

## SECTION 6. FACILITIES

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### 6.1 OVERVIEW

The following provides:

- an inventory of the recreation facilities located within Brantford, including park-based features (e.g., soccer pitches, ball diamonds, etc.);
- an assessment of the adequacy of the existing supply of facilities; and
- an assessment of the need for additional facilities.

Quantitative projections of current and future demand for certain types of facilities have been developed in order to support the recommendations provided herein. These projections estimate the number of Brantford residents that will participate in key facility-intensive recreation activities in the future.

An assessment of all of the City's recreation facilities has identified the following common themes: the need for improved facility maintenance and facility upgrades and the absence of a clear picture of the remaining life of some of the existing facilities. At the present time, only the arenas have been subjected to a detail assessment of necessary repairs. There is a need to have a similar database for community centres, aquatic and seniors centres and indeed for all of the City's recreation facilities including outdoor sports fields. Municipal recreation facilities are essential to the City's ability to offer a quality recreation system and their long-term viability must be assessed.

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake an assessment of all of its recreation facilities (including arenas, indoor pools, community centres, community halls, as well as sports playing fields). The purpose of this assessment is to develop a complete picture of the required level of investment in each facility prior to making decisions regarding the long-term use, maintenance and/or upgrading of existing facilities. Specifically, the assessment will determine the improvements and upgrades that are required, how much the work will cost, and the estimated "life span" of each facility.*

### 6.2 METHODOLOGY

Various factors were considered in evaluating recreation facility requirements, including:

- demographic considerations;
- leisure trends;
- the current inventory of facilities;
- perceived demand based on input from the public and user groups; and
- demand based on population-based and participant-based standards.

*Note: The provision standards which have been applied in this Master Plan have been described and summarized in Section 1.4.*

Given that the Master Plan is a ten-year plan, the key facility actions and/or recommendations are based on the 2003-2012 time frame. Any reference to longer-term facility needs have been provided to ensure that facilities are not recommended or constructed to meet a peak in demand which may decrease over the long-term.

### **6.2.2 Current & Future Demand**

Brantford's recreation facilities have been evaluated on the basis of their ability to serve both current and future populations. The component of the analysis entitled "Current & Future Demand" incorporates input from user groups (e.g., participant/enrolment information, level of usage, suggested facility improvements), input from staff, and a projection of facility demand to the year 2016 for arena, soccer and ball diamond facilities. The longer term projection period is intended to provide confidence that recommended facilities are not based on a peak demand.

The facility demand projections are based largely on current participation data (as provided by the groups that participated in the study) and/or population forecasts. For arenas, soccer pitches, and ball diamonds, participant-based standards have been utilized. Participant-based standards calculate future demand by dividing the current participant information by the population for the age cohorts of the participants which results in a multiplier. This multiplier is then applied to the current participation rate and forecasted into the future, to the year 2016 to provide for a longer term perspective on participation levels. Demand projections are then evaluated based on participation thresholds and the existing supply of facilities. For all other facilities, population-based standards and/or qualitative analysis was used to determine current and future need. These methodologies are further explained in Section 1.4 of this Plan.

While actual participation rates and demand projections provide a good means of forecasting future facility needs, it is still necessary to consider qualitative factors such as trends or anticipated barriers to participation in assessing facility needs. Monitoring, as recommended in Section 4 will be required in order to assess changes (e.g., changes in the projected population, the development of additional facilities within the market area or new recreation trends) which may influence the projected number of participants.

## **6.3 RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY**

Table 6-1 provides an inventory of the key municipal recreation facilities available in the City of Brantford. A detailed inventory of school facilities was not undertaken as part of this analysis, rather information provided by the municipality has been relied upon. Private recreation facilities have not been included in the inventory but do form part of the discussion, where appropriate.

**Table 6 -1  
Existing Recreation Facilities in Brantford**

	Municipal	School	Total
<b>INDOOR FACILITIES</b>			
Ice Pad	5	-	5
Community Centre	7	-	7
Community Halls (Grandview, Tranquility, Bellview and Dufferin Tennis Club)	4	-	4
Swimming Pool	1	1	2
Gymnasium	8	18	26
<b>OUTDOOR FACILITIES</b>			
Softball Diamond (lit)	4*	-	4
Softball Diamond (unlit)	19	5	24
Hardball Diamond (lit)	2	-	2
Hardball Diamond (unlit)	15	5	20
Practice Ball Diamond	5	-	5
Full Soccer Field - lit	2	-	2
Full Soccer Field - unlit	8	1	9
Intermediate Soccer Field	5	-	5
Mini Soccer Field	8	3	11
Practice Soccer Field	6	-	6
Outdoor Ice Rink	27	-	27
Playground/Play Structure Location	62	-	62
Swimming Pool**	2	-	2
Accessible Playground***	2	-	2
Tennis Court****	11	-	11
Multi-Purpose Pad/Basketball Court	20-22	-	20-22
Splash Pad	2	-	2
Football Field	3	N.A.	3
Cricket Pitch	1	-	1
Track	2	N.A.	2
Lawn Bowling Court	2	-	2
Golf Course	2	-	2

\* Includes Jaycee Red which will be lit in Spring 2003.

\*\* This includes the facilities at Earl Haig Park.

\*\*\* Included in the 62 Play Structure Locations above.

\*\*\*\* Includes 6 courts at Dufferin Tennis Club (City-owned facility).

Source: City of Brantford, Tournament Capital, Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

## 6.4 INDOOR FACILITIES

### 6.4.1 Arenas/ice Pads

#### 6.4.1.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City of Brantford has 3 arena facilities that offer a total of 5 ice pads. They are described as follows:

##### **(1) Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre**

The Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre offers two 80 ft. x 180 ft. (24m x 54.8m) ice pads and one 85 ft. x 190 ft (26m x 58m) ice pad. Two of the surfaces are operated year-round. The Blue Rink was constructed in 1967, Red Rink in 1972, and Yellow Rink in 1998. The Blue Rink offers bleacher seating for 300 persons. There are a total of 14 dressing rooms (12 with showers) as well as an office/meeting room that is used by Brantford Minor Hockey.

Facility user groups identified some necessary improvements, including the need for larger dressing rooms with showers and washroom facilities at the Blue Rink. It was also noted by groups that the existing lobby, which can only accommodate 200 persons, does not allow for a proper flow of people moving in and out of the facility.

Suggested improvements from staff include updated dressing rooms at the Blue and Red Rinks, an improved lobby and mezzanine, additional insulation, and the replacement of outdated equipment. Furthermore, according to staff, the boards, rear entrance and bleachers all need upgrading at the Yellow Rink.

##### **(2) Lions Park Arena**

Lions Park Arena was constructed in 1971 and was retrofitted approximately 7 years ago. The improvements included new rink boards as well as other major repairs. The Arena has one ice pad measuring 80 ft. x 180 ft (24m x 54.9m) and contains 6 large dressing rooms, bleacher seating for approximately 500 persons, a music room, coaches room, a concession and washrooms. The facility also has an auditorium that offers kitchen and washroom facilities. The auditorium can seat 274 people and is used for meetings, special events, ball tournament headquarters, buck and does, weddings, etc.

Suggested improvements that were noted included improved seating (i.e., padded seats) greater amenities for female users. Also of note, Lions Park has been identified in the past as having potential for twinning.

### **(3) The Brantford & District Civic Centre**

Opened in 1967, the Brantford & District Civic Centre has one ice pad measuring 190 ft. x 85 ft. The arena can accommodate 2,981 spectators. The facility has 8 dressing rooms, 3 concessions and a portable stage. The Civic Centre also features an auditorium with seating capacity for 400 as well as a permanent stage and kitchen facilities.

User groups of the Civic Centre suggested a number of improvements which are beyond the scope of this Plan but which should be reviewed when any improvements to the facility are being contemplated. These suggestions included:

- the installation of a marquee clock outside;
- the installation of a computerized sign outside;
- additional office and storage space;
- more comfortable seats (existing ones are wooden);
- improved scheduling and/or allocation (groups often get “bumped” by special events); and
- the replacement of the existing electric radiant heat with a gas system (more cost efficient).

#### **6.4.1.2 Overall Assessment**

Generally, groups are happy with the operation of the City’s arena facilities and credit City staff with providing quality service – a service level which serves to counteract facilities that are no longer state of the art. The level of service (and this includes extensive volunteer efforts) are identified as being the “backbone” to Brantford’s success in the tournament field. Those involved in the promotion of tournaments, however, are concerned about the state of Brantford’s aging arenas.

In May 2002, Black & McDonald prepared a detailed assessment of Brantford’s arena facilities. Given the aging condition of the facilities, all of the City’s arenas are in need of repairs over the coming years. In the case of the Civic Centre, it was noted that if the repairs are not undertaken, that the facility would probably have to be shut down.

The key trends in arena facility development include the twinning of single pad arenas and also the development of fourplex arena facilities. These approaches provide for significantly lower operating costs as well as increased tournament potential. As noted previously, Brantford has been singularly successful in the tournament area. As more four pad facilities are developed elsewhere in the province, however, Brantford may encounter more difficulties attracting tournaments.

Another key trend is the involvement of private enterprise in the development and operation of arena facilities. Throughout the province, there are examples of private sector partnerships in arena development, although the form of the partnerships vary in each municipality (the issues surrounding the formation of partnerships is addressed more fully in Section 4, Delivery of Recreational Services).

### 6.4.1.3 Ice Allocation

According to staff, all of the City's arena facilities are completely booked during prime time (generally Monday through Friday, 5 p.m. till 11 p.m., and all day Saturday and Sunday 7 a.m. till 12 midnight). The shortage of prime time ice was identified as an issue by user groups. However, due to positive relationships among user groups, there has been a successful sharing of available ice time. Regular meetings of arena user groups are held and this creates a forum to address issues such as the need for ice time.

At the present time, the needs of the majority of user groups are being met. However, Minor Hockey and Brantford Girls Hockey (as well as adult recreational leagues) have requested additional ice time and/or alternative times (e.g., adult recreation leagues are looking for earlier times). Girls Hockey has advised that they would like to add more teams and that they are only being accommodated because another group handed back some ice time (it was also indicated, however, that Girls Hockey had returned some of their prime time ice).

Tournaments and competitions are an integral part of arena programming and this is recognized by arena user groups. They are prepared for some disruption of regular programming, however, the amount of time lost to tournaments was raised as an issue by many groups.

Some user groups felt that the City is not making the best use of its ice time. Suggested improvements included greater use of the early morning hours and also late evening hours. It was also suggested that more efficient use of ice time might result if some of the minor hockey groups were to be amalgamated.

The Civic Centre noted that it books 84 hours of ice time a week which includes 15 hours a week for school use (three hours weekday mornings). Most weekday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. the ice surface is empty. This time is used for maintenance.

In reviewing the scheduling information provided by staff at the Gretzky Centre, it was noted that a number of private rentals (e.g., adult pick-up games) are scheduled during prime time hours (e.g., 8:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. on Monday evenings and 5:30 p.m. till 11:30 p.m. on Tuesdays). Furthermore, there appear to be openings at 11 p.m. at most arena facilities and a limited number of rentals past 12 midnight. While late evening bookings are not favoured by participants, they are a fact of life in many municipalities where there is a shortage of prime time ice. Many municipalities operate their arenas until 1 a.m. - 1:30 a.m. in the morning. These late hours are not appropriate for minor hockey and are generally assigned to adult users. A review of the arena schedules identified that a number of adult groups have favourable prime time ice. Reallocating this ice time to younger age groups is one option that the City has as a strategy to address shortages in prime time ice.

As indicated in Section 4 (Delivery of Recreation Services), the City's current facility ice allocation policy is based on historical precedence which leaves little opportunity for new groups to offer programs. It has been recommended that the City, in consultation with user groups, should develop a facility allocation policy which better addresses the needs of all groups including youth groups, emerging sports, as well as adult recreational groups.

6.4.1.4 Current & Future Demand

In evaluating arena and ice time demand, it is important to consider current trends that are impacting the user rates of arenas across the province. The demand for arena facilities is increasing as a result of the growth in female participation in hockey, the "echo" generation and an increasing number of active older adults. Use of arenas during the non-ice season is also growing due to rollerhockey or in-line hockey, lacrosse, and special events. There is evidence that these trends are present in Brantford.

In 1989, the Ontario Leisure Participation Study predicted declining rates of participation in traditional arena-based activities such as hockey and skating. However, industry experts are now predicting the continued need for new arena development, at least in the short-term. Growth in women's hockey is a factor in the positive outlook for participation numbers.

Factors such as an aging population and increasing costs to participate are key considerations in the long-term evaluation of participation levels in both hockey and figure skating. In some communities, including Brantford, participation in figure skating has decreased in part due to costs as well as challenges in finding qualified coaches.

Population growth projections for Brantford indicate that the City's population will be bolstered by new residential growth, however, its population is still aging. As a result, participation in arena-based activities is expected to decline towards the end of the Master Plan's projection period.

Table 6-2 presents current participation numbers and projected participant demand based on demographic trends. Facility recommendations have accounted for market trends and user data, such as the growth of women's hockey. More detailed analysis and a broader database which includes details on past participation, if available, could result in modifications to future demand projections (e.g., greater growth in girl's hockey). The projected demand data, therefore, should be considered as a baseline for the future. Also of note, the participant data does not include all of the daytime users (e.g., the numbers of school children who use the facility or public skating numbers) or tournament participants.

**Table 6-2  
Demand for Indoor Ice Surfaces - City of Brantford\***

	Current	Projected Demand		
		2006	2011	2016
<b>Total Participants</b>	3615	3642	3677	3692
<b>Rate of Supply (based on 5 surfaces)</b>	1:723	1:728	1:735	1:738

\* Does not include Tournament demand and all daytime users  
Source: Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

An acceptable provision standard for ice pads for a municipality the size of Brantford is in the range of one ice pad per 600 to 700 participants. As is evidenced in Table 6-2, Brantford operating at a level that is slightly higher than this recommended standard of supply. The development of

a sixth ice pad would put Brantford at the other end of the standard (i.e., closer to 600 participants per ice surface).

While the needs of most ice user groups are being met, there are some that have requested additional ice time. Brantford's supply of ice time cannot accommodate any growth unless significant changes are made to the way that the City offers its ice to the public. Some of these needs could be addressed by revising the ice allocation policy or extending prime time hours; however, any real growth of a program will require a sizable number of additional hours which are not readily available. In Brantford's case, another key factor to be considered is the impact (displacement) of tournaments on arena user groups and the need for facilities which can assist in the marketing of Brantford as the Tournament Capital. A repeated concern among ice users was that Brantford's facilities are the weak link in the tournament capital initiative.

The response to the household survey did not reflect a significant need for an additional ice pad (9% of survey respondents indicated that an additional ice pad is required).

The arena facilities in Brantford are essentially operating at or near capacity. Changes to the ice allocation practices and improved scheduling of prime versus non-prime hours should help to alleviate some of these current pressures. However, the current capacity constraints limit the potential for expanded or new programming to be offered. Some groups have also indicated a desire for additional ice time and the impact of tournaments on ice time allocation has further impacted the supply of arena facilities. The growth of the Tournament Capital initiative may also be curtailed without the development of additional arena facilities.

Once improvements to ice allocation are implemented and on-going monitoring of participation levels are undertaken by the City, the need for an additional ice surface can be better assessed. Until such time, the City should focus its efforts on assessing current arena facilities to determine life expectancy in an effort to develop a direction with regard to exploring a partnership with the County of Brant for the development of a new arena facility.

Consideration should also be given to the numerous outdoor ice rinks that are provided by the Neighbourhood Associations (see sub-section 6.5.7 - Outdoor Rinks). These rinks provide a tremendous opportunity for public or free skate time. However, as indicated in Section 4, all of the Associations have expressed difficulty in recruiting new volunteers and as such, there is no guarantee regarding the continued provision of these outdoor surfaces and the relief they provide for indoor ice surfaces.

It was also indicated that there is interest in developing a local Junior "A" hockey team. Brantford currently has a Junior "B" team as well as a Senior "A" Team. One of the key requirements in establishing a Junior "A" franchise is a 5,000 seat facility, which currently does not exist in the City.

Some staff indicated that an additional ice surface is not required and cautioned that building a new surface would take participants away from existing facilities. Priority should, therefore, be placed on replacing the older facilities.

In terms of a possible location for a new arena, if needed, the majority indicated that the north end near Highway 403 would be a good location. Others indicated the City's new industrial park would make a good location.

#### 6.4.1.5 Off-Season Use

During the summer months, a variety of groups use the City's arena facilities, including a basketball camp, a figure skating school, Brantford Minor Lacrosse, as well as numerous private rentals (e.g., hockey schools). The needs of these groups appear to be met, with the exception of the Rolling Thunder Roller Hockey group, which has opted to play at the St. George's Arena in the County of Brant because the arena rental rates are more favourable.

#### 6.4.1.6 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City adopt a provision standard of one ice pad per 600-700 participants.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City introduce changes to the ice allocation practices, giving priority to minor hockey, youth and children.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City consider extending its non-prime time ice hours to better serve the needs of ice user groups as a strategy to address prime time shortages of ice, which are being experienced at this time.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in undertaking any future renovations of its arena facilities, consult with female participants regarding specific facility and dressing room needs.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake a detailed assessment of the life span of all existing arena facilities prior to pursuing the development of an additional ice surface.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City consider a partnership with the County of Brant in developing a new arena facility should it be determined that an additional ice pad is needed. Furthermore, a new arena (if needed) should form part of a multi-purpose recreation facility rather than a stand-alone arena facility.*

### 6.4.2 Community Centres

#### 6.4.2.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City of Brantford currently identifies 5 community centre facilities within its inventory, including Branlyn Community Centre, Resurrection Community Centre, Woodman Park Community Centre, Eagle Place Community Centre and T.B. Costain/ S.C. Johnson Community Centre. The City's inventory of community centres increases to 7 if the Brantford Seniors Centre and the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre are taken into consideration.

The following provides an overview of the Brantford's Community Centres:

### **(1) Branlyn Community Centre**

The Branlyn Community Centre was constructed in 1988 in partnership with the Separate and Public School Boards, as well as the North Brantford Lions. The facility is situated in the same building as the schools and the service club, on a 4 hectare (10 acre) site that also includes Bridle Path Park.

The community centre includes a triple gymnasium which features a stage at one end and a commercial kitchen at the opposite end. The flooring in the gym is plastic rubber and was installed in the summer of 2002 at a cost of more than \$100,000. The gym has a ceiling height of 24 feet. The gymnasium facilities at Branlyn are extremely popular – in fact there is not one single opening. The key user groups include CYO Basketball, Briers Basketball, Brantford Co-ed Volleyball, Brant Health Volleyball, Brant Youth Volleyball, Brantford Inner City Soccer, and Brantford Minor Basketball. The facilities are also booked by the Neighbourhood Association as well as by various industries that hold their Christmas parties at the Centre. Fibre Force is another regular user of the facility. This local industry sponsors a teen dance for kids aged 12-14 on every other Friday night.

The centre also offers a large meeting room that can be divided into two rooms. There are two sets of men's and women's washrooms with each set being linked by a shower. The facility also includes office space for staff and storage space which was described as being inadequate (which holds true for all of the City's community centres). Staff advised that various entrances into the centre are not supervised and that security cameras have been installed to help monitor the facility.

Outdoor amenities include 2 ball diamonds, a number of basketball backboards as well as 2 mini and 1 full size soccer pitches. There is also a paved parking area that can accommodate 136 vehicles.

There is very limited City programming at the Branlyn Centre. The pre-school program which is offered is very popular as are the drop-in programs, including adult basketball and volleyball.

### **(2) Resurrection Community Centre**

Resurrection Community Centre was developed in partnership with the Separate School Board. The Centre is located in the same building as Resurrection School, adjacent to Brier Park. The arrangement is such that the City has access to the facility after 5:30 p.m. on weekday evenings as well as on weekends, if there are rentals.

The Centre contains a double gymnasium. The flooring in the gym space is VCT Tile and the ceiling height is 22 feet. There is also a stage, changerooms with showers as well as office space for staff and storage areas. The parking area can accommodate 22 vehicles and is in need of improvement (e.g., levelling and resurfacing).

The main users of the Resurrection Community Centre include Resurrection School and Brier Park Public School during the day, as well as a Karate Club (which is an affiliated group) and an Adult Men's Soccer Team. Various local industries also book the facilities for their staff sports activities. It was noted that a number of the groups that are being turned away include soccer and baseball groups which are looking for off-season training space over the winter months.

The drop-in programs that are offered 2 nights a week at the Resurrection C.C. are very popular, especially the adult recreational volleyball program, as is the City's karate program.

### **(3) Woodman Park Community Centre**

Woodman Park Community Centre is adjacent to Woodman Park Public School. Constructed in 1978, the facility is described as being in good condition but "aging". The centre features a large "L" shaped meeting room that can be used as either a large, medium or small space. The combined gymnasium/auditorium has VCT Tile flooring and a ceiling height of 22 feet. There is a standard kitchen in the facility as well as office space, three storage areas, and changerooms with showers.

The outdoor amenities include a 25 metre swimming pool, a tennis court which has been converted for basketball use, as well as a paved parking area for 64 vehicles. It was also indicated that a rock climbing wall may be installed in the gymnasium in 2003.

Various facility improvements were identified including the need for more storage space and parking and the replacement of some maintenance systems. Enclosing the pool was also suggested for consideration.

It was noted that the Centre has experienced incidents of vandalism, in particular with regard to the pool (e.g., broken glass in pool, holes cut into fencing). The City has had to hire a security guard at the Centre for after hours patrol in the summer months.

The main users of the Woodman Park Community Centre include the School, a ball hockey group, indoor soccer, church groups, as well as a pre-school program which is very popular. Private rentals for weddings and "buck and does" account for many of the weekend rentals. Affiliated groups, which provide a community service, offer a number of programs including the Brantford Stamp Club, Brantford Numismatic Club, Brantford Lapidary Club, Grand River Sociable Radio Club and Brantford Aquarium Club.

### **(4) Eagle Place Community Centre**

Eagle Place Community Centre was opened in 1975. The Centre offers 3 meeting spaces: one that has a capacity of 20 persons (has kitchen facilities) and is located next to the auditorium, one that can accommodate 80 persons (has a kitchen), and the auditorium/gymnasium which holds 270 persons. The gymnasium has a tile floor and a ceiling height of 20-25 feet. The facility also has various storage areas, changerooms and washrooms. Outdoor amenities include a paved parking area for 80-100 vehicles as well as some basketball standards.

While the gymnasium space at the facility is well utilized, there is space available. The user groups include mens ball hockey, Parks and Recreation programs, badminton, seniors programs, children's drop-in programs, and community programs. The Public School Board is also a main user of the gymnasium during the day.

An 800 square foot ground floor addition for a seniors meeting room has been proposed but has not been developed to date. The renovation of this facility was to have included reorienting the entrance to face the street, a new lobby area as well as expanded office space for staff. At the present time, the seniors meet on the second floor, which is a physical barrier for some. The ground floor addition would address this concern and would also provide more community use space in the evenings.

The popular programs at the Centre include drop-in activities for girls and boys, adult badminton, land training by minor sports, birthday parties and other rentals. It was noted that programs are frequently cancelled due to a lack of interest. Staff have tried to be responsive to the community's requests but have had difficulty finding the right programs. Staff are also trying to offer programs during the day when space is available at the Centre.

#### **(5) T.B. Costain/S.C. Johnson Community Centre**

Opened in June 2002, the TB Costain/S.C. Johnson Community Centre is situated in a renovated public elementary school that was closed down 3-5 years ago. The S.C. Johnson Company donated \$500,000 to the City so that the facility could be purchased and redeveloped into a community facility. In return, S.C. Johnson uses the centre as a corporate training centre approximately once every two weeks. It was indicated that the Centre has filled a real void in the community which previously did not have any facilities.

The facility includes 4 meeting rooms of various sizes, office space, a gymnasium with a stage, a kitchen, a computer room and washrooms. The parking area can accommodate 15-18 vehicles. In addition to the Community Centre, there are 3 tenants including a church group (have 2 dedicated rooms), Junior Achievement ( 2 rooms), and a day care centre.

Initially, the community had not responded well to the City's program offerings at this facility. The main use is currently for rentals for birthday parties. A needs assessment of the surrounding community was undertaken which identified that the area is comprised of a mix of low income families as well as professional persons. Staff are trying to market to both groups. Program offerings include ball hockey for kids, literacy programs, computer programs for adults, drop-in programs, kids programs and craft programs.

#### **(6) The Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre**

The Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre is Brantford's only true multi-purpose community centre and includes 3 ice pads, an indoor pool, fitness centre, sports playing fields as well as the Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition. Any future community centre facility that is developed should be based on this model.

The arenas, indoor pool and sports field components have been addressed under the appropriate headings. This analysis focuses on the Centre's fitness facility as well as the Sports Hall of Recognition.

### Fitness Facility

Staff have advised the Gretzky fitness facility is facing significant competition from the recently opened Athletic Club. The privately operated Athletic Club offers the newest, top-of-the-line equipment as well as programs at a lower membership rate. Staff have advised that they cannot compete with the newer facility and that revenues at Gretzky have dropped. Also of note, a representative for Mohawk College advised they are considering developing a fitness centre in partnership with the OPP.

The fitness centre needs more studio space including a separate yoga studio (yoga is one of the most popular programs). Staffing was also noted as an issue as some fitness classes have been cancelled because of the lack of staff.

It is strongly recommended that the City monitor the financial viability of the fitness centre very closely and determine whether it should be maintained, enhanced, shut down or potentially relocated to the recommended new multi-purpose recreation facility.

### Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition

Opened in its permanent location in 1990, the Sports Hall of Recognition started as a temporary exhibit in the former cafeteria at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre in the mid-1980s. In 2002, renovations and exhibit design work were undertaken to accommodate an artifact conservation and registration program. The objective is to interpret the achievements of the Hall's inductees through the careful display of artifacts, memorabilia and photographs as part of a rotating exhibit system.

The future of the Sports Hall with respect to its expansion, exhibit improvements, visitor services and artifact conservation deserves careful consideration. At the present time, there are 65 inductees and on average, two inductees are added each year. There is currently space to provide exhibits for 28 members at any given time. As the number of inductees grows, it will become increasingly difficult to provide adequate exhibition time to all the inductees, even on a rotational basis. The current space limitations also presents difficulties in accommodating larger groups of visitors (e.g. tournaments, tour buses). One of the greatest barriers to the effective operation of the Hall from a museological perspective is its location at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre. Located directly adjacent to the main entrance, positioned between the pool and the arena both of which significantly impact the temperature and humidity levels, the facility constantly battles to maintain an "artifact friendly" environment.

The best solution for these constraints and conditions would be to review and consider relocating the Sports hall to a more appropriate site that could provide improved environmental controls, better access to the visiting public and greater avenues for exhibit design and display. Given the current budget and staffing levels, efforts to maintain the

facility at its current location and to improve its public profile will require creative and innovative solutions on the part of staff and the Sports Hall Executive Committee.

### **(7) The Brantford Seniors Centre**

Constructed in 1985, the Brantford Seniors Centre is located on the second floor of the Beckett Building (elevator access is provided). The facility includes 3 meeting/program rooms, a large auditorium with a stage (not suitable for sport activities), a cafeteria (serves between 30-35 lunches a day between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and also has a take out service), a library/lounge area that includes computers and books, and a lobby.

There are 27 seniors clubs at the centre that offer drop-in programs run by senior volunteers. A nominal fee is charged for these activities. Instructional programs requiring an instructor to be brought in are also available, but cost a bit more. Offered programs include weights, fitness clogging, Scrabble, water colour painting, ceramics, wood carving euchre, etc.

In addition, there are other seniors clubs that are offered at a neighbourhood level and which use the community centres (Woodman Park, Eagle Place) for their meetings/activities. These clubs tend to overlap with groups at the Seniors Centre. The Seniors Centre has a program and special events team (includes staff & seniors) as well as a full time programming person.

It was indicated that the Centre would like to have more computers and courses, but that they do not have the space to accommodate them. A space that can be locked up is needed because on some week nights and weekends the facility is rented out to other groups including weddings, buck and does and other community groups.

The annual membership is \$24 to \$33.50, which includes 4 hours of free parking with every visit to the Centre. There are approximately 1,000 members and generally, 200-300 people come through the facility each day.

#### **6.4.2.2 Facility Trends**

From a trends perspective, the traditional community centre is evolving into a multi-purpose facility. In addition to providing recreation and leisure programming opportunities, social services may also be available at a community centre.

Community centres are also being developed in combination with other facilities, such as libraries and provide a real focal point for the community. Brantford was a leader in the development of the Gretzky Centre, which is Brantford's one multi-purpose recreation facility. However the Gretzky Centre lacks the multi-purpose space which would allow it to fulfill its mandate as a community centre. There is little opportunity for additional uses to be accommodated at the Gretzky Centre.

As noted in Section 5 (Programming), one of the major issues affecting community centres is finding the right mix of programming.

### 6.4.2.3 Current & Future Demand

Existing community centre space appears to be well utilized, particularly the gymnasiums. The need for meeting space does not appear to be an issue as there are ample meeting room opportunities available to groups outside of the community centres. It was indicated that all of the centres are aging and need to be updated. Vandalism also appears to be somewhat of an issue.

The major gaps appear to be in the availability of drop-in space for youth, as well as the need for more gymnasium space (this is addressed in Section 6.4.4). There is also the matter of whether the City should continue to offer the fitness centre at the Gretzky Centre given the increased competition from the private sector.

With respect to future demand, as indicated in Section 3, the need for a new multi-purpose recreation facility (including other community services) to serve the south-west end of the City has been already identified in the Parks and Recreation Department's 2003-2007 capital budget submissions. A detailed feasibility study should be undertaken to determine facility components, etc. As previously noted, any new community centre that is developed should be multi-purpose in nature. Design considerations for the longer term should include the potential for an indoor pool component, an arena facility component as well as sports playing fields (e.g., soccer and baseball). Given the issue of access to school gymnasium space, consideration should also be given to providing a double or triple gymnasium. A youth drop-in space and skate park should also form part of the new multi-purpose recreation facility. Potential partnership arrangements for future community centre development should be considered, including an agreement with the County of Brant.

### 6.4.2.4 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City, as part of its overall assessment of its recreation facilities, consider:*

- 1. Providing more storage space, reviewing the current parking facilities, and replacing some of the maintenance systems at the Woodman Park Community Centre.**
- 2. Constructing the 800 square foot (74.3 square metre) ground floor addition proposed for Eagle Place Community Centre in order to provide an accessible space for seniors. Furthermore, the project would also include reorienting the entrance of the Centre to face the street, a new lobby area, and an expanded office space for staff. If the proposed renovations are implemented, consideration should be given to converting the current seniors area on the second floor into youth drop-in space.**
- 3. Converting existing space or adding additional space to the Brantford Seniors Centre to provide a computer training room.**

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake a Feasibility Study for the development of a new recreation facility in south-west Brantford. The facility should be multi-purpose in nature and include gymnasium space, youth drop-in space, and other community services (e.g., library, police etc.). As part of a longer-term strategy, the design of the centre should consider potential future uses, such as an arena facility and an indoor pool.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City monitor the financial viability of the fitness centre at the Gretzky Centre and determine whether it should be maintained, enhanced, shut down, or potentially relocated to the recommended new multi-purpose recreation facility proposed for south-west Brantford.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City maintain the Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition in its current location at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre for the short-term, and in the longer-term, review and consider relocating the Hall to a site that can provide improved environmental controls, better access to the visiting public and greater opportunities for exhibit design and display.*

### 6.4.3 Community Halls

#### 6.4.3.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City owns 4 community halls: Bellview Community Hall, Grandview Community Hall, Tranquillity Community Hall and the Bisons Alumni Club. These facilities are leased for a 3-5 year period, through a detailed agreement and are managed and maintained by outside groups including service clubs and a board of directors. In exchange, the groups have their own meeting space and manage the financial affairs of the facilities. The halls are also used a number of groups in the community including cubs and scouts, seniors groups and for private social events.

**Bellview Community Hall** - has a licensed main hall with a stage and full kitchen. This facility has a capacity of 150. The City is currently negotiating with the Kinsmen Club to take over the operation of the hall.

**Grandview Community Hall** - has a licensed main hall, a full kitchen and a bar area and has a capacity of 220. Grandview is leased by the Optimist Club of North Brantford.

**Tranquillity Community Hall** - has a licensed main hall, a full kitchen and a bar area. The hall has a capacity of 113. The Optimist Club of Brant-Lynn lease this facility from the City.

**Dufferin Tennis Club-** is managed by a Board of Directors comprised of representatives from both the tennis and the lawn bowling groups that make up the Club.

For the most part, the community halls play an indirect role in the City's delivery system. In this regard, the money which is raised by the service clubs that lease these facilities is poured back into the community through various programs including sponsorship of local sports teams and supporting local charities (CNIB, hearing impaired, etc.).

Only the Dufferin Club functions as a recreation facility offering both tennis (6 lit tennis courts) and lawn bowling (2 courts). Anyone from the public is able to join the club.

#### 6.4.3.2 Overall Assessment

Like the majority of Brantford's recreation facilities, the community halls are older facilities that will require financial expenditures in the future. The City's agreement with its service club tenants is that the City is responsible for major repairs. There is a need to consider the long-term future of these facilities, particularly relative to other recreation priorities in the City. At what point, for example, would the City choose not to undertake repairs to any one of these facilities? While these facilities are serving the community as a funding source for service clubs, they are not providing a significant role in the recreation delivery system. The current clubs should be engaged in any long-term planning exercise for these facilities.

#### 6.4.3.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake a cost/benefit analysis of maintaining the community halls as part of the municipal recreation inventory of facilities. The community halls should be included in the recommended general assessment of all the City's recreation facilities in order to gain a thorough understanding of the future costs of maintaining these facilities.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in undertaking any long-term planning exercise for the Community Halls, include the respective tenants/service clubs in the process.*

### 6.4.4 **Indoor Swimming Pool**

#### 6.4.4.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City's indoor pool is located at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre. The 65 metre (213 ft.) Olympic Size pool features 16 lanes and has bleacher seating for 800 spectators. The Olympic Diving Towers are 5 metres (16 ft.), 7.5 metres (24.6 ft.) and 10 metres (32.8 ft.) in height. There are also two spring boards with heights of 1 metre (3.3 ft.) and 3 metres (9.8 ft.). The pool area also features a 150 foot (45.7 m) water slide and a 40 foot (12m) hot pool. Brantford's pool is one of the premier facilities in Ontario and is in demand for provincial and national meets.

Staff and user groups noted that the pool is very well maintained. The single largest user group and tenant is the Brantford Aquatic Club. Storage is an issue for that group (see list of identified facility

improvements below). The Aquatics Club indicated that the Gretzky pool is excellent and that they have contributed \$40-\$50,000 worth of equipment including lane ropes and a scoreboard.

It was indicated that there are a lot of competing uses in the pool, particularly for the deep end. User fees have also been identified as an issue. In order to keep the service affordable, service cuts have occurred at the pool, including the cancellation of two evening public swim sessions as well as shortened weekend hours. These cuts did not, however, emerge as an issue in the household survey.

From a trends perspective, swimming is one of the most popular recreation activities for all ages, both nationwide and in Brantford. Based on the household survey results, swimming is the second most popular leisure activity (walking was number one). As previously noted, the City's swimming program is very successful and well attended. Staff have, however, indicated that a program audit should be undertaken in order to determine if there are ways of improving the City's aquatic programming.

Suggested facility improvements or upgrades include:

- additional storage and possibly additional meeting/office space;
- additional leisure pool components including water slides;
- additional parking (an issue during tournaments particularly); and
- additional seating capacity.

While an additional lap pool was identified as a desirable component, it was felt that the site would not easily accommodate such an addition.

The facility is aging, and in keeping with many of Brantford's facilities, the City needs to consider in its budget process the need for additional maintenance. Other identified issues are staffing (e.g., the difficulty of attracting and maintaining aquatics staff) and marketing resources. These issues are addressed in Section 4. Tournaments and competitions are also an issue. Staff have to balance the accommodation of outside groups and tournaments against the impact on City offered swimming programs.

Brantford's indoor pool is, as noted above, recognized provincially as a superior competitive venue. However, it does not include the leisure components that are a part of modern pool design (e.g., teaching steps, ramps, whirlpools and larger, more comfortable change rooms). Furthermore, the modern leisure pool is better able to meet the needs of a more active, elderly population and results in greater daytime usage of the facility. A leisure pool generally has a bigger capture area than the standard rectangular fitness pool because it appeals to a larger cross-section of the population and can physically accommodate more people.

Any future indoor pool development in Brantford should include leisure pool components. Presently, the existing pool serves as a competitive and teaching venue as well as a leisure pool, which results in compromises from both types of users, as noted above.

#### 6.4.4.2 Current & Future Demand

The key users of the Gretzky pool include the municipality (e.g., learn to swim and public swim) and a number of groups including the Brantford Aquatic Club, the Gatquatic Divers and the Brant Synchro Club. It should be noted that only the Brantford Aquatic Club provided input to this Master Plan.

The needs of pool users appear to be met and no waiting lists have been reported. The pool is heavily programmed and the City aquatics staff are multi-programming the pool (e.g., offering more than one program/group at a time) which is maximizing the use of the pool.

There is a ratio of 1 municipal indoor pool for every 84,417 Brantford residents. If the pools at YMCA-YWCA and at W. Ross Macdonald School are taken into account, the ratio of pools to population is 1 for every 28,255 persons. However, access to W. Ross Macdonald is limited.

The Survey of Recreational Facilities in Ontario<sup>11</sup> identifies a standard of 1 municipal indoor pool per 33,928 persons for municipalities with populations between 25,000 and 100,000. Provision standards for municipal indoor swimming pools can vary considerably, but generally range from one per 50,000 to 60,000 population in cities the size of Brantford and larger. The City of London, for example has just adopted a standard of 1:60,000 while the City's of Guelph is considering a standard of 1:50,000.

When approaching a standard of one facility per 60,000 population, there is often reliance on aquatic facilities from other public or semi-public providers. In Brantford, although there is only one municipal indoor pool, the City does have the YMCA pool and some (although limited) access to the W. Ross MacDonald School facility. In considering this supply of indoor pools and the current level of user satisfaction with the supply of indoor pool facilities, the current need for an additional indoor pool is difficult to justify. However, in order to meet longer-term indoor pool demands, as the City approaches a population in the range of 100,000 people (projected in the year 2016), a plan should be in place to provide Brantford with an additional indoor pool.

Facility partnerships should be considered by the City in developing a new indoor pool. For example, both the YMCA and the County of Brant have indicated a desire for the provision of a new indoor pool. In considering such partnerships, it is essential that issues around community access, user fees and impacts on existing facilities are addressed up-front.

Residents from the County of Brant currently utilize the Gretzky pool and the County has identified the need for an indoor pool. While no timing has been determined for constructing a pool facility, there may be an opportunity to undertake a joint venture. The YMCA-YWCA is also a potential partner.

It is strongly recommended that if an indoor pool is developed, it should form part of a multi-purpose recreation complex. Larger, high quality, multi-purpose facilities are the main trends in facility design. This type of facility provides for cross-programming opportunities allowing, for example, one family member to swim while other members take part in a fitness program. The

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and Ontario Recreation Facilities Association, 1996

multi-purpose facility addresses the "shortage of time issue", which is one of the major factors affecting participation in recreation and leisure activities. Consumers can maximize their time at a facility that has a full range of program opportunities for all household members, at one location. Furthermore, multi-purpose facilities allow for a variety of programming to meet the changing activities of different age groups, as well as changing leisure trends.

#### 6.4.4.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City of Brantford adopt a service standard of 1:50,000 as a benchmark for the provision of indoor aquatic facilities.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City consult with the YMCA-YWCA and the County of Brant to investigate the potential of preparing a joint needs and feasibility study for a new aquatic facility within the next five years.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, as part of its assessment of the short and long-term improvements required to its recreation facilities, address the issues of storage and access at the Gretzky Pool.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake an audit of its pool programs.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in reviewing its user fee policies and current grant process, undertake a review of its pool rental rates.*

#### 6.4.5 **Gymnasium Facilities** (volleyball, gymnastics, badminton, basketball, dry land training)

##### 6.4.5.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City's inventory of municipal gymnasium facilities includes eight gymnasiums:

- Branlyn C.C. (3 - triple gymnasium);
- Resurrection C.C. (2 - double gymnasium);
- Woodman C.C. and Eagle Place C.C. (1 each - combined gymnasium and auditorium; ceiling height 20 to 25 feet); and
- T.B. Costain/S.C. Johnson C.C. (1 - single gymnasium).

All six high schools provide gymnasium space; an assessment of the quality of these facilities was within the scope of the Master Plan. Reportedly, the facilities at St. John's College and Assumption College are considered to be superior facilities. All three public high schools have triple gymnasiums. Elementary schools also provide multi-purpose gymnasium space. Detailed information about the booking and scheduling of high school and elementary gymnasium space was not available for this Master Plan. The Separate School Board public bookings are handled by individual principals and the Grand Erie District School Board provided an accounting of the number of permits issued last year (170), however, this data does not provide an accounting of gymnasium space usage.

Mohawk College has a triple gymnasium which accommodates a full size basketball court, two half courts, a volleyball court, 4 badminton courts, 1 indoor soccer court as well as seating. Mohawk's facility is a favoured tournament venue and is also used for interscholastic finals. Mohawk College accommodates their own varsity programs as a first priority and then City championships. User groups include Brantford Briers (basketball), CYO Basketball, and indoor soccer. The facility is booked about 85% of the time with occasional weekend, Friday evening and Sunday openings.

The YMCA-YWCA has a small gymnasium space and the Boys and Girls Club has a double gymnasium.

A private organization, Brantford Gymnastics Academy offers a quality gymnastics program which is producing elite level athletes who are competing nationally. This organization has in the past sought the assistance of the City in finding a new venue. The Club currently rents space at a private facility (Park Racquets). The Club runs tournaments and would like to build their own facility, but have had some difficulty finding a suitable location.

Based on interviews with groups, the City does not have, at this time, a suitable badminton venue to support a thriving and very successful junior badminton club. This club has spawned the development of a successful badminton program at the high school level. There are reportedly 2,000 students playing badminton in the high schools, a level not matched anywhere in Canada according to Edith Hayman who is a Brantford resident with a national reputation as a coach and trainer. The desire on the part of the Badminton Club is for a specialized badminton facility with higher ceilings and coloured walls.

Trends indicate that gymnasium-based sports such as volleyball and basketball are growing in popularity. Basketball Ontario reports the popularity of basketball for younger ages, while adult volleyball is a growth sport in municipalities across Ontario. These trends are visible in Brantford as the City has been a strong basketball community for many years. According to Brantford Briers, however, growth in basketball has recently been curtailed by the high cost and availability of gymnasium space. Basketball programs have traditionally relied on school gymnasium space and, as noted in Section 4.6.1, the cost of booking high school gymnasium space has increased by 400% in recent years. Based on survey data collected in 2000 by the Tournament Capital Committee, there has been a dramatic shift in the usage of school facilities by Brantford Briers. In 2000, the group was booking upwards of 70 hours per week in school facilities. Today, they are relying on Mohawk and Branlyn Community Centre as their main venues (Lansdowne Public School and Tollgate Technical College are also booked).

Gymnasium space is at a premium in Brantford. In City run facilities, all of the gymnasiums are well used. The majority are operating at capacity with groups being turned away. Groups such as the Briers Basketball Club have been unable to offer participants as much practice time as they would like due to the shortage of affordable and available gymnasium space. Schools have been the traditional venue for many gymnasium-based sports across Ontario, however, in the face of rising costs and reduced funding, school boards have been increasing rental rates. The Briers have been approached by the YMCA-YWCA as a potential partner in their proposed facility. The Club has fundraised and has some funds available for facility development (approximately \$100,000).

In Brantford, the Separate School Board gymnasium facilities are available to affiliated groups such as CYO Basketball at favourable rates. The Board also permits groups such as Brownies and Scouts to use their facilities at no cost at this time. Public school facilities have undergone a significant rate increase in the past years and this high cost is having the effect of creating a shortage of affordable gymnasium space. From a cost or user fee perspective, cost was not identified as an issue for adult users, specifically volleyball.

How much space is actually available in the school gymnasiums? This is difficult to assess. According to the Brant County Secondary School Athletic Association representative, there has been a noticeable decline in public use of school gymnasium space in the evenings and on weekends. This issue is a difficult one and involves two elements, one being the amount of time that individual principals free up for the public as well as factors such as rental rates which may be having the effect of artificially reducing demand for school gymnasium facilities. Some groups raised concerns that Brantford schools are becoming less willing to open up their facilities to the public. Tournament bookings also impact gymnasium users and have a significant impact on regularly scheduled basketball programming.

#### 6.4.5.2 Current & Future Demand

Based on statistics provided by Brantford Briers, CYO Basketball, Brantford Junior Badminton Club, Brantford Co-ed Volleyball and Brantford Youth Volleyball (relied on 2000 survey results as group could not be contacted), there are upwards of 1,200 persons involved in gymnasium-based sports in Brantford (dry land training not accounted for). Provincial trends data shows continued popularity of gymnasium-based activities and the prospects of an older population more interested in fitness activities suggests that there will be continued demand for facilities to accommodate such activities as adult volleyball.

At this time, there is no evidence of a real shortage of facilities, although not all of the facilities offer all the design aspects desired by certain sports (e.g., Badminton). The issue is primarily one of access. However, unless the City is able to negotiate a more favourable agreement with the School Boards that results in improved access or considers supplementing the cost of booking school facilities, there will be a need to develop additional gymnasium facilities to address current and future needs. As the City's population continues to increase, additional gymnasium space should be considered, particularly in the south/south-west growth area.

#### 6.4.5.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That gymnasium space be recognized as a significant component of Brantford's recreation delivery system.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City address the issue of public access to school gymnasium facilities as a part of a general reassessment of the Joint Use Agreement. If improved access cannot be ensured, the City may be in a position of having to provide additional gymnasium facilities.*

**Recommendation:** *That multi-purpose gymnasium space be provided as a component of any future multi-purpose recreation facility; the City should entertain partnership agreements with user groups in this regard.*

**Recommendation:** *That any municipal gymnasium facility should be capable of meeting the needs of a broad range of gymnasium-based activities. Municipal facilities should primarily serve entry level rather than elite level athletes.*

## 6.5 OUTDOOR FACILITIES

### 6.5.1 Ball Diamonds

#### 6.5.1.1 Inventory & Analysis.

##### **(1) Softball/Slo-Pitch Diamonds**

According to the list of field bookings provided by City Staff, Brantford has a supply of 37 softball diamonds (this includes some school facilities). 8 of these diamonds are identified as "A" facilities, including three diamonds at Lions Park (only 1 is lit), two diamonds at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre, and three diamonds at Jaycee Sports Park. Table 6-3 identifies the softball diamonds which are currently being booked by the City.

The supply of softball diamonds is adequate to meet demand, however, maintenance and a shortage of quality fields have been identified as issues. As indicated in Table 6-1, lit facilities for the purposes of this assessment are deemed to be equivalent to two unlit diamonds due to the extended playing time that lights provide.

It should be noted that the input from adult slo-pitch groups was limited. Based on the input that was provided, the following facility concerns and needs were identified:

- two or more additional lit softball facilities are required (Gretzky is the only lit facility with multiple diamonds);
- a multi-diamond location with lights is required;
- permanent washroom facilities are required at Lions Park;
- improved outfield maintenance at Lions Park is required; the overall field quality is considered to be good;
- the Gretzky diamond(s) should have a dugout area to shelter players when it rains and drainage is an issue on site;
- grading of fields was generally identified as being poor;
- weekend lining for tournaments requires improvement;
- drainage of the outfield at Jaycee Park is an issue; the yellow diamond is considered to be in poor condition;
- need washroom facilities at parks that host all-day tournaments;
- unscheduled school use of fields is an issue as it often disrupts the lining of fields for evening use;
- the installation of outdoor rinks on outfields often damages the quality of the turf; and

- backstops are showing their age and in need of repair.

Adult groups – who are the main users of the softball diamonds (only 20% of softball players in the 2002 season were under the age of 16) – did not identify user fees to be an issue. The rating system of diamonds was, however, raised by some as an issue. “A” fields are considered to be higher quality diamonds and offer irrigation, lighting, and additional amenities. Jaycee Park only has one lit diamond, yet all the diamonds are rated as “A” facilities. Some groups (not limited to ball players) feel that the distinction between “A” and “B” rated facilities needs to be clarified and that the standard of “A” rated facilities should be considerably higher. Again, Jaycee Park was cited, particularly because drainage is poor, yet users pay a higher rate. In addition, Waterworks Park (1 softball diamond and 1 soccer pitch) is identified as having potential for upgrading to an “A” rating if lighting was provided.

There was a general consensus that Brantford’s ball diamonds are not living up to the “Tournament Capital” label. Tournaments are a big part of the adult slo-pitch program and some groups indicated that they would run more tournaments if higher quality facilities were available.

**Table 6-3  
Softball/Slo-Pitch Diamonds Currently Scheduled By The City**

Location / Park	Competitive		Practice
	Lit	Unlit	
Agnes Hodge (school)	-	1	-
Branlyn Red	-	1	-
Branlyn Blue	-	1	-
Cedarland Red (school))	-	1	-
Cedarland Blue (school)	-	1	-
Centennial	-	-	1
Conklin	-	1	-
Connaught Red	-	1	-
Connaught Blue	-	1	-
Devon Down	-	1	-
Dufferin	-	1	-
Grandwoodlands	-	1	-
Greenbrier	-	1	-
Gretzky - Red & Blue	2	-	-
Holmedale Blue	-	1	-
Jaycee Red, Blue & Yellow	1	2	-
Joseph Brant (school)	-	1	-
Lions Park - Red, Blue & Yellow	1	2	-
Lynden Hills	-	1	-
Orchard Park	-	-	1

**Table 6-3  
Softball/Slo-Pitch Diamonds Currently Scheduled By The City**

Location / Park	Competitive		Practice
	Lit	Unlit	
Pleasant Ridge	-	-	1
Prince Charles	-	1	-
Recreation	-	1	-
St. Patricks' (school)	-	-	1
St. Pius (school)	-	-	1
St. Thomas Moore (school)	-	1	-
Waterworks	-	1	-
Wilkes		1	
<b>TOTAL FACILITIES</b>	<b>4 (equivalent to 8)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>

Source: City of Brantford and Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

There is a need for consistency between the Parks Department's ball diamond inventory and the City's booking inventory (many fields are identified on one list, but not the other). Inventory accuracy has been an issue throughout this analysis as there are discrepancies between the City's various databases.

## **(2) Hardball/Baseball Diamonds**

There are 22 hardball diamonds, 4 of which (those at Cockshutt Park, 2 of which are lit) are rated as "A" facilities. With each lit diamond being equivalent to two unlit diamonds due to increased opportunities for play, the total supply of hardball diamonds in Brantford is considered to be 24.

While there appears to be a considerable oversupply of hardball diamonds, user groups still identify the need for additional quality facilities. Table 6-4 lists the hardball/baseball diamonds which are included on the City's booking schedule of available diamonds. A significant number do not appear to be booked at all, although they may be used informally for practices. It should also be noted that the City's inventory includes some school diamonds.

Cockshutt Park is generally viewed by user groups as a good facility, but groups did note a number of issues including the need for dugout, the lack of shade, and the need for additional full size diamond (only three of the four diamonds are regulation size).

Brantford Minor Baseball has entered into a partnership with the City to improve Brantford's baseball facilities. Recent improvements include upgrading the outfield at Cockshutt Park and the installation of home run fences and improved grass outfields at Bill Little Park.

User fees were not identified as an issue by baseball groups. The biggest concern for minor baseball and softball is the declining enrolment numbers and the shortage of volunteers.

6.5.1.2 Field Development

Municipalities are realizing the advantages of clustering like facilities. While the school/park template will continue to require both a soccer pitch and a ball diamond, the new preferred outdoor sports venue includes a clustering of facilities (e.g., 2 or more like facilities such as ball diamonds or soccer pitches). This approach provides greater opportunities for tournament play, more flexibility in programming and the ability to reduce maintenance costs.

**Table 6-4  
Hardball/Baseball Diamonds Currently Scheduled By The City**

Location		
	Lit	Unlit
Agnes Hodge (school)		1
Arnold Anderson Stadium (Red, Blue, Yellow)	2	2
Bill Little Park	-	1
Burnley	-	1
Fairview (school)	-	1
Hillier (school)	-	1
Holmedale Red	-	1
Iroquois Red	-	1
Iroquois Blue	-	1
Lynden Hills	-	1
Mayfair (Yellow Blue, Red)	-	3
Parsons	-	1
Princess Ann	-	1
Resurrection (school)	-	1
Roswell	-	1
Spring Gardens	-	1
Tollgate Tech (school)	-	1
TOTAL FACILITIES	-	1
<b>TOTAL FACILITIES</b>	<b>2 (equivalent to 4)</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: City of Brantford and Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

6.5.1.3 Current & Future Demand

**(1) Softball/Slo-Pitch Diamonds**

Softball/Slo-Pitch is extremely popular with adults in Brantford, but as previously noted it is much less popular among youth and children. Only 20% of the total number of players are under the age of 16 and Brantford Minor Softball is struggling with its enrolment (it lost 100 participants last year). Adult participation is high, but details on the need for additional diamonds is limited as few adult teams responded to the request for information.

Minor softball is struggling in Brantford as it is across the province. In the long term, this trend suggests that the supply of adult players may be reduced. For the short-term, however, adult softball/slo-pitch is a popular activity in Brantford and represents a significant aspect of Brantford’s Tournament Capital marketing.

Brantford is just meeting the current demand for softball facilities. A review of the softball schedule confirms that there is an adequate number of fields to meet demand for games and practices. However, the City is meeting that need with many facilities that are below the appropriate level of quality, particularly for tournament play. As Table 6-5 indicates, Brantford’s current provision standard is 1:77 players and, based on input from groups and a review of scheduling, this provision level is one which is generally meeting the needs of all groups. The 1:80 service standard is one that has been used in other jurisdictions (e.g., London, Mississauga, etc.).

The primary issue for the City of Brantford is whether the supply and upgrading of facilities for a primarily adult market should be a priority. The consensus of the groups interviewed is that there is a need for at least two more quality diamonds.

Table 6-5 indicates the demand for softball/slo-pitch diamonds based on a participant-based standard of 1 diamond per 80 active users. This methodology indicates that no new diamonds are required. However, additional “A” rated softball diamonds to meet the needs of user groups may be created either the development of new facilities or through the upgrading and or lighting of existing diamonds.

**Table 6-5  
Softball/Slo-Pitch Diamond Demand - City of Brantford\***

	Current	Projected Demand		
		2006	2011	2016
<b>Total Participants</b>	2834	2895	2950	2986
<b>Rate of Supply (based on 37 diamonds)</b>	1:77	1:78	1:80	1:81
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	1	0.82	0.1	-0.32

\* Does not include tournament demand.

Source: City of Brantford and Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

**(2) Hardball/Baseball Diamonds**

Brantford has a considerable oversupply of hardball diamonds. At a standard of 1:80 active participants, Brantford would need only 7.5 diamonds, resulting in a surplus of 16.5 diamonds. As was the case for softball, the number of high quality diamonds is limited. Only the diamonds at Cockshutt Park are considered to be “A” facilities, although improvements have been made to Bill Little Park. The groups using Cockshutt Park include two semi-professional teams: the Brantford Braves and the Brantford Red Sox.

Minor Baseball numbers continue to decline in keeping with province-wide trends. While no new hardball/baseball diamonds are recommended, improvements to field quality are recommended in order to provide appropriate facilities for current users.

Table 6-6 indicates the demand for hardball/baseball diamonds.

**Table 6-6  
Hardball/Baseball Diamond Demand - City of Brantford\***

	Current	Projected Demand		
		2006	2011	2016
<b>Total Participants</b>	602	607	606	606
<b>Rate of Supply (based on 24 diamonds)</b>	0.059028	0.0590278	0.0590278	0.0590278
<b>Surplus (Deficit) (based on standard of 1:80 players)</b>	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5

\* Does not include tournament demand.

Source: City of Brantford and Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

6.5.1.4 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City adopt a service standard of 1 diamond per 80 active participants for both softball/slo-pitch and hardball/baseball. Each lit diamond should be considered to be the equivalent to 2 unlit ball diamonds due to the increased usage potential of a lit facility.*

**Recommendation:** *That, where possible, future diamonds be clustered to enhance the scheduling of games and tournament play and to reduce maintenance costs.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake an assessment of all its ball diamonds and develop a program to systematically upgrade its facilities (including the development of additional lit facilities and irrigation) in order to increase the supply of “A” rated diamonds. The identification of appropriate fields for renovation and improvement should be done in consultation with user groups. Fields which are*

**identified as being unsuitable for play should be eliminated from the scheduling inventory.**

**Recommendation:** *That the City develop two additional "A" rated softball diamonds to its inventory through either the development of two new additional softball diamonds or through the upgrading and or lighting of existing diamonds.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City develop one additional full size hardball/baseball diamond to its inventory of "A" rated facilities through upgrading and improvements to existing facilities. The identification of a suitable field for upgrading should be done in consultation with user groups and staff, including parks maintenance staff.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in consultation with adult user groups, consider a voluntary field rental surcharge to cover (in full or in part) the capital upgrades associated with the diamond upgrade recommendations.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City include ball diamonds as an outdoor component of any new multi-purpose recreation facility, namely to eliminate existing problems with parking conflicts with adjacent users.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City reassess its definition and rating of ball diamonds and, in consultation with user groups and the Tournament Capital Committee, develop a new and consistent rating system.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in order to monitor field usage and assess the adequacy of supply, should make a practice of booking all fields (practice and game).*

**Recommendation:** *That the City develop a comprehensive inventory of its softball and hardball/baseball facilities that is consistent with the parks inventory and that identifies the appropriate rating of the field and whether the field is suitable for game play and/or practices.*

## **6.5.2 Soccer Pitches**

### **6.5.2.1 Inventory & Analysis**

There are 35 soccer pitches in Brantford that are currently being booked. Table 6-7 classifies these fields according to their size. The two soccer pitches at Lions Park are the City's only lit and "A" rated soccer facilities.

There are 11 organizations involved in delivering soccer programs to Brantford residents, the largest being Brantford Minor Soccer Association. Of the 2,665 soccer players (2002 season), 77% were involved in the Minor Soccer Program.

At the present time, the City does not book practice fields. Minor Soccer leaves practices up to the individual teams, often resulting in a doubling and tripling up of practices on a single field, which has a detrimental impact on field quality that is directly attributable to over use.

**Table 6-7  
Supply & Classification of Soccer Pitches in Brantford**

Location	Full Size Fields		Intermediate	Mini	Practice
	Lit*	Unlit			
Brier	-	-	-	2	-
Brooklyn	-	1	-	-	-
Cedarland	-	-	-	1	-
Centennial	-	-	-	-	1
D'Aubigny Creek	-	1	-	4	-
Devon Downs	-	-	1	-	-
Dufferin Park	-	-	-	-	1
George Campbell	-	-	-	3	-
Grand Woodlands	-	-	1	1	-
Greenbrier	-	-	1	-	-
John Wright Soccer Complex	-	4	-	-	-
Lions Park	2	-	1	-	-
Lynden Hills	-	-	-	-	1
Mohawk	-	1	-	-	-
Parsons Park	-	-	-	-	1
Resurrection	-	1	-	-	-
Silverbridge	-	-	-	-	1
Spring Gardens	-	-	1	-	-
Waterworks	-	1	-	-	-
Woodman	-	-	-	-	1
<b>TOTAL FACILITIES</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>

\* Lit facilities equivalent to 2 pitches.

Source: City of Brantford and Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

The greatest shortfall of game fields appears to be in the area of intermediate size pitches. Minor Soccer is allocating fields to groups which are not always a good match to the age group being

served. For example, the under 11's are playing at John Wright (which has full size fields) and at Brier Park (mini fields). Intermediate fields would better suit the needs of this age group.

Considerable work has been done to develop and improve the quality of the soccer pitches at John Wright Soccer Complex. These improvements have been undertaken by the City in partnership with Brantford Youth Soccer, who have in recent years reportedly invested about \$100,000 in field improvements. These fields are considered to be excellent (but are not "A" facilities) as they offer washrooms and are irrigated. However, because of their location on a flood plain, the development of a field house is apparently not feasible.

As a consequence of Ontario's hot dry summers, municipalities across the province are installing irrigation systems. At present, John Wright Soccer Complex and Lions Park facilities are irrigated. There should be a long range plan for irrigating all game quality soccer fields and irrigation should definitely be a feature in any new field development (see Section 7 - Parks and Open Space Maintenance). Irrigation is not, however, the only factor affecting field quality; the underlying soil condition is just as important.

Parking is an issue at many outdoor sports fields. Single fields in residential neighbourhoods pose a nuisance to adjacent residents as the fields were typically not developed with a parking plan in mind (see Section 7 - Parks and Open Space Classification).

Provincial trends data suggests a levelling of soccer demand. However, in Brantford, participation in Minor Soccer increased by 200 persons last year, with much of the growth in the 10-11 girls age bracket. From a facility perspective, the greatest demand is for intermediate size fields at this time. The majority of groups identified the need for additional soccer pitches as an issue in Brantford.

Brant County Recreational Soccer Incorporated, which offers a program for 3 to 6 year olds, uses the fields at George Campbell and D'Aubigny Creek. The group has indicated that they had a waiting list last year and cannot accommodate any additional children on these fields. It has been suggested that the larger field at D'Aubigny Creek should be converted into two mini fields. At both parks, parking is an issue and the conversion to two mini fields may exacerbate the parking problem. Field quality is not an issue at this site.

Lions Park is the designated field for senior soccer. Some user groups, however, still expressed a preference for their former facility at the Gretzky Centre, which is now being used primarily for football. Additional fields in the north end of the City were requested.

One way to improve the supply of soccer pitches is by adding lighting, however, the opportunities are limited. Flood plain restrictions impacts two locations (John Wright and D'Aubigny Creek). Furthermore, Minor Soccer specifically does not want to use lit fields due to the additional costs.

#### 6.5.2.2 Allocation

For the senior competitive division, timing is an issue; the groups would like to have earlier confirmation of their bookings. As the priority is given to minor soccer, the older competitive groups feel that there is a general lack of support for senior soccer (ages 18+) (see also Facility Allocation in Section 4).

### 6.5.2.3 User Fees

User fees are a big issue for some adult soccer users. Adult and senior users are reportedly paying almost double what their counterparts in Hamilton are paying. The rate quoted in Brantford was \$138 plus \$30 for the use of change facilities compared to a rate of \$78 in Hamilton. The fees need to be clarified with staff as they appear to be higher than the 2002 identified rate structure (e.g., \$38.00 at Lions Park, plus lighting at \$48.50). Nevertheless, user fees are identified as a challenge for some groups.

“B” rated facilities, which describe the majority of City soccer pitches, are booked a rate of \$25 per game. The rates are higher for the “A” rated facilities. The issue of user fees and program fees need to be addressed at the field user group meetings.

### 6.5.2.4 Current & Future Demand

Based on population projections, soccer demand is anticipated to level off in Brantford. The current growth forecast indicates that the City will not experience any decline in soccer pitch demand. This assessment does not, however, fully account for the continued growth in the popularity of soccer.

For many years a standard of 1:50 players has been considered the benchmark for measuring the adequacy of supply (typically based on a four day schedule). It is a benchmark and a more detailed soccer needs assessment would incorporate other methodologies (e.g., calculations relating to game play, practices by level of play, field size, etc.). Considering that Brantford’s standard of play is closer to a 6 day schedule than a 4 day schedule at this time, it is appropriate to look at a slightly higher standard of 1:60.

Using a standard of 1:60, the current supply is deficient by an estimated 8 fields, a portion of which will be mini fields. City staff have advised that they are generally able to meet the existing demand for games.

**Table 6-8  
Soccer Pitch Demand - City of Brantford\***

	Current	Projected Demand		
		2006	2011	2016
<b>Total Participants</b>	2565	2567	2553	2537
<b>Rate of Supply (based on 35 fields)</b>	1:73	1:73	1:73	1:72
<b>Surplus (Deficit) (based on a standard of 1:60)</b>	-7.8	-7.8	-7.6	-7.3

\* Does not include tournament demand.

Source: City of Brantford and Monteith Planning Consultants, 2003

At the present time, the City is only booking game fields and true demand should account for both game field and practice field usage, as well as tournament play. This poses somewhat of a problem for the City. If the City were to fully meet the demand for practice and game fields, it would result in greater costs for user groups which currently do not pay for practice fields.

One strategy to deal with shortfalls is to develop new fields. In light of the cost of developing new soccer fields, other strategies which can be employed are extending the schedule of play (moving away from soccer's traditional four day schedule). In London, for example, one soccer organization is planning to offer a weekend schedule for parents who prefer weekend games and practices. At the present time in Brantford there are some Friday bookings available. Generally, weekends are left for men's and women's soccer and tournament play. Another option is to upgrade existing fields that are not being used to full capacity at the present time.

Before developing any new fields, the City has to establish a satisfactory agreement with user groups in regard to fees. Without such an agreement, the City could find itself with a number of new facilities that user groups will not book because of the cost.

#### 6.5.2.5 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City adopt a service standard of 1 soccer pitch per 60 active participants. Each lit soccer pitch should be considered to be the equivalent to 2 unlit pitches due to the increased usage potential of a lit facility.*

**Recommendation:** *That, where possible, future soccer pitches should be clustered to enhance the scheduling of games and tournament play and to reduce maintenance costs.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City's classification system for its soccer pitch inventory distinguish between mini, intermediate, full, and practice fields.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in consultation with user groups, move towards a seven day schedule as a means of maximizing field use and dealing with the current shortfall of facilities.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in consultation with user groups and the Tournament Capital Committee and other potential partners such as the County of Brant, seek to improve the current supply of soccer fields by identifying opportunities within the City's existing inventory for field upgrades and by identifying suitable locations for multi-field development.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City continue to give priority to entry level soccer, particularly for children and youth.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City monitor participation levels and field usage (as a result of the implementation of the improved booking system) to assess longer-term soccer field needs.*

### 6.5.3 Football Fields

#### 6.5.3.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City of Brantford has three football fields: two at the Gretzky Centre (the Bisons Alumni Football Complex) and one at Jaycee Park.

##### **(1) Bisons Alumni Football Complex**

The complex includes two irrigated, lit fields, two field houses, one with dressing rooms and washrooms, a concession area, a track with press box, an electronic scoreboard, bleacher seating and parking.

##### **(2) Jaycee Sports Park**

Jaycee Sports Park has one irrigated football field, bleacher seating, a meeting room and three softball diamonds. This facility lacks lighting which makes its use problematic in the fall. Changerooms are also needed.

All three football fields are heavily used. The football season (junior program) generally runs from May to the end of August while the senior season runs from mid-July to mid-November. The need for additional football facilities has been identified by staff and user groups, specifically the Brantford and District Tackle Football Club.

#### 6.5.3.2 Overall Assessment

There is an insufficient number of fields to accommodate all the demands for practices. The Tackle Football Club shares use of the field with Flag Football. The fields are also used by the schools and unscheduled (early or pre-season) use has been identified as an issue at the Gretzky Centre. The Harlequin Rugby Club facilities are also used by high school football. The Rugby Club has indicated that they believe there is a need for an additional football field.

As previously noted, Jaycee Park lacks lighting, which is an important element for football in the Fall season. The installation of lighting would allow for extended hours of play.

There are football fields associated with some of the high schools, however, a comprehensive database of school facilities was not available to the Consultants for this Study. When asked about high school facilities, user groups indicated that only some of the high school fields are lit and lack convenient field houses.

### 6.5.3.3 Current & Future Demand

At the present time, there are 200 players in the Brantford Youth Flag Football League and 200 players in the Brant and District Football Club (the Tournament Capital inventory identifies a Senior Men's Flag Football League, however, participant information was not available). While youth flag football numbers have been declining, the tackle football club is growing. Province-wide, participation in tackle football is growing. Overall, it appears that the current needs of the flag football league are being met, while those of the tackle league are not.

Based on input from the groups, the greatest demand is for practice fields. It has been suggested that the City could use two additional football fields. However, prior to the City investing in the development of any additional football fields, the potential of utilizing high school fields should be investigated. As an initial step, the City should seek to identify opportunities for practice fields within the school inventory.

### 6.5.3.4 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in collaboration with both School Boards, identify high school football fields which could be utilized as practice fields for community groups.*

## 6.5.4 Specialized Facilities

There are a number of sporting and recreation activities that appeal to a narrower spectrum of the population. As desirable and beneficial as these activities are, there are limitations regarding the ability and/or responsibility of the City of Brantford to supply such groups with facilities, specifically lawn bowling, curling, cricket, and rugby. This is not to say that these activities are not a significant and important part of Brantford's recreation system, however, as reiterated throughout this Plan, money for upgrading and renovating is a scarce resource. There is tremendous competition for capital dollars and the City must address needs in a prioritized, fiscally responsible manner.

It should be noted that curling has not been included in this analysis. At the present time, curling is a recreational opportunity offered by the private sector and there has been no indication in the consultation process to date that this arrangement should be altered in Brantford.

**Recommendation:** *That the City not be obliged to finance, construct, operate or maintain any facility that does not directly serve its main target markets, does not constitute a core service or does not form part of an identified sports tourism initiative.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, as a general principle, shall devote its resources to activities and programs which serve the largest number of persons.*

(1) Rugby

The Harlequin Rugby Club was one of the first rugby clubs established in Canada. At the present time there is one women's team and one men's team. The Club hosts a tournament and noted that rugby is growing at the high school level. No improvements or further City involvement in rugby is recommended at this time.

(2) Cricket

The Brantford Cricket Club is another organization with a long history in Brantford. The Club is self sustaining and has its own clubhouse and cricket pitch located in Cockshutt Park. The cricket pitch is in good condition. There is one team consisting of mostly adults and the club is interested in organizing a youth league (in the development stages).

The major issue for the Cricket Club is the conflict with the surrounding ball diamonds. It is their perception that the needs of minor baseball are given priority over their schedule and have had some difficulties in the past trying to schedule tournaments as a result. Generally, however, they feel that the allocation system works well.

While the priority given to minor baseball is unfortunate from the perspective of the Cricket Club, this is in fact a fairly standard practice in most municipalities. Priority at municipal facilities is generally given to youth and children over adults. The recommendations of this Master Plan support this notion as well.

**Recommendation:** *That the City continue to work with the user groups at Cockshutt Park to ensure that the Brantford Cricket Club continues to have a viable schedule of games and some tournament play.*

(3) Lawn Bowling

The Dufferin Tennis Club is the home of the City's two lawn bowling courts. The Club is a private facility operating on City owned property. It has been indicated that the Club is fairly self sufficient.

Lawn bowling has traditionally been considered to be a specialized facility, but aging trends suggest that there is the potential for growth of this sport in the future. It remains to be seen, however, if aging baby boomers will be drawn to lawn bowling. As lawn bowling largely caters to an identified "target population" (that being seniors), the City should continue to support this activity.

**Recommendation:** *That the City monitor participation in lawn bowling.*

## 6.5.5 Skate Parks

### 6.5.5.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City of Brantford has a mobile skate park facility and one half pipe which is located in Jaycee Park. The need for a permanent skate park facility has been identified as a priority for youth. Through the household survey, a skateboard park was the third most frequently requested facility (tied with community centre).

Skate parks, which are often referred to as skateboard or stunt parks, offer paved areas featuring ramps, quarter pipes, rails and other structures designed specifically for rollerblading, skateboarding and/or freestyle BMX biking.

Skateboarding is one of the fastest growing sports in Canada and the demand for skate parks is high. These facilities appeal to older youth, a demographic that has traditionally been challenging to serve. The primary market for skateboarding is males, ages 10 to 19.

Skateboarding needs to be recognized within Brantford's parks and recreation system. Both skateboarding and rollerblading are increasingly popular activities and are no longer considered to be fads. These activities, however, frequently occur in public plazas or on private lands, resulting in conflicts with other activities. In response, many municipalities and volunteer organizations have developed skate parks to address these conflicts and to provide recreation opportunities for children and youth.

While the notion of a mobile skate park has merit, in practice, the mobile facility in Brantford has not been successful in attracting many youth. Such a facility tends to be most useful as a test market for a permanent facility.

Public skate parks should be centrally located, close to other recreation activities and should be highly visible from the street. Public amenities such as telephones, water fountains, and washrooms should also be available. Furthermore skate parks should be highly accessible to non-drivers, preferably along a bus route, although bike racks should be standard features. The preferred location for a skate park is definitely within an existing park or recreation area.

Smaller introductory skate facilities should be incorporated into the park design in the City's newly developing areas and existing community level parks that can serve a larger area.

With a relatively new facility such as a skate park, service standards are still evolving. The City of London recently adopted a service standard of 1 skate park facility per 5,000 youth (ages 10-19). The application of this standard in Brantford would result in the need for 2.5 skate park facilities. This makes some practical sense in Brantford. One facility should be provided centrally and one should be developed in the south-west end of the City (which is the growth area). Skateboarding continued to grow in popularity and the development of skate parks may trigger increased demand for the facilities. As such, this may be a conservative estimate of the demand.

It was noted that the Lions Club has recognized the need for skate park facilities and has expressed an interest in becoming involved as a potential partner. As is the case for all facility recommendations, the City needs to continually monitor participation and facility usage levels.

### 6.5.5.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City adopt a provision standard of one skate park per 5,000 youth, ages 10-19.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City develop one major skate park facility in a central location. Youth should be consulted in determining the location of all skate parks, as well as their components/amenities.*

**Recommendation:** *That a second skate park be considered a potential component of any new recreation facility. The recommended new multi-purpose for the south-west represents a potential location.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City incorporate introductory skate apparatuses as play features in neighbourhood and community parks as part of any park development or redevelopment project.*

## 6.5.6 Play Structures

### 6.5.6.1 Inventory & Analysis

At the present time, the City has 62 play structure locations (including the two accessible playgrounds). Over the past decade, new playground safety requirements have resulted in municipalities and schools replacing certain play apparatuses and installing additional safety measures on others. The City of Brantford undertook an audit of its playground equipment in 2001. As a result of the audit, the Charles Ward Park play structure was removed and replaced. In 2003, the play structure in Wood Street Park will be removed and replaced.

More important than the absolute supply of play structures is the distribution of play equipment. They should be located within a safe walking distance of the home of every child in Brantford. In order to implement this philosophy, many municipalities try to provide parkland and playground equipment within an 800 metre (1500 foot) radius of all residential areas, without crossing any major barriers. The 800 metre radius is a benchmark and represents a safe distance for younger children to walk. Realistically, the application of this standard may find some neighbourhoods deficient, however, it is a very useful measure for parks planning in new areas. This is a measurement which has been used as a guideline for many years by the City of London and has in fact been adopted in their new Master Plan.

A measure of the adequacy of the total supply (not distribution) of play equipment is the application of a population-based standard. Brantford current has a supply of 1 play structure per 1,394 persons. As a broad guideline in parks planning, a standard of 1:1,500 persons is often used, which indicates that the City's supply of play structures is generally sufficient. The more effective measurement of play structure needs, however, is the physical distribution, particularly in relation to populations of children 0 to 9.

#### 6.5.6.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City adopt a service standard requiring that parkland and playground equipment be located within an 800 metre radius of every residential neighbourhood. This radius should not cross major barriers such as railways, rivers or major roadways. This standard will provide for an adequate and equitable distribution of parkland and playground equipment.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake an assessment of play structures in relation to the recommended service standard and the playground audit in order to identify areas in need of facilities or improvements, recognizing that availability of parkland is a pre-requisite for any new facility development.*

#### 6.5.7 Outdoor Ice Rinks

##### 6.5.7.1 Inventory & Analysis

Brantford has had an effective partnership with the Neighbourhood Associations for many years, which has resulted in an excellent distribution of outdoor ice rinks throughout the City. Last year there were 27 outdoor rinks. Weather permitting, this is an excellent program. However, milder winters (the winter of 2003 being an exception!) are having an impact on the program; poor ice quality due to mild temperatures results in reduced attendance.

There have been suggestions that Brantford should consider the development of an artificial outdoor ice surface. Such features are fairly commonplace in Ontario and are typically located in downtown areas where there is a desire to attract people. To the extent that it remains feasible, Brantford should continue to support the outdoor ice rink program. However, in the longer term, the City should consider the development of at least one artificial outdoor ice surface.

##### 6.5.7.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City continue to support the neighbourhood outdoor ice rink program as long as it remains viable.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City consider the development of an artificial ice surface as part of the proposed new downtown Civic Square.*

## 6.5.8 Tennis Courts

### 6.5.8.1 Inventory & Analysis

Brantford currently has 11 public tennis courts at the following locations:

- 6 lit courts at the Dufferin Tennis Club, which is operated out of a City-owned facility; this facility is used for most tournaments and also offers a tennis camp program; the courts are available to the public;
- 3 lit courts at Lions Park; and
- 2 unlit courts at the Gretzky Centre.

Tennis is not considered to be a growth sport. Only 4.6% of household survey respondents indicated that they had played tennis in the past year. Due to its declining popularity, many municipalities are opting to convert tennis courts to basketball and/or multi-purpose pads that can also accommodate street hockey or skateboarding activities. This is in keeping with the trend in Brantford. Provincial trends, however, anticipate that participation in tennis will remain stable in the coming years.

Tennis is considered to be an unstructured activity that typically takes place at the neighbourhood level (e.g., players walk to the local courts).

### 6.5.8.2 Current & Future Demand

Only 1% of the household survey respondents (those who indicated that the City needs new facilities), suggested that more tennis facilities are needed. This is evidence that the current provision level in Brantford (1:7,856 population) is one that is generally meeting demand. In 1996, the standard of supply for Ontario municipalities with populations between 25,000 and 100,000 was 1 court (lit or unlit) per 3,180 persons, however, this provision level relates to an earlier period of time when tennis was a more popular sport. Furthermore, each of Brantford's tennis courts are lit, thereby creating increased opportunities for evening play.

Although the need for additional tennis courts has not been identified at this time, it is recommended that the City monitor the need for future tennis facilities. Furthermore, as noted in the analysis for multi-purpose pads, where a court is identified for upgrading, the future use thereof (which may or may not include tennis courts) should be determined in consultation with the neighbourhood associations.

### 6.5.8.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City maintain the existing supply of tennis courts in order to provide reasonable access to tennis opportunities.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City monitor the need for future tennis facilities with the intent of ensuring access to tennis facilities in newly developing areas.*

## 6.5.9 Basketball and Multi-purpose Pads

### 6.5.9.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City's inventory identifies 20 to 22 multi-purpose pads of varying sizes. Many of these multi-purpose pads are former tennis courts. Field assessment by the Consultants identified some pads with markings but no backboard or hoop and others with backboards/hoops.

Staff indicated that there are a number (not specified) of multi purpose pads that are 20-25 years old. The pads are cracked and heaving and the fence posts are rusting out at the base. It was estimated that the vast majority of these pads are used informally. It has been City practice, that if the facility is situated at the right location (e.g., ball won't roll out onto the street), to replace them without the fencing.

Trend research confirms that basketball is growing in popularity. Outdoor basketball facilities (typically a half court) are now standard features in municipal parks. Multi-purpose pads provide a venue for basketball, hockey or tennis.

### 6.5.9.2 Current and Future Demand

The population base for basketball is the 10 to 19 age bracket. In Brantford the current standard of supply is in the range of 1:600 youth 10 to 19. There is no broad provincial data base to gauge the appropriateness of this standard because the growth in the popularity of basketball has been a fairly recent phenomena. As a point of comparison, the City of London has recently adopted a standard of 1;750 youth 10 to 19 for outdoor basketball courts. By that measure, the City's current 22 courts (standard of 1:600) would be well within acceptable limits. Public input to date has not identified a need for additional outdoor basketball/multi-purpose pads, nor was this an issue for the "Youth Speak Out" focus group.

### 6.5.9.3 Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City seek to maintain its current provision standard of one multi-purpose pad per 600 youth, ages 10-19.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City undertake an assessment of all multi-purpose pads and upgrade as appropriate, ensuring that, as a minimum, each pad offers a half court basketball facility.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City, in upgrading any multi-purpose pad, consult with the neighbourhood associations regarding the future use of the pad including basketball and/or tennis.*

## 6.5.10 Outdoor Aquatic Facilities: Splash Pads, Outdoor Pools and Earl Haig Family Fun Park

### (1) Splash Pads

#### (a) Inventory & Analysis

In keeping with provincial and national trends, wading pools are being replaced with splash pads in Brantford. Currently, the City has two splash pads: an older facility in Mohawk Park and a new facility in Bridle Path Park. Staff have indicated that the Mohawk splash pad is in need of upgrading and renovation. One standard wading pool is provided at the Earl Haig Family Fun Park.

Splash pads are “people gatherers” that are appropriate in downtown locations and in parks that are garner heavy use. Placing a splash pad on a bike or pathway linkage can be effective as the pads then serve a slightly broader age range. Older children or youth may be attracted to such a facility in addition to younger children who are accompanied by parents.

#### (b) Current & Future Demand

A splash pad for every 3,000 children between the ages of 0 and 10 is recommended. If a splash pad with multiple features is developed, this standard should be modified to reflect this. Brantford's existing standard of supply is 1 splash pad to every 6,000 children (ages 0 to 10). By applying this standard to Brantford, the City would need 2 additional splash pads.

Looking to the future, the south-west quadrant of the City will attract younger families and should be considered as a future splash pad location.

#### (c) Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City adopt a service standard of 1 moderately scaled splash pad for every 3,000 children between the ages of 0 to 10. The service area for a splash pad should not cross any major arterial roads.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City upgrade the splash pad in Mohawk Park.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City develop two additional splash pads. South-west Brantford should be considered as a location for a future splash pad. When the Woodman Park Pool reaches the end of its life span, it should be considered as a potential location for a splash pad.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City engage the community in designing and fundraising for the development of any new splash pad facility.*

(2) Outdoor Pools

(a) Inventory & Analysis

Brantford has two outdoor pools, one adjacent to the Woodman Park Community Centre and the other in the Earl Haig Family Fun Park. There is also an outdoor pool in the Brant Conservation Area resulting in a supply of three outdoor pools to serve the City.

It has been suggested that the Woodman Park Pool be enclosed. Such a suggestion should be assessed as part of the City's overall needs for an additional aquatic facility.

The short season, susceptibility to changing weather and the ability to build "summer patios" into the design of newer indoor pools, reduces the desirability of building any new outdoor pools. Nevertheless, outdoor pools are recognized as an additional recreation opportunity and a medium for swim lessons as well as fun. As outdoor pools reach the end of their life span, they should not be replaced.

(b) Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City maintain Woodman Park pool as long as it is economically feasible. When the pool reaches the end of its life span, consideration should be given to replacing it with a splash pad.*

(3) Earl Haig Family Fun Park

(a) Inventory & Analysis

Earl Haig Family Fun Park is a multi-feature facility consisting of a leisure pool, water slide, lazy river, miniature golf, batting cages, beach volleyball, playground, wading pool and a go-kart track.

The City took over this facility in 1996 and it has operated with a small annual operating deficit since that time. In 2001, the recommendations contained in a market research study concluded that the City should continue to operate the facility. With some additional marketing and some changes to the facilities (additional water play features, eliminating some of the features such as the batting cages), it was felt that the facility could operate at a profit.

This Park has not been a focus of the Master Plan. There are some issues relative to the facility which should be addressed, including local access and the priority that should be assigned to this facility relative to other aspects of the recreation delivery system. Unlike the majority of Brantford's recreational facilities, this facility is intended to serve a regional

market and is a tourist attraction, rather than a local recreational facility. If the facility is financially and operationally viable for the City (as is suggested once the required changes are made), the continued operation of the facility (at least in the short-term) is a non-issue. However, should the facility become a financial burden on the City, the municipality may wish to reassess its role as facility operator and owner.

From a recreational perspective, this facility would rate fairly low on the priority scale relative to other recreational needs. However, if it can be operated profitably it can perform a role that is similar to that of golf – serving to subsidize the cost of other recreational facilities in the system that traditionally operate at a deficit (such as aquatics, which have very high operating costs).

In regard to local access, the market research study suggested a favourable season pass system for local residents. There have been suggestions that the current rate system is still too high for local residents. This is an issue which should be explored more fully with the affected neighbourhood associations.

(b) Recommendations

**Recommendation:** *That the City continue to implement the recommendations of the Earl Haig Family Fun Park Market Research Study. Should the implementation not result in a favourable profit situation for the facility, the City should reassess its involvement as owner and operator.*

**Recommendation:** *That the City review the current rate structure of the Earl Haig Family Fun Park for local residents to determine if any changes can be made to improve access while not significantly interfering with the profit margin of the facility.*

## 6.5.11 Cemeteries

### 6.5.11.1 Inventory & Analysis

The City of Brantford's inventory of parks and recreation inventory includes 3 cemetery facilities as follows:

- **Greenwood Cemetery** - This old cemetery covers an area of approximately 8 hectares ( 20 acres). There is no additional land available at Greenwood. Staff have advised that there only 6-10 interments a year at this facility.
- **Mount Hope Cemetery** - Mount Hope has an area of 18 hectares (45 acres) and has a few plots for sale.

- **Oakhill Cemetery** - Opened in 1993, Oakhill is City's the newest cemetery. The total site area is 20 hectares (50 acres) of which 6 hectares (15 acres) have been developed. This facility is considered to be adequate to meet the City's future needs.

There is a fourth cemetery in Brantford, Tranquillity Cemetery, but it is inactive (i.e., not accepting any new internments).

Staff advised that one additional staff person is needed to maintain the City's cemetery facilities. This message is consistent with that heard from other departments/divisions and has been addressed in Section 4.

It was also noted that a portion of the City's bike trail traverses Oakhill Cemetery. Having people travelling through the cemetery is considered to be a good idea as it serves to reduce the opportunities for vandalism.

#### 6.5.11.2 Recommendation

**Recommendation:** *That the City, where possible, continue to integrate its trails and pathway system and its passive recreation system into its cemetery lands.*

### 6.5.12 Other Facilities

#### (1) Mohawk Park Pavilion

Originally built during the 1950's, this popular facility burnt down and was replaced with the current structure. The pavilion includes an auditorium with a stage that has a capacity of 200 persons, a separate bar, a kitchen area and concession (which is leased), washrooms as well as a licensed outdoor patio that faces lakeside. The facility is not air conditioned. During March through October, the facility is heavily used for rentals including weddings, buck and does as well as family reunions. No changes to the pavilion are recommended at this time.

#### (2) Bell Homestead National Historic Site

The Bell Homestead museum is a tribute to the accomplishments of Alexander Graham Bell. There are two main buildings on the property including Henderson Home and Melville House, which were restored in 1995 at a cost of \$350,000. Staff advised that there is a need to renovate the carriage house, which is estimated at \$50,000 to \$60,000. Staff has also requested \$150,000 in funding for upgrades to the public washrooms and the carriage barn.

The facility also features a café. The picturesque grounds and gardens provide a popular location for wedding photos. A number of special events are scheduled at the Homestead throughout the year.

One of the issues for this facility is the lack of funds for promotion and marketing, which staff feel is directly related to the level of attendance at the facility. It was noted that Bell Homestead's annual marketing and promotions budget is \$4,800.00. This issue has been addressed in Section 4.

**Recommendation:** *That the City, as part of its assessment of facilities, consider improvements to the Bell Homestead National Historic Site.*

(3) Operations Yard

Staff have advised that there is a need for an additional operations yard to store maintenance equipment. Given the growth that Brantford has experienced and will continue to undergo, this idea has merit. Staff currently spend a significant amount of time shuffling equipment about. Both time and cost savings may be realized if an additional maintenance works yard is developed.

**Recommendation:** *That the City consider establishing an additional storage area for off-season storage of maintenance equipment and to serve as a seasonal satellite yard.*