

Planning a Future for Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Master Plan White Papers

- Service Delivery
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization



Parks and Recreation Master Plan Development

What is the future of recreation in Ottawa? Have your say!!

The City of Ottawa is looking for input from our residents in the development of a new set of principles to guide the delivery of recreation services for the next 10 to 20 years.

To assist, the City has developed a series of three white papers, each one putting forward information about how recreation services are provided and the challenges in meeting the demands of the future.

The three white papers focus on:

- Service Delivery
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization

Residents are invited to provide feedback to the questions found throughout each of the white papers. The resulting responses will be incorporated into a final strategic direction to be presented to City Council for consideration and approval.

Related Link

[The Benefits of Recreation](#)

Why a master plan?

Ottawa residents are fortunate to have many different opportunities to be active thanks to services provided by the City, the National Capital Commission, the school boards, colleges and universities, and other recreation service providers. Together these organizations provide a significant infrastructure of pathways, parks, green space and facilities. The City of Ottawa provides many programs and services directly and supports others through its partnerships with community associations, sport groups and other like-minded organizations.

Over the last few years, the City has made progress in growing and harmonizing citywide recreation services however some fundamental questions remain unanswered. In particular, if the City is to fully take advantage of the benefits of recreation, how should it finance and deliver recreation services in the future and for whom?

A master plan will assist the City to answer these fundamental questions. It will provide guidance where there are no legislative requirements and develop solutions to some of the gaps in service delivery experienced by the City since amalgamation in 2001.

These three white papers provide the basic framework for the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. They provide information and ask for your comments on how to deal with issues of tax support and subsidization, revenue generation, accessibility and inclusion and service delivery. The results will give City Council and staff the tools to make consistent and fiscally responsible decisions in providing recreation services.

Recreation is a fundamental service that provides social and economic benefits to the community while reducing long term health care, social service, police and justice costs.



It is widely accepted that physical activity – taking a walk, riding a bike, dancing, swimming or playing- makes you feel better and can improve your health.

Some interesting facts about Ottawa that will affect the Parks and Recreation Master Plan include:

- Ottawa is the fourth largest municipality in Canada with a population of more than 850,000 residents.
- It is physically larger than any other major Canadian city including Toronto.
- It contains a significant amount of agricultural land, key waterways and protected green space.
- It is a multilingual city made up of 86 distinct communities.

Key factors influencing the role of the City in providing recreation services include:

- The City offers programs directly as well as through partnerships and/or agreements with community organizations and groups.
- Recreation facilities such as arenas, gyms and sports fields are used to full capacity at certain prime times of the day and week but are under-utilized at other times.
- Changing demographics – i.e. increase in the number of older adults versus other groups and increases in immigrant populations.
- Climate – variations in weather conditions affects the provision and cost of some services.
- Changing economic conditions such as a slow down in the economy or inflation could affect the ability to delivery some services.

The City invites you to read the papers, discuss them and then tell us what you think.

How to respond:

1. Online: visit ottawa.ca/recreation and click on the Master Plan link.
2. Mail to:
City of Ottawa
Attention: Diane Huffman
100 Constellation Crescent, 8th Floor West
Ottawa, Ontario
K2G 6J8
3. Drop off your written response at any staffed community centre, client service centre or library.



Service Delivery

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Overview

Background

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3. [Delivery Approaches](#)
4. [Sport and Partnerships](#)
5. [Role of Parks and Recreation within the Market Place](#)
6. [Volunteers and Service Delivery](#)
7. [Francophone Services](#)

Overview

The City has a goal to ensure all residents have the opportunity to be healthy and active. To accomplish this the City provides recreation services with a commitment to:

- Improve access to services by decreasing the reasons that prevent people from participating
- Ensure that access is affordable
- Respond to community needs for all ages

Ottawa's population is constantly shifting and expanding. As the population changes, so too do its demands on recreation services. To keep up with these changes, the City is looking for feedback from the public that will help give the City direction to guide future policy decisions.

The following paper will provide an overview of the way the City is presently delivering recreation services and ask questions to assist in developing a direction for recreation service delivery over the next 10 to 15 years. The paper will discuss:

- The services that should be available from the City
- The delivery approaches to be used by the City
- The type of relationships the City should develop with different communities and stakeholders

Background

In 2001, the City of Ottawa was created from the amalgamation of 11 urban, suburban and rural municipalities, each offering different services. Since then, the City has focused on areas needing attention including improving services for residents with special needs. New sports fields and arenas have been built to help bridge the growth in population and demand from clients and the services available.

There are variations in how services are provided in rural, suburban and urban areas of the city. Currently, the City's delivery system is based on three main factors:

- History of service
- Capacity of the community (roles and responsibilities defined in a partnership)
- Scope of the service

These factors play a role in who delivers the services and under what type of agreement. The spectrum of approaches includes:

- Services offered via full-time staff (City staff or community-based staff)
- Services offered via volunteers (sport organizations, community associations and other groups)
- Services offered via contract agreements with community associations – these may be offered by either or a combination of the first two approaches



Service Delivery

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

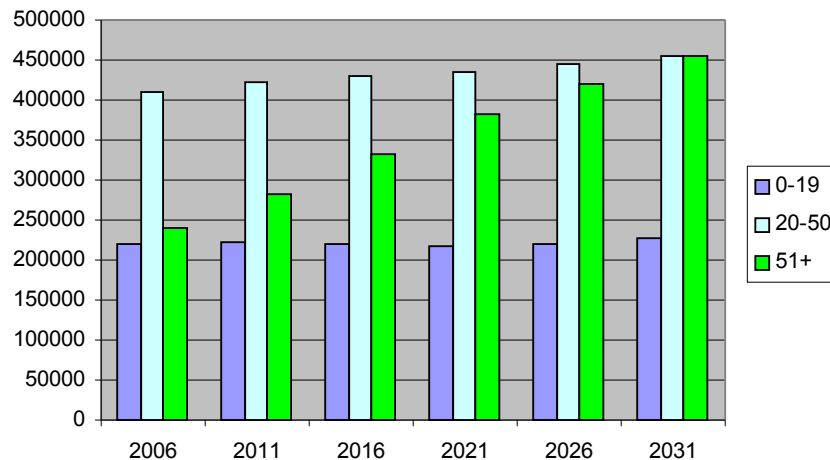
The most appropriate approach is often dependent on the scope of the service. For example, large multi-use centres, such as the Nepean Sportsplex, are managed by City staff, who offer some programs and support different organizations and groups to conduct a variety of program activities for residents. In rural areas local community centres are often managed and programmed through community associations. With sport groups, similar to most rural associations, the City provides the facility and the organization is responsible for the management and implementation of the program activities. These differences in how and by whom services are delivered are one of the strengths of Ottawa’s recreation system and demonstrate how organizations, groups and individuals play a major role in shaping recreation.

The City has also been a strong facilitator for specific programs that are used by a limited portion of the population. With access to City property, organizations fund operational and, in some cases, capital costs of their recreational activities. This has created strong opportunities for the development of more advanced and varied facilities and activities than seen in many other communities.

The issues surrounding the variety of agreements and delivery methods lead to some of the key questions that will help shape the direction of recreation – what services the City should be offering, and what accountability and responsibilities should community partners have when operating programs or services on behalf of the City. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is currently developing a partnership strategy to ensure communities contributing to program delivery are recognized through a transparent decision-making process.

Ottawa is expected to have a 30 per cent population increase in the next 20 years. Variation in growth will see an increase in the number of older adults and in immigrant populations while the percentage of children and youth will level off. The following chart provides an overview of the expected changes to Ottawa’s population.

City of Ottawa 2006-2031 Population Demographics



It is important to the City that services provided in the future reflect the changes to the population and that those services are offered in a manner consistent with resident’s expectations.



Service Delivery

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The City presently offers recreation services, including:

- Multi-use facilities to accommodate a variety of sports and recreation services
- Community-based facilities e.g. neighbourhood community centres that provide program activities and meeting spaces.
- Facilities and services to accommodate events and special activities such as major tournaments, community events, and festivals
- Outdoor facilities such as pathways, parks, wading pools and sports fields that provide informal opportunities for residents to be active

The City continues to offer traditional recreation activities such as swimming, child supervision, physical activity and sports to different groups.

These activities are offered to all age groups: pre-school, children, youth, adults, adults 50+ and seniors 65+, as well as to persons with disabilities, low income and of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. These services include instructional classes, drop-in programs, workshops, special events and sports leagues. Most of these services have a participation fee.

The City is the largest seasonal employer of youth. It offers employment opportunities that will enhance youth development and leadership skills, and contribute to the successful delivery of recreation service across the city. This is also complemented by volunteer hours that youth sometimes contribute to the City as part of a 40-hour volunteer requirement needed to receive a secondary school diploma.

In essence, partnerships allow Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services to be able to facilitate many different levels of services than it could not offer on its own. Recreation has a long tradition of volunteer involvement and engagement. The demographic change in our population has affected how members of the community wish to volunteer and the type of assistance they are seeking from the City to provide recreational opportunities. As a municipality, we are looking to determine the services the City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services should provide, to whom, at what standard, and the level of community involvement in the shaping and delivery of services.

Infrastructure

Developing plans and strategies for recreation services will help to establish the vibrant, healthy and active city envisioned in the Ottawa 20/20 plan. Combining the goals of the Transportation Master Plan with planning guidelines (Smart Growth), that suggest facilities should be built along major transportation routes, will help make facilities more accessible. These strategies, along with the Environmental Strategy to link neighbourhoods and communities by pathways, will make recreation more accessible to residents. This is important to the delivery of recreation services, as transportation is one of the main barriers to recreation for youth, seniors, low-income residents, immigrants, and people with disabilities.

The City's vast system of parkland and pathways provide opportunities for most residents to participate in both informal and scheduled activities. This feature is one of the main reasons people are attracted to live and work in Ottawa. Parks are offered at no cost to residents (with the exception of sports fields for league play) and for the most part, are subsidized by tax dollars.

The development of new buildings and infrastructure is guided by policies for both park development and the need for a specific type of recreation facility in a community. These policies are based on population density, existing recreation services in the area, and citywide recreation needs. The City is currently working to develop multi-use facilities in new developments that provide a one-stop shop approach to service delivery. Development fees support these facilities.



Service Delivery

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Many of the existing facilities located in the central and rural areas of the city, such as single-pad arenas and pools built in the late 1960's and early 1970's, are in need of major funding to bring them up to today's standards. In some cases, though the facilities no longer meet the needs of the residents in the immediate neighbourhood they are still being used by a variety of groups from across the City.

The City understands that there is a need for neighbourhoods to have general meeting and programming space, but existing budgets do not provide for the redevelopment of facilities within older neighbourhoods. Funding for this purpose, therefore, relies on the tax base for support. It is important to determine how the City can continue to provide these services, maintain facilities and program activities within its current budgets.

In planning for the future, it is important to determine how to provide access to meet growing needs while being aware of the shifts in demographics and trends. For example, over the last 10 years there has been an increased demand for skateboarding facilities. Currently these demands are being met at specific locations. The location selection was based on appropriateness for development, community needs, and the current policy that determines the location of facilities.

Key Questions:

1. Should we continue to develop or redevelop smaller neighbourhood-based community centres?

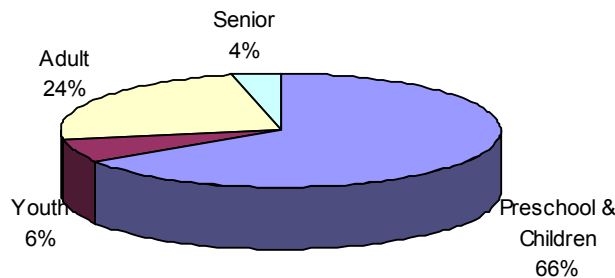
Yes / No

Comments:

Program and Services

Introductory level programs are the foundation of services provided by the City. These programs offer a variety of learning experiences such as dance instruction or aerobics classes, based on the needs and demands of the community. The following chart provides an overview of who participates in City recreational programs.

Registered Programs Participation





Service Delivery

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Table 1: Types of Programs - provides an overview of the types of programs and the City's role in providing these services.

Program type	Definition	City's role
Introductory	Structured "learn to" or participatory programs that promote lifelong learning. These programs benefit the individual and the wider community's general health and wellness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue-based services. In general, these services almost meet the cost of providing the services. • Often these services are provided directly by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services or in partnership with a local community association or group.
Intermediate	Programs that primarily benefit the individual through the continued development or competency in specific skills. These programs and services may require specialized facilities and instruction. These programs are most often delivered by outside associations with advanced technical skills. The City often provides the venue for programs at this level within community centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility provider • Provides the service directly or in partnership.
Advanced	These programs and services support the individual's needs for advanced skill competency. These programs may require sophisticated and expensive facilities and instruction, most often provided by clubs or associations. In some special cases the City does provide advanced instructional programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of these programs can be limited. Programs often receive the least amount of municipal tax support. • In most cases, the City provides the facilities but does not implement the program directly.

Table 2: Program Services and Service Delivery Approaches - provides an overview of the program services and delivery approaches used by the City

City facility operations	Program services delivered by the City	Program services delivered through community group support and partnerships	Public private partnership (formal agreements)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34 arenas for a total of 43 indoor ice surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice rentals • Recreational skating programs • Public skating • Skating lessons • Hockey schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hockey leagues • Figure skating clubs • Skating clubs • Ringette league 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-private partnerships (P3s): e.g. Sensplex



Service Delivery

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City facility operations	Program services delivered by the City	Program services delivered through community group support and partnerships	Public private partnership (formal agreements)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100 community centres ● 10 major complexes ● 300 halls ● 36 gyms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fitness and wellness programs ● Special needs programs: therapeutic programs, integration opportunities ● Cultural programs ● Day camps ● Child supervision ● Gym sports ● Rentals for community meetings, programs and special events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purchase of service agreements for facility operation and program delivery through community associations ● Facility/centre operation through informal partnership ● 180 various partnerships/affiliate agreements ● Unified bookings with schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reciprocal agreements with school boards (public-public partnerships)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 11 standard pools ● Three wave pools ● Nine outdoor pools ● 58 wading pools ● 75 water play/spray pads ● Four beaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 16,045 swimming programs ● Public swimming ● Learn to swim programs ● Lifesaving/drowning prevention ● Aquatic certification ● 17 per cent of rental hours to swim clubs, synchronized swimming, water polo, diving 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contracted services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 300 sports fields ● 350 ball diamonds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rental hours accommodating 750 community and sports leagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purchase of service agreements with recreation and sport associations ● Grants 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 108 tennis facilities (273 tennis courts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 77 instructional programs ● Free court-time at public tennis courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tennis club agreements regarding community-based operations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 850 parks ● 234 outdoor rinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal use at 14 skateboard parks, basketball courts, play structures, etc. and outdoor rinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintained by the City. Permitted park use at specific park sites. ● Outdoor rinks operated under purchase of service agreements with community groups. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specialized facilities such as the equestrian centre, golf course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional programs ● Rental opportunities. Maintained and operated by the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agreements for skilled resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hornets Nest Super Dome



Service Delivery

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

The City plays an important role in providing facilities including parks, sports fields, arenas, pools and community meeting space. The types of programs offered in an area depend on the individual neighbourhoods, their demographics and the type of facilities available.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is one of many recreation service providers. Others include school boards, community associations, and private operations like fitness centres, and sport or cultural associations. Together they provide a wide range of activities within the city. While there are different levels of programs offered throughout the city, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is committed to ensuring services fulfill the needs of Ottawa's residents. Though at times some of these other services providers operate in the same areas as the City, it should be noted that in most cases the City's programs provide access to a different clientele.

Speciality programs and facilities such as the City's equestrian park and golf course add diversity to the services available to residents. These services are operated totally through fees paid by clients.

Key Questions:

1. Does the City currently offer an appropriate mix of recreation services?

Yes/ No

Comments:

2. Is our blend of introductory, intermediate and advanced programming appropriate?

Yes/ No

Comments:

3. What recreation programs and services should the City be offering?



Service Delivery

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

4. What role should the City take in ensuring services are available to the community if other recreation service providers exist within that area?

5. What is the role of the City in advancing sports excellence and competition?

Delivery Approaches

The City is developing guidelines to outline how it should partner with community groups looking for more input into recreation services. Community participation, collaboration and coordination are key factors in defining the City's model for service delivery.

Partnering or collaborating with others to deliver services to the public has been a foundation of recreation in Ottawa. Table 2 clearly illustrates that the City is not the sole provider of services, but plays an important role. In some cases the City's role is simply to provide the space, particularly for sports programs where associations deliver most of the activities using City facilities. This is similar for many community groups, who rent the facilities from the City and then provide program services to their community.

The City has entered into a range of agreements with organizations to provide recreation services. The school boards and the City have a mutual agreement whereby the school boards provide gym space, meeting rooms, and outdoor fields for City-run programs. In exchange, the school board has the use of sports fields, pools and ice-time in arenas or outdoor rinks. The City has also entered into public-private partnerships (P3s) with the business community so that facilities are available to meet the ever-growing demands in recreation. All of these agreements help to ensure that residents have access to recreational activities.

Agreements with community associations and groups to run facilities and programs range from having key access to sports field storage areas, to operating programs and managing facilities. The outdoor rink operation gives community groups grants for the development, supervision and maintenance of neighbourhood outdoor rinks. The City provides the necessary support for the group to offer the service, including a water source, hoses and rink boards. Currently, there are approximately 25 different types of funded service agreements with community associations or groups who are providing recreation programs and services in different neighbourhoods.

The City is working to develop policy guidelines that will define the different service agreements it enters into with community groups, and the roles the City plays. The challenges to these agreements are the defining factors of the partnerships and collaborations, resource costs, liability and revenue.



Service Delivery

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Key Questions:

1. Should the City's standards and policies be applied to our partners offering recreational services?

Yes/ No

Comments:

2. Should the allocation of facilities be based on the City's approach to program delivery (accessible and inclusive, etc.)?

Yes/ No

Why/why not?

Sport and Community Partnerships

Sports are great examples of successful community partnership. Sport associations and community clubs manage most sport activities. The role the City plays is to provide the rental facilities for hockey, soccer, baseball, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics, ultimate and many other sports. The clubs, community and sport associations operate the activities. Sport has the most participation by children and youth in recreational activities. Sports activities contribute to how we develop our parks, our community centres and our multi-use centres. They account for approximately 80 per cent of our facility rental revenues.

Allocating space and accommodating different sports are two major challenges the City faces. The levelling off of participation in baseball and the increase in soccer registrants has meant that parks need to be designed differently. As participation levels of some sports increase, they put stress on facility requirements and the volunteers who organize the activities.

Sports require different types of facilities for different levels of skill. There are requests to build facilities for more competitive sports. It is important that the City have the support of the public before a consideration is made to move in this direction. With high-level facilities the City can bid for tournaments or games that would not otherwise come to this area. These facilities are often more costly to build and maintain, but contribute to the economic base of the City, while providing opportunities to talented citizens.



Service Delivery

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Key Questions:

1. Should the City ensure that community-based leadership (e.g. community and sport associations) provide accessible and safe environments for our residents?

Yes/ No

Comments:

What should the City be doing to assist these organizations?

2. When planning future facilities, should the City incorporate the requirements of high-performance sports and special events?

Yes/ No

Comments:

If so, where should the financial resources come from?

3. Should some facilities be designated for specialized use (e.g. 50-metre competition pool, Terry Fox Athletic Centre)?

Yes/ No

Comments:



Service Delivery Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Role of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services within the market for recreation services

The City is operating a number of programs that may appear to be in competition with the business sector or other service providers. In many cases entry-level services offered by the City are either complementary to programs offered by other service providers, or they target different groups or clientele.

Some activities, such as fitness classes and fitness memberships, are offered in our multi-use facilities. Revenues from memberships are used to fund services for participants and reduce the tax support for recreation services across the City. If these services were cut, revenues would decline and result in either a reduction of services or increased reliance on tax support.

The City of Ottawa is questioning what role it should take in programming services in order to ensure all residents have access to recreation activities.

Key Questions:

1. What role should the City take to ensure accessible opportunities for residents when other private service providers such as the YM-YWCA, are located within the same area as a City facility providing program services?

Volunteers and Service Delivery

Community volunteers provide additional options for residents to participate in activities in their neighbourhoods.

There are two types of City volunteers:

- 1) Those who work directly for the City and assist City staff in recreation programming. Each year, volunteers provide service that is equivalent to 21 full-time staff members.
- 2) Those who work with a non-profit organization that has an agreement with the City. The cost to the City is often reasonable and allows the community to actively participate and support their residents.

There are a number of issues challenging the recruitment of volunteers. These challenges have a tremendous impact on recreation services that are currently offered by sport, culture and community associations. Time constraints on personal and professional lives leave smaller amounts of time for volunteering. The most significant shift in the last five years has been a move from long-term commitments in groups like Brownies, to episodic support where volunteers use their skills in a short-term project, like at the National Capital Marathon.

More goal-oriented management practices, accountability and liability concerns have put pressure on non-profit organizations to:

- Run a volunteer program that is safe for both the volunteer and the client
- Reduce risk and liability to the organization and the volunteer
- Ensure volunteers are placed where they are needed the most
- Provide a meaningful experience for the volunteer



Service Delivery

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Key Questions:

1. What types of support (financial and in-kind) should the City of Ottawa provide to volunteers and non-profit organizations?

Francophone Services

In 2001, the Bilingualism Policy was enacted, stating that the City should offer comparable services and programs in both English and French. The policy states that the quality and level of service of these programs should be equal in both languages. The City recognizes both official languages as having the same rights, status and privileges.

Prior to amalgamation, only four of the 11 municipalities had French recreation programs. The new City of Ottawa moved quickly to ensure francophone residents were being served. Over 16 per cent of the total population stated that French was their first language. Ottawa's rapid growth has meant that the francophone population has spread throughout the City. Although dispersed throughout the City, the majority of francophone residents live east of the Rideau River and north of Leirrim Road. A lower proportion of francophone residents live outside of the Greenbelt, with the exception being east of the Greenbelt. There are now francophone schools and communities in historically anglophone areas such as Barrhaven, Kanata, Nepean and Stittsville.

The City has a well-established variety of service providers, funded groups, associations and private organizations to offer francophone recreation programs to all age groups across the City. Over the last three years, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services has made great strides to increase the number of programs offered in French. We have seen a 33 per cent increase in participation.

While francophone residents have access to programs in their language of choice, a clear direction and policy needs to be developed by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services in order to better respond to the needs of all French-speaking residents for years to come.

Key Questions

1. Do you have suggestions as to how the City can reasonably offer francophone service across the city?



Service Delivery

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

2. Should we continue to rely on partnerships to meet the needs of francophone residents?

Yes/ No

Comments:

3. Should we promote programs that are primarily English in francophone promotional materials (festivals, special events etc.)?

Yes/ No

Comments:

4. Should we promote programs that are primarily French in anglophone promotional materials (festivals, special events etc.)?

Yes/ No

Comments:



Service Delivery Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

5. Would a bilingual format for the delivery of some programs or promotions be reasonable?

Yes/ No

If so, how should programs offering services in a bilingual format be decided?

Comments:

If there are questions that you feel are important but we did not address, please provide your comments below:

General Questions

The following information is confidential and will only be used to determine if our process is reaching the residents of Ottawa. We ask that you please fill out as much as you can.

Is this an individual or a group/collective response?

If a group or collective response, please provide the name of the organization or group represented:

If providing a group or collective response:

Number of members in the group: _____

Number of female members: _____

Number of male members: _____

If an individual response:

Postal Code:

Gender: Male / Female



Service Delivery

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Age Category (Please check one)

- 13-18
- 19-30
- 31-40
- 41-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 75+

Number of members in the household (Please check one)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7+

Household income (Please check one)

- under \$20,000
- under \$25,000
- under \$30,000
- under \$35,000
- under \$40,000
- under \$45,000
- under \$50,000
- under \$55,000
- under \$60,000
- under \$65,000
- under \$70,000
- under \$75,000
- \$75,000 and up

Involvement in Recreation (Please check all that apply)

- Rental Group (e.g. Sports association)
- Volunteer
- Community Association Member
- Partner Recreation Group
- Staff
- Participant – Registered program
- Participant – Memberships
- Participant – Drop-In
- Other – please specify



Accessibility and Inclusion

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Overview

[Background](#)

1. Specific Populations
 - a. Low-income residents
 - b. [People with disabilities](#)
 - c. [Cultural groups](#)
 - d. [Seniors/older adult residents](#)
2. [Facility Usage](#)
 - a. Allocation of space
 - b. Distribution of facilities
3. [Parkland, Open Space and Informal Recreation](#)

Overview

The City of Ottawa is made up of a diverse population and landscape. It reaches out to residents in urban, suburban and rural areas with recreation services that are constantly evolving. As Ottawa expands and changes through immigration and an aging population, the City must ensure its programs and services reflect these variations in the population.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is looking for feedback from the public to ensure the needs of all residents are met. Information gained through this white paper will be used to determine equitable and practical approaches to create opportunities for participation in City-supported recreational activities for all Ottawa residents.

The discussion on 'accessibility and inclusion' will focus on:

- The range of accessible and inclusive recreation services.
- The current status of plans undertaken by the City of Ottawa to ensure recreation services are accessible and inclusive.
- Priorities that will help make recreation activities and facilities more accessible over the coming decade.

Background

Evidence suggests that investing in recreation services has long-term benefits including lower health care costs and crime rates. The benefits of recreation validate the importance making recreational activities accessible and inclusive to all residents – for more information visit the Benefits of Recreation page.

The City provides a wealth of recreation opportunities. There is a network of parks, pathways, beaches, playgrounds, wading pools, splash pads, outdoor rinks and tennis courts available throughout the City. All of these services are financially accessible and allow for informal play, socializing, exercising and participation in a variety of activities.

Facilities like community centres, arenas and pools provide locations for residents to participate in structured and scheduled physical and social activities. Community groups and associations often offer and/or operate the program services within these facilities. In some cases community agencies also provide services, usually under government funding and/or City grants such as with the Elderly Persons Centres. There are also complementary services provided by other organizations, such as the YMCA-YWCA, universities, and the National Capital Commission, that play an important role in creating the full range of activities available to residents.

The City ensures its recreation services are accessible and inclusive by providing reasonable and affordable opportunities to participate in recreation activities to all residents. However, with Ottawa becoming larger and more diverse not all services are offered identically in every community, nor are all services always able to accommodate everyone.



Accessibility and Inclusion

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Over the past few decades the City has experienced a strong growth in demand to provide scheduled and registered activities. The current service delivery approach reflects this demand. The recreation activities offered include fitness, 'learn to swim', 'learn to skate', and programs for persons with special needs, seniors, adults and children. The City also provides a variety of recreation options for girls and women through the Citywide Girls, Women and Sports program. In addition, many community and sports groups fulfil the needs of the community by offering organized sports programs at all levels, including intermediate and advanced programs, in the City's indoor and outdoor facilities. There is a wide range of opportunities for residents based on the experience of the participant, cost of the program and the location of the service.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services' priority is to offer affordable, entry-level programs targeting low-income residents, persons with disabilities, seniors and the Francophone community. The emphasis is to reduce barriers and assist these residents to participate in the different recreation programs available in their communities.

The City, in partnership with the City for All Women's Initiative (CAWI), is building awareness of the full spectrum of demographic groups that may have challenges participating in their community and is developing strategies to be inclusive. The 11 groups identified by CAWI include five groups previously recognized in the City's equity and diversity policy (aboriginal people, women, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender) and six additional groups including recent immigrants, francophone residents, youth, seniors, residents with low-income and rural residents.

When developing programs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services tries to reduce barriers to recreational activities. The barriers most often mentioned include:

- Transportation
- Cost of the service
- Language of the program
- Availability of child care (a barrier to many adults, particularly women)
- Limited leisure time
- Lack of awareness about the service
- Appropriate support services, volunteers and training
- Physical barriers

Another challenge in providing accessible recreation services are the recreation facilities themselves and their location across urban, suburban and rural areas. Multi-use facilities located in areas across the City serve a large community base and are a trend in new developments. These larger facilities meet the demand for services geared to all residents but in particular towards children and youth, who make up 72 per cent of participants in registered programs.

There are a large number of children and youth living in the core areas of the city like Vanier, Banff, and Rochester Heights. In these areas, services are often provided by smaller, single-use facilities such as pools, arenas, community centres or parks. The approach in rural areas is similar. Many of these facilities were built in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and need to be renovated or rehabilitated. Ottawa, like most municipalities, is struggling with the demand to repair these community-based buildings.

To ensure accessibility needs are met when developing new policies, it is important that Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services first understands what residents' needs are in recreation.

Specific Populations

The City of Ottawa's recreation services are available to most residents. However, some residents and neighbourhoods need greater assistance to access services. Individuals and groups with limited participation include:

- Low-income residents
- People with disabilities



Accessibility and Inclusion

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- Immigrant and cultural groups
- Seniors

a) Low-income residents

Residents with low income typically depend on tax dollar support to have access to recreational services. A fee assistance program is available through the City to those who qualify and gives them a program credit. This approach provides fee-assisted participants with a recreation experience but does not establish continuous participation in an activity nor does it address the need for skill development in this demographic group.

Those in the low-income bracket that are not accessing assistance may be dealing with other barriers such as language or cultural factors. As the poverty level increases, it is important that barriers be reduced for greater access to recreational programs.

Transportation costs and activity fees often act as deterrents to low-income residents. Recreation services are offered in most neighbourhoods and are generally accessible by walking, but low-income individuals' participation is limited to these site-specific activities. Other service providers such as sport organizations offer programs in local neighbourhoods that are not being offered by the City, but these activities are often costly and are not covered under the City's subsidy policy. Some of these organizations have their own subsidy policy. To better serve low-income residents, tax-based subsidies need to be prioritized.

b) People with Disabilities

Many individuals with disabilities are currently participating in recreation services with minimal or no support. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services has limited resources to help individuals with special needs participate in existing programs. Until now, integrating children and youth with special needs into regular year-round program/activities and summer camps has been a priority. For individuals with unique or more complex needs, the City offers specialized programs internally and through partnerships with other organizations. These programs are supported through a combination of user fees, municipal property taxes, funding from other levels of government and external agencies.

Today, specialized services are offered across the city in facilities designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. For example, play structures for children with physical disabilities have been designed and placed in a few parks across the City. Going forward, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* will mandate improvements that will affect the delivery of recreation services. These changes may result in increased program and facility costs, as many facilities require retrofitting. The City is currently developing a strategy to meet these requirements.

c) Cultural Groups

There are over 60 different cultural groups in Ottawa. Language and cultural barriers prevent many of them from taking part in programs and services. Today, the City works with other organizations and applies for grants and funding to help accommodate the needs of these groups. For example, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services provided a grant to design services for Muslim women. The funding provided this group with the opportunity to swim, exercise and participate in sports activities in a women-only environment. The current approach to services is to ensure opportunities are accessible and inclusive but reasonable in terms of operational requirements and costs.

Providing specialized services for individuals who do not speak English or French is an ongoing challenge. The cost of translation, providing qualified instructors and competition for facility space all affect the services available to these individuals. Currently Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is conducting pilot projects to better understand how to engage and integrate these individuals into programs.



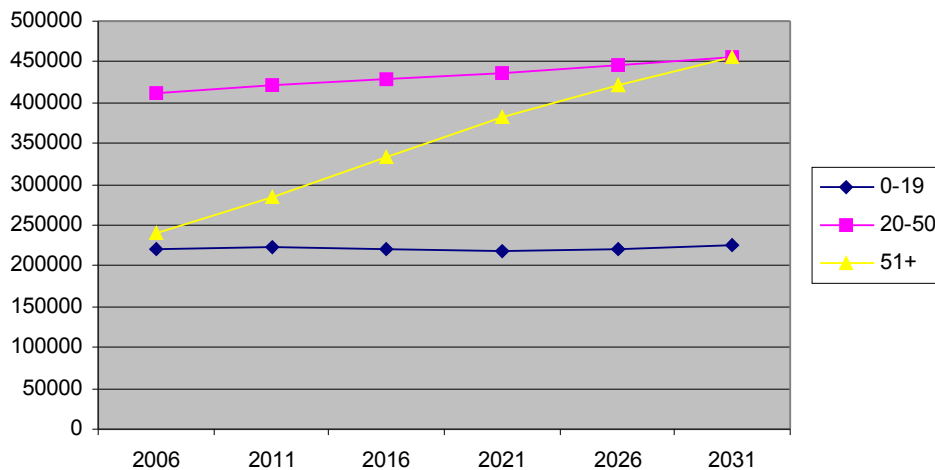
Accessibility and Inclusion Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

To offer better accessibility to services the City is becoming more reliant on external partners who have the expertise to provide the specialized services needed. Going forward, it is important that the City determines its role with these programs and identifies opportunities to fund the services.

d) Senior/Older Adult Residents

Like many municipalities across the country, Ottawa's population is aging. As shown in the following diagram, the number of older residents will increase dramatically over the next 20 years.

City of Ottawa 2006-2031 Population Demographics



Programs specific to older adults (50 years and up) accounted for four per cent of participation in registration-based programs. Adult programs (19 years and up) accounted for 24 per cent of the overall participation rates. We know that older active adults (50 years and up) make up a portion of the adult participation but the City is unable to track the actual numbers by age within the adult age category.

Due to demographics and predicted growth of this group, these participation figures will continue to grow as the population ages. This presents many of the same issues experienced by other groups, such as allocation of dedicated space. The City needs to prepare to accommodate the future needs of these residents.

Much like the low-income group, transportation to and from activities is often an issue for seniors (65 years and up). A combination of factors affects their ability to get around including the loss of a driver's licence, the relocation of family members to other municipalities, and the loss of partners and friends. When these factors are combined with Ottawa's harsh winter climate and large rural areas, the limited options for transportation becomes a major barrier to participation in recreation.

Older adults and seniors enjoy access to all City community centres and complexes. As well, the City has developed senior recreation centres, which are found either as dedicated space in larger multi-use facilities or as single-use facilities especially for seniors. Examples of such single-use facilities include the Churchill Recreation Club, Kanata Senior Recreation Centre and Heron Senior Recreation Centre. These centres were developed in areas with a high density of senior residents and they offer a variety of activities for older adults and seniors. Senior centres are operated by the City or often in partnership with outside groups.



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Specialized and therapeutic services are offered by other organizations to citizens with different levels of abilities and who may be unable to participate in City-run programs.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of the senior population aged 75 and over are isolated from the community. Currently this may be upwards of 10,000 seniors in Ottawa. Staying active in the community and maintaining health are priorities for successful aging.

Key Questions

Currently the municipality attempts to service groups who might not be able to participate in recreational activities, but recognizes the need to better serve these groups in the future. However, such changes would require either more funding or a shift of funding from another area.

1. Do you support program subsidies for low-income residents?

Yes/ No

If so, should priority be given to:

- A) offering programs for low-income residents at reduced prices, or
- B) improving access to subsidies so that qualifying individuals can register in regularly priced programs.

Comments

2. Do you support program subsidies for persons with disabilities?

Yes/ No

If so, should this assistance be

- A) universally provided, or
- B) based on a person's ability to pay?

Comments



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3. Do you support subsidies for programs designed to integrate new immigrants and other cultural groups into recreation activities?

Yes/ No

Comments:

4. What should the City do to provide programs to accommodate the growing numbers of older adults and seniors?

5. Should the City be developing exclusive space for senior programs?

Yes/ No

Comments:

Facility Usage

i) Allocation of Space

In 2002, City Council approved an allocation policy for the use of space in arenas, pools and sports fields for its wide range of users. Hundreds of groups from the former municipalities were combined under one system of space allocation. Schedules were reassessed to ensure they were equitable. In an endeavour to make sports more family-friendly, minor sport organizations were given preference for time slots up until 9 p.m. Unfortunately, the demand was greater than the space available in outdoor and indoor venues during prime time. Today, a group's level of participation, its history of use, and the age levels to which they cater are considered when allocating facility space.

The City of Ottawa has standards on the number of arenas (1:22,000) and pools (1: 35,000) available in a community based on the number of people living in the area. While demand is high during prime time, there is a lack of funds for more buildings and there are cases of facilities being 'under-used' during off-peak hours. These issues are complicated by new sports, such as skateboarding and ultimate, that compete for similar time and space with more traditional sports.



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Key Questions:

1. How should the City address the shortage of prime time space for its users?

2. Do you support adjustments to the current system of allocation and rental of facilities for programming?

Yes/ No

Comments:

3. How should the City address facilities being 'under-utilized' during off-peak hours?

4. How should the City balance the needs of established associations and leagues with the demands of emerging and growing organizations?

b) Distribution of Facilities

In 2005, Council approved a recreation study outlining a Sports Field Strategy (2003) and Community Infrastructure Strategy (2005). Under these strategies, potential land use, community consultations and other assessment factors are considered when establishing the type of facility an area needs. Parks, sports and recreational facilities must be varied and conveniently located throughout the City and must address urban, suburban and/or rural standards. Factors such as changing demographics, growth and even climate change also need to be considered.



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Facilities in certain pockets of the city are less financially sustainable; however, they provide essential space and services to residents who may not be able to afford recreation opportunities otherwise. While communities have gone through generational cycles, the area’s recreation facilities were not often adjusted to match the new demographics. Some community centres in areas such as these have found alternate uses for amenities without City support. For example, some tennis courts are now being used for in-line hockey or basketball.

Key Questions

1. Large, multi-use facilities are being built in new developments.
 - a. What role should smaller neighbourhood facilities have in their communities?

b) What is your preference to meet your recreation needs:

- Multi-use facility (name): _____
- Neighbourhood facilities (name): _____
- Combination of both _____

b. How should the City support the needs of these facilities?

Parkland, Open Space and Informal Recreation

The City’s Official Plan has a target of two hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents in the urban area and rural villages. Parks offer important recreational space that is accessible to most citizens. Fortunately, Ottawa’s residents can also enjoy the parkland and pathway systems of the National Capital Commission (NCC). This NCC land complements the land that the City has dedicated to parks and informal activities.

Parks and open spaces offer the most accessible, available, and affordable opportunities for residents to participate in outdoor activities - at no cost to them. The spaces lend themselves to a range of informal activities such as walking, hiking, and providing a community gathering place. They also provide for formal activities such for sports, community gardens and other scheduled or exclusive uses.

In today’s environment, there is a growing interest in ‘green’ communities. These communities offer an increased quality of life through comfortable, attractive, safe, healthy, vibrant and more liveable environments. Parks and open spaces are an important aspect of ‘green’ communities. With this in mind, the City is trying to ensure that parklands are:

- Equally distributed within the community.
- Easily accessible by foot or bicycle from homes, and linked to other green spaces.
- Provide for a wide range of passive and active outdoor recreational opportunities.



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It is important to understand that achieving this goal means land for future development is limited. As older neighbourhoods experience changes in their residents and their recreational needs, there will be limited funding to upgrade parks and significant competition for development space.

Key Questions

1. What do you recommend the City do to balance formal (scheduled) and informal activities for residents in our parks?

2. Do you support the exclusive use of parks for certain activities, such as community garden plots, commemorative items located in parks, or extended contracts for exclusive use of portions of parks?

Yes/ No

Comments:

3. Do you support the use of parks by commercial groups to carry out vending, advertising or other programming initiatives?

Yes/ No

Comments:

4. Do you think that amenities such as tennis courts should be available for rent by individuals, allowing exclusive access for a temporary period of time (e.g. for a special event)?

Yes/ No

Comments:



Accessibility and Inclusion

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

If there are questions that you feel are important but we did not address, please provide your comments below:

General Questions

The following information is confidential and will only be used to determine if our process is reaching the residents of Ottawa. We ask that you please fill out as much as you can.

Is this an individual or a group/collective response?

If a group or collective response, please provide the name of the organization or group represented:

If providing a group or collective response:

Number of members in the group: _____

Number of female members: _____

Number of male members: _____

If an individual response:

Postal Code:

Gender: Male / Female

Age Category (Please check one)

- 13-18
- 19-30
- 31-40
- 41-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 75+

Number of members in the household (Please check one)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7+



Accessibility and Inclusion

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Household income (Please check one)

- under \$20,000
- under \$25,000
- under \$30,000
- under \$35,000
- under \$40,000
- under \$45,000
- under \$50,000
- under \$55,000
- under \$60,000
- under \$65,000
- under \$70,000
- under \$75,000
- \$75,000 and up

Involvement in Recreation (Please check all that apply)

- Rental Group (e.g. Sports association)
- Volunteer
- Community Association Member
- Partner Recreation Group
- Staff
- Participant – Registered program
- Participant – Memberships
- Participant – Drop-In
- Other – please specify



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Overview

[Background](#)

1. [Tax Support](#)
2. [Revenue Generation](#)
 - a. User Fees
 - b. Advertising and Sponsorship
3. Subsidization

Overview

Ottawa's recreation system is one of the most diverse in the country. It serves the needs of urban, rural and suburban residents using a variety of approaches inherited from the 2001 amalgamation of 11 different municipalities. The blending of more than 60 linguistic groups among its 85 (and growing) neighbourhoods means Ottawa has many opportunities and challenges when providing services to its residents. To accommodate these needs, the City provides a vast system of parks, sports fields, pathways and facilities such as arenas, pools and community centres. It offers recreation programs for families, children, seniors and persons with special needs such as fitness classes, learn to swim or learn to skate classes, a variety of instructional programs, day camps and after-school programs.

The City bases its recreation services on general principles including:

- Fiscal responsibility
- Affordable services
- Accessible and inclusive services that reduce barriers to participation
- Responsiveness to the needs of the community

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is developing a coordinated approach to delivering services and a decision-making model to guide how it will provide recreation to the residents of our diverse city.

This white paper identifies the key challenges facing the City of Ottawa's recreation system around tax support, revenue generation and subsidization with respect to:

- Recreation services that should be fully, partially, or minimally supported by taxes
- Identifying services that require a fee and what that means to you as a resident
- Identifying the costs that service fees will cover
- Identifying who pays for recreation services
- Identifying how funding will be used to offset tax support

Background

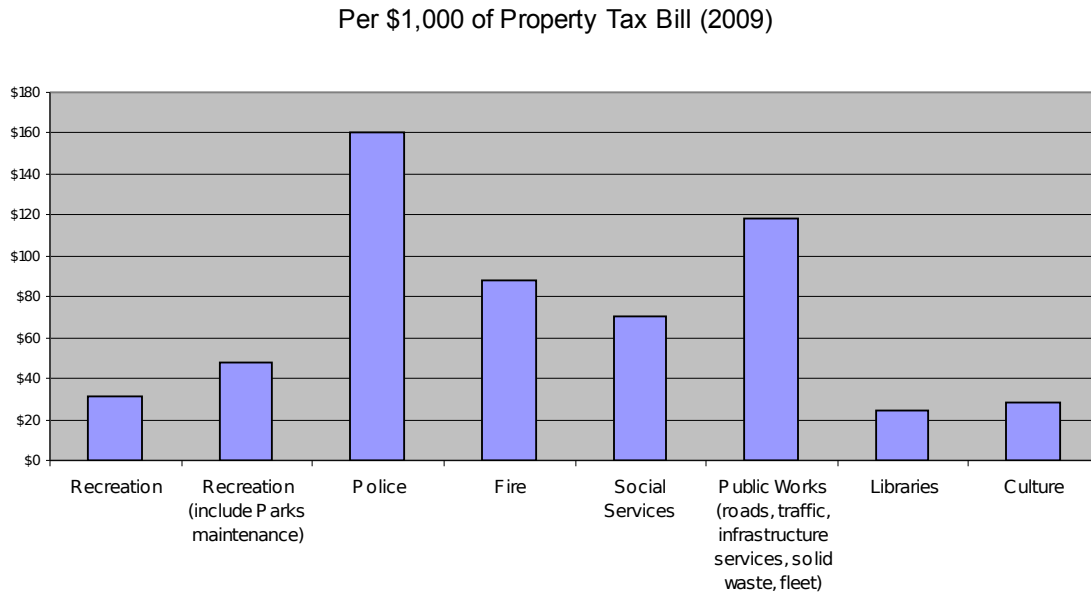
All Canadian municipalities support recreation services from their tax base. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is projecting \$92 million in expenditures for recreation in 2009 plus a further \$23 million for parks and sports field maintenance. This \$92 million is offset by \$49.5 million in revenues consisting mainly of fees paid by the clients, sponsorship dollars and \$42.5 million from the municipal property tax base. Over the last several years, between three and four per cent of the City's overall operating budget has been invested in recreation. The following chart provides an overview of how the City's tax support revenues are distributed over selected municipal services.



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Selected Municipal Services (Per \$1,000 of Property Tax)



Based on an estimated population of 902,150 residents, approximately \$72 per resident is put toward recreation from the property taxes collected. This means roughly \$48 of every \$1,000 on the property tax bill helps to support the programming and operation of:

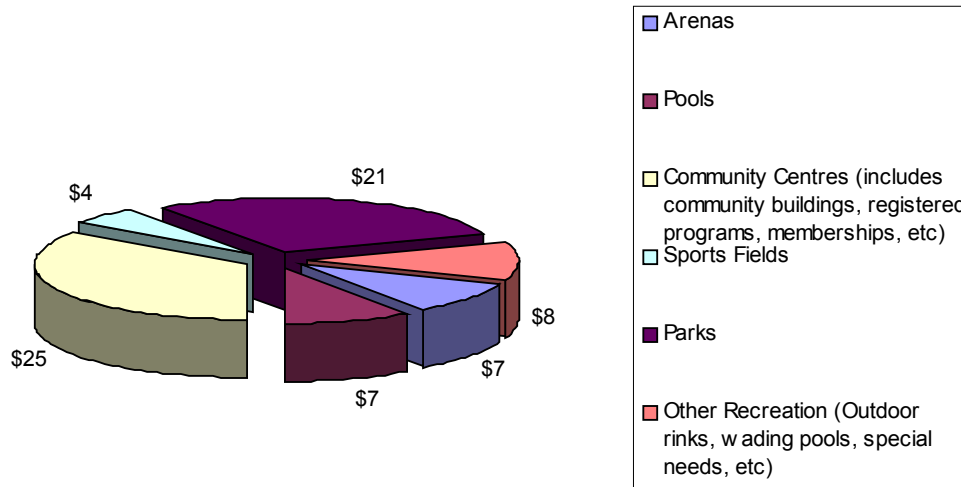
- 34 arenas, with 43 indoor ice surfaces
- 234 outdoor rinks sites/375 surfaces
- 17 indoor pools, nine outdoor pools, 58 wading pools
- 75 water play/spray pads
- 323 community centres/halls
- 850 parks, pathways
- 300 sports fields and 325 ball diamonds



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

The breakdown of the individual services that the \$72 supports include:

Estimated \$ Cost Per Resident (2009)



Recreation services are delivered and supported in a number of different ways. Traditionally the City of Ottawa has directly delivered recreation programs like swimming and skating lessons, day camps, and fitness classes. The City has also rented facilities such as arenas, pools, sports fields and community halls. Factors like the Ottawa 20/20 vision of a healthy, safe and accessible environment, the priorities of residents and new trends in recreation all help to determine which services the City will provide.

The former municipalities that now make up the City of Ottawa delivered programs in many different ways. Some were City-delivered while other programs were provided through partnerships with outside organizations. Community partnerships can provide financial benefits to the City and in some cases is considered the best approach to meet the needs of the City and its residents. Community partners can apply for grants the City does not qualify for and can often use these grant revenues for multi-year project funding.

A full review of program service delivery is in the White Paper - Service Delivery.

Tax Support

Generally, tax support pays for the development and maintenance of the recreation infrastructure including park and pathway systems, playgrounds, wading pools, spray pads, municipal tennis courts and outdoor rinks. It also covers facilities such as arenas, pools and community centres. Programming services such as swimming, skating, dancing lessons and day camps are supported by a combination of revenues and tax support. The more revenues generated to cover costs, the lesser the reliance on tax subsidies. For instance, the highly popular 'learn to' programs, such as 'learn to swim' or 'learn to skate' are likely to fully recover their costs since participation in these programs is generally high.

The amount of tax support a program receives depends on the type of service and for whom the service is being delivered. Children's programs receive more tax support than adult programs regardless of whether the service is delivered by the City or through an outside service provider.



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Currently, approximately \$1 million is spent each year to assist low-income residents participate in recreation programs. This assistance is partially supported by the federal government. In some cases residents with low incomes have access to City-operated neighbourhood programs for free or at reduced rates. The tax base, provincial and federal grants and/or private foundations subsidize this reduced rate. These programs play a major role in reducing barriers to participation and to the overall health of the city. For more information visit the Benefits of Recreation page.

The City's current approach provides the highest level of tax support to informal programs. The fees to access these programs are intended to be affordable. Informal activities include public swimming, public skating programs or drop-in activities such as basketball at local centres. In some cases participation is free, like at outdoor rinks, wading pools and beaches.

In general, the taxpayer pays for the operation of facilities and parks. Maintenance costs are typically supported by taxes, although there is a movement towards recovering a portion of these costs through user fees. In general, fees paid by the participant cover program delivery costs; however, in some cases tax dollars help cover costs of services for specific groups (e.g.: children, youth, and people with low income).

Key Questions

1. Do you support the present approach of subsidizing program costs for certain target groups (children, seniors, people with low income) and moving towards full cost recovery for all other programs?

Oppose

Neither oppose nor support

Support

Comments:

2. Do you prefer that:

A) subsidies cover program costs targeted at specific populations, or

B) a model that sets fees and provides subsidies to those who cannot afford the set fee?

Comments:



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

3. Are there specific recreation programs or services that you feel should be partially or fully supported through property taxes? If so, which ones?

4. In the future, would you be willing to pay proportionately:

- A) more,
- B) less, or
- C) the same property taxes, as you do today to support access to recreation programs and services?

Comments:

Revenue Generation

The City of Ottawa’s financial framework expects that “to the extent possible, property taxes be reduced by diversifying revenue sources, such as user fees.” While traditionally the tax base has subsidized recreation, like most other municipal services, there is a trend toward limiting the amount of further subsidization. To provide current programs and allow for future growth, Ottawa must become less reliant on property tax dollars to support recreation. This year, residents are being faced with increased fees. Participation rates in recreation may decline if fees become unaffordable.

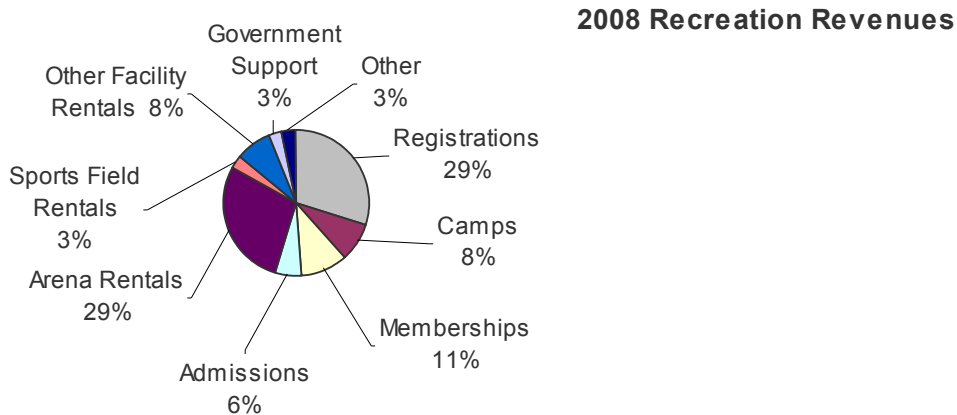
Currently, recreation-based revenues are generated in a number of ways:

- Registration fees
- Rental fees for sports fields, arenas, pools and halls
- Grants from other levels of government or organizations
- Parking fees at locations such as Mooney’s Bay beach
- Sponsorship for events or programs
- Membership fees for fitness centres



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

The following chart provides an overview of how recreation revenues are generated in percentages.



i. User Fees

The City of Ottawa determines the fees charged to participants based on direct costs, what is happening in the recreation market throughout the city and on fees in other municipalities. The City earns revenue primarily through facility rentals and program registrations, but also collects revenue from sources such as parking lot fees, advertising and vending. The following links provide an overview of rental fees and the Spring/Summer 2009 Recreation Guide for program fees.

http://ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/facilities/rentals/rental_rates_en.html

http://ottawa.ca/residents/parks_recreation/programs/guide/index_en.html

Program registration fees, account for approximately 30 per cent of all revenues and is broken down demographically as follows:

- Preschoolers, children and youth make up about 25 per cent of the population and account for 72 per cent of the recreation program participants.
- Adults make up 64 per cent of the population and 24 per cent of the participants in programs.
- Seniors account for roughly 11 per cent of the population, make up four per cent of the participation in registered programs, and contribute 11 per cent of membership revenues.

Facility rentals (arenas, pools, sports fields, meeting halls) account for about 40 per cent of the revenues generated. Many of the rental options are geared towards children and youth - about 80 per cent of prime time in arenas, for example. Fees for rentals are determined by looking at other municipalities, the local marketplace and by determining a cost recovery rate. User groups, who are not deemed to be a priority e.g. not children or youth, are expected to pay higher rental fees to cover costs.

For the City to continue to reduce tax support and increase revenue requires an examination of the issues and trends surrounding this approach. The city is expanding and its demographics are changing. The population is expected to increase approximately 30 per cent by 2030. The number of seniors is expected to almost double over the next 15 years, whereas the proportion of children and youth is decreasing. This shift will affect revenues and services the City provides. Demographics are changing so drastically that some facilities, programs and services offered today may not be appropriate in the future.



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

The shifting of the burden from tax support to a revenue-covered model creates issues in the decision-making of which services to cover. User fees may increase to recover direct and indirect costs such as administrative, operational, or even initial set-up costs. At some point, high fees may deter residents from using a service. At the same time, services offered by other providers also dictate the fee the City can charge participants. Greater reliance on user fees means that some users, such as sport associations, may have a difficult time attracting members to offset the higher costs. This will add a barrier that may cause some groups, such as people with lower incomes, not to participate.

The City must therefore balance reducing its reliance on the tax base with its capacity to generate revenues, knowing that there is a cost threshold that affects participation levels.

Key Questions

1. Other than the direct costs related to a program (wages, material, promotion), should fees be set to include:

A) the full, or

B) partial recovery of indirect costs (facility use, administrative overhead, etc)?

Comments:

2. Do you agree that fees from programs that generate a surplus should be used to support programs for specific priority residents? For example, fitness class revenue may be used to support drop-in gym programs for youth or summer camps for children who cannot afford the fees.

Yes/ No

Comments:

3. What types of programs/services should be supported through user fees?

ii. Advertising and Sponsorship

Advertising and sponsorship may be a great source of untapped revenue for the City of Ottawa. The City has a large amount of building infrastructure and parkland that could be of interest to advertisers and in turn generate dollars for the City.



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Currently there are approximately 35 various sponsorship arrangements in Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000. The arrangements help support services through payments of cash or services-in-kind.

The City also generates revenues through advertisements and vending agreements within its facilities. Currently, the responsibility to arrange and maintain these agreements falls on City staff in charge of specific programs, so there is no consistent approach used across the city.

Part of the City's business plan for the next 10 to 20 years is to introduce opportunities to recover costs and gain more revenue. Initiative to develop these areas must support Council's 2005 direction* that staff seek out advertising and sponsorship opportunities and gain revenues from City properties and its other assets. Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services is in a good position to increase revenue in this manner, and allow residents in need, such as persons with low income, the opportunity to participate in more recreation programs.

By coordinating efforts, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services can develop sponsorship packages that are attractive to private companies and organizations. While considering this option, it is important to understand the risks associated with sponsorship, particularly if the City becomes too reliant on these funds as a source of income. Replacing base budgets with sponsorship dollars may place programming at risk during an economic downturn where sponsorship dollars are less available. It is important, therefore, to develop a guideline on sponsorship funds and how they are to be used.

Key Questions

1. Should advertising revenue and sponsorship of recreation programs, facilities and parks be used to enhance recreation programs and to make programs more accessible to disadvantaged groups?

Yes/ No

Comments:

2. Should the City pursue large-scale sponsorship agreements for recreation facilities and parks?

Yes/ No

Comments:



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

3. Should private companies or other agencies have the ability to advertise in municipal recreation facilities and parks?

Yes/ No

If so, what limitations would you expect?

4. Would you support commercial sponsorship and advertising signage in City parks (e.g. Rink board, bench and back stop advertising)?

Oppose

Neither oppose nor support

Support

Comments:

5. Would you support commercial advertising and sponsorship recognition on City facilities in commercial and institutional areas?

Oppose

Neither oppose nor support

Support

Comments



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

6. Would you support it in residential areas?

- Oppose
- Neither oppose nor support
- Support

Comments:

7. Would you support the sale of facility naming rights to commercial entities and the display of the commercial names on City facilities?

- Oppose
- Neither oppose nor support
- Support

Comments:

8. Would you support the replacement of current facility names with commercial names?

- Oppose
- Neither oppose nor support
- Support

Comments:

July 15, 2005, Corporate Sponsorship and Advertising Policy (CSEDC Report 32, Item 4)

Subsidization

Often the revenues generated from user fees, grants or other methods coupled with tax dollar support are used to offset or subsidize the costs of some programs. For example, revenues from fitness classes might offset the costs of programs offered in at-risk neighbourhoods, allowing the programs to be provided at no cost.

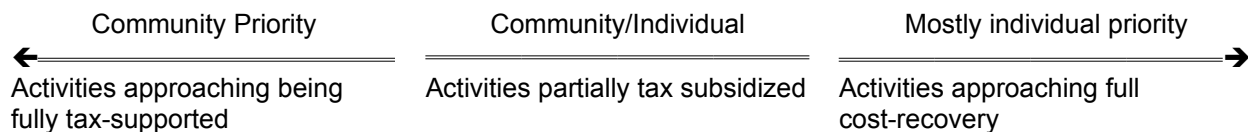


Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

There are a number of available sources with which Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services can subsidize programs; one example is the instance mentioned above. Alternatively, the tax base can fund programming for specific residents. Using tax dollars to support priority programs or population groups is generally of great benefit to the community.

Currently, the City’s priority programs that are supported or subsidized often by taxes and revenues, are programs for children, youth and low-income residents. This gives these residents a greater ability to access municipal recreation services. Generally for these groups, the individual user fee and the rental fees for facilities tends to be lower. It should be noted that often children’s activities with many participants, such as swimming lessons, recover all the costs associated with the program even when lower fees are charged. Many adult and non-traditional programs (such as sailing and golf) are fully paid for by the user and receive little or no support from the tax base or other revenues.

The above model summarizes the City’s approach to recreation programs and services. With increasing pressure on municipalities to provide recreation services for all, while providing programs that will last for years to come, the City of Ottawa must determine which recreation services it should offer and whose recreation services will be supported by tax dollars.



Key Questions

1. Do you agree that some city residents should pay different fees for programs and services based on their ability to pay?

Yes/ No

Comments:

2. Should certain programs be designed to have lower costs (basic service, fewer activities, less expensive material and services, etc.) to provide economical alternatives for those on limited incomes?

Yes/ No

Comments:



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

3. Do you agree that entry-level programs and services for children, youth, seniors and low-income groups should be subsidized by tax dollars?

Yes/ No

Should this subsidy be universal or based on ability to pay?

4. Do you support having discounted program fees for certain age groups regardless of ability to pay?

Yes/ No

Comments:

If there are questions that you feel are important but we did not address, please provide your comments below:

General Questions

The following information is confidential and will only be used to determine if our process is reaching the residents of Ottawa. We ask that you please fill out as much as you can.

Is this an individual or a group/collective response?

If a group or collective response, please provide the name of the organization or group represented:

If providing a group or collective response:

Number of members in the group: _____

Number of female members: _____

Number of male members: _____

If an individual response:

Postal Code:

Gender: Male / Female



Tax Support, Revenue Generation and Subsidization Parks and Recreation Master Plan – White Paper

Age Category (Please check one)

- 13-18
- 19-30
- 31-40
- 41-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 75+

Number of members in the household (Please check one)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7+

Household income (Please check one)

- under \$20,000
- under \$25,000
- under \$30,000
- under \$35,000
- under \$40,000
- under \$45,000
- under \$50,000
- under \$55,000
- under \$60,000
- under \$65,000
- under \$70,000
- under \$75,000
- \$75,000 and up

Involvement in Recreation (Please check all that apply)

- Rental Group (e.g. Sports association)
- Volunteer
- Community Association Member
- Partner Recreation Group
- Staff
- Participant – Registered program
- Participant – Memberships
- Participant – Drop-In