



The City of

Saint John

Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

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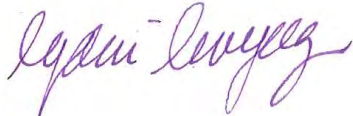
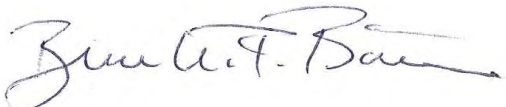
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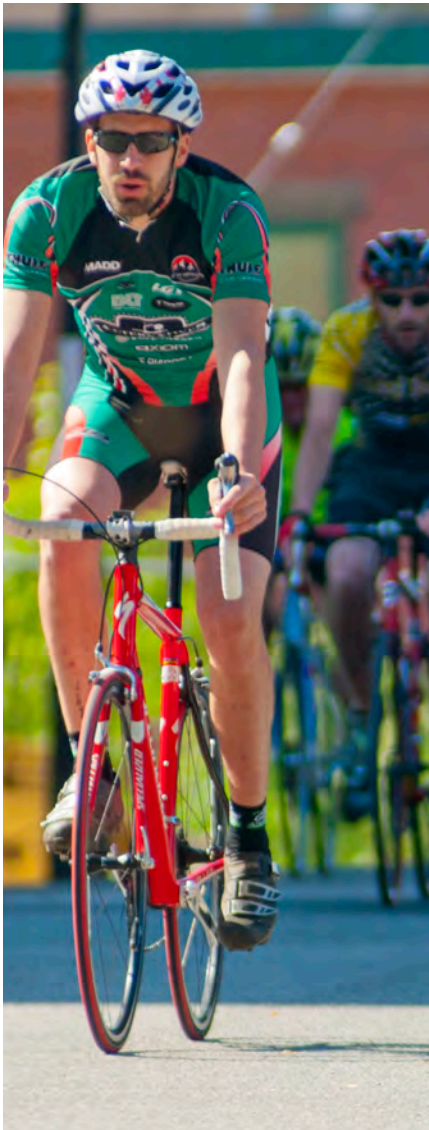
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1 chapter background



1.0 Introduction

Parks and recreation amenities in Saint John are a legacy handed down for the enjoyment of this and future generations. The City of Saint John is committed to protecting that legacy by preserving and enhancing the community's rich parks and recreation heritage.

1.1 Quality of Life

A city's quality of life and attractiveness is often evaluated on its recreational facilities and the range of leisure programs and opportunities it can offer its residents. Parks and recreation opportunities are essential to the **quality of life** of all residents in Saint John and offer a number of specific benefits that help strengthen families; ensure the healthy development of children; provide social opportunities and retreat for seniors; build a healthy community; and improve the economy.

In an increasingly urbanized society, parks and recreation amenities contribute to a balanced life. They are essential to the growth and development of children and youth; and provide opportunities for adults to develop their full potential and maintain healthy lifestyles.

The recreation options in the City of Saint John are diverse, inclusive and responsive; they enrich quality of life; encourage healthy active living; and promote personal growth and development opportunities for all age groups. They are also readily accessible to residents and families regardless of social or economic status or level of ability and have an economic benefit through the reduction of health care, social services and police and justice costs. Sources indicate that economic and health care costs of physical inactivity cost the Canadian economy as much as \$6.8 billion dollars a year.¹

2.0 Saint John's Goals and Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The City of Saint John is committed to providing a wide range of parks, recreation and leisure facilities as well as programs and opportunities designed to enrich the health, well-being and quality of life of Saint John residents. The Municipality's parks, open spaces, natural areas, recreation facilities and leisure programs are an integral part of the public infrastructure system that makes Saint John "*a healthy and inclusive community, living an interactive lifestyle.*"¹

¹<https://www.phecana.ca/economic-costs-inactivity>; and <http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/publications/research-update/2009/sept-health-care.pdf>

²City of Saint John Request for Proposal, 2011-092293P, Consulting Services: Recreation and Parks Master Plan, 2011

2.1 The City's Goals

The City's specific goals for The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan are:

- Parks and open spaces that meet the leisure needs of an interactive, inclusive community;
- A healthy community enhanced through participation in education and leisure opportunities;
- Quality, accessible recreation and leisure facilities maintained at a high standard and used to their maximum potential;
- A diverse, accessible and inclusive recreation/leisure program service within the community through various delivery models;
- A community enabled to provide for its own needs;
- Guidance for the current and future delivery and provision of recreation and leisure programs, facilities, and services; and City decision-making over the next 10 to 15 years;
- Recommendations on best serving the needs of the community while focusing on financial sustainability; and
- A healthy and inclusive community living an interactive lifestyle.

Plan SJ: the City of Saint John Municipal Plan sets the course for the Strategic Plan by recognizing the value that residents place on their parks and recreation facilities. It is imperative that this Strategic Plan integrates community expectations with effective management strategies for community resources that will result in residents' desired outcomes in the future.

2.2 Purpose of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

In 2011, the City of Saint John completed the Growth Strategy: *Saint John's Choice for Growth and Change*, as the precursor to *Plan SJ - the City of Saint John Municipal Plan* adopted by Common Council in January 2012. The Municipal Plan provides the guiding policies for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and the rationale for its foundation.

Observing the guiding principles of the Growth Strategy and aligning with Plan SJ, the purpose of this Strategic Plan is:

- To guide the current and future delivery and provision of recreation and leisure programs, facilities, and services and municipal decision making over the next 10-15 years;
- To identify the recreation infrastructure that will be required to meet neighbourhood, community, citywide

and regional needs over the next 10-15 years;

- To locate new community facilities and parks strategically to promote complete communities implementing the principles of smart growth;
- To recommend strategies that best serve the needs of the community while focusing on financial sustainability;
- To recommend changes to programs delivered by the City which align with community expectations, the City's sustainability goals, and the Growth Strategy.³

Furthermore, the City of Saint John will endeavour to consistently deliver:

- High quality experiences for residents and families in safe, clean, and healthy environments;
- City facilities that serve as community hubs, bringing people together in welcoming and energetic settings where they can socialize, build relationships, and unwind;
- City supported programs that are planned, managed and delivered in a way that truly reflects community priorities and values;
- City green spaces that celebrate the beauty and unique natural history of Saint John; and
- Diverse public venues and plazas that strengthen the culture and character of the City's Regional profile and attract residents and visitors.

By assessing the state of existing parks and recreation infrastructure against the new planning directive of *Plan SJ: the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan* will be the new approach to recreation planning. It will build on studies and work completed to-date merging goals, analysis, and policies into one workable action plan; thus bridging the policies of the Municipal with the benchmarks and recommendations proposed by the IFP study.

3.0 Context

As the demographic characteristics of our communities change, the task of meeting residents' recreational expectations becomes more of a challenge. Recreation needs are influenced by a number of factors including age, income, education and place of residence. When evaluating the demographic features of Saint John and subsequent trends, it is important to do so within the regional context. Residents from the outlying areas of Grand Bay – Westfield, Rothesay, Quispamsis, and the rural unincorporated Local Service Districts comprise the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

3.1 City and Region

The CMA is home to approximately 122,000 residents. Saint John residents now account for 53% of the region's

³ The City of Saint John Growth Strategy: Saint John's Choice for Growth and Change, 2011.

population. In 1971 they accounted for 83%. A significant number of users of recreation facilities within Saint John's municipal boundary come from these outlying areas within the CMA.

3.2 Regionalization

Recreation in Saint John is and continues to be mix of programming and facilities that addresses the needs of both Saint John residents and the residents of the Greater Saint John area. Indeed for most residents whether they live inside the City of Saint John or in one of the nearby Towns, recreational facilities are generally seen as a shared public resource. The Greater Saint John Regional Facilities Commission is an excellent example of Regional co-operation with many the area's major facilities and institutions (Harbour Station, Aquatic Centre, Imperial Theatre, Convention Centre) operating and funded under this regional model.

In December 2011 the provincial government announced a broad range of actions to create a new Local Governance System in New Brunswick to increase collaboration, communication and planning between communities. The establishment of 12 Regional Service Commissions was proposed as the mechanism to help communities communicate and collaborate regionally, as well as plan on a regional basis. Within each region, a new Regional Service Commission will have three main roles:

- Delivering, or facilitating the delivery of mandated services to communities.
- Facilitating voluntary service arrangements among interested communities.
- Acting as a regional forum for collaboration among communities on regional issues.

The proposed Commissions will be required to provide services such as Policing, Solid Waste Management, Local and Regional Planning. The Regional Service Commissions will also be responsible for facilitating the planning and cost-sharing of major sport, recreational and cultural facilities. The new Regional Service Commissions will also be the entity through which Municipalities, Rural Communities and Local Service Districts come together to identify and reach consensus on the need, the scope and the financing required for such new facilities (could include the expansion / renovation of existing facilities). Such agreements could be developed by the Commissions on a fully regional or on a sub-regional basis and would cover both initial capital and on-going operational costs.

One of the most relevant implications for the City of Saint John with regard to the proposed Regional Commission model is that once implemented provincial funding support for new recreation facilities will be contingent upon obtaining support from those communities expected to benefit from the facilities. For example Provincial support for the proposed multi-purpose indoor sport and recreation facility *The Field House @ Exhibition Park* could be contingent upon support from the communities in the Southern New Brunswick catchment area.

Pending full implementation of the Provincial regional service model, scheduled for 2013, municipalities have begun to examining models for inter-municipal / regional cooperation for recreational services. In 2009 a comprehensive analysis of New Brunswick's sport and recreation infrastructure was commissioned by Recreation New Brunswick in partnership with the Government of New Brunswick. It included:

- An inventory of key provincial recreation infrastructure (arenas, swimming pools, community centres, athletic/ball fields);
- An analysis of demographic and industry trends having implications on future recreation infrastructure planning;
- An analysis of the current state of New Brunswick's recreation infrastructure;
- An investment case for recreation infrastructure renewal and
- The development of a recreation infrastructure renewal strategy.

A resulting report, New Brunswick Recreational Infrastructure Renewal Strategy, identified six critical pillars that are the foundation to a New Brunswick Recreational Infrastructure Renewal Strategy.

1. Province wide strategic focus on citizen healthy/ active living.
2. Development of New Brunswick recreation facility standards.
3. Values-based recreational infrastructure system planning.
4. Incentives for a collaborative regional approach to planning, construction and operating large-scale recreation infrastructure that compliments neighbourhood-community infrastructure.
5. Innovative partnering, designing and management of recreational facilities.
6. Dedicated 25-year recreational infrastructure investment program.

Recreation New Brunswick believes that the new Regional governance model provides optimism for the future of recreation in New Brunswick; *“The development of Regional Recreation Commissions would address a number of issues. Firstly, it would ensure that the recreation resources of a region are equitably utilized and accessible and that the recreation resources of an area are equitably supported by all users of the region. Secondly, by providing a mechanism that allows for input from all users of the region’s recreation resources and any future resources, we ensure that there is a means whereby residents have an opportunity to provide input into the system and receive feedback. Finally, it provides the networking and cost sharing mechanism to ensure that all resources are managed properly and that we do not experience further losses or declines in our recreation assets.”*⁴

3.3 Population and Demographics

Saint John is the largest city in the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area; and as of the 2011 census the second largest City in New Brunswick. Saint John has experienced a slow and steady population decline over the past forty years having peaked at 89,000 people in 1971. City population declined 10% since the early 1990s and by 25% since the early 1970’s. (see Chart 1)

The 2011 Census indicates the city’s population decline has recovered slightly from a low of 68,043 people in 2006 to 70,063⁵ residents in 2011. This represents a population increase of nearly 3.3%, reversing a 40 year downward trend.

Notwithstanding the population increase of 2011, the good news does not yet demonstrate enough of a trend to discount the preceding forty years. Saint John is still faced with difficult economic factors: higher rates of deaths than births; an aging population; and the out-migration of youth and members of household-forming age groups.

Chart 1 - Population Change					
Population Change 2006-2011 (Both Sexes)					
	0-14 years	15-24 years	25-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years
Saint John	-1.9%	0.8%	0.3%	17.2%	6.2%
Rest of CMA	-1.3%	5.6%	-0.5%	23.8%	26.3%
Saint John CMA	-1.6%	2.8%	0.0%	20.2%	13.2%

Population Trends

Three dominant population trends are occurring in the City of Saint John: the largest age group (25-45) is shrinking; the youngest population (0-14) is rapidly declining; and the overall population is aging, led by the baby boomer generation (aged 45-65). The city is getting older with fewer youth 19 years old and younger and a growing number of residents aged 55 and older.

Low Income

Saint John’s 29,000 households make up approximately 60% of all households in the CMA, yet they earn 85 cents to every dollar earned by households within the entire CMA. The city’s median income was recorded as \$41,459 in 2006. More than 1 in 5 Saint John residents live in poverty; 40% of whom live in one of the city’s five *priority neighbourhoods*. Another 60% of residents in poverty live in other neighbourhoods throughout the city. The high rate and concentration of poverty within the city’s core requires a different approach to best service the recreation needs of those living in poverty.

Obesity

Obesity rates are on the rise throughout North America, with Atlantic Canada facing the highest rates in the country. Local statistics from Regional Health Authority B, Zone 2⁶, consistently show obesity rates higher than the averages for New Brunswick and Canada. By 2008, the obesity rate in Saint John reached 25%, higher than the province’s rate of 23.5% and the country’s rate of 17%. Shifts in lifestyle including increased time spent on idle activities that revolve around computers and televisions have contributed to the increase in obesity.

Education

Demographic characteristics such as income and education determine participation levels, especially among youth. *“Children who have a parent with a graduate or first professional university degree were more likely to play sports (60%) than children whose parents have a high school diploma (42%). Children of parents who have not graduated from high school are even less likely to be sports participants (22%). The relationship between parental level of education and sports participation of their children is linked to household income, as the children of university-educated parents are more likely to be in high-income households.”*⁷

⁴Submission to the NB Department of Local Government Consultation on Enhancing Local Governance presented by Recreation New Brunswick, Submitted by J. Shanks, April 14, 2011

⁵Census of Population - Statistics Canada; 1996 Total Population 72,494; 2001 Total Population 69,661; 2006 Total Population 68,043; and 2011 a Total Population of 70,063.

⁶The Regional Health Authority is responsible for managing and delivering a variety of services including Hospital Services, Community Health Centre Services, Extra Mural Services, Addictions and Mental Health Services and most Public Health Services.

⁷Kids Sports,(Chart 2 Sports participation is highest for children in high income families), Warren Clark, Statistic Canada, Ottawa, 2005



In 2010, the proportion of the population 15 years and over that had completed a university degree or a post-secondary certificate or diploma in Saint John (CMA) was:

- 46.3% (down from 48.0% in 2009 and up from 43.2% in 2000).

The 2010 figure of university educated residents was lower than the provincial average (46.6%) as well as the national rate (51.8%). Furthermore, the proportion of the population older than 15 years who had not completed high school in Saint John (CMA) was:

- 19.8% (up from 19.5% in 2009 and down from 25.7% in 2000).

The high school dropout rate was however, lower in Saint John than the provincial average (24.8%) and as well as the national rate of 20.2%.⁸

3.4 Trends in the Recreation Industry

The recreation industry, like any other industry, is evolving in response to communities and residents' needs, in a marketplace that is very different from that of the 1970's-90 in terms of both recreation consumers and recreation providers.

Trends that affect residents' recreation choices; real and perceived barriers to access to publicly funded recreation programs and facilities; municipal priorities and policies to engage all age groups; and innovations in recreation infrastructure, programs and services; are factors that influence the strategic investment of limited resources in a manner that will result in the greatest returns.

Trends which may influence Saint John's Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan include; planning, demographics, health, and expectations of users. To be relevant, the Strategic Plan must consider these changing trends in the planning context.

3.4.1 Planning

- A large geographic area coupled with a low population density affects the ability of the City of Saint John to efficiently deliver services and enhance the quality of life for residents.

- Sprawl creates longer commutes to recreational facilities.
- Many of Saint John's recreation facilities were constructed to serve a population 25% larger than it is today and consequently, the City has an over-supply of many facilities.
- In spite of the supply of recreation facilities, residents feel existing facilities do not adequately meet their needs.

3.4.2 Demographics

- Saint John's population is getting older with fewer youth 19 years and younger and a growing number of residents aged 55 and older.
- Retiring baby-boomers have higher discretionary income thus potentially altering demand for recreation and leisure activities.
- 42% of the 70,000 city residents live in the urban core; 40 % live in the suburban ring; and 18% live in the strip developments on the rural outskirts.
- High levels of low-income place additional pressures on the City to ensure recreation services are accessible geographically, economically and socially.
- Significant pockets of urban and rural poverty and lone parent families face barriers in accessing recreational opportunities and sustaining participation.
- Declining school enrolment may result in the closure of school playgrounds that have served a community's recreational needs.
- School closures resulting from declining population for ages 0- 14 will have an impact on recreation services.
- Declining population, and therefore tax revenue, increases the expense of maintaining existing facilities as well building new facilities and offering additional programs.

3.4.3 Health

- Saint John has an obesity rate of 25% in (as reported by Health Region 2) that is rising, and is significantly higher than the national average of 17%.

⁸Greater Saint John's VitalSigns 2011, Greater Saint John Community Foundation, 2011

- There is no correlation between an increased supply of recreational infrastructure and reduced obesity rates. Although the City offers 70 playgrounds, it also has one of the highest childhood obesity rates in the country.
- Fewer residents report to be physical active on a regular basis. Physical activity rates within Saint John have stagnated to less than 50%.⁹

3.4.4 Expectations of Users

- Many of Saint John's recreation facilities were constructed to serve a population 25% larger than it is today. This means that the City has more of some facilities per capita than recreation industry standards suggest are necessary.
- In spite of this oversupply, the public perception is that of an undersupply, based in part upon the reality that many facilities are old, out dated and not in a state of good repair.
- Quantity doesn't always mean quality. Despite an oversupply, the public has indicated through PlanSJ and through the City's Annual Citizen Satisfaction Surveys that they want better quality parks, recreation facilities and programs.
- The deteriorating state of infrastructure in Saint John falls short of residents' expectations for a high level of quality.
- Regional recreation infrastructure is in part supplied by the City of Saint John without appropriate cost contribution.
- Operating budget for the City of Saint John is insufficient to maintain the current supply in excellent condition and upgrade and improve facilities over the long term.
- Pressed-for-time families and households have little time for leisure activities.
- There is a rising demand for casual and self-directed activities.
- Walking will continue to gain more popularity as the population ages increasing the demand for safe, well maintained public walkways and trails.
- Many Canadian municipalities report that multi-purpose trails are the most pressing infrastructure need required to help residents become more physically active.
- There is a shift and/or decline in participation in many organized sports (with some exceptions).

- Parks and facilities increasingly consolidate multi-purpose uses at single locations.
- The provision of high quality recreational services will continue to become more expensive. Coupled with the continued aging of recreation facilities, the City of Saint John struggles to maintain current service levels.

3.5 City Spending on Parks and Recreation

The level of municipal investment as a percentage of the overall municipal budget is one method of measuring recreation and leisure programming. Unfortunately, the variations in budget reporting for parks and recreation from municipality to municipality make direct comparisons difficult. With this in mind, the average reported municipal spending on recreation between 2004 and 2008 in the Greater Saint John Region was 11.3%.¹⁰

In contrast, the City of Saint John reported an average recreation and culture budget equal to 6.54% of its total operating budgets during the same time period. Other comparable communities in the region invest significantly higher ratios of their operating budgets. For example, the City of Fredericton's 2010 Operating Budget for Community Services, the department which is responsible for recreation spending, represents 11.4% of that city's total operating budget.¹¹ In Halifax (Halifax Regional Municipality), the combined 2010 operating budgets for their Community Development and Infrastructure and Asset Management departments represents 8.75% of the municipality's 2010 operating budget.¹²

The City of Saint John 2010 budget report acknowledges this gap noting that "*periods of restraint have meant that the resources committed to recreation and parks programs and facilities have diminished noticeably in the past decade.*" However, during the 2010 Budget approval process, Common Council passed a five percent increase to the City budget to allow for additional funding for neighbourhood centres, a new focus on developing green spaces and trails within the city, a larger commitment to the PRO-Kids program, enhancement of the City's summer playground programs, additional staffing for recreation programs, and the completion of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to guide future investments.

Furthermore, Common Council made a commitment to improving recreation facilities, and during the period 2009-2012, the City of Saint John completed a number of major projects including:

⁹Regional Health Authority B, Zone 2; 2007 (self-reported rate of physical activity).

¹⁰This figure includes spending on recreation and culture departments in the City of Saint John and the Towns of Quispamsis, Rothesay, Grand Bay-Westfield and Hampton.

¹¹City of Fredericton, Department of Community Services operating budget includes spending on recreation, parks and trees, and public transit. The Department's total operating budget for 2010 stood at \$10,632,229.00.

¹²The combined budget total of the Halifax Regional Municipality's Community Development Department and the Infrastructure and Asset Management Department was \$28,279,990.00. These two departments are responsible for programming and facilities spending respectively.

- The construction of splash pads at Rainbow Park and Fleming Park. The Rainbow Park pad also serves as a winter skating oval. The total cost of both projects was \$1.7 million.
- The construction of mountain bike trails (\$235,000) at Shamrock Park and upgraded Tennis Courts (\$750,000) as part of the overall Master Plan (\$75,000) for Shamrock Park.
- The creation of a Park Master Plan for Market Place West.
- \$3.6 million redevelopment of the main entrance to Rockwood Park, funded by the Saint John Horticultural Society, the City of Saint John and the Recreational Infrastructure Canada.
- \$2.2 million contribution by the City of Saint John to the \$6 million Canada Games Stadium upgrade project. Improvements include stands, infrastructure, and field turf.

4.0 Guiding Policies for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

In 2012 the City of Saint John adopted its new Municipal Plan known commonly as **PlanSJ**. The municipal plan calls for a series of strategic plans, which are envisioned to ensure the business practices of the City align with the Municipal Plan in various service areas. These strategic plans are more specialized documents that require additional study to support the implementation of the Municipal Plan.

Policies of the City of Saint John Municipal Plan that guide parks and recreation services include:

- Review the IFP Study and make recommendations that will align the City's parks and recreation infrastructure with community expectations;
- Strategically locate facilities and parks to help build communities and implement the guiding principles of smart growth;
- Create complete communities that offer a range of community amenities within Intensification Areas;
- Address community facility goals of the municipal plan such as:

- » Investment in regional parks and other community facilities;
- » Value of public investment in community facilities within Intensification areas;
- » Alignment with IFP benchmarks;
- » Number of programs and services offered at City-run community centres and number of community members participating in programs;
- Parks and open spaces that meet the leisure needs of an interactive, inclusive community;
- A healthy community enhanced through participation in educational and leisure activities;
- Quality, accessible recreation and leisure facilities maintained at a high standard and utilized to their full potential; and
- Recreation that benefits the entire community (as opposed to individual special interest groups).

Significantly, the Municipal Plan directs the City to complete a Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to decisively manage its inventory of recreation infrastructure, facilities and programs to ensure they meet the needs of the community and align with the priorities of the Growth Strategy and Municipal Plan. The Municipal Plan also directs the City to:

“Ensure cost-effective and efficient service delivery for tax payers... (and) optimize the quality and appeal of parks and green spaces within the designated Intensification Areas, while ‘right-sizing’ the overall supply of these spaces city-wide.”¹³

The two principal directives from PlanSJ that have guided the development of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan are:

- Optimization of the quality and appeal of parks and green spaces within the designated Intensification Areas;¹⁴ and
- *Right-sizing* the overall supply of these spaces city-wide.¹⁵

The result of following the directives of PlanSJ are that parks and recreational assets inside intensification

¹³City of Saint John, Municipal Plan, 2012.

¹⁴Intensification Areas are identified as the areas of the City where most future growth and development will be focused. There are five sub-categories within the Intensification Areas, described as Primary Centres, Local Centres, Mixed Use Centres, Urban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas, and Suburban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas. Section 2.3.1 (Pg.37)

¹⁵The City of Saint John 2010 Infrastructure, Facilities and Programming (IFP) Inventory Study, depicts and oversupply of much of the City recreation infrastructure and recommends a right sizing process of reorganizing or restructuring the parks and recreation services by reducing costs, reorganizing the workforce, and the delivery of programs and services. The goal is to reduce over supply in alignment with population based standards and to achieve higher facility quality standards.

areas will become the focus of planning, investment, and improvement for the City of Saint John; and that *right-sizing* will enable the City of Saint John to explore alternatives to the direct municipal management of and responsibility for parks and recreational assets that exceed per capita based recreation industry standards.

By right-sizing, the City will bring its inventory into “*alignment with recognized facility inventory benchmarks, as set out in the Infrastructure, Facilities and Programming Study.*”¹⁶ *Right-sizing* also addresses the community’s response to the Citizen Survey that “*cutting services to maintain the tax level seems the most amenable way to balance service delivery and taxation.*”¹⁷

The Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan provides overall direction and guidance for decisions about parks and recreation programming, facilities and infrastructure and investment in the community. The Strategic Plan balances the needs and concerns of the public with the fiscal realities of implementation. The Strategic Plan is a guide to deliver, in a fiscally responsible manner, the parks and recreation services required by Saint John residents for the coming decade. It is a comprehensive framework that provides the foundation for:

- Service excellence;
- Strategic and operational decision-making;
- Communications and engagement;
- Support and capacity-building at the neighbourhood level;
- Partnering; and
- Resource allocation.

5.0 Parks and Recreation Framework

The City of Saint John Corporate Strategic Plan, 2012 outlines the organization of City staff and ensures that their service priorities are directed to achieve the priorities of Common Council. The strategies identified in the City’s Corporate Strategic Plan provide direction to the Corporation (City of Saint John) for the delivery of all services. The goal is to ensure that the City of Saint John is effective in meeting the needs of the community and that City services are delivered in the most innovative, sustainable and efficient way possible. A broad organization re-alignment has been implemented that has changed the structure of service delivery. Rather than structuring around *departments*, similar and complementary services have been grouped together with the result being a new model for the delivery of parks and recreation services.

5.1 Urban Environmental Services

This new broad service area has the mandate of providing safe, liveable neighbourhoods. It includes the Fire

Department, Emergency Measures Organization and the *softer* services associated with the old Leisure Services:

Neighbourhood Improvement Service: The City collaborates with citizens to create safe, vibrant communities and to promote a good quality of life. The Neighbourhood Improvement Service provides residents with tools and support to build resilient, healthy neighbourhoods. This service promotes and delivers programs that strengthen individuals and engage people in shaping the future of their community. The Service works with neighbourhood groups and associations to be empowered to meet the needs of their neighbourhoods through forming partnerships and providing guidance, information and other available resources. Neighbourhood Improvement Service includes the following programs:

- Community Development
- P.R.O. Kids

Recreation and Cultural Programming Service:

The Recreation and Cultural Programming Service provide access to many recreation, sport and cultural opportunities that allow residents to stay active, enjoy life in their leisure time and connect with other members of the community. Through innovative leadership, the goal is to deliver service that promotes community well-being and enhances the quality of life of residents to produce a healthy, vibrant, positive and strong community. This Service focuses on meeting the diverse recreation, cultural and leisure needs of the community.

- Seniors Programs
- Playground Program
- Community Centres
- Tennis Program at Shamrock Park
- Saint John Sports Hall of Fame
- Special Events, and Volunteer Appreciation

5.2 Transportation and Environmental Services

This new broad service area includes much of the old *Municipal Operations* combined with the *harder* services associated with the old Leisure Services:

• **Sport and Recreation Facilities Service:** The City of Saint John maintains a variety of facilities to serve the recreation and leisure pursuits of citizens and visitors. Sports and Recreation Facilities Service includes the scheduling, booking of sport fields, and arenas as well as other facilities such as playgrounds, tennis courts, and splash pads used by citizens and visitors daily. City staff also works closely with local and visiting organizations to ensure their sports and recreation requirements are met.

• **Parks and City Landscape Service:** The Parks & City

¹⁶City of Saint John, Municipal Plan, 2012.

¹⁷City of Saint John 2011 Citizen Survey, based on Ipsos Reid’s Municipal Performance Metrics



Landscape Service provides access to parks and open green spaces for the recreational and leisure pursuits of citizens and visitors. The Parks and City Landscape Service, is responsible for delivering the following services: Development, operations and maintenance of all community parks, squares, trails, tourist sites and City rights-of-way; preservation and protection of natural areas; and coordination of urban forestry operations and initiatives.

5.3 Other Service Providers

Throughout Saint John recreation and leisure programs are offered both directly from the City using City staff and more commonly through partnerships with other community groups such as the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA. The City also partners with and provides funding to other community groups to provide before and after school programs, outdoor education, swimming lessons and many other recreation activities. The City provides support to and partners with the following organizations:

- **12 Priority Neighbourhood Associations / Groups** (PULSE, Crescent Valley Resources Centre, ONE Change, Westside PACT, Teen Resource Centre, Village Association, Vibrant Communities, East Side Motivators Association, Anglin Drive Tenants Association, Story Tent, Crescent Valley Community Tenants Association, Courtney Bay Tenants Association).
- **8 External Community Centre Associations** (Latimore Lake Recreation Association, HOPE Centre, Loch Lomond Community Centre, Milford Community Centre, Denis Morris Community Centre, KBM Association, Martinon Community Association, Lorneville Community Recreation Association = Total 24 engagements (program planning and development meetings and programs)
- **20 Inclusive and Accessible Community Partnerships** (Saint John Ability Advisory Committee,

Premiers Council – Status on Disabled Persons, Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, Inclusive Recreation Committee Recreation NB, SJ Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, etc.).

- **Fundy Wellness Network** (health & wellness program planning, partnership development meetings)
- **2 Community Wellness Centre Partnerships** with Horizon Health Network (Carleton Community Centre & HOPE Centre)
- **Facilitate Community Engagement Process & Planning Phases for Neighbourhood / Community Projects** (Rainbow Park, Flemming Court Splash Pad / Playground Development, Glen Road Playground, Market Place Outdoor Recreation Conceptual Plan, Anglin Drive Playground Project, Romeo & Juliet Park Plan, Dominion Park Revitalization, Lou Murphy Park Revitalization Plan, Martinon Community Centre Strategic Plan, KBM Strategic Plan, Shamrock Park Plan, 3 Community Gardens – Greater SJ Community Gardens, South End Community Garden, Shamrock Park Community Garden, Mind Care 3 on 3 World Street Hockey).

6.0 Engaging the Community

Prior to embarking on public consultation for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, the City of Saint John conducted various surveys to gauge citizen satisfaction regarding the City's delivery of programs and services. The results of these surveys provide important community feedback relevant to the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Following are summaries of the Citizen Satisfaction Survey and the public consultations conducted in direct relation to the Strategic Plan.

6.1 Citizen Survey – 2009

Common Council adopted an accountability framework in order to guide the City in being more accountable for

service delivery.¹⁸ The accountability framework identified citizen satisfaction surveys as a tool to obtain feedback from the public to determine the effectiveness of the City's service delivery in meeting the needs of residents.

In 2009 the City of Saint John engaged Ipsos Reid¹⁹ to design and conduct a citizen survey to understand the needs and concerns of its residents and to support its desire for continuous improvement in service delivery. The survey was designed to meet the following objectives.

- Assess satisfaction with the current level of City of Saint John services in support of its accountability framework and related performance measures.
- Assess the community's needs and identify priorities that Common Council should address to improve municipal service and help the community achieve its vision of leading the nation as an example of a sustainable community.
- Assess progress towards achieving community sustainability objectives (where appropriate).

According to the 2011 Citizen Survey the focus for Saint John residents revolved around four key areas: drinking water, wastewater treatment; road maintenance and snow removal. Parks and recreation had lower importance for citizens.

Only 66% of Saint John respondents stated that "*Saint John offers many recreational opportunities*;" while the Ipsos Reid norm for this question is 92%. However, "*parks, trails and other green space*" continue to be quite important to residents and should be maintained to foster positive relationships and opportunities for citizens. Overall, recreation facilities appeared to be of lower priority. According to the survey analysis the public indicated that recreational areas should not be ignored but rather, maintained in order to keep citizens satisfied.

"The areas where the City appears to be facing more challenges with residents are:

- *Supporting a strong economy with different kinds of business;*
- *Promoting responsible and quality urban development;*
- *Supporting the community's vision;*
- *Improving the quality of life for residents;*
- *Ensuring the community is involved in municipal decisions.*"²⁰

In the 2011 survey residents were asked to respond to a statement regarding the increased cost of maintaining current service levels and infrastructure, and that the City must "*balance taxation and service delivery levels.*" The

major response to that statement was that most residents believed, "*cutting services to maintain the tax level seems the most amenable way to balance service delivery and taxation.*"²¹

6.2 Public Engagement for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

The City of Saint John, working with its consultants engaged stakeholders representing community groups and the general public in consultation sessions regarding the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Two separate sessions were held at the Lily Lake Pavilion in Rockwood Park: a Stakeholder Workshop on November 24th, 2011 and a Public Open House on November 30th, 2011. The City of Saint John supplied a list of over 200 stakeholders representing Saint John Community Groups and Sports Organizations. Initial electronic invitations were followed up with a questionnaire which respondents were asked to complete if they were unable to attend the workshop or if they wanted to provide additional information. The City of Saint John also sent invitations to the several hundred participants on the PlanSJ contact list. The Public Open House was advertised by the City of Saint John and provided citizens the opportunity to contribute to the Strategic Plan.

Survey Monkey

The City of Saint John posted 10 infrastructure, facilities and program related questions to this web-based survey site to solicit further opinion and input from the general public.

Approximately 110 responses were posted and tabulated. Results varied with respect to the need for specific facilities ranging from a need for more arenas, multi-purpose complexes, tennis courts and facilities for roller derby.

However, from a service perspective, comments generally corroborated those made at the stakeholder and public sessions in term of quality versus quantity; *right-sizing*; and the need for parks and recreation services that enhance quality of life in Saint John.

The public and stakeholders provided commentary and suggestions regarding the parks and recreation infrastructure and programs in Saint John. The feedback is summarized according to the topics presented in the consultation sessions:

- Playgrounds;
- Parks;
- Community and recreation facilities;

¹⁸An Accountability Framework for the City of Saint John, Prepared by the Performance Management Project Team; City of Saint John, March 16, 2009

¹⁹Ipsos Reid is Canada's largest market research and public opinion polling firm.

²⁰City of Saint John 2011 Citizen Survey, based on Ipsos Reid's Municipal Performance Metrics

²¹City of Saint John 2011 Citizen Survey, based on Ipsos Reid's Municipal Performance Metrics

- Programs and services;
- Squares, plazas, open spaces, and community gardens; and
- Trails and connectivity.

Playgrounds

Quantity

The emerging issue is the role playgrounds have in the lives of children and improving the quality of life in neighbourhoods; as opposed to the number of playgrounds. Most stakeholders and the general public would agree that playgrounds are necessary for proper physical development and their total number, as measured against a per capita standard, is secondary to their consistent use.

Safe access to the playground, either by foot or by bike, is critical where children cannot safely navigate busy streets or intersections. The condition of sidewalks should provide for safe and unobstructed passage by children and parents with strollers.

Quality

Playgrounds should be located where children live. Thus, neighbourhoods with high concentrations of children should have playgrounds or play areas that are in good repair, safe, accessible and offer a variety of play choices.

The Right Mix

Equipment should vary among playgrounds with various options: wooden play structures, manufactured equipment, and playgrounds that capitalize on their natural landscapes. This variety could create movement between playgrounds, maximize their use, and satisfy the municipal policy intent of building *complete neighbourhoods*.

Rockwood Park is viewed as the City's most valuable asset and continued investment in its playground was strongly supported.

Recommendations

- Eliminate playgrounds in neighbourhoods where few or no children reside.
- Ensure equipment used by children in neighbourhood playgrounds is properly maintained and serviced to guarantee safety.
- Build variation among playgrounds to improve appeal and use.
- Introduce play areas along Harbour Passage to serve the Uptown.
- Consider the play needs of adults of all physical abilities and expand the playground at Rockwood Park to serve the play and/or exercise needs of adults.

Parks

Quantity

The City's existing supply of parks is sufficient to serve the needs of the community.

Quality

Better promotion would lead to increased use and appreciation of the City's parks. Directional signage along trails and roadways is lacking and would be of great benefit for residents and tourists alike. Quality and safety of the City's parks could be easily improved by providing consistent, high quality informational signage, trail markings and lighting. Timely and efficient public transportation routes can ensure access for those without vehicles.

Two parks were cited as community favourites: Mispéc Park²² and Rockwood Park. Mispéc Park, a popular destination for residents, requires considerable investment to improve conditions and quality. Rockwood Park is considered under-used and strategic investment and expansion of recreation, leisure and active living choices would enhance its regional appeal.

The Right Mix

The City should focus on enhancing Rockwood Park. Building and concentrating facilities, such as fields, in under-used areas would create a recreation hub for the City. Keeping the balance between conservation and structured areas of Rockwood Park is important.

All parks should take advantage of views and vistas; offer gardens; and the opportunity to sit and linger.

Recommendations

- Invest in Rockwood Park and build out to create a regional recreation hub. Expand the trails taking into consideration trail cycling as a popular sport in the Park.
- Invest in directional and information park signage, trails markings, and lighting.
- Improve the quality and cleanliness of Mispéc and Dominion Parks and trails.

Community and Recreation Facilities

Quantity

This topic includes a variety of facilities, including arenas, sports fields, and community centres. The need for greater supply to properly run and expand a sport was commonly cited; however, better scheduling and promotion of facilities, and expanding use into the off season may ease demand from sports organizations for additional facilities. Facilities need not be regulation size if they serve the recreational/sports needs of children.

²²Stakeholders did acknowledge that Mispéc Park, outside the City limits, represents an amenity greatly enjoyed by Saint John residents.

Consulting with sports organizations and understanding their strategic plans for growth is an important operation for the City in delivering the proper infrastructure to these organizations.

Quality

While *good quality* facilities are deemed important, there were diverging opinions regarding the degree of quality needed; from investing in new multipurpose/indoor facilities, to directing investments to enhance existing facilities and outdoor amenities.

The difficulty of satisfying the needs and requirements of each sports organization were acknowledged. The key is compromise between the City and sports organizations; wherein the use of existing facilities must be maximised prior to discussions about *right-sizing*.

The Right Mix

The right mix depends not just on the type of sport field (for example) but also on maximizing the use of facilities through: improved and playable conditions, better and optimized scheduling, and increased non-traditional use of facilities in the *off-season*. Respondents indicated that without knowing the root cause of low utilization (unusable tennis fields for example) it would be difficult to envision the *right mix* in response to community needs.

Recommendations

- Consult with sports and community organizations to better understand how the City can provide support for growth.
- Optimize the use of facilities with better promotion and scheduling.
- Concentrate supply of same type facilities in strategic locations (co-location).
- Support Community Centres as they provide affordable rental space to the community.

Programs and Services

Quantity

There are sufficient programs offered to citizens, yet many may not be properly targeted focusing on sports rather than active living and "*social and cognitive engagement*."²³ In order for citizens to fully appreciate the programs available to them, enhanced promotion is needed. In addition, ensuring accessibility for low income households is important given the high rate of poverty within the City.

Quality

The City offers residents a good choice of quality programs, yet affordability continues to be an issue for many residents.

The Right Mix

Organized sports are well represented and supported by the City's facilities and programming. *Active living* and active play for all ages requires more attention.

Recommendations

- The City's role should be one of *facilitator* rather service provider. The role of facilitator includes educator and communicator.
- As a *facilitator*, the City should support and provide resources to organizations that have the program expertise and staff to deliver specific programs.
- A leader or *champion*, supported by the City, is needed, and is a strategic component to move the active living agenda forward.

Squares, Plazas, Open Spaces, and Community Gardens

Quantity

There is sufficient supply of open spaces, squares, plazas, and public spaces. Many have historical significance and a high profile within the community, while others are unused. The concept of community gardens should be pursued. However, the success of community gardens is largely dependent on the commitment of volunteers, thus any investment by the City requires consideration.

Quality

The use and provision of amenities in these public spaces could be enhanced to attract commercial, cultural and sporting events. Sporting events can incorporate these public spaces, such as the running event: *A Run Through History*, which brought runners through the city's historical sites. Investment in lighting and signage would increase the use and quality of existing public areas.

The Right Mix

Linking key public spaces to commercial, cultural and sporting events will give public spaces greater value within the community. Seen as valuable public open space, the expansion of Harbour Passage received unanimous support.

Recommendations

- Support community gardens, when groups are well organized and have a *champion*.
- Explore opportunities to use public spaces in non-traditional ways and link to activities that generate income and interest in the city's history.
- Provide access to an electrical supply in key areas to support cultural fairs, concerts, and other non-traditional activities.

²³As people age they may suffer from cognitive impairments, often leading to forms of dementia such as Alzheimer's disease. Programs that focus on mental stimulation (chess clubs for example) for an aging and elderly population help defend against cognitive impairment.

- Improve and add lighting and other amenities such as benches, tables, and games tables (eg. chess) to key public gathering spaces.

Trail Connectivity and Access

Quantity

Gaps exist within the existing trail and active transportation systems but there are opportunities to expand multi-modal transportation options to better link various parts of the city.

Quality

Safety is an issue with active transportation options. Moving from one neighbourhood to another is difficult given the breaks within the system and current road conditions. Improved trail and active transportation connections throughout the city and to Harbour Passage will increase participation through multi-modal transportation. There are opportunities to enhance, especially with signage, the system of trails in the city and in the various larger parks.

The Right Mix

Linking neighbourhoods and providing safe passage between areas of the city will contribute to building a complete trail and active transportation system.

Recommendations

- Continue expanding Harbour Passage and build linkages with key commercial, retail, recreation and natural areas of the city.
- Link neighbourhoods to commercial areas by expanding the trail system.
- Expand existing trails for recreational and active transportation purposes.

7.0 Infrastructure, Facilities and Programming Inventory – Summary

In 2009 when the City of Saint John embarked upon a review of the state of parks and recreation infrastructure within its municipal limits, it did not have an inventory of

parks and recreation assets. Completion of a detailed inventory was critical to:

- Provide a context for public debate on the maintenance, renewal, replacement, and funding for new infrastructure;
- Establish a common basis of measurement and monitoring, allowing for comparability;
- Provide a starting point to evaluate the condition of infrastructure and other assets on a regular basis, that would highlight changes in their condition over time; and
- Identify what flexibility the City might have in responding to residents’ changing service demands.

For these reasons the City of Saint John, (through the former Department of Leisure Services), undertook the preparation of an Infrastructure, Facilities, and Programming Inventory Study (IFP). This study completed an inventory and analysis of existing recreation and leisure amenities. The objective of the IFP study was to determine the City’s current supply of recreation infrastructure, facilities and programs and to propose actions that will improve recreation services and programs in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner. The results of this study contributed to the PlanSJ Growth Strategy and Municipal Plan.

The foundation of the IFP study was to describe the service levels required to meet the needs of the public. To identify service level standards for parks and recreation, the process included:

- a) Identifying recognized recreation industry standards (on a per capita basis and service standards);
- b) Evaluating City standards against best practices in other jurisdictions; and
- c) Establishing appropriate standards for Saint John based on an analysis of community expectations and needs.

The IFP updated, mapped, and benchmarked the City’s recreation infrastructure against industry service-level standards to determine if and where there was an over- or



under-supply of any given facility type within Saint John. These per capita service level targets were developed with consideration of existing service levels, demand factors, and stakeholder input. Although some targets may be similar to standards accepted in other jurisdictions, consideration of local factors did allow for the targets to be adjusted as required.

The IFP study reviewed all of the City's recreation facilities and parks against a population-based (per capita) recreation industry standard. The purpose was to determine whether or not Saint John has the right number of facilities based on population.²⁴ Some findings of note are highlighted below.

According to the 2011 census, Saint John's population grew to 70,063²⁵ people, thus the per capita review confirms that Saint John has an oversupply of some recreation facilities, such as:

- 70 playgrounds where 14 are the standard;
- 6 arenas, where 3-4 are the standard;
- 37 tennis courts where 14 are the standard; and 16 community centres where 14 are the standard for the size of Saint John's population.

More than any other component of the City's recreational infrastructure, playgrounds demonstrate the significance of oversupply in Saint John. The per capita provision standards recommend one playground for every 5,000 residents. However, with 70 playgrounds throughout the city, the actual number of playgrounds per capita is one playground for every 958 residents.

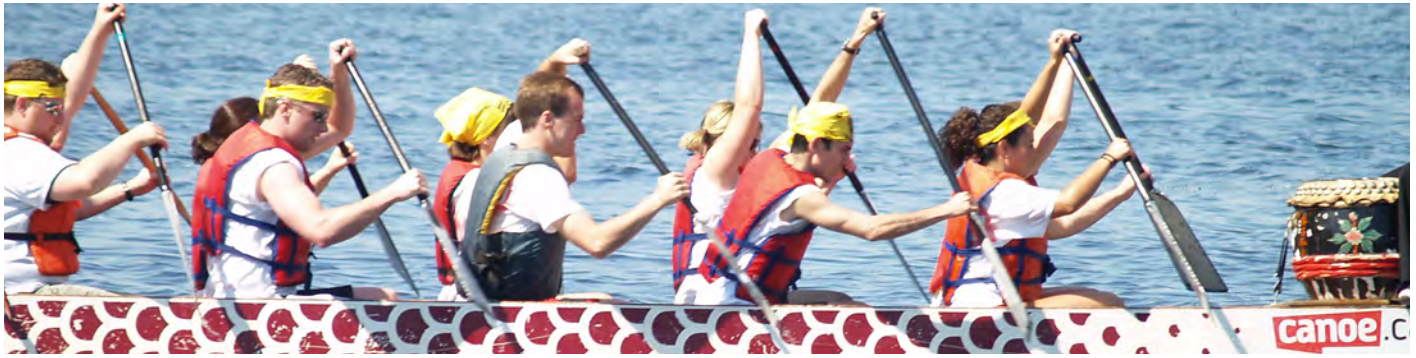
A comparison of Saint John's facilities in relation to industry standards appears in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Recreation Facilities in Saint John			
Facility	Existing	Per Capita Requirement	Total Required
Arenas	6	1 per 20,000 people	3.5
Pools	1 50m pool + 6 non-competitive	1 (50m competitive per region) plus 1 non-competitive pool per 20,000 people	1 (50m) + 3 non-competitive
Community Centres	16	1 per 5,000 people	14
Gymnasias	31*	1 per public school	31*
Curling Rinks	11 Sheets	12 per region	12
Sport Fields	25 Sport Fields	1 small non-regulation per 5,000 people or (1 large regulation fields per 20,000 people)	14(3)
Diamonds (Baseball/Softball)	30 Diamonds	1 per 5,000 people	14
Tennis Courts	37	1 per 5,000 people	14
Skate Parks	1	1 permanent park per region	1
Public Beaches	9	No per capita requirement	-
Beach Volley Ball	4	No per capita requirement	-
Parkland	2943 acres	900 square feet of parkland per person	1400 acres
Playgrounds	70	1 per 5,000 people	14

*Includes NBCC and UNBSJ.

²⁴Saint John Infrastructure, Facilities and Programming Inventory Study (IFP), City of Saint John Leisure Services, ADI Limited, 2010.

²⁵Statistics Canada. 2012. Saint John, New Brunswick (Code 1301006) and New Brunswick (Code 13) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE; Ottawa; released May 29, 2012.



These standards provide a practical benchmark for the inventory of the City's parks, playgrounds, open spaces, sports fields, arenas and community centres. This is the starting point to understanding the utilization and long term financial implications for the City as discussed below:

- The existing supply of much of the City's recreational infrastructure exceeds the industry standard for a city the size of Saint John. The practice of favoring a large quantity of facilities over a smaller number of high quality facilities is unsustainable and has resulted in residents' general dissatisfaction with recreational facilities and programming.
- There is no correlation between an increased supply of recreational infrastructure and citizen satisfaction. The 2009 Ipsos Reid Satisfaction Survey demonstrated that the City of Saint John has a lower rate of satisfaction with recreation facilities, services, and programming than many other Canadian cities.
- Continued recreational investment with the *status quo delivery model* and philosophy will unlikely result in increased citizen satisfaction. For that reason, a change is required to attain the outcomes of the Municipal Plan and to meet Common Council's priorities.
- Policy direction for parks and recreation must optimize the appeal of neighbourhoods and contribute to creating complete and sustainable communities in the PlanSJ *Primary Development Areas*.

The City's 2010 Infrastructure, Facilities & Programming Inventory Study (IFP) notes that programming within Saint John, regardless of who provides the service, represents an opportunity for improvement. It was suggested that City staff and those that provide recreation services work together to strategically focus on programs resulting in specific outcomes that enrich the quality of life for Saint John residents. These outcomes can be achieved through increased professional recreation accreditation, adherence to standardized recreational criteria or systems, and increased accountability and monitoring.

8.0 Summary

The Parks and Recreation Dilemma

The *status quo* approach of the current parks and recreation service delivery model does not and cannot meet community needs.²⁶ A new sustainable model is required for the following reasons:

- The IFP, Municipal Plan, and Growth Strategy, all endorsed by the public and approved by Common Council, conclude that the City needs to concentrate parks and recreation investment in order to strengthen the city's neighbourhoods and community, and to improve the sustainability of its operations.
- Implementation of previous reports and master plans has improved the quality and supply of some recreation infrastructure within the Greater Saint John Region. However, the City now finds itself over-supplied with some facilities, many of which require improvements and upgrades to extend their facility lifespan, such as arenas. The on-going maintenance of existing infrastructure is becoming more costly while City budgets are shrinking. Public consultations reveal that citizens are generally dissatisfied with the quality of recreational facilities and programming.
- The operating budget for parks and recreation is insufficient to adequately maintain and upgrade the City's existing park and recreation infrastructure, let alone commit to new facilities and infrastructure. In short, the present park and recreation service delivery model is not financially sustainable.

The following chapter proposes a new direction and outlines the foundation of an innovative parks and recreation service delivery model for the City of Saint John.

²⁶Reference to the City's historical legacy of oversupply. No implication toward the City's new service delivery model.

2 chapter Foundation of the Strategic Plan



1.0 Foundation of the Strategic Plan

Fundamental to quality of life in Saint John; parks and recreation facilities represent the places where the community comes together to celebrate, relax, and play. Parks and recreation facilities offer a safe, creative environment where families play and individuals can find refuge; be it on a trail along the harbour, or on the baseball diamond, or simply in an open space that offers a bit of green space in a growing urban neighbourhood.

As Saint John changes so do the community's expectations regarding the quality and opportunities in City parks and recreation facilities. Aligning these expectations requires balancing the City's financial limitations with the community's demands for a wide variety of recreation facilities and programs.

“As we move to a more knowledge-based environment, leisure services organizations will not necessarily be measured by the size of their resources. Rather, their intellectual capital and their expertise will be far more important, as will their knowledge of what can be provided by outside vendors to enhance their services. The goal of leisure services agencies in the 21st century will be

to create alliances with others that lead to higher quality services and programs.”¹

The value Saint John residents place on parks and recreation can be broad and vary widely across the city. The importance of the *Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan* is to provide guidance and recommendations on how best to advance the **quality of life** outcomes that will make Saint John a more attractive place to live, work, and play. The basis of recommendations and preparation of this Strategic Plan includes:

- Input from park and recreation professionals with the City of Saint John;
- Consultation with residents and stakeholders;
- Research and analysis of socio-demographic and leisure trends;
- Review of the distribution of parks and recreation services and programs and
- Analysis of city-wide service provision.

Contained within this Strategic Plan are recommendations for minimum standards that offer the City flexibility to accommodate unique opportunities. The Strategic Plan is also a guidebook with recommendations for those charged with the responsibility to make decisions

¹Outsourcing: A Strategy for Improving the Quality of Leisure Services; Christopher R. Edginton, Jeff Jiang; Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, Vol. 71, 2000

concerning the investment, re-investment and retirement of recreation assets. The Strategic Plan reinforces the priorities of Common Council and supports the policy direction of PlanSJ. As Saint John grows and changes the City must review the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan periodically to ensure it remains consistent with Common Council's vision and priorities.

Many of the Strategic Plan's recommendations are structured to provide ongoing guidance, while other recommendations may be one-time measures that are based on the best information available at this time. The topic of parks and recreation is a highly subjective and personal topic for many residents. During consultations for the Strategic Plan many residents expressed their personal desire for a wide variety of facilities and improvements. While the intent of this Strategic Plan is to set a vision for the City of Saint John, in the short term, residents should be prepared for budgetary restrictions that reduce the amount of money the City spends on maintaining a parks and recreation system that is largely unsustainable.

2.0 A New Direction in Recreation Planning

Over the last few decades a new strategic direction has emerged in recreation planning with a mandate for physical activity as an important contributor to health and wellness, supported by multi-purpose and multi-dimensional infrastructure with the functional flexibility to meet the recreation needs of the entire community it serves. This is a vast philosophical departure from the single purpose facilities of the 1980s and before, built to respond to the competitive sport and recreation needs of specific targeted groups.

2.1 Federal/Provincial Support

This philosophical shift in recreation planning has been the focus of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (F-P/T) government discussions surrounding sport, physical activity and recreation infrastructure. In 2005, F-P/T Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation in their jurisdictions, recognized that *"improved infrastructure will advance sport and physical activity in communities across the country while addressing critical health challenges and strengthening Canadian communities."*²

2.2 Provincial Guidance

In 2009, the Government of New Brunswick and Recreation New Brunswick partnered to conduct a study entitled, *Investing in New Brunswick Recreational*

Infrastructure. The study is a comprehensive analysis of the present stock of recreational infrastructure in the province and defines the *"go-forward challenges and opportunities"* that will ensure all citizens have equitable access to high quality recreational opportunities that are financially sustainable. Among the study observations is the *"poor state of recreation infrastructure planning"* in New Brunswick. The study further suggests that: *"New Brunswick's historic and current approach to recreational infrastructure cannot continue: the status quo is simply no longer tenable. New Brunswick can lead by example or be forced into change not of its own making. If it chooses the former, there are four significant opportunities that collectively are the pillars of recreational infrastructure planning, development and operations for the future:*

1. Complete integration of all aspects of recreation, sport and wellness into a singular provincial healthy/active living structure and system.
2. A strategic, fully-integrated recreational infrastructure system that incorporates the facilities of various providers including those of all educational institutions (public and post-secondary) to eliminate redundancy, maximize returns-on-investment, enhance infrastructure utilization and achieve economies of scale.
3. A collaborative, regional approach to planning, construction and operation of large scale recreational infrastructure that complements smaller-scale community-by-community infrastructure efforts.
4. Where viable, the clustering of recreational infrastructure in accessible locations with links to education, health, employment, community (day cares, senior centres, art galleries, churches, etc.), civic (libraries, theatres, etc.) and business infrastructure and services."⁴

New Brunswick's Wellness Strategy describes *wellness pillars* related to healthy lifestyle choices: Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Tobacco-free Living. Encouraging positive lifestyle choices may require behavioural changes that can only be achieved through an individual's mental fitness, resiliency and sense of *community* or belonging. The Strategy identifies homes, schools, communities and workplaces as key settings. There are five strategic directions that will result in action:

1. Form partnerships and collaborate with stakeholders.
2. Build capacity for community development.
3. Promote healthy lifestyles.
4. Develop and support healthy policies.
5. Conduct surveillance, evaluations and research.

²Investing in New Brunswick Recreational Infrastructure, Amulet Consulting, Government of New Brunswick and Recreation New Brunswick, Fredericton, 2010.

³Investing in New Brunswick Recreational Infrastructure, Amulet Consulting, Government of New Brunswick and Recreation New Brunswick, Fredericton, 2010.

⁴Live well, Be well - New Brunswick's Wellness Strategy 2009-2013, published by: Province of New Brunswick. Wellness Culture and Sport, Fredericton, New Brunswick

2.3 Municipal Role

Saint John Common Council has advocated for a livable and inclusive Saint John. The City has over the years endeavoured to take the necessary steps to build the social and physical infrastructure essential to supporting strong, vibrant communities. Common Council also established goals in 2009 that stated the following:

- “We will have City services that are delivered efficiently and effectively at an equitable tax rate.
- Our citizens / ratepayers consistently recognize municipal service as being effective at a supportable cost.”⁵

The process of developing a community vision for Saint John has been ongoing since 2007.⁶ In September of 2009, Saint John Common Council translated the *Our Saint John* community vision into specific priorities that would provide guidance to City staff in the operation and planning of services. Notwithstanding that the current Common Council⁷ has not had an opportunity to examine and redevelop its priorities for the next four years (2012-2016); the priorities established regarding recreation and green space for 2009-2012 are as follows:

- Increased opportunities for participation for all age groups.
- Restore/replace existing recreation infrastructure (Parks & Playgrounds).
- Benchmark programming (Level of Service/Program Standards).
- Complete current projects.
- Analyze current green space/add to and enhance current green space in line with what children want.
- Annually celebrate recreation volunteers in the city.
- Coordinate development/maintenance of a database of all recreation programs in the city.
- Improve accessibility for the disabled at all City facilities.
- Continue efforts to develop a new multi-purpose recreation facility to be constructed by 2012.

Common Council also recognized that building social infrastructure and strengthening neighbourhoods through key strategic investments improves the health and well-being of local communities.⁸ At the local level the City of Saint John recognizes that neighbourhoods are about people and places and that strong neighbourhoods contribute to the quality of life for everyone, with clean and safe streets, a vibrant local economy, walkable

communities with nearby amenities and green space, and a strong feeling of support and connectedness amongst neighbours. Consequently, good quality parks and recreation are critical in developing and sustaining a healthy and vibrant community.

2.4 The Direction for Saint John

The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, is based on this new direction in recreation planning, and focuses on improving and strengthening the City’s parks and recreation system, by building upon the City’s best assets, greatest achievements and strongest partnerships. The goal of the Strategic Plan is to construct a vision that integrates the recreational program and activity needs of the community with appropriate infrastructure in a sustainable and fiscally responsible manner. The Strategic Plan can only achieve this goal by challenging the status quo.

Through public and stakeholder consultations, Saint John residents consistently indicated they consider the City as the primary provider of recreation services. Integrating this public position with the opinions of staff, the Strategic Plan offers guidance regarding the role of City.

It should be the role of the City of Saint John to provide:

- A parks and recreation system based upon quantifiable service levels;
- Parks and recreation assets re-aligned to correspond with the PlanSJ primary development areas;
- A process for regular review of service level success including a method to measure benefits to residents;
- A strategy to address the fitness levels and healthy living needs of residents; and
- A strategy that targets mass participation in recreation, sports and programs at the introductory level.

3.0 A New Recreation Delivery Model

The Strategic Plan recommends a recreation delivery model comprised of three over-arching, inter-connected components or *focus areas*. Each focus area provides general guidance and evaluation tools. The recommended focus areas are;

1. Healthy and Active Living
2. Right-sizing
3. Community Development

⁵An Accountability Framework for the City of Saint John, Prepared by the Performance Management Project Team; City of Saint John, March 16, 2009

⁶In November of 2007 Common Council was presented with a Community Vision entitled “Our Saint John” that was developed through extensive consultation and input from City residents.

⁷New Brunswick Quadrennial Municipal Elections held on May 14, 2012.

⁸Refers primarily to programs such as, but not limited to, after school programs, ProKids, food banks, wellness centres, etc.

Greater detail is provided in subsequent Chapters dealing with specific parks and recreation topics as; playgrounds; parks and open space; community centres, arenas, sport fields, and trails. Chapter 10 reiterates recommendations and steps to implementation that will bring the City of Saint John closer to realizing the outcomes proposed in PlanSJ.

3.1 Focus Area: Healthy & Active Living

Today recreation professionals have developed an approach to improving quality of life outcomes that focus on *healthy and active living* that results in healthier citizens. Healthy and Active Living incorporates the concepts of physical experience, total life experience, and the relevance of physical activity to daily life and its place within communities. Healthy and Active living can be defined as a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily living. Programs that promote active living, social interaction and activities that stimulate the mind through thought and reasoning processes are as important as those that focus on sports and sporting excellence. As our population ages the City of Saint John should increasingly focus on healthy and active living.

The Shift to Healthy & Active Living

The City of Saint John, has been implementing a Healthy and Active Living approach as demonstrated in some of the City’s recent projects for park and recreation programs. For example the City’s support for community gardens addresses several of the principles found in the Provincial Wellness Strategy such as the creation of partnerships, building capacity for community development, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Integrating healthy and active living permanently into the decision making process for the City of Saint John requires an analysis of new facility and program proposals relative to active living principles. Those principles are based in the following:

- Does the proposal create a *cluster* of recreation infrastructure or programming?
- Does the proposal eliminate redundancy, maximize returns-on-investment, enhance infrastructure utilization and achieve economies of scale?
- Is the proposal a collaborative, regional approach to the construction and operation of recreational infrastructure or programs?
- Does the proposal target key populations for physical activity such as children, youth, and families who are inactive or at risk of becoming inactive?
- Does the proposal support social and physical environments that sustain a basic level of physical activity among children and adults?
- How will the proposal ensure healthy and active living outcomes are achieved through public investment?

Embracing *Healthy and Active Living* principles also means that the City’s investment in recreation facilities should focus on increasing user participation. In terms of providing recreation services the City of Saint John should focus its funding towards a reasonable supply of introductory level activities throughout the City’s primary development areas.

A wide range of introductory level recreation services would take precedence over higher levels of service in any one activity, sport, or program. User costs at the introductory level would be subsidized to a greater level by the City absorbing a larger amount of the operational cost. As skill levels increase, costs for participants should increase and the City’s role and responsibility should diminish.

If higher levels of service are desired to accommodate a particular sport, for example, alternate sources of capital and operational funding should be secured before a facility is developed. For example, The City of Saint John arena facilities should focus on accommodating minor sports; learn to skate; and recreational skating programs. For that reason arena ice surfaces should not exceed the basic standard size (200 x 85 feet), spectator capacity should not exceed that required to accommodate parental viewing and change room sizes and numbers should be limited to that required to accommodate average team sizes.

Furthermore the City of Saint John should not fund the incremental facilities associated with larger ice surfaces; increased spectator capacity; and larger than necessary change rooms, without the additional associated cost being absorbed by partners and where the business case proves a no-net cost burden to the taxpayers of Saint John.



Figure 1 - City of Saint John Service Level Cost Pyramid

The City of Saint John should draw upon *community developers* (see Focus Area: Community Development) to promote active living in the community by encouraging partnerships with and directing and facilitating access to community grant programs that support health related programs provided by others that promote healthy lifestyles, such as the Regional Hospital and auxiliaries;



UNBSJ and the community college; Heart and Stroke Foundation etc. Input from stakeholders and the public supports the principle of active living and its promotion within Saint John. Community developers should respond to residents' priorities for program improvements (identified through the community consultations) and consider the following:

- Programs for social growth i.e. outdoor recreation, public gardens etc.; and
- Active living, community involvement and leadership development.

Finally, community developers will put particular emphasis on the city's priority neighbourhoods and intensification areas identified through Plan SJ. Various residents echoed this sentiment through comments suggesting the need for:

- Additional programming for low income families;
- Programs that address health issues of aging people and people living with poverty related health issues; and
- Increasing affordability/support for low income families.

3.2 Focus Area: Right-sizing

The future of parks and recreation in Saint John requires creative and innovative methods to find solutions that will provide both financial sustainability and create a legacy of high quality parks and recreation infrastructure.

The IFP Study (2010) determined that the City of Saint John has an oversupply of many recreation facilities many of which are in poor condition. *Right-sizing* will not be an easy task. The approach will face a great deal of subjective pressure to maintain the status quo for individual parks, playgrounds and other recreation amenities. Additionally, the City also faces pressure

to make major contributions in new facilities, such as upgrading the Lord Beaverbrook Rink to an Olympic size ice surface, or the construction of a new Fieldhouse at Exhibition Park. While it would be appropriate for the City of Saint to participate in specific new recreation facility capital projects the pressure to spend must be balanced against right-sizing recreation infrastructure so that the City can *live within its means*. Reductions in the City's responsibility or commitment to maintain the current oversupply of recreation infrastructure will also free up budget that can then be directed towards increasing the quality of specific park and recreation amenities in Saint John.

The process of *right-sizing*, through the withdrawal of City parks and recreation services, can have a destabilizing effect on neighbourhoods. Accordingly the Strategic Plan proposes a methodology to maintain neighbourhood stability and reduce potential negative impacts by including neighbourhoods in the decision making process regarding surplus recreation infrastructure.

Right-sizing Criteria

Referenced earlier in the Strategic Plan are the two principal directives from PlanSJ that have guided the development of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. The principal directives are:

- Optimization of the quality and appeal of parks and green spaces within the designated Intensification Areas;⁹ and
- *Right-sizing*¹⁰ the overall supply of these spaces city-wide.

These two principles and a list of additional criteria that have been adapted and extracted from the policies of PlanSJ, the priorities of Common Council, supporting

⁹Intensification Areas are identified as the areas of the City where most future growth and development will be focused. There are five sub-categories within the Intensification Areas, described as Primary Centres, Local Centres, Mixed Use Centres, Urban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas, and Suburban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas. Section 2.3.1 (Pg.37) City Of Saint John Municipal Plan

¹⁰The City of Saint John 2010 Infrastructure, Facilities and Programming (IFP) Inventory Study, depicts and oversupply of much of the City recreation infrastructure and recommends a right-sizing process of reorganizing or restructuring the parks and recreation services by reducing costs, reorganizing the workforce, and the delivery of programs and services. The goal is to reduce over supply in alignment with population based standards and to achieve higher facility quality standards.

background studies, and professional practice were used to recommend the proposed park and recreation sites. Selection of the park and recreation sites involves many variables most of which cannot be captured in a statistical evaluation matrix. Parks and recreation areas do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of, and in some situations, the heart of communities. Communities are complex, dynamic and far more sophisticated than what can be described in a numerical formula. Nevertheless, the municipality must strive to demonstrate the process or criteria that formed the basis for *right-sizing* Saint John's parks and recreation facilities. The criteria used to evaluate and recommend the *right-sizing* of Saint John's parks and recreation includes:

1. Proximity to Population to be Served: Ideally, all residents of Saint John will feel welcome at any of the City's parks and recreation areas. The residents most commonly served by an individual park or recreation facility would reside within a convenient, safe walking distance to the site(s). However, given the wide distribution of population through the City of Saint John convenient vehicle/bus travel is also an important consideration and consequently the parks and recreation areas should serve catchments equal to a 15 minute vehicle/bus ride.

2. Proximity to Future Expansion of the Community: In Saint John, there are parks and recreation facilities that were constructed on sites that are no longer adjacent to population growth centres and/or residential areas. This criterion assesses the City's long-range planning and growth strategy (PlanSJ) related to the Primary Development Areas and specific intensification areas. The Strategic Plan has used a subjective evaluation of how well the parks and recreation site corresponds to the future expansion and redevelopment of the community. The recommendation to invest in specific sites is an attempt to ensure that each is a good long-term (10+ years) site for a Saint John.

3. Proximity to Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities: In some instances in Saint John there are existing parks and recreation sites (e.g. community centres, arenas, beaches, etc.) that are shared between multiple neighbourhoods and to which the addition of new or enhanced functions and facilities is essential and desirable. Investing in new parks and recreation infrastructure where multiple other amenities already exist creates a cluster of facilities and activities that is more cost effective to maintain and provides greater interest and activity in the community.

4. Site Topography & Micro-Climate: Developing parks and recreation infrastructure on difficult, steep terrain adds unnecessary costs and should be avoided. Ideally, the site should be fairly level with some topographic

relief that can provide good natural play opportunities as well as positive drainage. Throughout Saint John, choices of properties that are level may be limited, thus consideration should be given to sites that best meet the requirements of the type of park or recreation infrastructure proposed and effort made to design these facilities to fit the site. Additional care should be exercised by considering the types of parks and recreation amenities required for the facility (i.e. playground/ play area, soccer field, track, basketball court, etc.). In addition the selection of park and recreation sites should provide protection from prevailing winds which intensify cold temperatures. Sites with some type of natural wind protection are desirable over those exposed to harsh winds. Topography, orientation and site vegetation are important factors that can mitigate indoor and outdoor temperatures and requirements for winter heating and summer cooling. Topography and site vegetation can also provide interest and opportunities for outdoor play and educational activities.

5. Natural Beauty and Appeal: Saint John is blessed with a great deal of natural beauty. Accordingly, park and recreation sites can be assessed for the quality of their surroundings such as vegetation, topography, views and surroundings. As aesthetic value is subjective, it is important that the City also considers subjective evaluation of the merits of the site and the potential improvements that could make the site more visually pleasing.

6. Physical Site Planning: City officials and design professionals tasked with selecting sites and developing or redeveloping parks and recreation areas should take into account the following site planning and design criteria:

- a. Public parking opportunities and access from a public street into the park or recreation area.
- b. Safe public and pedestrian access to the park and recreation area from nearby public schools, community facilities, and other public buildings.
- c. Space(s) to accommodate recreational facilities and exercise equipment targeted specifically toward active healthy living and improving physical fitness, for a wide range of age and ability groups.
- d. Space(s) to accommodate new play equipment specifically targeted toward different age and ability groups, with adjacent comfortable seating areas for accessibility challenged users, care-givers, and guardians.
- e. Space to accommodate more seating, picnic tables, plazas, restroom facilities, shelters, barbecue stations, and other traditional park amenities to increase use of the park and recreation area.

- f. Protection and retention of healthy existing vegetation, augmented by the judicious installation of trees, shrubs, fences, barriers and the like to ensure increased visibility of users and improve public safety.
- g. Preparation of a lighting plan to increase safety of park users and decrease vandalism while not creating *light pollution* for adjacent residential properties.
- h. Designs that offer a unique *identity* and accommodate *place-making components*.
- i. Spaces for public art to provide inspiration, beauty, and cultural significance.
- j. Environmental interpretation, and to the extent practical, protection and conservation of plants, wildlife, and habitats native to the Fundy Coast.

How to Right-Size

Regarding the increasingly important role of recreation professionals as community developers, academics have noted that: *“The recreation profession has the unparalleled opportunity to promote empowerment through community development. This is part of a new role for recreationists, as we move from a consumer society where programs are consumed, to a more cooperative society where community development plays an important role. Recreationists need to immerse themselves in community development because of the realization that people need to be educated about empowerment, acquire self-confidence, and support each other in order for communities to be a better place to live. The results of cooperative communities in the empowerment process will be an enrichment of leisure opportunities and increased quality of life for all those willing to participate in meeting the challenges of community life. It is time that society as a whole, communities, and recreationists in particular, can take responsibility for the future of their communities.”*¹¹

The intent of implementing a right-sizing strategy is that the City of Saint John could reduce costs and improve quality of selected facilities. As previously noted, the effect of withdrawing services from a community can have a potentially destabilizing effect, whereas the overall intent of the Strategic Plan is to improve quality of life. The key to making the right-sizing transition is to organize community members to work together with City staff. In working together the community is empowered to make decisions and take action regarding its well-being. An organized community can mobilize people who are directly affected by the right-sizing situation to enable

them to take action and ultimately take over a service. This practise of a community group providing a service once provided by the City is known as Alternative Service Delivery (ASD).

3.3 Focus Area: Community Development

The foundation of community development is based in techniques and theories of improving social inclusion by empowering individuals and providing them the skills and resources they need to achieve change in their own communities. Community Development is a field of practice exercised by civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals to harness that knowledge for the benefit of improving communities. Methods for fostering community development are also based on the belief that inclusive communities are places where both the public and private sectors equally commit resources for the social and economic health and well-being of the whole community.

Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) *“is defined as the process of public sector restructuring that improves the delivery of services to citizens by sharing municipal functions with individuals, community groups, the private sector or other government agencies. By using ASD, the municipality concentrates on the activities that it is best equipped to provide while allowing other sectors to carry out those activities that they do best.”*¹²

Alternate Service Delivery *“...a creative and dynamic process of public sector restructuring that improves the delivery of services to clients by sharing governance functions with individuals, community groups and other government entities.”*¹³

Alternative Service Delivery at the community level is implemented through a process known as Community Development. The City of Saint John currently utilizes several forms of Alternative Service Delivery. Financial support for the Canada Games Aquatic Centre; Harbour Station; Rockwood Park Golf Course; the operation of community centres and the Rockwood Park Campground, and the Lord Beaverbrook Rink by third party organizations; are all various forms of ASD. The Lily Lake Pavilion in Rockwood Park, for example, is governed by a volunteer board of directors and managed by hospitality professionals. The Pavilion is also a registered charity and non-profit organization; accordingly all funds raised by the business activities of the Pavilion are returned to the community and distributed to local charities.

¹¹Empowerment Through Community Development in Recreation and Leisure, Martha Barnes, Associate Professor Applied Health Sciences - Recreation & Leisure Studies, Brock University, Journal of Leisurability vol. 24, #1, 1997

¹²A Guide to Service Delivery Review for Municipal Managers – Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario; the Municipal Finance Officers’ Association of Ontario; and the Ontario Municipal Administrators’ Association, 2004

¹³Robin Ford and David Zussman, Alternative Service Delivery: Transcending Boundaries. (Toronto: KPMG and IPAC, 1997).

The following are examples of various Alternative Service Delivery models from other jurisdictions:

BEST PRACTICE

Greater Victoria Inter-municipal Recreation Managers

Committee: The Greater Victoria Region is comprised of thirteen local governments including seven parks and recreation departments and also includes the YMCA-YWCA of Greater Victoria and the Canadian Forces Base (CFB Esquimalt). Each department and organization within the region has a mandate to provide community recreation service to the citizens within their respective community. Similar to the experience in Greater Saint John, residents in the Greater Victoria area often look beyond their municipal boundaries for community recreation services. In Victoria a system was needed to effectively coordinate existing programs and create new innovative recreation opportunities that can address regional needs and be delivered in a consistent fashion.

The Greater Victoria Inter-municipal Recreation Managers Committee has demonstrated, since the 1990's, how multiple municipalities can cooperate in the area of recreation for regional benefit. The Victoria example reveals how to foster program efficiencies between partner organizations, and how to create new regional programs and services through shared resources. The result in Victoria has been that public recreation needs are being met well beyond the capacity of any individual municipality or partner agency.

BEST PRACTICE

City of Hamilton, Ontario; Adopt-A-Park Program: The City of Hamilton's 3 year old program has 37 different Adopt-a-Park groups fundraising to plant native trees and enhance park amenities such as benches, and play structures. Adopt-a-park volunteers pick up litter and debris, rake leaves, remove graffiti, report park hazards, sweep courts and pathways, pull weeds and perform shrub bed maintenance. Hamilton's **Community Liaison Coordinator**, similar to the proposed community developers in Saint John, works closely with the Adopt-a-Park groups to plan and perform these activities. Hamilton's **Extreme Park Makeover Program** sponsored by the local newspaper, has improved shrub beds through weeding and mulching, planted trees and shrubs, removed graffiti and installed benches to enhance the parks' appearance and included the installation of a ten piece outdoor gym in August 2011.

Each year in Hamilton, over 1500 volunteers collect litter, remove graffiti, and beautify parks. These volunteers need the tools and equipment to do their work effectively so the Operations & Waste Management Division of the City of Hamilton's Public Works Department created and introduced an innovative solution to meet the needs of the volunteers a *Community Clean Trailer*. The Community Clean Trailer is equipped with supplies for litter and debris clean-up, graffiti removal and landscape tools for beautification projects, as in Figure 2. The City of Saint John could introduce a similar program and invest in the appropriate equipment.



Figure 2 – The City of Hamilton stocks trailers with everything from rakes to sun-block that park adoption groups can request for their workdays.

The Right Strategy for Saint John

Partnerships and collaborative arrangements for the delivery of programs and services can include those with other levels of government, as well as with the private sector and not-for-profit voluntary organizations. The context of implementing an alternative service delivery strategy through partnerships, collaborations and arrangements agreements in which the partners agree to co-operate on the delivery of a program or service that fulfills objectives of the City, where there is:

- Delineation of authority and responsibility among partners;
- Investment of resources (such as time, funding, expertise);
- Allocation of risk among partners; and
- Mutual or complementary benefits.

“In planning for the provision of service, all options must be considered as to how service is delivered including public sector resources, contracted services, or a combination of both. The goal is to ensure that government is effective in meeting the needs of the public, while using the most efficient means possible.”¹⁴

The process of implementing a right-sizing strategy for Saint John is based upon working with the community to embrace the challenge the City has in financing parks and recreation services. Utilizing community development techniques residents and community organizations in Saint John can engage in various and appropriate forms of Alternate Service Delivery. The proposal for ASD programs such as; Adopt-a-Park, Adopt-a-Playground, Joint Use Agreements, etc. are described in greater detail in the following chapters.

¹⁴A Guide to Service Delivery Review for Municipal Managers- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario; the Municipal Finance Officers' Association of Ontario; and the Ontario Municipal Administrators' Association, 2004.

The City's Mandate for Community Development

City of Saint John's Urban Environment Services is mandated "to deliver services that support the community in achieving its long term vision of being a safe, liveable community where people have a sense of belonging."¹⁵ The basis of this new service model can be generally classified as *community development* - the mandate to consider the needs of the entire community, creating opportunities for resident input and feedback; and responding effectively and efficiently to address community needs as they are identified.

The question the Strategic Plan must answer - **what is the appropriate role for community development to ensure City resources are best used to deliver quality programs?** The mandate for the City is clear; facilitation of recreation services through community partners.

Stakeholders are in agreement with this mandate, as long as support is fairly allocated and includes organizational capacity building. Stakeholders affirmed support for community development and identified the City's role as one of *facilitator, educator and communicator*. Under pressure to do more with less, the City should adopt a community development approach of facilitation and evaluation that pulls the City out of program operator and into the role of facilitator, educator and communicator.

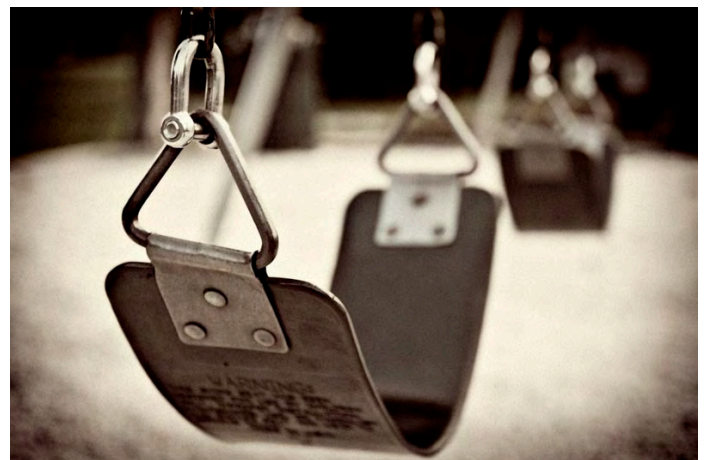
As part of a community development approach, City staff would assess the viability of offering park and recreation services through a partnership. For example, the Pro-Kids program is a regional service that is operated directly by the City of Saint John. Instead of operating the program directly, City staff should solicit appropriate youth organizations to take over the service. The Pro-Kids program *belongs* to the Greater Saint John Area and a youth based partner with a regional mandate or scope may enhance community ownership and participation.

Another example for potential partnership is the City's summer playground program. Where a need is identified for a playground program, a City *community developer* could work with a community group to operate the program and provide short-term assistance to the group in the form of staff training and program evaluation. In the community development model City staff no longer operates these programs directly.

By establishing new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, the City will empower organizations to meet local neighbourhood needs offering them support through information; education; and sponsorships and grants. This will help build community capacity and allow residents to respond to opportunities, issues and concerns at the neighbourhood level. Building community capacity ensures that programs meet the needs of local neighbourhood residents; promotes neighbourhood relationships, partnerships, information sharing, and

collaboration – elements that strengthen neighbourhood cohesion and inclusion. "The effectiveness of the delivery system is a direct result of the degree of coordination and cooperation among its partners: municipal departments, private sector program providers, other agencies and the consumer/public. Coordination and cooperation are effected when communication is allowed to occur. If lines of communication are not clear and open the delivery system is hindered."¹⁶

This new organizational structure is a positive step toward embarking on a service delivery model that sees the City of Saint John embracing a true facilitation role. Strengthened by this *Park and Recreation Strategic Plan* the City can embark upon community development identifying community needs, and enabling sports, recreation, and social organizations and agencies to respond to those needs. By establishing partnerships and criteria for program quality assurance, the City can focus on programs that enrich the quality of life for all Saint John residents.



4.0 The Strategic Plans for Service Delivery

The proposed organizational structure of the Strategic Plan is a positive step toward adopting a service delivery model that sees the City of Saint John embarking on a role of true facilitation. As earlier discussed in **Chapter 2 Foundation of the Strategic Plan**, the proposed recreation delivery model for Saint John is comprised of three over-arching, interconnected components or *focus areas*. Each focus area provides general guidance and where appropriate evaluation tools. The recommended focus areas are:

- Healthy/Active Living
- Right-Sizing
- Community Development

¹⁵Urban Environment Services; Services Plan 2012-2014; Report to Common Council, January 10, 2012.

¹⁶City of Saint John Recreation and Open Space Strategy, 1993.

These three focus areas together with the analysis of existing conditions, public input, and resolution of the issues provide the basis for the recommendations for each service plan described in the following Chapters.

Each subsequent Chapter is organized in the following manner:

- **Topic:** each Chapter deals with a specific recreation topic and relevant matters. They are: Playgrounds; Parks; Outdoor Recreation Facilities – Sport Fields; Indoor Recreation Facilities – Arenas; Community Centres; Neighbourhood Improvement and Recreation Programs; and Trails and Connectivity.
 - **The Issue:** each Chapter describes the predominant issue(s) surrounding the topic, in Saint John.
 - **Context:** context is described in terms of existing conditions in Saint John.
 - **Quantity:** quantity is measured as described against an industry standard for provision.
 - **Quality:** quality describes the existing condition associated with each recreation topic. Quality is based on observations as well as public input and perception.
- **Resolution:** describes a proposed solution or methodology to improve or solve recreation issues.
 - **Recommendations:** recommendations are proposed for each topic area that are developed upon the three focus areas and bring the City closer to the facilitation model for service delivery.
 - **Implementation:** outlines the steps necessary to put recommendations into practice.

Each subsequent Chapter describes the strategy for the delivery of service(s) for its specific recreation theme.

3 chapter

The Strategy for Playground Services



1.0 Introduction

Playgrounds are spaces designed for children’s active play and are an important part of healthy schools and communities. Successful playgrounds are not sport specific and are well used by children. In Saint John, playgrounds are supplied with a variety of manufactured play equipment and are usually located on public land. Saint John has a wide variety of playgrounds that can be characterized in the following ways:

- Built and maintained through the collaborative support of corporate sponsors or community service groups, such as the Kiwanis Playground in Rockwood Park;
- Publically built and maintained, as found at most public schools and City parks; and
- Private facilities, both indoor and outdoor, connected to a business, for customers only, such as those found at some restaurants, private child care centres and private play facilities.

Rationalizing the number and quality of playgrounds required in Saint John will enhance their appeal and use by children and enable the City to provide good quality and safe playgrounds within its fiscal capability.

2.0 Issue

Despite a supply of 70 playgrounds, Saint John continues to struggle with obesity levels.

In 2009 Statistics Canada reported a childhood obesity rate of 24% for New Brunswick youth aged 12-17. This includes youth in the Saint John CMA.¹

“While in 2010, the obesity rate for those 18 years and over in New Brunswick Health Region 2 (which includes the Saint John CMA) was 24.2%, up from 23.7% in 2009 and 22.4% in 2003. The 2010 figure was lower than the provincial average (27.5%) and higher than the national rate (18.1%).”²

At only 7%, New Brunswick has the lowest percentage of youth attaining the recommended daily physical activity level. **With so many playgrounds in Saint John how can this level of inactivity and obesity be possible?**

3.0 Context

The City of Saint John Sports and Recreation Facilities Service strives to provide good quality, safe playgrounds. However, the cost of maintaining 70 public playgrounds exceeds the City’s fiscal capacity to support proper design, maintenance, repair, improvements and replacement of playground equipment under its responsibility.

¹Statistics Canada: Canadian Community Health Survey 2009-2010.

²Greater Saint John’s VitalSigns 2011, Greater Saint John Community Foundation, Saint John, 2011



Right-sizing the number of public playgrounds in Saint John means determining the best facilities in which to invest public funds. Conversely the scale of many small, local neighbourhood playgrounds presents an excellent opportunity for community groups to take over certain playgrounds, engage citizens and reduce the burden on the City. Reducing the City’s responsibilities will allow for greater re-investment in several destination playgrounds that better serve residents, and aid in the battle against inactivity and obesity. These sites will be located within the PlanSJ designated primary development areas, in order to serve the greatest number of residents. The City of Saint John will also battle obesity in the school yard with additional agreements and shared management of School District recreation facilities such as playgrounds.

4.0 Quantity

Currently, the City of Saint John provides capital support and maintenance to 70 playgrounds. As shown in Chart 2 – Playgrounds Required Per Capita; with a population of 70,063³ (2011 Census), Saint John has 1 playground for every 1,000 residents. This playground to person ratio is above the established standard⁴ of 1 playground for every 5,000 residents; or 14 playgrounds for Saint John’s current population. The difference between what is available – 70 playgrounds; and the standard – 14 playgrounds, is immense. **What is the right number of playgrounds for Saint John?**

Facility	Existing	Per Capita Requirement	Total Saint John Population	Total Required
Playgrounds	70	1 per 5,000 people	70,063	14

PlaySJ consultations revealed the public is less concerned about the total number of playgrounds and more interested the benefits of playgrounds for improving the quality of life for children. Specifically, residents indicated that the total number of playgrounds is not as important as is the value of an individual playground to any given community. The City was cautioned by the public when determining *playground value* by statistical or demographic analysis, that this measurement does not reflect or appreciate local issues. Consequently, the approach to right-sizing the number of playgrounds in Saint John engages the community, allowing residents to decide the fate of *their* community playgrounds.

5.0 Quality

Unfortunately this high level of service (1 playground for every 1,000 residents) requires levels of funding for maintenance and capital beyond the City’s financial capacity. Consequently, the inability to properly support this playground infrastructure has resulted in a largely obsolete or poorly maintained system of playgrounds.

The majority of the playgrounds in Saint John are old and outdated. These playgrounds clearly do not engage youth to be active. However, changing the pattern of inactivity cannot be remedied by merely selecting new playground equipment from a catalogue. Rather, playground quality is found in the *variety* and *diversity* of playground design. Variety and diversity are two essential elements to hold the interest of the city’s youth and entice them into greater physical activity.

Diversity in playground design creates interest between various playgrounds and is an important method of reinforcing communities. Thus playgrounds enhance communities which strengthen the City’s goal of fostering more *complete* communities.

³Statistics Canada. 2012. Saint John, New Brunswick (Code 1301006) and Saint John, New Brunswick (Code 1301) (table). Census Profile.

⁴New Brunswick has no established guidelines regarding the standardized provision of recreation facilities, in 2010 the City of Saint John’s Infrastructure, Facilities & Programming Inventory Study, established the Ontario Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards (1998) as the “de facto” recreation facilities guidelines.

Best Practice - Playground Design

The following is adapted from the *Elements of Play Mode*⁵ as developed by the South Australian Department for Recreation and Sport in order to illustrate the basic factors required to establish quality playground experiences. The elements of the Australian model are very adaptable to the City of Saint John situation.

Natural Design

Natural Playgrounds make use of topography and varied ground covers, giant logs, boulders and trees and various forms of vegetation and include predominantly materials from nature. Spaces are accessible to all, filled with nature, interactive musical and art elements throughout, provide naturally inspired education opportunities throughout and have creative and unique design concepts specific to the project.

Active Play/ Equipment Based

Play equipment has historically been the dominant factor in playground provision. However, play equipment should complement the remainder of the play environment rather than be the only play feature in an area. Provision of predominantly equipment and other elements that allow for aerobic activity, development of co-ordination and balance, gross/fine motor skills as well as encouraging social and sharing opportunities, which may also include informal sport elements such as goal posts or basketball nets.

Open Space

Open spaces should offer areas for informal ball games and general running around and should not be confused with formal sport requirements. The essence of such a space is to encourage and allow activities to develop spontaneously among the children present at the time who then implement the parameters by which the play will be engaged.

Adult Supervision

Adults/ care-givers accompanying children to play areas require a comfortable area where they can oversee activities should they choose not to participate. The inclusion of such areas in playgrounds may result in longer periods of use by families or adult/ care-givers with young children. Safety in the playground can be influenced by the presence and involvement of carers as it is by the implementation of thoughtful and exciting design solutions.

Creative/Explorative Spaces

These elements encourage the child to explore, to develop a sense of wonder, to question, to engage in and interact with their natural or built environment. They also allow the child, on repeat visits, to recognise the dynamics and change within that space. The natural environment lends itself particularly well to this latter element of play provision. This is often the most neglected aspect of play provision and it requires sensitivity to develop the possibilities for such an area.

A Special Features Area

Children are constantly growing and maturing and accordingly so do their play preferences. Special features, such as a skateboard ramp, water features, and other unique elements encourage exploration and boundary testing which contributes to the overall development of the child.

6.0 Resolution

The Strategic Plan for Playground Services provides guidance to address the specific issue such as playground oversupply and is based on the three following focus areas.

1. Healthy/active living: a strategy for playground service that addresses the fitness levels and healthy living needs of children and youth which may involve:

- Clustering of playgrounds with other infrastructure and amenities.
- Provision of playground equipment, structures, amenities and that are appealing and support various types of physical activities.
- Provision of playground equipment etc that meet the social needs of the age group for which they are intended.

2. Right-Sizing: determining the criteria necessary to recommend a playground hierarchy and proposed number of playgrounds appropriate for Saint John. The criteria include:

- Proximity to population to be served
- Proximity to areas of future expansion of the community
- Proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities
- Site topography, natural features and appeal
- Physical site layout

3. Community Development: the approach to right-sizing the number of playgrounds in Saint John must engage the community, and allow residents to decide the fate of *their* community playgrounds. This may lead to the divestment of City responsibility for a number of playgrounds and enable the creation of partnerships with community groups who will agree to deliver local services that fulfill the City's objectives, such as:

- Maintenance and repair
- Management and administration

6.1 Playground System

The playground hierarchy forms the basis of the Playground System – see Table 2 that describes in

⁵Playground Manual, Office For Recreation and Sport, Government of South Australia, October 2007 (2nd Edition)

more detail each playground category, catchment areas, required service levels and financial ramifications. It suggests the need for:

- **1 Regional Playground** – fully funded and maintained by the City
- **6 District Playgrounds** – fully funded and maintained by the City
- **20 School Playgrounds** – supported by formal Joint Use Agreements
- **42 Neighbourhood Playgrounds** – supported in part through community grants

The following map illustrates the hierarchy of playgrounds described in the playgrounds system. Starting with the regional playground at Rockwood Park, the map lists and shows the location of district playgrounds, and school playgrounds. Several schools listed have 2 playgrounds. The 42 neighbourhood playgrounds are located only, indicated by the purple symbols.

Regional Playgrounds

Regional Playgrounds are often located in city or regional parks, are somewhat specialized, and serve residents within a larger region and often from more than one municipality. They are typically independent of school facilities, make provision for large play areas with various elements and cater to all ages and abilities.

The area required by a regional playground is dependent on the largest range of playground equipment and amenities to be provided. Typically, regional playgrounds require a large site/acreage.

Regional playgrounds are designed to have a theme or distinct character. They may include adventure playground elements, skateboarding facilities and areas for free, unstructured play. Equipment suited to a particular age group may be grouped and separated from equipment suited to another age group. The design of a regional playground should also incorporate the site's natural features such as topography, vegetation including trees, understory and varied ground covers; and use boulders, giant logs and other natural elements to create interest and promote exploration and imaginative play.

Of all the playground types, regional playgrounds should provide the greatest range of play opportunities and the highest element of challenge.

Regional playgrounds should cater to group or family visits ranging from 2 hours up to a day in duration and may in fact be considered a tourist attraction or destination. As such they should be sited within walking distance of car parking, toilets and picnic areas. Supporting facilities may include: shade (natural and/or built), picnic / BBQ areas and shelters, toilets, drinking fountains, open fields and green space, natural areas, trails/pedestrian access and vehicle parking.

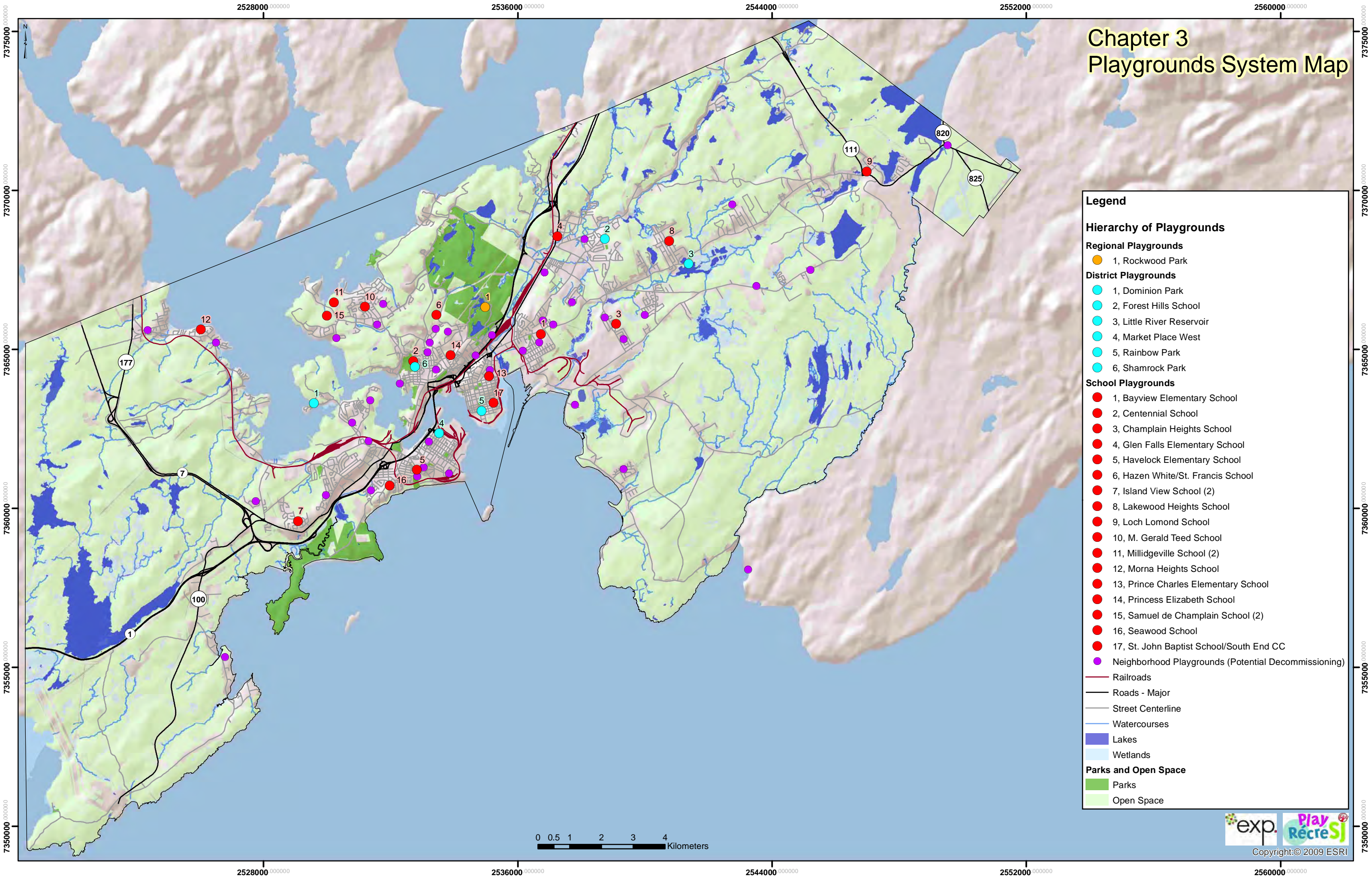
The Strategic Plan for Playground Services recommends one *Regional Playground* for Saint John to be located in Rockwood Park due to: its location within the Greater Saint John area; its current function as the City's main Regional Park; and its existing playground which lends itself to redevelopment as a regional playground. The regional playground should be the **first development priority** in terms of redesigning and upgrading the playground resulting in a high quality, unique and attractive playground that has the ability to attract families and users from Saint John and beyond and position itself as a tourist destination.

The design of this playground should incorporate natural features of the Park such as topography, vegetation, rock outcrops and watercourses and provide connections to Fisher Lakes. A finished design inspired by nature and specific to Rockwood Park can provide educational opportunities through interpretation.

The existing Rockwood Park playground represents approximately 4 acres of land that may be redeveloped as a specialised playground to offer an experience not found elsewhere in the Greater Saint John area. While the 0-4 and 5-9 age groups should be provided with equipment suitable for their physical capabilities, the teenage group should be given special consideration in the design of this regional playground because they seek specific qualities in their play activities which should only be provided at the regional playground level. Children and teenagers with physical and/or cognitive disabilities should also be given consideration in the selection or design of play equipment.

Locating the regional playground in Rockwood Park is a cost effective measure that takes advantage of existing support facilities; while enhancing the regional playground's ability to attract residents and visitors alike.

Chapter 3 Playgrounds System Map



Legend

Hierarchy of Playgrounds

Regional Playgrounds

- 1, Rockwood Park

District Playgrounds

- 1, Dominion Park
- 2, Forest Hills School
- 3, Little River Reservoir
- 4, Market Place West
- 5, Rainbow Park
- 6, Shamrock Park

School Playgrounds

- 1, Bayview Elementary School
- 2, Centennial School
- 3, Champlain Heights School
- 4, Glen Falls Elementary School
- 5, Havelock Elementary School
- 6, Hazen White/St. Francis School
- 7, Island View School (2)
- 8, Lakewood Heights School
- 9, Loch Lomond School
- 10, M. Gerald Teed School
- 11, Millidgeville School (2)
- 12, Morna Heights School
- 13, Prince Charles Elementary School
- 14, Princess Elizabeth School
- 15, Samuel de Champlain School (2)
- 16, Seawood School
- 17, St. John Baptist School/South End CC
- Neighborhood Playgrounds (Potential Decommissioning)

Infrastructure and Land Use

- Railroads
- Roads - Major
- Street Centerline
- Watercourses
- Lakes
- Wetlands
- Parks and Open Space
 - Parks
 - Open Space



Table 2 - Playground System				
	1 Regional Playground	6 District Playgrounds	20 School Playgrounds	42 Neighbourhood Playgrounds
Catchment Area	<p>Servicing the entire City of Saint John and regional population catchment of 80,000 to 100,000 people.</p> <p>Regional playgrounds will also function as a district playgrounds for the surrounding 5km catchment zone⁶.</p>	<p>Catchment area of 2.5 km radius and located to provide service to a number of local school areas servicing 15,000 to 20,000 people.</p>	<p>Catchment area of 1.5 km or as determined by school district.</p>	<p>Catchment area of 500 metres or as determined by sponsoring community. Give consideration to major pedestrian barriers such as highways, major collector roads, and industrial facilities.</p>
Service Level	<p>Developed through a master plan process and includes a variety of play equipment, environments, infrastructure and technology (Wi-Fi) for all ages and abilities.</p> <p>Located in or close to large open space areas or regional parks. Provides the greatest level of play opportunities in the City intended for visits greater than 2 hours. Associated facilities including toilets, walking paths and trails, BBQ pits, picnic benches and shelter structures.</p>	<p>Variety of play equipment and site features suitable for a number of age and ability levels. Where possible located in close proximity to large open space areas or close to other major recreational facilities, such as arenas, community centres, sports fields, community gardens.</p>	<p>Basic provision of playground equipment from approved suppliers.</p>	<p>Basic provision of playground equipment from approved suppliers.</p>
Funding Requirement	<p>Total replacement cost of these playgrounds estimated +/- \$200,000 to \$300,000.</p>	<p>Replacement cost is estimated at \$100,000 - \$150,000</p>	<p>Funding \$10,000 - \$40,000</p>	<p>Funding support to a maximum of \$5,000 per project.</p>
Notes	<p>Preference for highly creative playground environments that function in multiple ways for multiple audiences relating well to the natural open space setting of the location.</p>	<p>District playgrounds will also function as a neighbourhood playground for the surrounding 500 metre catchment area⁷. Development as a high quality public space and adherence to CPTED principles will be considered in the selection and design of district playgrounds.</p>	<p>Natural playground design and school ground greening projects will be the priority for program support.</p>	<p>Sustainability principles will be considered when determining the City's support of community applications.</p>

⁶Where Regional Playgrounds provide service to a prescribed district 5km catchment area the City of Saint John will not provide additional playground infrastructure or community grant support.

⁷Where District Playgrounds provide service to local neighbourhoods. The City of Saint John will not provide additional playground infrastructure or community grant support.

District Playgrounds

District Playgrounds are high-quality and distinctive playgrounds that draw people from across a district, e.g. catering to the West, Uptown, East and North areas of the city. District playgrounds in high-profile recreation parks will be developed and upgraded as the **second development priority** within the Playground Service Plan. These include:

1. Dominion Park
2. Forest Hills School
3. Little River Reservoir
4. Market Place West
5. Rainbow Park
6. Shamrock Park

District playgrounds help to reconnect children to the land and support their spontaneous and creative play, and in doing so, enhance children's cognitive and physical development. Designed without boundaries, district playgrounds are open to everyone not just the very young.

School Playgrounds

The Playground Service Plan includes 20 school playgrounds with three schools having two playgrounds each. School playgrounds are owned by School Board Districts 8 and District 1.

The Playground Service Plan promotes the City of Saint John's interest to continue agreements for joint use of school playgrounds, as a way to provide services to children and families in convenient school locations, improve opportunities for physical activity by increasing use of existing school play equipment, and to leverage capital investments. However, engaging in joint use, particularly intensive sharing of playgrounds by the public, presents ongoing challenges to school and community leaders. Co-location and joint use agreements between the City of Saint John and School Districts provide a variety of benefits. Not only do they provide an efficient use of resources by leveraging capital budgets, they also involve significant potential cost savings for land, construction, maintenance, and insurance and so on.

The benchmark for good-quality school playgrounds includes: a number of pieces of play equipment; some unique features to provide a focus for schools; and location in conjunction with a school or specific community amenity. School playgrounds will be developed and upgraded as the **third development priority**; and include:

1. Bayview Elementary School
2. Centennial School
3. Champlain Heights School
4. Glen Falls Elementary School
5. Havelock Elementary School
6. Hazen White/St. Francis School
7. Island View School (2)
8. Lakewood Heights School
9. Loch Lomond School
10. M. Gerald Teed School
11. Millidgeville School (2)
12. Morna Heights School
13. Prince Charles Elementary School
14. Princess Elizabeth School
15. Samuel de Champlain School (2)
16. Seawood School
17. St. John Baptist School/South End CC

The City of Saint John acknowledges the importance of school locations for the entire community; their ability to serve as centres of the community; civic landmarks or heritage sites; anchors for neighborhoods, and community centres. The location of schools and school playgrounds in residential neighborhoods has important benefits for communities; allowing students to use playground infrastructure for play and physical activity when school is not in session; enabling students to walk or bicycle using established and familiar safe routes; and making it possible for families to be more readily aware their children's whereabouts.

*"Sharing school grounds and facilities with the surrounding community makes sense as we look at the future of sustainable cities. It can strengthen networks (increasing resilience through getting to know your neighbours) and improve urban health (access to green parks for recreation and improved air quality)."*⁸

This concept of a shared facility is not unique. Many communities have adopted similar approaches. For example, the City of Vancouver has a matching fund program which is used by school based led groups who are interested in facilitating creative improvements to public lands. See Best Practices insert.

⁸Learning to Share: Designing Schoolyards for More Than Just Recess, Peter Harnik, City Parks Blog, Center for City Park Excellence at the Trust for Public Land and the City Parks Alliance, May 2, 2011

Best Practice School Matching Fund Program

**School Matching Fund Program
City of Vancouver, British Columbia**

The City of Vancouver’s School Matching Fund Program will supply funds up to \$10,000 to match the contribution the community makes through other funds raised, donated supplies, or volunteer labour for projects. Projects must be led by school-based groups who want to make creative improvements to local public land. The fund supports projects that actively involve people to develop their community and build school connections while improving parks or other public spaces.

Community groups must develop a project proposal and budget and submit an application outlining the matching (volunteer labour, donated supplied, funds raised) contribution. City staffers then conduct a technical review of the site and the proposed project. If technically feasible, the proposal is then reviewed by an Advisory Committee, composed of community members from across the city. The committee then selects the most eligible projects for funding. According to published communications the City of Vancouver rarely allocates the maximum level of funding to a project.

Who can apply?

- Any school-based, registered not-for-profit groups, such as Community Centre Associations or School Associations, are eligible.
- Informal school-based groups and organizations may apply in partnership with the sponsorship of a registered not-for-profit organization.
- Registered not-for-profit groups or service clubs which are not school-based are expected to partner with community groups.
- Examples of projects supported by the School Matching Fund include:
 - Garden or greening projects
 - Building a community fence
 - Working with a local artist to build creative park benches
 - Developing natural or historical interpretation
 - Building an information kiosk

Neighbourhood Playgrounds

Neighbourhood playgrounds do not have specific service level descriptions primarily because they represent playgrounds that are financed and managed through partnerships with citizens groups and not directly through the City of Saint John. Neighbourhood playgrounds are primarily about playground assets sponsored and supported by various community associations and their relationship with the City of Saint John. These relationships are described as an Alternative Service Delivery model (ASD – see **Chapter 2**) wherein the process of public sector restructuring improves the delivery of services to citizens by sharing municipal functions with community groups.

By using ASD, the municipality concentrates on the activities that it is best equipped to provide while allowing residents to carry out those activities that they do best. The Strategic Plan for Playground Services identifies those playgrounds currently maintained by the City of Saint John that present the best opportunity for community management including maintenance. They are:

1. Allison Grounds
2. Anglin Drive Playground
3. Beaconsfield Park
4. Belmont Street Park
5. Boyaner Crescent Playground
6. Cabot Court Playground
7. Cedar Point Playground
8. Celebration Street Playground
9. Courtney Avenue Park
10. Dalila Ct. Playground
11. Dresden Avenue
12. Eastmount Playground
13. Ellerdale Street Park
14. Flemming Court Playground
15. Hilton Belyea Arena
16. Honeysuckle Drive Playground
17. Karen Street Playground
18. KBM CC
19. King’s Square West
20. Latimore Lake
21. Latimore Lake CC
22. Loch Lomond CC
23. Lorneville CC
24. Lou Murphy Park
25. Martinon CC
26. Midwood Avenue Playground
27. Mispes Park
28. Monte Cristo Playground
29. Montgomery Crescent Playground
30. Morris Street Playground
31. Nason Road Playground
32. Ocean Drive Playground
33. Quinton Heights Park
34. Robertson Square
35. Saint John Boy’s and Girl’s Club
36. Seaside Park

37. Silver Crescent Playground
38. Swanton Street Playground
39. Taylor Avenue Playground
40. Troop Street Park
41. Woodhaven Drive Playground
42. Woodside Park

Through the use of community developers⁹ the City of Saint John would facilitate through various public engagement methods, a process of reviewing and determining the future of the community playgrounds. By investing in a community development and governance model for neighbourhood playgrounds the City can focus resources (funding, staff time, etc.) towards projects with the greatest demonstrated need and long term commitment by communities. Accordingly, the City of Saint John would phase out its maintenance responsibilities for identified neighbourhood playgrounds and support community governance of the playgrounds by:

- Providing resources to assist communities to develop community and neighbourhood associations;
- Providing experienced community developers to facilitate community engagement as required;
- Providing access to City resources, communications, assets and technical support as may be required in response to supporting neighbourhood playground plans and goals;
- Funding community based projects, through a competitive community grants program; and
- Mentoring, assisting or training members of community organisations to further their mission.

7.0 Recommendations

The focus of the Strategic Plan for Playground Services is strongly based on an Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) model¹⁰ that advocates the sharing of municipal functions with community groups (See **Chapter 2**). By using an ASD model, the City of Saint John can concentrate on a smaller number (right- sized) of total playgrounds while allowing residents to make decisions regarding the future of playgrounds in their neighbourhood. The recommended approach is for a phased roll out of the Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) model that would slowly reduce Municipal responsibility for identified playgrounds throughout Saint John by soliciting community groups and associations to takeover control and management of individual playgrounds.

Recommendation 1: Right- Size the City's Playgrounds.

Although the industry standard of 1 playground for every 5000 persons (or the equivalent of 14 playgrounds given Saint John's current population) under the direct responsibility of the City of Saint John, it is a benchmark that requires testing and clarification with the community. The proposed playground hierarchy ensures the City's full responsibility for 6 district playgrounds while sharing the responsibility for 20 school playgrounds through Joint Use Agreements. The configuration of the remaining 42 neighbourhood playgrounds will be determined through community consultations, expressed community needs, and the formation of community groups or associations willing and able to take responsibility for these playgrounds with support from the City of Saint John.

To achieve *right-sizing* with respect to playgrounds, the City of Saint John should adopt the following playground hierarchy:

1 Regional Playground within Rockwood Park, re-designed as the premier flagship playground in the City, fully funded and maintained by the City of Saint John.

6 District Playgrounds redesigned to higher standards and fully funded and maintained by the City of Saint John.

20 School Playgrounds located on School Board Property and supported by formal Joint Use Agreements with School Districts.

42 Neighbourhood Playgrounds governed by community associations and supported in part by community grants from the City of Saint John.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Policy to Divest Public Land.

The City in conjunction with community partners will identify playgrounds that residents have determined are no longer useful or required by the community. These sites may no longer serve any other public purpose. Consequently the City of Saint John should develop a formal policy that ensures the disposal of municipal lands is transacted in a method based on fair and equitable procedures and endorsed by Common Council. The development of such a policy will ensure that the divesting of public land is clearly in the public's best interests. The funds made available through divestiture may be set aside to fund the ASD playgrounds (or other recreation needs as determined by Common Council).

Recommendation 3: Establish a Joint Use Interagency Team.

Establish a Joint Use Interagency Team composed of staff representatives of the School Board District(s) servicing Saint John and staff from the City of Saint John. The role of the Joint Use Interagency Team would be to develop

⁹A City of Saint John, Community Developer, is a proposed staff position who is responsible for supporting the community and voluntary sectors in Saint John and facilitating and supporting healthy, sustainable and empowered communities equipped and skilled to tackle local concerns.

¹⁰A Guide to Service Delivery Review for Municipal Managers – Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario; the Municipal Finance Officers' Association of Ontario; and the Ontario Municipal Administrators' Association, 2004



agreements for use of shared responsibility and access to playgrounds, sport fields, gymnasias and other shared facilities.

Recommendation 4: Develop a Joint Use Playground Design, Installation and Maintenance Policy.

One of the more important elements of a Joint Use Agreement is that both the School District and City of Saint John will adhere to recognized standards and best practices for the design, installation and maintenance of both existing and future recreation infrastructure. Fundamental to this policy is that the needs of the community should be addressed and accordingly concepts such as CPTED¹¹ and the best practices for community design that ensures that equipment will be located to promote use by the community and that proposed play equipment will not duplicate existing area facilities.

8.0 Implementation

A number of actions will enable the smooth transition of right-sizing the city's stock of playgrounds and incorporating the Playground System described earlier. These actions are described as specific steps below and their implementation may be only the beginning of a series of activities that will continue in successive years.

Step 1: Continue Implementation of Existing "Park Playground" Master Plans.

Two of the 6 identified District Playgrounds; Rainbow Park and Market Place West, have existing master plans and are currently in various stages of implementation. The City of Saint John should continue to implement these master plans and seek opportunities for additional corporate and community support to assist in the development of new master plans for each of the identified District Playgrounds.

Step 2: Negotiate Community Joint Use Agreement(s).

Negotiate Community Joint Use Agreements to secure the potential shared benefits of joint use and joint development of school playgrounds, sport fields and gymnasias - a policy and operational framework is needed. Recreation infrastructure associated with public school facilities and school grounds should be governed, planned, designed, managed, and funded to support their intensive use by the entire community.

Until these explicit governance systems and support are in place, school districts will likely remain hesitant partners in joint use and joint development of playgrounds. The City and School Board District(s) will need a process by which to schedule use of properties, develop rules for implementing the Agreement, address and resolve any concerns or problems that arise during the Agreement through dispute resolution mechanisms, and evaluate the Agreement(s). Accordingly the requirement for a Joint Use Interagency Team is the first implementation step.

Step 3: Implement an Adopt-a-Playground Program.

The City of Saint John should develop an Adopt-a-Playground Program that will challenge residents to evaluate the future of their neighbourhood playground and determine applicable takeover, control and management of individual playgrounds. The Adopt-a-Playground Program is enabled by the New Brunswick Municipalities Act¹² which allows the City of Saint John to provide support to eligible groups registered as *local improvement associations*. The program serves two primary functions: as a community and citizen engagement program; and as a tool to implement an Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) model (see **Chapter 2**) by sharing municipal functions and responsibility with individuals and neighbourhood groups for the 42 identified neighbourhood playgrounds located throughout the city.

¹¹Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.

¹²The Municipalities Act allows for the transfer of City owned assets into community hands through Section 149 "Local Improvement Associations" which allows for the incorporation of a local improvement association. These local improvement associations must be comprised of at least five (5) persons in a community who, with the approval of the Common Council of the municipality, would become members of a corporate body (under the Companies Act) for the purpose of:

- a) encouraging horticulture,
- b) improving and ornamenting streets, parks, commons, cemeteries or other open public places in the municipality; and
- c) caring for, restoring, preserving and protecting any public buildings, statues, monuments, or landmarks.

Step 4: Create general discipline Community Developer¹³ staff positions.

These new City staff employees will be responsible for supporting and facilitating programs such as the Adopt-a-Playground Program. These new community developers will be highly skilled in facilitation, relationship building, and assisting communities to identify and address their needs and concerns regarding access to neighbourhood playgrounds and other recreation facilities and services.

Step 5: Implement a Community Grants (Playground) Program.

Chapter 2 outlines how the City of Saint John can create a governance model to provide community grants assistance. A new grants program would be established by Common Council to replace the various grants currently administered by the City of Saint John.

One of the important implementation mechanisms necessary for the Adopt-a-Playground Program is access to City funded community grants. The purpose of the Grants Program is to provide flexible grants to local improvement associations to allow for the rehabilitation, expansion or improvement of existing community playgrounds. Eligible incorporated community associations may then make application to the City's Community Grants Program to receive funding and support from the City to rehabilitate, expand or improve existing neighbourhood playgrounds, create new parks, develop natural playground projects, community gardens, and other community amenities. Award of grants is intended as a competitive and merit based program that determines support relative to the sustainability of the project, amount of community support for the project, and level of assistance being sought.

Step 6: Create a Master Plan to Redevelop the Kiwanis Playground in Rockwood Park.

Rockwood Park is Saint John's premier regional park facility. Accordingly the City should prepare a master plan and re-investment strategy to create a regionally significant and premier destination playground in Rockwood Park. Building upon the success of the existing Kiwanis Playground (in Rockwood Park) the City of Saint John should prepare a conceptual master plan that incorporates opportunities for funding through corporate partnerships and sponsors to ensure that the new playground is a *best in class* regional facility.

Step 7: Develop High-Quality and Distinctive District Playgrounds.

The City of Saint John should develop an overall implementation plan and coordinated master plan to create no fewer than 6 district level playgrounds located within the primary development areas of the city. The intent of a coordinated approach to district playgrounds is that each playground has a distinctive character while adhering to uniform quality standards as high-profile recreation facilities. The 6 recommended District Playgrounds locations are:

1. Dominion Park
2. Forest Hills School
3. Little River Reservoir
4. Market Place West
5. Rainbow Park
6. Shamrock Park

¹³Refer to Community Development Chapter for more detailed discussion.

4 chapter

The Strategy for Parks Services



1.0 Introduction

In our increasingly urbanised lives, most people have a strong desire to *touch nature*, to immerse themselves in a natural setting such as a community garden, the local square, in one of the large regional parks, or along the Saint John waterfront. These open spaces are the favourite places of Saint John residents; they have special meaning and are crucial to **quality of life**.

Parks, squares, plazas, and public spaces, historic sites; open space; and community gardens are inspiring and pleasant places to exercise and improve physical and mental wellbeing for the City's largely sedentary population that is more vulnerable than ever to stress, mental health issues and obesity.

Strengthening the City of Saint John's system of parks (squares, plazas and public spaces; historic sites; open spaces; and community gardens) through increased citizen participation and stewardship will provide long lasting benefits for current residents as well as future generations.

2.0 Issue

Residents of Saint John have become accustomed to perceiving parks as vast acres of *empty urban wilderness*. Anchored by Rockwood Park and the Irving Nature Park, city park land in Saint

John exceeds the per capita standard by nearly twice the baseline amount. The management and retention of such a large inventory of park land presents the City with many options for future park land improvement, although there is less need for more intensive park land improvements than would be required in a larger and more densely populated and developed city. **Consequently, at what point does the additional acreage of park land become a liability, instead of an asset, for the City of Saint John?**

There is no easy answer. Residents of Saint John cherish all of their park land. In the view of many residents the concept of *too much is park land* is contradictory. It is understandable that residents perceive the need for more natural space due to the large amount of heavy industry in the city. As an example of the importance of green space to the community, the residents of Loch Lomond Road area have strongly supported the efforts of the Little River Reservoir Association to develop a new park on the lands surrounding the head-pond of the Little River Reservoir in East Saint John.

3.0 Context

The City of Saint John, Parks and City Landscape Service provides the development, operation and maintenance of all community parks,

squares, trails, and tourist sites, and the preservation and protection of the City’s natural areas, including urban forestry operations and initiatives. The Service provides year round daily maintenance of City Parks including mowing, snow removal, leaf removal, turf maintenance, tree planting, tree pruning, park lighting maintenance, fertilizing, watering, pruning, garbage clean up and removal. Recently the Parks and City Landscape Service accomplished several notable projects:

- Improvements to Dominion Park including new perimeter fencing and gate, painted benches and picnic tables.
- Supported the development of park green space (David Greenslade Peace Park)¹ next to the Summerville-Millidgeville Ferry landing in partnership with a neighbourhood development group.
- Park improvements at Jervis Bay – Ross Memorial Park in partnership with local area residents.
- Assisted in the development of a new community garden at Shamrock Park on the site of a former playground.
- Supported landscape beautification efforts at local area schools.
- Supported the refurbishment of the John Hooper public art sculptures in Loyalist Plaza.
- Excavation and site work for Peter Powning’s *Shards of Time* public art sculpture on Harbour Passage.
- Supported the Queens Square Farmers Market and Harvesting the Arts Festival.

4.0 Quantity

As shown in Chart 3 – Park Land Required Per Capita, there is an oversupply, (in fact more than twice the required area) of parks, squares, plazas, public spaces and open spaces within the city. Many of these spaces have historical significance and a high profile within the community; while others are less used and less well known. Through PlaySJ consultations, participants generally agreed that more community gardens are a worthy concept to encourage and foster. However, some felt that the long term success depends solely on volunteerism and that the City should invest its resources cautiously.

Chart 3 – Park Land Required Per Capita				
Facility	Existing	Per Capita Requirement	Total Saint John Population	Total Required
Park land	2943 acres (1191 ha)	900 square feet (84 m ²) of park land per person	70,063	1400 acres (567 ha)

The City of Saint John encompasses a large geographical area with a diverse range of varying landforms and natural features. The City’s new Municipal Plan aims to protect and enhance natural areas in the city and to aid and improve the functioning of ecosystems and maintain biodiversity. To the maximum extent possible in an urban area, the City intends to create a balanced relationship between the functioning of urban systems and natural systems. Several of the new Municipal Plan policies address this issue.

The City’s Municipal Plan 2011 organizes parks into a hierarchy that reflects the size of the geographic catchment areas they are meant to serve. They range from small local playgrounds to large regional tourist attractions and collectively create a park system. The City’s parks are categorized according to the following hierarchy:

- Regional Parks
- Community Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks

5.0 Quality

Quality standards are an important element of planning and managing parks and open space areas. However, formulating and evaluating standards of quality for parks, squares, plazas, open spaces, etc. can be challenging. Quality standards define minimum acceptable conditions in parks and as such they can be useful in defining desired future conditions and evaluating the need for management and physical improvements that will enhance the public’s experience. Throughout the city, parks and other open spaces vary in their standard of quality associated with design, amenities, and aesthetic appeal, from very high to a degree that deters residents from using the space.

Quality standards can also include the concept of linking parks, squares, plazas, public spaces and open spaces to commercial activities and cultural and recreational events that give public spaces greater value to the community. Harbour Passage, although technically a trail and addressed in great detail in the City’s Trails and Bikeways Plan, was viewed by the public as a very important amenity on which to focus increased investment and expansion. The public recommended the following:

- Explore opportunities to use public spaces in non-traditional ways and link to activities that generate income and interest in the city’s history.
- Provide access to utilities such as water and electrical supply in key areas (Queen’s Square) to support cultural fairs, concerts, and other non-traditional activities.
- Improve and add lighting and other amenities such as benches, tables, and games tables (e.g. chess) to key public gathering spaces.

¹At the time of writing, this park was under development as a neighbourhood park, but is not included in the inventory.

The public's comments also echo the intent of the City's Municipal Plan suggesting more *programming* within parks, squares, plazas, public spaces and open spaces, with the intent of enhancing *sense of place*, creating social and cultural connections for residents and visitors alike, and consequently improving the quality of these important city spaces.

6.0 Resolution

The Strategic Plan for Parks Services provides guidance.

At what point does the additional acreage of park land become a liability, instead of an asset, for the City of Saint John?

Through analysis of existing conditions and practices together with resident input, the three focus areas were examined to formulate specific recommendations that will enable the City to deliver parks services in a strategic manner:

1. Healthy/active living: focus on ensuring that the City's green spaces and outdoor assets offer increased opportunities for citizens to participate in both a social and physical manner thereby fostering and enhancing the community's engagement in healthy and active living opportunities.

2. Right-sizing: focus on reducing the City's costs of maintaining a system of park land while ensuring a standard of quality of its parks; squares, plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens that enhance their use and meet the needs and expectations of residents.

3. Community development: focus on actively engaging residents to be more involved and take on greater responsibility for City parks; squares, plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens.

To ensure long term success, the Strategic Plan for Parks Services must also address the following factors:

- Planning for parks; squares, plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens must be integrated into overall community and city planning to effectively provide for these important community features.
- If parks; squares, plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens are to preserve their value and importance in Saint John, they must be maintained. Stewardship is an essential element of any open spaces, squares, plazas, public spaces, and community garden strategy.
- Parks, squares, plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens come in a variety of shapes, sizes and forms and they perform different functions and purposes. Grass roots efforts (e.g. the Little River Reservoir Association) need assistance and capacity building in order to draw on a variety of tools, resources, and strategies that will ensure their success.

- It is important to involve the people who will fund, design, build, use and maintain these spaces. Such involvement will help ensure that parks, open spaces, squares, plazas, public spaces, and community gardens truly meet community needs and function well.
- The City of Saint John faces a growing demand for new recreational and leisure opportunities to serve an increasingly diverse population and an increasing number of aging citizens. Unfortunately, this increased demand is coupled with diminishing tax revenues, provincial and federal funds, and other traditional resources.

6.1 Parks System

The City's responsibility for parks and open spaces begins with a prioritization of spaces that will receive the bulk of the City's direct effort for maintenance and resources for upgrades. The hierarchy of parks as described in the Municipal Plan 2011 is the foundation of a Parks System that has been expanded to represent the type and function of park lands available in Saint John. This system includes the following:

- **2 Regional Parks** – 1 fully funded and maintained by the City
- **7 District Parks** – fully funded and maintained by the City
- **5 Community Parks** – maintained by the City
- **44 Neighbourhood Parks** – may be school playgrounds, tot lots or parkettes and may be supported in part through community grants
- **9 Squares, Plazas and Public Spaces** – 9 maintained by the City
- **4 Historic Sites** – some maintained by the City
- **Open Spaces** – typically receive no City support
- **1 Community Garden** - supported in part through community grants

The following map illustrates the hierarchy of parks described in the parks system. Starting with the regional parks the map lists and shows the location of district parks; community parks; squares; plazas and public spaces, historic sites and community gardens. Those neighbourhood parks which are also school playgrounds are shown on the Playgrounds System Map in Chapter 3. The map illustrates the distribution of these assets in relation to the more densely populated areas of the city.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are large expanses of park land that serve the people who live within a large region. They may serve more than one municipality and may be considered tourist attractions or destinations attracting local residents and visitors alike. They provide space for active and unstructured recreation for all ages and abilities and include a wide range of specialized uses.

Chapter 4 Parks System Map

Legend

Hierarchy of Park Land

Regional Parks

- 1, Rockwood Park
- 2, Irving Nature Park

District Parks

- 1, Dominion Park
- 2, Harbour Passage
- 3, King's Square
- 4, Little River Reservoir Park
- 5, Market Place West
- 6, Queen's Square
- 7, Tucker Park

Community Parks

- 1, Fallsview Park
- 2, Public Gardens
- 3, Riverview National Park
- 4, Seaside Park
- 5, Wolastoq Park

Neighborhood Parks

- are playgrounds and are illustrated on the Playgrounds System Map (Chapter 3)

Squares, Plazas, and Public Spaces

- 1, Jervis Bay - Ross Memorial Park
- 2, King's Square West
- 3, Loyalist Burial Grounds
- 4, Loyalist Plaza
- 5, Queen's Square West
- 6, Robertson Square
- 7, St. Andrew's Square
- 8, St. Patrick's Square
- 9, Victoria Square

Historic Sites

- 1, Fort Howe
- 2, Fort Latour
- 3, Martello Tower
- 4, Partridge Island

Community Gardens

- 1, Greater Saint John Community Garden

Parks and Open Space

- Parks
- Open Space
- Railroads
- Roads
- Watercourses
- Lakes
- Wetlands

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

The City's Regional Parks include:

1. Rockwood Park
2. Irving Nature Park

- Rockwood Park

Rockwood Park, above all other parks is clearly the most valued of the City's parks by the public. As the City's most popular park destination, residents indicated that Rockwood Park requires continued investment to carry on the site work that has been completed over the past several years. Recognizing that Rockwood Park is somewhat under-utilized, residents none-the-less supported strategic investment and expansion of recreation, leisure and healthy/active living choices that would enhance the Park's use and status as a tourist destination.

- Irving Nature Park

Owned by J.D. Irving, Limited, the Irving Nature Park is a 243 hectare park site developed to help protect an environmentally significant area. Park upkeep, educational programs and beautification are fully funded by J.D. Irving, Limited. As a privately owned and operated recreation facility, the City of Saint John has no jurisdiction with regards to this park.

This special part of the Fundy coastline is just minutes from downtown Saint John and offers residents and visitors alike an oasis of forest, marsh, beaches and trails. There are eight different walking trails of varying lengths, as well as a roadway that encircles the park. This allows those who are less mobile the opportunity to access the park. Visitors enjoy the park's rugged beauty, its trails and lookout points, its boardwalk on the salt marsh with amazing birding opportunities, its picnic sites and its free gas barbecues. Special events like moonlight snowshoeing, geological history, meteor showers, and story sessions are all free.

Many consider the park a regional park due to its amenities and opportunities for various activities. Because of its location and ability to draw visitors from across the city and region, it can also be considered a tourist attraction or destination.

- Harbour Passage, Wolastoq Park, Reversing Falls Park, and Fallsview Park

The last decade has seen the development of Harbour Passage - a popular (walking /biking) trail along the City's Inner Harbour that has captured the hearts of Saint John residents. During this time, several master plans were developed proposing strategies for development of the Inner Harbour including Tin Can Beach, the park at Reversing Falls, and Wolastoq Park which incorporates the popular Jet Boat Rides enterprise that launches from Fallsview Park. Concurrently, the Saint John Port Authority disclosed plans to re-develop Pugsley Park adjacent to the Marco Polo Cruise Ship Terminal. Together, the

proposed design solutions contained in these master plans create a park system along Saint John's waterfront connected by Harbour Passage. Should the development of this waterfront park system come to fruition it has the potential to become a tourist attraction and thus should be considered a regional park. Furthermore, the Municipal Plan 2011 identified the significance of waterfront access to residents through the potential development of parks along Saint John's harbourfront.

District and Community Parks

District Parks

District parks are community parks that typically serve those who live within a community. Their catchment area is a 2.5 kilometre radius which serves a number of neighbourhoods or communities, making them accessible by walking, public transit or by private vehicle.

For the purposes of this study the category of District Parks is used to identify community parks that should be the focus of the City's direct effort for maintenance and resources for upgrades. These spaces include a wide combination of active recreational uses such as sport fields, playgrounds, and areas for unstructured recreational use such as trails and beaches.

District parks include:

1. Dominion Park
2. Harbour Passage
3. King's Square
4. Little River Reservoir Park
5. Market Place West
6. Queen's Square
7. Tucker Park

Community Parks

Community Parks typically serve those who live within a community. Their catchment area is a 1.5 kilometre radius which serves a number of neighbourhoods or communities, making them accessible by walking, public transit or by private vehicle.

They should be large enough to accommodate all types of recreation activities. Community Parks should be programmed to offer a variety of recreational and leisure opportunities, including both structured and unstructured activities. Most are distributed in the urban and suburban areas of the City.

Community parks include:

1. Fallsview Park
2. Public Gardens
3. Riverview Park
4. Seaside Park
5. Wolastoq Park



Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood Parks are intended to serve the people who live within a neighbourhood. They should be developed to meet the needs and interests of the residents they serve. They are the social, visual and recreational focus of a neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Parks have a catchment area radius of 0.5 kilometres making them within walking distance of all areas of the neighbourhood. They are located throughout the City, with the majority located in urban and suburban core neighbourhoods.

The City's Neighbourhood Parks include:

- Playgrounds
- Tot lots
- Parkettes

In Saint John many neighbourhood parks are playgrounds. These are illustrated on the Playground System map found in **Chapter 3**.

Squares, Plazas, and Public Spaces

Various squares, plazas and public spaces are found throughout the city. Maintenance support and to a lesser degree programming support in the form of special events is provided by City staff for 9 of these sites. The new Municipal Plan specifically recognizes the value of these assets including:

1. Jervis Bay – Ross Memorial Park
2. King's Square West
3. Loyalist Burial Grounds²
4. Loyalist Plaza
5. Queen's Square West
6. Robertson Square
7. St. Andrew's Square
8. St. Patrick's Square
9. Victoria Square

Many of these locations are maintained as formal and manicured spaces in the City's urban areas and are viewed by many as historical and iconic symbols of Saint John. Many are also considered central attractions that create economic opportunity by offering people a common

area to gather for social, cultural and political activities. In many ways these spaces bring vitality, livability and diversity to the city and have the potential to foster the following benefits:

- Attract private investment and foster grassroots entrepreneurial activities such as the local Farmers' Market that was created during the summer of 2011 in Queen Square's.
- Cultivate community identity, encourage volunteerism, and highlight a community's unique values.
- Welcome a diverse population by serving as the City's *common ground*. Successful squares and public spaces draw upon the support of many different kinds of people by offering and fostering many choices of things to do, such as: socializing, eating, reading, playing a game, making art, protesting, etc.

Historic Sites

Sites such as Martello Tower, Fort Howe, Fort Latour and Partridge Island are important historical assets for the city. Currently, Martello Tower, a Parks Canada responsibility is the only site of these four that is developed as a tourism attraction, yet each offers significant tourism potential.

Consideration should be given by the City to developing these three sites in partnership with federal government departments or other agencies should development plans be proposed.

These assets differ from other park facilities as they are not intended to address aspects of healthy/active living. As historic sites, however, they do have tourism potential which should be explored through business case studies.

1. Fort Howe
2. Fort Latour
3. Partridge Island - was identified in the Municipal Plan as having potential within the City's park system (its ownership is not resolved).

Open Spaces

Open Spaces are natural undeveloped green areas that are defined in the new Municipal Plan as areas including rural resource lands; environmentally significant lands such as watersheds, wetlands and watercourses, wilderness areas, coastlines; and archaeological or heritage sites and cemeteries.

²The Loyalist Burial Grounds are owned and supported by the J.D. Irving corporation.

Community Gardens

Community Gardens are “any piece of land gardened by a group of people, and are commonly associated with a group of volunteers starting, maintaining and managing a garden site.”³ The community garden may include any combination of plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables, herbs and common areas that support the upkeep of garden plots. The most common element is a volunteer group and community participants working together to:

- Beautify neighbourhoods;
- Generate opportunities for exercise, leisure, relaxation and education;
- Create a catalyst for neighbourhood and community development;
- Encourage self-reliance by reducing food budgets;
- Improve the quality of life for people involved in the garden;
- Produce nutritious local food;
- Provide opportunities for inter-generational and cross-cultural connections and
- Inspire social and community interaction.

In Saint John the Greater Saint John Area Community Garden (G.S.J.C.G.) is a volunteer group working within the city limit. Their focus is on the community garden at Rockwood Park. The project offers plots to residents which are committed on a first come basis-first served basis. Citizens who acquire plots are required to abide by rules of the Garden, and pay a nominal fee of \$15.

7.0 Recommendations

Parks (including squares, plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens) are important municipal features that enhance the quality of life for residents of Saint John. Their value must be preserved for future generations. The proposed community development model recommends partnerships between the municipality and community in order to share responsibility for such things as maintenance, upgrades and programming; that will improve the quality of experience in the City’s system of parks. With this objective in mind we recommend the following:

Recommendation 1: Create a City of Saint John Parks Bylaw.

The City of Saint John currently has only two parks related bylaws. The first is **Bylaw C-3** concerning Kings Square and the second is **Bylaw M-11** concerning public beaches. These two bylaws do not adequately address the essentials of the City’s diverse system of squares,

plazas, and public spaces; historic sites; open space; and community gardens. Without a Parks Bylaw City staff is not properly equipped to provide the leadership and guidance regarding activities and opportunities in city parks, open spaces, plazas and squares. The City of Saint John should prepare a Parks Bylaw that would focus on increasing the public’s enjoyment of parks, open spaces, square, plazas, and other public spaces by providing the public clear direction regarding the following:

- expectations regarding personal behaviour;⁴
- permitted and restricted activities;⁵
- controls on activities in environmentally sensitive areas;
- control and regulations of vehicles; and
- permitted commercial activities.

The motivation for the development of a new Parks By-law would increase control and provide appropriate consequences on activities that burden the City with increased maintenance costs. In this manner a prohibition on smoking, for example, would reduce the amount of litter in city parks while increasing the public’s enjoyment. Additionally a Parks Bylaw is the mechanism from which the City can solicit commercial proposals that would provide programs, services, and entertainment and determine the re-investment of revenue back into city parks.

Recommendation 2: Designate District Parks.

These parks should be designated as District Parks to enable the City of Saint John to undertake specific development plans or management plans that reflect the individual and unique characteristics of each site. The City should also involve the people who will fund, design, build, use, and maintain these spaces. Such involvement will help ensure that these parks meet community needs and function well.

As a general guide only, the parks listed below are prioritized for the purpose of determining budgetary requirements:

1. Harbour Passage
2. King’s Square
3. Queen’s Square
4. Market Place West
5. Dominion Park
6. Tucker Park
7. Little River Reservoir Park

³American Community Garden Association

⁴For example many Canadian municipalities have restricted smoking in public parks by adhering to the Canadian Cancer Society’s concern about children and adults being exposed to smoking behaviour in youth-friendly areas like parks and playgrounds.

⁵For example the control and regulation of pets.



Recommendation 3: Formalize the Role of a *Community Garden Resource Coordinator for a Community Developer.*

The Community Garden Resource Coordinator is a job function for a City of Saint John community developer which requires a specialized skill set. The garden coordinator would provide seasonal support to community members, local businesses, and community leaders in the development and operation of new and existing community gardens. The specific duties and responsibilities should be focused on seasonal outreach to help identify and start-up new community gardens. The garden coordinator should be tasked with establishing new community organizations while also providing managerial and horticultural assistance. The coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Supporting existing community gardens on City owned land.
- Facilitating the planning and implementation of new community gardens.
- Collaborating with community garden groups to establish good governance.
- Facilitating orientations, work projects, and meetings.
- Collaborating with community garden groups to design potential sites.
- Coordinating gardening education and training.
- Acting as a liaison between community garden groups and the City of Saint John.

Recommendation 4: Develop a *Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper* Placemaking Strategy for Parks, Plazas and Squares.

The City of Saint John should develop a placemaking strategy for its squares, plazas and public spaces. The specific intent of the strategy is based upon the work of organizations such as the Project for Public Spaces and its 10 Principles⁶ for successful public spaces and the promotion of a *Lighter Quicker Cheaper* (LQC) strategy.⁷ LQC is a method for rolling out fast, simple, and low-cost solutions in public areas that acts as a catalyst for future activities and facilities that will be more complex

and enjoyable. To that end, public venues such as the City's four historic squares (King's Square and Queen's Square, south and west) should be examined for their infrastructure requirements (washrooms, garbage, lighting, sound, electricity) to serve as key community venues for a wide host of activities.

8.0 Implementation

This section suggests opportunities where the City of Saint John may capitalize on public buy-in to share the responsibility for improvements to parks and open spaces. Stewardship is an essential element of this approach.

Step 1: Implement an Adopt-a-Park Program.

The City of Saint John should develop an Adopt-a-Park Program as an annual volunteer program through which volunteers can help maintain and care for the green spaces, trees, and flower and shrub beds in their community. The Adopt-a-Park Program (similar to the Adopt-a-Playground Program) will be facilitated by City community developers who will involve the public to share the responsibility for park maintenance and improvement with the City. The intent of the Adopt-a-Park Program is twofold; the first goal is engage the community and provide awareness and education regarding the importance of parks; and the second purpose is to facilitate Alternate Service Delivery designed to help keep parks attractive and safe while reducing maintenance costs. The program may be best suited to neighbourhood and community parks.

Step 2: Purchase and Program Landscape Maintenance Trailers.

In support of both the Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Playground Programs the City of Saint John should purchase an enclosed cargo utility trailer(s) and equip the trailer(s) with landscape tools and supplies for litter & debris cleanup, graffiti removal and park beautification projects. A fully equipped trailer would be booked by community associations and delivered by City staff to specified locations where organized events to maintain parks or playgrounds are scheduled. The estimated cost for a 7x14 foot landscape trailer is approximately \$7,000-

⁶Project for Public Spaces, www.pps.org/articles/squaresprinciples/, New York, NY

⁷A term introduced the UK based planning firm Urban Space Management (USM).



\$8,000; and fully equipped at a total cost of \$12,000 to \$15,000 per trailer.

Step 3: Plan for and Implement Infrastructure Upgrades in City Squares.

Notwithstanding the need for longer term infrastructure improvements to City squares, provision of electrical outlets in public squares can provide many potential opportunities for new and emerging activities within public spaces. Therefore, the City should consider providing electrical access in its four historic squares. One option is to retrofit lamp posts or replace them with new posts that include panels with controlled access to electrical outlets. This option is relatively low cost and one which can be implemented quickly. It also typifies the LQC approach. The addition of publically accessible electricity in City squares would support projects such as the Queen's Square Farmers Market which currently uses portable gas operated electrical generators to provide electricity to its vendors.

Step 4: Update and Implement the Rockwood Park Master Plan.

The 1988 Master Plan for Rockwood Park has been only partially implemented. The public has consistently stated in many forums that Rockwood Park continues to be the most clearly valued park in the Greater Saint John area. Thus, it would be prudent to revisit the 1988 plan to ensure the long term conservation and protection of Rockwood Park. In preparation of an updated Rockwood Park Master Plan the City of Saint John should consider the following:

1. The master plan should have a citizen lead process and public consultation program similar to PlanSJ's Citizen Advisory Committee.
2. The master plan should have a clear implementation strategy and capital program that allows the City and community partners to fund and execute individual project initiatives.
3. The master planning team should include ecological specialists, historians, landscape architects, engineers, city staff, park users, and City Councilors to ensure that

many points of view are heard and that the resulting product is practical and widely supported.

Recommendation 5: Implement a Gift Guide Program for City owned Parks

The City of Saint John's proposed Community Grants Program should include a separate fund account and dedicated grant structure to encourage fundraising, donations, commemorative giving and/or in-kind donation specifically for City owned parks. An organized, efficient and productive donation and grants program enables corporations, organizations and individuals to contribute to specific projects in the community. Examples of popular giving opportunities include:

- Parks Amenities: Benches, picnic tables, vegetation or playground equipment are common commemorative or donated amenities.
- Project Registry: Create a registry of projects requiring fundraising and develop a marketing and communications program requesting help. This allows the public to contribute to projects that are meaningful to them and demonstrates the City's commitment to improvement.
- In-Kind Donation: Service organizations and individuals are eager to donate time, materials and services to parks and recreation projects.
- Commercial Advertising Sales: Develop a policy that provides general guidelines for advertising, sponsorship, design and management that allows the City to generate advertisement revenue.
- Land Trust: Establish a policy to provide tax benefits for land donations.
- Parks Campaign: Establish a parks campaign directed to large infrastructure projects, such as the planned improvements to Rockwood Park and or the proposed new Regional Playground at Rockwood Park.
- Park Supporter Recognition Program: A critical component of the all of the above items is a City organized *outstanding recognition* system that ensures people, organizations and corporations receive credit for their contributions.

Step 6: Implement an Application and Approval Process for Access to City Land.

The City of Saint John should continue handling the applications and administering the membership process for the Greater Saint John Community Garden Association. The City should also develop an application form and approval process for organizations requesting access to City owned public property such as underutilized playgrounds that could be re-purposed as a community garden or another public amenity.

The proposed administrative procedures for community gardens should be developed in partnership with the Greater Saint John Community Garden Association. The intent of the new process is that Community Garden Resource Coordinator and executive volunteers will review applications for new gardens to determine if the site is suitable and if the community can support a community garden. If the site is not suitable, an alternative site(s) may be suggested. If approved, the community group with support from the Greater Saint John Community Garden Association would be responsible for all expenses associated with operating and maintaining the garden. City staff will assist with capacity building and volunteer training opportunities and guiding the community group through the proposed community grant process.

Step 7: Divest Un-developable LPP lands.

Lands for public purposes (LPP) are properties acquired by the City of Saint John through a requirement in the subdivision of land process that stipulates a percentage of land to be deeded to the City. In various instances throughout the City these lands offer little or no public value. Indeed, there are LPP land dedications that are undevelopable due to size, configuration, location, topography, access, soil, character and condition. The City of Saint John should undertake to eliminate the administrative burden and potential liability of such undevelopable LPP lands according to the Policy to Divest Public Land, described in **Chapter 3 Playgrounds**. The proposed policy ensures that the divestment of municipal lands is clearly in the public's interest. The funds made available through divestiture of LPP lands may be set aside to fund the ASD playgrounds or other recreation needs as determined by Common Council.

5 chapter

The Strategy for Outdoor Facility Services



1.0 Introduction

Outdoor recreation facilities are Saint John's primary locations for active recreation and sporting needs. Outdoor facilities may encompass a wide assortment of facility types including recreational fields, baseball/softball diamonds, tennis courts, and skate parks. Recreational fields by their nature can accommodate an even wider range of activities such as: football, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, rugby, ultimate Frisbee, and the like. Recreational fields are developed to accommodate league play, recreational programs, school physical education classes, tournaments, and special events. Therefore recreational fields can be broken down into two distinct types: sports fields that are smaller and non-regulation size; and multi-purpose facilities that are large regulation sized fields that can accommodate league play and specialised uses such as tournaments.

Outdoor facilities provide Saint John residents with opportunities to engage in healthy physical activity, through organized sports clubs and through casual games of pick-up. These opportunities strengthen communities by fostering social interaction among residents and contribute to quality of life.

2.0 Issue

Saint John has an ample supply of 92 outdoor facilities which includes 25 recreational fields, 30 baseball/softball diamonds and 37 tennis courts. This surpasses the benchmark standards of 14 recreational fields, 14 baseball diamonds, and 14 tennis courts for a population the size of the City of Saint John. Saint John also has 1 skate board park, 9 beaches and 4 beach volleyball courts; however, as no benchmark standards are available for these facilities, they are not examined in this report.

In spite of this oversupply, why does the community perceive there to be a shortage of field space and playing time for local residents? Many sports organizations complain of an inability to book practice time on city fields. And in spite of this oversupply, why does the City struggle with high levels of obesity especially among children and youth?

3.0 Context

The City of Saint John Sports and Recreation Facilities Service strives to provide quality, outdoor facilities, however; the cost of maintaining the existing inventory of recreational fields, baseball diamonds and tennis courts in Saint John exceeds the City's fiscal

capacity to support proper design, maintenance, repair and improvements and replacement of the fields under its responsibility.

Currently the City of Saint John is responsible for the maintenance of recreational fields including 6 multi-use fields, 30 baseball diamonds and 18 tennis courts. Although historically the City of Saint John maintained many school fields, the City’s responsibility for maintenance has diminished. These facilities accommodate league play, recreational programs, school physical education classes, tournaments, and special events. Changing field maintenance requirements, field amenities and supply are a priority for Saint John and the City is committed to re-evaluating its responsibilities for outdoor recreation facilities.

4.0 Quantity

As shown in Chart 4 - Outdoor Facilities Required Per Capita Saint John residents are supplied with an abundance of outdoor facilities. Two standards of provision apply to recreational fields based on field size

in terms of non-regulation or regulation. The benchmark standard for sports fields (non-regulation sized fields) is 1 field per 5,000 people; or 14 sports fields required in Saint John. Currently there are 19 existing sports fields for an oversupply of 5 fields. While the benchmark standard for multi-purpose fields (regulation sized fields) is 1 field per 20,000 people or the equivalent of 3 multi-purpose fields in Saint John. Currently there are 6 multi-purpose fields (regulation sized fields) in Saint John or double the benchmark standard for total number of multi-purpose fields. Thus there is a significant oversupply of recreational fields where provisions standards recommend 14 in total.

Baseball diamonds and tennis courts exhibit the similar oversupply and according to benchmark standards should be provided at a rate of 1 per 5,000 people or the equivalent of 14 of each facility. **With the magnitude of this oversupply and public demand for more facilities, what is the right number of recreational fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts for Saint John?**

Chart 4 – Outdoor Facilities Required Per Capita				
Facility	Existing	Per Capita Requirement	Total Saint John Population	Total Required
Recreational Fields	25 Recreational Fields: 19 sports fields 6 multi-purpose fields	1 small non-regulation per 5,000 people or (1 large regulation fields per 20,000 people)	70,063	14 total or; 3 total
Diamonds (Baseball/Softball)	30 Diamonds	1 per 5,000 people		14
Tennis courts	37 tennis courts	1 per 5,000 people		14

Public opinions expressed through the PlaySJ consultations indicated a desire for increased fields in order to enable sports groups to properly run and expand their given sport. Discussions surrounding the contradiction between provision standards, existing supply; and perceived need for more fields offered some potential solutions such as better scheduling and promotion of fields, and expanding use into the off-seasons.

In reviewing the recreational field bookings data, stakeholders felt that without knowing the root cause of low utilization it would be difficult to envision the right response to developing a sports field strategy for future community needs.

Data surrounding recreational field bookings compiled by the City of Saint John is shown in Table 3. Direct comparisons of the data are difficult due to differences in the number of weeks the statistics were tracked, (15 +/- weeks in spring and 7 +/- weeks in fall) and the number of total hours the facilities were available for use.

However, some general trends do emerge. The Allison football field, and Chown field show substantial fall use in the at 47% and 35% usage respectively. Barrack Green displays similar usage in both the spring and fall periods. Shamrock 1 and 2 are both well used in both time periods. All other fields show marked decreases in usage in the fall.

Many of the fields included in this list are in poor condition with poorly delineated lines and unsmooth surfaces, and may not meet the needs of sports clubs for practices and games. Varying states of field repair render many of the fields *unplayable*, increasing usage pressures on those fields that are in better condition. Increasing pressures from sports groups for extended use in off-seasons and longer practice times also have consequence for field quality.

Table 3 – Sports Field Bookings: Spring to Fall 2011

2011 Spring/Summer Sport Field Bookings ¹ May 20 - Sept 4 – (15 weeks + or -) 1120 Hours² Available			2011 Fall Sport Field Bookings Sept 4 - Nov 5 (7 weeks + or -) 536 Hours Available	
Field	Hrs Booked	% Used	Hrs Booked	% Used
Allison #1	625.5	77%	41	9%
Allison #2	521.5	64%	33	7%
Allison Football ³	0	0%	226.5	47%
Forest Hills - BB	608	75%	69.5	14%
Forest Hills - SB	686.5	85%	73	15%
Forest Hills #1	225	28%	0	0%
Forest Hills #2	225	28%	0	0%
Memorial BB	578	71%	59.5	12%
Memorial SB	440.5	54%	52	11%
Shamrock #1	692.5	85%	274.5	57%
Barnhill	602	76%	0	0%
Barrack Green ⁴	189	24%	105	35%
Bayview	2	0%	0	0%
Beaconsfield	631	79%	0	0%
Chown/Prince Charles Elementary School	17.5	2%	105	35%
East SJ	145.5	18%	0	0%
Havelock	669	84%	8	3%
Lakewood Heights	0	0%	0	0%
Lorneville Field	0	0%	0	0%
Lowell	481	60%	0	0%
Market Place	454.5	57%	4	1%
Milford	502.5	63%	0	0%
Quinton Heights	300	38%	0	0%
Seawood School	300	38%	0	0%
Shamrock - Cent	519	65%	0	0%
Shamrock - FH	576	72%	139	46%
Shamrock - LL	465	58%	0	0%
Shamrock #2	454.5	57%	170	56%
St. Peter's	161.5	20%	0	0%
St. Rose	663	83%	8	3%
Taylor Ave	0	0%	0	0%
Thornborough	0	0%	0	0%

¹Note that the sports fields bookings listed above do not include School District bookings, which are not tracked by the City.

²Weekdays 4pm-12am and Weekends 8am-12am for a total of 76 hours per week/per field.

³Zero hours listed for Allison football fields reflect that fields are only converted to football in the fall.

⁴The multipurpose field at Barrack Green is owned by the Federal Government, while the diamond is owned by the City of Saint John.



Stakeholders specifically noted that to ease the demands of sports organizations more in-depth consultations with City Staff may be required. Consultations could help determine development strategies to support an organization's growth and sport development and enable the City to determine the magnitude of its responsibilities with respect to fields, diamonds and courts.

5.0 Quality

Public consultations revealed the community's desire that the City address the lack in quality of existing recreational fields, ball diamonds, and tennis courts. While *good quality* fields, baseball diamonds, and tennis courts were deemed important by residents, there were diverging opinions regarding the *degree* of quality needed. Opinions regarding *quality* issues ran the gamut from field conditions, field size, to complementary amenities such as lights, dressing rooms, washrooms and the like.

The challenges with many recreational fields in Saint John is that they were not *master planned*, resulting in fields that were developed, redeveloped, or expanded over time without much attention to design. This has resulted in a system of recreational fields that contain a myriad of quality standards and design issues that are not complementary in terms of physical linkages, availability of support amenities, or type of sport played.

Furthermore, there are several instances where baseball diamonds have been converted into sports fields to accommodate all manner of sporting activities. Often the result is sports fields that are too small to be used by anyone other than the youngest participants.

PlaySJ consultations verified that field condition is the principal prerequisite of sports organizations. Additionally stakeholders noted that supporting ancillary features of sports fields are also extremely important and that these amenities have a large impact on a group's motivation to use one sports field over another. The field amenities that collectively received the most public support include seating for players, change rooms, washrooms, storage, and concessions.

To address field quality many municipalities have developed service level standards designed to maintain field quality. Indeed the issue of field *playability* is a subject that this Strategic Plan strives to address through right-sizing strategies that reduce the City's costs related to the oversupply of facilities in order to focus on field quality and maintenance.

BEST PRACTICE – Sport Field Maintenance Service Levels City of Edmonton⁵		
Activity	Service Level	Quality Standard
Grass Cutting		
Power Mowing	10 cuts per season on neighbourhood/ school sites 18 cuts per season on Premier rectangular fields	Turf height cut at 5 cm. Maximum height at 12 cm on average. Turf cut even.
Trimming	4 times per year.	Turf height 5 cm. Reduce to 2 times per year.
Turf Quality		
Fertilizer application	Up to 3 times per year on Premier Fields. Once per year on priority fields (high use fields identified by users).	Application is even, uniform and free of burn spots.
Herbicide application	As per standards recommended in IPM. Premier field – 3 weeds m ² Standard field – 6 weeds m ²	Turf height 5 cm. No over spray or drift on non-target area. No spraying on designated herbicide free sites.
Misc. Turf	As required.	Top dressing - uniform application not to exceed 10mm thickness. Irrigation - thorough soaking to the depth of root zone. De-thatching - uniform throughout, thatch removed. Edging - curbs free of overgrowth. Clippings removed to prevent the killing of grass.
Aerating	As required.	Uniform coverage.
Playing Surface		
Major Turf Repair – Seed	As required.	Seed application even and uniform. Repaired areas to be at grade and flush with surrounding turf.
Major Turf Repair – Sod	As required.	Turf established to compatible level of surrounding area.
Line Marking	As required to a maximum of 6 times per year on Premier fields (paint only)	Fields marked with clearly visible markings - 4" lines. Dimensions as per regulations or site limitations.
Fixtures		
Sports Field Furniture & Fixtures	As required.	Sports fixtures safe and free of damage. Goal posts are painted white and are numbered. Bleachers/benches installed on a concrete pad. Backstops are numbered and bottom rail.
Jump Pit Maintenance	As required.	Sand free of debris including grass, weeds, etc. Up to 2 jump pits per school. No installation or maintenance of takeoff boards.
¼ Mile Track Maintenance	As required to a max of 6 times	Ensure surface is free of all debris. Surface must remain firm underfoot when complete.
Diamond Maintenance		
Line Marking	Pay per mark only.	Fields marked with clearly visible white paint - 4" lines. Dimensions as per regulations or site limitations.
Premier Diamond Maintenance	Float shale up to 10 times per year. Edge as required. Top up shale as required.	Playing surface are in a safe, level playing condition and all areas free of debris or glass. Surface must remain firm underfoot.
Standard Diamond Maintenance	All standard diamonds 2 times per year.	Playing surface is free of debris/glass and all area is in safe, level playable condition. Use shale material to fill depressions, etc.
Home Plate Maintenance	All home plates checked prior to season start. Subsequent repairs as required.	All home plates installed level with existing ground surface. All home plates aligned with optimum outfield clearances. Rubber plate is attached to wood base plate.

⁵Sportsfield Maintenance Operations, Parks Division City of Edmonton, 2012

6.0 Resolution

“When municipalities or school boards invest in sports by building new facilities, adding programs, making programs more affordable, or reducing rental fees; sport participation increases. This has many long-term benefits such as improved population health, reduced crime, and savings to the Provincial Health and Justice systems. Conversely when programs and opportunities to participate in sports are reduced at the local level, costs borne by the Provincial Government increase. This issue is known as cost-benefit imbalance.

The consequence of this spending-saving imbalance is that decisions made by local groups are felt at the Provincial level. The Provincial Government should seek innovative ways to invest in sport opportunities in order to save itself money. This suggests the need for Provincial-Municipal cost sharing of sport and recreation programs to a much larger degree than is currently the case.”⁶

The Strategy for Outdoor Facility Services provides guidance to issues of the oversupply of recreational fields, ball diamonds and tennis courts. The strategy examines quality concerns related to outdoor facilities that may influence their use and maintenance requirements. The strategy depends on maximizing the use of fields through:

- Improved and playable conditions
- Better and optimized scheduling
- Increased use in the shoulder seasons

To this end, an examination of the three focus areas suggests the following:

1. Healthy/active living: With high obesity rates especially among children and youth, and a low rates of youth participation in recommended daily physical activity, the City’s focus should be on increasing the quality of sports fields to increase participation rates among the Saint John population. Enhanced participation translates into more Saint John residents engaged in sport for health and social benefits. Enhanced quality of fields through field condition and provision of complementary amenities may garner better results from casual participants, athletes, coaches, and officials.

2. Right-sizing: The City should focus on reducing the current inventory of sport fields to an acceptable supply to garner cost savings that can be used to enhance the quality and capacity of selected outdoor facilities. The goal of improving recreational fields’ quality and condition will put the burden of cost on the City if the current inventory is not reduced. Reducing the current inventory will enable the City to redistribute funds and sustain the long term maintenance of these selected fields to a higher level of quality.

Right-sizing criteria should consider:

- Proximity to population served
- Opportunities for co-location and proximity to other recreation facilities, institutions and attractions
- Proximity to areas of future growth of the community
- Site topography and natural features
- Site layout and design

3. Community Development: The approach to right-size the supply of outdoor facilities; i.e.: recreational fields, baseball diamonds and tennis courts; in Saint John must engage the community and in particular sports organizations and stakeholders. Through PlaySJ consultations these groups agreed that compromise is needed; however, existing fields/facilities must be optimally used first, prior to any sport organization agreeing to *right-sizing* the supply of fields. Stakeholders acknowledged the difficulty the City will encounter in trying to satisfy the needs of all sports organizations. To this end, these stakeholders offered the following recommendations related to the use of recreational fields, baseball diamonds and tennis courts:

- Foster ongoing consultations between sports organizations and the City of Saint John to better understand how the City can provide support for the growth of their sport(s).
- Optimize the use of fields/diamonds and courts through better marketing, promotion and scheduling.
- Concentrate the supply of good quality fields/diamonds and courts in strategic locations such as adjacent to significant recreation complexes, institutions or attractions to take advantage of an existing critical mass of infrastructure and clientele.

Furthermore, impacts on residents due to right-sizing the supply of outdoor facilities can be reduced through stewardship agreements with local sport organizations and through Joint Use Agreements with Provincial School Districts. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance interaction with the sports stakeholders and the community through better collaboration that can lead to more partnerships and more joint ventures.

Recreational Field System

Right-sizing the number of recreational fields, baseball diamonds and tennis courts in Saint John entails determining the optimal outdoor facilities in which to invest public funds. Reducing the City’s responsibilities will allow for greater re-investment into several district recreational field *hubs* that already exist, located within the PlanSJ designated primary development areas. These *hubs* will serve the greatest number of residents and their recreational and social needs. Continued and

⁶Investing in New Brunswick Recreational Infrastructure, Amulet Consulting, Government of New Brunswick and Recreation New Brunswick.

enhanced partnerships between the City of Saint John and Provincial School Districts will benefit the community in terms of improved access. Joint Use Agreement will determine the roles and responsibilities of partners for the management and maintenance of School District sport fields.

The following map illustrates the hierarchy of recreational fields described in the recreational field system. The map lists and shows the location of the 4 district field hubs, followed by the baseball/softball diamonds and the sports/multipurpose fields. The location of all tennis facilities is shown regardless of their condition. Facilities recommended for the decommissioning provide context in terms of the distribution of total recreation assets.

District Field Hubs/ (Multi-purpose Fields)

The City of Saint John has four existing, well-distributed sports field complexes throughout the city; which includes the following amenities:

- **Allison Grounds:** Softball Diamonds (2), Multi-use Sportsfield (1), Softball fields converted for multi-use purpose in the fall.
- **Forest Hills Park:** Baseball Diamond (3), Softball Diamond, Multi-use Sportsfield (1), Other Elements include Tennis Courts (3), Playground, Owned by School District
- **Memorial Park:** Memorial Baseball Diamond, Barnhill School Baseball Diamond, St. Rose School Baseball Diamond, Memorial Softball Diamond, Other Elements include Tennis Courts (2), Basketball Court, Owned by School District and St. Rose Parish respectively.
- **Shamrock Park:** Jack Kyle (Centennial) Baseball Park, Shamrock SLL Baseball Diamond, Multi-use Sportsfields (3), Other Elements include Tennis Courts (8), BMX Mountain Bike Trails, Horseshoes, Community Garden, Playground (Centennial School)

These facilities include large multi-purpose fields in combination with various other outdoor facilities such as baseball diamonds and tennis courts; and complementary amenities that together create a recreation complex. Due to their location and distribution throughout the city – they can also be classified as *district hubs*. A recreation hub, such as Shamrock Park, includes a number of recreation assets that allow users to participate in different activities and sports.

The City should continue to expand or enhance these four facilities to serve as the main multi-purpose field hubs in Saint John. A centralized recreation hub facilitates the City's objective of sustaining optimal efficiency in terms of maintenance and operations of the facility.

Sports Fields and Baseball/Softball Diamonds

School fields can also be classified as sports fields and are an important component of the recreational fields system in Saint John. The City of Saint John faces challenges affecting the maintenance and operation of sports fields including the unauthorized use of fields in wet conditions and during rest and regeneration periods (early and late in the year) which can cause severe damage to fields; damage from which some cannot fully recover. Sport fields adjacent to schools are often problematic in this regard as they receive a great deal of use, much of which is not supervised or authorized. Joint Use Agreements between the City and School District(s) should be put in place to resolve the issues of responsibility for maintenance and to address efforts to reduce non-permitted use.

The City of Saint John should consider providing maintenance for the following school sports fields only, subject to the negotiation of a Joint Use Agreement with the Provincial School District(s).

Sports Fields and Multipurpose Fields

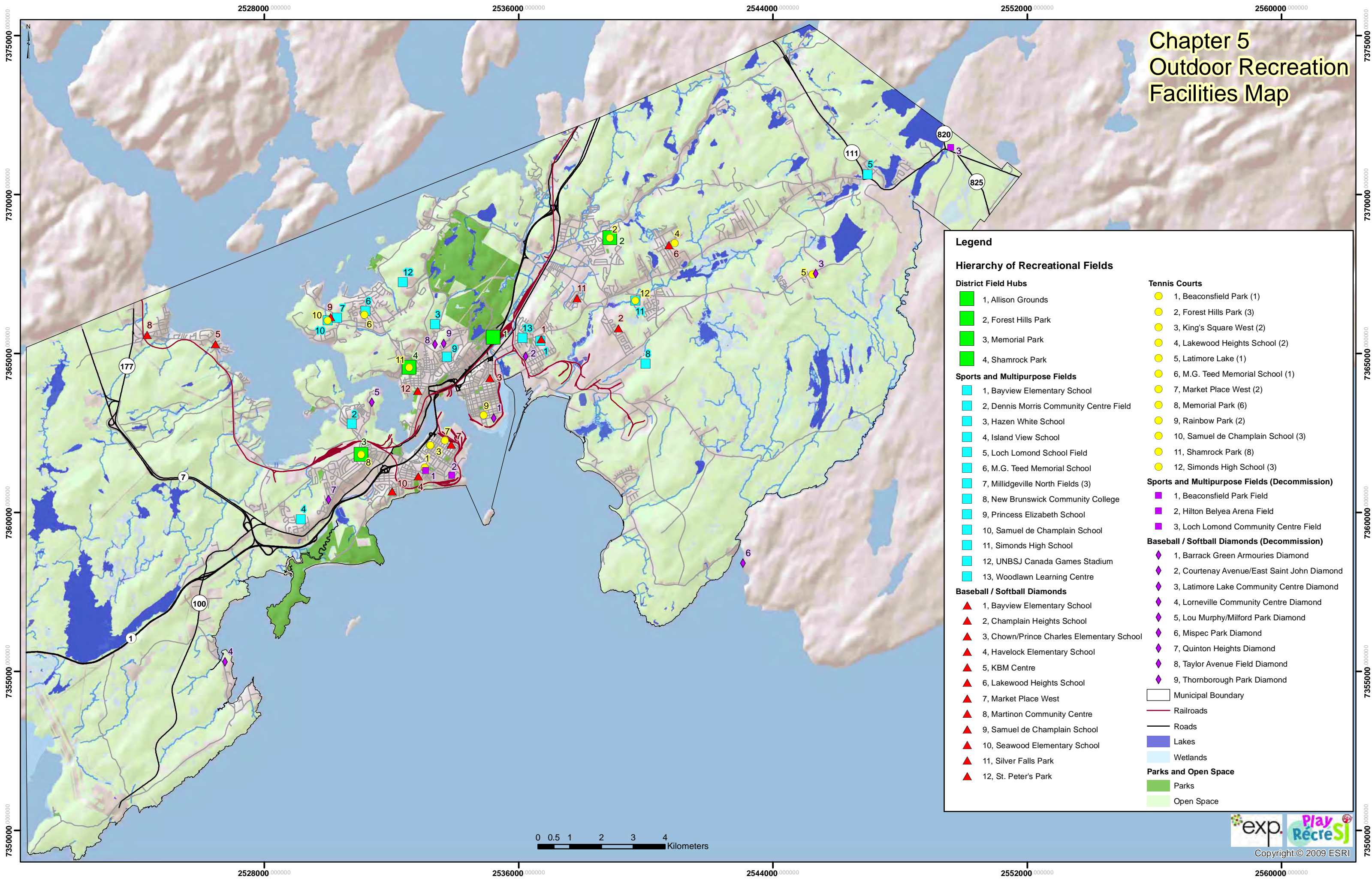
1. Bayview Elementary School Field (1)
2. Hazen White School Field (1)
3. Island View School Field (1)
4. Loch Lomond School Field (1)
5. M. G. Teed Memorial School Field (1)
6. Millidgeville North Fields (3)
7. NB Community College (1)
8. Princess Elizabeth School Field (1)
9. Samuel de Champlain School Field (1)
10. Simonds High School Field (1)
11. UNBSJ Canada Games Stadium (1) (owned by University of New Brunswick)
12. Woodlawn Learning Centre Field (1)

Baseball/Softball Diamonds

1. Bayview Elementary School (1)
2. Champlain Heights School Field (1)
3. Chown Field/Prince Charles Elementary School (1)
3. Havelock Elementary School (1)*
4. Lakewood Heights School Field (1)
5. Market Place West (1)*
6. Samuel de Champlain School (1)
7. Seawood Elementary School (1)
8. Silver Falls Park (1)
9. St. Peter's Park

*These facilities are city owned.

Chapter 5 Outdoor Recreation Facilities Map



Legend

Hierarchy of Recreational Fields

District Field Hubs

- 1, Allison Grounds
- 2, Forest Hills Park
- 3, Memorial Park
- 4, Shamrock Park

Sports and Multipurpose Fields

- 1, Bayview Elementary School
- 2, Dennis Morris Community Centre Field
- 3, Hazen White School
- 4, Island View School
- 5, Loch Lomond School Field
- 6, M.G. Teed Memorial School
- 7, Millidgeville North Fields (3)
- 8, New Brunswick Community College
- 9, Princess Elizabeth School
- 10, Samuel de Champlain School
- 11, Simonds High School
- 12, UNBSJ Canada Games Stadium
- 13, Woodlawn Learning Centre

Baseball / Softball Diamonds

- 1, Bayview Elementary School
- 2, Champlain Heights School
- 3, Chown/Prince Charles Elementary School
- 4, Havelock Elementary School
- 5, KBM Centre
- 6, Lakewood Heights School
- 7, Market Place West
- 8, Martinon Community Centre
- 9, Samuel de Champlain School
- 10, Seawood Elementary School
- 11, Silver Falls Park
- 12, St. Peter's Park

Tennis Courts

- 1, Beaconsfield Park (1)
- 2, Forest Hills Park (3)
- 3, King's Square West (2)
- 4, Lakewood Heights School (2)
- 5, Latimore Lake (1)
- 6, M.G. Teed Memorial School (1)
- 7, Market Place West (2)
- 8, Memorial Park (6)
- 9, Rainbow Park (2)
- 10, Samuel de Champlain School (3)
- 11, Shamrock Park (8)
- 12, Simonds High School (3)

Sports and Multipurpose Fields (Decommission)

- 1, Beaconsfield Park Field
- 2, Hilton Belyea Arena Field
- 3, Loch Lomond Community Centre Field

Baseball / Softball Diamonds (Decommission)

- 1, Barrack Green Armouries Diamond
- 2, Courtenay Avenue/East Saint John Diamond
- 3, Latimore Lake Community Centre Diamond
- 4, Lorneville Community Centre Diamond
- 5, Lou Murphy/Milford Park Diamond
- 6, Mispic Park Diamond
- 7, Quinton Heights Diamond
- 8, Taylor Avenue Field Diamond
- 9, Thornborough Park Diamond

Other Features:

- Municipal Boundary
- Railroads
- Roads
- Lakes
- Wetlands
- Parks and Open Space**
- Parks
- Open Space



Working with stakeholders, School Districts and organized sports groups, the City should determine those sports fields and baseball diamonds and tennis courts that can be decommissioned, used for other purposes or divested. Specific recommendations pertaining to right sizing outdoor recreation facilities are examined in the following sections.

Tennis Courts

Adhering to population based standards is a method of setting the base level of service that the City will provide regarding the provision of tennis courts. The City of Saint John should adhere to a population based standard of 1 tennis court / 5,000 people and not exceed 14 courts for its current population. The inventory of 37 tennis courts in Saint John is more than double the amount suggested by benchmark standards. These courts are in various states of repair. There may be opportunities for the City to focus efforts and finances on a selected number of tennis courts, continue to decommission those courts deemed to be excess, and potentially repurpose decommissioned courts.

The list of tennis courts in Saint John includes:

- Beaconsfield Park (1)
- Forest Hills Park (3)
- King Square West (2)
- Lakewood Heights (2)
- Latimore Lake (1)
- Market Place West (2)
- Memorial Park (6)
- M.G. Teed Memorial School (1)
- Rainbow Park (1)
- Samuel de Champlain (3)
- Shamrock Park (8)
- Simonds High School (3)

The City should focus its efforts and resources to tennis courts that are located in District Field Hubs. This includes:

- Forest Hill Park (3)
- Memorial Park (4 with restoration)
- Shamrock Park (8)

Retaining tennis courts at other park facilities should be rationalized against benchmark standards, geography and location, population and demographics and current court quality. Engage stakeholders and organized tennis groups to verify this process and to achieve right-sizing of these facilities.

During the course of this study, the Saint John and District Tennis Association submitted to the City of Saint John, a proposal regarding the development of 6 indoor

tennis courts. This proposal is discussed in Chapter 6. Discussions and negotiations between the City and the Tennis Association will be crucial to determine the proper mix and number of both indoor and outdoor tennis facilities.

7.0 Recommendations

The City of Saint John clearly has a role to play the provision of outdoor recreation facilities including recreational fields: sports fields and multi-purpose fields; baseball diamonds and tennis courts. This role should include the planning and design, management, maintenance, advertising and promotion of these outdoor facilities. Therefore, the role of organized sports groups is crucial to the success of this Strategic Plan. It is paramount that stakeholders, organized sports groups and School Districts are engaged by the City to gain an understanding of the City's fiscal constraints and to work in partnership to raise the profile of sports and access to these important outdoor facilities. Working in partnership, the City, and stakeholders can achieve outcomes for improved health and wellbeing of all Saint John residents, but most importantly its children and youth – making Saint John a stronger and fitter community.

Recommendation 1: Decommission Sports Fields and Baseball/Softball Diamonds and Right-size to a Population Based Standard.

Adhering to population based standards is a method of setting the base level of service that the City will provide regarding the provision of sports fields and baseball diamonds. Saint John currently supports and maintains 25 recreational fields throughout the city. The City of Saint John should adhere to a population based standard of 1 field / 5,000 people and not exceed 14 sports fields/ or baseball diamonds for its current population. The variety of support for these facilities will comprise both City owned fields/diamonds and support for sport fields/ diamonds owned by School Districts. While population standards represent an important factor in sports field/ baseball diamond planning, the City of Saint John should also recognize that these standards must be continually monitored and adjusted to reflect:

- Local demographic trends;
- Demand in terms of usage and bookings and duration of time used;
- Maintenance practices and balancing the use of fields with resting periods;
- Standards of play (e.g. age ranges, team size); and
- Sporting trends or emerging sports that create new demand.

Recommendation 2: Decommission Tennis Courts and Right- Size to a Population Based Standard.

The City of Saint John should adhere to a population based standard of 1 tennis court / 5,000 people and not

exceed 14 courts for its current population. Many tennis courts are deemed *unplayable* and lend themselves to decommissioning. However, stakeholders and organized tennis groups must be engaged in to verify this process. Stakeholders can provide input and help the City determine which courts should be upgraded and receive continued support and investment and those that should be deemed surplus.

Recommendation 3: Develop a Sports Field Allocation Policy and Centralized Booking System.

The City of Saint John should develop or adapt an allocation policy for sports fields; based upon the principles of the City's Ice Time Allocation Policy that ensures fair and equitable access to facilities by all organized sports groups, and the community.

The City should recognize that one of the benefits it could provide to School Districts, through a Joint Use Agreement, is a centralized approach to field bookings. Coordination of field bookings between the School District and the City is limited and, as such, there is no definitive measure of sports field usage or demand. The lack of a centralized booking system also creates confusion for the public as to which agency books which field, which can lead to under-utilization and the inconsistent application of rental fees. Lastly, the City of Saint John should recognize that a centralized booking system would promote greater accountability as it allows for equity and balance in the use of fields throughout the city.

Recommendation 4: Develop Master Plans for District Field Hubs

The City of Saint John has four well distributed sports field complexes throughout the city:

- Allison Grounds
- Shamrock Park
- Forest Hills Park
- Memorial Park

The Allison Grounds facility was recently updated by the City. Also, it offers no room for expansion. Therefore this facility does not require a master plan. Shamrock Park has a master plan which is currently in various stages of implementation. A master plan should be developed for all District Field Hubs to enable the City to provide future upgrades, improvements and possible expansions in a well-planned and designed manner and appropriate to the City's financial resources.

Recognizing the importance of master plans, the City should develop plans for the following District Field Hubs:

1. Memorial Park
2. Forest Hills Park

Recommendation 5: Examine the Life-Cycle Costs of Artificial Turf.⁵

The Master Plan for Shamrock Park includes an artificial turf multi-use field. Before the City of Saint John makes any final decision to invest in an artificial turf field it should first examine utilization of UNBSJ's artificial turf field as it is the only such field in Saint John available for community use. Additionally, the City of Saint John should examine the life-cycle costs of artificial turf. Commercial installations of artificial turf indicate that once plastic replaces natural grass, it kills any living organism in the subsoil requiring years of soil remediation before natural turf will grow successfully on that surface. Therefore, once a decision is made to implement artificial turf the City of Saint John would have little choice but to install another artificial turf field when the first one needs to be replaced.

Another aspect of a turf strategy, including both natural turf and artificial turf, is the consideration of how the City's supply of sports fields supports sport tourism through the hosting of events such as soccer and baseball tournaments. These events attract a large number of visitors to Saint John and, in turn, provide an economic benefit to local businesses. Tournaments also place a significant strain on natural sports field turf due to the intensity of use and the requirement for *must play* scenarios regardless of weather. These factors lead to greater field usage and maintenance challenges that tend to result in impaired field quality.

8.0 Implementation

The examination of recreational amenities considers all assets regardless of ownership. The issue of ownership is complex, and is magnified by the City's partnerships with other agencies through Joint Use Agreements. Although this strategy can only suggest decommissioning facilities owned by the City, this does not reflect an accurate picture of the entire recreation system and the City's involvement and responsibility for maintenance of assets it does not own. The targets indicated in the strategy for outdoor recreation facilities represent a *reasonable service level* that takes into account all assets. The biggest impact for the City in terms of costs savings will be achieved by focusing its resources on the District Field Hubs, negotiating maintenance responsibilities through Joint Use Agreements with School Districts, and decommissioning some of the outdoor facilities assets discussed in this Chapter.

Step 1: Decommission Surplus Sports Fields and Baseball/Softball Diamonds.

The City of Saint John should begin the process of decommissioning the sport fields/baseball diamonds listed below. The intent is to reduce the maintenance and financial burden of providing and maintaining the number

⁵Artificial turf, usually constructed of polyethylene plastic grass and an in-fill base of "crumb rubber" from ground-up recycled tires (as many as 10,000 in a single field).

of sports fields that exceed the recognized population based standard. Community developers from the City of Saint John should work with community groups and sports organizations to solicit their interest and capacity to manage and or repurpose (e.g. into community gardens) these sport fields. Funding support for groups would be considered through the proposed Community Grants Program.

Sports Fields

1. Beaconsfield Park Field (1)
2. Hilton Belyea Arena Field (1)
3. Loch Lomond Community Centre Field

Baseball/Softball Diamonds

1. Barrack Green Armouries (1)
2. Courtenay Avenue/ East Saint John Diamond (1)
3. Latimore Lake Community Centre (1)
4. Lorneville Community Centre Field (1)
5. Lou Murphy/Milford Park (1)
6. Mispic Park (1)
7. Quinton Heights (1)
8. Taylor Avenue Field (1)
9. Thornborough Park (1)

Step 2: Implement Centralized Bookings through Scheduling Software.

To enhance the recreation system and encourage increased participation from residents, more and more communities are making use of facility scheduling software for coordination of municipal and school recreation facilities. This improves the efficiency of recreation facility bookings providing users with *one stop* service and the ability to book and pay for use on-line. The City of Saint John in partnership with the School District(s) should implement centralized booking of facilities through the use of scheduling software. The use of this software will also enable the City to gather detailed usage statistics and compile reports in terms of facility usage, activities, capacity and trends. This data is an invaluable resource that will enable the City to make reasoned decisions surrounding recreation facilities in the future.

For recreation facility users, and emerging recreation organizations, it can be a laborious task to figure out which facilities have available blocks of time that meet their needs. Facility scheduling software has the potential to increase efficiencies in this regard. The consolidation of all municipally operated recreation facilities and school facilities into one scheduling database would allow for better coordination of available recreation facilities, programs and activities; would improve efficiencies, customer service and accountability, helping individuals and organizations maximize participation through

such thing as on-line registration; and facilitate new organizations to create new programs.

Step 3: Implement Field Standards and Management Plans.

The scope of this study did not include a condition assessment of City sports fields. It is recommended that the City of Saint John conduct an assessment of its fields examining at a minimum, the following areas of focus:

1. General layout and orientation of fields
2. Drainage and turf upgrading requirements
3. Parking requirements and locations
4. Lighting and CPTED audit
5. Nuisance setbacks from adjacent land uses

Once an evaluation is completed the City of Saint John should implement Service Standards for its fields based upon the latest principles and techniques of managing and maintaining sports turf. Service standards should deal with:

- Baseline characteristics of each field including the benefits of specific turf grass variants emphasizing the latest and best varieties for each field;
- The identification, monitoring and control of diseases, insects, and weeds in turf grass;
- Pest management programs to recognize and monitor infestations of diseases, insects and weeds, to manage turf in a pesticide-free environment, and maximize the efficiency of biological and cultural methods to control/ reduce infestations;
- Soils management and methods to foster growth and fertility to resolve problems;
- Water management including sub-surface and surface drainage systems, irrigation practices and systems and the efficient use of water and weather information for managing improvements under water restrictions;
- Cultural practices which enhance and promote good turf and improved playing conditions;
- Sports field construction including proper design, layout, and solar orientation;

Renovations and restoration methods for poorly performing fields and best practices which promote good conditions and improved maintenance practices.

Step 4: Continue to Implement Existing Master Plans for Multi-Purpose Fields and Sports Fields.

Both Shamrock Park (3 fields) and to a lesser degree Market Place West have Master Plans developed by the City of Saint John that propose major upgrades. The City of Saint John should continue implementation of these existing master plans through the City's capital budgeting process. Shamrock Park should be established as the

City's premier sports field hub and the focus for artificial turf development subject to life cycle and feasibility analysis.

Step 5: Implement Joint Use Agreements for School Sports Fields.

The School District(s) and the City of Saint John should establish a Joint Use Interagency Team (see **Chapter 3 Playgrounds**) composed of staff representatives of the School District(s) and the City. The role of the Joint Use Interagency Team would be to develop agreements regarding roles and responsibilities and costs associated with maintenance of these sports and baseball fields; and the resolution of conflicts arising from access to fields and activities.

The City of Saint John should consider providing maintenance to school sports fields subject to the negotiation of a Joint Use Agreement with the School District(s).

The City of Saint John faces challenges affecting the maintenance and operation of sports fields including the unauthorized use of fields in wet conditions and during rest and regeneration periods (early and late in the year) which can cause severe damage to fields; damage from which some cannot fully recover. Sport fields adjacent to schools are often problematic in this regard as they receive a great deal of use, much of which is not supervised or authorized. The Joint Use Agreement should attempt to address efforts to reduce non-permitted use.

6 chapter The Strategy for Indoor Recreation Facility Services



1.0 Introduction

The challenges of developing and operating indoor recreation facilities are many. However, municipalities and residents throughout Canada have experienced long lasting benefits of indoor recreation facilities. Benefits include increased opportunities to:

- improve physical health and adopt healthy/active lifestyles;
- participate in instruction for such things as swimming, water safety, all manner of aerobic activities; and strength training – for youth and seniors alike;
- gather, meet others and socialize; and
- learn and play.

The benefits of a recreation facility must be balanced against the cost of construction and operation over the long term.

The objective of the Strategic Plan is to ensure the City's facility portfolio is responsive to the current and future needs of the community in a responsible and cost effective manner. The strategy of this service plan is to propose a long-term and fiscally sound approach that will enable the City of Saint John to manage public expectations and access to facilities fundamental to the community.

2.0 Issue

The City of Saint John has a mix of recreation facilities of various ages and in various states of repair. Some require no to minimal improvements while others need significant upgrades. Other may be at the end of their life cycle and require replacement. **How can the City of Saint John balance the costs of facility improvements/replacements within existing financial constraints, ensuring its portfolio of indoor recreation facilities continues to meet the needs of the community?**

To ensure financial effectiveness it is critical that the City of Saint John maximizes the use of existing facilities before building new ones. Consideration must be given to providing increased community access to School District assets such as pools and gymnasias, which may be feasible through partnerships and Joint Use Agreements

3.0 Context

Indoor recreation facilities represent the most costly capital and operational components of the City's recreation and leisure system. The category includes a majority of publically owned and operated facilities and private facilities such as:

- **6 Single Ice Surface Arenas** - 4 City Owned, the Lord Beaverbrook Rink and Harbour Station.

- **29 School Gymnasias** - associated with Elementary, Middle, and High Schools.
- **UNB Saint John’s Athletics Centre** - 30,000 square foot all-purpose synthetic floor court surface floor, bleacher seats for 900, fitness/weight room and complete locker room facilities.
- **New Brunswick Community College Saint John** - 90’x63’gymnasium, weight room and indoor climbing wall.
- **Canada Games Aquatic Centre** - 50 meter Olympic-size 8-lane pool and diving complex with 3 diving, a 25 meter warm water leisure pool and associated amenities.
- **7 indoor pools** – 2 school pools and 5 hotel pools, which are programmed and available for limited community use.
- **2 Private Curling Clubs** – 11 sheets of ice owned and operated by the private sector.

Although the above list includes many facilities, the City is financially invested only in the operation of arenas and the Canada Games Aquatic Centre. The mix and offering of Saint John’s indoor recreation facilities enhances the quality of life for residents. Some facilities may serve as *community hubs*, bringing residents and neighbours together in a setting where they can socialize, learn, build relationships, and have fun.

Previous Studies

In previous years, various studies have been completed dealing with the state of recreation programming and infrastructure in Saint John. Several studies have proposed improvements to existing facilities and the construction of new ones. Two of the more significant ones that are relevant to this strategy are discussed below.

Saint John Recreational Facilities Review Committee Report

In 2004 the Saint John Recreational Facilities Review Committee (John Wallace, Chair) published a report that examined the recreational needs of the Greater Saint John area. The following is a summary of the more significant recommendations from that report and their status:

1. Address the need for additional ice surface. The \$23 million dollar QPlex opened in 2011. This 75,000 sq. ft. multi-purpose recreation and conference centre includes an NHL size ice arena, walking track, YMCA/ YWCA Childcare Centre, outdoor Olympic swimming pool, full access playground, dog park, and 4,000 square foot conference centre.

2. Refurbish Canada Games Stadium. Design and construction completed in 2010. City of Saint John contributed \$2.2 million to the \$6 million Canada Games Stadium upgrade project. Improvements include stands, infrastructure, and field turf.

3. Pursue indoor multiplex sports dome complex. No action to date. In 2007 the Saint John Exhibition Park Association published the Multiplex Recreation Feasibility Study and a subsequent feasibility and concept plan in 2011. The current proposal calls for an indoor soccer facility at an estimated cost of \$23 million, however funding partners have not committed to the project.

Multiplex Recreation Feasibility Study

The Exhibition Park’s 2007 Multiplex Recreation Feasibility Study, indicated that many of the observations and recommendations of the 2004 Saint John Recreational Facilities Review Committee Report were not based on suitable recreational analysis and demand modeling and called many of the Wallace reports recommendations into doubt. The common element in these reports is; no public agency has the time or money to do all it would like to do, nor can public agencies provide for everything that the public desires. Budgets, personnel, programs, facilities, and public lands and watercourses need to be allocated to certain recreation opportunities. Difficult recreation allocation decisions need to be made, and certainly some decisions will be must be challenged to prove their validity.

4.0 Quantity

Chart 5 – Indoor Facilities Required Per Capita shows the per capita provision standards for pools, gymnasias, and curling rinks (number of ice sheets). Saint John is well served and in the case of arenas and indoor swimming pools, slightly over supplied.

Chart 5– Indoor Facilities Required Per Capita				
Facility	Existing	Per Capita Requirement	Saint John Population	Total Required
Arenas	6	1 per 20,000 people	70,063	3.5
Pools	1 50m pool + 7 non-competitive	1 (50m competitive per region) plus 1 non-competitive pool per 20,000 people		1 (50m) + 3 non-competitive
Gymnasias	31	1 per public school + NBCC + UNBSJ		31
Curling Rinks	11 Sheets	1 per 6,000 people		12

In terms of arenas, with a 2011 population of 70,063,¹ Saint John offers 1 arena for every 11,677 residents. This arena-to-resident ratio is well above established standards² of 1 arena for 20,000 residents. Unfortunately this high level of service (1 arena for every 11,677 residents) requires levels of funding for maintenance and new capital far beyond the City's financial capacity. Consequently, the inability to properly support this arena infrastructure has resulted in an obsolete or poorly maintained system of arenas.

During PlaySJ consultations the public and stakeholders provided input regarding a wide variety of facilities. With respect to indoor facilities respondents suggested:

- There is a need for more arenas/ ice surfaces to properly run and expand existing sports. However, participants recognized that better scheduling and promotion of facilities, and expanding use into the off season, may ease demand from sports organizations for additional facilities. Stakeholders also indicated that in order to deliver the proper facilities infrastructure to sports organizations, the City needs a better understanding of their respective strategic plans for growth and expansion.
- There is a need for facilities that could accommodate such activities as indoor soccer, indoor tennis, and roller derby. (However the high response rate for these activities is largely attributed to the efforts of dedicated volunteers who ensured their members answered the Survey Monkey questionnaire).

5.0 Quality

Through PlaySJ consultations, residents and stakeholders indicated that while *good quality* facilities are important, opinions were divided regarding the *degree of quality* needed. Some residents supported investment in new multi-purpose indoor facilities, yet others felt that municipal funding should be directed to improving existing indoor facilities.

An examination of recreation and leisure trends indicates that people generally prefer quality over quantity. The trend in recreation facility design is to consolidate a variety of components within a single building (e.g.: two or more ice pads, swimming pools, walking track etc.) creating a multi-purpose facility.

An emerging trend combines other services such as libraries, municipal offices and service centres with recreation uses to create a multi-use complex. Grouping uses and services creates a more attractive, functional

and convenient facility for users. This approach is very popular and cost effective as it optimizes economies of scale in terms of infrastructure; such as heating, water and waste water systems, parking and the like. Additionally, these multi-purpose recreation complexes are becoming *destinations* that include traditional leisure amenities (e.g. ice rinks, fitness centres, swimming pools and etc.), along with expanded retail and entertainment options such as cinemas, commercial retail stores and restaurants. For example, Credit Union Place in Summerside PEI is a multi-purpose recreation and leisure complex that delivers all manner of recreational activities in addition to social and cultural events and as such has become a popular Island destination drawing residents from across PEI, as well as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Multiple activities in a central facility provide convenience and people will travel farther for the value added experience of a high quality facility.

Consequently, any new facility proposed in Saint John or reinvestment in existing facilities should be designed and constructed to high quality standards, incorporate multiple activities and uses, and provide for items such as large dressing rooms, better showers and washrooms, greater accessibility features, etc.

6.0 Resolution

The intent of the Strategic Plan for Indoor Recreation Facility Services is to outline methodologies that will enable the City to plan, manage and deliver access to these facilities in a way that best reflects community needs and priorities. The Strategic Plan endeavours to address the issues of facility improvements versus replacement in a manner that ensures indoor recreation facilities meet the needs of Saint John residents. The Strategic Plan is based on three focus areas:

1. Healthy/Active living: investments in recreation facilities be they improvements or replacement must focus on increasing participation from all age groups. Improving building function and infrastructure may in turn enhance opportunities for physical activities that lead to a healthier and more active community.

In terms of the provision of recreation services, the City of Saint John should focus its funding towards a reasonable supply of introductory level activities throughout the City's indoor facilities. A wide range of introductory level recreation programs should be the priority before higher levels of service in any one activity, sport, or program are funded.

¹Statistics Canada. 2012. Saint John, New Brunswick (Code 1301006) and Saint John, New Brunswick (Code 1301) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released February 8, 2012.

²New Brunswick has no established guidelines regarding the standardized provision of recreation facilities, in 2010 the City of Saint John's Infrastructure, Facilities & Programming Inventory Study, established the Ontario Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards (1998) as the "de facto" recreation facilities guidelines.

User costs at the introductory level should be subsidized to a greater level, with the City absorbing a larger amount of the operational cost. As skill levels increase, costs for participants should increase and the City's role and responsibility should diminish. As participants advance their skills to the competitive and elite categories, the City's financial responsibility would be reduced as other agencies and the private sector become involved. Figure 1 - illustrates this concept.



Figure 1 - City of Saint John Service Level Cost Pyramid

2. Right-sizing: The Strategy for indoor facility services must adhere to the principle of cost minimization that strikes an appropriate balance between community need and the City's role as either funding agency or partner in the provision of indoor recreation services in Saint John.

During the period 2009-2012, one of Common Council's priorities was to "continue efforts to develop a new multi-purpose recreation facility to be constructed by 2012."³

Although no definitive plans have been made regarding the type of facility or the ownership model, in 2011 Common Council did consider support for a proposed multi-purpose indoor soccer facility at Exhibition Park that would serve Southern New Brunswick.

The current approach to planning new recreation facilities is to design buildings that are flexible, both in terms of access and programming, and that address individual and family needs in one location. Thus considerations for the addition of new facilities in Saint John should be guided on principles of creating good quality infrastructure as follows:

- **Flexible & Integrated facilities:** flexible building design with opportunities to accommodate as wide a range of use as possible and to increase opportunities for integration of services (e.g. ice surfaces with curling, an elevated walking track, etc.);
- **Co-location:** Group facilities together, such as libraries, municipal services etc. to support economies of scale and expand user opportunities;

- **Access and Physical Linkages:** fair and equitable access for residents of all income groups supported by various modes of travel, by locating facilities on major transit routes and collector roads with good pedestrian access; and
- **Focused funding:** focus on partnerships and funding commitments that would allow the development of facilities that exceed basic standards.

Through PlaySJ consultations, residents and stakeholders acknowledged the difficulty for the City to satisfy the needs and requirements of all sports organizations. Again, participants agreed that compromise is needed and suggested that existing facilities must be used to their full potential before any discussions of right-sizing, or consideration of capital expenditures can take place.

Outside the context and influence of this Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, decisions by other agencies may be proposed that could influence the supply of indoor recreation facilities⁴ funded and or supported by the City of Saint John. In evaluating whether or not to support such proposals⁵ the City of Saint John should consider the following:

1. Is the facility affordable, and does it serve a majority of Saint John residents?
2. Does the location of the proposed facility reinforce the City's growth strategy and policies of the new Municipal Plan 2011?
3. Is the facility located in close proximity to an existing or projected population⁶ base that would support the proposed uses?
4. Does the facility compete with existing facilities or services?
5. Is the proposed facility highly visible and does it maximize opportunities for residents to access public and active transportation?
6. Can the proposed facility co-locate with other City services (police, fire, library, etc.)?

3. Community Development: as with examples of other recreation facilities and infrastructure mentioned in previous chapters, the community development model for indoor recreation facilities is based on partnerships or joint use agreements that would propose alternate funding and ownership models. Three examples are described below specific to the provision of arenas, school gymnasiums and indoor tennis.

The following map indicates the location of existing indoor recreation facilities discussed in this Chapter and includes arenas, school gymnasiums, pools and curling

³Common Council Priorities 2009-2012, City of Saint John, NB, 2010.

⁴Proposed YMCA in Crescent Valley, Lord Beaverbrook Rink Olympic Size Ice Surface Feasibility Study, Proposed Exhibition Center (Indoor Soccer) Fieldhouse.

⁵Ibid.

⁶See City of Saint John Growth Strategy, PlanSJ, 2011.



clubs. As most pools shown are either privately owned hotel pools or publicly owned school pools, they tend to be concentrated in the city centre. Other facilities are reasonably well distributed throughout the city's residential areas.

Arenas

The life cycle of ice rinks within Greater Saint John is physically capable, notwithstanding the unforeseen failure of major facility components, of operating for another 10 to 15 years with proper annual upgrades and maintenance of each individual facility.

Today, new arena facilities in urban municipalities are rarely built as single pads, but rather are provided in multiple ice-surface combinations. Multiple ice surface facilities permit efficiencies with both capital and operating costs, and attract larger, revenue-generating sports tournaments and competitions. Additional traffic makes consolidated ancillary services such as food and beverage, and advertising more viable.

Customer quality expectations in Saint John are primarily geared to people playing recreational hockey. Consequently, the demand is primarily for arenas that meet the North American (versus International) size ice of 85ft x 200ft. Additionally, large seating capacities are generally not well used as the majority of time the arena is used by small crowds attending recreational ice sports for younger players.

If higher levels of service are desired to accommodate a particular sport, for example, alternate sources of capital and operational funding should be secured before a facility is developed. For example, the City of Saint John arena facilities should focus on accommodating minor sport; learn to skate and recreational skating programs. For that reason arena ice surfaces, for example, should not exceed the North American rinks specification of 61 metres (200 feet) × 26 metres (85 feet), spectator capacity should not exceed that required to accommodate parental viewing and change room sizes and numbers should be limited to that required to accommodate average size teams.

Furthermore the City of Saint John should not fund the

incremental facility upgrades to larger ice surfaces, increased spectator capacity, larger than necessary change rooms, etc. without the additional associated cost being absorbed by partners and where the business case proves a no-net cost burden to taxpayers of Saint John.

“Increasing access to recreational facilities that already exist at schools has emerged as one of the most promising strategies for building more opportunities for activity into neighborhoods.”⁶

School Gymnasias

Schools can play an important role in increasing access to physical activity and safe places to play. Unfortunately financial concerns often lead school districts to close their doors once school is out of session. Joint Use Agreements between the City of Saint John and Provincial School Districts should be the primary mechanism to secure the potential shared benefits of joint use and shared development of good quality school recreation assets. Gymnasias associated with public schools should be governed, planned, designed, managed, and funded to support their intensive use by the entire community.

Indoor Tennis

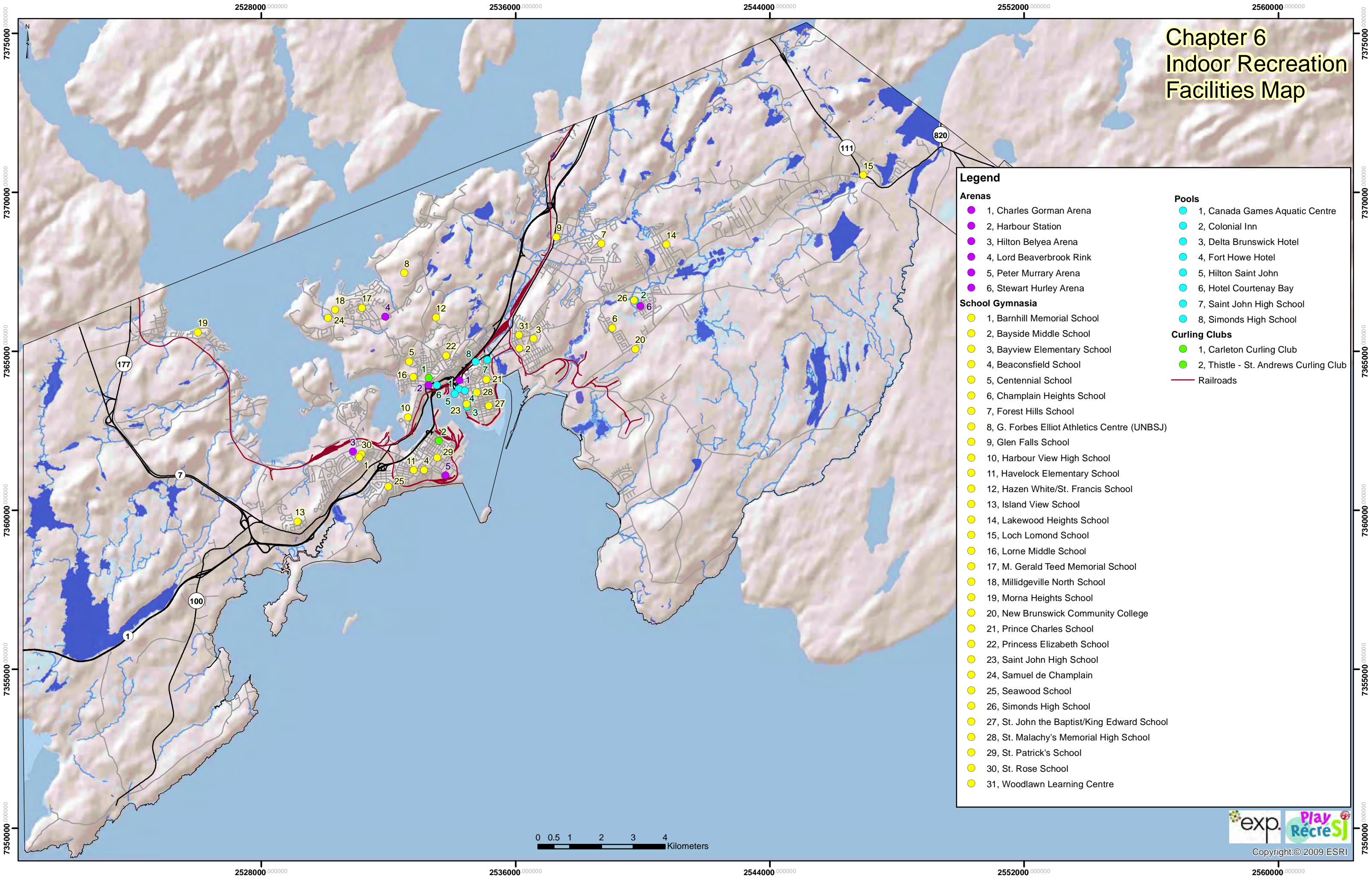
A submission was prepared by the Saint John & District Tennis Association, for consideration by the City in this Strategic Plan process. The Association proposes the development of an indoor facility with 6 courts. This proposal could, without great difficulty, be designed into a multi-use recreation facility. The addition of new 6 courts in Saint John would bring the total number of courts to 14 and would not exceed the population benchmark of 1 court per 5000 people. Support for the capital project is available from Tennis Canada and Tennis NB through a pre-development and capital funding grants program including:

- Up to \$25,000 pre-development support; and
- Up to \$250,000 towards capital costs of the facility.

The Association's proposal suggests that this facility would be operated as a not-for-profit organization and be sustained entirely on memberships, fees and lessons without any financial assistance from the City of Saint John. Nonetheless, the City should require more analysis

⁶Opening School Grounds to the Community After Hours. A toolkit for increasing physical activity through joint use agreements, Robert S. Ogilvie and Jason Zimmerman, ChangeLab Solutions formerly (Public Health Law & Policy),2010

Chapter 6 Indoor Recreation Facilities Map



Legend

Arenas

- 1, Charles Gorman Arena
- 2, Harbour Station
- 3, Hilton Belyea Arena
- 4, Lord Beaverbrook Rink
- 5, Peter Murray Arena
- 6, Stewart Hurley Arena

School Gymnasias

- 1, Barnhill Memorial School
- 2, Bayside Middle School
- 3, Bayview Elementary School
- 4, Beaconsfield School
- 5, Centennial School
- 6, Champlain Heights School
- 7, Forest Hills School
- 8, G. Forbes Elliot Athletics Centre (UNBSJ)
- 9, Glen Falls School
- 10, Harbour View High School
- 11, Havelock Elementary School
- 12, Hazen White/St. Francis School
- 13, Island View School
- 14, Lakewood Heights School
- 15, Loch Lomond School
- 16, Lorne Middle School
- 17, M. Gerald Teed Memorial School
- 18, Millidgeville North School
- 19, Morna Heights School
- 20, New Brunswick Community College
- 21, Prince Charles School
- 22, Princess Elizabeth School
- 23, Saint John High School
- 24, Samuel de Champlain
- 25, Seawood School
- 26, Simonds High School
- 27, St. John the Baptist/King Edward School
- 28, St. Malachy's Memorial High School
- 29, St. Patrick's School
- 30, St. Rose School
- 31, Woodlawn Learning Centre

Pools

- 1, Canada Games Aquatic Centre
- 2, Colonial Inn
- 3, Delta Brunswick Hotel
- 4, Fort Howe Hotel
- 5, Hilton Saint John
- 6, Hotel Courtenay Bay
- 7, Saint John High School
- 8, Simonds High School

Curling Clubs

- 1, Carleton Curling Club
 - 2, Thistle - St. Andrews Curling Club
- Railroads



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regarding the feasibility of an indoor tennis facility. A partnership for indoor tennis would potentially be a welcomed addition to the concept of a proposed multi-use recreation facility.

7.0 Recommendations

Although indoor recreation facilities represent the most costly capital and operational components of the City's recreation and leisure system, they typically are the facilities with the broadest reach to a variety of users. Given the cost implications, partnering opportunities as well as flexibility of use should be considerations in a long-term strategy. The following are recommended:

Recommendation 1: Require Independent Business Plans for Recreation Facility Capital Funding Requests.

Prior to committing funds for recreation facility capital funding requests, the City of Saint John, should require a prepared independent business plan for the proposed facility. The examination of an independent business plan would determine the capability of the organization to make such facilities sustainable without ongoing assistance. For example, the feasibility study conducted for the proposed Exhibition Park Fieldhouse facility notes: *"At least one of the groups who responded in this study anticipated fees to use the full field in the order of \$20 per hour. Operating costs for the facility are in the order of \$200± per hour."*⁷ Based on such statements the potential lack of support by users for such costs could pose serious implications for sustainability of the project.

Recommendation 2: Adopt Minimum Standards for Arenas.

Notwithstanding the recommendation to develop a multi-use recreation facility, any new arena development and upgrades should strive to incorporate design standards listed below, to address functionality and demand capacity, physical conditions, accessibility and support services:

1. A minimum of 2 ice surfaces per arena;
2. Maximum ice surface 200 feet x 85 feet;
3. A minimum of 6 dressing rooms for each ice pad;
4. 2 referee rooms per ice pad;
5. Dressing rooms should be sized and designed for adults of both genders, with suitable shower and washroom accommodations;
6. For twinned arenas at least one ice pad with seating to accommodate minor sport tournament capacity of 250 people;

7. Events and tournaments should be accommodated in the design of lobbies, community rooms/multi-purpose rooms, ticket booths and other ancillary space;

8. Designed with opportunities to accommodate year round demand including sports such as (i.e.: basketball, lacrosse, inline hockey, etc.);

9. Warm-up areas large enough to accommodate users without interfering with traffic flow in arena;

10. Installation of energy efficient equipment to reduce long-term utility costs and improve operating efficiency to decrease overall maintenance costs;

11. Accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities as spectators;

12. At least one ice pad per arena shall be designed to allow participants who have a physical disability to play and access ice activities such as, sledge hockey;

13. Commercial leasable areas including concession areas and restaurants in a multi-pad arena; and

14. Commercial retail space for physiotherapy services, and retail sport and recreation goods and various sport services such as skate rental kiosk, skate sharpening, sport equipment, and dry-land training.

Recommendation 3: Foster Opportunities to Leverage Sustainable Partnerships that Support a Multi-use Facility Concept.

To attract and appeal to residents with limited time for recreation, recreation centres must offer exceptional customer service and value-added services and programs. The City of Saint John should foster and investigate partnerships that can support and sustain a multi-use recreation facility to serve a wide spectrum of Saint John residents and their needs. As described earlier, principles for the development of a quality recreation and leisure facility should include:

- **Flexible & Integrated Facilities:** The City of Saint John should promote building designs that are flexible and able to accommodate a wide a range of uses and to increase opportunities for integration of services;
- **Focus Funding:** The City of Saint John should only support and develop recreation facilities that meet basic sport requirements standards. Accordingly the City's financial contributions are assessed proportionately to a level at which the cost to upsize the facility exceeds basic standards in order to support more elite sport programs.
- **Group Facilities:** The City of Saint John should consider the grouping of facilities together to support economies of scale and expanded user opportunities;

⁷Final Report Exhibition Association of the City & County of Saint John, Multi-Purpose Recreational Facility Feasibility Study, dmA Planning & Management Services – Murdock & Boyd Architects, October 2010

- **Linkage and Access:** Promote access by a range of residents via various travel modes by the locating facilities on major transit routes and collector roads with good pedestrian access.

Recommendation 4: Prepare Life Cycle Cost Analysis for New Recreation Facilities.

New facilities will require sustainable funding for proper operation and maintenance as well as regular capital renewal. Facility design should also include life cycle cost analysis. There are four primary principles⁸ the City of Saint John should consider when assessing life cycle costs, they are as follows:

1. Life cycle cost analysis is an essential part of the City's overall asset management strategy.
2. Facility development and costing begins at the concept and preplanning stage and is complete when the asset is sold or the site returned to its original condition.
3. Rather than choose the cheapest capital cost option, the full cost of each project component should be examined across the life of a project. This may mean initial higher capital costs but may result in reduced operational, maintenance and disposal costs and a net lower total ownership cost.
4. Life cycle analysis should also consider all of the economic and financial costs associated with constructing, procuring and operating a facility.

Recommendation 5: Examine Public Private Partnerships (P3) to deliver New Recreation Facility (ies).

Municipal budgets are stretched, and traditional funding sources for major recreation facilities such as provincial and federal grants are no longer readily accessible. Municipalities are examining partnerships with private and not-for-profit organizations (tennis associations, curling clubs, etc.) to share the cost of providing new recreation facilities.

Public-private partnerships (P3) is an alternative method of delivering public infrastructure and infrastructure services that transfer responsibilities and risks that traditionally have been borne by municipalities, to the private sector. The decision by the City of Saint John to enter into a P3 model should be project-specific with an objective to allocate the risks associated with designing, building, operating, and maintaining an asset over its full lifecycle between the municipality and the private sector partner. Allocating risks reduces the likelihood of their occurrence and mitigates the impacts of their severity if they do occur. Overall, this increases the municipality's value its investment. However, the City of Saint John should undertake an independent analysis before

developing a P3 model for new recreation facilities.

Recommendation 6: Develop a Strategy for Regional Ice Sports – through the Regional Facilities Commission.

The City of Saint John has both a limited mandate and limited financial resources to address the needs of ice sports organizations whose membership is derived from the Greater Saint John area. As previously stated the City's focus on capital facilities should be to accommodate introductory healthy/active living programs. In 2012 the City of Saint John funded a conceptual study to determine the feasibility of expanding the Lord Beaverbrook Arena from an NHL sized ice surface to an Olympic sized ice surface. Common Council's subsequent review of that study halted further progress.

As the City has a limited mandate (and resources) to accommodate regional ice sports; the Regional Facilities Commission is the appropriate body to develop a strategy addressing these needs. Accordingly the Regional Facilities Commission should investigate options for meeting the demand either through expansion or twinning of an existing facility or incorporating Olympic sized ice as a part of any new multi-pad facility.

8.0 Implementation

The implementation sequence below combines both policy change and capital expenditure. Unfortunately, no strategy is able to accomplish the City's objectives without cost. However, the suggested options will optimize the City's resources through collaboration, cooperation and consolidation.

Step 1: Implement Community Joint Use Agreements for School Indoor Recreation Facilities.

Community Joint Use Agreements (as discussed in Chapter 3 – Playgrounds) serve as the principal instrument to secure these public assets so that both the School District and the City of Saint John could share the benefits of joint use and co-ownership of recreational assets. These recreation facilities located in public schools throughout the city should be governed, planned, designed, managed, and funded to support their use by the entire community. To ensure financial effectiveness it is critical that the City of Saint John maximize the use of existing public facilities before building new facilities.

Step 2: Develop and Implement an Advertising Revenue Generating Policy.

Municipalities traditionally have limited options to generate revenue. As a component of its operational plan for all its facilities the City of Saint John should examine the opportunity to generate revenues from advertising.

⁸Life Cycle Cost Guidelines For Sport And Recreation Facilities, A Guide For Sport And Recreation Facilities Owners And Managers, Department of Sport and Recreation Government of Western Australia, 2005

An *Advertising Revenue Generating Policy* is a set of guidelines for managing advertising in its public facilities and spaces. Advertising sales involve the simple purchase of advertising space sold at rates determined or agreed to by the City, for a specific period of time.

Advertisers would enter into legal agreements with the City of Saint John and through the policy would ensure that their advertising proposals meet the following sample criteria:

- a) compliance with the standards set out by the Canadian Advertising Standards Council;
- b) adherence to applicable City bylaws and policies regarding signage;
- c) no adverse impact on the quality and integrity of the City's properties, buildings, or streetscape;
- d) no adverse effect on public safety and City liability;
- e) no negative impact on the visual amenity of the landscape or character of the property;
- f) no conflict or hazard to existing vehicular, pedestrian or cycling traffic; and
- g) all costs (design, production, installation, maintenance, removal and repair) are the responsibility of the advertiser.

Step 3: Plan for End of Life Cycle of Existing City Arenas

Operating 4 Centennial era ice arenas spread throughout the city represents a great burden to Saint John taxpayers due their aging mechanical and structural infrastructure and outdated or scant amenities popular with sports organizations and spectators alike. These arenas are now 45 years old and are nearing the end of their life cycle. The costs of upgrading and renovating these facilities versus building a new 4-pad arena need to be carefully considered by the City.

The City of Saint John should consider the following:

1. Preferred Option: Decommission 4 City Arenas and Develop a 4-Pad Arena.⁹

The City of Saint John should develop a decommissioning strategy for 4 City arenas: Peter Murray, Belyea, Gorman, and Hurley; while it also examines a capital plan for the construction of a new 4- pad arena. The development of a 4-pad arena is recommended only as a component of a multi-purpose complex that includes other recreation amenities or services (e.g. curling rinks, indoor tennis, fitness centres, library or other municipal service function), potentially with expanded retail, entertainment, hotel, and commercial tenants. The design of the new arena must also be based on minimum arena standards that describe functional facilities such as those listed in Recommendation 6 above.

The capital plan should also examine the feasibility of repurposing these some of these 4 arenas through community partnerships that identify opportunities for alternate (dry surface) community recreation uses. Decommissioning or closure of these City arenas would occur following the opening of the sports complex.

2. Secondary Option: Rehabilitate and Twin Two of the Existing Arenas.

As an alternative, the City of Saint John could close two of its four arenas and rehabilitate the other two where life cycle costing supports this expenditure and where sufficient land exists to accommodate both twinning and associated increased parking. The Gorman and Peter Murray Arenas may offer the potential to twin the ice surfaces with all of the associated structural, mechanical and functional space enhancements. This scenario adds no additional ice pads to the existing four rinks.

This capital investment in this option would not significantly address the issue of the aging infrastructure and potentially increased operational costs associated with it. Nor is it possible to predict any unforeseen costs associated with upgrades to mechanical and structural systems.

The remaining two arenas Belyea and Hurley would be closed once the twinning is completed.

⁹A 4 pad arena should represent a key element in a multi-use recreation and leisure complex (Hockey, Curling, Tennis, Fitness, etc.) developed through partnership with

7 chapter

The Strategy for Community Centre Services



1.0 Introduction

In Saint John, 17 community centres provide public venues for all manner of recreation, leisure, social and cultural events. Community Centres provide a wide-range of programming and activities for all ages. Residents use community centres as meeting places, for weddings, fund raising events or simply to meet with neighbourhoods, exchange ideas and socialize.

Traditionally community centres have functioned as the recreational, cultural and social hub of the neighbourhood.

2.0 Issue

Owning and operating recreation facilities requires a dedicated financial commitment that strains limited municipal budgets. Across the country, municipalities are exploring alternative service delivery models which share the burden of responsibility with the private sector. The ideal strategy for owning and operating community centres is one where several community based partners participate in the funding and the delivery of programs. ***How can the City of Saint John reduce costs associated with the provision of good quality programming yet ensure the long term sustainability of community centres?***

3.0 Context

In Saint John, the community centre provides a venue for activities such as indoor and outdoor sports and games, educational courses and cultural and social programs in response to needs or interests identified by the community.

Community centres can be membership based, such as the YMCA Community Centre; open to the entire community, such as the North End Community Centre or targeted to a specific group, such as the Boys and Girls Club.

Community centres in Saint John have various funding arrangements and in some instances operate with little or no support from government. A successful community centre has the following characteristics:

- A well-established focal point of the community;
- Facilities that are well-used and maintained;
- Contributes positively to the quality of life;
- Serves the immediate population of the community or neighbourhood;
- Strong reliance on dedicated volunteers and staff;
- Diverse programming, providing both sport and non-sport programs;



- Partnerships that enhance its mandate; and
- A strong governance model.

4.0 Quantity

Currently there are 17 community centres in Saint John. Compared to benchmark standards, the residents of Saint John are well served by community centres. (See Chart 6 – Community Centres Required Per Capita) The benchmark standard suggests the provision of community centres is 1 per 5,000 persons, which for a population the size of Saint John’s equates to 14 community centres.

Thus Saint John has a slight oversupply by 3 facilities. Table 4 lists each community centre and indicates its ownership and management arrangement.

Facility	Existing	Per Capita Requirement	Total Saint John Population	Total Required
Community Centres	17	1 per 5,000 people	70,063	14

Facility	Management Scheme
1. Carleton Community Centre 2. North End (C.E. Nick Nicolle) Community Centre 3. Somerset Community Centre ¹	Owned and/or managed by the City of Saint John
4. Boys & Girls Club; 5. YMCA-YWCA (Prince Edward Mall) 6. Teen Resource Centre	Privately owned and operated
7. Forest Glen Community Centre 8. Millidgeville Community Centre 9. South End Community Centre	Owned by the School District and managed by the City
10. Ketepec Belmont Morna (KBM)Community Centre 11. Milford Memorial Community Centre 12. Denis Morris Community Centre 13. Latimore Lake Community Centre 14. Loch Lomond Community Centre 15. Lorneville Community Centre 16. St. Joseph’s Community Centre (Hope Centre) 17. Martinon Community Centre	Community Centres funded through partnership agreements with the City of Saint John

During the Play SJ consultations, participants made no requests for additional community centres. In addition, the inventory of community centres surpasses the benchmark standard requirement.

The development of new community centres should be considered only when warranted; in situations where population growth exceeds the standard requirement; or where the closure or amalgamation of existing facilities creates a shortage.

¹The Somerset Community Centre is not owned by the City, it is owned by the Province of New Brunswick and managed by the City.

5.0 Quality

Quality in terms of a community centre relates to the ability of the facility to support the functional needs of the programs being offered. Thus, the quality of the building and its functional aspects are related to the quality of programming that can be delivered. As demographics change, so do community centre programs and as a result so do the physical requirements of the building. In Saint John the public and stakeholders indicated that there is a need to ensure a broad range of programs, including more non-sport programming for children and youth and fitness and social programs for seniors.

In an industry survey the most common features currently included in community centre facilities are:

1. Classrooms and meeting rooms
2. Fitness centres
3. Bleachers and seating
4. Locker rooms
5. Exercise studios
6. Concession areas / canteens
7. Playgrounds
8. Indoor sports courts
9. Outdoor sports courts
10. Open spaces, including gardens and natural areas

Best Practice: Top 10 New Programs

In a 2010 national survey conducted by Recreation Management Magazine the top concern expressed by community centre managers was marketing and methods of increasing participation in programs. Central to that concern was how to keep residents coming back for more programming. In that same survey the top 10 programs being offered were: special events; fitness programs; mind-body/balance programs; day camps and summer camps; youth sports teams; educational programs; active older adult programs; sports tournaments and races; swimming programs; and adult sports teams. The top 10 programs additions included:

1. Nutrition and diet counselling
2. Teen programs
3. Mind-body balance programs
4. Fitness programs
5. Educational programs
6. Individual sports activities like running clubs or swim clubs
7. Active older adult programs
8. Sports training
9. Day camps and summer camps
10. Sports tournaments and races²

In Saint John's community centres, much of the existing programming is possible due the efforts of volunteers. Because the City of Saint John offers a limited amount of direct programming, volunteer recruitment and retention is critical to the success of community centres. As demands on volunteers increase, access to better qualified volunteers is a major necessity to deliver quality programs (with the quality of the building being secondary). However, finding qualified volunteers is challenging due to financial limitations that do not support recruitment, training or capacity development. Sound planning and financial stability are essential to ensuring the delivery of quality programs and the long term success of community centres. The primary focus of quality in community centres is to achieve measurable results by investing in the people and the organization.

In many Saint John community centres, social issues present a specific need that cannot be ignored. Five priority neighbourhoods with high rates of poverty increase the potential for *at-risk* children and youth. Structured sports or social programs for children and youth are important, but these activities need to be complemented by non-traditional programs targeted at the most vulnerable. Community centres should provide a safe haven, with supportive programs and good role models.

6.0 Resolution

The current operational model for community centres in Saint John is a hybrid of facilities owned and operated by the City and community centres owned and managed by not-for-profit organizations. Moving forward, the intent of the strategic plan is to develop a uniform approach for all community centres with support from the City.

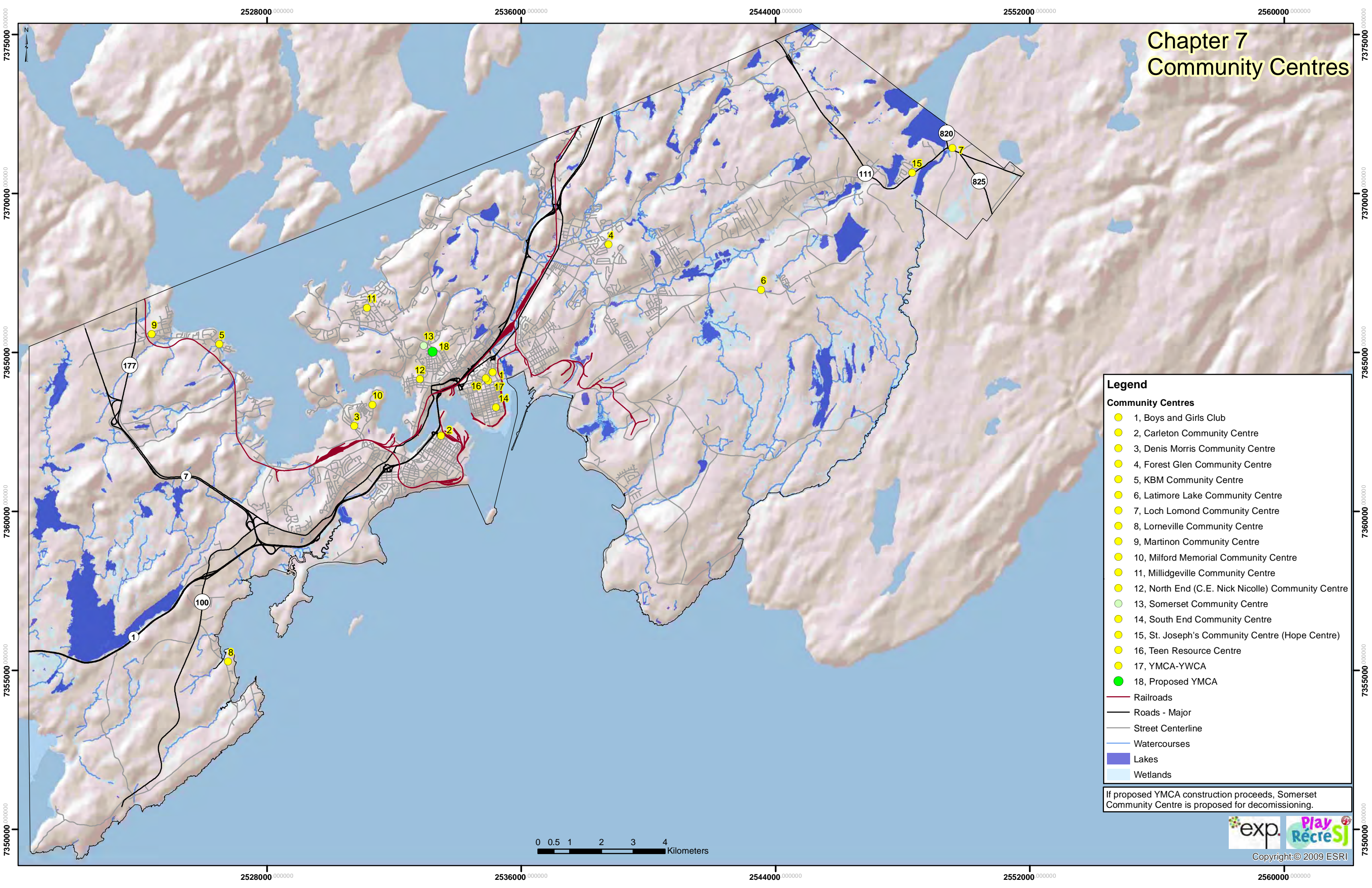
The following map illustrates the locations of existing community centres in Saint John. It also indicates the location of the proposed YMCA in the Crescent Valley neighbourhood. The proximity of this proposed new facility to the existing Somerset Community Centre is clear - see symbols 13 and 18 on the map. Therefore, should the new YMCA be constructed, Somerset Community Centre is proposed for decommissioning.

The service strategy for community centres draws less on physical assets and more on collaboration and partnerships. The goal is to ensure the broad needs of the community are met with less concern paid to who delivers the service. The strategy also demonstrates flexibility with a variety of governance and management options aimed to ensure its long-term sustainability while maximizing the use of resources.

Ultimately, Saint John should be served with relevant, desirable programs delivered through well-maintained,

²Recreation/Sports Centers, A Look at Trends in Community Recreation & Sports Centers - 2010 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry, Recreation Management Magazine, 2010

Chapter 7 Community Centres



Legend

Community Centres

- 1, Boys and Girls Club
- 2, Carleton Community Centre
- 3, Denis Morris Community Centre
- 4, Forest Glen Community Centre
- 5, KBM Community Centre
- 6, Latimore Lake Community Centre
- 7, Loch Lomond Community Centre
- 8, Lorneville Community Centre
- 9, Martinon Community Centre
- 10, Milford Memorial Community Centre
- 11, Millidgeville Community Centre
- 12, North End (C.E. Nick Nicolle) Community Centre
- 13, Somerset Community Centre
- 14, South End Community Centre
- 15, St. Joseph's Community Centre (Hope Centre)
- 16, Teen Resource Centre
- 17, YMCA-YWCA
- 18, Proposed YMCA

Railroads
Roads - Major
Street Centerline
Watercourses
Lakes
Wetlands

If proposed YMCA construction proceeds, Somerset Community Centre is proposed for decommissioning.



contemporary facilities. The City of Saint John is an important funding partner in the delivery of community centres however these facilities will be sustained primarily through community efforts. The strategy is based on the three focus areas that provide guidance for community centre services. These are described as follows.

1. Healthy/Active Living: The creation of innovative programs that address the needs of a changing demographic will be a key mandate. Community developers will assist community volunteers in identifying demographic changes and emerging recreational trends to help them provide relevant programming for their community and meet the quality targets of the City. These programs may include:

- Nutrition and diet counselling
- Teen programs
- Mind-body balance programs
- Fitness programs
- Educational programs
- Individual sports activities like running clubs or swim clubs
- Active older adult programs
- Sport training (non-elite)
- Day camps and summer camps
- Sports tournaments and races³

Community centres receiving funding from the City of Saint John will be mandated to provide a broad range of recreational and leisure activities in compliance with City standards. Collaboration and cooperation with other community based service providers is a best practice that will ensure maximized delivery of programs.

2. Right sizing: With 17 community centres, Saint John has a slight oversupply of these facilities as compared to benchmark standards. These facilities will be managed, programmed and operated by community associations. Community centres owned by the City will no longer be programmed and staffed by City staff.

City of Saint John will not support the development of new community centres that would add to the City's existing inventory, unless warranted due to significant population growth or the closure of existing centres. The City may

consider its future role as a partner in capital projects proposed and managed by other agencies.

3. Community development: The community centre strategy must be driven and completely led by dedicated volunteers who understand and appreciate the needs and concerns of their community. In all community centres, qualified and trained staff is essential to supporting the efforts of volunteers. The City's role through community development is to facilitate collaboration and communication with other community organizations, government agencies, as well as other service providers. Support from the City through community developers is a key part of the strategy that will address human resource development, program training and quality control.

Decisions regarding how the City of Saint will determine its support for community centres should be guided by the following criteria:

- **Healthy and Healthy/active living:** promote healthy and healthy/active living for all members of the community through targeted programs.
- **Sustainability:** balance the overlapping needs of individual centres by rationalizing support to the entire system to ensure sustainability.
- **Community-led:** community centre associations and partnerships that are committed to developing grass roots community based leadership and local governance of the facility.
- **Volunteer-driven:** community centre associations and partnerships that develop, train and support their volunteers to meet service and quality standards.
- **Accessible:** community centre associations and partnerships that work to eliminate access barriers (e.g. social, cultural, and physical) to its programs and facilities.
- **Collaboration:** community centre associations and partnerships that embrace the need to reduce overlapping mandates and welcome partnerships with other organizations with mutually beneficial agendas.
- **Inclusiveness:** community centre associations and partnerships that provide safe and respectful environments for gender and cultural diversity and whose governance structure reflects the desired diversity of the community.

³Recreation/Sports Centers, A Look at Trends in Community Recreation & Sports Centers - 2010 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry, Recreation Management Magazine, 2010

Best Practice - Owen Sound Family YMCA

As an example of partnership the City of Owen Sound and the Owen Sound Family YMCA have a joint agreement that ensures the following principles are met in the community's new regional recreation centre:

Access: Programs and services will be accessible to all people regardless of their economic status, age, gender, ability, race, and religion. The regional recreation centre will serve public recreation requirements and will always be owned or leased and operated by a non-for-profit agency. The recreation center will be operated according to the membership based Y model which is inclusive of all ages, backgrounds and financial situations.

Program Co-operation: The importance of the expansion and diversification of programs and services offered to the community based on evolving community need.

Community Involvement: Participation by citizens in the planning, implementation, and operation of the facility, programming and services.

Market Orientation: The notion that projects must be operationally sound and economically viable as determined by each respective organization.

Sustainability: The planning and implementation of programs and services to create and sustain the development of a healthy community.

Flexibility: The use of flexible terms to deal with unforeseen future issues and create opportunities for monitoring and evaluation to respond to the needs of the community.

Communication: Ongoing communication between the parties and with the public is paramount to the success of the partnership.

Best Practice - City Of Winnipeg

Across Canada a large percentage of public recreation facilities are well over thirty years old, outdated and unable to serve the changing recreation needs of their community. Municipalities are now faced with the dilemma of aging infrastructure with no reserve accounts for facility replacement and are facing expensive retrofitting, renovation and repair costs.

In response to this predicament the City Of Winnipeg's Recreation, Leisure, And Library Facilities Policy, includes a requirement to provide Managed Care levels of maintenance for all new facilities and a commitment to attain this level of maintenance for existing facilities. The term Managed Care is derived from a maintenance hierarchy developed for the City of Winnipeg in its asset management plan. Under a Managed Care program, Winnipeg's recommended facility maintenance operating budget (not including utilities) is:

- 3.5% of Current Replacement Value (CRV), with a corresponding Facilities Condition Index (FCI)⁴ of between 0.10 and 0.20.

The latter indicator means that the amount of deferred maintenance

must not be greater than 20% of the current replacement value in order for the Managed Care funding level to be effective.

The City is providing all facilities with a Managed Care level of maintenance at 3. Level 1 facility maintenance is equal to maintaining a facility in an 'almost new' condition. The other end of the spectrum a level 5 maintenance program is considered 'Crisis Response' where normal usage and deterioration continues unabated, eventually leading to forced closure or complete replacement of the facility. Under Crisis Response, repair is basically instituted for life safety issues only.

7.0 Recommendations

The service strategy for community centres draws heavily upon the principles of community development and focuses less on physical assets and more on collaboration and partnership. The goal is to ensure that wide-ranging needs of the community are met regardless of who delivers the service. The strategy also proposes flexibility with a variety of governance and management options aimed to ensure its long-term sustainability while maximizing the use of resources.

Owning and operating community centres is an intensive financial commitment. The ideal strategy for community centres is one where several partners participate in the ownership of facilities and the delivery of recreation and leisure services. Partners include government agencies, not-for-profit organizations and private and commercial entities. The strategy works best when all the service partners cooperate. Communication and cooperation can ensure that this model of facility management and service delivery will benefit the entire community.

Recommendation 1: Endorse Partnerships as the Model for Community Centres.

City of Saint John residents should be served with relevant, desirable programs delivered through well-maintained facilities. The community centre strategy in Saint John is currently a hybrid of facilities owned and operated by the City and some centres owned and managed by not-for-profit organizations. Moving forward, community centres owned by the City should no longer be programmed and staffed by City staff. The intent of this service strategy is to develop a uniform approach for all community centres supported by the City.

The City should adopt alternatives to facility ownership in an effort to reduce long term operating and capital costs. This may be accomplished through partnerships with School Districts, other educational institutions and youth based service organizations such as the YMCA. To ensure the long term sustainability of community centres, the strategy is to invest in developing local governance

⁴This calculation also provides the facility professional a corresponding rule of thumb for the annual reinvestment rate (funding percentage) to prevent further accumulation of deferred maintenance deficiencies.

Cited: Center for Facilities Research (CFaR), APPA: The Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers

that will allow centres to be operated by volunteers and not-for-profit organizations managed by elected Boards of Directors. The City of Saint John is an important funding partner in the delivery of community centres however; in future these facilities will be sustained through community efforts.

Recommendation 2: Encourage Community Management of 3 City Owned Facilities.

Currently City of Saint John staff manages and operates three community centres. These centres are Carleton and North End (C.E. Nick Nicolle), which are owned by the City, and Somerset Community Centre which is owned by the province. These community centres should be operationally adapted to a community partnership model.⁵

Encourage Community Management of 3 City Owned Facilities.

- 1) O.N.E. Change Proposal to operate and manage the C.E. (Nick) Nicolle Community Centre.
- 2) Decommission the Somerset Community Centre and Examine Support of proposed YMCA.
- 3) Community Management of the Carleton Community Centre.

8.0 Implementation

Steps to successfully implement the new direction in community centre management and program provision are described below.

Step 1: Implement Joint Use and/or Service Agreements for Facility Support.

To ensure public access and program alignment the City should consider funding support only where Joint Use Agreements are in place. The YMCA's mandate and governance model is nationally recognized and the organization excels at providing the community access to its programs. Similar to the proposed partnership model for community access to school facilities, the City of Saint John and YMCA should negotiate a Joint Use Agreement that ensures the following principles would be met in the proposed new facility:

- **Access:** Programs and services will be accessible to all people regardless of their economic status, age, gender, ability, race, and religion. The community centre will serve public recreation requirements and will always be owned or leased and operated by a not-for-profit agency and operated according to a membership model inclusive of all ages, backgrounds and financial situations.
- **Program Co-operation:** The YMCA recognizes the City's role in developing diverse programs and expanding services offered to meet evolving community needs.

- **Community Involvement:** Encourages the participation by citizens in the planning, implementation, and operation of the facility, programming and services.
- **Communication:** Communication among the City of Saint John, the YMCA, and the public is paramount to the success of the partnership.

Step 2: Implement a Checklist Approach to Determining Community Centre Partnership Viability.

Decisions regarding how the City of Saint John will determine its support for community centres and community associations will be guided by the following checklist:

1. The City of Saint John should work with community centre associations to balance the overlapping needs of individual centres by rationalizing its support to the entire system including school facilities, to enhance equity, quality and ensure sustainability.
2. The City of Saint John should support community centre associations and partnerships that promote healthy and healthy/active living for all members of the community through the provision of targeted programs.
3. The City of Saint John should support community centre associations and partnerships that are committed to developing grass roots community based leadership and local governance of the facility.
4. The City of Saint John should support community centre associations and partnerships that develop, train and support their volunteers to meet service and quality standards.
5. The City of Saint John should support community centre associations and partnerships that work to eliminate barriers to access (e.g. social, cultural, and physical) to its programs and facilities.
6. The City of Saint John should support community centre associations and partnerships that embrace the need to reduce overlapping mandates and maximizing value by welcoming partnerships with other organizations with mutually beneficial agendas.
7. The City of Saint John should support community centre associations and partnerships that provide safe and respectful environments for gender and cultural diversity and whose governance structure reflects the desired diversity of the community.

Step 3: Implement Measurable Outcomes to Assess Community Centre Support.

The City of Saint John currently provides a variety of financial support to community centres throughout the city. In many of these situations the support is both on-going and unconditional. The City of Saint John should make annual funding for community centres contingent upon associations reporting their attained outcomes for

⁵A Community Management scenario is suggested until such time that the proposed YMCA facility is constructed which would replace the need for the Somerset Community Centre.

recreational and social programming that focus on healthy and healthy/active living outcomes such as:

- Nutrition and diet counselling
- Teen programs
- Mind-body balance programs
- Fitness programs
- Educational programs
- Individual sports activities like running clubs or swim clubs
- Active older adult programs
- Sport training (non-elite)
- Day camps and summer camps
- Sports tournaments and races⁶

Step 4: Implement Quality Standards to Assess Community Centre Support.

Where public funds are invested, the City of Saint John should make its support contingent upon a requirement that all programs offered within a facility adhere to recognized quality standards. Accordingly, the City of Saint John should focus and direct its funding in community centres to achieve results by investing in people and the community association through:

- **Training:** Community centre associations and partners must work together with the City of Saint John to provide proper training (e.g. Canadian Sport for Life; High Five⁷; etc.) for those volunteers in key positions (e.g. how-to manuals; standardized job descriptions).
- **Governance:** The City of Saint John understands that good organizational governance is the first step to ensuring the needs of the community are met.
- **Volunteer Development:** Community developers from the City of Saint John can provide training and support for community centre associations and partners to help them foster greater access to youth volunteers, potentially through high school curriculum programs, retirees and seniors.
- **Collaboration:** The City of Saint John will encourage and foster the sharing of trained and skilled volunteers between community centres that create opportunities for development of greater capacity and expertise in specific programs, fundraising, youth engagement, etc. and to reduce or avoid duplication.

Step 5: Decommission the Somerset Community Centre and Examine the Feasibility of Supporting the Proposed Crescent Valley YMCA Facility.

In 2012 the Saint John YMCA announced plans for a

69,000 square foot facility multi-purpose recreation community centre located on the north side of Churchill Boulevard in Crescent Valley. The YMCA proposal is clearly the most advanced project in terms of its implementation. The proposed facility is intended as major asset in the Province's 20-year redevelopment plan for Crescent Valley which transforms the neighbourhood into a mixed-income community. The centre will facilitate the healthy/active living philosophy and promote a sense of belonging and ownership for the residents of this community.

In alignment with the YMCA's mandate the new facility will provide child care services, settlement services for immigrants, and government programs in addition to programming for children, youth, adults and seniors. The health and fitness components will include an indoor walking and running track, therapeutic pool, whirlpool, 25 metre lap pool, gymnasium, fitness centre and studio.

The location and mandate of the proposed facility overlaps with the nearby Somerset Community Centre. The new YMCA facility has the potential to provide physical space and programs that would make the Somerset Community Centre redundant. The YMCA facility supports the three guiding principles of this Strategic Plan in that:

- The facility and offered programs address healthy and healthy/active living;
- The facility in conjunction with the closure of Somerset addresses right-sizing; and
- The YMCA's mission as a registered charity, open to all, dedicated to providing programs and services to help individuals, families and communities; offers ample opportunity for collaboration in terms of the City's community development direction.

Therefore, the City of Saint John should consider supporting the proposed YMCA facility and decommissioning the Somerset Community Centre. This action also supports Common Council's priority to "*continue efforts to develop a new multi-purpose recreation facility to be constructed by 2012*"⁸

Step 6: Implement a Facility Maintenance Model.

Across Canada a largest percentage of public recreation facilities, such as community centres are well over thirty years old. Municipalities such as the City of Saint John are now faced with the dilemma of aging infrastructure with no reserve accounts to pay for facility replacement and are facing expensive retrofitting, renovation and repair costs that must be funded out of a shrinking City budget. In response to this predicament the City of Saint John should adopt a managed care methodology for maintenance of

⁶Recreation/Sports Centers, A Look at Trends in Community Recreation & Sports Centers - 2010 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry, Recreation Management Magazine, 2010

⁷HIGH FIVE® is Canada's only comprehensive quality standard for children's sport and recreation programs.

⁸Common Council Priorities 2009-2012, City of Saint John, NB, 2010.



all new facilities and develop a commitment to attain this level of maintenance for existing facilities. The Managed Care methodology suggests facility maintenance operating budgets (not including utilities) of:

- 3.5% of Current Replacement Value (CRV), with a corresponding Facilities Condition Index (FCI)⁹ of between 0.10 and 0.20.

The latter indicator means that the amount of deferred maintenance must not be greater than 20% of the current replacement value in order for the Managed Care funding level to be effective. Five facility maintenance levels are contained in this model. Level 1 facility maintenance is equal to maintaining a facility in an 'almost new' condition and a level 5 maintenance program is considered

Crisis Response where normal usage and deterioration continues unabated, eventually leading to forced closure or complete replacement of the facility. Under Crisis Response, repair is basically instituted for life safety issues only. The City of Saint John should attempt to ensure that all community centres whether owned by the City of Saint John or by a community association are attaining a Managed Care maintenance level of 3.

⁹This calculation also provides the facility professional a corresponding rule of thumb for the annual reinvestment rate (funding percentage) to prevent further accumulation of deferred maintenance deficiencies.

8 chapter

The Strategy for Neighbourhood Improvement & Recreation Program Services



1.0 Introduction

The City of Saint John, through its new function - Urban Environment Services, is mandated “to deliver services that support the community in achieving its long term vision of being a safe, liveable community where people have a sense of belonging.”¹ To accomplish this mandate, the City must:

- Consider the needs of the entire community;
- Create opportunities for resident input and feedback; and
- Respond effectively and efficiently to resolve community needs.

The City of Saint John is currently invested in a service delivery model of facilitation where neighbourhood improvement and recreation programs are realized through the efforts of community partners. Thus, this mandate fits the model of *community development* – a philosophical cornerstone of this Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan.

To improve people’s lives, community members have to organize and work together. They need the power, insight, and resources to make decisions and take action regarding their own well-being. Organized communities can mobilize people, directly affected by a situation, and enable them to take action.

2.0 Issue

Currently, the City has established partnerships with community organizations and agencies who deliver programs to the residents of Saint John. The outcome of this Strategic Plan would direct the City toward a facilitation based service model relying on community partnerships. These partnerships are the foundation of community development. Community development involves the process of organizing, learning and implementing practices that increase a community’s ability to achieve existing goals and to reach toward higher goals in the future.

How can the City best implement and focus citizen-led efforts to define problems, develop solutions, and attract the resources necessary to implement activities that respond to neighbourhood improvement and program services?

3.0 Context

The Municipal Plan 2011 identifies Community Facility Goals that pertain directly to community development in the City of Saint John, as:

- “Promote the establishment of complete communities with convenient and affordable access to key community services and amenities.
- Promote social cohesion and ensure

¹Urban Environment Services; Services Plan 2012-2014; Report to Common Council, January 10, 2012.

*community facilities, programs and recreational opportunities are accessible to and affordable for, all members of the community.*²

The Municipal Plan 2011 emphasizes the importance of “ensuring a high quality of life for residents.”³ Thus it is important for the City of Saint John to uphold and improve the *quality of life* to retain current residents and in an effort to attract new ones. “*The quality of neighbourhood life is influenced by three significant factors:*

- *The community services offered within the community;*
- *The social relations among residents and other participants in the community, and;*
- *The physical environment of the community.*⁴

Furthermore, the 2011 Municipal Plan provides specific policies related to community development that will enable Saint John Common Council and staff to create a safe, liveable community, improve the quality of life and social well-being of residents, and build capacity through recreation and leisure opportunities. Although the recreation and leisure policies of the Municipal Plan deal with various and specific recreation and leisure topics, they are nonetheless interconnected interests that address quality of life. Tables 5 and 6 describe the City’s current service delivery structure regarding the implementation of programs and services that support the improvement of quality of life in Saint John.

Table 5 - Recreation and Cultural Programming

Service Outcome	Quality life experiences that leads to the development of physical and mental well-being for all citizens; and provides life experiences that impact the body, soul, and mind while building moral values and character. A healthy and inclusive community living an interactive leisure lifestyle. Active and healthy youth, adults and seniors in the community participating in recreation and cultural opportunities having a positive impact on their quality of life. A diverse, accessible and inclusive recreation/leisure program service within the community through direct programming, facilitation and partnership delivery models
Service Objective / Level	Deliver recreation/culture programs at city operated / sponsored / partnered facilities which are accessible to all members of the community regardless of physical limitations and ability to pay. To provide wide range of artistic, cultural, social, educational and recreational opportunities (directly or indirectly) which meet the interests of all ages and abilities. 2010 citizen satisfaction level – 78% Future state objective: Citizen satisfaction level of 88% to match municipal norms.
Service Output	20+ community special events 15+ senior programs 15+ inclusive / disability specific programs 1 volunteer recognition event 15 playground program sites (direct and in partnership) 1 instructional tennis program Operate and manage 3 Community Centres (North End, Somerset, Carleton) Contract agreements for 3 Community Centres (Millidgeville, Forest Glen, South End)
Resource and Funding Requirements	General budget funding Full time City staff to develop, manage and supervise programs and services City grants to partnering agencies: Saint John YMCA – Millidgeville Community Centre, Forest Glen Community Centre Boys & Girls Club / South End Community Centre Provincial and Federal Government Grant Programs Fundraising initiatives at community centres Added value programming through partnerships/sponsorships High quality facilities for recreation and leisure services City funded part-time sessional staff hours at city managed community centres (North End, Somerset, Carleton) City funded part-time summer staff hours for playground program.
Benefit or Impact	Youth, adults and seniors (citizens) who are actively involved in healthy activities and have a greater sense of well-being (physical and mental health).

²City of Saint John, Municipal Plan, 2011.

³IBID.

⁴IBID.

Table 6 - Neighbourhood Improvement / Community Development	
Service Outcome	Safe communities that provide opportunities for individuals to develop a sense of belonging and caring through on-going interaction and involvement. A healthy and inclusive community living an interactive leisure lifestyle. An enabled community providing for their needs.
Service Objective / Level	To promote and deliver community based projects and programs that contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods and healthy communities through facilitation, networking, partnerships and use / development of recreation and parks infrastructure, facilities and opportunities. To ensure a variety of recreational, social and cultural opportunities are accessible and inclusive for all citizens through collaboration and helping recognized neighbourhood groups, associations and agencies. To provide neighbourhood residents with tools and support to build resilient, healthy communities (Community Development) Encourage citizens to be empowered to meet their wants and needs resulting in an improved quality of life. To support the Emergency Measures Organization through the mobilization of Emergency Shelter Services.
Service Output	60+ community partnerships & relationships maintained 240+ engagements with community groups, associations and agencies Support of 10 neighbourhood / community special events City grants distributed to community organizations / associations PRO Kid Placements
Resource and Funding Requirements	Full time City Staff to engage and work with communities & neighbourhood groups, associations and agencies Budget support for the Neighbourhood Development Stimulation Grant Budget support for External Community Associations PRO Kids - Fundraising Initiatives, support from Greater Saint John Community and Part-time staff Support of other municipal services (i.e. parks & public spaces service support – neighbourhood cleanup days)
Benefit or Impact	Neighbourhoods and communities are empowered and have a high level of citizen engagement, involvement and participation. Individuals and the community as a whole are socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally healthier. (*Empowered – The community has the power to decide their needs. Role and responsibility of staff is to work with the community to help realize and meet these needs)

4.0 Quantity

Residents of Saint John enjoy a great number and variety of programs, activities and recreation services that are offered through the efforts of the City and other agencies. Recreation and leisure programs in Saint John are provided in one of three ways:

1. Programs operated directly by City employees and offered primarily in community centres and playgrounds.
2. Programs operated by community partners such as the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Canada Games Aquatics Centre, and other organizations that receive funding from the City.
3. Support and facilitation to community groups provided by City of Saint John staff.

The public policy issue that all municipalities, such as Saint John, must address is how to invest finite public resources (tax dollars) back into recreation and leisure to maximize the greatest effect. Recreation and leisure programming is therefore a method of coordinating the best use of public resources to stimulate joint planning, implementation and program evaluation, among all groups and agencies currently providing recreation opportunities.

PlaySJ consultations indicated that although the City has reduced its direct involvement in the delivery of programs, residents display a high level of satisfaction and support for City efforts. A sample of opinions includes:

- *“I have noticed a great improvement in our recreational services available in the past decade which just makes for an overall better community lifestyle.”*
- *“The city of Saint John has a wide variety of programs being offered to the citizens of Saint John.”*
- *“I think Saint John does a better job than most communities to ensure options for all residents.”*
- *“My message to the city would be do less, but do it extremely well.”*
- *“Need quality not quantity.”*
- *“Better to have fewer (smaller number of) quality programs and facilities that are well used and accessible to all.”*
- *“Invest in projects/programs that generate revenue and improve quality of life.”*

The vast majority of recreation and leisure programs offered in the City of Saint John are provided through

various not-for-profit agencies and organizations. The Infrastructure, Facilities and Programming Inventory Study (IFP), 2010⁵ indicates approximately 153+ programs are delivered by no fewer than 109 organizations. These programs are supplemented by organizations; among them are the Saint John Boys & Girls Club, Saint John YMCA-YWCA, and P.R.O. Kids of Greater Saint John. Each contributes to the recreational offering, experience and well-being of Saint John residents. Regardless of who operates these programs, the City provides funding, support and delivery of a range of programs and services such as:

- Before- and after-school programs;
- Aquatics programs;
- Youth oriented ice sports (minor hockey, speed skating and figure skating, etc.);
- Senior programs (free skating, support to senior clubs, senior friendship games, etc.);
- Programs for persons with disabilities;
- Outdoor and environmental education (Rockwood Park Interpretation Centre);
- Scheduling of recreational facilities (arenas, sports fields and tennis courts, etc.);
- Neighbourhood based programs offered at playgrounds and community centres; and Community, neighbourhood and civic events.

Feedback from stakeholders and the public revealed the observation held by many that there is a sufficient offering of programs for residents, and that the right location of programs/facilities is as important as their number. Although there is a good mix of programs, some are improperly targeted and it is thought more effective promotion and advertising would benefit residents. Stakeholders also suggested that duplication of programs is not advantageous, but expensive and inefficient. Residents and stakeholders suggested several programming related issues, such as:

- The need for more winter based sports, ensuring programs are geared to all seasons.
- Accessibility should be a priority to ensure that seniors and teens are engaged.
- Adequate promotion of programs available to residents.
- Develop capacity and promote leadership and coaching.
- Where money is a barrier, work with partners to create incentives to train coaches.
- If families don't have money; the result is that children cannot participate. How should we be funding participation? Fund the participants or the facility/programmer?

5.0 Quality

City staff adheres to standards of professional practice in the delivery of programs and through the support they provide to other program providers. However, the quality of recreation and leisure programs in Saint John spans a wide range. Some programs are offered by recognized organizations adhering to established quality standards. In other cases, some providers are under-resourced or have internal organizational concerns. Currently, programs that are supported by the City are vetted by staff to ensure the delivery of quality programs. However that vetting process is not fully entrenched within the City, nor does the program evaluation follow any established quality control methods.

The question and challenge for City staff is; **what is the appropriate role for the City and how to best ensure City resources are used to deliver high quality programs?**

In Canada, there are several recognized programs, such as Canadian Sport for Life and High Five, that are specifically designed for recreation professionals as tools for ensuring *quality control* of recreation and leisure programs. These are described in terms of Best Practices, and their potential application in Saint John, in the accompanying text.

Best Practices – Quality Control and Program Evaluation Systems

Canadian Sport for Life (**CS4L**) is a national movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity through improved athlete training and better integration among all stakeholders including sport organizations, education, recreation and health. This approach includes all players and stakeholders in the sport world: participants, coaches, parents, schools, clubs and community recreation programs.

CS4L provides guidelines for recreational professionals to follow in developing quality programs that promote CS4L principles:

1. Municipal recreation departments should be at the forefront of physical literacy programming in the first two stages of physical literacy and, where there is opportunity to do so, they should facilitate the transition to more advanced stages through partnership with local sports clubs.
2. Municipal recreation departments should inventory the variety of sport programs being delivered in their communities to identify what is available and determine the extent to which CS4L has been adopted.
3. Municipal governments should make additional investment in the physical literacy programming to ensure that all children and youth develop basic movement skills.
4. Municipalities should (re)examine their recreational programming to ensure that young children are given the opportunity to sign-up for year round programs that combine exposure to a number of different sports, with fundamental movement skill learning opportunities and

lots of skill developing mini-games. Community recreation programs for pre-pubescent children should be designed to cover a range of physical literacy skills, rather than be organized as single sport programs.

5. CS4L- Long-Term Athlete Development “*is contingent on an optimal training, competition and recovery program that is based on biological development and maturation versus chronological age (i.e. although young athletes may be the same age, their bodies are at very different levels of development).*” Municipal recreation programming should be based on this same premise. Strict *age-divisioning* may not be appropriate considering children of the same chronological age can be four years apart in developmental age.

6. Municipalities should have staff properly trained in Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) for internal programs, and encourage training programs for external leaders.

7. Municipal recreation programmers and other front-line staff working in the community should regularly assess their programming with reference to the following:

- Programs are accessible to all children and youth whether they are able-bodied or have a disability.
- Multi-sport programs for the pre-adolescent children are focused on skill development.
- Sport programs are delivered by trained or certified coaches or instructors.
- Sport training opportunities are at reasonable cost to ensure access for all children.
- Sport and physical activity programs are linked strategically with other interventions to address social problems.
- Information material about CS4L and LTAD for parents is available at community centres.

Under the CS4L framework, municipal recreation professionals work together with sports clubs and schools to harmonize programs and create a more effective system for all residents. This collaboration can create more seamless delivery of quality sport and physical activity programming. Key areas where the CS4L model can be a guide include:

1. Physical Literacy Program Development.
2. Municipal Planning and Sport Strategy Development.
3. Sport Councils.
4. Facility Planning.
5. Access and Allocation.

Best Practices – HIGH FIVE

HIGH FIVE is Canada’s only comprehensive quality standard for children’s sport and recreation programs. HIGH FIVE’s mission and focus on delivering quality programming for children and youth is a best practices example that will support the City of Saint John in its role of facilitator. HIGH FIVE’s mission is based on a framework committed to developing healthy children and youth by:

- Ensuring that recreation and sport practitioners develop a high level of knowledge and expertise in childhood development;
- Helping parents to make informed choices and;

- Providing practitioners with the tools to enhance and maintain a high level of program quality.

HIGH FIVE provides tools, training and resources to program provider; support for organizations using these tools; and professional accreditation. HIGH FIVE also educates parents and the general public about the importance of sport and recreation and the need for quality programs.

As evaluators of programs and services, City staff charged with the responsibility of assuring quality programs and delivery would be required to ensure program providers meet these standards through evaluation and on-going monitoring. The ability of organizations to satisfy evaluation criteria and monitoring will determine their ability to secure City sponsorship and funding. HIGH FIVE provides a procedural and reliable framework that community developers can use to maintain and enhance a high level of programming quality.

Incorporating a quality control system such as High Five or CS4L as a City procedure for program delivery by non-City organizations, provides a measurement tool that can assure Common Council and the public that taxpayers’ support for recreation and leisure programs is addressing community needs. Many municipalities require that program providers incorporate quality standards to maintain their eligibility for public funding. These standards pertain to the following:

1. Adherence to an accepted employee and volunteer screening process designed to ensure that anyone who presents a known risk to vulnerable groups is prevented from working with them.
2. All programs must be sustainable by enrolling and retaining an adequate number of participants in order to ensure cost recovery and program viability.
3. All recreation proposals must have a clear program plan, including program goals and objectives, weekly lesson plans, and other special concepts (e.g., guest instructors, fieldtrips).
4. All children and youth programs must incorporate a recognized quality control system in the program design and must be subject to program review.
5. Programs must be open to all persons, regardless of ability or background, and should provide opportunities for meaningful interactions between participants.
6. All programs practice municipally approved safety rules and guidelines, to ensure a safe recreation environment for all.

6.0 Resolution

Researchers have long advocated that the role of recreation professionals must be first and foremost one of community developers.

“The recreation profession has the unparalleled opportunity to promote empowerment through community development. This is part of a new role for recreationists, as we move from a consumer society where programs are consumed, to a more cooperative society where community development plays an important role. Recreationists need to immerse themselves in community development because of the realization that people

*need to be educated about empowerment, acquire self-confidence, and support each other in order for communities to be a better place to live. The results of cooperative communities in the empowerment process will be an enrichment of leisure opportunities and increased quality of life for all those willing to participate in meeting the challenges of community life. It is time that society as a whole, communities, and recreationists in particular, can take responsibility for the future of their communities.*⁶

Diminishing municipal budgets means that the City of Saint John does not have the financial resources to ensure that recreation services and neighbourhood improvements are equally distributed through the city at the same level of quality.

A service delivery model based entirely on community development (partnerships and facilitation) will provide effective and cost efficient services on a community-wide basis through the coordinated efforts of the public and private sectors. The strategy for Neighbourhood Improvement and Recreation Program Services includes the following:

- Providing Advice and Expertise.
- Training Community Based Leaders.
- Evaluating programs and recommendations for improvement(s).
- On-going monitoring of program quality indicators.
- Networking with others organizations and levels of government.
- Funding programs through a City Grants Program.
- Supporting community groups when they apply for funding from other non-City sources.
- Communicating and promoting programs through the City's communication network, website, newsletters, press releases, etc.
- Centralizing scheduling of programs and facilities.

The philosophical cornerstone of this Strategic Plan is based on three focus areas that provide the guiding principles for Neighbourhood Improvement and Recreation Program Services in the following manner.

1. Healthy/Active Living: Services related to neighbourhood improvements and recreation programming, whether delivered directly by or with the support of the City must be of high quality and standard to attract the participation and sustained use by Saint John residents.

Community developers trained as *Healthy/Active Living Specialists* through the HIGH FIVE or CS4L programs will work with partners and organizations that receive City funds to provide programs directed toward youth. Such

programs will be required to adhere to quality control procedures.

2. Right Sizing: Saint John will require community developers to accommodate the more than 200 service groups and organizations that deliver programming within the City. Thus the focus of *right sizing* has to do with determining the right mix as it relates to human resources. Currently, the City of Saint John has capacity in direct recreation programming and little capacity in community development. The City will transition its personnel from the role of recreation practitioners to that of *community developers*. These community developers will engage residents in a number of ways:

- Encouraging volunteerism in recreation;
- Mentoring groups and teaching leadership skills,
- Helping communities to organize themselves; and
- Facilitating the efforts of other City departments and agencies to provide an integrated support system to communities across the city.

To accommodate some more specialized service requirements of the Strategic Plan, community developers may require the following specialized skills:

- Community Development Management;
- Volunteer management; and
- Training in community garden development and public art programming.

3. Community Development: The City of Saint John is invested in a service delivery model of facilitation where recreation services are provided through community partnerships. Stakeholders are in agreement with this mandate – as long as support is fairly allocated and includes organizational capacity building. Direct delivery of programs by the City of Saint John should be viewed as a temporary or last resort, or ruled out entirely with every effort being made to enable other agencies to deliver programs.

Stakeholders affirmed support for the community development (partnerships and facilitation) model and see the City's role as one of *facilitator, educator and communicator*. Under pressure to do more with less, Saint John would do well to fully adopt a community development approach of facilitation and program evaluation that sees City staff out of the role of directly providing programs.

By establishing new partnerships and strengthening existing ones, Saint John can empower organizations to meet local neighbourhood needs offering them support through information; education; and sponsorships and grants. Building community capacity ensures that programs not only meet the needs of local neighbourhood residents; it promotes neighbourhood relationships,

⁶The Role of Community Infrastructure in Building Strong Neighbourhoods, Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force - joint initiative of the United Way of Toronto and the City of Toronto, 2005



partnerships, information sharing, and collaboration – elements that strengthen neighbourhood cohesion and inclusion. Finally, the facilitation model insulates the City of Saint John, from the ebb and flow of changing budgets and fiscal realities.

7.0 Recommendations

Community stakeholders would share the opinion that Neighborhood Improvement and Recreation Services are key to creating an atmosphere of safety and community. The City of Saint John has much to offer its citizens in this regard. However, there are opportunities for the City to advance policies to stimulate additional collaboration and sense of community.

Recommendation 1: Transition from Direct Delivery to Community Development.

Generally the direct delivery of recreation programming by municipal departments is both unnecessary and inefficient. In Saint John the role of the private sector, both voluntary and commercial with and without support from the City, is vital in the provision of recreation opportunities in which residents choose to participate. This leveraging of municipal dollars is critical as such investments leverage funds that increase the quantity of programs that otherwise would be singularly delivered by the City. Leveraging has helped the City by developing sources of private assets that supplement public budgets, shifting the burden from public to private resources. This approach has helped build programs in communities that otherwise would never have been developed or offered which in turn, helped stimulate the city's economy. The City of Saint John should fully transition staff from the role of direct delivery recreation practitioners to that of community developers. These community developers will engage residents in a number of ways:

- Encourage volunteerism in recreation;
- Mentor groups and teach leadership skills,
- Help communities to organize themselves; and
- Facilitate the efforts of other City departments and agencies to provide an integrated support system to

communities across the city.

Recommendation 2: Link Quality Standards to All City Funded Program Support.

The City of Saint John should assure itself that where public funds are used to support organizations that offer programming that those programs adhere to established and recognized quality standards. Accordingly, the City of Saint John should require that all organizations receiving support incorporate the following program standards in order to maintain their eligibility in the Community Grants Program:

1. Organizations must adhere to an accepted employee and volunteer screening designed to ensure that anyone who presents a known risk to vulnerable groups is prevented from working with them.
2. Offered programs must be sustainable by enrolling and retaining an adequate number of participants in order to ensure cost recovery and program viability.
3. Organizations must present proposals to the Community Grants Program Committee with a clear program plan, including program goals and objectives, weekly lesson plans, and other special concepts (e.g., guest instructors, fieldtrips).
4. All children and youth programs must adhere to recognized quality standards in their design and will be subject to program review and/ or certification.
5. Programs must be open to all persons, regardless of ability or background, and should provide opportunities for meaningful interactions between participants.

Recommendation 3: Provide Leadership and Support to a Greater Saint John Regional Recreation Commission.

Pending full implementation of the Provincial Regional Service Commission Model, scheduled for 2013, the City of Saint John should along with neighbouring municipalities begin examining models for inter-municipal / regional cooperation for recreation services. The Saint John Regional Exhibition Centre Commission Act which enables the inter-municipal funding and management of

several major existing recreation facilities is an excellent governance model for funding facilities and would serve as a benchmark for future cooperation.

Recreation in the city continues to be a mix of programming and facilities that addresses the needs of the residents of Saint John and the region. Indeed for most residents whether they live inside the City of Saint John or in one of the neighbouring municipalities, the provision of regional facilities such as the Aquatic Centre and Harbour Station provide good examples of regional cooperation. *“The development of Regional Recreation Commissions would address a number of issues.*

Firstly, it would ensure that the recreation resources of a region are equitably utilized and accessible and that the recreation resources of an area are equitably supported by all residents of the region. Secondly, by providing a mechanism that allows for input from all users of the region’s recreation resources and any future resources, we ensure that there is a means whereby residents have an opportunity to provide input into the system and receive feedback. Finally, it provides the networking and cost sharing mechanism to ensure that all resources are managed properly and that we do not experience further losses or declines in our recreation assets.”⁷

8.0 Implementation

Previous sections have noted the issues and opportunities for enhancement of City policy. Moving policy into action requires a phased implementation. Change is never easy and typically requires a commitment of stakeholders and an investment in time and resources, both of which are in high demand in every community. The following steps are intended to facilitate collaboration and community engagement and respect the fiscal and staff resource challenges of the City.

Step 1: Implement A Community Development Model Based Upon Facilitation.

Diminishing municipal budgets require that the City of Saint John becomes more cautious regarding how resources are used to deliver programs directly to

residents. A community development model based on facilitation would provide a more effective and efficient solution by coordinating efforts of both the public and private sectors. Moving forward the direct delivery of programs by the City of Saint John should be viewed as both a temporary measure and only entertained as a last resort. Facilitation of programs to be delivered by non-government organizations includes a role for City staff to provide the community with the following:

- Strengthen existing City and community partnerships and build new ones through a facilitation approach to service delivery;
- Identify service gaps in programming and those agencies most suited to filling those gaps;
- Monitor supply and demand regarding programming and work with partners to develop responsive programs;
- Develop capacity among program delivery partners through training, leadership and coaching;
- Support the accreditation of City staff and partners to ensure quality programs and delivery;
- Build networks and communication for program partners and stakeholders;
- Promote and communicate programs and opportunities within the community;
- Establish service delivery benchmarks for partners that includes evaluation criteria; acceptable benchmarks; ongoing monitoring; and measurable outcomes;
- Link evaluations to grants and subsidies so that agencies whose score meets an acceptable benchmark are eligible for grants or subsidies;
- Encourage cooperation and sharing of resources amongst program providers; and
- Support volunteerism and assist program providers by matching the skills of volunteers to appropriate tasks/agencies.

Step 2: Implement a Community Grants Program.

Currently community grant funding awards are provided to organizations through a wide variety of mechanisms



⁷Submission to the NB Department of Local Government Consultation on Enhancing Local Governance presented by Recreation New Brunswick, Submitted by J. Shanks, April 14, 2011

and assigned in a relatively diverse fashion by various City departments and managers. The City of Saint John should consolidate all of its community grants under a single program. The proposed community grants program should be competitive with applications for funding being forwarded for assessment to a Community Grants Committee made up of City staff, Councillors, and Citizen Members. Individual City Departments should provide a recommendation report on applications applicable to their specific City program goals, criteria, policies, and requirements. The Community Grants Committee would then provide a written response for submission to Common Council for their consideration and approval, in similar fashion to the annual budget approval.

The City of Saint John should demonstrate a preference to support large community service organizations that have broad mandates and serve diverse populations, including organizations that represent a coalition, partnership or collaborative initiative strategic in nature and in line with Common Council priorities.

Applicants should be required to re-apply each year, and be made to understand that City of Saint John is intent on creating sustainability and not dependence within the community development model. The City of Saint John should clearly identify that continued funding from year to year is not guaranteed. Nevertheless, the Community Grants Committee should retain the option of considering requests for multi-year funding for initiatives or activities that may take longer than one year to fully develop, and/or to achieve or document results that are meaningful, or that build sustainability. Applications of this nature should generally not exceed a three-year time frame.

Step 3: Implement Evaluation Criteria for Community Grant Applicants.

The City of Saint John should ensure that Community Grants are awarded based upon an applicant's alignment with the City's organizational goals by evaluating funding applications according to the following areas:

1. Organizational Merit

- Quality of the organization's creation, production, presentation, dissemination and service activities (strength of intention, effectiveness of how it is put into practice, degree to which it enhances or develops a form, practice or process and impact on the community involved).
- Clear articulation of mandate/vision and degree to which the proposal supports the mandate/vision.
- Distinctiveness of the organization's activities in relation to comparable activities in the City.

2. Organizational Capacity

- Evidence of clear mandate, competent administration, good governance and a functional board and an

appropriate administrative structure.

- Evidence of financial stability and accountability as demonstrated through prior financial performance, achievable and balanced budgets, and financial management practices and plans.
- Evidence of planning in place to support the proposal and/or ongoing organizational capacity (as per realistic schedules, timelines, planning practices, etc.).

3. Community Impact

- Level of public access to the work, activities or services.
- Evidence of growing interest and attendance.
- Level of engagement with other organizations, and community groups from all of the city's communities.
- Evidence of promotional and/or outreach strategies in place to encourage wide public participation, awareness and engagement.
- Demonstrated support from the community as evidenced through partnerships, collaborations, sponsorship support, in-kind support, volunteers, etc.

Step 4: Implement Evaluation Criteria for Proposed Community Projects.

The City of Saint John should assure that Community Grants support projects and new initiatives that are:

1. Community directed and:

- demonstrate commitment from applicants and their partners;
- link to the organizations' mandates and strategic plans;
- build upon community strengths;
- show evidence of collaboration with others in the same field;
- are funded by 50% or more from other sources (excluding all other City programs);
- involve those affected by the proposal in the development, implementation and evaluation of the proposal;
- use, enhance, mobilize or expand the skills, capacities and assets of local people and communities.

2. Lead to measurable and sustainable impacts, and:

- are likely to be effective and to serve as a model for others;
- respond to identified needs and priorities and address root causes;
- show evidence of significant, appropriate and local support;
- provide realistic plans for longer-term funding, if the project will be ongoing.



3. Lead and do not support:

- ongoing operational or core expenses;
- retroactive funding, or for any project expenses to be incurred prior to the application submission;
- debt retirement or reserves; mortgage pay-downs
- office equipment and furniture;
- activities of religious organizations that serve primarily their membership and/or their direct religious purposes, unless the community at large will benefit significantly;
- large-scale capital and public infrastructure projects (e.g. major recreational facilities);
- travel to/attendance at conferences, competitions, symposia or annual events;
- bursaries, scholarships and awards.

Step 5: Develop a Job Description for Community Developers.

The City of Saint John should prepare job descriptions for the community developer positions. The community developer is the frontline City representative responsible for supporting the community and volunteer sectors in Saint John and facilitating healthy, sustainable and empowered communities equipped and skilled to tackle local concerns. City of Saint John community developers

should be highly skilled in facilitation, relationship building, and demonstrate effectiveness in assisting communities to identify and address their diverse needs and concerns.

9 chapter

The Strategy for Trails, Connectivity and Access Services



1.0 Introduction

Trails are pedestrian connectors that weave throughout the city in parks and open spaces, through neighbourhoods, or adjacent to roadways. Trails can be used for both recreational and commuting purposes and are defined by their general use; such as multi-use trails (for walking, jogging, cycling, roller blading, cross country skiing, etc.); hiking trails; and bike trails. Together with public sidewalks and roadways, trails may form a system or network. Trails and pedestrian infrastructure facilitate the linkage of one neighbourhood to another, and to community facilities and amenities such as schools, parks, community centres, shopping malls, etc. In this way trails provide *connectivity* throughout the city.

Throughout Saint John there are many kilometers of both formal and informal trails. Formal trails are generally protected or otherwise dedicated to public use. They are usually constructed or improved, signed, mapped, maintained, and managed by a group or organization for public use. They are typically advertised to the public and may have support facilities such as parking, shelters, benches, signage and toilets. On the other hand, informal trails usually lack the attributes of formal

trails and are threatened by several factors such as uncertainty over property ownership. Nevertheless, throughout Saint John many of these informal trails, known mainly to locals, are enjoyed by city residents and the occasional visitor that happens upon them.

Together both formal trails and informal trails may be found within and outside of dedicated parks and natural spaces. Trails enhance the quality of life for Saint John residents.

2.0 Issue

Providing appropriate connections and access among or between community facilities through trails, opportunities for active transportation and conventional means such as sidewalks and public transportation are important components for successful recreation delivery. Connectivity within the City's park and recreation system includes both recreational trails and the pedestrian infrastructure to connect destinations such as sports fields and arenas to residential areas.

There are no benchmark standards regarding the amount of recreational trails and connectivity that should be provided in a community. **What is the right mix and amount of trails for Saint John? How do these**

elements come together to form a network that links neighbourhoods to parks, and parks to other recreation amenities?

3.0 Context

In 2010, the City of Saint John prepared a *Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan* to determine and achieve better connectivity within the community. This Strategic Plan provides a description of potential trail connections in the city with a focus on active transportation and provides detailed guidance and recommendations for improvement of the City's bicycle and pedestrian network. This Plan outlines a "*transportation network of trails and interlinking corridors*" that creates a central *spine* or active transportation corridor through the city, connecting one end of the city to the other. Because it was created prior to the completion of the Municipal Plan 2011, the *Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan* did not have the benefit of the goals and direction of the Municipal Plan 2011, and therefore, does not fully align with those goals and direction.

The Municipal Plan 2011, supports and promotes connectivity among and between significant recreation amenities that will enhance the life of residents. Connectivity can be achieved in a number of ways: through the development of trails to accommodate walking and cycling, the inclusion of public sidewalks, the designation of specific bicycle routes on existing roadways, and the assurance of good public transit. The Municipal Plan 2011 identifies the following relevant policy direction:

- Support healthy/active living through the provision of active transportation and recreational infrastructure.
- Provide accessibility to neighbourhood parks by a variety of transportation options.
- Increase the quality and quantity of, and accessibility to, green spaces in the Uptown and Intensification Areas.

Furthermore the Municipal Plan 2011, provides specific policies related to trails, connectivity and access that will guide Saint John Common Council and staff in the determination of future trail and connectivity development. These policies support specific topics and themes related to recreation and they are summarized below.

The Municipal Plan 2011, also targets growth and capital and operational investment in areas that will strengthen the city's urban structure and provide the greatest advantage to the community. This city structure proposes an "*appropriate hierarchy of development*" based on an organized and rationalized land use model. Accordingly the **Primary Development Area** (PDA) is where most

future development will occur. **Intensification Areas** and **Employment Areas** are part of the PDA and are located to benefit significantly from future investment and new development. Links between Intensification Areas and common destinations including the waterfront will be an important component of the city structure. The Plan also suggests that "*Park and Natural Areas and Rural Areas will be largely protected from development, with the exception of some resource development in appropriate locations and limited residential development in Rural Settlement Areas.*"¹ Intensification Areas are:

- Uptown Centre
- UNBSJ Plateau/Regional Hospital
- Urban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas including the Old North End, South End, Lower West Side, Waterloo Village and Crescent Valley
- Suburban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas including Central Millidgeville, University Avenue, Monte Cristo/Gault Road, and Forest Hills/Lakewood

The Municipal Plan 2011, identifies significant corridors between the Intensification Areas and "*common destinations including the waterfronts.*" Their significance is determined by how they shape and define community character and meet the servicing needs of users. There are three defined corridor types:

Primary Corridors

Primary Corridors are the main transportation routes that link Intensification areas with other areas of the city. They provide residents with a broad range of services/uses at a "*scale and density suitable to support high levels of transit use.*"² These are areas identified for physical improvements, intensified land use, and enhanced public transit and active transportation.

Primary Corridors include:

- Millidge Avenue – from Somerset to Hill Heights Road
- Somerset Street
- University Avenue/Woodward Avenue/ Sandy Point Road
- Churchill Boulevard – connects Lansdowne Centre with Crescent Valley
- Main Street – east of Douglas Avenue, connects Uptown with Lansdowne Centre and also Saint John West via Douglas Avenue
- Union Street –links Uptown with Waterloo Village and Saint John East
- Fairville Boulevard

¹City of Saint John Municipal Plan, City of Saint John, New Brunswick, 2011.

²Ibid.



The Municipal Plan 2011, sets out guiding principles for the advancement of a network of roadways and sidewalks that will link city neighbourhoods with common destinations, particularly waterfront areas. The right mix of planned physical improvements, promotion of active transportation, and enhanced public transit, will create a system of connectivity that promotes and enhances access among different neighbourhoods and recreation amenities throughout Saint John.

The City's Pedestrian & Traffic Management Service is principally responsible for bike and pedestrian facilities and services throughout the City. Thus proposed trail related recreation initiatives that may impact the Pedestrian & Traffic Management Service, should reinforce the efforts of this Management Service to implement the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan, as well as the connectivity goals of the City's 2011 Municipal Plan.

4.0 Quantity

Existing Recreational Trails

Currently the City of Saint John has the following formal recreational trails, including Harbour Passage, an urban multi-use trail:

- Rockwood Park has a diverse trail system of approximately 55 kilometers of trails and includes a range of highly accessible trails to trails with a higher degree of difficulty for advanced hikers.
- Irving Nature Park has 8 trails and includes the Sheldon Point Hiking Trail all of which are publically accessible and privately owned.
- Harbour Passage has 4.5 kilometers of inter-connected multi-use paved trail connecting to waterfront parks, heritage sites, and City sidewalks.
- Little River Reservoir natural trails and recreation area.

The Rockwood Park and the Irving Nature Park are considered regional parks attracting residents and tourists alike. Located in the Uptown Centre, Harbour Passage is an urban, multi-use trail, used by walkers, runners and cyclists, for both recreational and active transportation purposes. Through the Municipal Plan 2011, the City is committed to supporting and enhancing these facilities as important regional parks; and promoting the "*expansion of Harbour Passage to develop a connected system of trails along the city's waterfront.*"³

Existing Bike Lanes

In addition to recreational trails, the City has also designated various bicycle routes on existing roadways through demarcated bike lanes. Currently the City offers 21.7 km of bike lanes as shown in Table 7. The Trail and Bikeways Strategic Plan identified the need for 68 Km of neighbourhood routes; 29 km of community routes; and 37 km of citywide routes.

As a component of an active transportation system designated bike lanes are the important links that connect neighbourhoods, communities and City facilities. Four of the existing bike routes: Bentley Street., Douglas Avenue., Managwagonish Road, and Churchill Boulevard align with the Primary and Character Corridors outlined in the Municipal Plan. These routes, which need to be expanded, are the beginning of a network of connectivity identified in the Municipal Plan to enhance the Urban and Suburban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas.

³City of Saint John Municipal Plan, 2011

Table 7 - City of Saint John Bike Lane Inventory

Street	Limits	Distance (km)	Year Installed	Road Symbols
Bentley St.	Chesley to Douglas	0.3	-	No symbols
Douglas Ave.	Bentley to Chesley	0.9	-	No symbols*
Manawagonish Rd.	Gault Rd. to Fairville Blvd.	2.0	-	No symbols
Manawagonish Rd.	Birch St. to Medi-Trust	2.3	-	No symbols
Ocean Westway	Gault Rd. to King William	2.2	-	No symbols*
King William Rd.	Ocean Westway to 260 King William	1.4	-	No symbols*
Loch Lomond Rd.	Bayside Dr. to McAllister Bon Accord to Charles	4.6		No symbols*
Loch Lomond Rd.	Ben Lomond to Airport	2.4	2008	No symbols
Churchill Blvd.	Visart St. to Somerset St.	0.8	2008	No symbols*
Westmorland Rd.	Kilburn to Ellerdale	0.9	2008	No symbols*
Westfield Rd.	Road 7 to Acamac to Backland Rd.	1.0	2011	No symbols*
Rothsay Rd.	Brookville Lime to City Limits	1.2	2010	With symbols*
Champlain Dr.	York St. to Grandview	1.6	2008	No symbols*
Total length		21.7		

* Bike lanes exist on both sides of the road; indicates addition of painted symbols on the roadway
 Updated October 4, 2011 - Source: City of Saint John, Traffic Services, 2012

No minimum standards exist that indicate the number of trails a community should contain. The provision of trails can be dictated by a number of factors: use and demand; availability of suitable land; topography; potential for partnerships with volunteer associations and corporate entities; land ownership; and finances. As described in the Municipal Plan, and reinforced in the Trails and Bikeways Plan, Saint John needs to focus its resources and energies on creating a good network of trail connections that encourage resident movement at a neighbourhood level, and community level concentrating on the Neighbourhood Intensification Areas.

5.0 Quality

The enhancement and improvement of Primary Corridors and Character Corridors that will strengthen the sense of place of these sites and attract high quality development to their neighbourhoods, requires well planned, designed and executed public improvements. For this, the City needs to develop and adopt design guidelines specific to streetscaping and urban design.

The Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan, 2010 outlines Design Standards for trails, sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes and crosswalk/intersection configurations. These Design Standards are based on two recognized sources, The Traffic Association of Canada (2008) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada; and the U.S. Department of Transportation (2001) Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Part II: Best Practices Design

Guide; and should be adopted by the City of Saint John for future development and improvements to the *active transportation* system.

Issues of quality must also address year round maintenance. Year round use of key trail connections – such as Harbour Passage for example; is an important element of connectivity. Maintenance schedules that respond to all seasons, result in increased trail use, and maintain connectivity among neighbourhoods and facilities. Residents’ ability to walk, run or cycle on the trail system year round supports the *healthy/active living* philosophy. Encouraging physical movement for all ages in this manner will help Saint John battle its high rate of obesity.

City of Saint John Traffic Calming Policy

Issues of quality can also be addressed through traffic calming measures. To this end, in the spring of 2012, City staff from Neighbourhood Improvement Services coordinated efforts with City Staff from Pedestrian & Traffic Management Services to consult the public on the development of a Traffic Calming Policy. The traffic calming policy suggests the following: “*Neighbourhood streets attempt to serve two roles. Firstly, these are used to move vehicle traffic to and from homes. Some streets are designated as Arterial or Collector streets and are meant to move larger volumes of vehicle traffic, sometimes at the expense of separating a neighbourhood. Other streets designated as Local carry fewer vehicles. Secondly, many streets are integral parts*

of a neighbourhood, used by children and families for cycling, walking and other community activities. Although these two street functions can sometimes conflict, ultimately both must be satisfied. To this end, special steps may sometimes need to be taken to regain an

appropriate balance through an overall City of Saint John Traffic Calming Policy and a specific Traffic Calming Plan for a neighbourhood.”⁴ The Traffic Calming Policy also details a ranking system that the City will use to determine the priority of projects, the criteria are as follows:

Table 8 - Traffic Calming Ranking System	
CRITERIA	WEIGHTING
Street is within a Neighbourhood Intensification Area, as defined within the Municipal Plan	0 or 1
Street has no sidewalks physically separating pedestrians from vehicles	0 or 1
Stopping sight distance for motorist’s view of pedestrians at marked or unmarked crosswalks can be brought within acceptable levels at the posted speed limit	0 or 1
Street has no painted bike lanes or separated bike trails separating cyclists from vehicles	0 or 1
Street is within 500 m walking distance from a daycare, pre-school, elementary school or middle school	0 or 2
Street is within 500 m walking distance from a park, place of worship, hospital, or community centre	0 or 2
Average speed of vehicles measured is equal to or greater than 5 km/h over the speed limit during the traffic survey	0 or 1
Over 1500 vehicles per day are counted on a local street during the traffic survey	0 or 1

6.0 Resolution

The 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan describes a network of potential trail connections throughout the city with a focus on active transportation. This network is based on “existing and proposed trails and links to create a comprehensive connectivity web for all of Saint John.”⁵ Connectivity is enhanced through road and trail intersections that provide walking options for residents. The focus is on linking urban/suburban sidewalks and trails to bike routes to create a comprehensive network that connects Saint John.

Stating that the system must be *universally accessible*,⁶ the Plan proposes “reconnecting the pedestrian grid throughout the city.”⁷ It offers design solutions and standards for the integration of bike lanes and safe intersections based on the Transportation Association of Canada Standards. The 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan identifies 3 classifications of active transportation routes and a corresponding number of route segments throughout the city. Those classifications and number of segments are:

- Neighbourhood routes 50 route segments identified
- Community routes 14 route segments identified
- City wide corridors 29 route segments identified

The rationale of the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan suggests that: “The prioritization of segments is based on a citywide connectivity approach to the trails

and bikeways plan development. Also, it recommends that a low hanging fruit approach be taken to the trails and bikeways plan with the short term goal (5-10 years) of installing the low cost bikeways infrastructure for the city-wide corridors, the medium term goal (11-15 years) for the completing the Community routes, and long term goal (16-20 years) of completing the neighbourhood bike infrastructure.”⁸

The following map illustrates the three priority active transportation routes identified in the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan that best align with the guiding principles for a connectivity network described in the Municipal Plan 2011. These routes are shown on the maps as: Uptown to North End and University in blue; Uptown to Rockwood Park in purple; and Manawagonish to Douglas Avenue in yellow. Proposed trails are shown in orange and illustrate the intensive network outlined in the Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan, which would provide good city-wide coverage and connectivity. Existing city trails are identified in green.

Because it was created prior to the completion of the Municipal Plan 2011, – the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan did not have the benefit of the goals and direction of the Municipal Plan 2011, and therefore, does not fully align with those goals and direction. The Municipal Plan 2011, emphasizes that developing and improving Primary Corridors in Urban and Suburban Neighbourhood Intensification Areas, should be followed by a similar enhancement strategy for the Character

⁴City of Saint John, Traffic Calming Policy, Pedestrian & Traffic Management Service, Version: 1.0, April 10, 2012.

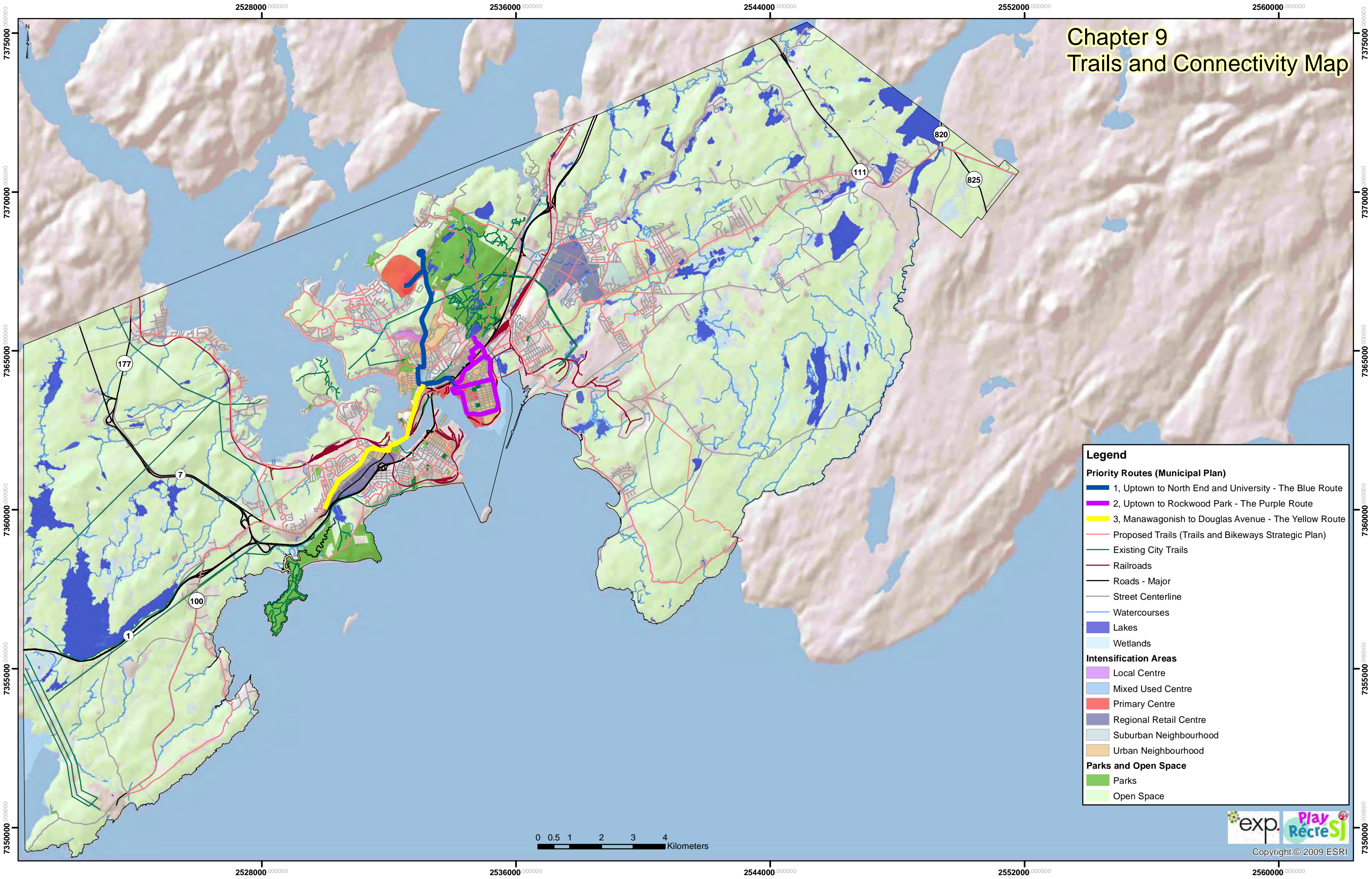
⁵City of Saint John Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan, 2010; Terrain Group.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

Chapter 9 Trails and Connectivity Map



Legend

Priority Routes (Municipal Plan)

- 1, Uptown to North End and University - The Blue Route
- 2, Uptown to Rockwood Park - The Purple Route
- 3, Manawagonish to Douglas Avenue - The Yellow Route

Proposed Trails (Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan)

Existing City Trails

Railroads

Roads - Major

Street Centerline

Watercourses

Lakes

Wetlands

Intensification Areas

- Local Centre
- Mixed Used Centre
- Primary Centre
- Regional Retail Centre
- Suburban Neighbourhood
- Urban Neighbourhood

Parks and Open Space

- Parks
- Open Space

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

Corridors – especially where these linkages connect to waterfront areas and where connections can be made to Harbour Passage and the Uptown Centre.

Recommendations from the Trails and Bikeways Strategic plan that align best with the Municipal Plan are as follows:

1. **“Priority 1: Connect North End to Uptown:** *This citywide spine will connect the university and hospital with Uptown and the associated neighbourhoods in these areas. This corridor has existing sidewalks on either both or one side for the entire corridor.”*⁹

This opportunity is further expanded in the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan in *“Recommendation 2: University/Hospital: The University and the Hospital are one of the largest single concentrations of employment in Saint John. The location of the University and Hospital has forced many of the students and employees to drive. It is recommended that a trail/corridor be located to link the proposed University Avenue Community route north to the hospital and university, also creating a link to the north end of Rockwood Park. A potential connection could be off the end of Royal Parkway.”*¹⁰

2. **“Priority 5: Rockwood Park Connector:** *Rockwood Park is the primary outdoor recreational destination in Saint John. This segment will create a direct connection between Rockwood Park and the Uptown area and provide a key corridor to capture the neighbourhoods in the area.”*¹¹

This aligns with the direction of the Municipal Plan 2011, in terms of directing investment and encouraging new development to the Intensification Areas: Uptown Centre, UNBSJ Plateau and Regional Hospital and their associated Primary Corridors: Millidge Avenue, Somerset Street, Churchill Boulevard, University Avenue, and Main Street.

3. And finally, **“Priority 2: Connect Manawagonish to Douglas:** *The Manawagonish to Douglas section will link west end Saint John to the Uptown core. This will connect a key residential area to the Uptown core and to the University/Hospital citywide corridor.”*¹²

The Trails and Connectivity Map illustrates the three priority routes as described by the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan and supported by the Municipal Plan 2011. These three trails are:

1. Uptown to North End and UNBSJ;
2. Uptown to Rockwood Park; and

3. Manawagonish to Douglas Avenue.

The map also illustrates the trails proposed by the 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan in addition to existing city trails. The trails are shown in context of the Intensification Areas defined in the Municipal Plan 2011.

To provide additional guidance to trail and connectivity development in Saint John, an examination of the three areas reveals the following direction.

1. Healthy/active living: In 2009, Canadians’ most popular leisure-time physical activity was walking.¹³ Evidence collected by recreation and health professionals indicates the continued popularity of trails for activities such as walking, running and cycling – activities that promote healthy lifestyles and that are *active living*. Furthermore, physical activity helps prevent “*heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, colon cancer and depression.*”¹⁴ Therefore increasing the amount and quality of trails in Saint John will increase opportunities for residents to participate in physical activities and lead to healthy /active living outcomes.

2. Right-sizing: There are no minimum standards for the amount of recreational trails that a community should provide, however an increased number of developed trails will put additional financial demands on the City. Therefore efforts should be focused on making small strategic improvements to the trail system that would increase connectivity and opportunities for community use. Two examples are connecting Tucker Park to UNBSJ Plateau; and connecting Seaside Park to the Irving Nature Park.

3. Community Development: The City should negotiate stewardship agreements with local community associations and trail developers that assign roles and responsibilities for trail development, management and upkeep, in keeping with the overall Alternate Service Delivery philosophy of this strategic plan. Through these agreements, trail associations would have access to the Community Grants Program.

7.0 Recommendations

The Strategic Plan for Trails, Connectivity and Access Services includes several recommendations that will enable the City of Saint John to initiate a comprehensive system of trails that provides safe connections among neighbourhoods, community hubs and existing recreation destinations.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Percentage participating in selected leisure-time activities and average number of times per month, household population aged 12 or older, 2009 Canadian Community Health Survey. Heather Gilmour, Health Information and Research Division, Statistics Canada, 2009.

¹⁴Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the U.S. Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health, National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Atlanta, Georgia, 1996.

Recommendation 1: Complete Comprehensive Local Trails Master Plans.

The 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan includes the recommendation to “*complete comprehensive local trails Master Plans for primary local trail system destinations*” and to further study and develop a comprehensive inventory and master plan for: Rockwood Park, Little River Reservoir, Shamrock Park, Blueberry Hill, Seaside Park, Dominion Park, and Tucker Park. The 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan also recommends that Rockwood Park should take priority.¹⁵

The Recreational Trail Master Plan(s) should include:

- An inventory of existing trails in the city;
- The identification of the types of trails needed by local residents and user groups and the mapping of ideal trail routes for future development;
- The identification of opportunities for smaller neighbourhood loops that can link to parks and other recreation destinations, and thus become circuits;
- Design standards for trail materials, lighting, benches, signage, shelters, bike racks, etc.;
- Trail surfacing recommendations which include the types of materials available for surfacing, design standards, maintenance guidelines and subsequent levels of service based on potential and existing uses of the Trail;
- Identification of partnership opportunities for programming, maintenance, operation and enforcement;
- Identification of potential partners that may wish to develop and finance additional trails; and
- Creation of a recreational trails *priority list* to identify which trails should be constructed first

Recommendation 2: Develop Trail Planning and Management Plans.

With divergent landscapes and habits found within the city, and especially in Rockwood Park, the City of Saint John should develop trail planning and management plans that reflect sound ecological practices. Trails must be planned, designed and managed from an ecological perspective to ensure the integrity of the landscape and important habitats are not irreparably damaged. This should be a focus in Rockwood Park. Therefore, care must be taken with regard to the management of public access and how access interacts with wildlife habitats.

Trails are generally regarded as essential facilities in parks and forests. They provide access to remote areas,

accommodate a diverse array of recreational activities, and protect resources by concentrating visitor trampling on narrow and resistant tread surfaces. Formal or designated trails are generally designed and constructed, which involves vegetation removal and soil excavation. These changes may be considered “*unavoidable, in contrast to avoidable post-construction degradation from their subsequent use (e.g., trail widening, erosion, muddiness), or from the development and degradation of informal visitor-created trails.*”¹⁶

Environmental impacts associated with recreational use of trails that should be considered include:

- Vegetation loss and compositional changes
- Soil compaction
- Erosion
- Muddiness
- Degraded water quality
- Disruption to wildlife

Recommendation 3: Participate in Regional Trail and Active Transportation Initiatives.

The City of Saint John is a major regional destination for shopping, employment, health care, government services, entertainment and cultural events. Accordingly, accommodating walking and cycling, and other modes of transportation to and from the city can have many health and environmental benefits for the entire Region. Non-motorized means of transportation can reduce traffic congestion, alleviate air pollution, reduce parking demand, contribute to energy conservation, increase mobility for non-drivers, and result in cost savings for the municipality and households, and support sustainable urban development. Bicycle and pedestrian networks take little space and are less expensive to accommodate than public transit or automobile networks.

Although Saint John would be the primary focus of regional efforts to improve connectivity and access, an approach is required that directs the interest of a collective group of community champions. A regional approach will require champions from each community to come together on a regular basis to support each other in the assessment and development of active transportation initiatives and opportunities. The City of Saint John should endorse Regional efforts to increase trail connectivity and active transportation efforts that flow appropriately throughout the Greater Saint John Region.

¹⁵The 2010 Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan also recommended that the Irving Nature Park should have a master plan, however, it not City owned and therefore not included in this recommendation at this time.

¹⁶Environmental Impacts of Mountain Biking: Science Review and Best Practices, Jeff Marion and Jeremy Wimpey, published in Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA's Guide to Providing Great Riding, 2007.



Recommendation 4: Additional Active Transportation Routes.

Consideration should be given to expanding the active transportation network to the East side, in particular connecting East Saint John with the Uptown core. Ideally these additional routes would be developed in conjunction with planned infrastructure improvements to the main corridors.

8.0 Implementation

The following actions will facilitate the development of a comprehensive system of trails for Saint John. These actions are described as specific steps below and their implementation may be the beginning of a series of actions that will continue in successive years.

Step 1: Implement Specific Recommendations from the Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan that Best Align with the Municipal Plan.

The City of Saint John should implement the recommendations of the Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan that best align with the City's Municipal Plan as follows:

1. Connect North End to Uptown;
2. Connect to Rockwood Park; and
3. Connect Manawagonish to Douglas Avenue.

Step 2: Continue Investment and Expansion of Existing 4 Main Recreational Trails.

The City of Saint John should continue to focus and expand its four main recreational trails based upon the following order of priority:

1. Harbour Passage: Extend this trail as planned.
2. Rockwood Park to Uptown: Create better connectivity potentially through trails and bike routes.
3. Irving Nature Park and Sheldon Point Hiking Trail: Create better connections to the adjacent communities especially along coastal areas.
4. Little River Reservoir Trails: Support community efforts to formalize and improve this trail.

Through the City's Municipal Plan, the City has stated its commitment to supporting and enhancing these trails as important regional parks; and promoting the "*expansion of Harbour Passage to develop a connected system of trails along the city's waterfront.*"¹⁷

Step 3: Implement a Neighbourhood Walkable Communities Initiative.

The City of Saint John should concentrate on providing connectivity between and among neighbourhood parks, playgrounds, schools with a specific focus on the Intensification Areas of the Municipal Plan. The location of schools and their adjacent play equipment, in residential neighbourhoods and in central locations provides opportunities for children to use these facilities for play and physical activity when school is not in session. Enabling students to walk or bike to school via established and familiar routes, provides good, safe access and assures parents of their children's whereabouts and safety.

The City of Saint John should develop a *Neighbourhood Walkable Communities Initiative* with the priority of improving *safe routes to school*. This can be accomplished through the following steps:

¹⁷City of Saint John Municipal Plan, 2011

1. Assist in the Development of Safe Routes to

School: In partnership with the School Districts, community developers with the City of Saint John should be trained to provide schools and neighbourhoods with Safe Routes to School (SRTS) leadership, coordination and management. The SRTS coordinators would assist the School Districts in the facilitation of volunteer development, financial development and collaborations with other community agencies. Together the School Districts, the City of Saint John and SRTS coordinators would champion the Safe Routes to School Program building and sustaining collaborative relationships with other community organizations, UNBSJ, NBCC, etc. and volunteers to increase awareness and educational outreach.

2. Develop a Safe Routes Neighbourhood Liaison

Committee: City Staff would support and coordinate the development of and participation in a “*Safe Routes Neighbourhood Liaison Committee*” made up of local parents, School District staff, teachers, Community Associations, and local businesses. This committee would promote safe connectivity networks in the local area through physical improvements, marketing, and education; ensuring that all residents can traverse the neighbourhood in safety via different modes of mobility or transportation.

3. Coordinate with City Traffic Calming Policy:

Working collaboratively with the SRTS Coordinator and the SRTS Neighbourhood Liaison Committee the City should establish, through the 2012 Traffic Calming Policy, specific initiatives that make neighbourhood streets safer for children to navigate whether on foot or bike. Safer streets benefit the entire neighbourhood.

4. Safe infrastructure for walking, bicycling, and public transportation in school vicinity: Improve safety and convenience of travel in school vicinity and on school property via walking, bicycling, and public transportation by providing safe infrastructure in terms of sidewalks, trails, ingress and egress of vehicles, lay-bys and parking. Ensure that site design safely accommodates students arriving and departing by all modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, public transportation, school bus, and private vehicles, while prioritizing safe access for children who are bicycling or walking (including those walking after drop-off from cars or buses) over vehicle access.

10 chapter

Summary of Recommendations and Implementation



1.0 Introduction

The recommendations and implementations summarized in the following chart proposes a fifteen year plan outlining the strategies, time frames, staff and budgetary implications for the recommended operational changes and capital expenditures necessary in ensuring the effective management of city parks and recreation infrastructure and programs moving forward. Much of the implementation of these recommendations can be accomplished by existing staff resources; however, 2-3 additional staff may be required to achieve the community development model described in the strategic plan. These staff would help to fill service gaps during the transition from direct service provision to community development. The progress on these initiatives will be directly affected by the number of other departmental or corporate initiatives, and will require stable resources and service level expectations elsewhere.

Three time periods for implementation are recommended: **short term – one to two years; medium term – two years to five years; long term – five years to fifteen years**. In some instances the implementation of strategies will be only the beginning of a series of activities that will continue in successive years. In such instances, recommendations are identified as either *Short - Medium Term*, or *Medium - Long Term*. The strategies are organized according to the subject matter addressed in each chapter of the report, and broken down into two categories: recommendations and specific implementation items.

Chapter 3 – Playgrounds

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline		
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items					
1. “Right Size” the City’s Playgrounds.	Pg. 33	Impacts to City Governance and Relationship with Community	Redistribution of Staff and Resources	Short – Medium Term	1. Continue Implementation of Existing “Park Playground” Master Plans.	Pg. 34	Assign Task to Existing Staff Via Tender Process	Implement within Annual Budget Approval Process	Short – Medium Term
2. Develop a Policy to Divest Public Land.	Pg. 33	Assign Task to Staff	Accommodate within Existing Staff Resources	Short Term	2. Negotiate Community Joint Use Agreement(s).	Pg. 34	Assign Task to Existing Staff (Parks / Recreation / Communication)	Accommodate within Existing Staff Resources	Short - Medium Term
3. Establish a Joint Use Interagency Team.	Pg. 33	Assign Task to Existing Staff (Parks / Recreation / Communication)	Accommodate within Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term	3. Implement an Adopt-a-Playground Program.	Pg. 34	Assign Task to Existing Staff (Parks / Recreation / Communication)	Accommodate within Existing Staff Resources Require Community Grant Support	Short Term
					4. Create general discipline Community Developer staff positions.¹	Pg. 35	Staff Training or New Hires	Additional Operating Budget	Short – Medium Term
					5. Implement a Community Grants (Playground) Program.	Pg. 35	New Governance Structure (Arm’s Length to Park and Recreation Services)	Community Grant Support to fund Applicant Organizations	Short Term
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items					
4. Develop a Joint Use Playground Design, Installation and Maintenance Policy.	Pg. 34	Assign Task to Existing Staff (Parks / Recreation / Communication)	Accommodate within Existing Staff Resources	Medium Term	6. Create and Implement a Master Plan to Redevelop the Kiwanis Playground in Rockwood Park.	Pg. 35	Assign Task to Existing Staff Via Tender Process	Implement within Annual Budget Approval Process	Medium – Long Term
					7. Develop High-Quality and Distinctive District Playgrounds.	Pg. 35	Staff Training Required	Requires additional operational funding	Medium Term

¹ See also Chapter 8 Neighbourhood Improvement implementation Items.

Chapter 4 – Parks; Open Spaces; Squares and Plazas

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline		
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items					
1. Create a City of Saint John Parks Bylaw.	Pg. 41	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Short Term	1. Implement an Adopt-a-Park Program.	Pg. 24	Implement with City Staff Resources	Implementation results in reduced operational cost	Short– Medium Term
2. Designate District Parks.	Pg. 41	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Short Term	2. Purchase and Program Landscape Maintenance Trailers.	Pg. 42	Assign Task to Existing Staff Via Tender Process	New Capital Cost Implementation results in reduced operational cost	Short – Medium Term
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items					
3. Formalize the Role of a “Community Garden Resource Coordinator” for a Community Developer.	Pg. 42	Staff Training Required	Accommodate costs within existing staff resources	Medium Term	3. Plan for and Implement Infrastructure Upgrades in City Squares.	Pg. 43	Assign Task to Existing Staff Via Tender Process	Capital Budget Implications to be determined through Common Council Budget Approval Process	Medium - Long Term
4. Develop a “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” Placemaking Strategy for Parks, Plazas and Squares.	Pg. 42	Staff Training Required	Requires additional operational funding	Medium Term	4. Update and Implement the Rockwood Park Master Plan.	Pg. 43	Assign Task to Existing Staff Via Tender Process	Implement within Annual Budget Approval Process	Medium Term – Long Term
					5. Implement a Gift Guide Program for City owned Parks.	Pg. 43	Implement with City Staff Resources	Potential reduction in Capital and Operating Costs	Medium Term
					6. Implement an Application and Approval Process for Access to City Land.	Pg. 44	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium Term
					7. Divest Un-developable LPP Lands.	Pg. 44	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium – Long Term

Chapter 5 – Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline		
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items					
1. Decommission Sports Fields & Baseball/Softball Diamonds and Right-Size to a Population Based Standard.	Pg. 52	Implement with City Staff Resources	Redistribution of Staff and Resources	Short -Medium Term	1. Decommission Surplus Sports Fields and Baseball/Softball Diamonds.	Pg. 53	Implement with City Staff Resources	Redistribution of Staff and Resources	Short - Medium Term
2. Decommission Tennis Courts and Right-Size to a Population Based Standard.	Pg. 52	Implement with City Staff Resources	Redistribution of Staff and Resources	Short -Medium Term	2. Implement Centralized Bookings through Scheduling Software.	Pg. 54	Implement with City Staff Resources	Costs to be borne by users	Short - Medium Term
3. Develop a Sports Field Allocation Policy and Centralized Booking System.	Pg. 53	Implement with City Staff Resources	Costs to be borne by users	Short - Medium Term	3. Implement Field Standards and Management Plans.	Pg. 54	Ongoing	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources - Implications result in reduced life cycle costs.	Short Term
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items					
4. Develop Master Plans for District Field Hubs.	Pg. 53	Implement with City Staff Resources	Infrastructure Development Funds Required – Redistribution of Staff and Resources	Medium-Long Term	4. Continue to Implement Existing Master Plans for Multi-Purpose Sports Fields & Sports Fields.	Pg. 54	Assign Task to Existing Staff Via Tender Process	Implement within Annual Budget Approval Process	Medium Term
5. Examine the Life Costs of Artificial Turf.	Pg. 53	Implement with City Staff Resources and UNB Canada Games Stadium Management	Implement when results demonstrate reduced life cycle costs.	Medium Term	5. Implement Joint Use Agreements for School Sports Fields.	Pg. 55	Implement with City Staff Resources	Redistribution of Staff and Resources	Medium Term

Chapter 6 – Indoor Recreation Facilities

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline		
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items					
1. Require Independent Business Plans for Recreation Facility Capital Funding Requests.	Pg. 61	Implement with City Staff Resources	Cost to borne by the Proponents	Short – Medium Term	1. Implement Community Joint Use Agreements for School Indoor Recreation Facilities.	Pg. 62	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term
2. Adopt Minimum Standards for Arenas.	Pg. 61	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term	2. Develop and Implement an Advertising Revenue Generation Policy.	Pg. 62	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items					
3. Foster Opportunities to Leverage Sustainable Partnerships that Support a Multi-Use Facility Concept.	Pg. 61	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium – Long Term	3. Plan for End of Life Cycle of Existing City Arenas.	Pg. 63	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium – Long Term
4. Prepare Life Cycle Cost Analysis for New Recreational Facilities.	Pg. 62	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium – Long Term					
5. Examine Public Private Partnerships (P3) to deliver New Recreation Facility(ies).	Pg. 62	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium Term					
Long Term Recommendations				Long Term Implementation Items					
6. Develop a Strategy for Regional Ice Sports – through the Regional Facilities Commission.	Pg. 62	Implement with City Staff Resources	Capital Budget Implications require both Common Council Budget Approval and Approval of Regional Facilities Commission	Long Term					

Chapter 7 – Community Centres

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline		
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items					
1. Endorse Partnerships as the Model for Community Centres.	Pg. 68	Implement with City Staff Resources	Redistribution of Staff and Resources. Net budget increase as a result of funding partnership service agreements for Community Centre Operations	Short – Medium Term	1. Implement Joint Use and/or Service Agreements for Facility Support.	Pg. 69	Assign Task to Existing Staff (Parks / Recreation / Communication)	Accommodate within Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term
					2. Implement a Checklist Approach to Determining Community Centre Partnership Viability.	Pg. 69	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Short Term
					3. Implement Measureable Outcomes to Assess Community Centre Support.	Pg. 69	Implement with City Staff Resources	Utilize Reallocated City Staff	Short – Medium Term
					4. Implement Quality Standards to Assess Community Centre Support.	Pg. 70	Implement with City Staff Resources	Utilize Reallocated City Staff	Short – Medium Term
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items					
2. Encourage Community Management of 3 City Owned Facilities.	Pg. 69	Implement with City Staff Resources	Existing Staff Reallocated	Medium Term	5. Decommission the Somerset Community Centre and Examine the Feasibility of Supporting the Proposed Crescent Valley YMCA Facility.	Pg. 70	Implement with City Staff Resources	Capital Budget Implications require both Common Council Budget Approval	Medium Term
					6. Implement a Facility Maintenance Model.	Pg. 70	Implement with City Staff Resources	Accommodate Costs within Existing Staff Resources	Medium Term

Chapter 8 – Neighbourhood Improvement & Recreation Programs

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items			
1. Transition from Direct Delivery to Community Development.	Pg. 78 Staff Training Requirements and Additional Staff	Requires additional operational funding	Short – Medium Term	1. Implement A Community Development Model Based Upon Facilitation.	Pg. 79 Staff Training Required and Additional Staff	Requires additional operational funding	Short –Medium Term
				2. Implement a Community Grants Program.	Pg. 79 New Governance Structure (Arm’s Length to Park and Recreation Services)	Cost of new Committee of Common Council and Impacts on Applicant Organizations	Short – Medium Term
				3. Implement Evaluation Criteria for Community Grant Applicants.	Pg. 80 Staff Assignment	Accommodate with Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term
				4. Implement Evaluation Criteria for Proposed Community Projects.	Pg. 80 Staff Assignment	Accommodate with Existing Staff Resources	Short – Medium Term
				5. Develop Job Descriptions for Community Developers.	Pg. 81 Staff Assignment	Accommodate with Existing Staff Resources	Short Term
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items			
2. Link Quality Standards to All City Funded Program Support.	Pg. 78 New Reporting Capabilities	Cost impacts borne by funded organizations	Medium Term				
3. Provide Leadership and Support to a Greater Saint John Regional Recreation Commission.	Pg. 78 Assign Task to Staff	Accommodate with Existing Staff Resources	Medium-Long Term				

Chapter 9 – Trails, Connectivity & Access

Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline	Subject Area	Organizational Change	Budget Impacts	Implementation Timeline		
Short Term Recommendations				Short Term Implementation Items					
Medium Term Recommendations				Medium Term Implementation Items					
1. Complete Comprehensive Local Trails Master Plans	Pg. 88	Implement with City Staff Resources	Operational Budget Implications result in additional Costs	Medium – Long Term	1. Implement Specific Recommendations from the Trails and Bikeways Strategic Plan that Best Align with the Municipal Plan.	Pg. 89	Implement with City Staff Resources	Operational Budget Implications result in additional Costs	Medium Term
2. Develop Trail Planning and Management Plans.	Pg. 88	Implement with City Staff Resources	Operational Budget Implications result in additional Costs	Medium – Long Term	2. Continue Investment and Expansion of Existing 4 Main Recreational Trails.	Pg. 89	Implement with City Staff Resources	Operational Budget Implications result in additional Costs	Medium Term
Long Term Recommendations				Long Term Implementation Items					
3. Participate in Regional Trail and Active Transportation Initiatives.	Pg. 88	Implement with City Staff Resources	Operational Budget Implications result in additional Costs	Long Term	3. Implement a Neighbourhood Walkable Communities Initiative.	Pg. 89	Implement with City Staff Resources	Operational Budget Implications result in additional Costs	Long Term