

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to guide the delivery of recreation services, parks and open spaces, programs and facilities within the City of Brantford to the year 2012 and beyond. The Master Plan focuses on the parks, trails, arenas, community centres, community halls, aquatic facilities and cemeteries which are under the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department. Although recognized as being an important and integral part of Brantford's leisure system, arts and cultural facilities and programs are not within the scope of this Master Plan. The City's golf courses, although a part of the City's open space system are not included because they operated as a separate business unit, under the direction of a Management Board.

The purpose of the City of Brantford's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is two-fold:

1. The Master Plan serves as a single and up-to-date source of information on the parks and recreation facilities, programs and services that are available to Brantford residents; and
2. The Master Plan provides a strategy for the future provision of parks and recreation facilities and services.

Note: An Executive Summary has been prepared that is a separate, but complimentary, document to this Master Plan. The Executive Summary contains all of the Master Plan's recommendations, along with associated timing (implementation plan), as well as a brief description of the project and the background analysis. For a complete understanding of the issues and proposed strategies, the Executive Summary should be read in conjunction with this Master Plan.

1.2 CONTEXT

This is Brantford's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The timing is right to study the recreation system - whether it is meeting the current needs of residents and to get a perspective on community priorities. While the focus of the Master Plan is on the City of Brantford's role in the parks and recreation delivery system, it also considers the roles and responsibilities of all those providers who contribute to Brantford's parks and recreation services.

Brantford has developed a reputation as a sporting community. It has produced a long list of elite athletes who have developed their talents using City facilities, through the efforts of volunteer coaches. The challenge in developing this Master Plan, and for the City, is to determine how to maintain and enhance the existing recreation and park opportunities in the face of increasing demands on the municipal tax dollar and the looming issue of having to upgrade many of its facilities.

While this Plan considers Brantford's financial circumstances and the current fiscal climate, it recognizes that the implementation of the Plan, particularly major capital budget recommendations, will take place over a number of years and will occur at a pace reflective of the fiscal priorities established by Council in any given year. The Executive Summary identifies the

recommendations as short, medium and long term needs, but specific timing will ultimately be left to the discretion of the municipality.

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

The Master Plan process consists of three phases:

Phase 1 - Background Research and Consultation (Market Research)

Tasks included:

- analysis of socio-demographic and trends;
- compiling of parks and facility inventory including site visits (with assistance from Staff);
- interviews with key City Staff, Councillors, and stakeholders (Appendix B details the groups and individuals who were interviewed for this Master Plan); and
- preparation and administration of a household telephone survey.

Phase 1 of the Master Plan provides the building blocks for the recommendations of the Plan. Without a clear understanding of the components of the system as well as the participants (i.e., who is doing what where), the formulation of policy recommendations would be virtually impossible. Balancing the views and concerns of stakeholder groups with the results of the household survey provides perspective on community priorities.

Phase 2 - Analysis and Master Plan Preparation

Using the information collected in Phase 1, the Draft Master Plan was prepared. This document was reviewed by the Steering Committee and Staff prior to presenting it to the public. At the mid-point of this Phase, the Consultants met with the project coordinator and Director to review the findings to date. The draft Plan was then revised and the Executive Summary prepared.

Phase 3 - Master Plan Finalization

Following the presentation of the draft Master Plan to the public, the Executive Summary (Implementation Plan) and Master Plan will be finalized and presented to Municipal Council for adoption.

1.4 PROVISION STANDARDS

Facility needs assessments are perhaps the most complicated of all components comprising a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The evaluation of recreation facility requirements is guided by a number of factors, including demographics (current and future), leisure trends, facility inventory and condition of facilities, and perceived demand from the public and user groups. As described

below, however, the primary component of the analysis is the development and application of population and participant-based provision standards.

The use of population-based standards (e.g., 1 facility per “x” population) has traditionally been widely used for assessing community demand and need for recreation and parks. The popularity of this method results from the fact that standards are easily understood and applied. They serve to indicate the adequacy or inadequacy of existing supply in terms of geographically distinct segments of the population and can be useful in targeting specific neighbourhood deficiencies.

In using population-based standards, the following assumptions are made:

- that all factors affecting recreation opportunities are the same throughout the area in which the standards are applied;
- that all recreation facilities of the same type are identical; and
- that all demographically and geographically distinct segments of the population have identical needs and wants for recreation.

Population-based standards remain the most accurate measure of demand for facilities that accommodate a wide range of activities, that differ in their component parts, and that do not have an easily identifiable target market, such as community centres, indoor swimming pools, gymnasiums, parkland, etc.

The standards noted in this Plan are based on previous research, including *A Survey of Recreation Facilities in Ontario* (Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, 1996). The Consultant's extensive experience in other jurisdictions was also valuable in establishing the standards. It is important to note that there are no “set” standards, rather the recommended levels of provision are based upon the unique needs of Brantford and are flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

Participant-based standards (e.g., 1 facility per “x” participants) have the same theoretical foundations of population-based standards, but offer a more accurate representation of actual demand. These standards are based upon the principles of market demand and participation rates, but cannot be applied to all types of facilities. Participant-based standards work best for activities for which the number of participants can be easily correlated to the capacity of the facility (e.g., baseball, soccer, hockey/skating).

The participant-based approach works by estimating current and future demand in an activity through the application of current participation rates. By using the actual participation rates for Brantford, demand projections are able to recognize the specific circumstances that exist in the City and, therefore, are typically more accurate than generic levels of provision that are based on population thresholds. It is, however, still necessary to consider qualitative factors such as trends or anticipated barriers to participation in assessing need.

This method is one of the most useful in assessing community demand and need for recreation and park facilities, however, it is unable to provide an indication of participants’ wants and needs for recreation facilities. This is why it is imperative to consider the opinions of the public and stakeholder groups. Following the application of the standards, the results have been assessed

in relation to relevant socio-demographic considerations, trends and existing supply to provide a determination of need. All standards are considered to be Brantford-specific through adjustments that account for local circumstances.

Table 1-1 illustrates the recommended provision standards for recreation facilities within the City of Brantford. Provision standards were not established for all facility types.

**Table 1-1
Recommended Facility Provision Standards for the City of Brantford**

FACILITY	PROVISION STANDARD
Arenas / Indoor Ice Pads	1 ice pad per 600 to 700 participants
Indoor Swimming Pools	1 indoor pool per 50,000 population
Ball Diamonds	1 ball diamond per 80 participants
Soccer Pitches	1 soccer pitch per 60 participants
Skate Parks	1 skate park per 5,000 children/youth ages 10 to 19
Play Structures	1 play structure within an 800-metre radius of all residential neighbourhoods, unimpeded by major physical barriers
Basketball & Multi-Purpose Pads	1 basketball/multi-purpose pad per 600 children/youth ages 10 to 19
Splash Pads	1 splash pad per 3,000 children ages 0 to 10
Parkland	6.0 hectares of parkland and open space per 1,000 population

Source: Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

1.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The City of Brantford's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is organized as follows:

Section 1: Introduction - defines the parameters of the project and describes the study methodology.

Section 2: Brantford Profile - provides an overview of Brantford's facilities and programs, trends (e.g., demographic, leisure and development), and public consultation activities. This Section concludes with an identification of community priorities based on the issues emerging from the public consultation process.

Section 3: Strategic Directions - identifies the guiding principles and strategic priorities that have been developed to shape the Plan's recommendations.

Section 4: Delivery of Recreation Services - identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the current recreation delivery system and includes an analysis of municipal and non-municipal providers.

Section 5: Programming - assesses the recreational programming opportunities within the City of Brantford, with an emphasis on the role of the City as a direct provider.

Section 6: Recreation Facilities - provides a review and assessment of indoor and outdoor recreation facility and playing field needs.

Section 7: Parks, Trails and Open Spaces - examines parks, open space and trail requirements and best practices.

Section 8: Implementation - details how the Plan's recommendations will be implemented, including a process for monitoring and updating the Master Plan.

Appendix: Contains the results of the household survey, a list of the user groups that participated in the public consultation process, and market research on selected user fees.

1.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Master Plan contains a number of recommendations relating to improvements to the leisure delivery system, programming, and the provision of recreation facilities, parks and open space, as well as for the implementation of the Plan. These recommendations are contained within Sections 4 through 8 and are shown in ***bold and italic print***. Each recommendation has been assigned a priority timing for implementation in the Executive Summary to this Master Plan. The time frames are as follows:

- Short-Term: 0-5 years (2003-2007)
- Medium-Term: 6-10 years (2008-2012)
- Long-Term: 11-15 years (2013 and beyond)

Note: Recommendations contained in this document often refer to the term "That the City...". The use of this term is intended to signify that, individually or collectively, City Council, its Committees and Boards, or City staff may be involved in and/or responsible for implementing the recommendation. The actual implementation of the recommendations and responsibilities for that implementation, however, is envisioned to be undertaken through a co-ordinated approach.