

SECTION 2. BRANTFORD PROFILE

2.1 OVERVIEW

This section contains a snapshot of the City of Brantford's recreation facilities (including parks and open spaces) and a summary of the trends that influence the demand for recreation services. Specific topic areas include: demographic trends, general leisure trends observed nationally and provincially and how they apply (or do not apply) to Brantford, and also development trends in the City (e.g. where the future demand for services will be).

A summary of the public consultation process is also provided. This includes the perspective of the public at large via the household survey and the views and opinions of key stakeholder groups (e.g., users of the system, program/service providers, funders, etc.). Finally, the main themes and issues arising out of the consultation process are highlighted.

2.2 WHERE WE ARE TODAY: FACILITIES & PROGRAMS

The City of Brantford is the main provider of recreation services and facilities in Brantford. A detailed listing of facilities and parks is provided in Sections 6 and 7, respectively.

2.3 TRENDS

2.3.1 Demographic Trends

Factors including population growth, aging trends, migration levels, and socio-economic background play an important role in determining parks and recreation facility, program and service needs. The analysis for Brantford provides the basis for understanding the relationship between the demographic characteristics of the population and their future needs for recreation and leisure services, facilities and programs.

Demographics are essential in developing the Master Plan. They are the foundation for determining the current and future needs of the City. For example, they tell us:

1. how many children currently live within the community that are within the age range of most minor sports associations;
2. how many "baby boomers" there are;
3. how many senior citizens live in the community, as well as all ages before, after and in between; and
4. how many individuals are female and how many are male.

Through the careful application of population projections, demographics can tell us if the number of people currently of age to participate in minor sports will likely increase or decrease and at what rate. By knowing the details of who lives within the community (present and future) it is possible

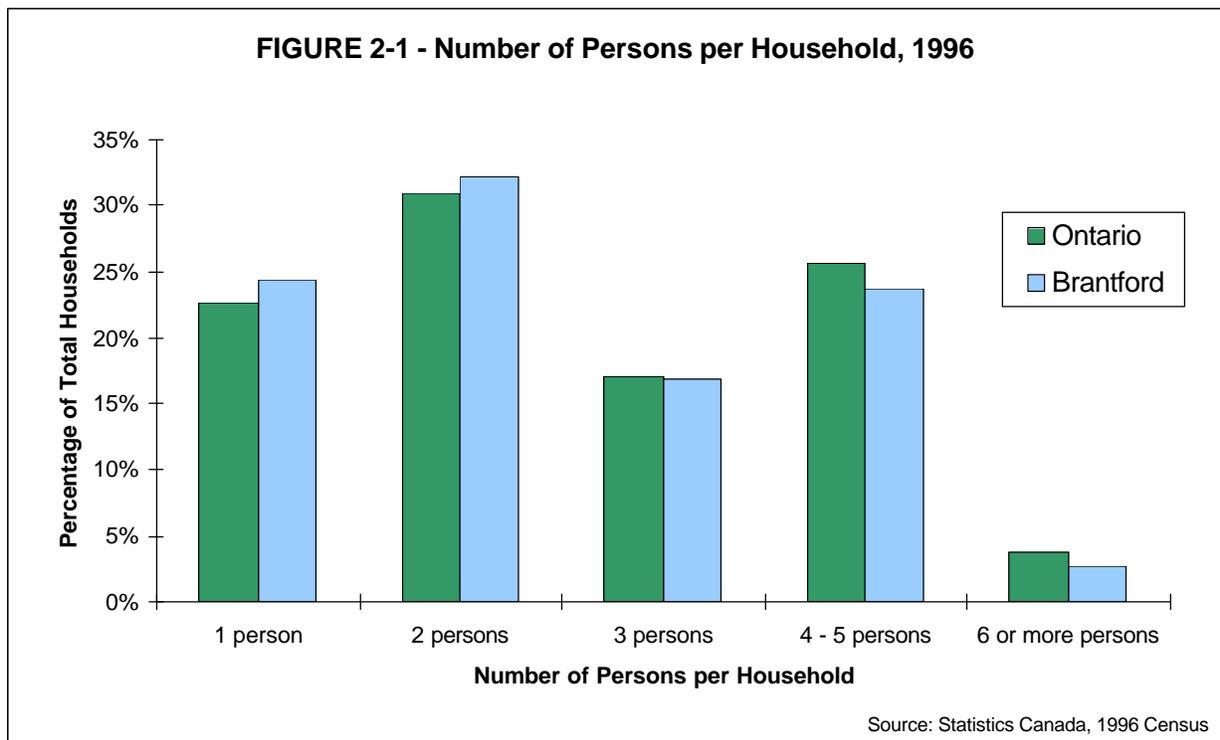
to create a fairly accurate picture of enrolment trends in minor hockey, figure skating, adult hockey, minor baseball, adult slo-pitch, minor soccer, adult soccer, and even seniors social activities.

Household size, household income, place of work and education level, all impact on the use and ability to use parks and recreation facilities, programs and services. For example, research shows that physical activity is generally more prevalent in children and youth whose families have higher incomes and whose parents have higher education levels. There is also general agreement that, in Canada today, there is a broader separation of economic classes, increased commuting, smaller households, and a more educated population than there was in previous years. There is a need to design and provide parks and recreation facilities and programs that are able to accommodate the demands of our ever changing society.

Data on the aforementioned socio-demographic characteristics has been compiled for Brantford and Ontario using 1996 and 2001 Census data. The following is a brief analysis of these statistics as they relate to the provision of recreation facilities, programs and services within Brantford.

2.3.1.1 Household Size & Annual Household Income

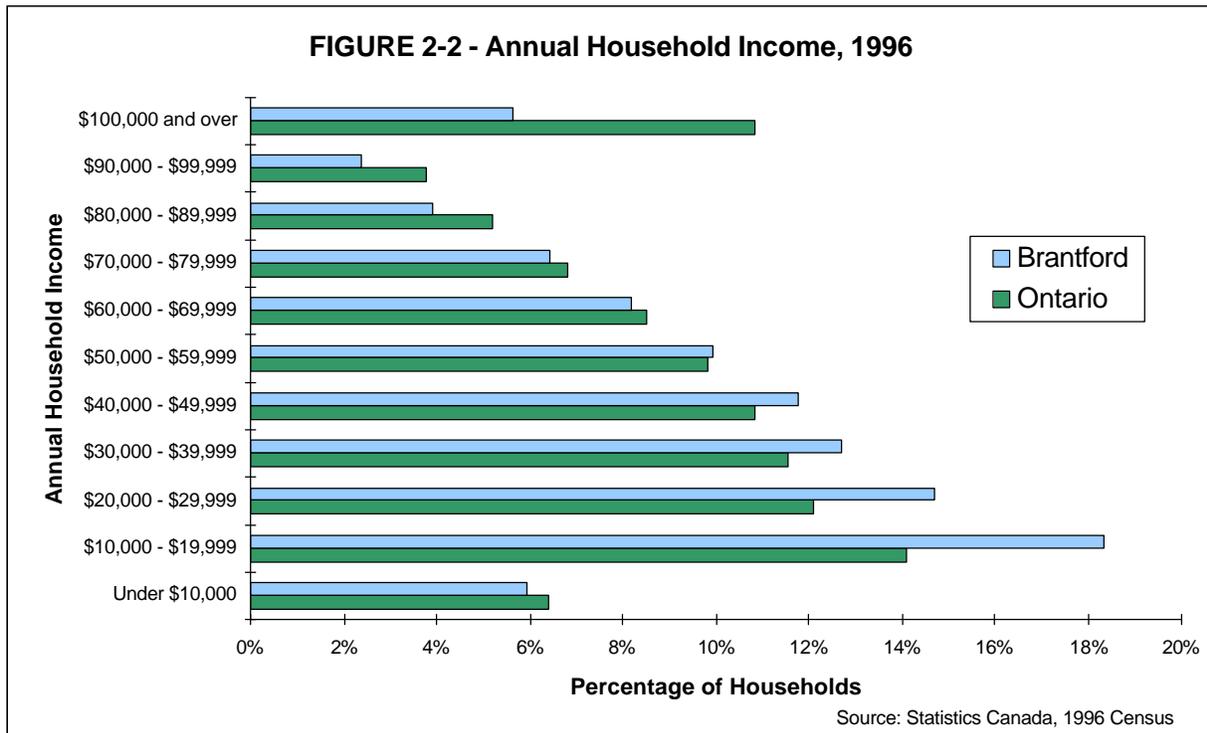
Figure 2-1 illustrates the size of the households in Brantford.



Brantford has a slightly higher percentage of 1 and 2 person households compared to the Province as a whole. Overall, Brantford is generally in line with provincial household size data and, therefore, this factor is expected to have a significant impact on variations in leisure activity levels or preferences.

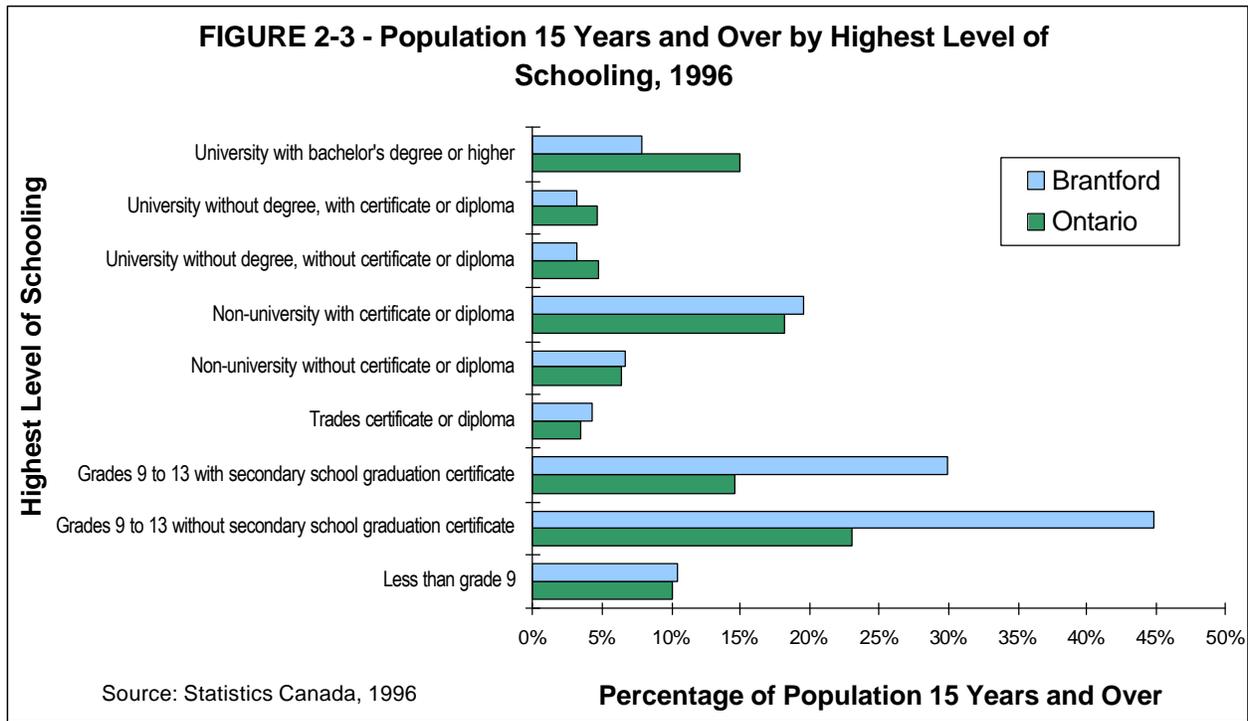
Figure 2-2 shows that approximately 24% of Brantford households have incomes of less than \$20,000, which is higher than the provincial average. Furthermore, there are fewer households in Brantford, as compared to Ontario as a whole, that have an income in the range of \$60,000 - \$100,000 and significantly fewer households that have incomes exceeding \$100,000 (11% provincially, 6% in Brantford). The 1996 census data indicates that the average household income in Ontario was \$54,291, while the average income in Brantford is significantly lower at \$45,433.

There is a strong correlation between family income and physical activity. As a result, this characteristic also correlates with the ability to pay user fees for certain services, to participate in more costly activities (e.g., hockey, golf, specialized sports), to travel greater distances for recreation, and to pay for programs or memberships in private facilities.



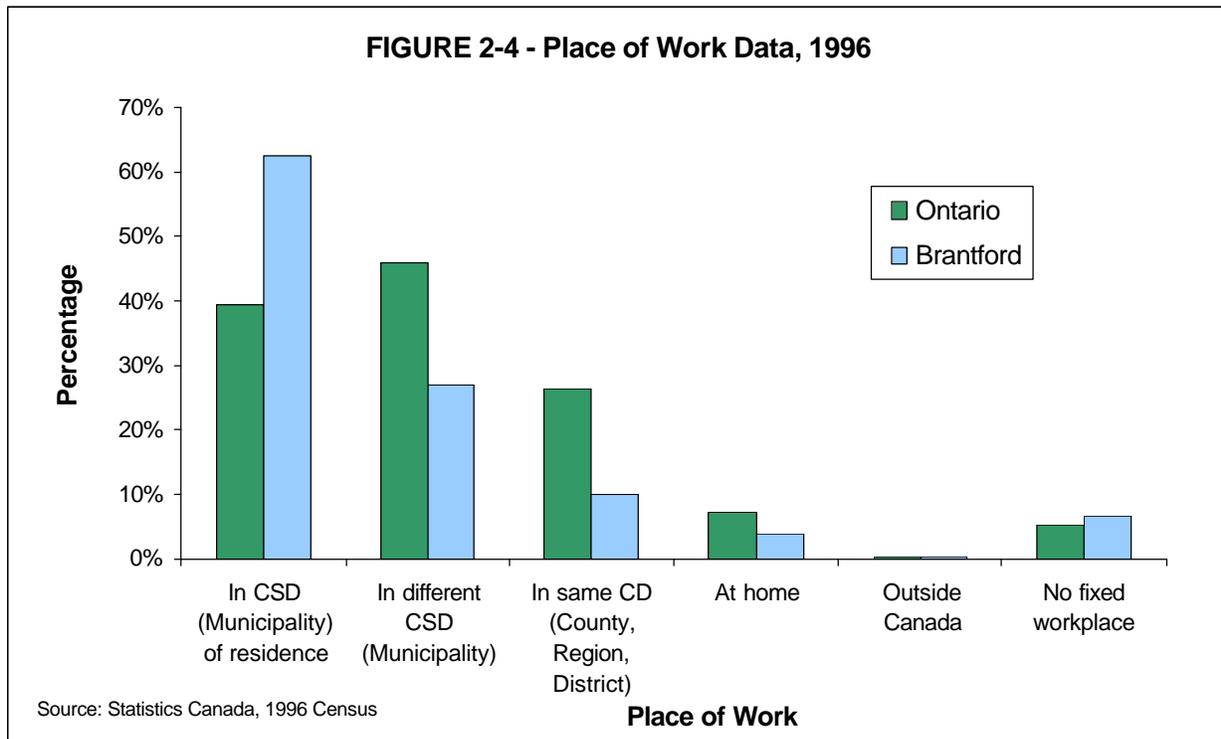
2.3.1.2 Level of Schooling

Figure 2-3 shows that Brantford residents have generally attained lower levels of university education than the provincial average. This can partially be attributed to the absence of a university presence in the City until recently. However, Brantford has a slightly higher level of secondary school, trades and other non-university graduates. Trends suggest that higher levels of physical activity are realized in children that live with parents with higher education levels.



2.3.1.3 Place of Work

Figure 2-4 indicates that the majority of Brantford's population works in the City.



The percentage of the population that works within the municipality of residence is significantly higher than the provincial average (62% for Brantford compared to 39% for the Province). This may result in a greater reliance on local recreational facilities and services.

2.3.1.4 Population Projections

The population projections presented in Table 2-1 have been utilized for the analysis contained in this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These numbers are consistent with those used in the City of Brantford’s Development Charges Background Study, which were prepared by C.N. Watson Ltd. and adjusted for the 2001 Census population count for Brantford.

As with any projection, ongoing monitoring of growth, age cohorts, trends, locations of growth, etc. must be carried out. In this respect, the Master Plan should be viewed as a flexible document that adjusts to reflect change. For example, if population growth increases beyond that currently projected, the park and facility standards will need to be revisited to ensure that an appropriate supply of such parks and facilities is provided.

Although the Master Plan is designed for a 10-year period (2003 to 2012), it is important to evaluate population trends over a slightly longer-term (i.e., 15 years) in order to provide confidence that any Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census recommendations for major facilities are genuinely required beyond the ten year horizon of the Plan. This helps to ensure that facilities are being built to meet actual needs and can be designed with greater flexibility to reflect the changing needs of the population.

As indicated in Table 2-1, Brantford had a population of 86,417 in 2001. The projected population estimates for Brantford show a continued growth of the overall population. By the year 2006, a further increase of 3,959 people (4.6% increase) is anticipated, reaching a total population of 90,376 people. By 2011, a population of 94,987 is anticipated (a further increase of 4,611 people or 5.1% increase). The City needs to carefully monitor the population growth as any changes to the population growth (increases or decreases) will have an impact on the demand for facilities.

**Table 2-1
Population Projections for the City of Brantford (2001-2021)**

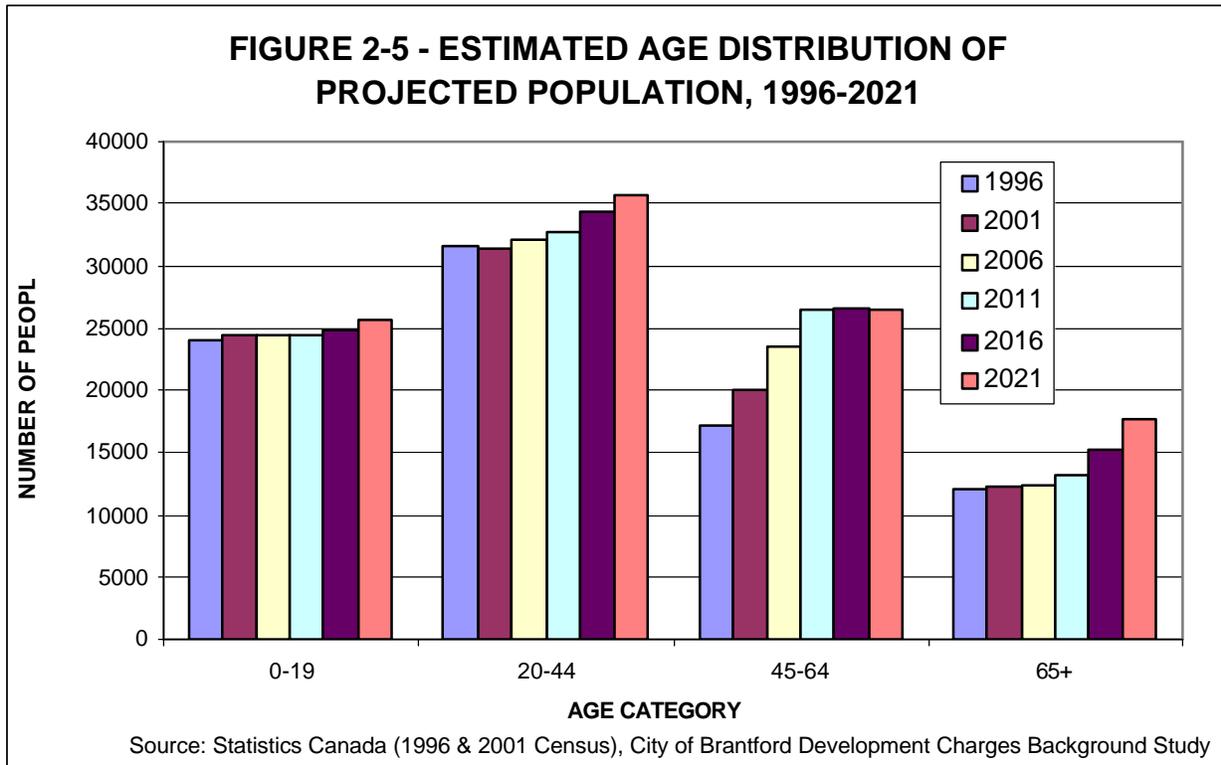
Year	Population
2001	86417
2006	90376
2011	94987
2016	98847
2021	103376

Source: City of Brantford Development Charges Background Study

Figure 2-5 provides an overview of Brantford’s population profile for the period between 1996 to 2021. The data indicates that each age grouping will either remain stable or will increase in

population. No decline in population is anticipated to occur in Brantford over the projection period. This is not the case across the province, where many municipalities are seeing a decline in the younger age cohorts combined with an increase in the older age cohorts.

The continued growth in all age groupings means that the City will have to ensure that a balance of facilities and programs is provided in the future.



The age cohort population projections indicate that the greatest level of growth over the next ten years is expected in the 45-64 age group (older adults). As older adults age, however, this will result in rapid growth of the 65+ age category between 2011 and 2021. Slower, but stable growth is projected for the 0-19 age group (children and youth), which is the traditional focus of municipal recreation services. The younger adult age group (ages 20-44) is expected to experience moderate growth throughout the projection period.

2.3.2 Development Trends

Understanding the patterns of growth and development is an important aspect of recreation facility planning. This information also provides a “snapshot in time” by illustrating the development issues and priorities at the time the Master Plan was prepared. The City’s 2002 Annual Report and Residential Monitoring Report are the primary sources of the following identified development trends.

Initiatives such as the proposed Civic Square and the development of the North-West Industrial Area are also noted as these projects may influence the relative priority assigned to any facility recommendations arising out of this Plan. The need for a new community centre to serve the south/south-west end of the City has been already identified in the Parks and Recreation Department’s 2003 budget .

Tourism initiatives are also identified. As previously noted, while parks and recreation facilities are of value to local residents, they also are also being recognized as significant tourism draws.

1. Shift in Residential Development from the North to the South-West

Over the period from 1998 to 2002, there has been a shift in Brantford’s growth from the north to the south-west areas of the City. In 1998, almost 60% of the new single detached homes were built in the north end of Brantford and about 25% were built in the south-west. By 2001, over 50% of new single detached homes were built in the south-west. Of six identified residential construction zones (North, Northwest, Central, Garden Avenue/Echo Place, Eagle Place and the South-West), the highest percentage of single detached dwelling permits was issued in the south-west.

2. Residential Subdivision Potential

According to estimates provided by the Planning Department, there are an estimated 3,719 lots in registered, draft approved or application stages of pre-development. Within the City of Brantford, there are 13,790 potential residential units (including currently vacant, but designated residential lands).

3. Local Housing Market: Steady Growth Since 1999

In 2001, 255 residential dwelling permits were issued, representing a slight increase since 1999, when 248 permits were issued. In 2002, 499 residential dwelling permits were issued, which is almost a 100% increase from the previous year.

4. Building Permit Activity Reflects Upswing in Local Economy

The value of commercial and industrial permits issued in 2002 was above average for the past five years. The total construction value in 2002 was well above the annual average for the period 1992-2001.

5. Tourism/Economic Development Initiatives

The City, in partnership with the County of Brant, launched a new/reworked Brantford Brant Resource Enterprise Centre as a service for prospective new businesses. Surveys confirm that, of those assisted by the Centre (who completed a survey), 66% have started a business and 135 new full and part time jobs have been created.

A new Visitor and Tourism Centre was developed and the Tournament Capital of Ontario Committee (core funding provided by Council) began their first full year of operation.

6. Arts/Culture Initiative

Since the demise of the Brantford Regional Arts Council (BRAC) in 2000, arts services have been in a transition phase. A new organizational structure is being developed. The overall intent is to raise both the profile and level of support to arts and cultural groups. Arts grants (previously the responsibility of BRAC) were frozen in 2000.

7. Focus on the Downtown

The City has recently completed a Downtown Plan which identifies the creation of a Civic Square that can accommodate festivals and events, thus reducing the wear and tear on Victoria Square. The cost of implementing the Downtown Plan is estimated to be \$4.5 million.

The other major recreation project identified in the Downtown Plan is the YMCA-YWCA's plan for a new facility. Estimated cost of the new facility is \$15 million, but funding is not in place at this time. The Y is seeking partners to pursue this venture.

8. Brownfield Initiatives

The City of Brantford has been a leader in the area of brownfield redevelopment. Fifteen sites have been identified, of which two may have some potential for development as parks: 186 Pearl Street and 22 Sydenham Street. For the majority of sites, however, the site remediation costs make parkland an unlikely choice.

9. Servicing and Development of the North-West Industrial Area

The City has an inadequate supply of serviced industrial land. The development and servicing of the North-West Industrial area is identified as being the number one priority for the City of Brantford. This project is estimated to cost in the range of \$17 million.

2.3.3 Leisure Trends

Table 2-2 summarizes the major leisure trends driving recreation in Ontario. These are based on the Consultant's extensive market research and experience in municipalities across the province.

**Table 2-2
Key Trends Affecting Recreation & Leisure**

Category	Trend/Subject Area	DESCRIPTION/IMPLICATIONS
Socio - Demographic	Aging of the Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased demand for seniors programming, including active living & wellness stable demand for child & youth programming
	Urbanization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brantford will carry a greater burden of responsibility than rural or outlying areas
	Aging Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aging infrastructure coupled with chronic under-funding to the sport sector identified as an issue in sport and recreation sector in Ontario
	Growing Economic Disparity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> income is a significant barrier to participation
	Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> balancing and/or prioritizing local needs with regional needs & impact on the economy
	Changing Patterns of Work & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "lack of time" is the number one barrier to participation for both youth & adults translates into a need for multi-purpose facilities & more flexible hours
Participation	High Levels of Inactivity among Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> children become less active as they enter adolescence long-term health risks & economic impact - need to find a way to engage those who are inactive; may require government to direct more funding to promote youth fitness and physical activity
	Adult Activity Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adults are more active than they were 10-20 years ago active adults will become active seniors
	Popularity of Physical Recreation Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased demand for trails & open space swimming continues to be the most popular recreation activity for all age groups increased demand for unstructured & individual activities (e.g., golf, walking, aerobics, skateboarding, drop-in opportunities)
	Children & Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increasing female participation may help offset potential decline in male sports
	Declining Participation in Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> income is a key variable potential to increase sport participation rates if adequate facilities exist

**Table 2-2
Key Trends Affecting Recreation & Leisure**

Category	Trend/Subject Area	DESCRIPTION/IMPLICATIONS
Delivery System	Volunteerism in Decline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need to attract growing seniors cohort & youth as volunteers
	School Board Budget Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessibility & affordability of school facilities for community use in jeopardy, creating greater pressure on City facilities • City & Schools need to work out cost sharing agreements
	Facilities Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emphasis on market driven standards; • “one-stop shopping” - multi-purpose & multi-generational facilities
	Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children & youth remain focus • more emphasis on active programming for seniors;
	Role of Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affordability & accessibility are priorities, but budget is limited - must do more with less • community-led programming is important but the onus to lead remains a municipal responsibility
	User Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trend towards subsidy based on the ability to pay, not age (most seniors, particularly new seniors do not need to be fully subsidized)
	Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need for creative arrangements with other providers • need to reduce duplication & reallocate responsibilities based on strengths

Source: Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

While all of the trends noted in Table 2-2 are evident in Brantford, through the public consultation process and facility analysis, the following have emerged as key issues in the Master Plan. For each of the identified trends, a local Brantford context has been prepared which includes some of the market research relevant to the trend.

1. Volunteerism in Decline

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating undertaken in 2000¹ identified both a decline in the number of volunteers and in the number of volunteer hours. Seven percent (7%) of Canadians provided 73% of the volunteer hours. Attracting and maintaining volunteers is an issue identified by the majority of local groups who were interviewed. In fact, a number of the larger groups (e.g., minor hockey and minor soccer) identified a shortage of volunteers as one of their key issues. Many volunteer-run boards in Brantford are also having difficulty attracting new board members and filling positions.

¹ Statistics Canada, Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians, "Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating", Ottawa: Ministry of Industry 2001.

2. Aging Infrastructure and Underfunding

In the Consultant's experience in municipalities across the Province, one of the major issues affecting the sport and recreation sector is aging infrastructure. This emerged as one of the key issues in a project undertaken by Monteith Planning Consultants for the Ontario Trillium Foundation in the fall of 2002 that involved recreation leaders from across the Province. The consensus of those surveyed was that an aging infrastructure will be one of the most significant issues impacting the sport and recreation sector in the coming years. Brantford, therefore, is not alone in dealing with an aging infrastructure. Twenty years ago, many of Brantford's facilities were state of the art. This is no longer the case. There is also broad consensus that the sport and recreation sector is underfunded.

3. User Fees, Full Cost Recovery & Subsidies

Traditionally, recreation services have been identified as public services. But fiscal constraints have led many municipalities to adopt a more aggressive user pay policy, which in some cases has matched or exceeded commercial pricing formulas. Many user groups feel that Brantford's user fees are too high.

A survey of Sport Alliance of Ontario members identified revenue to operate programs as the single greatest challenge facing sport². Across the province, municipalities (and school boards) have been introducing and/or raising user fees in an effort to attain the goal of full cost recovery. A report commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation identified that rising costs and increasing difficulty in finding appropriate space are among the key concerns of not-for-profit recreation sector organizations³.

While full or partial cost recovery is a goal, revenues for most recreation programs and facility usage do not fully cover the cost of operation, resulting in some level of subsidy for most areas.

The trend across the province is to rethink the subsidy traditionally offered to seniors. Statistics Canada reports that wealth and (family) income increases with age. The highest net worth is associated with those in the 55-74 age group⁴. In addition, trends literature indicates that participation in all forms of recreation is generally greater for higher income households. Economists and demographers alike are predicting a growing disparity between the rich and the poor in Canada. At the present time, Brantford offers a subsidy to seniors, children with a disability, and youth.

According to the household survey, a significant majority of Brantford residents (65%) believe that recreation subsidies should be linked to the ability to pay.

² Sport Alliance of Ontario, Trends in the Sport and Recreation Sector "Sport Alliance Survey" 2001.

³ Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, Emerging Issues in the Not-for-Profit Recreation Sector, The Randolph Group Management Consultants Inc. 2000.

⁴ Statistics Canada, The Assets and Debts of Canadians: An Overview of the Results of the Survey of Financial Security, 2001.

4. Partnerships

Partnerships are now a way of doing business in the municipal sector. In this area, Brantford has been a leader. The Branlyn Community Centre and its partnership with both school boards was a first in the province.

As municipalities face the challenge of providing quality programs and services at the right price, new types of alternative service delivery methods and partnership arrangements have become increasingly attractive. According to the household survey, a majority of households in Brantford believe that in order to build new facilities, partnerships between the City and the private sector should be considered.

Recreation facilities and programs are involving increasingly complex partnership relationships - not just the traditional school board partnership arrangements, but multi-layer agreements involving one or more levels of government, corporate, private sector partners and not-for-profit organizations.

Moving away from the more traditional public sector (municipal provider) to different types of partnerships, however, has some risks. For example, Brantford's venture into a partnership at the Gretzky Sports Centre resulted in some difficulties for the City and there are similar examples across the province. While there are inherent risks, experience with partnership agreements now indicates that the risks can be greatly reduced by a well-documented partnership framework.

Corporately, municipalities are beginning to think outside the "recreation" box when it comes to providing recreational facilities. For example, libraries are recognized as ideal partners in recreation facilities. Police and Fire Departments are also potential partners.

5. Impact of School Board Budget Pressures

Schools, which were once a municipal resource, have become provincial assets as a result of changes in the funding formula and provincial legislation. The redefinition of priorities in educational funding is affecting the delivery of recreation and leisure programming across the province. It has become increasingly difficult and costly for local groups to access school facilities. The pressure is most acute for groups who rely on school gymnasium space. In Brantford, one of the most significant gaps in facility provision is the lack of accessible and affordable gymnasium space.

Reductions in funding for non-classroom based activities has impacted both the quality and quantity of recreation opportunities offered in school settings. The indirect result of this may be increased demand on other providers in the delivery system to fill the gap, namely municipalities. The Canadian Sport Policy and Federal/Provincial Action Plan for Sport (2002-2005) identifies an "urgent need to improve the state of sport and physical activity in scholastic settings"⁵. This may be one area where Brantford is not following the trend. School sports appear to be thriving in Brantford, supported by the City's generous policies on access.

⁵ Sport Canada, "Canadian Sport Policy and Federal Provincial Action Plan for Sport 2002-2005".

6. Sport Tourism

Sport tourism is another area where the City of Brantford is a leader. Municipalities across the country are beginning to recognize the significant contribution that sport tourism can make to the local economy. According to research compiled by Brantford's Tournament Capital Committee, sport travel in Canada is valued at \$1.3 billion. This represents a change in traditional thinking. Today, parks and recreation facilities are being assessed for their contribution to the tourism market, whereas in the past, the emphasis was on a resident population.

The City of Brantford has invested staff and facility dollars in the sport tourism area. One issue is the absence of a direct return on investment for the recreation facilities. Municipalities across Ontario who bid for major sporting events also wrestle with the issue of building facilities to suit the bid, sometimes resulting in facilities being constructed that do not match local community needs.

Opinion on the relative merit of the sport tourism initiative is fairly mixed amongst Brantford user groups. Some consider it to be an excellent initiative while others feel that it has no impact on how they organize tournaments. Some expressed resentment that the City is devoting funds to meet the needs of "non-Brantford" residents, while others are not clear about what the Tournament Capital Committee does and what resources they offer to groups.

7. Youth: The Neglected Cohort

Across Ontario, youth are the top item on the recreation agenda, in part because this age group is peaking in total population. There is also greater attention to the social costs associated with failing to engage youth in appropriate leisure activities. Out of the extensive literature on youth needs come a few consistent messages:

- a) there is a need for more casual drop-in activities;
- b) there is a need for age segregated opportunities (the 11 to 19 age group should not be lumped together);
- c) cost is a significant variable affecting youth participation; and
- d) convenient hours are important as youth are experiencing the same time crunch as adults.

Brantford has responded to the needs of homeless youth (the most "needy" youth) through the development of the Youth Resource Centre.

In January 2002, a focus group was held with 31 Brantford youth. Four main issues were identified: program (including facility) issues, transportation, user fees and drop-in/unstructured opportunities⁶. While the focus group identified some specific local issues, overall, Brantford youth are no different than those elsewhere in Canada. A permanent skate park facility tops the list of facility needs and there is also a desire for drop-in space for older youth (see also Programming, Section 5). The focus group also identified the need for more programming opportunities for youth with a disability (e.g. sledge hockey, wheelchair basketball) and for more passive opportunities, including arts and cultural opportunities.

⁶ Source: Youth Meeting Report, submitted by Anti-Vandalism Coordinator

8. Trails Are Number One

Trail based activities are among the most popular recreation activities for Canadians of all ages. Brantford has an impressive network of trails and a “grand” vision for the entire network. Some who are intimately involved in the trail system in Brantford, are of the opinion that the importance of trails to Brantford residents is undervalued by the City and that this is reflected in the relatively small budget allotment for future trail development.

2.4 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

2.4.1 Overview

The Community Consultation process began with a public awareness campaign that included press releases, posters and communication with City staff advising residents and administration of the Master Plan.

Community organizations, civic administration, political officials and the general public participated in the planning process through:

- mail-out survey to 30 neighbourhood associations;
- telephone interviews with stakeholder groups (e.g., minor sports organizations, service clubs, etc.);
- interviews with City Councillors and key City Staff involved in all aspects of the parks and recreation system;
- telephone interviews with key organizations, including representatives from the County of Brant, the School Boards, the Public Library, recreation providers and local funders;
- a random sample household telephone survey.

It is impossible to contact everyone. Time and budget are limiting factors. However, the process has truly engaged a wide cross-section of residents, stakeholder groups as well as staff who are intimately involved in the delivery of Brantford’s recreation services.

The public meeting will provide further opportunities for the public at large to provide input into the Master Plan process. It will provide stakeholder groups who have already participated in the process with an opportunity to see how their input has been reflected in the Plan and, for those who have not yet participated, a chance to have their say.

Part of the challenge of a process like this is providing a non-threatening environment for people to be frank about their issues and concerns. For this reason, the confidentiality of the opinions expressed by those who participated has been protected.

It is also important to recognize that the community priorities which conclude this Section of the Plan are the opinions of the public, user groups and others involved in the provision of parks and recreation services in Brantford.

2.4.2 Random Household Survey

In order to gain a perspective on the recreation needs and preferences of Brantford residents, a random household telephone survey was conducted. A total of 384 households completed the survey which represented a statistically reliable sampling of the population (the sample size yields a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of $\pm 5.0\%$, 19 times out of 20). The results have been integrated throughout the Master Plan and a detailed summary is contained in Appendix "A". The household survey provides a useful counterpoint to the views of interest groups who participated in the process.

The main message from the household survey is that the majority of Brantford residents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the parks and recreation system as it exists today. Lack of time, not lack of facilities, is the main factor limiting residents ability to participate in recreational activities. Brantford residents also see an ongoing role for the City in the delivery of recreation services.

2.4.3 Community Interest Group/Stakeholder Interviews

Telephone interviews were conducted with a wide variety of community interest groups, service clubs, organizations and facility providers in the City of Brantford. Appendix "B" lists the organizations and individuals that were interviewed.

2.4.4 Staff and Councillor Interviews

City Councillors were interviewed to gain a perspective of ward-specific issues as well as City-wide concerns. City staff involved in all aspects of the recreation system (from cemetery operations to corporate communications) were interviewed.

2.5 MAJOR THEMES OF THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following is a summary of the main themes and issues that emerged from the community consultation process for the Master Plan. While the recommendations of the Plan speak directly to many of these themes, other elements have also shaped the recommendations of the Plan, including demographics, an assessment of the quality, quantity and distribution of facilities, and market research/trends.

1. Satisfaction with Available Recreation Opportunities

Overall, the public is very satisfied with the quality and quantity of recreation opportunities available in Brantford. There is a perception amongst user groups, however, that the public is generally unaware of (or takes for granted) the high quality of Brantford's recreation opportunities; not just the facilities, but the quality of the programs (especially coaching) and the range of opportunities.

2. Facilities in Need of Upgrading

Those groups which are actively involved in running programs are acutely aware of some of the impending facility issues. Lack of storage is an issue at many City facilities. While the Gretzky Centre was "state of the art" when it was built, the arena in particular, does not offer the amenities of newer facilities. Many have expressed concern about the future of the City's aging facilities.

3. Strong Emphasis on Maintaining Existing Facilities

Household survey respondents assigned a higher priority to maintaining existing facilities over building new ones. While user groups would like additional outdoor sports facilities and additional ice surfaces (particularly relative to being able to compete in the lucrative tournament market) overall, existing facilities appear to be meeting the needs of the existing population. However, as identified throughout this report, there are some obvious gaps. One of the gaps which was identified consistently by user groups was gymnasium facilities. The need for a skate park facility was also frequently noted.

4. Parks and Trails: A High Priority for Brantford Residents

Brantford's open space and trails system is very important to residents.

5. High User Fees

Although household survey respondents indicated a preference for user fees as compared to raising taxes, user groups and staff were fairly consistent in acknowledging the high cost of using both City and School facilities.

6. Youth: Identified "Gap Area"

As noted by various sources, Brantford's youth are under-served. The need for youth drop-in facilities and a skateboard facility top the list.

7. Shortage of Volunteers

The shortage of volunteers is an acute problem for many groups.