

Executive Summary

Recreation provides individuals with numerous physical health, psychological, economic and environmental benefits which are associated with a high quality of life. Not only does participation in recreation provide opportunities for a healthy lifestyle, it also facilitates greater cognitive development, self-esteem, social interaction, economic spending, conservation of natural lands, and community vibrancy. The field of recreation planning has emerged in response to the importance of the recreation sector, effectively positioning decision-makers and service providers to meet the recreational needs of a community in a sustainable manner. Municipalities frequently undertake assessments of their recreation systems to develop policy frameworks, and quantify benefits and needs. The City last undertook a Recreation Facility Master Plan that was approved in 2008 (a Parks Policy Plan was also approved in 2005).

This new Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (RFPMP) plays an important role in setting a new course in delivering high quality services and facilities to residents of St. Catharines. In establishing the strategic framework for this Plan, efforts were made to ensure integration and consistency with other municipal projects and priorities, while respecting key themes that were provided through this Master Plan's community consultation program. The Master Plan is clear in that it distinguishes between community needs and perceived "wants"; recommendations are based upon a comprehensive methodology, consideration of regional trends and best practices, demographic composition and projections, and alignment to municipal roles and priorities for the delivery of core services. City Staff and Council will play a key role in implementing recommendations of the RFPMP through annual capital and operating budgeting processes, along with any supporting work plans developed by Staff, for City Council to consider on a recommendation-by-recommendation basis.

A cornerstone of the RFPMP is the comprehensive community engagement program, involving over 1,000 residents and stakeholder groups through use of telephone and online surveys, workshops and focus groups, interviews, and open houses. One of the most prevalent themes emerging from the consultations was the need for more equitable and inclusive investments in the City's recreation system, resulting in a vision designed specifically for the RFPMP to make St. Catharines:

The City Where Everybody Can Play



The following pages summarize the facility service level targets from this Master Plan. It is emphasized that the tables should not be construed as a tool for determining facility needs based simply by applying a service level to a population or registration figure. The Master Plan has arrived at its recommendations using an integrated methodology that considers evolving trends, public opinion and user preferences, utilization and operational performance, demographic characteristics, and service levels.

Indoor Facility (number of facilities)	Standard Recommended in the Plan	Service Level Achieved in 2015	Additional Facilities Required by 2026	Comments and Qualifications
Arenas / Ice Pads (10 total, 8.9 equivalents)	1 : 500 Registered Youth Participants	1 : 390 Registered Youth Participants	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equivalent supply assumes Meridian Centre as 0.25 ice pads, Merritton Arena as 0.65 ice pads, and includes Haig Bowl • Service Level Achieved is based on the 2013/14 arena registrations • Standard is within a generally accepted level of service across Ontario of ice pads per youth registrants, depending upon age composition, allocation priorities, rural vs. urban settings, etc. • Service level standard must be considered in tandem with prime time utilization rates (optimally 90%-95%) and other market factors • Future facilities required contingent upon two phased implementation approach (see Recommendations #1 and #2)
Indoor Aquatic Centres (1 municipal, 3 non-municipal)	1 : 140,000 Population (excluding quasi-public pools)	1 : 140,660 (1 : 35,165 if including quasi-public pools)	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally accepted service levels across Ontario are 1 indoor aquatics centre per 35,000 to 60,000 population, factoring access to quasi-public facilities such as the Y.M.C.A., Brock University and Ridley College pools • Refer to Recommendation #4
Indoor Sports Fields (0)	Contingent on business planning	n/a	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with municipal best practices, indoor turf is preferably pursued where an appropriate partnership is negotiated with a third party (see Recommendation #5)
Gymnasiums (2)	Not Applicable	1 : 70,330 Population	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service levels typically range from 1 gym per 35,000 to 60,000 population in Ontario, there are no generally accepted service standards as provision depends on a variety of factors including agreements with school boards and ability to complement other indoor facility components to act as community hubs or multi-use/multi-generational facilities • Refer to Recommendations #6 to #8
Equipment-Based Fitness Centres (0)	Not Applicable	n/a	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no generally accepted service standards as provision depends on service philosophies (e.g. whether to compete with the private sector) • Refer to Recommendation #9

Indoor Facility (number of facilities)	Standard Recommended in the Plan	Service Level Achieved in 2015	Additional Facilities Required by 2026	Comments and Qualifications
Dedicated Older Adult Centres (3) and Youth Centres (2 private)	Not Applicable	1 : 46,889 for older adult space and n/a for youth space	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no generally accepted service standards as provision depends on municipal service philosophies and availability of community-based facilities • Instead of new dedicated facilities, age priority-based space integrated within an existing or future facility is preferred • Refer to Recommendations #10 to #13

Outdoor Facility (number of facilities)	Standard Recommended in the Plan	Service Level Achieved in 2015	Additional Facilities Required by 2026	Comments and Qualifications
Rectangular Fields (32 total, 37.0 equivalents)	1 : 90 Registered Participants	1 : 144 Registered Participants	24.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equivalent supply assumes Kiwanis Field is equal to 2.0 unlit natural fields, and lit fields equal 1.5 unlit natural fields • Service Level Achieved is based on 2014 registration data • Service level standard must be considered in tandem with prime time utilization rates (optimally 65%-85% for Class A and B fields) as well as age range of players to understand field sizes required • Provision should also consider access to non-municipal fields at schools, universities or other privately owned lands • Refer to Recommendations #14 to #16
Ball Diamonds (22 total, 27.5 equivalents)	1 : 100 Registered Participants	1 : 72 Registered Participants	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equivalent supply assumes lit diamonds are equal to 1.5 unlit diamonds • Service Level Achieved is based on 2014 registration data • Service level standard must be considered in tandem with prime time utilization rates (optimally 65%-85% for Class A and B diamonds) • Also consider access to diamonds at schools, universities or other privately owned lands (e.g. Grantham Optimist Club) • Refer to Recommendations #15, #17 and #18
Splash Pads (2)	1 splash pad per City ward	1 splash in two City wards (or 1 : 70,330 pop.)	4 (exception may be where already serviced by an outdoor pool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally accepted service levels across Ontario are 1 splash pad per 3,000 to 5,000 children (ages 0 to 9) or based upon geographic distribution • Application of service level standard must be considered in tandem with the ultimate strategy for outdoor pools and other aquatic opportunities • Refer to Recommendation #19 and #20



Outdoor Facility (number of facilities)	Standard Recommended in the Plan	Service Level Achieved in 2015	Additional Facilities Required by 2026	Comments and Qualifications
Outdoor Pools (10 at six locations)	1 : 71,400 to 1 : 140,000 Population (number of locations)	1 : 23,443 Population (locations) or 1 : 14,066 Population (pool tanks)	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no generally accepted service standards as provision depends on municipal service philosophies and presence of other aquatic facilities (e.g. indoor aquatic centres, splash pads, beaches) Future provision must be considered in tandem with remediation/modernization costs, with the ultimate strategy for splash pads, considering the location of other aquatic opportunities (e.g. St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatic Centre) whether to service marginalized areas of the community and/or other strategic locations Refer to Recommendations #21 to #23
Tennis Courts (28)	1 : 5,000 Population	1 : 5,025 Population	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accepted service levels across Ontario are 1 tennis court per 4,000 to 5,000 population Provision may also be warranted where required to service a geographic gap Refer to Recommendations #24 and #25
Multi-Use Courts (22)	1 : 700 Youth	1 : 685 Youth	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accepted service levels across Ontario are 1 multi-use court per 600 to 800 youth (ages 10 to 19), while considering the geographic distribution of courts to serve the population Refer to Recommendation #26
Skateboard Parks (1)	1 : 7,500 Youth	1 : 15,112 Youth	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accepted service levels across Ontario are 1 skateboard park per 5,000 to 8,000 youth (ages 10 to 19) Provision of smaller-scale skateboarding amenities may also be warranted where required to service a geographic gap Refer to Recommendations #28 and #29
Playgrounds (90 at 70 locations)	1 Playground within 800 metres of Residential Areas	1: 2,009 Population (number of locations)	As required by new growth or gap areas (existing distribution is strong)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally accepted service levels across Ontario are 1 playground per 1,500 or within 500 to 800 metres of residential areas without requiring crossing of major pedestrian barriers (e.g. highways, waterways, rail lines, etc.) Refer to Recommendations #30 to #32
Golf Courses (2)	Not Applicable	1 : 70,330 Population	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no generally accepted service standards as provision depends on municipal service philosophies (notably whether to compete directly with the private sector)
Leash Free Dog Parks (1)	Not Applicable	1 : 140,660 Population	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no generally accepted service standards as provision depends on municipal service philosophies and presence of third parties who are willing to partner with a municipality