The Municipal Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie

BY-LAW NO. 199-06

BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT THE FORT ERIE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie approved the preparation of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan as part of the 2005 capital budget, and

WHEREAS By-law No. 139-05 was passed by the Municipal Council of the Town of Fort Erie to authorize the entry into an agreement with The GSP Group Inc. for the preparation of the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan, and

WHEREAS the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan will ensure the provision of a balance of recreation, passive, heritage and environmental parks and open space facilities to meet the needs of the community, and

WHEREAS Report No. CDS-098-06 was approved at the Council-in-Committee meeting held November 6, 2006, authorizing interalia, the adoption of the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan as a planning tool for improvements to, and the future development of Town parks and open space resources, and

WHEREAS it is deemed desirable to adopt, in principle, the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan;

NOW THEREFORE the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie hereby enacts as follows:

1. THAT the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan dated October 2006 annexed hereto as Schedule “A” to this by-law be and it is hereby adopted, in principle, as a planning tool for improvements to, and the future development of Town parks and open space resources.


________________________________________
MAYOR

________________________________________
CLERK

I, Carolyn J. Kett, the Clerk of the Corporation of the Town of Fort Erie hereby certify the foregoing to be a true certified copy of By-law No. 199-06 of the said Town. Given under my hand and the seal of the said Corporation this day of , 2 .
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Acknowledgements

This Master Plan was developed with significant input and direction from the community, through a random telephone survey of over 300 residents, stakeholders meetings with approximately 36 community groups and agencies, and two public open houses. We wish to thank all who contributed their time, energy, thoughts and ideas to this project and the advancement of Fort Erie.

- Adult Slow Pitch League
- Community Living Fort Erie
- Bert Miller Nature Club
- Crystal Beach Improvement Area
- District School Board of Niagara
- Early Childhood Development Centre
- Fort Erie Arts Council
- Fort Erie Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Fort Erie Conservation Club - Women’s Auxiliary
- Fort Erie Friendship Trail Citizen Advisory Committee
- Fort Erie Horticultural Club
- Fort Erie Minor Football
- Fort Erie Museum Services
- Fort Erie Multi-Cultural Center
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
- Fort Erie Optimist Club/Opti-Mrs. Club
- Fort Erie Recreational Mixed Slow Pitch League
- Fort Erie Senior Citizen Advisory Committee
- Fraternal Order of Eagles & Ladies Auxiliary
- Friends of Crystal Beach
- Friends of Fort Erie Creeks
- Gilmour Lodge
- Greater Fort Erie Youth Soccer Club
- Greater Fort Erie Minor Ball Association
- Lions Club of Fort Erie
- Maple Park Lodge
- Niagara District Catholic School Board
- Niagara Parks Commission
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Niagara Regional Police
- Ontario March of Dimes
- Ontario Shorewalk Association
- Ridgeway BIA
- Thunder Bay Residents Association
- Top of the Ridge Daycare
- YMCA

We would also like to thank the members of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan Ad-hoc Committee who oversaw the project:

- Mayor Wayne Redekop
- Councillor Ann Marie Noyes
- Rino Mostacci, Director of Community Planning and Development
- Doug Campbell, Operations Manager
- Brian Desrosier, Manager of Facilities and Cemeteries
- Signe Hansen, Manager of Parks and Open Space Development
- Deanna Bryant, Community Health and Wellness Coordinator

Finally, thanks to all community members who attended and participated in the public open houses and telephone survey. Input from all sources was instrumental in developing the direction of the plan and its recommendations.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2005, the Town of Fort Erie launched the development of a comprehensive Parks and Open Space Master Plan, which provides for the systematic planning of all parks and open space resources relative to community need and demand. GSP Group Inc., in association with F.J. Galloway & Associates and Insights Inc. were retained by the Town to assist with the preparation of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

The scope of the Master plan involves both active and passive park and open space venues across the community. The primary focus is on developed and undeveloped parkland, sports parks, open space and natural areas, recreation trails, outdoor heritage venues, beaches, public waterfronts and urban beautification lands and related sites. The Plan will guide parks and open space development over the next ten to fifteen years and provide recommendations on the creation of a balance of active, passive, heritage and environmental open spaces, within a parks and open space hierarchy and associated development standards.

The Master Plan was developed in two documents:

- Background Analysis Report
- Parks and Open Space Master Plan

The first phase of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan involved a comprehensive research program of evolving recreation trends, Fort Erie’s demographics and growth trends, and community need and expectations. The inputs, analyses and results of this assessment are available under a separate cover entitled Background Analysis Report. The research phase involved the following key activities:

- A population profile and projections review, a community development profile and related community development perspectives;
- Current venue participation profiles and utilization considerations;
- Review of relevant planning, policy and related strategic documents of both the Town and the Region;
- A 300 unit random selection survey of Fort Erie household representatives focusing on participation patterns, future perspectives, awareness and satisfaction ratings and other inputs for parks and open spaces;
- Community consultation and interviews with thirty-six stakeholder groups, and public meetings involving over 100 community and organized group representatives soliciting their input on the strengths and weaknesses of the parks and open space venues and services available, the services delivery model, future visioning and needs;
- A financial review of operating costs and the Town’s capital forecast for parks and open spaces;
- A parks and open space inventory;
- A trends analysis related to parks and open space utilization, development and delivery.

The recommendations with the Parks and Open Space Master Plan have been developed on three levels, moving from a strategic foundation through to specific park and open space initiatives:

Level 1 – Plan Foundation - provides the philosophical foundation for the Master Plan, developing the benefits of providing parks and open spaces, integration with the Town’s Vision and Master Plan, Principles and Goals.

Level 2 – Parks and Open Space Policies and Delivery Strategies - focuses on establishing the policy framework for the development, delivery and evaluation of parks and open spaces, as well as the variable delivery approaches that could be utilized and participated in by the Town of Fort Erie.
Level 3 – Specific Parks and Open Space Initiatives - identifies specific park and open space actions, investments and approaches that are proposed to be undertaken by the Town of Fort Erie over the next ten to twenty years, including the Master Plan's proposed implementation strategies.

2.0 TRENDS

There are many trends and factors that will influence the provision of parks and open space planning and development over the next 15 years.

An aging population will have participation impacts on the types of facilities and services provided, such as adult sports leagues. Facilities, programs and services will also need to respond to an increasing immigrant population that will place different demands on the parks and open space system. There will also be a need to accommodate an increased level of participation in sports by females and persons with disabilities. Significant increases in youth soccer is occurring, and expected to continue, which will have immediate impact on the provision of facilities.

Society is moving towards an increasing focus and concern for the environment. Municipalities, in combination with local steward groups, will be increasingly engaged with the conservation and preservation of environmental resources, from both a public use perspective and a resource management role.

The quality and quantity of new facilities needs to take into account Fort Erie’s geographical area and its positioning within the Region of Niagara. Also, the increasing role of parks and open space in support of sport tourism and festival and event-based tourism in local communities can mean changes in facility design and related services.

Finally, the integration of education, social, health and leisure services and goals are a growing trend. Increasingly it is important to deliver the right services at the right time to various target audiences.

3.0 IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The importance of parks and open space facilities and programs as a core service and public amenity is critical to the functioning of individual neighbourhoods and the overall community. Active living is gaining increased public awareness across North America as weight gain amongst youth reach epidemic levels. In order to support an active and health lifestyle, parks and open space facilities and programs have to be readily accessible and affordable to the public. Both passive and active recreation opportunities need to be provided in the appropriate locations throughout the Town. Parks and open spaces provide opportunities for recreation, socialization and health and wellness of individuals, as well as providing benefits for the environment and the economy.

Consistently, the provision of parks and open space ranks high as one of the most valued parts of any community. A recent presentation in August 2006 by Mr. Allan Gregg, Chair of the Strategic Counsel of Canada indicates that “green spaces and parks” ranks second in overall importance for desired community features. In Fort Erie’s case, the random telephone survey undertaken for the Master Plan and community consultation highlighted the importance of the current parks and open space system and the continued development and enhancement of the system. The most valued aspects of the parks and open space system are the trail network, waterfront, and natural environment.

Parks and open space provide a distinct element to local life and lifestyle of residents. The current value of the parks system in Fort Erie is estimated to be over 21 million dollars based on assessed land, facility and infrastructure costs. The value of this asset illustrates the scope of the investment in parks and open space by the municipality. The redevelopment and continued development of parks and open space facilities is critical to ensure this current investment is maintained and new investments are appropriately made.
4.0 STRATEGIC THEMES

Local characteristics and trends will influence the continued planning and development of the parks and open space system for Fort Erie. Several strategic themes for parks and open space planning and development emerged through the development of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan and they are summarized below.

Community Development

The community will continue to grow at a moderate rate, with nearly 50% of the growth over the next 10+ years occurring in Fort Erie South. Crystal Beach and Crescent Park will also experience notable growth. An overall aging population (i.e. baby boomer population) is anticipated for Fort Erie, which will place demands on the parks and open space system. Continued immigration to Canada, Ontario and Fort Erie will play a part in the delivery of programs and services.

The Town has significant land to facilitate long term residential, commercial and industrial development. Provincial initiatives around density intensification, along with population growth will encourage higher residential densities in Fort Erie which will impact the need for and use of both existing and new park sites.

Park Hierarchy, Standards and Delivery

There is a need to redefine the parks hierarchy and provision/service delivery standards to reflect contemporary trends, as well as current practices. For example, the development of maintenance standards and strategies for parks (i.e. turf maintenance) is recommended in the Master Plan to provide a consistent approach throughout the Town.

The Town will continue to be the principal provider of park and open space venues, directly or through partnerships with other organizations and agencies. An emphasis on increasing the quality of the maintenance, presentation and signage of the parks and open spaces, along with an emphasis, where possible, on reducing vandalism and increasing the safety of open space through employing CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles is required.

Partnerships with key landowners, whether informal or through reciprocal agreements, is one of the key strategies for sustaining and expanding the availability of park and open space resources and capital funding. Enhancing park and open space programs and activities through support of community organizations in the development and delivery of specific programs and services will be essential. Stewardship partnerships will local environmental groups will also be important to protect and enhance local natural areas. Volunteerism plays a significant role in the delivery of programs and services, as well as volunteer organizations participation in the acquisition and development of venues. Such community efforts must be recognized and nurtured.

The Town’s marketing function should be sustained and become more targeted in terms of both creating awareness of parks and open space opportunities, as well as using educational components to ensure a full understanding of what is available, and the importance of these resources.

Periodic review and the development of a specific policy related to the role, criteria and levels of park and open space user rates and fees should be developed as part of a broader recreation rates and fee strategy.

Finally, the ongoing assessment of trends and renewing existing parks and open space facilities is an important planning strategy in support of on-going venue investment.

Park and Open Space Priorities

The historical and geographical dispersion of the Town inherently make the provision of parks and open space facilities and programs challenging. With this in mind, one of the main priorities will be to address under-serviced geographic areas such as Fort Erie South, Crystal Beach, Thunder Bay and Crescent Park. Encouraging a balanced distribution of facilities is at the heart of the proposals contained in the
Master Plan. Neighbourhood Plans, as they are developed over the next several years, may further refine land use, development objectives and neighbourhood needs and requirements, and serve to keep the Master Plan relevant.

The development of new and expanded facilities will be needed to ensure Fort Erie’s parks and open space system meets current and future demands of the community:

- Enhance neighbourhoods parks to ensure facilities meet community need and expectations;
- Maintain current baseball fields and utilizing some for informal play;
- Need for 4 additional Class 1 soccer fields or lighting of fields;
- Development of new playgrounds, including some general improvements related to safety, accessibility, replacements and enhancements;
- Conversion of underutilized tennis courts to multi-use courts, including the addition of new multi-use courts as funds become available;
- Develop 4 new splash pads;
- Develop a central skatepark facility;
- Develop a leash free park for dogs in a suitable location;
- Develop an interim park at the Hershey Cemetery for public uses until future cemetery is develop.

Specific needs are detailed in the Master Plan on a neighbourhood and community basis. It is estimated that approximately 4.9 million dollars is needed toward new or upgraded facilities and ongoing maintenance over the next 15 years.

By 2024, Fort Erie will require approximately 30 additional acres of neighbourhood parkland based upon growth projections. Therefore, it will be important to identify appropriate lands for park and open space development, including partnering with developers and with other local groups/stakeholders. Large parks such as Optimist Park and United Empire Loyalist Park are currently providing an excellent supply of community parkland and those lands should be maintained.

From a community wide perspective, enhanced access and protection of and use of all waterfront and beach resources is essential given the importance of these areas to the public. The recommendations contained in the 2006 Waterfront Action Plan approved by Council will be the guide for future development. These improvements have been reflected in the Implementation Plan developed for the Master Plan.

Continued development and expansion of the trail system by linking it to neighbourhoods and community nodes is important in creating a walkable and accessible community. This will be refined through individual neighbourhood plans.

The preservation and conservation of key natural areas and features, heritage venues and related community resources needs to be undertaken in balance with the need for sportsfields, non-programmed open spaces, and waterfront access/beaches.

Providing some additional focus on activities within park and open space venues that support youth, teens and senior participation, as well as increased accessibility for those with physical and other disabilities will be required. A good example of this is the provision for a skatepark to address youth and teen needs. Another example is the need for 4 additional soccer fields for youth and adult leagues. Emerging and ever evolving trends must be considered in order to appropriately serve the community, including the development of sportsfields and infrastructure in support of sport and event tourism initiatives, as well as support for art, heritage and cultural components within park and open space venues.

Maintenance practices will also need to be examined and improved or altered, where appropriate.
5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Parks and open space are important to our society and provide opportunities for active living. Fort Erie is fortunate to have many significant and unique resources such as waterfront and beaches, natural environment, heritage lands, first class sports facilities and trails. The community survey and public consultation undertaken as part of the Master Plan process illustrates that residents area aware of and truly value these assets. The local parks and open spaces are a tremendous resources that must be planned, developed and maintained for existing and future residents.

As the population of Fort Erie grows there will be a need for new facilities in specific areas of the community. Trends will also play a part and the municipality will need to respond to these changes in a rational and planned manner.

Improvements and enhancements to facilities within existing parks and open space will required. Further, maintenance practices will need to be rationalized to ensure all facilities remain relevant, safe and accessible for all local residents.

The Master Plan is intended to be a living document that will be updated on an ongoing basis. The implementation plan contained in the Master Plan is intended to direct investment over the next 15 years. These priorities should be reviewed regularly to ensure the goals and objectives of the Master Plan are being achieved. Priorities will inevitably change over the life of the plan, but appropriate trade-offs can be made to ensure the parks and open space system and facilities meet the needs of local residents.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Fort Erie Open Space Master Plan

The purpose of the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan is to provide Council, staff and residents a series of recommendations to guide decision-making, partnership initiatives and investments over the next ten to fifteen years in the development and delivery of parks and open space resources within the community. The recommendations focus on policy, service delivery, land acquisition and venue development and implementation proposals designed to provide a comprehensive roadmap for the planning, development and sustaining of these vital community resources within the Town of Fort Erie.

The scope of the Master Plan involves both active and passive park and open space venues across the community. The primary focus is on developed and undeveloped parkland, sports parks, open space and natural areas, recreation trails, outdoor heritage venues, beaches, public water fronts, urban beautification lands and related sites. Also included for consideration are outdoor lands owned by agencies such as the District School Board of Niagara; the Niagara District Catholic School Board; the Niagara Region Conservation Authority; the Niagara Parks Commission; venues operated by local service clubs, such as Optimist Park; and private sector venues. Collectively, these venues constitute a wide range of diverse outdoor park and open space resources that provide recreational, education, heritage, environmental conservation and urban form and beautification benefits to the residents of Fort Erie.

The scope of this Master Plan focuses on the parks and open space resources as well as developed outdoor facilities involving sports fields, playgrounds, single and multi-use play courts, trails, monuments and heritage features, splash pads and outdoor swimming pools, skateboard facilities, special event and festival areas, urban beautification elements and related uses. The Master Plan also involves examinations and recommendations associated with park and open space amenities involving parking areas; access points; service buildings that include washrooms, change rooms, concessions and storage; signage and related amenities.

The Master Plan for Parks and Open Spaces in Fort Erie focuses on the Town's role undertaken both directly and via partnership with community organizations. It is designed to ensure an adequate and creative supply and the effective management of parks and open spaces within the municipality as a core service that contributes significantly to the quality of life to the Fort Erie residents. It is important that parks and open space resources be seen as vital to the overall community's and residents' well-being, and that they are effectively integrated with all the other services initiatives being undertaken by the municipality, both currently and in the future.

The Master Plan does not address major recreational facilities, such as indoor aquatic centres, arenas, community centres, indoor seniors and teen facilities, art galleries and cultural centers, museums, cemeteries or similar community facilities. Some of these indoor recreation facilities may exist within some of the parks and open spaces addressed in the Master Plan, however the Master Plan does not undertake recommendations with respect to their further development, need, operations or other associated master planning analysis.

1.2 Master Plan Linkages

The Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan does not exist in isolation. It is directly linked to a series of other Town planning and implementation initiatives associated with youth, transportation, individual neighbourhood plans, an Official Plan Review, Active 2010, Development Charges By-Laws, future potential Reciprocal Agreements with other park and open space providers, wayfinding study, communications and other activities.

As a result, the Master Plan needs to recognize both the research and recommendations resulting from these various initiatives. Also, these initiatives need to give consideration to the research results and the policy directions and recommendations that emerge from the Master Plan. As a result, the Town needs to ensure that there is a meshing of the various initiatives in order to ensure cohesive and integrated
strategies and recommendations that best serve the long-term needs of the community that are both efficient and effective in the delivery of services to the residents of Fort Erie.

1.3 Master Planning Process

1.3.1 Planning

The master planning process undertaken for the Town of Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan involved three phases:

- Phase I – Background Analysis
- Phase II – Draft Parks and Open Space Master Plan
- Phase III – Draft Master Plan Review and Approval

1.3.2 Background Research

The first phase of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan involved a comprehensive research-based work program for which the inputs, analyses and results are available under a separate cover entitled Background Analysis Report for the Town of Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The research phase involved the following key activities:

- A population profile and projections review, a community development profile and related community development perspectives. The Town was separated in 10 Community Areas as illustrated on Figure 1;
- Current venue participation profiles and utilization considerations;
- Review of relevant planning, policy and related strategic and policy documents and materials from both the Town and the Region;
- A 300 unit random selection survey of Fort Erie household representatives focusing on participation patterns, future perspectives, awareness and value ratings and other inputs for parks and open spaces;
- Community consultation with thirty-six focus groups, interviews and public meetings involving over 100 community and organized group representatives soliciting their input on the strengths and weaknesses of the parks and open space venues and services available, the services delivery model, future perspectives and needs;
- A financial review of operating costs and the Town's capital forecast for parks and open spaces;
- A parks and open space inventory;
- A trends analysis related to parks and open space utilization, development and delivery.

1.3.3 Survey and Community Consultation

The community telephone survey undertaken as part of the background research indicated a high level of awareness for the Friendship Trail, the local beaches, Sugarbowl Park and neighbourhood/local parks. 8 in 10 people gave a high score “excellent” or “good” to local parks, trails and sportsfields. About 71% of residents felt there neighbourhood parks were “excellent” or “good”. Respondents felt that the job being done for teens, seniors and those with disabilities could be improved. Highest support from respondents was for the installation and maintenance of playground equipment and creating and preserving environmental and conservation areas. Waterplay areas for children, extension of the trail system and streetscaping were also considerations for the futures. The installation of a skateboard park received reasonable support.

Input through focus groups, interviews, and public forums also highlighted the importance of trails, protection of natural areas, access to beaches and the waterfront, need for increased maintenance of parks and facilities, need for additional parkland in certain areas, importance of partnerships with local groups and agencies and the need to reduce vandalism and increase safety in parks.
1.3.4 Parks and Open Space Master Plan Format

The recommendations within the Town of Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan have been developed on three levels, moving from a strategic foundation through to specific park and open space initiatives:

Level 1  
Plan Foundation  
Section 3.0 provides the philosophical foundation for the Master Plan, developing the benefits of providing parks and open spaces, integration with the Town's Vision and Master Plan, Principles and Goals.

Level 2  
Parks and Open Space Policies and Delivery Strategies  
Section 4.0, focuses on establishing the policy framework for the development, delivery and evaluation of parks and open spaces, as well as the variable delivery approaches that could be utilized and participated in by the Town of Fort Erie.

Level 3  
Specific Parks and Open Space Initiatives  
Section 5.0 identifies specific park and open space actions, investments and approaches that are proposed to be undertaken by the Town of Fort Erie over the next ten to twenty years, including the Master Plan's proposed implementation strategies.
2.0 STRATEGIC THEMES

From the Background Analysis Report, a series of conclusions and strategic themes were developed that established a foundation upon which the Parks and Open Space Master Plan recommendations were based. The conclusions are available in the Background Analysis Report. The following material represents the key strategic themes that emerged from the conclusions and research phase for this project.

2.1 Community Development Profile

• The community will continue to grow at a moderate rate, with nearly 50% of the growth over the next 10+ years occurring in Fort Erie South.

• The population is marginally older than that of the Province, and will continue to age as the “baby boomer generation” ages.

• Future immigration to Canada over the longer term will influence the source of newcomers to Canada and the proportionality that they will represent within the Fort Erie population.

• The Town has significant land to facilitate long term residential, commercial and industrial development. Provincial initiatives around density intensification, along with population growth will encourage higher residential densities in Fort Erie which will impact the need for and use of both existing and new park sites.

2.2 Policy Considerations

• Re-alignment of the parks hierarchy and provision / service delivery standards to reflect contemporary trends, as well as current practices.

• Position the municipality to be principally a provider of park and open space venues, both directly or through partnerships with other landowning organizations.

• Enhancing park and open space programs and activities through support of community organizations in the development and delivery of specific programs and services.

• The preservation and conservation of key natural areas, features, heritage venues and related community resources to be undertaken in balance with the need for sportsfields, non-programmed open spaces, waterfront access / beaches and other development initiatives.

• Development Charges, Park Dedication Funds, fundraising and a range of other sources of income are to be utilized to support capital development on an on-going basis, including appropriate direct municipal capital investments.

• Partnerships with key landowners, whether informal or through reciprocal agreements, is one of the key strategies for sustaining and expanding the availability of park and open space resources and capital funding.

2.3 Park & Open Space Priorities

• Continued development and expansion of the trail system connecting more community nodes, along with external linkages.

• Enhanced access and protection of and use of all waterfront and beach resources.
• An emphasis on increasing the quality of the maintenance, presentation and signage of the parks and open spaces.

• Providing some additional focus on activities within park and open space venues that support youth, teens and seniors’ access and participation, as well as increased accessibility for those with physical and other disabilities.

• Promoting the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to reduce vandalism and provide safer open spaces.

• Increased planning in preparation for growth in both youth and adult soccer.

• Development of park and open space land in under-serviced geographic areas.

• Development of facilities to achieve a balanced distribution of resources throughout the Town.

• Development of sportsfields and infrastructure in support of sport tourism and event tourism initiatives.

• Greater integration and support for art, heritage and cultural components within park and open space venues.

2.4 Key Operational Perspectives

• The Town’s marketing function to be sustained and become more targeted in terms of both creating awareness of parks and open space opportunities, as well as using educational components to ensure a full understanding of what is available, and the importance of these resources.

• Volunteer development can be a significant department role in order to ensure the long term viability of volunteer delivered programs and services, as well as volunteer organizations participation in the acquisition and development of venues.

• Periodic review and the development of a specific policy related to the role, criteria and levels of park and open space user rates and fees should be developed as part of a broader recreation rates and fee strategy.

• Continually assessing trends and renewing existing parks and open space infrastructure is an important planning strategy in support of on-going venue investment.

• Development of maintenance standards and strategies for parks (turf maintenance).
3.0 MASTER PLAN FOUNDATION

3.1 Introduction

In order for a Master Plan to determine strategic directions, assess policy and development choices / alternatives and analyze specific areas for enhancing or diminishing services, a strategic foundation has been developed that establishes park and open space benefits, principles and goals. This section of the Master Plan outlines the key benefits of the community's and Town's involvement in the provision of park and open space resources establishes a connection with the Town's Vision and develops principles and goals for the Master Plan. Collectively, these elements provide the foundation for the recommendations within the Plan with respect to policies, specific park and facility development and implementation strategies.

3.2 Benefits of Park and Open Space Resources

It is widely recognized that residents and the community as a whole benefit from having access to an array of park and open space resources that facilitate and support the multiple interests of community members. Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO), Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), the American Planning Association (APA) and many other professional and community bodies have identified the unique benefits and contributions that parks and open space resources can make to the quality of life within a community and the community's overall development strategies.

Parks and open space resources have evolved to become a core service in most municipalities as the benefits they provide impact the lives of all residents, whether through formal, structured recreational activities or through informal activities such as walking, hiking or nature interpretation. The importance of these resources is evident in terms of the considerable public interest they generate related to their acquisition and ongoing development and renewal; the increasing importance residents are placing on environmental conservation; the rising interest in heritage perspectives and venues; and the growing interest in communities that are green, comfortable, attractive, safe, healthy, vibrant and more livable as key measures of a community's quality of life. Parks and open spaces are no longer associated with simply a playground or sportsfield. They have become a complex core service delivery area that addresses, on an integrated and linked basis, an array of interests, opportunities and benefits within the community.

The following benefits have been identified as the primary rationales for the community's and the Town's investment in the acquisition, development and sustaining of a diverse mix of park and open space resources that benefit all residents directly and indirectly.

Recommendation 1: Benefits of Parks and Open Space Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Activity and Skills Development…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>provide venues for a diverse range of both structured and unstructured leisure pursuits for children, teens, adults and seniors to pursue activities of personal interest, to develop skills, to volunteer and to actively engage in community life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resident Health and Wellness…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>provide opportunities to enhance resident physical, mental and social well-being and health by creating venues that allow the pursuit of activities that support fitness, such as sports and trail usage; social development through volunteering and / or meeting fellow residents; and the pursuit of reflective and stress reducing activities. These benefits address the needs of the whole person, not just physical perspectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendation 1 (cont'd): Benefits of Parks and Open Space Resources

Environmental and Heritage Conservation and Preservation...
provide venues that protect and conserve valued nature resources, such as woodlots, marshes waterfronts and other natural features vital to a healthy ecology and natural environment; as well as the recognition and sustaining of valued historical and heritage venues that have contributed to the community's development and identity. These benefits support current and future generations of residents, providing educational and interpretative opportunities in concert with improving environmental sustainability and health.

Urban Form, Beautification and Identity...
provide park and open space resources that contribute to a more livable and functional urban form amongst the many land uses within the municipality, and the greening and beautification of the municipality via both natural and planted materials and venues. Parks and open space resources can also create unique identifiers and focal points for the community, such as the beaches, the waterfront, the trails and other resources in Fort Erie. Continue to balance and integrate the built environment with park and open space opportunities.

Economic Development...
provide benefits to the local economy by attracting visitors and tourists through sport tourism and special event initiatives; utilization of the beaches, waterfront and trails; visitation to natural and heritage venues; and other opportunities. These benefits generate expenditures by visitors in the community that support increased business investment. Parks and open spaces can also enhance neighbouring property values, be a supporting catalyst for an area's renewal and be an integral component of the mix of elements that attract new residents to a community.

3.3 Vision

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan for the Town of Fort Erie must connect with the overall vision and strategic directions of the municipality. In this way, it is a planning tool that supports the broader vision and direction the municipality wishes to pursue as both a community and corporate entity. The following Vision, Purpose and Corporate Values provide a foundation upon which to develop the directions and intent of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan for the Town of Fort Erie.

Recommendation 2: Town of Fort Erie Vision, Purpose and Corporate Values

Vision:
We will guide the Town towards achieving a community that provides the quality of life we want for our children.

Purpose:
Our Focus: Your Future
Recommendation 2 (cont'd): Town of Fort Erie Vision, Purpose and Corporate Values

Corporate Values:

Proud to Serve
*We serve Fort Erie with pride, care and excellence*

Team Work
*We partner with other departments, volunteers, other levels of government, agencies, boards and commissions to deliver services to the public.*

Respect
*We treat others how we would like to be treated – with sensitivity and respect – we listen.*

Honesty
*We are open and honest - we value trust and integrity.*

Commitment
*We are committed to the well-being of our community.*

The following principles have been developed as a basis for establishing the policies and specific recommendations within the Parks and Open Space Master Plan for the Town of Fort Erie.

Recommendation 3: Master Plan Principles

Balance of Park and Open Space Venues...
*that support the diversity of recreation, culture and education interests of residents.*

Environment Preservation and/or Conservation...
*preserve significant environment features & resources, create parkland that is sensitive to the nature/history of the place and provide supporting education opportunities.*

Fair and Equitable Opportunities...
*that encourage participation by all residents in terms of their abilities, culture, economic, geographic and related interests and backgrounds.*

Responding to Change...
*through the use of ongoing evaluation and assessment of evolving community needs, venue utilization, the benefits realized and service quality.*

Geographical Diversity of Parks and Open Space Venues...
*that support the unique needs and interests of the Town’s neighbourhoods, in concert with community and specialized venues that support broader-based activities and opportunities.*

Partnerships...
*that utilize all the resources of the whole community to deliver vibrant, diverse and accessible parks and open space opportunities and services.*

Town Leadership Role...
*through facilitating and leading the planning, development and promotion of parks and open space opportunities.*
Flexible Parks and Open Space Venues...

that support programmed and non-programmed activities, can be adapted to changing needs and priorities, support innovation and contribute to a range of Town initiatives involving youth, health, growth management, economic development, transportation and long term sustainability.

Principle 1 – Balance of Park and Open Space Venues:

This principle identifies the importance of a balanced mix of parks and open spaces that encompass recreation, arts and culture. It is through this balanced mix that a spectrum of venues is made available that can meet the multitude of needs and variable interests of residents. Parks and open spaces are not for one particular dimension of the community. They need to be accessible to all residents.

Principle 2 – Environmental Preservation and/or Conservation:

Preserving significant environmental features and resources, creating parkland that is sensitive to the nature/history of the place and supporting educational opportunities are important.

Today parks and open space venues do not stand alone. In most cases, they have significant interconnectivity with social, health, educational, environmental, heritage and other Town goals. This approach focuses on the holistic development of each person, supporting the development of the whole person. It is through this interchange and collective approach that individuals are better served, have more opportunities and achieve enhanced benefits.

Principle 3 – Fair and Equitable Opportunities:

This principle supports the need for the fair and equitable provision of parks and open space venues so that all residents can have a reasonable opportunity to access and participate in them. These services do not simply exist but require efforts to encourage participation. This encouragement needs to be both generic in terms of the whole population but also needs to be targeted at specific groups who have barriers that need to be overcome, require different types of informational resources or have other considerations that need to be addressed in order to ensure fair and equitable access. In an increasing multicultural community, with some financial barriers and other challenges, the communication and encouragement process becomes increasingly important and targeted in order to better serve the whole community.

Principle 4 – Responding to Change:

This principle involves responding to change. What is evident over the last twenty-years, and increasingly so in recent years, is that there is significant change in the operating environment for parks and open spaces. These changes could involve demographics, participant preferences and utilization patterns, government policy, new service delivery models, funding sources and many other considerations. What is particularly important as a principle, is the need for the parks and open space services of the Town to be flexible, dynamic and fully understanding that servicing considerations will continually change. Therefore, the municipality needs to continually evaluate its parks and open space resource activities. This could involve increasing emphasis on the renewal of existing venues, diminishing some current service levels in order to enhance emerging user preferences and to continually be aware of key strategic trends, government policy initiatives and other influences that will impact directly the Town's role, investments and activities in the provision of highly valued park and open space resources.

Principle 5 – Geographical Diversity of Parks and Open Space Venues:

This principle recognizes the importance of the neighbourhoods within the Town of Fort Erie and the need for parks and open spaces that respond to the unique and differentiated needs amongst these areas that collectively make up the Town of Fort Erie. These areas have different age and demographic profiles,
have widely diverse traditions and historical backgrounds, involve different levels of commercial and related land use activities and have different geographic and environmental focuses, ranging from urban, to rural, to waterfront / beach, to other profiles. There is a distinct geographic separation of communities within Fort Erie which impacts on the provision of facilities and services.

Therefore, the Plan needs to ensure that there is evident capacity to meet neighbourhood needs which is the level of service that often touches the most residents. The Plan also needs to ensure, that there is adequate community and specialized parks and open spaces to address the broader interests of the community. The balancing of park and open space sites, targeted at different user segments, is an important principle and key success factor for the Master Plan.

**Principle 6 – Partnerships:**

This principle is central to the Master Plan's implementation. The Town already has extensive partnerships that have ensured the availability of a range of outdoor recreational activities, the acquisition and development of specific parklands and open spaces, support for park-based facilities development and other initiatives. Increasingly, more intensive partnerships, and working collaboratively with community organizations will be a key success factor in advancing and achieving the benefits that residents and the community as a whole can realize from a comprehensive parks and open space services delivery approach.

**Principle 7 – Township Leadership Role:**

The Town of Fort Erie has a leadership role to fulfill in regards to the delivery of parks and open space resources. It is uniquely positioned to provide technical, financial, ownership, and other support. However, it needs to work collaboratively and through consultative strategies to effectively fulfill this role. Therefore, the Town needs to ensure that it recognizes this leadership role, and that it adequately supports it in order to achieve the benefits that can be realized via a comprehensive parks and open space services delivery approach.

**Principle 8 – Flexible Park and Open Space Venues:**

The final principle addresses the need for parks and open spaces to be flexible in their application and use. Increasingly, pressures have mounted to develop more programmed activities in parks and open spaces, reducing their availability for unscheduled and informal use. It is vitally important, that both programmed and non-programmed activities are provided for, especially at the neighbourhood level. Also it needs to be recognized that parks and open spaces can contribute to a wide array of Town initiatives involving youth, health, transportation, economic development, growth management and other strategies. In this light, parks and open spaces also need to be flexible in responding to the variety of priorities the Town has established.

### 3.4 Plan Goals

The following goals have been developed for the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan based on community input and priorities, recreation trends and projected growth and development.

**Recommendation 4: Plan Goals**

- To develop a parks classification model and service and maintenance standards that allow for the measurement of existing service levels and which support future decision-making on park and open space additions, modifications and redevelopments.
- To develop design guidelines and standards that support the ongoing development of new and the renewal of existing parks and open spaces.
• To develop specific recommendations for park, open space and trail development initiatives and priorities that reflect current and future participation trends, community growth and Town strategic priorities.

• To identify partnerships, joint initiatives and other collaborative activities that extend the availability, quality and accessibility of park and open space resources within Fort Erie.

• To ensure an array of park and open space experiences, involving recreation, arts and culture, heritage, environmental conservation and related interests and outcomes.

• To develop a supporting marketing program that builds awareness and value for and enhances participation in the parks and open space resources of the Town of Fort Erie.

• To develop an implementation plan that establishes the financing, sequencing, management and related strategies for achieving the Master Plan's recommendations.
4.0 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DELIVERY POLICY AND STRATEGIES

4.1 Introduction

The Parks and Open Space Master Plan Foundation provided recommendations on the benefits of parks and open spaces, the Town's Vision and Master Plan Principles and Goals as a basis for the Plan's other recommendations. The next dimensions to be developed within the Plan, prior to the individual venue and infrastructure initiatives, are the Town's park and open space service delivery policy and strategy recommendations. These recommendations set out the framework on which Town decisions on parks and open space need to be assessed and go forward.

4.2 Town Parks and Open Space Delivery Policy

4.2.1 Overview

Municipalities are under increasing pressure and expectations to deliver a wider range of leisure opportunities, many of them involving increasingly sophisticated land areas and facilities; integrated services delivery approaches; and growing long term capital, operating and financial/sustainability requirements. Society has moved to a point where there is a growing array of parks and recreation activities that people want to be involved with, many of them involving smaller clusters/segments of individuals within the community and beyond. Also, many activities/services are subdividing into users that want high performance experiences or individuals who just wish to try something out or want a more limited experience.

The increasing mix of residential interests and needs is generating a more complex service delivery environment. Further complicating this environment is that new groups are forming that need support while established groups go through cycles of strength and weakness variability. As a result, the Town may be approached to support the launch of a new service initiative or to support organizations that are experiencing sustainability or significant leadership challenges.

As a basis for the Town to address its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of parks and open space resources, it requires a policy framework upon which to ensure that it is not seen as the sole party responsible for these services. However, the policy needs to recognize that the Town is in a unique position within the parks and open space delivery model in terms of skills and capacity, assets and financial resources, service stability and other key delivery factors. Finding a balance that is a basis to undertake this role and to effectively address parks and open space as a core service is an important part of the long term planning process for park and open space venues in Fort Erie.

Recommendation 5: Parks and Open Spaces Delivery Policy

- That the Town is a leader in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of parks and open spaces resources within the municipality.

- That the Town firmly supports the value of and need for community organizations to successfully operate leisure services in park and open space venues as the primary means to optimize the accessibility, availability, affordability and mix of outdoor park and leisure services that are available to its citizens.

- That the prioritization process for the Town's participation and investments in park and open space venues focus on servicing Town of Fort Erie residents as the primary users within the following priority framework:
  - First – resources that facilitate and encourage broad-based participation amongst Town residents at a recreational level of activity which include both passive and non-competitive activities. These recreational activities will also include in-town, regional and provincial competitive oriented activities for children and youth and which link to the specialized needs of targeted populations, such as those with disabilities, seniors, young children, teens, new Canadians and others.
Recommendation 5 (cont’d): Parks and Open Spaces Delivery Policy

- Second – resources that are primarily intended to support key strategic initiatives of the Town, such as economic / tourist development, conversion of brownfield sites, conservation of major open space resources, waterfronts and beach areas, natural areas/environmental lands, heritage features and specialized services that ensure a broad mix of outdoor opportunities for Fort Erie residents.
- Third – resources development that are targeted primarily at regional, national and international participation will only be considered within a sport tourism or special event framework where need / use levels and impact potential demonstrates an evident benefit to the community, and where other partners (municipalities, senior government levels, sustainable non-profit organizations and the private sector) are active, substantial and committed contributors.

- The Town will fulfill its role in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of park and open space resources based on the following hierarchy of responses and roles:
  - First – to actively work to facilitate and support community groups and individuals in the development and delivery of venues and on-site facilities by providing technical supports, data information, volunteer training and recognition, access to facilities and related capacity building strategies.
  - Second – to enter into partnerships, joint ventures and related collaborative initiatives, at variable levels of involvement, that result in a shared responsibility for a park and open space initiative where:
    - The interest of the residents of Fort Erie are fully realized
    - Need is apparent
    - Sustainability within acceptable risk parameters exists.
  - Third – to undertake the direct delivery of park and open space initiatives where other delivery strategies are not viable or available, utilizing direct capital investment and annual budget support, as well as Town staff operating alone or in partnership with volunteers.

- Any Town involvement in parks and open space delivery should be based on the following conditions:
  - Identification of either demonstrated need at reasonable participation levels or environmental or heritage significance.
  - Evidence of long term sustainability
  - Assured public accessibility, participation and affordability as appropriate.
  - Involvement by the Town to be reflective of the scale of the benefits to be achieved for both the participants and / or the community at large.
  - The use of business case analysis and preparation as a basis to support Town investments in a park and open space and related facility initiatives where appropriate.

- The Town will establish a data collection and outcomes / performance monitoring program that will effectively assess:
  - the value of the Town’s role in the various delivery strategies;
  - the level of participation / utilization that is being realized;
  - the environmental and quality of life and other benefits attained.
  - Services and facilities that need changes in terms of reduced or increased availability.

The policy focuses on the fact that the Town is best served if organized groups and individuals within their own perspectives can be integrated into the delivery of park and open space venues and facilities. This strategy generally focuses on programs/programming, as most parks and facilities become too costly and often require some form of direct or partial Town involvement. The Town can not be all things to all people. Therefore, groups of individuals with a particular interest need to galvanize themselves to a point where they can take on most of the administrative, program development and delivery perspectives for outdoor sports, special event or related activities.
The Town has a strong role in facilitating community groups in order to assist them by providing technical supports and to aid them to overcome the challenges that may occur from time to time. This role allows the Town to engage with these groups at points where the groups can remain independent but do not have the capacity to access some key resources which could range from marketing and advertising, to registration, to volunteer training and development, to program evaluation, to accessing grants, to assessing new opportunities, etc. The Town has many of the skills and capacities in-house or has access to such resources that can be beneficial to these groups, especially if they are experiencing difficulties and their sustainability becomes threatened.

The second level of the policy, indicates that the Town, before it will undertake direct involvement in the delivery of a parks and open space facility or services, will look for alternative approaches. This could be through partnerships, joint ventures or other collaborative initiatives. This is not a new perspective for the Town. But asking the question early in the review and development process, as to whether other strategies are available, needs to be formalized. It may be that these opportunities are not apparent to the groups, and that, partnerships and joint ventures may need to be initiated by the Town and even organized by them in terms of forming groups or operations that could eventually be a partner with the Town.

The third dimension of the hierarchy, is that the Town, based on evident need and strategy compliance, decides to make a direct investment in the development of a park or open space venues. This will occur when no other available alternatives for parks and open spaces exist and need is apparent. It positions the Town as having the central role with respect to parks and open spaces development.

The policy further articulates key criteria and related considerations that need to be addressed whenever the Town becomes involved in a park and open space initiatives. The affordability of programs and activities and accessibility of the public becomes a major criteria, as does sustainability. Another important consideration is that the scale of the Town's involvement needs to be in balance with the benefits that are going to be realized. It is possible that the ideas that come forward are out of scale with the benefits that will be realized. This needs to be assessed, possibly within a business case model.

From a policy implementation perspective, the Town will need to further develop the application dimensions of the policy, giving particular consideration to the last point which is ensuring the data recording systems are in place to assess participation and benefits, as well as performance monitoring of the outcomes and benefits to be realized, changes in need and other points of assessment. Examples of such tools involve:

- Establishing five year, rolling trend lines of participation / use levels, venue / facility capacity utilization and other capacity indicators;

- An annual strategic trends (provincial, national, international) review related to demographics, participation shifts and other demand indicators / predictors;

- An annual linkages review with the Town's growth management plans, strategic priorities and related directions;

- Web-based resident satisfaction survey and input forum supported through the annual communications program;

- An annual community forum to assess park and open space satisfaction levels, needs and priorities;

- Continual identification of best practices, municipal investment levels and other indicators, possibly using a cluster of five to seven comparator municipalities.
4.3 Park and Open Space Delivery Strategies

There are multiple approaches relative to parks and open space delivery strategies for the Town. The following material is a basis upon which to develop an overall services delivery strategy.

4.3.1 Developer Responsibilities

Overview

Typically, municipalities do not advance the development of parks until certain population thresholds are identified and developed. However, the development of parkland and trails during initial phases of subdivision development provides immediate opportunities for passive and active recreational activities. This encourages active living and participation in various active and passive recreational activities.

Municipalities use a mix of parkland dedication, other land conveyances, and development charges in new residential developments in order to secure land and develop leisure facility resources. There has been a movement towards the developers preparing parkland, in addition to rough grading and also undertaking completion of park development. Some developers believe that their residential developments will have a significant advantage if parks and trails are developed earlier within the overall development process.

The early development of parks in new subdivisions needs to be established in policy. Such a strategy would be an incentive for developers to take on the early preparation of parks and facility sites to Town standards through Development Charge credits.

Such a strategy could result in several benefits:

- Promotion of active living for residents in early stages of development.
- Reduced Town tendering requirements and potentially some cost savings.
- Protection of Town’s standards.
- Reduced pressure from residents for earlier development of facilities in evolving areas.
- A more integrated approach to the development of new communities / neighbourhoods in terms of roads, services, utilities and parks.
- A more linked scheduling of park and open space resources in new areas to the rate of growth in these areas, and potentially reduced pressure on leisure resources in other neighbourhoods that need to support both their local area, as well as emerging neighbourhoods on a transitional basis.

This approach will require further investigation and discussion with the development community. However, that represents an opportunity to address some anticipated challenges for the provision of parks, trails and open space and is increasingly reflective of the expectations of residents in newly developing areas.

Recommendation 6: Developer Responsibilities

That the Town continue to work with developers in taking on a larger role in the preparation of parks, open spaces, community trails and potentially leisure facility sites.
4.3.2 New Policy Development

Overview

The Town has numerous policies with respect to their specific involvement in key areas of parks and open space services and some of the principles and criteria that are involved.

During the course of discussions through the development of this Plan, which involved the review of some existing policies, a trends analysis, and input received from the consultation program, other areas of potential policy development where identified. It is important that the Town have a comprehensive policy framework to support its parks and open space evaluations and investments. In many cases, the Town has active programs in these areas but requires them to be connected to a strategic framework. Also, the Town has responsibility for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and accessibility issues which are key policy areas.

Recommendation 7: Policy Reviews and Enhancements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That the following policy areas are recommended for review and / or to ensure they are in place in the Town:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fairness and equality of accessibility / inclusion; to ensure all park and open space are accessible to the entire community, including those with mobility challenges, disabilities, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affordability parameters for programs, services and activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeted populations in terms of ability, new Canadians and others who have significant barriers to participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic impact and development expectations from Town investments in parks and open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Naming rights and corporate sponsorships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Art, Plaques and Artifacts in Town parks and open space (Section 4.3.12 of this Report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leash free zones in parks (Section 5.3.3 of this Report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partnerships with local groups, organizations and agencies (Section 4.3.7 of this Report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stewardship agreement for natural and open space areas (Section 4.3.9 of this Report).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encroachment Policy for private utilization of public lands (Section 4.3.14 of this Report).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3 Facilities Project Development

Overview

The Town has undertaken many major recreation facility developments based on various inputs and, assessments. A Parks and Open Space Master Plan is a process that brings together significant amounts of research to identify priorities, needs and strategies over an extended period of time, often ten to fifteen years. It identifies not only facilities but also criteria, strategies, etc. However, Master Plans do not, in and of themselves, typically deal with the Business Plans for individualized parks and open space facility resources/facilities due to the changing characteristics of the market and demand over time, community growth patterns, trends, the municipality's financial resources and commitments and other factors. The Master Plan sets the overarching facilities development framework for services and priorities. Then, individual Business Plans are undertaken based on timelines established within the Master Plan and the current Town business case template. These Business Plans should focus on:

- Locational considerations.
- Governance and management plans.
- Connections to the Town and department's corporate / strategic plans and goals, policies and objectives;
• Alternative development strategies in terms of using existing venues/facilities, building new facilities and undertaking additions.
• Need and demand profiles, marketing requirements and related feasibility assessment components.
• Determining market competitive profiles.
• Identification of space and size needs and special equipment, often involving conceptual / simplified venue plans.
• Three year operating pro formas in order to identify revenues, expenses and staff requirements.

These and other elements are developed to focus on a specific venue. This is an effective strategy in order to ensure these major capital investments are targeted with clear outcomes and firmer capital cost projections.

The need for a business plan is not required for developer-driven park development or situations where the Town is a minor development partner.

**Recommendation 8: Facilities Project Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• That the Town require a Business Plan on all capital parks and open space proposals as follows:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o That any major new initiatives or major addition to an existing venue with a potential capital cost of over $500,000 be supported by a Business Plan;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o That the Town direct the undertaking of the Business Plans, seeking public consultation, and working in partnership where appropriate with community proponents;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o That the results of the Business Plan, when finalized and accepted, become the basis for new or expanded parks and open space resources being incorporated into the capital budget forecast for the Town related to timing, capital cost projections, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4 Multi-Use Facility Development

**Overview**

Over the last decade or more, there has been a significant move towards the development of community facilities on a multi-use / multi-partner basis. The key rationales for this strategy are as follows:

• Potential capital cost savings, often in the order of 10% to 25%.
• Significant potential for operational savings, up to 25%.
• Enhanced customer / user satisfaction relative to convenience and visiting one site only as an individual and/or a family.
• Greater critical mass, visibility and community identification and improved marketing;
• Potential for more enhanced facilities relative to scope, quality and volumes.

The continuation and enlargement of this strategy is a parks and open space delivery approach that needs to be enhanced wherever possible in order to improve user satisfaction and quality experiences, as well as achieving the maximum capital and operating economies of scale.
**Recommendation 9: Multi-Use Facility Development**

That the Town, for all major parks and open space facilities renewal and new development initiatives, investigate the potential for a wider range of multiple use opportunities.

**4.3.5 Community Use of School Venues**

**Overview**

The community use of schools has been a long established practice in Ontario and many other jurisdictions. Due to the significant expansion of public schools, colleges and universities, taxpayers have supported the development of a wide array of facilities that have significant potential to support parks and open space activities. These include indoor facilities, but also important are the venues themselves as both green spaces and the venues for outdoor facilities, such as sportsfields, tracks and playgrounds.

Since the mid 1990s, there has been a significant decline in the community use of schools due to the gravitation towards increased fees for utilization, customer service challenges, accessibility consistency concerns and other issues. Some communities have divested their responsibility to coordinate community group use of these facilities, while others are experiencing significant challenges in regards to their user groups wishing to develop more stand alone or separate municipal venues as substitutes for school sites.

In the summer of 2004, the Province of Ontario announced a $20 million program as part of an overall initiative to facilitate and encourage increased utilization of publicly funded schools by community organizations. Considering that these facilities are built by the same taxpayer, and that there is a wide array of sportsfield and other facilities, these venues present a potential resource for recreation programming, often at neighbourhood and district levels of services.

The Town could continue to take leadership, along with other municipalities, to explore with the local school boards, the opportunity for municipalities to access publicly funded schools on behalf of organized groups, in order to provide more localized capacity and to reduce the pressures and need for additional long-term municipal investments.

**Recommendation 10: Community Use of School Venues**

That the Town initiate discussions with the District School Board of Niagara and the Niagara District Catholic School Board to develop policies, strategies and processes, including as appropriate, more formal reciprocal agreements, that effectively enhance community accessibility to publicly funded school venues.

**4.3.6 Surplus School Sites**

Within the Town of Fort Erie there are currently 11 elementary schools and 3 secondary schools. At this time there has been no indication that any of these schools sites are surplus to the needs of the School Boards. Many of the school sites are near or adjacent to existing municipal parkland. Some of these school sites provide facilities to the immediate neighbourhood and area residents. Should school sites become available in the future for public ownership, consideration should be given to acquiring these sites based on a further review of the need for parkland or facilities in a given area.

**Recommendation 11: Surplus School Sites**

That the Town consider acquiring surplus school sites in the future, based on a further review of the need for parkland or facilities in a given area.
4.3.7 Partnerships Initiatives

Overview

For many years, partnerships have been a significant strategy used by municipalities to enhance services delivery to participants, residents and others connected with this service area. The Town of Fort Erie has formed many partnerships. Principle amongst these has been working extensively with minor soccer, baseball and football organizations; neighbourhood associations; service clubs; special event organizers; and other community institutions.

The Town recognizes the importance of partnerships as a service delivery strategy. A policy focus will assist in the further development and evaluation of this strategy. Partnerships with the Niagara Parks Commission, the Niagara Region Conservation Authority, the local School Boards, additional service clubs and others could develop both enhanced formal and informal opportunities to improve the availability and accessibility of parks and open space resources within the community.

Recommendation 12: Partnership Initiatives

That the Town continue its efforts in forming partnerships with community organizations and institutions as a basis to broaden the delivery of park and open space activities and resources, using a partnership development model that focuses on:

- A continuum of partnership opportunities, and undertaking proactive approaches with potential partners to explore possibilities;

- Forging both formal and informal arrangements / agreements necessary to maximize the potential benefits from available partnerships;

- Establishing a partnership policy for the Town that supports the pursuit of partnerships and identifies the key terms and conditions necessary to achieve mutual benefits;

- Ensuring that there are periodic evaluations of existing partnerships, potentially at a minimum once every three years, to assess whether these arrangements are fulfilling the outcomes identified and are providing mutual benefits to the parties involved.

4.3.8 Private Parkland

There are currently three parks in Fort Erie that are owned by others, but have recreation facilities within them. These parks include the Optimist Family Park, Stevensville Conservation Area, United Empire Loyalist Park and Stevensville Mini Park. In addition, there is also a private park in the Thunderbay area which is operated by the Thunderbay Property Owners Association. Niagara Parks Commission lands are also present in the Town (eg. Old Fort, Niagara River Recreation Trail, etc.).

These parks all play an important role in the delivery of facilities and programs for the immediate neighbourhoods and area residents. Ongoing communication with the various agencies and organizations is important to ensure long term use of these lands. Partnerships should be maintained or fostered, to provide parks, facilities or programs to certain neighbourhoods or area residents.

Should these parks not be available for use, this parkland would need to be replaced. Further, should these parks become available for public ownership, consideration should be given to acquiring these lands to maintain the current supply of parkland and facilities.
Recommendation 13: Partnership and Private Parkland

- That the Town establish ongoing communication with the various agencies and organizations to ensure long term use of this parkland.
- That partnerships be maintained or fostered, where appropriate, to provide parks, facilities or programs to certain neighbourhoods or area residents.
- That should private parkland become available for public ownership, consideration should be given to acquiring these lands to maintain the current supply of parkland and facilities.

4.3.9 Natural Areas

Overview

Natural areas within the Town of Fort Erie are a vital resource. They represent currently over 50% of Town parkland. They are extensively used by both residents and visitors for a wide array of leisure activities, primarily on a self-directed basis, including walking and hiking, jogging, bicycling, photography, fishing, nature interpretation, children’s play non-programmed activities, nature appreciation and other activities.

A need exists to ensure that there is a policy framework for the on-going acquisition, management and utilization of these resources in order to sustain their long-term ecological and environmental viability and their availability as part of the urban form and leisure resources base of the Town. It is also anticipated that increased numbers of open space sites will come under Town jurisdiction as more lands are designated and non-developable and increased statutory emphasis is placed on protecting environmental sites and features.

The Town has an excellent partnership with the Bert Miller Nature Club for development and maintenance of the Shaqbark Nature Park. This stewardship partnership should be maintained and others encouraged and fostered, where appropriate. Formal guidelines should also be developed between the Town, and the steward partners to direct and assign development, maintenance and ongoing responsibilities of the Town and the steward group.

Recommendation 14: Natural Areas

- That the Town consider policies and strategies for their extensive natural areas and their use and enjoyment by the public involving:
  - Conservation and management plans for each site to ensure their sustainability in harmony with compatible leisure pursuits by the public;
  - Operational and capital funding at a level consistent with current and future conservation needs and public use;
  - Development of appropriate infrastructure which supports the use of natural areas by the public, including trails, boardwalks, parking, signage, interpretive facilities, washrooms, litter and garbage control, security and safety;
  - Engaging multi-disciplinary approaches that focus on the conservation and human use of the natural areas through the planning and engineering phases of subdivision development;
  - Encourage and foster existing and additional stewardship partnerships; including the preparation of guidelines to direct the development, maintenance and organization responsibilities of the steward group and the Town.

4.3.10 Parkland Dedication, Land Trust and Parkland Dedication Policies

Parkland dedication is one the primary means by which the Town acquires lands in support of its parks, open space, trail, beach and related developments. Parkland dedication is a function of the Ontario
Planning Act which permits the Town to receive up to five percent of a development's lands for public park purposes or an equivalent value in funds.

Over many years, there have been considerable negotiations amongst municipalities and developers as to what type of lands a developer would dedicate including suggestions involving ravine lands, slopes and other non-developable lands as parkland dedications. However, many of these non-developable lands are also not suitable for the desired park functions, such as sportsfields, playgrounds, ancillary buildings and trails, or have safety and hazard conditions associated with them. The Town has developed a park classification system that identifies the types of parks and open spaces required in the community, their size, function and use requirements. Therefore, in order to successfully implement the parks classification and parks provision standards, parkland dedication requirements need to secure appropriate lands to support these policies and to ensure the Town's park venues meet the needs and aspirations of the residents.

A Parkland Dedication strategy is required to give direction to the negotiations for dedicated parklands. This is also important in light of the fact that Provincial environmental, planning and other initiatives are resulting in increased amounts of lands being deemed non-developable for various reasons, and that municipalities are under pressure to absorb more of these lands as part of the parkland dedication requirements. Such pressure could jeopardize the ability to secure table lands for park-based activities, could result in some parks that are not in the preferred locations and could create a host of potential other challenges.

Further, with the Town already having significant open space lands, and in anticipation of an increased amount of non-developable lands coming into Town ownership, the Town may also need to explore other management and funding supports related to these particular lands. This could result in the need for a 'Land Trust' type strategy similar to what is happening with the Nature Conservatory of Canada and other organizations who work in partnership with community organizations and granting bodies to fundraise, to develop technical capacities and to undertake other initiatives to more effectively manage and preserve these lands.

**Recommendation 15: Parkland Dedication and Land Trust**

- That the Town only accept parkland dedications that:
  - Meet the park and open space hierarchy and provisioning standards of the Official Plan and this Master Plan;
  - Effectively support the development of park-based facilities and amenities as per the parks hierarchy development guidelines;
  - Do not include designated environmentally sensitive areas, significant woodlots, ravine lands, stormwater management ponds and related lands.
- That parkland dedication funds would only be taken by the Town if the size of the dedicated land(s) is too small to support the park and open space provisioning requirements and/or the geographical area is well serviced with parks and open space lands and no additional land requirements are needed.
- That the Town of Fort Erie explore with community members and other government agencies such as the Conservation Authority, Region of Niagara, Ontario Heritage Foundation, etc., the potential to establish a 'Land Trust' as a possible organizational vehicle to acquire, manage and sustain non-developable lands that may come into public ownership but represent capital and operating investments beyond the Town's capabilities and/or interests.
In addition, the Town has been undertaking an update to their Official Plan. Section 13.8.3 of the adopted Fort Erie Official Plan (July 10, 2006) sets out the “Land for Park Purposes” (parkland dedication policies). The policies were reviewed as part of the Background Analysis. We recommend modification to these Official Plan policies which can be considered during the plan approval process.

The following “Land for Park Purposes” policies are contained in the adopted Official Plan:

"I. As a condition of residential development or redevelopment, conveyance of land to the Town for park purposes shall be required at a rate of:

(a) 5 percent of the land proposed for development; or

(b) one hectare of land for each 300 dwelling units proposed.

II. As a condition of industrial or commercial development or recommended condition of approval of a plan of subdivision, the conveyance of land to the Town for park purposes may be required at a rate of 2 percent of the land proposed for development or redevelopment.

II. In lieu of the conveyance of land for park purposes, a cash payment equal to the value of any land required to be conveyed may be required.

IV. Land to be dedicated for park purposes shall only be accepted when minimum site and location standards and site preparation are deemed acceptable by the Town.

V. Council shall use the lands conveyed to the Town for public park or recreational uses, but may sell such lands at any time.

VI. All monies received under provisions of Section III. and V. shall be used for the sole purpose of public park or recreational uses in accordance with the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990.

VII. Council may utilize any monies identified in Section VI. to acquire or develop public park or recreational uses in any area of the Town it considers necessary.

VIII. The Town shall endeavour to encourage the availability of land and facilities of other agencies and groups for the general use of all residents.

IX. The Town may also acquire lands which are of particular value either because of their physical character, or if appropriate social or environmental character, or because their location provides a link with other portions of the open space system.

X. Public Recreational areas and parkland are deemed essential for the welfare of the residents, and the policy of this Plan is therefore to provide such areas at the rate of 4 hectares per 1,000 population.

XI. The Tourism and Leisure Master Plan, prepared by the Town, shall be used as a guide to Council in its decisions regarding parks and recreational facilities."
Recommendation 16: Parkland Dedication Policies

- That the Town make the following recommended changes to Section 13.8.3 of the draft Official Plan:

I. The Town shall require the conveyance of land suitable for park or other public recreational purposes as a condition of the subdivision of land or development pursuant to the Planning Act. All conveyances shall be made in accordance with the criteria and standards set out in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan at the following rates:

(a) the conveyance for commercial and industrial purposes shall be 2 percent of the land.
(b) the conveyance for residential and other purposes shall be 5 percent of the land, or one hectare of land for each 300 dwelling units proposed, whichever is greater.

II. The Town may, in lieu of land dedication, require the payment of money by the owner of the land equal to the value of the land conveyance otherwise required under the following circumstances:

(a) Where the required land dedication fails to provide an area of suitable shape, size or location for development of public parkland. Generally a parcel of land may be considered to be of unsuitable size if its area is less than 0.5 hectare.
(b) Where, using the guidelines established in the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, it is determined that existing park and recreational facilities in the Neighbourhood Planning Area are clearly adequate to serve the projected increase in population.

III. The determination of the value of the land should be in accordance with either Section 42 or 51 of the Planning Act.

IV. The Town where appropriate and in compliance with the parkland dedication policies of this Plan, may consider portions of protected natural areas for parkland dedication purposes where sufficient active parkland is provided for the neighbourhood and/or community and where the lands are of particular value either because of their physical, or if appropriate social or environmental character, or because their location provides a link with other portions of the open space system. The acceptance of woodlots and other natural areas, in specific circumstances, will encourage the protection of the natural amenity and allow for passive recreational use and educational opportunities.
4.3.11 Public Consultation Framework

Municipal parks and recreation services engage high percentages of any community's population. They are actively pursued by residents who have specific interests and who are looking for benefits, both directly for themselves and for the broader community. As such, there is a continuing need for service providers to dialogue with direct users and the broader community to ensure that new, renewal and other service delivery initiatives are undertaken in a way that builds community support, reflects community needs and aspirations and work towards a consensus when multiple alternatives exist.

In order to achieve this outcome, a public consultation framework becomes important in ensuring that both directly engaged individuals and organizations, as well as the broader community have opportunities to learn about the initiatives, to provide input and to achieve more informed and supported outcomes.

Public consultation can be undertaken in many different ways. The Town's website can provide ongoing opportunities for continuous dialogue and input, surveys, access to documents and maps and other two-way communication strategies. Public meetings, workshops, focus groups and other initiatives can be undertaken to solicit input and commentary. Regular meetings with key partners can be organized to share ideas and to facilitate joint directions and opportunities. It is increasingly important within these consultation processes, that there be:

- Appropriate notification and communications.
- A reasonable time for people to educate themselves, prepare their perspectives and to engage.
- Assurances that the input is taken seriously and the overall experience has been informative and meaningful.

Public consultation is not necessarily about the numbers of people who participate, but rather the quality of the input and participation. This statement recognizes the fact that not all people are interested in all initiatives, however the opportunity to participate, if interested in a meaningful way, is what is valued.

**Recommendation 17: Public Consultation Framework**

- That the Town of Fort Erie recognizes that meaningful public consultation is an integral component of any planning and evaluation process for the development of new or renewed park and open spaces within the Town. Public consultation should be undertaken any time a park and open space initiative:
  - Could significantly change the character, capacity, focus / intent or related considerations of an existing park and open space venue.
  - Involves the planning and development of a new park and open space venue;
  - When significant new or policy change initiatives effecting parks and open spaces in the Town are under consideration.
Recommendation 17 (cont’d): Public Consultation Framework

- That the Town will utilize consultation techniques that best suit the unique conditions of the individual park and open space initiative and be dependant upon significance and size of project may include:
  - Focus groups when involving specific users or individuals with a similar perspective or interest, e.g. sportsfield users;
  - Public workshops, open houses and meetings when broader initiatives, such as a master plan, policy initiatives or larger park or facilities development are involved;
  - Surveys, whether electronic or paper-based, when demand, utilization and interest-based information and data is required.

4.3.12 Art, Plaques and Artifacts

Since the inception of parks and open spaces in municipal settings, there has been a long tradition of placing plaques and artifacts in these venues. These range from small plaques identifying commemorative trees, or specific species of tree within an arboretum, to large memorial artifacts, such as cenotaphs, military equipment or other representations. Most of this activity is consistent with the purpose and intent of the park and open space.

In more recent decades, there has been some growth in exploring greater artistic expressions in parks and open spaces. Some of this activity could be free form, such as Henry Moore’s sculpture at Toronto’s City Hall which is a public plaza or commemorative pieces of equipment from converted brownfields areas that are placed in urban beautification sites.

In the last five years, many municipalities have been embracing the Creative Cities initiative evolving from the book by Richard Florida. Its focus has been on the need for cities to give equal importance to the arts and culture interests and capacities of the community, similar to recreation, economic and other dimensions of community life. Proponents of Creative Cities initiatives strongly argue that the creative development of the community, in terms of its arts and culture, significantly contributes to its quality of life and positive economic development.

Larger communities, such as Burlington, Kitchener, Toronto and others, have developed policies around art in public places which allocates a percentage of the capital cost of a municipal project towards the acquisition of artwork, whether a painting, sculpture or other artistic expression that would form an integral part of the overall project.

Though Creative Cities initiatives and the placement of art in public places adds significantly to a community’s quality of life and identity, it also has practical challenges in terms of the following:

- Ongoing maintenance and dealing with vandalism of the items;
- Negative community reactions when a piece of artwork needs to be removed due to structural integrity or other fundamental challenges that result from being exposed to the weather, age, etc.;
• Lack of community acceptance of the artwork. Art is responded to differently by individuals, and there are often concerns related to the community values and standards that can be challenged by an artist's perspective.

• Safety and related concerns can occur depending on the size, configuration and accessibility to the of art.

• Artwork needs to be in conformity with the context, purpose, scale and functionality of the park and open space venue.

Communities are embracing an increased emphasis on art in public places but they also need to recognize there are challenges associated with such initiatives. In order to effectively deal with some of the challenges, communities tend to establish an Art in Public Places Advisory or related committee that focuses on the evaluation and assessment of potential artistic placements and their appropriateness. They are advisory in nature, and undertake recommendations to Council. Municipal Councils have the responsibility to determine the final outcome of such an initiative as such initiatives often involve public expenditures, both in terms of acquisition and ongoing maintenance, as well as a effectively responding to community commentary and standards.

Recommendation 18: Art, Plaques and Artifacts in Town Parks and Open Spaces

• That the Town give consideration to the possibility of artwork being part of the development of new parks undertaken by the Town or when major renewals of existing parks and open space resources are pursued.

• That ownership of an artistic work that is placed in a Town park or open space becomes the property of the Town of Fort Erie immediately upon installation, with the Town responsible for ongoing maintenance and technical assessments over time.

• That an Arts Advisory Committee of at least five members appointed by Town Council, either an existing or a new body, undertake responsibility to:
  
  o Identify the type and scale of artwork that would be appropriate for each particular application based on a request from Town staff;
  
  o Determine the process for the selection of artwork as directed by Town Council on a case-by-case basis;
  
  o Undertake an evaluation process of potential artwork, ensuring that such initiatives are consistent with the purpose and intent of the park and open space, its scale and functionality, as well as being safe and sustainable;
  
  o Request artwork for parks and open space, if approved by Council, ensuring a diversity of artists are involved, with potentially no one artist having works in more than one, or possibly two Town parks and open spaces;
Recommendation 18 (cont’d): Art, Plaques and Artifacts in Town Parks and Open Spaces

- Ensure the artistic work provides images, expressions and themes that are within the community's values and standards and are respectful of the ages and audiences that will be engaged with the particular artwork;

- Undertake these reviews and to make recommendations to Council who would have final approval responsibility.

- That the Museum and Cultural Heritage Committee, advise Council with respect to the acceptance of heritage monuments, artifacts and signs within Town Parks:
  - That signage accompanying such monuments and artifacts conform with Town standards for signage and presentation as outlined in the Wayfinding Study and Heritage-Loop Tour program;
  - Meet safety standards for park and open space users and are not to overwhelm the functionality and purpose of the park or open space;
  - Have evident connectivity with significant historical and developmental perspectives of the community, at either a Town-wide or neighbourhood level;
  - Be reasonably able to be maintained and be sustainable without undue costs to the Town.

- That the Town, through a decision of Council and at its sole discretion, can remove any artwork, monument, plaque or artifact as may be required for safety, maintenance, functionality or any other reason.

- That at the discretion of Council, a public consultation program can be undertaken to determine residents' views on the type and placement of artworks, monuments or artifacts in Town parks or open spaces prior to final approval of any such initiative.

4.3.13 Waterfront Road Allowances and Waterfront Utilization

The Fort Erie waterfront, spanning 40 kilometers along two distinct shorelines—Lake Erie and the Niagara River – is predominately privately owned, allowing Fort Erie residents limited access to waterfront amenities. The Fort Erie Gateway Master Plan (2000) and Council’s strategic direction of 2001 identified increased access to publicly owned waterfront lands as a priority.
Full utilization of the waterfront and increased public access to the waterfront continues to be important to the Town and its residents. The Waterfront Road Allowance Assessment Study was completed by the Planning and Property Safety Department in 2003. The study assessed and evaluated 13 unopened Lake Erie road allowances. There were four fundamental objectives in undertaking this Study:

- Increase public access to the public waterfront lands;
- Develop a land acquisition operational plan to expand the area of these properties;
- Create a Waterfront and Tourism Reserve Fund to sponsor such project;
- Create a partnership between privately and publicly-owned land.

The Study and recommendations were never formally adopted by Council. However, in July 2006 Town Council adopted the 2006 Waterfront Road Allowances Action Plan. This implementation plan, based upon the analysis, principles and recommendations of the 2003 Study, included several standardized improvements for all waterfront road allowances at which public access was recommended. These include:

- Standardized signage and site amenities.
- Armourstone and/or removable bollards to restrict undesirable vehicular access at specified road allowances.
- Property line delineation to demark the boundaries of the waterfront road allowances.
- Undertake surveys of the waterfront road allowances to confirm extent of public lands.
- Encroachments exist on several waterfront road allowances and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The recommended list of improvements and associated costs have been identified in the Implementation Plan of this Master Plan. Implementation of the improvements is recommended to occur over the next three years, with further consideration given to the four road allowances excluded from the recommendations, as mitigation occurs, the costs of which are also identified in the Implementation Plan.

In addition, property from time-to-time may become available along the Lake Erie shoreline. Whether beach lands or rocky shoals, these properties may serve to improve public access to the waterfront or may enhance existing waterfront road allowances or parks. Areas for potential acquisition should be studied and documented in order for the Town to be in a proactive position should they become available.

**Recommendation 19: Waterfront Road Allowances and Waterfront Utilization**

- That the Town, continue to implement 2006 Waterfront Road Allowance Action Plan relative to improvements to unopened waterfront road allowances and update the Action Plan as required.
- That the Town develop a land acquisition operational plan to expand the area of the existing waterfront road allowances or waterfront parks.
- That the Town create a Waterfront and Tourism Reserve Fund to sponsor development and/or expansion of waterfront road allowances or waterfront parks.
- That the Town foster partnerships between private and public landowners, where appropriate to increase public access to Fort Erie’s waterfront.
4.3.14 Encroachment Policy

Encroachments are the private utilization of public lands, which may or may not interfere with public use and enjoyment of the property. The Town should consider the development of a policy that may provide for authorization of or removal of existing and future encroachments on Town owned parks, open space, trails, environmental lands and natural areas.

**Recommendation 20: Encroachment Policy**

That the Town develop a detailed inventory of encroachment issues on public lands. The development of this policy should include a broad public consultation process and a final policy adopted by Council.

4.3.15 Volunteer Development

Community-based parks and recreation services have arisen over the last century and a half from the interests, contributions and passion of volunteers. Though community parks and recreation services have grown immensely in the last fifty years, and most municipalities have developed significant organizational staffing resources to support these services, volunteers remain absolutely critical to the ongoing development and delivery of these services.

It is increasingly important for municipalities to both recognize the value of the volunteer commitment and contributions to parks and recreation services, as well as to ensure appropriate recognition, training and development are available to sustain their participation. Volunteers’ commitment and contributions are enriching to the community, however, there are also periods over time when the right leadership mix, personalities and other issues enter into the volunteer operating environment that can cause challenges to the organizations and the community. Therefore, many volunteer-driven organizations go through cycles of highs and lows. The municipality needs to be supportive in reducing some of these challenges that volunteer organizations will experience in order to sustain their capacities and contributions.

In terms of the Fort Erie Parks and Open Space Master Plan, volunteers need to be recognized as a valued resource and in need of ongoing support and development. However, this initiative does not exist in isolation to parks services alone, but also involves recreation facilities and programs, community development and other areas of initiative that collectively define community services.

Some of the key initiatives the municipality should be considering are as follows:

- A recognition event and awards program for length of service and outstanding service by volunteers who contribute to the community through parks, recreation and other community services areas.

- Policy-based training in regards to gender equity, health and safety, WHIMIS, legal liability and related areas.

- Quarterly publications or other communication strategies to keep volunteers connected, informed and to answer their questions or to encourage them to contact one another and/or the Department in gathering information, developing capacity or problem-solving.

- The potential to use an annual survey or a survey every two years asking volunteers what their challenges and needs are, what is working and what are the types of initiatives that could be helpful to them in fulfilling their voluntary leadership and other roles.
In the end, the Town of Fort Erie, in ensuring an ongoing and well-developed base of volunteers, needs to give attention and support to the recognition, recruitment and training and development of volunteers in voluntary organizations.

Recommendation 21: – Volunteer Development

That the Town of Fort Erie develop a comprehensive volunteer recognition, recruitment and training and development program for community services organizations and leaders giving focus to:

- The recognition of volunteers for length of service and outstanding service to the community;
- Supporting volunteer recruitment initiatives;
- Ensuring regular communications with volunteer leaders and voluntary organizations in identifying needs, opportunities, trends and supports.

4.4 Parks and Open Space Hierarchy

A new Parks and Open Space Hierarchy (“Hierarchy”) is proposed to overcome the problems inherent to consolidates the previous hierarchies, recognizes the unique circumstances of the Town, and provides an effective guide for planning the distribution and servicing of the Town’s existing and future parks. It is based on commonly accepted criteria that provides the Town with classifications suited to its unique situation.

The new Hierarchy will consist of three classifications:

1. Neighbourhood Parks
2. Community Parks
3. Specialized Parks

The new hierarchy provides a clear separation of traditional park and recreation facilities (sports fields, playgrounds, parking, buildings, amenities) that have desirable provision standards, and “specialized” facilities that rely on unique natural or recreation resources and/or have vague service standards (Beaches, Heritage Sites, Cemeteries, Natural Reserves, etc.). This is necessary in order to avoid bias in the provision standard analysis that will serve as a guideline for the distribution of new parks. Though the service level of Specialized Parks may be less standardized, it does not mean that these resources are any less important. There is a significant trend in the increasing value of natural heritage and environmental protection. These specialized resources are very important for tourism development. Placing these parks into a single specialized category allows the Town the flexibility to develop these resources without being tied to a more limited facility standard.

Provision of traditional park and recreation facilities in the Hierarchy is provided by a straightforward, two-level classification drawing from the 2001 Tourism and Leisure Master Plan and current park assessment practise. The categories of Neighbourhood and Community Parks are clearly differentiated on the basis of size, facilities, provision standards and service areas. As recreational facilities are expensive to develop, the Hierarchy is optimized to meet the essential level of service in each park category, both in park size and facility quantity and quality. The Neighbourhood Parks will provide the basic level of passive and informal activities, while the Community Parks will be the primary source of active recreational facilities.

Recommendation 22: Parks and Open Space Hierarchy

- That the Town adopt the following parks and open space hierarchy:
  1. Neighbourhood Parks
  2. Community Parks
  3. Specialized Parks
4.4.1 Parkland Classifications and Criteria

The proposed classifications and recommended criteria are discussed in detail below and summarized in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The Town’s parks according to the proposed Classification are shown in Figure 2. The proposed Service Areas of the Town’s parks under the new classification are shown in Figure 3.

*Neighbourhood Parks* are the foundation of the open space system and satisfy the basic open space and recreational needs of the Town’s residents. They usually serve one urban neighbourhood with a recommended service radius of 600 metres for built-up areas. They accommodate both passive activities and informal active recreation and serve all age groups of the population. The recommend size range of Neighbourhood Parks is between 0.5 - 2.0 hectares. Their programming should be based on neighbourhood interest preferences and at the minimum, provide areas for passive activities such as sitting, viewing, conversing and contemplating, as well as play areas for children and open turf areas for unstructured active play. Informal active recreational areas in the form of play fields or play courts are optional, and these optional facilities should reflect the needs and preference of the local population. Neighbourhood parks provide visual relief and add aesthetic quality especially to higher density areas as well as serving as meeting areas for small informal groups. Their location should be central to the neighbourhood they serve, within safe and convenient walking distance for most of the neighbourhood residents and uninterrupted by major thoroughfares or other physical barriers. Neighbourhood parks are primarily accessible by walking and cycling, thus provision of good local linkages in form of walkways and cycling routes is a key to the success of the park. Their location and facilities should be coordinated with elementary schools where this possibility exists.

*Community Parks* serve two or more adjacent, urban neighbourhoods and provide for active recreational activities. They have a recommended service area of 1.6 km in built-up areas. They are multipurpose and can offer both passive and active recreational areas for both programmed and non-programmed use. They should offer year round recreational opportunities, where possible. They can accommodate major sports, community and specialized facilities, such as multiple play fields, outdoor swimming pools, splash pads, and play courts. The size of Community Parks will vary according to the nature of proposed facilities, but should be a minimum of 4.0 hectares. Community Parks may also serve as Neighbourhood Parks for their immediate neighbourhood, and should fulfill all the requirements set for Neighbourhood Parks where this opportunity exists. They are accessible by walking, cycling, driving and preferably also by public transit. Good local linkages in form of walkways and cycling routes are very important and provision of parking becomes a requirement at this level. Their location and facilities should be coordinated with secondary schools where this possibility exists and is feasible.

*Specialized Parks* are those that do not fit within the standard, outdoor recreation facilities model, but offer unique, special purpose facilities. They take advantage of a variety of important resources, such as natural features (Shagbark Nature Area, Stevensville Conservation Area, Beaches), historically significant sites and structures (Veteran’s Way, Battle of Ridgeway Park), areas of unique character (Riverwalk Park) or significant recreational facilities. Alternatively, they might offer a unique recreational facility that will attract users from all around the Town. This might include a skatepark facility, outdoor aquatic facility, or a premium spray pad/playground complex. These parks serve a large cross-section of the Town’s population and may attract visitors from outside the town. Specialized Parks include:

- Outdoor Recreation Venues
- Trails and other Linear Parks
- Cultural and Historic Parks, Memorials, Monuments
- Natural Reserves
- Public Beaches, Waterfront Parks and Accesses
- Urban Greens, Beautification Areas and Public Gardens

While a general facility guideline is provided, the size of these parks will vary depending on the land resource and their facility requirements, and should be decided on individual basis.
The new park hierarchy includes generic facilities provision standards for each relevant class of park along with a minimum recommended park size, to ensure that the required space is available to accommodate current and future facility needs. This will ensure the basic infrastructure of parkland and the essential level of associated facilities that will serve the Town for the long term.

**Recommendation 23: Parkland Classifications and Criteria**

- That the Town adopt the parkland classifications for Neighbourhood Park, Community Parks and Specialized Parks and the criteria as outlined in Table 1, 2 and 3.
Table 1: Recommended Criteria - Neighbourhood Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood Parks</th>
<th>Basic Facility Requirements</th>
<th>Optional Facilities</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Preferred Size</th>
<th>Service Standards</th>
<th>Identity &amp; Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Class 2 playground</td>
<td>-Class 2 play courts</td>
<td>-walking</td>
<td>600m radius or 5-10 minutes of walking, uninterrupted by major roads and other physical barriers.</td>
<td>0.5 - 2 hectares</td>
<td>1ha/ 1,000 population</td>
<td>Define edges to distinguish from adjacent land use and provide extensive street frontage for safety and visibility.</td>
<td>Serves one neighbourhood. Location and facilities should be coordinated with elementary schools where the possibility exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Informal seating area</td>
<td></td>
<td>-cycling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A balance of active and passive park spaces</td>
<td>Location to be central to the neighbourhood it serves, in a way that the service area is not interrupted by major roads and other physical barriers. Screen park from negative adjacent impacts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Open turf area for play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Provide shaded areas (with planting or shade structure) for passive recreation</td>
<td>-Toboggan hills -Bocce courts, horseshoe pits etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Park name signage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Waste receptacles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Recommended Criteria - Community Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Parks</th>
<th>Basic Facility Requirements</th>
<th>Optional Facilities</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Preferred Size</th>
<th>Service Standards</th>
<th>Identity &amp; Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To fulfill all requirements as Neighbourhood parks, where fulfills that function as well</td>
<td>- Additional Class-1 play fields or play courts</td>
<td>-walking -cycling -driving -public transit</td>
<td>1.6 km radius in built-up areas; 2.0 km in urban fringe areas</td>
<td>Minimum 4 hectares</td>
<td>1ha/1,000 population</td>
<td>Primarily active park spaces with the provision of passive spaces to fulfill the requirements of a neighbourhood park where applicable.</td>
<td>Define edges to distinguish from adjacent land use and provide extensive street frontage for safety and visibility.</td>
<td>Serves two or more neighbourhoods. Can serve as a neighbourhood park for the adjacent residential area. Location and facilities should be coordinated with elementary or secondary schools where the possibility exists. Potentially also attracts visitors from other areas of the Town and from outside the Town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Class 1 playground</td>
<td>- Splash-pads - Toboggan hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Seating area for viewing</td>
<td>- Natural areas, horticultural displays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provision of shade with planting or shade structure</td>
<td>- Bocce courts, horseshoe pits etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parking and parking lot lighting</td>
<td>- Informal seating areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provision of bike racks</td>
<td>- Open turf areas for play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Park name signage</td>
<td>- Concession facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Waste receptacles</td>
<td>- Washrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Play area, play court and play field lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Walkway lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Informational signage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Recommended Criteria - Specialized Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Facility Requirements</th>
<th>Optional Facilities</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Preferred Size</th>
<th>Service Standards</th>
<th>Identity &amp; Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Basic facility requirements to be determined on individual basis</td>
<td>-Parking as required -Parking lot lighting as required -Waste receptacles as required -Washrooms as required -Display info or guide to park facilities where applicable</td>
<td>-walking -cycling -driving</td>
<td>Serves the entire community</td>
<td>Size varies depending on land base and facilities.</td>
<td>3ha/1,000 population</td>
<td>Define edges to distinguish from adjacent land use. Location dependent on availability of areas with features these parks can rely on.</td>
<td>Includes: -Recreational buildings -Trails -Cultural, Civic and Historic Parks, Memorials, Monuments -Public Gardens, Arboreta -Cemeteries -Conservation Areas, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Natural Areas -Beaches, Waterfront Parks Potentially attracts visitors from outside the Town.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 Parkland Classification of Parks

The Town’s existing parks and open spaces were assigned to their new categories based on substantial conformance to the size, resource and facility criteria. Classification is also proposed for undeveloped open space and any parks not yet developed to previous Town standards.

Reclassification of the existing parks according to the new Hierarchy will result in 12 Neighbourhood Parks, 6 Community Parks and 18 Specialized Parks. Table 4 shows the proposed changes in Park classification. Figure 2 illustrates the Town’s Parkland according to the Proposed Classifications.
Table 4: Proposed Classification of Parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARK NAME</th>
<th>COMMUNITY AREA</th>
<th>PARK SIZE (ha)</th>
<th>CURRENT USE</th>
<th>PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN PARKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.C. Douglas #1</td>
<td>Douglastown</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.C. Douglas #2</td>
<td>Douglastown</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albany Woods</td>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>Undeveloped Open Space</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Street Park</td>
<td>For Erie South</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle of Ridgeway Park</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay Beach</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Ave. Beach</td>
<td>Thunderbay</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen Road Park</td>
<td>Bridgeburg</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherryhill Road</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Beach</td>
<td>Crescent Park</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Beach Waterfront Park</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Ridge Park</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Park</td>
<td>Fort Erie North</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Field</td>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenndale Park</td>
<td>Crescent Park</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loomis Crescent Park</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisureplex/Town Hall</td>
<td>Crescent Park</td>
<td>7.17</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakes Park</td>
<td>Bridgeburg</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens Circle</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeway Lions Park</td>
<td>Ridgeway</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverwalk Park</td>
<td>Fort Erie North</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shagbark Nature Park</td>
<td>Ridgeway</td>
<td>25.70</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Road North</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Road South</td>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville Memorial Park</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville Memory Park</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville Mini Parkette</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugarbowl Park</td>
<td>Bridgeburg</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Slope</td>
<td>Fort Erie North</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s Way</td>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Leaf Park</td>
<td>Thunderbay</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverly Beach and Park</td>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOWN PARTNERED PARKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimist Family Park</td>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville Conservation Area</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>49.40</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Empire Loyalist Park</td>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>20.50</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara Parks Commission lands</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Town-Wide Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LINEAR PARKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship Trail (Approx. 19 km)</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Town-Wide Linear Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niagara River Recreational Trail (Approx. 17 km)</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Town-Wide Linear Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PARK AREA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>195.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: "Town-Wide" and "Specialized" represent the same type of park. "Specialized" is considered a better term to indicate the varied uses and activities of this type of park.
Recommendation 24: Parkland Classifications of Parks

- That the Town adopt the parkland classification of parks as outlined in Table 4.

4.4.3 Parkland Provision Standards

Park provision standards have gone through several iterations in the 20th century to keep pace with recreational trends, values and demographics. The history of provision standards in North America begins pre-WWII and was consolidated in the US in the post-war period with recommendations of a park classification system and parkland area per population. The convention of 4 ha/1000 population along with the classification of neighbourhood, community and regional parks was well developed by the end of the 1970’s. Typically, the larger park categories would encompass more than just municipal parkland, including campgrounds, conservation areas, large natural areas, provincial and national parks.

The use of the park area per thousand population standard provides an easy and simple analysis of parkland provision. The Master Plan proposes new parkland provision standards in the new park hierarchy. However caution should be exercised in using such standards exclusively and absolutely. They should be considered as a guideline that can be used as one of several tools to determine parkland improvement and development. Provision standards do have their place in establishing policy and providing direction and priority to park improvement and development. If it is recognized that they serve as the foundation for establishing general parkland, subject to the ongoing needs of and direction from the community, then they serve as a valuable tool to meet recreation needs.

The new provision standards proposed for the Town are as follows:

- Neighbourhood Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons
- Community Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons
- Specialized Parks 3.0 ha/1000 persons
- TOTAL Municipal Parkland 5.0 ha/1000 persons

The Town is currently providing approximately 6.5 ha of municipal park per 1000, which exceeds the overall recommended provision level of 5.0 ha/1000. However, as can be seen in Table 4 approximately half of the parkland is under partnership status, where the Town provides operations and maintenance but ownership is by others. This partnership parkland is a significant Town resource and should public use ever be in jeopardy, the Town should acquire the parkland.

Recommendation 25: Parkland Provision Standards

That the Town adopt the following Parkland Provision Standards:

- Neighbourhood Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons
- Community Parks 1.0 ha/1000 persons
- Specialized Parks 3.0 ha/1000 persons
4.4.4 Parkland Analysis

This section examines the state of parkland provision in each park category according to the new classification and provision standards. The availability of neighbourhood, community and specialized parkland in each community is presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

The neighbourhood park issues that are important for the Town are increasing the provision level of neighbourhood parks and maintaining adequate park size and reasonable service area limits in a low density urban environment. Service areas for both neighbourhood and community parks in urban fringe areas of the Town should be increased. The establishment of new neighbourhood and community parks in rural areas is not recommended, as it is prohibitive in terms of cost and ineffective in service delivery, particularly without the support of adjacent community institutions like schools and community centres. Therefore, while community deficits in rural areas may be anticipated, overall provision levels should meet the standards. In addition, specific park improvements and/or new park development could be sited to better serve rural and urban fringe populations.

Table 5: Available Neighbourhood Parkland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>*Current Population / Future Population (2024) / Net Population Increase</th>
<th>Current Parkland / Required Parkland (ha) / Surplus, Deficit (+/- ha)</th>
<th>Future, Required Parkland (2024) (ha) / Future Surplus, Deficit (+/- ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeburg</td>
<td>3704 / 3782 / 78</td>
<td>**3.5 / 3.7 / (-0.2)</td>
<td>3.8 / (-0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Park</td>
<td>2667 / 3537 / 870</td>
<td>**2.0 / 2.7 / (-0.7)</td>
<td>3.5 / (-1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>3567 / 4544 / 977</td>
<td>**2.1 / 3.6 / (-1.5)</td>
<td>4.5 / (-1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglastown</td>
<td>1646 / 2548 / 902</td>
<td>3.9 / 1.6 / (+2.3)</td>
<td>2.5 / (+1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Erie North</td>
<td>3972 / 3972 / 0</td>
<td>**4.0 / 4.0 / (0.0)</td>
<td>4.0 / (0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>4596 / 7656 / 3060</td>
<td>2.1 / 4.6 / (-2.5)</td>
<td>7.7 / (-5.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeway</td>
<td>2325 / 2856 / 531</td>
<td>1.4 / 2.3 / (-0.9)</td>
<td>2.9 / (-1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>1457 / 1721 / 264</td>
<td>0.0 / 1.5 / (-1.5)</td>
<td>1.7 / (-1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>2407 / 2900 / 493</td>
<td>3.6 / 2.4 / (+1.2)</td>
<td>2.9 / (+0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunder Bay</td>
<td>1802 / 1938 / 136</td>
<td>0.0 / 1.8 / (-1.8)</td>
<td>1.9 / (-1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>28143 / 35454 / 7311</td>
<td>22.6 / 28.2 / (-5.6)</td>
<td>35.4 / (-12.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Derived from the 2001 Census Canada and the 2005 Town of Fort Erie Subdivision Status Report
** Where a Community Park serves a neighbourhood function as well, an additional 2.0 ha has been added to the park supply.

According to the new classification, the Town has an overall deficit of neighbourhood parkland. However, there are significant disparities in park provision among the Communities. Douglastown and Stevensville are well-serviced. Crystal Beach, Fort Erie South, Rural South and Thunder Bay have the largest deficits. Thunder Bay is partially serviced by a private park that serves the Thunder Bay Association. Rural South has no parkland within its boundaries providing a neighbourhood function and is only partially serviced by adjacent communities at the neighbourhood park level. Schools sites do provide some neighbourhood park functions such as playgrounds and free play areas and therefore may reduce the impact of neighbourhood park deficits as found in Bridgeburg, Fort Erie North, Crescent Park and Crystal Beach. However, these facilities are provided primarily for school purposes and there are no current agreements between the Town and the School Boards for the development and use of school site facilities by the general public.
Table 6: Available Community Parkland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Parks</th>
<th>*Current Population / Future Population (2024) / Net Population Increase</th>
<th>Current Parkland / Required Parkland (ha) / Surplus, Deficit (+/- ha)</th>
<th>Future Required Parkland (2024) (ha) / Future Surplus, Deficit (+/- ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeburg</td>
<td>3704 / 3782 / 78</td>
<td>11.7 / 3.7 / (+8.0)</td>
<td>3.8 / (+7.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Park</td>
<td>2667 / 3537 / 870</td>
<td>4.8 / 2.7 / (+2.1)</td>
<td>3.5 / (+1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>3567 / 4544 / 977</td>
<td>11.7 / 3.6 / (+8.1)</td>
<td>4.5 / (+7.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglastown</td>
<td>1646 / 2548 / 902</td>
<td>0 / 1.6 / (-1.6)</td>
<td>2.5 / (-2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Erie North</td>
<td>3972 / 3972 / 0</td>
<td>0 / 4.0 / (-4.0)</td>
<td>4.0 / (-4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>4596 / 7656 / 3060</td>
<td>29.5 / 4.6 / (+24.9)</td>
<td>7.7 / (+21.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeway</td>
<td>2325 / 2856 / 531</td>
<td>0 / 2.3 / (-2.3)</td>
<td>2.9 / (-2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>1457 / 1721 / 264</td>
<td>0 / 1.5 / (-1.5)</td>
<td>1.7 / (-1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>2407 / 2900 / 493</td>
<td>20.5 / 2.4 / (+18.1)</td>
<td>2.9 / (+17.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunder Bay</td>
<td>1802 / 1938 / 136</td>
<td>0 / 1.8 / (-1.8)</td>
<td>1.9 / (-1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>28143 / 35454 / 7311</td>
<td>78.2 / 28.2 / (+50.0)</td>
<td>35.4 / (+42.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Derived from the 2001 Census Canada and the 2005 Town of Fort Erie Subdivision Status Report

According to the new classification, the Town has a surplus of community parkland. However, there are disparities in provision on a community basis. Two of the parks, Optimist Family Park in Fort Erie South and United Empire Loyalist Park in the Stevensville area, are very large in size and result in surpluses for these communities. However, both of these parks are currently in private ownership and therefore their public availability is not fully secure. In addition, Optimist Park provides poor service area coverage for Fort Erie South. Of the five communities showing deficits, Fort Erie North and Ridgeway are reasonably serviced, and Thunder Bay and Rural South are somewhat serviced, by adjacent community parks. Douglastown has no parkland within or near its boundaries providing a community function.

Table 7 shows the available Specialized parkland. According to the new classification, the Town has a surplus of Specialized parkland. However, Stevensville Conservation Area represents half of the Specialized parkland and is currently a Town Partnered park. Specialized parks are reasonably well distributed considering the dependence on natural features for many of these parks.

Table 7: Available Specialized Parkland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialized Parks</th>
<th>*Current Population / Future Population (2024) / Net Population Increase</th>
<th>Current Parkland / Required Parkland (ha) / Surplus, Deficit (+/- ha)</th>
<th>Future Required Parkland (2024) (ha) / Future Surplus, Deficit (+/- ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>28143 / 35454 / 7311</td>
<td>98.3 / 84.4 / (+13.9)</td>
<td>106.4 / (-8.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Derived from the 2001 Census Canada and the 2005 Town of Fort Erie Subdivision Status Report
5.0 PARKLAND AND FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Provision of Neighbourhood and Community Parkland

A discussion of neighbourhood and community parkland provision is provided for each of the Town’s Community Areas along with recommendations on park acquisition and development. Where proposed or designated parks are already anticipated, these are shown on the park classification plan (Figure 2). The development of Neighbourhood Plans by the Town may further refine these recommendations. In general, new neighbourhood and community parkland should conform to the Recommended Criteria shown outlined in Tables 1, 2 and 3, unless specific Town or local needs suggest otherwise.

Bridgeburg

The built-up area of Bridgeburg is adequately serviced by a neighbourhood park level by Bowen Park and Sugarbowl Park. The community as a whole is slightly under-serviced but neither this deficit, nor the projected growth, warrant additional neighbourhood parkland. The built-up area is also well served on a community level by the Sugarbowl Park/Oakes Park complex. Development of a neighbourhood plan is currently underway and will further examine the parkland service level in this area.

Crescent Park

Crescent Park is under-serviced on the neighbourhood park level. Ferndale Park provides this service to the northern half of this community. Considering this current deficit and the projected growth, an additional neighbourhood park is warranted in the south area. The Community is well served at the community level by Ferndale Park.

Crystal Beach

Currently, the community of Crystal Beach is under-serviced by neighbourhood parks. The proposed neighbourhood park in the northwest portion of the built-up area, as identified in the 2005 Crystal Beach Neighbourhood Plan, is an appropriate initiative with a park size that meets the proposed minimum standard. The Town may also consider enhancements to Crystal Ridge Park and Bay Beach to improve service to the southeastern area of the community. On a community park level, Crystal Beach is adequately served by Crystal Ridge Park. This Park also serves Ridgeway and Thunder Bay and is the only community park in this area.

Douglastown

Douglastown is well-serviced in its built-up areas on a neighbourhood park level, both for current and future populations, with the exception of the mobile home park area on the southwest side of QEW. Douglastown does not have a community park nor is within a service area of an adjacent community park. Therefore, new and existing enhancements made to AC Douglas #2 should strive to provide a limited community park function.

Fort Erie North

Currently, Fort Erie North is adequately serviced on a neighbourhood park level, with adjacent Sugarbowl Park adequately serving the northern built-up section. Fort Erie North has no community park within its boundary, but is adequately served by the adjacent Sugarbowl Park/Oakes Park complex.

Fort Erie South

Currently, Fort Erie South is under-serviced on a neighbourhood park level. Given that approximately 40% of the Town’s future population growth is anticipated to occur in Fort Erie South, this deficit will become even more acute. Combined current and future projected growth deficits will require approximately 5.5 ha of additional neighbourhood parkland, or 3 to 4 neighbourhood parks. Waverly Beach Park should have a portion of its area developed with neighbourhood park facilities to help offset this deficit. The area is only partially serviced by Optimist Park and Ferndale Park on the community park
level (although Optimist Park has a very large community potential due its size). A future park north of Garrison Road is proposed in the Spears Road Neighbourhood Plan. This or other future parkland should be considered for enhanced use, with a community level function. Additional parkland should be acquired and developed commensurate with growth.

**Ridgeway**

Ridgeway is under-serviced by neighbourhood parks. The Ridgeway Lions Park serves most of the built-up area. This area is also complemented by a neighbourhood function of Crystal Ridge Park. The current deficit and projected growth will require an additional neighbourhood park. On a community park level Crystal Ridge Park is adequately servicing most of the area and improvements made to this park would benefit the Ridgeway community as well.

**Rural South**

Currently, residents of the Rural South have no neighbourhood or community parks and are only partially served by an adjacent community park (Ferndale Park). With low density and low projected growth it is difficult to provide effective neighbourhood park service however the current deficit suggests that a neighbourhood park may be developed in a boundary area with Crescent Park, so as to serve more than one community. Specific community parkland development cannot be justified for Rural South, but the community will benefit from improvements made to community parks made in surrounding areas.

**Stevensville**

The Stevensville area is well-serviced by both neighbourhood and community parks and will remain so with projected growth. The neighbourhood function is well-served by Stevensville Memorial Park and the Stevensville Mini Parkette. The surplus of community parkland provided by United Empire Loyalist Park is somewhat warranted as it is serving the whole north and northwest sections of the Town. United Empire Loyalist and Stevensville Mini Parkette Parks should be considered and planned as one park complex.

**Thunder Bay**

The Thunder Bay community has no public parks. An existing, centrally located private park owned by the Thunderbay Property Owners Association is currently serving a neighbourhood and community function for members. The Crystal Ridge Park is also providing community park service for part of the neighbourhood. Enhanced improvements to the private park have the potential to satisfy current and projected growth needs in this area. The Town may consider a partnership with the Association to in order to provide public access and secure this resource for Thunder Bay residents.

**Recommendation 26: New Park Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That the Town develop and/or acquire land for development for the following new parks, listed in order of priority:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Thunder Bay: establishment of neighbourhood park through development or partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fort Erie South: development of designated neighbourhood park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Crystal Beach: development of proposed neighbourhood park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Crescent Park: establish new neighbourhood parkland in south area, potentially also serving areas of Rural South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ridgeway: establish new neighbourhood parkland in north part of the built up area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fort Erie South: establish new neighbourhood parkland. Ensure designated or future neighbourhood parkland can accommodate some enhanced facilities (such as sports fields)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Provision of Specialized Parkland

The Town has significant and varied Specialized parkland. Several sub-categories of Specialized parkland are a part of current Town initiatives such as identifying and improving beach accesses, improving beachfront parkland, completing the regional trail linkages and developing tourism amenity such as the Riverwalk. These initiatives are an expression of the Town’s particular needs and a reflection of the Town’s unique resources. While the Town has a surplus of Specialized parkland, these initiatives should continue.

5.3 Park Facilities Recommendations

5.3.1 Introduction

With the important exception of natural environment open space (woodlots, wetlands and beaches) parkland provision is not an end in itself, but the medium through which facilities are made available. These facilities are the essential, physical manifestation of what a parks delivery system hopes to provide. They are the point of contact between the user and the Town, providing constructed features (both passive and active) that will maximize user recreation experiences and enjoyment.

Facilities provision is a challenge for municipalities. They need to determine the type, quantity and quality of facilities based on current and future trends, anticipate the capital and operating costs, and provide these on an optimized basis to ensure prudent use of primarily tax-based revenues.

Prescriptive facility provision standards (i.e. 1 soccer field per 2,500 population) are not proposed, as such approaches are not flexible enough to adapt to changing and emerging recreational trends. It is not realistic to expect a Master Plan to be able to adequately anticipate all recreational trends. For example, skateboarding is now an activity that the Town is planning a facility for, where such a consideration might have been a low priority five years ago. As another example, beach volleyball is an emerging trend that the Town should now be monitoring demand for.

The Master Plan proposes a two-prong approach to long term facilities provision:

1. ensuring an adequate supply of space for future facilities, and
2. entrenching a community consultation process to determine specific parkland and facilities needs on an ongoing basis (as per Recommendation #17).

The Background Analysis found that current and potential use and user satisfaction of primary facilities in the Town is affected more by issues of quality, distribution and type than by the overall number of these facilities that are available. Therefore, to bring some order to a generic facilities discussion the Master Plan proposes a Facility Classification for those facilities with the broadest range of cost and quality. The following sections review the Towns primary facilities according to these issues, and provide short and intermediate term recommendations.
5.3.2 Facilities Classification

The Facility Classification essentially distinguishes between a basic facility and an enhanced facility. Quality (and cost) issues can be forefront in discussions on optimizing facility provision.

Recommendation 27: Facilities Classification

That the Town adopt the following facilities classification (Regulation field size shall be based upon the association governing the sport in the Province):

SOCCER, FOOTBALL, LACROSSE AND FIELD HOCKEY FIELDS

- **CLASS 1**
  - Field is regulation size. Field grading is to recommended design standards. Lighting and irrigation are optional. Subsurface drainage is preferred and is required with irrigation. The field has appropriate goal posts and painted lines are preferred. Regular, scheduled field maintenance includes mowing, fertilizing, aeration and overseeding program. Field overlaps should be avoided. Player and bleacher seating is provided.

- **CLASS 2**
  - Field size depends on available area. Field grading is to ensure positive drainage. The field has appropriate goalposts, but no painted field lines. Mowing maintenance is supplemented with additional inputs on an as-needed basis. Overlaps between fields are acceptable.

BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FIELDS

- **CLASS 1**
  - Field is regulation size. Field grading is to recommended design standards. Lighting and irrigation are optional. Subsurface drainage is preferred. The field has a regulation backstop, specific infield surface, players’ benches and foul line fence. Regular, scheduled field maintenance includes mowing, fertilizing, aeration and overseeding program for the turf and grooming/make-up of the infield. Field overlaps should be avoided. Bleacher seating is provided for spectators.

- **CLASS 2**
  - Field size depends on available area. The field consists of a backstop, granular infield and two mounted benches for the players. Mowing maintenance is supplemented with infield maintenance and additional inputs on an as-needed basis. Overlaps between fields are acceptable.

TENNIS AND MULTI-PURPOSE PLAY COURTS

- **CLASS 1**
  - The court is regulation size, with coloured penetration surfacing, painted game lines and standard fencing. Lighting is optional and spectator seating or other amenity is recommended.

- **CLASS 2**
  - The court is approximately regulation size and includes painted game lines and fencing where required.

PLAYGROUNDS

- **CLASS 1**
  - A good variety of play items for children of all ages (2 to 12) is provided, including specific items and play separation for tots and pre-teens. The provision level is at least 8 major, non-identical play elements, excluding swings and slides. At least three junior and three senior swings are to be provided. Accessibility of the play equipment should be provided.

- **CLASS 2**
  - A basic level of play items for young children (2 to 7) is provided, including approximately 5-8 play items, excluding swings and slides. At least two junior and two senior swings are to be provided.
### 5.3.3 Provision of Facilities

Facility recommendations are summarized in Table 8 and discussed in detail in this section. Figures 4, 5 and 6 illustrate existing parkland facilities and facility recommendations. Beyond these recommendations, it is proposed that all parks be subject to ongoing review to bring facility quantity and quality up to the minimum facility standards as proposed in the Recommended Criteria (Tables 1, 2 & 3) and the preceding Facilities Classification.

**Table 8: Facility Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY AREA</th>
<th>PARK NAME</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>SPECIFIC FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeburg</td>
<td>Bowen Road Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Ball field to receive Class 1 maintenance, but with outfield fence removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oakes Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>• All ball fields to receive Class 1 maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• New Class 2 playground in partnership with Minor Ball Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugarbowl Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>• Future multi-use court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Future aquatic provision to be reviewed—pool improvements and /or splash pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ferndale Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>• Decommission ball field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve 3 senior soccer fields to Class 1 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location to be Determined</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>• New skatepark located in the Crescent Park/Fort Erie South area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Beach</td>
<td>Bay Beach</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>• Decommission ball field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crystal Ridge Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>• Future Class 1 soccer field, if required in Crystal Beach/Ridgeway/Thunder Bay area, should be located here without displacing other uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Future multi-use court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Splash pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglastown</td>
<td>A.C. Douglas #1</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Passive recreational amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.C. Douglas #2</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Soccer field to receive Class 2 maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Convert tennis court to multi-use facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Erie North</td>
<td>Douglas Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Ball field to be maintained as free play area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Soccer field to receive Class 2 maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Erie South</td>
<td>Albert Street Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Decommission ball field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve tennis courts if participation warrants, otherwise convert to multi-use facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Field</td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Ball field to be maintained as free play area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Specific Facility Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Area</th>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optimist Family Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>• Soccer fields to receive Class 2 maintenance&lt;br&gt;• New Class 1 soccer field or improvement of existing field to Class 1 with lighting&lt;br&gt;• Two future Class 1 soccer fields (or one Class 1 lit field), here or potentially alternate location in FES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Waverly Beach and Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>• New Class 2 playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ridgeway</td>
<td>Ridgeway Lions Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Ball field to be maintained as free play area&lt;br&gt;• Soccer field to receive Class 2 maintenance&lt;br&gt;• New Class 2 soccer field&lt;br&gt;• Convert tennis courts to multi-use facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>Stevensville Memorial Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Soccer field removed when capacity improvements have been achieved elsewhere in the Town&lt;br&gt;• New Class 2 playground&lt;br&gt;• Convert tennis courts to multi-use facility&lt;br&gt;• New splash pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevensville</td>
<td>Stevensville Memory Park</td>
<td>Specialized Park</td>
<td>• New pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Empire Loyalist Park</td>
<td>Community Park</td>
<td>• Ball fields to receive Class 2 maintenance&lt;br&gt;• Soccer field to receive Class 2 maintenance&lt;br&gt;• Improvement of playground to Class 2 level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunderbay</td>
<td>Establish New Park</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Park</td>
<td>• Neighbourhood park amenities&lt;br&gt;• New Class 2 playground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sports Fields

To summarize the findings in the Background Analysis, overall participation in minor ball has declined while overall adult ball participation has remained stable. Soccer continues to grow and this trend is expected to continue. Football participation has remained constant. Other field activities such as field lacrosse, field hockey, cricket, etc. are not placing any current pressure on field utilization.

The Background Analysis found limited sport field capacity in the Town. Generally, Class 1 ball fields and all scheduled soccer fields are experiencing an intense level of use. There is unused capacity in Class 2 ball fields. Currently, only soccer games are scheduled. However, information from the soccer association suggests that teams are sharing fields for practice and using school fields due to the unavailability of municipal fields for practices. The demand suggests that municipal soccer field use is at, or exceeding, the limit. Participation and trends analysis suggests that while ball activity has stabilized, soccer activity will continue to increase.
**Ball Fields**

Ball Fields have the widest range of quality and use. Class 1 ball fields are intensely used while there is unused capacity in Class 2 fields. There is additional ball field capacity and no new ball fields are proposed.

**Recommendation 28: Ball Fields**

- The Class 1 fields at Oakes Park and the Class 2 fields at United Empire Loyalist Park should continue to be maintained at these levels.
- The Class 1 field at Bowen Road Park be considered for Class 1 level maintenance but with outfield fence to be removed. If not this field then the ball association wishes an additional Class 1 field in close proximity to Oakes Park
- The Class 2 field at Ridgeway Lions Park, Energy Field and Douglas Park should be maintained as unscheduled free play facilities
- Due to poor condition, low utilization, and alternative provision, the fields at Ferndale Park, Crystal Ridge Park and Albert Street Park should be removed or maintained as a free play areas, whichever is the most cost-effective approach.

**Soccer Fields**

Existing Soccer fields are generally all at the Class 2 level. Currently only games are scheduled with the Town. However, information from the soccer association suggests that teams are sharing fields for practice and using school fields due to the unavailability of municipal fields for practices. Therefore, all scheduled soccer fields are experiencing an intense level of use. Utilization appears to be in excess of capacity at the multi-field venues (Ferndale Park and Optimist Park).

Immediate capacity improvements are required. Anticipated demand levels in the near term will result in the need for two additional fields. Existing fields can double capacity with the addition of lighting. However, this improvement will also require commensurate additions/improvements in drainage, irrigation and turf. Existing fields will require a careful audit to determine if they warrant such improvements.
Recommendation 29: Soccer Fields

- Improve immediate capacity with: a) the addition of one Class 2 field in Ridgeway Lions Park; and b) the addition of one new, unlit Class 1 field at Optimist Park, or the improvement of an existing field at Optimist Park to Class 1 level with lighting.
- Within a 5 year period, either two new Class 1 fields or one lit, Class 1 field be developed, located at either Optimist Park or at a new enhanced Neighbourhood Park in Fort Erie South. If sports tourism and tournament level soccer facilities assumes a priority, then Optimist Park would be the appropriate location, in concert with increased maintenance of the existing fields at Class 1 level. If the deficit in community park facilities in the growing Fort Erie South area assumes a priority, then the appropriate location would be at an enhanced Neighbourhood Park in the area.
- The three Class 2 senior soccer fields in Ferndale Park should be enhanced to a Class 1 level. Topsoil testing at Ferndale indicated a silty loam topsoil of good quality. However, soil of this texture are prone to compaction, which is the most significant problem facing soccer fields in general.
- The Class 2 fields at Ridgeway Lions Park, Douglas Park, Optimist Park, AC Douglas #2 Park and United Empire Loyalist Park should continue to be maintained at this level. If there are Class 1 field requirements develop in the Ridgeway/Thunder Bay area, then such a field should be developed in Crystal Ridge Park. This may require a reconfiguration of park facilities, but the intention would be to retain current uses with the exception of the ball field.
- The Class 2 field in Stevensville Memorial Park should be decommissioned and maintained as a free play area when Town-wide soccer capacity improvements permit.

Playgrounds

Based on a Playground Audit completed by the Town, a playground replacement program has been initiated and several playgrounds have been replaced to date. While the audit and replacement program is ensuring the priority objective of user safety in the Town’s playgrounds, it also presents an opportunity to review the play objectives of the site. Replacement of existing play items may not be consistent with the proposed park and facility standards or specific improvement recommendations.

School yards may have significant playground equipment that serve a neighbourhood function. The integration of such equipment into the Town’s provision inventory will require agreement with the respective school board. Boards of Education generally consider their playgrounds only in terms of school needs and they are accessible to the community only after school hours. Therefore, as a general policy, neighbourhood parks should have play equipment that is available to all, at any time. However, exceptions may be made on a case by case basis, where shared-use facilities are being developed, or where significant duplication would occur in the same service area.

All Neighbourhood Parks generally require a Class 2 Playground and this should be the first priority for the Town. Several existing playgrounds exceed general Class 2 levels, but may be deficient in tot features (ages 2 – 5) or swings, etc. This should be rectified as funds are available.
Recommendation 30: Playgrounds

- Adopt the following playground development priority:
  - Provide, at a minimum, a Class 2 Playground in all Neighbourhood Parks
  - Provide a Class 1 Playground (preferred) in all Community Parks
  - Provide Playgrounds at Town recreational facilities and complexes, to improve user amenity
  - Consider partnerships with community organizations to provide additional Playgrounds or Playground enhancement

- Provide a Class 2 playground in the Thunder Bay area
- Provide Class 2 playgrounds in Waverly Beach, Stevensville Memorial Park and Bay Beach
- Improve the playground at United Empire Loyalist Park to meet the Class 2 level
- Consider providing a destination type playground that provides exceptional play value for all users. Such a facility would best be situated with similar level spray pad and play court.
- Consider providing a Class 2 playground at Oakes Park in partnership with Minor Ball.

**Play Courts (Tennis, Ball Hockey and Multi-Use)**

The Town has two Class 1 and seven Class 2 tennis courts, but only one multi-use court and one ball hockey court. As the Fort Erie Tennis Club is providing an enhanced play opportunity, albeit for members, a substantial portion of the existing tennis court infrastructure should be converted to or replaced by multi-use courts, unless participation data suggest otherwise.

Recommendation 31: Play Courts

- Repair and maintain the tennis courts at Albert Street Park and Ferndale Park if participation warrants. Otherwise, convert these facilities to multi-use courts (which may provide a tennis function).
- Convert the tennis courts at Ridgeway Lions Park, Stevensville Memorial Park and AC Douglas #2 to multi-use courts (which may provide a tennis function).
- As funds become available, provide multi-use courts in the Community Parks which do not have such facilities.

**Special Facilities**

Special facilities are those that are not part of the core facility program of any park category, but are provided on a special case basis. Therefore, they can be provided on a Specialized or multi-community basis. By considering their location, they can help to equalize the uneven distribution of field facilities.

**Aquatic Facilities (Wading Pools, Splash Pads and Outdoor Pool)**

The Town’s two wading pools have or are being replaced with splash pads. This work has been completed at Ferndale Park. The wading pool is to be removed from Stevensville Memorial Park and will be replaced with a splash pad. The Kinsman Outdoor Pool will require a facility audit and review to consider its remaining service life and replacement options. While the pool is near the end of its service life and provides limited aquatic function compared to current family pool designs, it provides the only public pool in the Town.
Recommendation 32: Aquatic Facilities

- The Town prepare a facility audit and replacement recommendation for the Kinsmen Pool.
- The Town, in order of priority, develop additional splash pads at the following locations:
  - Stevensville Memorial Park
  - Crystal Ridge Park
  - Sugarbowl Park
  - Fort Erie South area

**Skatepark**

Unorganized youth sports activities such as skateboarding and freeriding are experiencing exceptional growth. Participation rates (in the US) are exceeding those of some of the popular minor league sports. For many youth, these unorganized activities are the only recreational activity they are involved in. Many municipalities have recognized that unorganized recreational venues, especially for senior youth, are lacking and have made such facilities part of their core facility provision.

The Town has dedicated approximately $104,000 for development a skatepark facility. The recent Mayor’s Youth Forum identified the development of a skatepark as a priority for youth. There is also general consensus in the community that there should be one central skatepark facility. Many communities that have skatepark facilities which are small in size or lack features, have found this to be a significant impairment to the potential success of the facility. Skatepark organizations recommend a minimum size of 750 to 900 m² to maintain interest and safety levels, and a preferred size of 1,700 to 2,300 m² to accommodate all skill levels. An all concrete facility is required for long-term durability and low maintenance costs. At an average cost for a concrete facility of $250/ m², this works out to about $200,000 for a basic facility and $425,000 for a preferred facility (these costs do not include related amenities such as lighting, fencing, landscaping, etc.).

Recommendation 33: Skateparks

- That the Town develop a skatepark with a budget objective of $425,000 for an all-concrete central facility in the Fort Erie South/Crescent Park area, that may be developed in a phased approach, to an ultimate preferred level for all abilities. User consultation will be key in determining the best strategy.

**Age-Related Amenities**

Douglastown was noted as having a significantly higher proportion of older age residents. Given this population’s focus on passive activity and visual amenity, and that the Neighbourhood Park at AC Douglas #2 is proposed to be well-serviced with basic and optional neighbourhood park facilities, the following is recommended:

Recommendation 34: Age-Related Amenities

- That AC Douglas #1 be developed as a passive-oriented Neighbourhood Park with visual amenities, enhanced seating areas and a fitness circuit.
**Leash-Free Zones**

Leash-free zones have emerged as a popular feature in recent years and help to mitigate sometimes increasing conflict between dog-owners and non-dog-owners in public parks. In areas where there is appropriate parkland and good separation from other users, such zones can be simply designated. In parkland where separation is not adequate, these zones are fenced. The most important aspect of this type of facility, particularly a fenced zone, is an active organization of volunteers and a demonstrated need from the dog-owning segment. Leash-free areas should have a minimum area of about 1 ha unless separate facilities are being provided for small dogs only. Required components include a chain link fence of 1.2 or 1.5 m height, separation from other park uses, user parking, a double-gated entry, and waste collection stations. Shade, benches and water supply is also desirable. Locations should be determined through a dedicated public process.

**Recommendation 35: Leash-Free Zone**

- That a leash-free zone be developed in a Community or Specialized Park, if initiated by an active community organization showing a demonstrated need.

The Town, through its ongoing reviews and consultation, should consider new and emerging recreational trends that may require facility provision. These might include activities such as cricket, field hockey, etc. Monitoring these trends will allow facility needs to be anticipated.

**Recommendation 36: Emerging and Future Trends**

- That the Town continue to monitor emerging recreational trends and adjust facility planning/provisions when required.

**5.4 Parkland Design and Maintenance Standards**

**General Approach**

The Town’s primary challenge is to maintain and improve the venues that it currently has. Part of this objective is to provide facilities that are safe and of the appropriate quality. However, parks are more than just a collection of facilities. They must be visually attractive, laid out in a coherent and functional manner, and be identifiable through consistency in signage and amenities.

New park development should include a process that provides a preliminary facility fit and grading plan for any land proposed to be dedicated or acquired. This ensures the site will accommodate the anticipated facilities. This and subsequent design work should be undertaken by qualified landscape architect employed or contracted by the Town, or contracted by the development interest.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) was passed with the intention of making Ontario’s public infrastructure barrier-free by 2025. The requirement by the Town that all new playgrounds be accessible is a laudable initiative. The Town should adopt accessibility standards for all park infrastructure and facilities. Several guidelines are proposed in this section.
Recommendation 37: Parkland Design Standards

That the Town adopt the following parkland design and maintenance standards:

**Location and Access**

- Neighbourhood Parks should preferably be located in the approximate centre of the population they serve. They should be located on collector roadways preferably with their longer side facing the road, or be located at an intersection of two collector roadways, with roadway frontage on two sides. Where only one side of the park faces the roadway, a link should be provided to the street that is closest to the back of the park. Since Neighbourhood Parks are primarily accessible by walking or cycling, the provision of good local linkages in form of walkways and cycling routes should be imperative.

- Community Parks should preferably be located on the corner of two arterial roadways, or one arterial and one collector roadway. These parks are accessible by walking, cycling, driving and public transit. Where the Community Park fulfills the Neighbourhood function for its immediate community, the provision of good local linkages in form of walkways and cycling routes is essential. The provision of parking is a requirement at the Community Park level and Public transit access is preferable.

- Specialized Parks are found in many different locations, and can be reached in several ways, but as a general rule, a main access to the park should be provided form the most prominent roadway in the vicinity of the park. If several accesses are provided for the same park, all of them shall have appropriately denoted entrances.

**Park Shape**

- Generally, Neighbourhood and Community Parks should be rectangular in shape (approximate ratio of 3:4). Some variation is acceptable if program and safety requirements can be met. The shape of Specialized Parks will be based on the specific features and facilities.

**Existing Vegetation Management**

- Parkland containing natural vegetation should be reviewed by qualified personnel at the outset. Vegetation communities should receive one of three general assessments: “Retain”, “Review” and “Remove”: The highest value communities that receive a retain rating will require preservation and protection during all park development. Significant communities should also be considered for protection, enhancement and connection after development. The lowest value communities will be removed and such areas considered for park facilities. "Review" communities are intermediate value or highly variable communities and which should receive additional assessment during the design process. Some or all of these areas may be removed according to outcome of the detailed review.

**Grading**

- Generally, Neighbourhood and Community Parks should have a minimum sloping to gently sloping surface. Though differences in relief or grades are possible and may be desirable, as in case of toboggan hills, they should not compromise the programmability of the park or the safety of the park users. Specialized Parks may require similar slope conditions for recreation facilities or a complete prohibition of any grading where natural environment preservation is required.
Recommendation 37 (cont’d): Parkland Design Standards

Parking

- Neighbourhood Parks do not require parking unless they have enhanced facilities such as multi-use courts and sports fields that will serve as community type-destinations, and where parking may be considered. On-street parking opportunities should be maximized.
- Community Parks should have a minimum of 25 spaces, more if it exceeds the basic facility standard. At least 10 additional spaces should be added per additional field, more if tournament activities are anticipated. At least one accessible parking space is to be provided per Community Park and at the ratio of 1 per 25 spaces for larger parking areas. On-street parking opportunities may be appropriate if there is no negative impact on local, residential streets.
- Specialized Parks should be provided with parking based on case by case requirements.

Accessibility

- Provide accessibility by ensuring adjacent road boulevards have curb cuts and sidewalk ramps.
- Primary trail slope should not exceed 8% (required) or 5% (preferred).
- Accessible parking on the basis of a minimum 1 per 25 spaces.
- Accessible furnishings (tables, drinking fountain, etc.) should be provided on the basis of a minimum of one per park and in multiples commensurate with the accessible parking provision.
- Accessibility may be an optional feature of Class 1 playgrounds and should be a requirement for enhanced, destination-type play areas.
- Accessibility in buildings must meet code requirements.

Park Lighting

- Neighbourhood Parks are not lit unless specific safety concerns are present.
- Community Parks should have drives and parking areas lit and may provide partial or complete pathway lighting.
- Specialized Parks will provide lighting on a case by case basis.

Specialized Pathways

- Should be developed according to a hierarchy of paths or trails.
- Minimum width for a multi-use path should be 2.4 m (required) or 3.0 m (preferred).
- Natural environment areas may have specific trail type and width requirements.

Fencing

- Properties adjacent to Neighbourhood and Community Parks should be demarcated by fencing, monuments and/or planting. Where a park abuts a significant natural area, fencing is not required if access is designated and controlled by trails and buffers planted with native species. Park roadway frontages of Neighbourhood and Community Parks should not be fenced. Specialized Parks may be fenced and decorative fencing may be used as a design feature on any park frontage.
Recommendation 37 (cont’d) – Parkland Design Standards

**Planting**

- New planting in Town parks should consider the following objectives:
  - Enhance or restore natural communities where appropriate utilizing regionally native species. This information may be available from various agencies or The Fort Erie Natural Areas Study. Seed and plant material should be locally sourced and meet the Ontario’s Natural Selections standard, as certified by the Forest Gene Conservation Association. Consider soil conditions and improvements when proceeding with ecological enhancements.
  - Generally use native species where possible (as identified in the Natural Areas Study), regardless of their source.
  - Avoid the use of invasive species (all Classes) and remove invasive species where they have been planted (Class 1 and 2). [As identified in “Sustaining Biodiversity – A Strategic Plan for Managing Invasive Plants in Southern Ontario”, prepared by Donna Havinga and the Ontario Invasive Plants Working Group].
  - Permit the use of exotic, non-invasive plant material where required to meet ornamental and aesthetic requirements.
  - Consider low-maintenance requirements in all planting design.

**Signage**

- A sign convention should be developed that will unify colours, materials and graphics for park use.
- A signage hierarchy should be developed to include entrance, information, interpretive, way-finding and regulation signage with sign standards and text guidelines, in accordance with the Wayfinding Study.

**Turf Management**

There are many aspects of park area and sports field maintenance, but turf management assumes a primary role. A key strategy is to develop a hierarchy of maintenance levels appropriate to the desired performance and aesthetic outcome, so as to optimize the application of limited operational resources. General turf maintenance with standard regimes often expend to much on non-priority areas and too little on intensive park and sportsfield turf. For Fort Erie, a higher maintenance regime must be anticipated for existing and new Class 1 and active Class 2 sports fields. Correspondingly, savings must be found through rationalizing expenditures on lower priority areas. However, just reducing mowing frequency in general park turf areas, especially under pesticide reductions or bans, often results in unacceptable loses in value and visual quality. Rather the objective should be to develop alternatives to traditional turf culture. Naturalization offers an opportunity to develop non-turf landscapes that achieve user, environmental and cost objectives. If the expectations, vegetation objectives and maintenance levels all work together at the appropriate levels then value, performance and visual qualities will be enhanced.

Pesticide applications are a societal concern and more and more communities have initiated either reductions or elimination of pesticides in municipal maintenance programs or general pesticide bans throughout their communities. These bans have held up to legal challenges. The reduction or elimination of pesticide use is a progressive objective. The alternative is achieving weed reductions through a comprehensive focus on turf plant health. Such a turf management program uses a variety of factors and inputs, including but not limited to mowing, that work together to achieve higher levels of turf health. A healthy turf competes against weed species, wears well and maintains an attractive appearance. However, in addition to the challenges that come from a dynamic instead of routine turf maintenance program, such an alternative usually entails the requirement for extra resources that the public is often not aware of. This is a quandary for the turf manager: either loss of performance and aesthetic value, or finding additional resources needed to maintain these values under the new pesticide realities. Hopefully
some of the additional resources can be found through the rationalization of park landscapes referred to above.

Although, there is often a focus on sportsfields due to the ongoing concerns of sports organizations, it is general park turf that forms the dominant part of park landscapes and which often serves as the lead “indicator” to the community of the level of maintenance service being provided. Dandelion and other weed growth can compromise the aesthetic integrity of general parkland. Frequent mowing during critical weed growth periods can reduces weed prominence, control weed distribution and increase weed plant stress. Mowing programs for all non-irrigated turf areas need to be designed around the growing cycles of the cool-season species used for park turf. Key is to increase cutting intervals during the spring flush of growth and increase cutting height and reduce cutting intervals during the dormant (hot and droughty) summer season periods. This also aligns with weed control objectives. Other inputs need to be timed for optimum plant health effects and providing late fall nitrogen instead of early spring is one important example.

One of the important differences between the proposed categories is the frequency of mowing. The mowing season is assumed to be a 25 week period, from April 25th to October 15th. This period may vary by as much as three to four weeks between years. In addition, the frequency of mowing will vary over the season, to conform to grass growing and dormant periods. Grass that may require mowing very 5 – 7 days during the spring flush, may only require a cut every 2 weeks during the hot summer, and then every 10 days during the fall growing period. The key is to adapt the mowing timetable to the turf’s growing cycles and to the aesthetic and performance objectives. Standard mowing timetables will waste money and resources.

One of the ways to focus turf maintenance resources on the priority areas is to establish naturalized areas of woody or meadow vegetation. The easiest way is to just stop cutting. However, the resulting lumpy pasture-type appearance is often unappealing. Turf areas treated with a non-selective herbicide and then seeded with a 70/30 wildflower/low and medium height native grasses will develop a much more attractive and habitat-friendly meadow. Although there is concern about herbicide applications, this method can be one of the most effective. Wildflower seeding is often best applied as broadcast with a sufficient carrier (sterile sand, etc), as the seed are very small and will not germinate if buried. Herbicide application does not require soil disturbance so weed seeds are not brought up to the surface as with cultivation. Cultivation often requires several passes over a period of time to be effective.

Woody naturalization utilizing whips planted in adequately sized nodes, particularly at the visible edges of the naturalizing area, are effective particularly when planted with a combination of early successional species (sumac, trembling aspen, birch) as well as shade-tolerant, climax species (sugar maple, ironwood). The fast, early successional species will rapidly create the shade necessary to reduce turf concentrations that inhibit woody regeneration. Naturalizing areas that are prepared properly will reward the municipality with years of very low maintenance requirements and reasonable visual appeal and user satisfaction.

A pleasing treatment that may be used with naturalized and buffer areas is to maintain “turf “trails” through these areas. While the naturalizing areas are uncut or infrequently cut, the trails are cut at the general turf level. They trails provide a scenic, walkable access to and through the naturalizing areas with a more fitting type of trail than pavement, and at very little cost.

At the other end of the maintenance scale are the Class 1 fields, which will receive the greatest intensity of use. Maintenance will include the most frequent cutting, but also a regime of several different inputs to repair turf damage and encourage the most rapid development of turf. In the current IPM or no-pest management environment, these other inputs are critical to turf health. They will also be the most significant portion of the overall maintenance cost. The City of Toronto estimated that the twice yearly application of compost that is applied to their Class A and stadium fields, accounts for two-thirds of the total turf management costs.

The following vegetation maintenance categories provide a full array of generic vegetation schemes for planning park development and improvement, each with an explicit understanding of operational impacts.
The categories are presented in order of increasing maintenance levels:

- Woody Naturalizing Areas
- Prairie/Wet Meadow Naturalizing Areas
- Buffer Turf Areas
- General Turf Areas
- Intensive-use Turf Areas
- Class 2 Sports Field Turf
- Intensive-use Turf Areas
- Class 1 Sports Field Turf
- Class 1, Irrigated Sports Field Turf

- Woody Naturalizing Areas

These areas are uncut and receive no other inputs other than possible mulching of newly planted woody stock. They may receive localized removal of invasive species through mechanical or chemical means.

- Prairie/Wet Meadow Naturalizing Areas

Whether these consist of existing vegetated field/turf areas or newly established meadow, they will be managed the same way. Often these areas respond better to occasional managed burns, but in lieu of this practice, a single mowing in the fall will be carried out with a flail mower every one to two years. The cut height would be 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8”) with the objective to aid in the distribution of seed and to control the development of woody stock. These areas receive no other inputs.

- Buffer Turf Areas

These may be considered analogous to the “rough” areas in golf course. They are not naturalizing areas, but are normally turf-type grasses maintained on an infrequent basis. They receive only mowing maintenance and are cut to a 12.5 to 15 cm height (5 to 6”) with rotary or flail mowers. Four cuts a year would be carried out: late May (or just at the height of dandelion bloom), mid-July, early September, and late October/early November. The infrequent mowing and higher height mowing will result in a course turf close-up, but maintain a reasonably weed-free, even and green turf appearance from farther distances. This is an ideal maintenance regime for areas buffering natural areas, undesirable uses and areas not requiring full utilization by park users.

- General Turf Areas

General turf is the mainstay of utility park areas: a turf which receives a basic level of maintenance but is fully accessible and usable by park users. Sports fields that provide only unscheduled activity can be maintained at this level as well. A broad range in maintenance level may be found in this category and it is often this level to which cutbacks have been focused. The standard maintenance regime will include mowing only on a 10 to 14 day rotation with no other inputs. A more preferred program would be as follows:
- maintain mowing height of 7.5 cm (3”), mowed once every 7 days during the active periods of spring and every 10 days during the fall. During the hot summer period raise the mowing height to 9 cm (3.5”) and mow as required such that no more than 1/3 of the leaf is removed to achieve the desired height
- fertilize with preference given to organic fertilizers once per year @ 0.5 kg N/100 m²
• **Class 2 Sports Field Turf**

  - maintain mowing height of 7.5 cm (3"), mowed once every 5 to 7 days during the active periods of spring and every 7 to 10 days during the fall. During the hot summer period raise the mowing height to 9 cm (3.5") and mow as required such that no more than 1/3 of the leaf is removed to achieve the desired height
  - fertilize with preference given to organic fertilizers 2 times per year @ 0.5 kg N/100 m²
  - aerate once per year
  - oversee as required (no more than once per year)

• **Destination Turf Areas**

  - maintain mowing height of 6 cm (2.5"), mowed once every 5 days during the active periods of spring and every 7 days during the fall. During the hot summer period raise the mowing height to 7.5 cm (3.0") and mow as required such that no more than 1/3 of the leaf is removed to achieve the desired height
  - fertilize with preference given to organic fertilizers 3 times per year @ 0.5 kg N/100 m²
  - aerate, top-dress, overseed as required

• **Class 1 Sports Field Turf**

  - maintain mowing height of 7.5 cm (3"), mowed once every 5 days during the active periods of spring growth and every 7 days during the fall. During the hot summer period mow as required such that no more than 1/3 of the leaf is removed to achieve the desired height
  - fertilize with preference given to organic fertilizers 3 times per year @ 0.5 kg N/100 m²
  - aerate twice per year for fields and once per year in spring for ball diamonds
  - top-dress as required
  - overseed as required

• **Class 1, Irrigated Sports Field Turf:**

  - maintain sports-specific mowing height (baseball – 5.0 cm (2’’); soccer – 7.5 cm (3’’)), mowed once every 5 days (3 times every two weeks)
  - fertilize with preference given to organic fertilizers 4 times per year @ 0.5 kg N/100 m²
  - aerate twice per year for fields and once per year in spring for ball diamonds
  - top-dress once per year
  - overseed twice per year, once in spring and again in fall

Recommendation 38: Turf Management Standards

That the Town undertake the following:

- A naturalization guideline should be developed to allow the naturalization of park areas that do not meet minimum use requirements.
- A pesticide-use policy be developed based on Integrated Pest Management principles that receives broad support within the Town.
- A following vegetation maintenance categories be considered to allow turf management in Town parks to be rationalized:
  - Woody Naturalizing Areas
  - Prairie/Wet Meadow Naturalizing Areas
  - Buffer Turf Areas
  - General Turf Areas
  - Intensive-use Turf Areas
  - Class 2 Sports Field Turf
  - Intensive-use Turf Areas
  - Class 1 Sports Field Turf
  - Class 1, Irrigated Sports Field Turf
- That the mowing guidelines suggested by the maintenance categories be accepted and a dynamic mowing schedule be followed during the mowing season.
- Vegetation maintenance categories be identified on all park development plans.
5.5 Cemeteries

Cemeteries, because of their size and history, have increasingly become important components of comprehensive park and open space systems. Though they have a definitive purpose in commemorating those who have passed, they also have unique and valued secondary benefits from open space perspectives. First, they can provide large land elements that contribute to the urban form of the community, providing additional green space, separating less compatible land uses and bring vegetation and tree cover into neighbourhoods. Second, they are widely used by people who have genealogy interests as they are a depository for significant amounts of family and other historical information. Genealogy is one of the fastest growing leisure activities, with particular interest amongst seniors. Third, cemeteries provide areas for people to stroll through, similar to trails and walkways, which involves physical fitness and wellness benefits. Fourth, cemeteries also represent contemplative and calming spaces for people who want to reflect, reduce stress or be away from the hustle and bustle.

The Town of Fort Erie has two operational cemeteries. The first is Ridgeway Memorial, which based on current estimates, has approximately a thirty-year operational time frame remaining. The second is Greenwood Cemetery in the Bridgeburg area. It is estimated to have ten to fifteen active years remaining.

Currently, the Town cemeteries have approximately 130 interments annually, of which 50% are cremations. If cremations were to increase, Sprinkling Gardens were to be added and other market changes were to prevail, the remaining capacity of the cemeteries could grow well beyond thirty years.

The Town also has a number of small church, pioneer or settlement cemeteries which are non-active and represent small spaces, generally in rural areas. Also, the Town in the 1980s, purchased a fifty-two acre land parcel on Centralia Street for the future Hershey Cemetery. Some of the lands were sold off for estate lots and approximately thirty-five acres remain in an un-developed state. In 1989, a Cemetery Master Plan was prepared that identified a trail system along the ravine, a boardwalk, historical interpretation areas, waterfowl and natural open spaces and a Peace Memorial, as well as core service zones for various internment formats.

Two key considerations exist for the Hershey Cemetery site from longer term planning perspectives. First, that within fifteen years, a Business Plan needs to be developed for the activation of that site if current interment rates absorb the available inventory in the two active cemeteries. Second, the Hershey site has the potential for trail connections and open space applications, both in the short and in the longer term. Also, the site has the potential to be a park area on an interim basis until demand warrants the development of its cemetery function. It is also possible, that with market changes in cemetery services, that this site may not be required for many years and could become an important open space or park resource.

Recommendation 39: Cemeteries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>That the Town of Fort Erie develop its cemeteries venues within the following parameters:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• As part of the Town's open space system, providing genealogy, passive recreation, walking / trail linkages and other compatible uses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• That the Hershey Cemetery site be developed with trail linkages to a broader trail network, and be given consideration as an interim park site if park and open space need and demand exists in this area of the Town, until it is or if it is required for cemetery services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• That by 2020, the Town undertake a comprehensive review of its cemetery inventory and operations, and develop a Business Plan on the future strategic directions of its cemeteries, as well as the timing and scale of development of the Hershey Cemetery as to need and development scheduling.</td>
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6.0 MARKETING PLAN

6.1 Introduction

Marketing plans are increasingly becoming an important functional task in the delivery of public services. This has come about due to the significant investments municipalities have made in these services, as well as the increasing complexity of the audiences who need the information on various topics and themes. As part of the Town of Fort Erie’s Parks and Open Space Master Plan, a Marketing Plan has been developed to assist in the various communication and promotional activities necessary:

- To enhance resident understanding of:
  o The benefits of outdoor recreational participation
  o The value of the parks and open space resources to them and the community
  o Information on events, activities, facilities, points of access to trails, new developments, etc.
- To support community user groups in the delivery of their programs related to the availability and scheduling of sportsfields and related facilities.
- To assist visitors to the community to participate in opportunities related to special events, the trails, the beaches and related activities as both a marketing (attraction) and informational tool.
- To improve information amongst Town staff and with partnering organizations/agencies.

6.2 What is Marketing?

Marketing is a host of activities designed to attract and inform possible users, purchasers, visitors and others about parks, open spaces, programs, events and related opportunities, as both a means to increase utilization and the benefits of participation, as well as to provide the information people need to make informed decisions, such as places, times, costs, etc.

There are multiple components to a Marketing Plan. These are:

- **Branding and imagery** – involves the consistent use of logos, tag lines, core messages and presentation formats in order to establish a clear “brand” in the users’ eyes based on ongoing reinforcement, clarity and identity.
- **Programs and services** – represent the units of activity/services that will be marketed to general and targeted audiences.
- **Promotion, advertising and communications** – Identifies the various means by which information is put forward to the general and target audiences, related to such tactics as the Leisure Guide, websites, flyers/brochures, maps, radio and TV media and other tools.
- **Evaluation** – Tasks designed to elicit feedback from residents and targeted audiences related to the quality of their experiences, future needs and projections and enhancements to communication programs.

6.3 Audience Identification

In an increasingly complex communications world, the emphasis is moving towards messaging and promoting to target audiences, that is audiences who have a similar profile or interest in utilizing or participating in a specific program, venue or opportunity. Some of the audience identifications are as follows:

Residents:
- Leisure programs information
- Trails
- Beaches
- Culture and Heritage
- Special Events
Tourists:
- Beaches
- Trails
- Culture and Heritage
- Special Events

Community/Neighbourhoods:
- Public meetings on new park and open space developments, renewals, etc.
- Localized special events and celebrations
- Area parks and open spaces, facilities, etc. as to locations, hours of operation, etc.
- Needs assessments
- Sports and leisure programs registration

Partners/Staff/Regional Servicing Groups:
- Inventories of parks and open spaces
- Future plans and developments, including linkages and partnership opportunities
- Project initiatives

Community Sports and User Groups:
- Sportfield availability and scheduling
- Allocation policies, fees, etc.
- Tournament opportunities/field reallocation requirements

What is also important is that from a customer perspective, they may not really know where to look or where to go to for information. They could easily end up in a Conservation Authority, school board, tourism or other information envelope. Therefore, developing links and the common distribution of written materials becomes increasingly important in reflecting a customer’s perspective as to how information is sourced.

Another important consideration is that though this is a Parks and Open Space Master Plan, many recreational activities also connect with the overall marketing initiative for leisure services. Integration of the recreational dimensions will also need to be given consideration related to arenas and community centres.

6.4 Promotional / Branding Strategy

Branding Strategy

Branding is the “development of imagery and core messages that are consistently used on a reinforcement basis to establish in the minds of users and the public recognition and value for the brand”. For the Town of Fort Erie parks and open spaces, the following strategy components should be considered.

A Defined Logo

Use the Town of Fort Erie logo or a special one for community parks and open spaces. It is recommended that it be the Town of Fort Erie logo due to the increased reinforcement value that exists and the linkages with Town ownership, leadership and responsibilities.
Site Signage

Every park and open space venue have a standard sign on the site that provides the following:

- the logo and identification of the Town of Fort Erie;
- name of the park or venue;
- the possible use of a tag line at the bottom that reinforces the brand, such as “Preserving our open spaces” or “Special places to enjoy”.
- All signs to be at a visible point of access to the venue;

For larger venues, the potential to present some horticulture, shrubbery or other supporting features to enhance a gateway concept.

Communications

The tag line is a key consideration in a branding strategy as it gives life and inspiration. The Town may wish to consider using a competition amongst school children and/or community groups to develop a tag line for community parks and open spaces.

Core messages are often to be developed in support of any branding strategy. These core messages are used in every form of communication in order to consistently share with readers, users, residents and others the key values for the Town's investment in community parks and open spaces. Typical three, possibly four core messages are utilized. The following core messages could be considered by the Town of Fort Erie in all its communications strategies:

- Valuable open spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy, to learn and to realize unique experiences;
- Conserving our unique natural areas;
- Venues for fitness, fun, learning and socializing and connecting the whole community;
- Unique places that meet the variety of interests and needs of residents;
- From beaches to ball fields, from soccer pitches to trails, places for everyone to enjoy, to learn and have positive memories.

These core messages represent words that would be weaved into larger text, but would be consistent around the themes of:

- Places for people;
- Enjoyment of residents and visitors;
- Variety and flexibility in meeting differentiated needs;
- Conservation and preservation of unique natural and cultural areas;
- Adding to resident quality of life and the identity of Fort Erie.

The typical strategy is to use three core messages that would be consistently used, with a couple of other core messages used for specialized situations, such as when promoting special events, sport field utilization or tourism initiatives.

Leisure Guide

The Leisure Guide has been used for many years, and has become the standard for communicating extensive amounts of information about recreation and parks and open spaces in the Town of Fort Erie to residents on a broadcast basis. It is a Town-sponsored publication that uses commercial advertising to off set its costs. It provides information on both Town services and venues, as well as information on community groups, museums and other operators who deliver a wide range of minor sports, cultural, adult and related leisure programs and services.
The Leisure Guide needs re-organization in order to gain greater clarity and utility by users. It is recognized as a broadcast tool that is distributed two times per year, reflecting programmatic seasons. The following recommendations are made for the Leisure Guide:

- Every issue to have a new theme that is reflected on the cover and in opening messages and an opening section;
- Advertising consolidated so as not to disrupt or break up various informational components. Consideration could be given to centre leaf and back of book advertising sections based on two or three theme sections such as food services and personal services.
- Sections within the document as follows:
  - Themed cover;
  - Messages and introduction;
  - User friendly index;
  - Youth program opportunities and registration information;
  - Adult program registration and access information;
  - Town recreation facility use, locations and rental information;
  - Community parks, open space and trails information and map;
  - Partner information, such as YMCA, Museums, others.
- Items that are new should have a starburst or some other indicator suggesting that this item is different from the past to catch the eyes of readers.
- Information should be delivered with the focus on the name of the service provider and the key contact information;
- Different coloured or shaded headers should be used to differentiate the sub-sections across the Leisure Guide.
- A section for tourists could be added if distribution could be achieved into accommodation units, Visitor Bureaus or distributed to enquiring parties by local tourism organizations;
- Distribution should also involve Welcome Wagon and other new resident support programs, as well as social service providers who may be potential renters or wish to recommend some of their clients to pursue recreational activities, such as group homes, Children’s Aid Society, the library; and other locations.

**Flyers / Newspaper Ads / Brochures**

Flyers are an event / incident specific tool that can be used for everything from a public meeting announcement to the launch of new programs or initiatives. A key to supporting the branding strategy is that all flyers produced by the municipality should have a common format involving:

- Logo and Town name;
- Product/ program / meeting title;
- One graphic to provide some interest which is representative of the topic where possible;
- A common template, possibly being a border / edging design;
- Key contact information at the bottom;
- The primary key information located in the centre using a bullet format as much as possible for ease of reading.

A standard flyer will quickly identify to readers that it is a Town of Fort Erie initiative, and will become easy to read because the format is focused and directed at key messages and strategies.

A second template, building on the flyer format, could be used for all newspaper advertising so that there is a consistency of delivery and messaging that readers/users get used to, are looking for and which clearly identifies to them who the provider / messenger is.

A specialized flyer on tourism opportunities, particularly related to the summertime, could be created in a brochure format that is distributed to accommodation units and through all tourism channels, including
information bureaus and materials used in answering enquiries. It could also be put into sport tourism and conference/convention kits that are provided to visitors attending various tournaments and meetings.

**Departmental Newsletter**

It is recommended, that there be a semi-annual department newsletter that is targeted at:

- Community organizations and facility renters;
- Neighbourhood associations and relevant community groups;
- Citizens at large on the web page.

The intent of the newsletter is to sustain ongoing connectivity with organized community groups, and associations. It is a vehicle to provide information on the following:

- Proposed plans;
- Future public meetings;
- Requests for input;
- Changes in policies and procedures;
- Identification of long term trends that could affect community organizations’ operations, registrations, etc.;
- Broader provincial initiatives, policies and funding that will impact the delivery of parks and recreation services;
- Messages from Council and future strategic directions for the Town

The intent of this communication tool is to support community groups in their efforts to deliver recreation programs and services in Town facilities and open spaces. It is also a tool to solicit input from various organizations on topics that don’t require a specialized survey or public forum.

A more informed community organization is, the better they can plan and strategize the ongoing development and delivery of their programs and services which are integral to ensuring a wide array of leisure opportunities for Fort Erie residents. It also gives them a sense of being informed and being connected to the department and gives them a regular source of information.

It is possible, such a strategy will allow the Town to consolidate some of its other information strategies in order to achieve a more in depth newsletter that is more effectively put together in order to bring a broad base of information to all the appropriate groups. It is recognized that keeping up the mailing list will be a challenge, but it is an important part of sustaining and supporting community organizations who are central to the delivery of parks and recreational services.

This document could be mailed out and/or could be accessed on the Town’s website.

**Website**

The growth of the internet as a tool for people to source information has been exceptional. Younger generations consistently now use website over any other form of information access. This is the same experience that many public libraries are currently responding to. Therefore, the ability to put information on a website in a useable manner will become more and more important in terms of how people access and use critical information in regards to parks and recreation services in Fort Erie.

A dedicated website for the Department needs will likely become necessary. The Leisure Guide information and the newsletter could become two central components on the website in terms of downloading information and presenting highlights.

In addition, the website can highlight special events, new initiatives and provide timely prompts for the distribution of the Leisure Guide and newsletter.

The website also has the capacity to be interactive in order to source information / input back from users and citizens. The website could be developed with the following headings:
• Youth and Adult Program Information;
• Community Organizations’ Programs and Services Information;
• Facility and Parks Information;
• Trail and Venue Locations Maps;
• Informational Dates / Circulation Prompts;
• Core messages on the benefits of recreation participation.

The internet will grow considerably and will become, in all likelihood, a primary information tool for promoting parks and recreation and tourism opportunities and information in the future.

**Trail and Venues Maps**

As the trail system becomes larger, it will become increasingly important to have a trail map, particularly for visitors to the community. The map needs to show the gateways, resting points, highlights and features, vistas, special conditions, cautions, and other considerations that support positive experiences in the use of the trail system.

The map, which should be distributed at visitor bureaus, through the schools, at parks and recreation venues, municipal offices and other locations, should be seen as a unique opportunity to encourage use of the trails. The map needs to have consistent branding and core messaging attributes that are central to reinforcing the brand.

The map should be updated every several years, or as major new links to the trail system are identified. Also, where possible, interpretive information could be provided for some of the more significant environmental or venue locations.

A venues map of the key parks and open space and recreation facilities areas should be undertaken. This map would support both residents in gaining a better understanding of what is available in their community, as well as tourists / visitors who are looking for specific activities to undertake, i.e.: beaches or the specific locations, i.e.: sportsfield venues. One of the challenges that faces sport tourism visitors, is often finding one or more venues for their tournament or meet. This map could be developed as a double page within the Leisure Guide, as a visual image on the website with a downloading capability, and could become available at various visitor bureaus and other sites in support of sport tourism information kits or other tourism applications.

The focus of this initiative is on the following:

• The beaches;
• The major sports venues;
• The trail system;
• The larger park areas;
• Outdoor pools and splash pads;
• Key facilities, such as arenas, the YMCA and community centres;
• Potentially private sector venues, such as golf courses and related facilities;
• Retail and service areas.

**Tourism**

Tourism needs to be seen as a sub-component of all the communication and promotion vehicles. The Leisure Guide can be a visitor’s information tool if available in accommodation units or at visitor bureaus. It should have a tourism sub-section that is highlighted and becomes a quick reference for visitors in a user friendly manner. The website should have a tourism sub-heading, along with links to related tourism websites.

Flyers and advertising programs using the standard format should also have a specific format for tourists/visitors to encourage their participation by providing the key information that will both attract them to Fort Erie and event/venue access information in order to facilitate timely arrival, parking requirements, admissions, etc.
This work should be undertaken with tourism bodies in Fort Erie, and become a partner-based approach to maximize visitor experiences in and attractiveness of the community.

Summary

In summary, an integrated promotional and branding strategy is recommended to maximize the distribution of information that is important to residents and visitors in knowing what is available in support of their decision-making, being attracted to participate at the venues and in supporting positive user experiences.

The branding strategy is the platform upon which all this work needs to be undertaken in order to achieve consistent reinforcement and to give clear identity to the readers. Using standardized templates and formats is also important in sustaining effective visuals and consistency of messaging and presentation.

All the promotional activity should be integrated, so that messages are consistent, information is the same across the various promotional tools and that it is consistently updated so that the information is fresh and accurate at all times.

The department will require someone to take responsibility to integrate these tools, to work with partners in the tourism industry, as well as to ensure that there are ongoing procedures to refresh the information base as it changes from day to day, week to week and season to season, as well as to ensure consistency.

Recommendation 40: Marketing and Communications Plan

That the Town of Fort Erie pursue the development of an integrated annual marketing and communications program in support of community services, tourism and related initiatives in Fort Erie, focusing on the following considerations:

- To work with tourism groups and non-profit parks services providers to enhance awareness of offerings; the timing and location of programs, services and events; and other initiatives designed to enhance participation, revenue flows and community organization sustainability.

- To develop a branding strategy that uses visual representations and connection to Community Services, along with the core messages necessary to support the strategic directions of the municipality and its partners, including an implementing monitoring and consistent use/reinforcement strategy.
Recommendation 40 (cont’d): Marketing and Communications Plan

- To develop a multi-media approach within an annual marketing and communications plan, based on the following key considerations:
  - The development of a Trail Guide Map for local users and tourists;
  - Enhancements to the Leisure Guide so that it is more focused, visual and easier to use as outlined in the Master Plan;
  - Development of an interactive website for both the transmission of information in a user-friendly fashion and to receive input and comments from participants and community organizations as part of an ongoing services planning and evaluation program;
  - Consider the development of a quarterly newsletter to community service providers, along with periodic forums to keep them informed of changes in policy and direction, and as a basis to gather their input and perspectives in support of various park services planning initiatives;

- To develop a venue signage program that gives clear identification of the name of the venue, the Town’s involvement/ownership, uses a possible tagline on all venue signs for reinforcement and sign placements that identify the key point(s) of entry/access, ensuring at all times that these signs reinforce the branding strategy.
7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Implementation Strategy

Table 9 itemizes the facility recommendations and other initiatives from the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. It contains the proposed initiative and related description, location, potential range of years over which the initiative could occur, and where appropriate, a preliminary capital and/or operating cost estimate.

This represents a template for planning and the various activities associated with each of the proposed initiatives. It will also support integration of approved projects into the Town’s ten-year capital forecast.

7.2 Capital Funding Sources

The capital costs associated with these recommendations represent a significant investment in the quality of life of Fort Erie residents. The Town will need to determine, for each of the projects, what the best capital funding mix is. The following provides some perspectives as to what types of sources could be considered and/or utilized in a project-by-project assessment process.

- Development Charges – provides an opportunity for 90% or some proportion of parks development costs to be funded if the facility supports new population growth. Therefore, in areas where population growth is anticipated and park development is a response to that growth, this becomes an important investment tool. It could also be utilized for smaller proportions of park development in more established areas that are going to be influenced by neighbouring growth areas where utilization of the facility may occur by new residents. The current level of Development Charges for parks should be reviewed at the next update of the Development Charges By-law. The level of Development Charges should continue to be monitored to ensure the appropriate level of funding is maintained.

- Community Fundraising – increasingly, municipalities are looking to community capital fundraising campaigns and other strategies to fund a portion of a project investment. The Town will need to give consideration, on a project by project basis, to determine if capital fundraising could be utilized to support an initiative. Capital fundraising is generally a good tool for a new or expanded development, high profile investments or where specific target audiences are identifiable, such as a neighbourhood and a new playground. They are less beneficial when a project is upgrading/ maintenance oriented, or the target audience is not unified or clearly identifiable or is dispersed. The capacity of the community to raise funds will be an important consideration in that not all areas of the Town have the same financial resources, or the same leadership capacities. Therefore, in terms of fairness and equity, some balancing of the use of this tool will need to be considered.

- Service Clubs / Corporate Sponsorships - service clubs have been traditional sources of capital funding support in Fort Erie. Some clubs maintain a continuing interest, particularly in park and open space venues that they have had a long association with, possibly even being the founding partner. Working with service clubs represents an ongoing opportunity for capital funding support, though service clubs have experienced changing membership profiles and generally are seeing more broadly based funding requests involving health, education and other service sectors. Corporate sponsorships increasingly represents an opportunity. However, an increasing number of corporations are also looking for naming rights, marketing value and related outcomes from their contributions. The use of these sources will be dependant upon the capacity of service clubs to participate and the availability and interest of private sector companies.

- Reserves / Park Dedication Funds – funds from these sources can be utilized for everything from upgrading to new development within park and open space settings. The ability to use these sources is dependant upon the capital available within the various funds and what contributions are made to these reserve funds over time.
• Municipal Investment – Represents a primary source of capital investment by the Town through its capital development program for Town infrastructure and supports.

Partnerships / Joint Ventures – if projects are undertaken jointly with school Boards, the Conservation Authority, the Niagara Parks Commission or others, there may be the possibility for some of these projects to involve joint ventures where capital contributions are made by two or more parties. This will be dependant on a case by case basis when other parties are involved and if they have access to capital funding resources. Examples would be campus developments on new school sites, redevelopment of playgrounds on school property as public facilities or related strategies.

7.3 Operating Financial Impact

These parks and facilities recommendations will have a range of potential operating impacts. For some, they are unknown at this time until a Business Plan is completed. Some will be partially or fully offset by the closure of some facilities and the opening of new facilities. Others will be influenced by the range of partnerships and/or other funding sources that may be available to the particular initiatives.

It will be critically important that when Business Plans are completed for each of the initiatives, as per the recommendations, that the operating costs are fully developed and integrated into the annual operating budget projections for the department.

7.4 Plan Review

The following Parks and Open Space Master Plan review process is proposed:

Recommendation 41: Plan Review Process

• Every year, the Implementation Plan should be updated in order to keep an active list of recommendations for use by staff, Council and the community.

• That the Town consider the use of an asset management plan for the appropriate allocation of funds for maintaining and making necessary upgrades and improvements to the park system. The Town should investigate alternative plans and the recommendation presented to Council.

• Every four years, planning sessions/workshops should be held to undertake a comprehensive review of the recommendations related to changes in the operating environment, emerging strategic trends and municipal financial strategies and priorities.

• At the ten year anniversary, there should be a major review undertaken to assess whether the long-term directions of the Plan remain linked to the key trends and rationales or whether other considerations have emerged that result in a need to recast the Plan to reflect the considerations of that time period.
### TABLE 9
TOWN OF FORT ERIE
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**NOTES** - COSTS SHOWN ARE ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS MULTIPLIED BY A FACTOR OF 1.25 TO COVER ANCILLARY CAPITAL COSTS, DESIGN AND CONTINGENCY. PRIORITIES ARE PROPOSED AT THREE LEVELS WITHIN EACH TERM, 'A' BEING THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.

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**Notes:**
- Costs shown are estimated construction costs multiplied by a factor of 1.25 to cover ancillary capital costs, design, and contingency.
- Priorities are proposed at three levels within each term, 'A' being the highest priority.

**Table Columns:**
- Initiative: The type of initiative or project.
- Location - Community Area: The location of the initiative or project.
- Description: A brief description of the initiative or project.
- Priority: The priority level of the project, ranging from 'A' (highest) to 'C' (lowest).
- Estimated Medium Term Capital Costs 2012-2016: The estimated capital costs for the medium term.
- Estimated Long Term Capital Costs 2017-2021: The estimated capital costs for the long term.
- Potential Annual Operating Budget Net Impact: The potential impact on the annual operating budget.

**Table Rows:**
- New Park Development
- Park Improvement
- Ball Fields
- Soccer Fields
- Playgrounds
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