Skateboarding/Bike Park	247	17%
Organized Older Adult 55+ Programs	237	17%
Gymnastics	236	16%
Cricket	196	14%
Pickleball	195	14%
Teen Programs (youth drop-in, etc.)	170	12%
Football or Rugby	127	9%
Outdoor Bocce	64	4%
Disc Golf	52	4%
Lawn Bowling	49	3%
Other (please specify)	101	7%
Total	1431	100%

6) If you and/or members of your household are not able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like, please indicate why (select up to three (3) responses).

	#	%
Lack of desired facilities or programs	485	38%
Program not offered at a convenient time	368	29%
Unaware of opportunities	293	23%
Lack of personal time / Too busy	276	22%
Facility too far away	260	21%
Lack of information	184	15%
Lack of money / Too expensive	183	14%
Lack of accessible options	83	7%
Lack of child care	67	5%
Lack of transportation	51	4%
Language / cultural barrier	11	1%
No Barriers - I/we can participate as often as I/we would like	213	17%
Other (please specify)	110	9%

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	#	%
Total	1264	100%

7) If applicable, list up to two (2) parks and recreation activities/programs that you (or members of your household) would like to see provided in Whitby that are not already provided.

Top 10 Requested Parks & Recreation Opportunities

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pools/lessons 2. Cricket fields 3. Outdoor skating rinks/trails 4. Pickleball courts 5. Tennis courts (indoor and outdoor) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Recreation programs (e.g., arts, gymnasium sports, EarlyON, fitness, drama, 55+, drop-in, adults, children, teenagers, etc.) 7. Trails (walking, hiking and biking) 8. Basketball courts 9. Waterfront enhancements 10. Soccer activities |
|--|--|

8) Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the current parks and recreation opportunities in Whitby for the following age groups.

	Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Total #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Pre-school Children (0 to 4 years)	125	20%	250	40%	124	20%	72	12%	48	8%	619
Children (5 to 12 years)	117	16%	318	44%	130	18%	93	13%	58	8%	716
Teens (13 to 17 years)	60	12%	157	30%	157	30%	91	18%	54	10%	519
Adults (18 to 54 years)	92	9%	386	37%	287	27%	197	19%	91	9%	1053
Older adults (55+)	133	18%	270	37%	163	22%	106	15%	58	8%	730
Family Activities and Events	110	11%	382	38%	293	29%	160	16%	55	6%	1000

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9) What is your level of satisfaction with the following parks and recreation facilities within Whitby?

	Very Satisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied		Somewhat Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied		Total #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas, pools, and gymnasiums	194	15%	509	40%	182	14%	257	20%	139	11%	1281
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds	217	17%	554	44%	213	17%	194	15%	90	7%	1268
Parks that preserve natural areas and open spaces	280	20%	643	47%	228	17%	157	11%	70	5%	1378
Community programs such as swim lessons and public skating	127	12%	362	34%	218	20%	219	20%	151	14%	1077
Recreational trails and pathways	269	20%	623	46%	202	15%	187	14%	73	5%	1354

10) In general, how important are the following parks and recreation facilities to your household?

	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Neither Important nor Unimportant		Somewhat Unimportant		Very Unimportant		Total #
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Recreational trails and pathways	1046	75%	274	20%	60	4%	11	1%	12	1%	1403
Parks that preserve natural areas and open spaces	1071	76%	249	18%	60	4%	18	1%	15	1%	1413
Indoor recreation facilities such as arenas, pools, and gymnasiums	837	61%	378	28%	85	6%	42	3%	28	2%	1370
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and playgrounds	859	63%	331	24%	118	9%	32	2%	24	2%	1364
Community programs such as swim lessons and public skating	727	56%	354	28%	138	11%	39	3%	29	2%	1287

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11) To what degree do you support or oppose spending additional public funds towards improving the following existing parks and recreation facilities or building new ones in Whitby? Additional investment to improve or build new parks and recreation facilities may result in tax increases or reallocation of existing public funds.

	Strongly Support		Somewhat Support		Neither Support nor Oppose		Somewhat Oppose		Strongly Oppose		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
New Parks and Open Space	855	61%	359	25%	129	9%	31	2%	35	2%	1409
Indoor Pools	815	60%	337	25%	138	10%	32	2%	30	2%	1352
Beach	823	60%	336	25%	145	11%	30	2%	31	2%	1365
Whitby Waterfront	862	62%	317	23%	146	10%	36	3%	39	3%	1400
Paved Multi-use Trails	738	53%	389	28%	167	12%	57	4%	41	3%	1392
Playgrounds	622	49%	385	30%	209	16%	24	2%	34	3%	1274
Outdoor Ice Rink / Trail	656	52%	339	27%	182	14%	34	3%	52	4%	1263
Youth Centres	573	49%	355	30%	206	17%	18	2%	29	2%	1181
Unpaved Nature Trails	655	47%	403	29%	247	18%	48	3%	27	2%	1380
Splash Pads	570	46%	370	30%	227	18%	34	3%	45	4%	1246
Fitness Centres	601	45%	401	30%	236	18%	52	4%	43	3%	1333
Space for Community Events	541	41%	455	34%	257	19%	37	3%	37	3%	1327
Indoor Walking Track	620	47%	346	26%	239	18%	53	4%	59	4%	1317
55+ Centres	559	47%	306	26%	244	21%	28	2%	44	4%	1181
Indoor Multi-Use Sports Dome	577	45%	353	27%	245	19%	52	4%	63	5%	1290
Community Gardens	542	42%	382	30%	283	22%	36	3%	49	4%	1292
Therapy Pools	532	42%	371	29%	263	21%	43	3%	58	5%	1267
Arenas (indoor ice)	541	43%	336	26%	217	17%	91	7%	83	7%	1268
Gymnasiums	503	40%	365	29%	302	24%	52	4%	41	3%	1263
Port Whitby Marina	512	41%	333	26%	289	23%	57	5%	68	5%	1259
Outdoor Tennis Courts	390	33%	364	31%	320	27%	47	4%	67	6%	1188
Outdoor Swimming Pools	430	35%	320	26%	287	23%	99	8%	109	9%	1245
Community Halls and Meeting Spaces	385	30%	388	30%	378	29%	76	6%	57	4%	1284
Outdoor Basketball Courts	334	29%	352	31%	336	29%	64	6%	65	6%	1151
Outdoor Soccer Fields	285	25%	326	28%	383	33%	83	7%	73	6%	1150
Outdoor Pickleball Courts	296	27%	274	25%	377	34%	72	6%	90	8%	1109
Off-Leash Dog Parks	302	27%	241	21%	340	30%	105	9%	144	13%	1132
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	381	25%	339	22%	333	22%	87	7%	98	6%	1238
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	235	21%	295	26%	418	37%	87	8%	97	9%	1132

Town of Whitby Parks & Recreation Master Plan Background & Community Engagement Summary Report

	Strongly Support		Somewhat Support		Neither Support nor Oppose		Somewhat Oppose		Strongly Oppose		Total
Skateboard Parks	214	19%	278	25%	419	38%	90	8%	97	9%	1098
Sports Field for Football and Rugby	188	18%	263	24%	446	42%	80	7%	97	9%	1074
Cricket Fields	230	22%	191	18%	390	37%	94	9%	159	15%	1064
Lawn Bowling Greens	119	12%	231	23%	474	46%	92	9%	108	11%	1024
Outdoor Lacrosse Boxes	126	13%	203	20%	450	45%	113	11%	108	11%	1000
Outdoor Bocce Courts	96	10%	221	22%	476	48%	90	9%	102	10%	985
Disc Golf Course	89	9%	113	11%	426	43%	121	12%	235	24%	984

12) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about parks and recreation in Whitby.

	Strongly Agree		Somewhat Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Parks and recreation opportunities should be a high priority for Town Council.	992	70%	334	23%	61	4%	20	1%	15	1%	1422
Whitby's parks and recreation opportunities are inclusive of all residents, regardless of age, income, ability, and orientation.	403	30%	449	33%	257	19%	175	13%	76	6%	1360
The Town does a good job in informing me about parks & recreation services.	236	17%	485	34%	288	20%	263	19%	142	10%	1414
I am satisfied with the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities in Whitby.	198	14%	480	34%	274	19%	274	19%	181	13%	1407

13) Do you have any additional feedback or comments about parks and recreation in Whitby?

	#	%
Yes	480	34%
No	951	66%
Total	1,431	

14) Please let us know your feedback or comments about parks and recreation in Whitby.

Comments provided will be considered as the Master Plan is prepared

Appendix B: Parks and Trails Development Manual

As part of the Master Plan, high level guidance has been provided to assist the Town with the development of a Parks and Trails Development Manual, which are identified below.

General Principles

Design standards for parks and trails in Whitby should be based on some general principles which apply across all sites and to all amenities and specifications. These include:

Consistency and Standardization

With certain exceptions there is value in consistency and standardization in terms of park and trail designs, features, and amenities. Advantages include economies of scale, consistency of service across the Town, ease of maintenance and repair of park features and development of a brand for the parks and trails system. It should be noted that these advantages must be balanced against the requirements of the Town's Procurement Policy and should allow for exceptions especially in the case of Town-wide parks.

Branding - Signage, Wayfinding and Park Furniture

Consistent signage and a comprehensive wayfinding system will knit together Whitby's parks and trails system and help establish a brand that users will recognize. In addition, users will come to recognize standard park benches and other park furniture and identify them with the Town's parks and trails system.

User Comfort and Safety

User experience in Whitby's parks and trails will be greatly enhanced by ensuring that visitors are comfortable and safe. Some of the elements which are key to this include provision of shade, availability of washroom facilities and drinking water, appropriate use of lighting and use of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles in designing and developing parks.

Year-round use parks and trails; aging demographics

An aging population, changing user preferences and the impacts of COVID-19 have led to an increase in the year-round use of parks and trails in recent years. This has led in turn to demand for washrooms and other park amenities on a four-season basis and to pressure from the public for more comprehensive winter maintenance of trails and parking lots in parks (as well as demand for activities requiring snow, such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing). In addition, older users frequently ask for the provision of additional seating along trails and walkways. These shifts have implications for both maintenance and park and trail design, in particular winterizing of washrooms, trail and pathway surfaces and provision of park furniture.

Durability and ease of maintenance; resistance to vandalism

Experience has shown that park and trail elements such as signs, furniture, waste receptacles, playground equipment and park structures will be subject to wear and tear and vandalism. It is therefore important that park design and the specifications for amenities consider durability, ease of repair and maintenance, availability of repair parts and resistance to vandalism and graffiti when sourcing or designing these features.

Sustainable Design

Design of parks and trails in Whitby should incorporate features, materials and design concepts which contribute to the Town's broader efforts to address issues and risks related to climate change adaptation and mitigation, resilience, and sustainability. Specific recommendations and actions related to this area are discussed in Section 5.8 of the Master Plan.

Low Maintenance Horticultural Elements

Provincial legislation banning the cosmetic use of pesticides has made maintenance of traditional horticultural elements (for example, shrub beds and formal gardens) very labour intensive. In addition, many traditional displays incorporating annual flowers, require frequent watering. Horticultural elements and plant selection in parks should be designed and implemented with these issues in mind in order to reduce labour requirements and reduce water usage.

Celebrating Natural and Cultural Heritage

Municipal parks and trails offer an opportunity to celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of Whitby. Park and trail designs should incorporate elements which recognize the Town's history, including recognizing its Indigenous heritage. This can be done through park and trail naming, public art, park design and features. In addition, Whitby's natural heritage may be recognized through landscape design and planting which incorporates or retains natural features and plants native to the area.

Accessibility Legislation and Policy (AODA)

Park and trail design in Whitby is subject to Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the regulations made under it. Beyond this, it is important that design or redevelopment of parks and trails in the Town is approached with a view to removing barriers wherever possible to be inclusive for both users with disabilities and for user groups such as older populations.

Park Design Standards

In addition to overall principles, a Parks and Trails Development Manual should address standards and specifications for major park amenities and features. These are outlined below along with discussion of characteristics and options to be considered.

Park Furniture

Park furniture includes amenities such as benches, picnic tables and bike racks. Multiple designs for these items are available both custom and "off the shelf". Some of the attributes to be considered when considering park furniture include:

- **Aesthetics** – the design of park furniture should fit with the overall concept of the park. The Town might consider two or more levels of furniture design depending on the park classification. A feature or high-profile park might merit a custom or high-end design for park benches for example, featuring more expensive or unusual materials. It should be kept in mind however that custom designs may be a more difficult to repair or replace when damaged and need to meet all of the other criteria for park furniture outlined below.
- **Durability** – benches, picnic tables and bike racks in a park will be exposed to the elements year-round and will receive a lot of use over time. Consequently, it is important that the design, materials, and construction be durable and vandal resistant.
- **Comfort and Accessibility** – picnic tables and park benches should be comfortable for users. This is dependent on the design and dimensions of the item, as well as materials and finish (for example a black metal bench will become uncomfortably hot if exposed to summer sunshine). In addition to being comfortable there are a number of requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act with regard to the design and installation of picnic tables and benches which need to be met in both custom and manufactured units.
- **Waste Receptacles** – At present Whitby has an informal standard using a basket receptacle with a metal liner for waste in parks and along trails. The Town also provides in-ground receptacles in some high traffic areas. These two types of receptacles seem to be working well; however the baskets have some disadvantages being open to snow and rain, and requiring hand emptying which is difficult when bags contain large loads or are wet or frozen due to precipitation.

The Town does not provide for recycling in parks and along trails, however there are some recycling bins in locations where Durham Region can reach them as part of their regular waste management routes. A number of Ontario municipalities have begun to move to two or three stream collection in most or all parks in order to match the service that residents receive at home. From an environmental point of view providing recycling of glass, plastic and

paper throughout Whitby's Towns and trails using appropriate receptacles would be desirable. Moving in this direction would likely require a review of current waste collection operations and equipment.

Sports Fields

As Whitby continues to grow and more outdoor sports facilities are developed, the Town will need to consider the different types of fields required and how these should be classified. Considerations could include field size, quality, and amenities present. For example, an 'A' Soccer Field might be full size, lit, and include irrigation, soil with a low percentage of silt and clay, subsurface drainage, and amenities such as bleachers and players benches. A 'C' field might be less than full size (or set up for multiple small-sided games) and be constructed from native soil or soil with a higher percentage of silt and clay. The 'C' field would be unlit, have no irrigation or subsurface drainage and would be suited for younger, recreational, or casual players.

The logic behind field classifications is that players and teams are matched to a field which meets their needs and skill level. In addition, establishing recommended field dimensions and buffer areas will assist in preventing conflicts with adjacent uses, amenities, and private properties adjacent to parks. Each classification of field would also have its own appropriate maintenance regime and be booked for an appropriate number of hours to maintain reasonable field quality, at the lowest possible cost.

The development of a classification system is best done in consultation with local sports groups and users. In addition, a review of classifications for fields in other municipalities and other references would be helpful. The Athletic Field Construction Manual published by the Sports Turf Association provides detailed information on field classifications, specifications, field dimensions and recommended levels of use.²⁸ Ontario Soccer, Baseball Canada and Softball Canada provides recommended dimensions and goal sizes for various age groups.

Examples of outdoor rectangular field classification:

- Lit and unlit
- Natural or artificial surface
- Irrigated or unirrigated; drainage system
- Soil profile
- Size
- Field amenities (benches, bleachers, fencing)

Examples of ball diamond classification:

- Hardball, softball and t-ball
- Lit and unlit
- Infield material
- Field amenities – (dugouts, bleachers fencing)

The Town may choose to locate various types of fields in specific classifications of parks. It may also want to develop a policy related to clustering of fields to facilitate tournament play.

Sports Courts

Outdoor hard surface courts for various sports represent a significant type of amenity for municipal parks. Activities which may be supported at courts include:

- Basketball (full or half court)
- Tennis

²⁸ The Sports Turf Association, Athletic Field Construction Manual, www.sportsturfassociation.com, Guelph ON

- Pickleball
- Ball Hockey
- Multi-use courts – convertible to accommodate various sports through multiple markings and convertible or portable goals.

The Town should determine which classification(s) of park can support courts. Specifications and standards for courts to be included in a park design manual should include marking/lining dimensions. Ideally these should comply with those set out by sport governing bodies. In addition, buffer areas, fencing if required and lighting should be included in standards and the surface to be used (asphalt, rubber or other) should be specified.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds may vary by type of play structure (accessible, adventure, suitable for a specific age group) and by size the number of elements. In addition, there are a variety of surfaces available which meet CSA standards (e.g. rubberized surfaces, wood fibre, sand, artificial turf). Each of these has advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost accessibility, durability, and ease of maintenance or repair.

The Town of Whitby has several different types, sizes and designs of play structures located in its parks, including one fully accessible play structure. There is currently no clear rationale behind the selection of a size and type of play structures or in what type of park a particular type of structure has been located.

Developing standards as to number and type of play elements, surfaces, playground size and themes will assist the Town as more playgrounds are developed and older playgrounds reach the end of their lifecycle. In addition, the Town should develop a clear policy related to provision and location of accessible playgrounds and play elements to assist in responding to requests from the public.

Splash Pads

Over the past few decades municipalities have experienced significant public demand for the development of splash/spray pads²⁹ in parks. Some of these have been built to replace older wading pools and others have been new additions to existing parks or part of new park developments. As with play structures, splash pads may vary in size, number, and type of elements. Surfaces may also vary, and facilities may be themed in some way.

Water use efficiency is an important consideration when designing splash pads. Some splash pads have water drain directly to municipal sewers, while others recycle all or part of the grey water. If water is recycled, splash pads need to meet provincial requirements under Ontario Regulation 141/8 requiring filtering and disinfecting of the water.

As with playgrounds, the Town of Whitby will continue to have requests to locate splash pads in new or redeveloped parks. In order to manage these requests a policy related to where and in what types of parks these facilities should be located should be developed and what size and type of installation is appropriate for a particular park.

Skate Parks

The Town of Whitby currently offers three skate parks to the public. As with playgrounds, skate parks may vary in terms of size, difficulty/age appropriateness, and the number and type of elements offered. Skate parks may feature prefabricated features, or the facility may be custom designed. In determining standards for skate parks the Town should consider what groups (in terms of age and skill level) it is trying to reach. Durability of elements, ease of maintenance/replacement and variety of challenges are important considerations in designing a skate park.

Skate park location is an important factor which should be addressed in developing standards. Provision levels for skate parks Town-wide, and what parks they should be located in should be determined. Ease of access is an important consideration for skate parks. Users tend toward a younger demographic and are quite likely to rely on walking, cycling or

²⁹ The terms “splash pad” and “spray” pad are both used by manufacturers and municipalities. They tend to be used interchangeably. “Splash pad” will be used here for brevity.

public transit to get to the facility. In consequence skate parks should be located where users can get to them readily and should include bike racks nearby.

Signs and Wayfinding

Signs and wayfinding for parks and trails includes entrance signs for parks and trailheads, information signs (including interpretive signs), and regulatory signs. Signs are an important way for the Town of Whitby to provide a familiar brand for parks and trails owned or managed by the Town. Graphic standards (including size, colour scheme, graphics, fonts and materials) should be developed for each type of sign within the parks and trails system. There should also be standards established for number and placement of signs to make sure users get required information while maintaining the aesthetics of parks and trails and avoiding over-signing.

At present many signs in Whitby are in poor condition, missing or have outdated information. The Town currently has a wayfinding study now developed. It would be helpful to have this in place as soon as possible. This will help to address sign and wayfinding standards and the implementation of sign replacement and standardization of new park wayfinding.

Lighting

Lighting of parks and trails may be present in high use areas, adjacent to major features or around buildings. From time-to-time municipalities will receive requests to light a particular trail, park, or walkway because of safety concerns, often associated with a specific incident.

The Town's Parks By-law prohibits entry into parks and trails after dark (10:00 pm April 1 to September 30 and 8:00 during the rest of the year). CPTED principles indicate that lighting of a park or trail suggests that the area is open and is safe. This means that lighting of parks and trails may be counterproductive in terms of the Parks By-law and in making park areas safer. Consequently, installation of lighting needs to be well thought out and the Town should develop a policy and standards as to where and under what conditions lighting will be installed.

Washrooms

Whitby has some washroom structures in place as well as portable toilets at selected park and trail locations. As noted above there have been increased calls for more washrooms on a year-round basis in parks.

Washroom structures in parks need to be well lit, easy to clean and resistant to vandalism. This increases the capital cost of these structures, especially if they are to be open twelve months of the year. In order to address this demand, a formal policy which addresses criteria for locating and constructing permanent washrooms or installing portable washrooms for parks and trails should be developed by the Town. It would also assist in managing capital costs if Whitby were to develop a standard washroom design for its park washrooms. This could be incorporated into new parks or installed in existing locations.

It is notable that Whitby has installed a portable toilet enclosure at Lynde Creek Park. This provides a solid base for installing the unit and provides an improvement in park aesthetics. If this innovation proves to be successful, the Town should consider making enclosures for its portable toilets a standard.

Shade and Drinking Water

Concern about the impacts of Climate Change and skin damage from sun exposure have increased demand for shaded areas in parks. This is especially important for high use areas where users may be sitting for some time such as adjacent to playgrounds, and at picnic areas and sports fields. Shade can be provided through both trees and built shade structures and shelters. Since a newly planted tree takes a number of years to grow to a size where it provides significant shade, trees are a long-term solution. Shade structures, gazebos, and shelters, however, can provide shade as soon as installed. Standards should be developed as to shade structure design and siting and park designs should consider optimal placement of what will eventually become shade trees.

Climate change concerns and active use of outdoor areas has also increased demand for availability of drinking water in parks and along trails. Combined drinking fountains and filling stations have the added advantage of encouraging the use of refillable bottles while discouraging the use of plastic water bottles in parks. Drinking fountains should be strategically located in high use areas such as playgrounds, trail heads, sports fields, picnic areas and splash pads and washrooms.

Priority locations should be those with water service already available. Regular inspection of drinking fountains is required by health regulations. Operating staffing requirements associated with this should be considered with planning installation.

Horticulture and Plantings

Horticulture and plantings in parks and along trails and streetscapes provide significant aesthetic and environmental benefits as well as offering shade, soil stabilization and windbreaks. An overall plan and standards related to horticultural design and location would help to ensure that plantings are situated where most visible and that these are maintained to ensure plant survival and health.

At present “Beautification” within Whitby may be the responsibility of different departments or sections, including Park Planning, Parks Services and Economic Development (who coordinate with BIAs). Any plan should be developed in coordination with these groups and should make responsibility and priorities for resources clear. A horticultural plan and standards should include:

- Coordination of planning, efforts, and resources;
- A focus on low maintenance;
- Use of annuals in high visibility, high impact areas;
- Design of perennial and shrub beds in park areas to minimize hand weeding and watering as far as possible;
- Installation of irrigation in areas that require regular watering where it is more cost effective than watering via water truck; and
- Baskets along high-profile streetscapes.

Fencing

Fencing in parks includes boundary fencing, fencing for baseball outfields or around sports fields to control the amount of wear or damage to high-end fields. The Town should develop standard specifications for chain link fence (height, rail and posts, footings, and chain link fabric (size, galvanized or vinyl coated). Equally important is a set of standards as to where fencing will be installed. This is especially important where parks and trails are adjacent to residential subdivisions since fencing can help to control encroachment issues.