



TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD

Leisure Services Master Plan



Final Report

January 2008

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Purpose of the Study.....	1
1.2	Study Process	1
1.3	Planning Context Summary.....	2
1.3.1	POPULATION	2
1.3.2	EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES	2
1.3.3	PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND REPORTED NEEDS.....	3
2.0	FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DELIVERY	4
2.1	Introduction	4
2.2	The Needs Assessment and A Strategy for the Future Development of Parks, Recreation and Culture Services.....	7
2.2.1	NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS.....	7
2.2.2	STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLAN	10
3.0	MAJOR INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES STRATEGY	12
3.1	Overview	12
3.2	Major Indoor Sports and recreation Facilities- Recommended Action Plans	12
4.0	SPORTS FIELD AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES STRATEGY	19
4.1	Overview	19
4.2	Sports Fields and Unscheduled Outdoor Facilities - Recommended Action Plans.....	19
5.0	PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STRATEGY.....	25
5.1	Overview	25
5.2	Parks And Open Space Strategy Recommended Action Plans.....	25
6.0	ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY	34
6.1	Overview	34
6.2	Arts and Cultural Strategy - Recommended Action Plans	35
7.0	PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.....	41
7.1	Overview	41
7.2	Program Strategy - Recommended Action Plans	41
8.0	DELIVERY SYSTEM STRATEGY	45
8.1	Overview	45
8.2	Delivery System Strategy - Recommended Action Plans.....	45
9.0	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.....	60
9.1	Introduction	60

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Leisure Services Master Plan is a comprehensive analysis of recreation, culture and park needs to be addressed in Collingwood over the next 10 years. The Master Plan will guide municipal Council and staff when making decisions concerning these services. The Plan is organized as follows:

- 2.0 Framework for Service Delivery
- 3.0 Major Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy
- 4.0 Sports Field and Outdoor Facility Strategy
- 5.0 Parks and Open Space Strategy
- 6.0 Arts and Culture Strategy
- 7.0 Program Strategy
- 8.0 Delivery System Strategy
- 9.0 Implementation Strategy

Background Reports to the Master Plan were submitted separately and include:

- An Environmental Scan, which documents background information relevant to study;
- Public Consultation Program Results, which report the findings of public consultation activities; and
- A Needs Assessment, which identified parkland and facility requirements. The Needs Assessment forms the basis of the discussions and future directions presented in this document.

1.2 STUDY PROCESS

The Master Plan was developed in three phases.

Phase One comprised the Environmental Scan of current, and anticipated future, conditions in Collingwood with respect to: population; parks, recreation and culture services; and leisure trends and best practices in service provision. It also included a review of the supply and use of parks, and recreation and culture facilities in the Town. A Vision and Future Directions Workshop was also held at which Town representatives articulated a preferred future for leisure services in Collingwood.

Phase Two included the Public Consultation Program, comprising a public meeting, focus groups, a survey of sport and recreation user groups, a survey of arts and culture user groups, submissions from volunteer community organizations, and personal interviews with key informants and municipal staff.

A detailed Needs Assessment was completed during the second part of Phase Two. This assessment determined requirements for future recreation and culture facilities and parks. The Needs Assessment was followed by a second workshop at which municipal representatives discussed the manner in which the Town should meet future needs.

Phase Three involved the preparation of the Master Plan, based on the result of all previous work. It details the strategies by which recreation and culture needs in Collingwood will be met over the next ten years. The Plan includes an implementation strategy that outlines responsibilities, and as warranted, order of magnitude costs associated with its recommended directions.

Note to the Reader: The public consultation activities, research and analysis for the Master Plan were undertaken in 2005 and 2006. Initially, a draft Master Plan was prepared in September 2006 for review with the Council and the community. However, due to considerable uncertainty surrounding population projections for the Town, this review was delayed and long term growth projections were re-visited by the Town in late 2006. This ultimately resulted in new projections and significantly different planning assumptions. Recommendations for facilities and parkland that were population based were therefore reviewed and revised. This process was initiated in the Spring of 2007 and as a result a revised Environmental Scan background report; Needs Assessment report and Final Master Plan were released in May and June 2007. The Final Report was further adjusted due to new developments in the Fall of 2007 and this final version was released in January 2008.

1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT SUMMARY

The Environmental Scan referred to above, provides detailed information on the planning context for the Master Plan. Discussion in this section therefore, is limited to a brief summary of key contextual variables. Relevant information is also presented throughout the document.

1.3.1 POPULATION

Collingwood's population is expected to grow to 30,000 people over the next 10 years, which represents a 30% increase from the estimated 2006 total of 23,000. By 2031 the population is projected to be 37,300.

The Town will continue to attract an older population. In 2001, about 30% of the Town's population was over 55 years, compared with 22% in Ontario. The average age in Collingwood was 41 years in 2001 compared to 37.2 in Ontario. Development in adjacent municipalities (such as Inverness in Blue Mountain) will spur population growth in Collingwood and attract a mix of permanent and seasonal residents.

1.3.2 EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

While current facilities are largely meeting existing demand, new facilities will be needed to serve population growth to 2016. Growth in the order of 7,000 people will support a number of new indoor facilities, including an arena, gymnasium and multi-purpose rooms, as well as a multi-purpose playing field. However, as a facility solely supported by the Town, a major, new indoor aquatic complex is not feasible in the 10 years covered by the Master Plan (assuming existing facilities are retained). There may, however, be merit in pursuing these facilities in consultation with neighbouring municipalities as a regional serving multi-use complex.

The Town also requires a number of new unscheduled and unstructured facilities, including a new skateboard park, splash pads and multipurpose sport pads.

Collingwood has an excellent trail network and has been expanding and improving waterfront parkland for a number of years; however, additional neighbourhood parks and improvements to the quality and maintenance of existing parks are required.

Arts and cultural programs and facilities, which have been an issue in the community for many years, are also needed; however, further study is needed to clarify the Town's role and commitment to the arts; the role of the arts community and specifically whether this sector will organize in support of the arts; and the extent to which arts facilities are (or should) serve a regional market.

1.3.3 PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND REPORTED NEEDS

The results of the public consultation program are presented in detail in a background report and this should be consulted for relevant information. Key themes that emerged from the public consultation activities include:

- Limited outstanding demand for facility time among current sports and recreation organizations was reported. However, most groups reported current facilities are used to capacity and additional facilities will be required in the future. In addition, some groups are using facilities outside of Collingwood and would transfer these activities to local facilities if available.
- Art and cultural groups indicated a need for specialized facilities suitable for their activities and programs.
- Both sports and arts volunteers reported concerns with a number of organizational issues including insurance, volunteer recruitment, marketing and promotion, etc.
- Arts groups indicated a strong need for improved communication and coordination within the arts sector and with the Town. Some type of Arts Coordinating Committee was supported.
- Interest was expressed in expanding the range of program opportunities in Collingwood. While traditional sport and recreation interests were well represented, arts and cultural activities and programming for youth, for unstructured recreational activities and other special interests were not well reflected in the current supply.
- Expanded and more effective partnerships were supported.
- The challenge of responding to growth was frequently noted, as was a need for improved management of leisure services (e.g. better planning and priority setting, improved policies, etc.).
- Support was expressed for active living and health promotion efforts.
- The trails system was frequently identified as one of Collingwood's most significant leisure assets.

2.0 FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes an overall framework for parks, recreation and culture in the Town of Collingwood by describing a role for leisure services in Collingwood. We have summarized the results of the Needs Assessment and discussed the challenges facing the Town as it defines its role in service delivery. Broad strategies and action plans that will guide the Department in the next ten years are introduced.

While the Master Plan describes facility, parkland and program requirements; it places considerable emphasis on the Town's interest and objectives in building a strong parks, recreation and culture system in Collingwood. Collingwood does not have a Mission Statement or an agreed upon statement of purpose or goals for leisure services. This is a limitation that should be corrected for a number of reasons, including:

- Community input identified a variety of often-conflicting perspectives on the role of the Department and the relative priority that should be placed on various areas of service;
- The Leisure Services Department currently is involved in a wide range of activities, some of which are not traditionally associated with parks and recreation departments, including a strong emphasis on major events that serve visitors. While special events for visitors may be appropriate, this should be reflected in the Department's mandate if Council considers it a legitimate role;
- The roles, responsibilities and priorities of municipal recreation departments are under constant review and pressure to respond to new and emerging interests and political priorities. The Provincial government's current emphasis on health and health promotion is increasingly reflected in the programs and priorities of municipal recreation departments. Similarly, the growth of the "creative cities" movement has increased interest in local cultural resources and the role of the arts in the community. The environment and green and healthy city initiatives are also being embraced by a growing number of municipal recreation departments. These many and sometimes conflicting pressures must be reconciled as the Department adopts a role and sets priorities;
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities will contribute to realistic expectations for service among residents, volunteer recreation associations and other service providers. At this time, these expectations are not grounded in any clear sense of the Department's role. A clearer definition of roles will also ensure the Department is clearly focused on the priorities that have been approved by Council and this will contribute to more efficient use of scarce resources;
- The Department's roles and responsibilities must be defined to allow Council and the community to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery. The Department should be expected to prepare annual operating plans that set out key projects and initiatives and targets for service provision. These plans can be used by Council to evaluate the Department's performance and hold the Department accountable for its activities. In the absence of a clearly stated purpose, it is not possible to introduce this accountability into the management of municipal leisure services; and
- Without a clearly defined role, it is difficult for the municipality to address new and changing demands for leisure services in a consistent and coordinated fashion.

The Master Plan will repeatedly return to the role of the Department and the function of leisure services in the municipality. Recommendations, which call for the review of existing roles and responsibilities, are rooted in the following considerations:

- A recognition of the social, personal, health, and environmental benefits of leisure;
- The need for municipalities to operate in a cost-effective manner to serve a wide range of interests with limited resources;
- The trend to deliver leisure programs in partnership with other community agencies, including those involved in the health, social service, environmental, tourism, community volunteer, and business sectors; and
- The need to achieve an appropriate balance among all leisure interests.

Recreation departments in Ontario generally fulfill three key functions. The first and most basic task assumed by most departments is the ongoing development of new facilities and services and the operation and maintenance of the physical infrastructure of recreation facilities and parks. While in many respects Collingwood has continued to build the infrastructure required to meet the community's needs, and in some cases, such as the trails, has gone beyond this, there are issues associated with the maintenance of existing resources and the Town will face challenges in keeping pace with future population growth.

A second function of most recreation departments is to ensure leisure programs and activities are available to community residents. Collingwood, like most departments, has fulfilled this function primarily by supporting the efforts of other program providers, including the YMCA and the volunteer sector. This is a legitimate program role for the Department, however, it does not appear that sufficient municipal resources have been invested in program support and stronger partnerships are undoubtedly possible. A particular concern in Collingwood has been the attention paid to sports and recreational pursuits relative to arts and cultural interests. As noted above, the Department's role must strike an appropriate balance among all leisure interests. There is strong feeling among the arts community that this balance has not been achieved in Collingwood.

The third responsibility of municipal departments is to act as a manager of leisure services on behalf of all providers. As a manager, the municipality's role is to ensure leisure needs are being met through a variety of means and service providers, and that efforts are not being duplicated. As a manager of leisure services, staff work with community agencies (e.g., health and social services, boards of education, conservation authorities, community organizations, the private sector etc.) to provide opportunities that support a healthy lifestyle, provide safe and challenging options for developing skills, create opportunities for social interaction, promote economic growth and diversity through tourism activities; and encourage environmental awareness, conservation and protection.

Municipalities accomplish these objectives through partnerships, ongoing identification of needs and suitable providers, supportive policies, communication and co-ordination. To support the manager role the municipality will have primary responsibility for research, evaluation, policy development, promotion, communication, co-ordination and long range planning functions. Finally, in recent years, new management approaches and a stronger focus on defining outcomes and measuring performance relative to those

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

outcomes has been a part of these municipal management responsibilities. Collingwood does not adequately address its role and responsibility for managing leisure services.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the role of this Master Plan in the future of Collingwood's parks, recreation and cultural services. Long time residents have seen changes in Collingwood in the past 20 years, and many of these are significant. The local economy, which was once characterized by major industries, is increasingly dominated by service and tourism businesses. With this change Collingwood has reclaimed its waterfront and transferred heavy industrial uses to a mix of recreational, residential and retail. The population composition is shifting with the new economy and Collingwood has seen new residential development and major retail establishments serving both the local and regional market.

Yet for all of these changes, in many respects the parks, recreation and cultural system has not changed. The Eddie Bush Arena, the YMCA, the municipal Fitness Centre, the Curling Rink, Centennial Pool and most of the Town's major parks were in place (or well into the planning stages) when the Town did its first Master Plan in 1983. The 1983 Master Plan identified an expressed need for improved cultural facilities, which has still not been realized. The 1983 Plan also called for improved public access to the waterfront and for a recreational trails system - the two areas where the Town has perhaps made the greatest strides in the past 20 years. However, in large part, the Town is dealing with a parks, recreation and cultural system today that is a product of and reflects Collingwood in the 1980s. When the 1983 Plan was done the Town's population was about 12,500. In the past 20 years the population in Collingwood has increased by about 10,000. In the next 10 years – which is the term of this Plan – the population will increase by 7,000 and further growth may be expected beyond this date. Consequently, Collingwood will have to deal with the changes that accompany this population growth.

This Master Plan marks a significant turning point in the Town's development. It is the Plan that should guide the community into a new stage of its development – the transition from a community of 20,000 to one of 30,000 and ultimately over 37,000, the shift from an industrial economy to a service and tourism economy, and demographic changes, including more older adults and seasonal residents. In some respects this will mean abandoning facilities, services and approaches to doing business that characterized the old Collingwood and defining a new future.

The Master Plan is an appropriate time to take stock of where the community has been and where it should be headed. It is also an appropriate time to adopt a long-term view that acknowledges the fact that Collingwood is changing. There are a number of issues in the community that should be evaluated with this point of view; including:

- The future of the YMCA facility and its capability to continue to serve the community. The YMCA has long recognized the space and functional limitations of the current building and has considered a variety of options for addressing these;
- The need to replace the Town's current Recreation Centre;
- Proposals to rebuild and refurbish existing facilities, such as the Centennial Pool; and
- The suggestion that the outdoor rink should be enclosed to act as the Town's second arena.

In our view, some of the proposals surrounding these issues reflect incremental, short-term initiatives that may have been appropriate in the past but no longer reflect Collingwood's future. The effective resolution of these issues and the successful implementation of this Master Plan demand a new Vision and a long-term perspective that acknowledges the Town is planning for a very different community.

2.2 THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

As noted earlier, this report builds on the Needs Assessment and identifies a strategy for the future development of parks, recreation and culture services in the Town. The strategy encompasses the facility and park needs determined in the assessment but also clearly identifies the municipal initiatives necessary to meet these needs. These initiatives include developing new or improved policies, confirming roles and responsibilities, completing additional planning studies, adding staff and revising operating procedures. They are captured in six strategies and 19 Action Plans.

The Action Plans identified in this report will be the municipality's focus for the next ten years and largely describe the priority undertakings to build a superior park, recreation and culture system. The recommendations from the Needs Assessment are outlined in Section 2.2.1 and the Strategies and Action Plans are summarized in Section 2.2.2 and discussed in the remainder of the report.

2.2.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

The following are the conclusions from the Master Plan Needs Assessment.

Aquatic Facilities

- The existing supplies of aquatic facilities are adequate for current residents, but both the number and types of facilities will not satisfactorily serve future residents.
- Projected population growth to 30,000 by 2016 alone will not create enough demand for a second major indoor pool in Collingwood, but the existing YMCA facility does not currently meet the full range of needs in the community. The Recplex in Wasaga Beach may met some needs, but increasing pressure for a new indoor pool should be expected before 2016.
- By 2031 Collingwood's population of 37,300 would likely be sufficient to support a second aquatic facility. However, this is still a relatively small market for a pool and it is unlikely that the YMCA alone can adequately meet needs until this time. An alternate strategy is the development of a regional facility. Recent Master Plans in Clearview and the Town of Blue Mountain have identified demands for an indoor pool and the combined regional population would make this a more viable proposition that might be developed within the next ten years. Any future pool should be designed to accommodate the widest possible range of programming and have features not found in Collingwood's existing pools, including therapeutic features to accommodate the needs of an aging population
- The existing outdoor pool could be revitalized to meet a broader range of needs and continue to fill a gap in existing services, at least until a major new indoor aquatic facility is provided.

Arenas

- Current demand exceeds available capacity but does not support the need to build a second arena in the short term.
- By 2016, population growth would warrant development of an additional indoor ice surface.
- When Collingwood provides its second ice surface it will have to determine the future of the Eddie Bush arena. This facility will either be retained and Collingwood will operate two single pad arenas or a new double pad arena would be developed, ideally in combination with other major indoor facilities. The latter is preferred from a financial and programming perspective but there will be other considerations affecting this decision. This issue is discussed further in the final plan.

Gymnasias

- While the school boards meet the majority of demand for gymnasium time, the Town should have access to a municipal gymnasium to augment this supply, provide daytime access, and provide opportunities for specialized programming.
- The gymnasium should be provided as part of a multi-use community complex, ideally associated with other major recreation facilities such as an indoor pool, multi-purpose programming space, and specialized program area (such as for youth).

Multi-Purpose/Meeting Space

- The Town should provide multi-purpose space for program development

Dedicated Seniors Space

- Additional dedicated seniors' space is not required in Collingwood.
- Program and service development during the timeframe of the Plan can be met using existing and recommended community facilities (like meeting spaces).

Squash Courts

- The Town of Collingwood should not provide squash courts.

Ball Diamonds

- The Town of Collingwood should not provide additional ball diamonds as the current fields are underused.
- Existing facilities appear capable of meeting future demand, so no new diamonds will be provided during the term of the Master Plan.

Soccer Fields/Playing Fields

- The Town should determine the potential for upgrades at existing fields. If these fields are suitable, they should be upgraded to meet the demand for soccer pitches during the term of this Master Plan.

- The Town should plan for a multi-field site that can accommodate soccer as well as other sports such as Ultimate Frisbee, football, lacrosse, and field hockey.

Lawn Bowling Green

- The existing lawn bowling green will meet community needs during the term of the Master Plan.
- There may be opportunities to relocate the lawn bowling facility to the mutual advantage of the club and other users of Central Park.

Tennis Courts

- Some courts (Kinsmen Double and Old Village Park Double) should be considered for conversion to multi-purpose playing courts.
- The Town should work with individuals in the community to determine if there is enough viable interest to form a club. If so, four courts should be provided at a location to be determined to support club activities.
- Should the demand for tennis grow in response to club activities, more courts should be provided, as warranted. The tennis club should participate in the financing of these facilities.

Skateboard Park

- The Town should continue to operate the current Skateboard Park until a major, town-serving facility is developed. A new facility should be located in a major community park to avoid conflicts with other users.

Multi-Purpose Sport Pads

- A program for the development of multi-purpose pads should be developed in consultation with area residents and a strategy for the improvement and upgrading of Town parks.
- The number of pads required to serve existing and future population should be determined based on community demand; the park development strategy and monitoring actual use as the pads are developed.
- Existing underutilized facilities (e.g., basketball courts and tennis courts) should be considered for conversion to multi-purpose pads.

Splash Pads

- The municipality should provide one Town-serving splash pad, in a major park designed to be a destination point for the use of these facilities.
- Consideration should be given to developing the major splash pad in conjunction with a revitalized outdoor swimming pool at the Heritage Park location.

Outdoor Rink

- The Town should maintain the existing outdoor rink as a venue for family and recreational skating.

- During the term of this plan, the Town should investigate the feasibility of installing a roof over the rink to provide shelter during the winter and extend the use of the facility. However, the facility should continue to act as a recreational skating venue and a more permanent enclosure to serve as a second ice surface is not recommended.
- No additional outdoor ice surfaces should be provided during the term of the Plan.

Parkland and Open Space

- In anticipation of population growth to 2016, the Town would require 14 acres of Neighbourhood Parkland and 17.5 acres of Community Parkland to maintain levels of supply consistent with Official Plan guidelines. Additional work is required to confirm actual levels of future supply and the appropriate distribution of open space among Neighbourhood and Community Parks and other types of open space in the community.

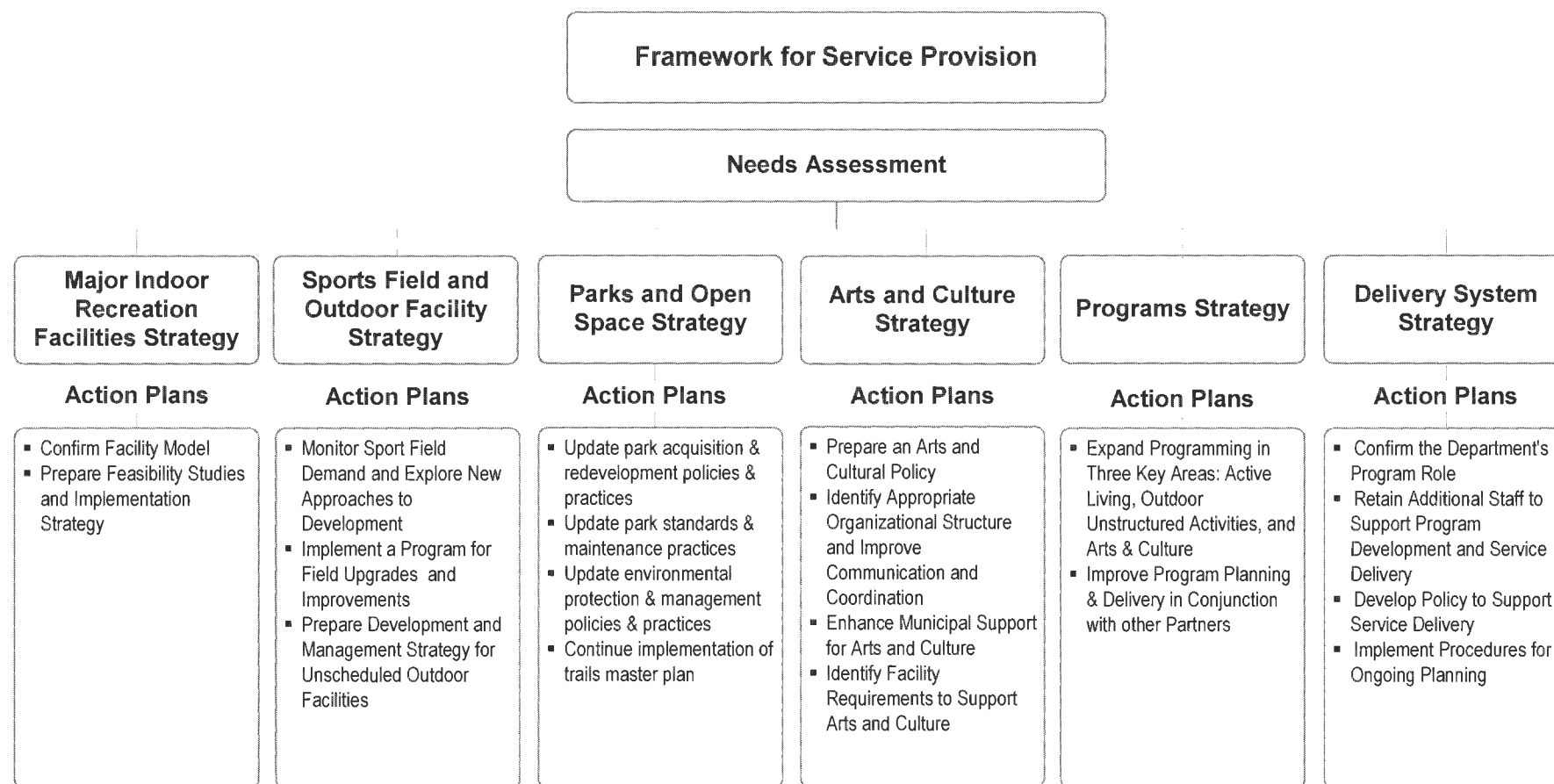
Arts and Cultural Facilities

There is a longstanding interest in the expansion of arts and cultural opportunities in Collingwood. There have been a number of studies in the past exploring the feasibility of arts facilities but no progress has been made with implementation, at least in part because the population has not been sufficient to support major facilities. The public consultation program for the Master Plan reiterated a strong interest in improved services and the limitations of existing facilities for arts and cultural activities. While there is clearly a need for new arts and cultural facilities to support expanded programming, the scale of the development is to be determined as is the need for specialized and higher order facilities, such as a performing arts centre or dedicated gallery space. Furthermore, in Collingwood the development of major facilities for the arts must follow a number of other initiatives that would clarify the Town's role and commitment to the arts and the role of the arts community.

2.2.2 STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLAN

Figure 2.1 is an overview of the Strategies and the Action Plans discussed in this report.

Figure 2.1: Leisure Services Master Plan – Action Plans



3.0 MAJOR INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES STRATEGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

Collingwood has been well served by both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities in the past. The basic infrastructure of municipal facilities and those available from other providers, including the YMCA and the Boards of Education have generally met the community's needs. In recent years, it has been increasingly apparent that these facilities were no longer keeping pace with community demand. The Town completed an in-depth feasibility study for major indoor facilities in 2004 and while the recommended facilities were not developed, unmet needs were identified.

While current demand does not justify immediate development, the anticipated population growth will create the need for a number of new major facilities. Some of these, including a second arena, gymnasium and expanded multi-purpose space can be supported within the ten year time frame of this plan; others such as an indoor pool will not be required in this period however may be pursued if the Town develops facilities in conjunction with neighbouring municipalities for the regional market. There is also a need for improved arts and cultural facilities, and these too might serve a regional market. Many of the issues that must be resolved in the indoor facility strategy have been addressed in Collingwood in recent years with the feasibility study and proposal to build a major multi-purpose complex. These issues were not satisfactorily resolved in the previous studies and must be revisited.

The Needs Assessment for this Plan confirms indoor facility requirements identified previously to serve new population growth. Collingwood's population growth and demographic changes will drive the need for an expansion in the supply of major indoor recreation facilities. The Major Indoor Recreation Facilities Strategy addresses this need. While this plan has a ten-year timeframe, for major facilities it would be prudent to look beyond 2016 and plan for the Town's longer term needs when its population will be in the order of 38,000 and the regional population will be considerably higher. The Town's focus for major indoor facilities can be captured in two Action Plans, as noted below.

3.2 MAJOR INDOOR SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES- RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS

Action Plan #1: Confirm a Comprehensive Facility Development Model for Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities

Action Plan #2: Implement a Strategy for Developing Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
Action Plan #1: Confirm a Comprehensive Facility Development Model for Major Indoor Facilities	
▪ Confirm the Master Plan's recommendation that future indoor facilities be centralized in a single Town serving complex. ▪ Explore the financial and service implications and community support for relocating existing older stand alone facilities to a new centralized complex and relocate if warranted. ▪ Identify other indoor and outdoor facilities that might complement a future major recreation complex.	▪ While there is considerable merit in centralizing facilities and relocating existing, stand alone and single purpose facilities to a major community complex, the issue has been debated in Collingwood in the past and further discussion and evaluation will be required to confirm this facility model. ▪ The development of major new indoor facilities will have implications for existing arenas and indoor pools in Collingwood and the future of these facilities should be evaluated against the preferred facility model. ▪ There may be other social, educational, cultural or recreational facilities not examined in this plan, which would be complementary components of a centralized complex.
Action Plan #2: Implement a Strategy for Developing Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities	
▪ Prepare necessary feasibility studies to support the development of major indoor facilities. ▪ Determine the interest in and feasibility of developing a major indoor multi-use recreation facility in partnership with neighbouring municipalities to serve the regional market.	▪ Additional research is required to confirm the market for these facilities, determine a location, possible partners and a business plan.

Action Plan #1: Develop a Comprehensive Facility Development Model for Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities.

Collingwood has not developed major indoor facilities for decades and the current supply and distribution reflects historic patterns of use and demand. The community's only arena is an older single pad facility located in the downtown core. The major indoor pool is a small and outdated structure provided by the YMCA as a stand-alone facility. A secondary pool owned by the Town is also stand-alone and serves an even more restricted market and program base. With the exception of the YMCA that has a facility; community access to gymnasia is via the school boards. The Town controls very little multi-purpose programming space. As indicated in the needs assessment, these facilities have historically served the community but are not adequate for Collingwood's future.

In addition, the current supply and distribution of facilities is an outdated model that would not be replicated today. Major indoor facilities would almost always be provided as part of multiuse complexes to achieve both capital and operating cost economies; enhance ancillary services for users; expand cross-programming opportunities and tournament special event potential and increase revenue. However, in Collingwood's case, the opportunity to develop a multi-use complex of this type was the subject of considerable community debate when proposed in the 2004 feasibility study. There was apparently no agreement on the relative merits of decommissioning and relocating existing facilities, and particularly the

downtown arena. In addition, the desirability of a single centralized complex in what was then seen as location peripheral to the urban area was questioned.

While the 2004 study was undertaken by the Town of Collingwood, it was based on the assumption that Collingwood would serve residents in the surrounding communities of Wasaga Beach, Town of Blue Mountains, and Clearview. Since that time Wasaga Beach and the Simcoe Muskoka YMCA have developed an indoor pool and community centre, which captures part of this market. Nonetheless, there remains a significant regional market for major indoor facilities that is currently not well served and where demand will continue to increase with population growth. Both Clearview and Town of Blue Mountains have recently prepared Master Plans indicating a need for new major facilities, including aquatic facilities, however neither are likely to proceed in the short term if they must rely on the local population alone. Collingwood is in a similar situation with respect to a pool. A regional serving aquatic facility would likely be feasible in the short term and ultimately be a much more cost-effective project. Similar economies of scale and programming advantages could result from the joint development of arenas and other major facilities.

By 2016, simply to serve Collingwood, we believe there are significant advantages to developing a multi-use complex with the following facilities that have been identified in the needs assessment:

- A new arena and potentially the relocation of the existing arena;
- A gymnasium; and
- Multipurpose program space.

If a regional market was considered, an indoor pool and possibly arts and cultural facilities could be added to this list. However, even if regional facilities are not pursued, Collingwood should be planning for the long term when these facilities will be required to serve a larger population. In addition, a number of the recommended outdoor facilities could be located at the multiuse complex. This includes sports fields as well as specialized, Town serving facilities, such as a major skateboard park.

While we support a more centralized facility model that would accommodate a major multi-use complex, given the concerns that have been raised concerning such a complex in the past, this should be tested as part of a feasibility study (see next Action Plan). This assessment should investigate the following issues:

The community's access to various sites that might accommodate the development. The Town's only opportunities to develop a major complex with the components noted above will be in new development areas. None of the Town's existing parks can accommodate the facility. Land assembly would be required. No current land has been assembled by the Town and this will need to be addressed as part of the parkland development strategy. This is discussed further in Section 6 of the Plan. While all residents may not prefer locating future facilities in the new development area, there is nothing to suggest this location would be inaccessible. Furthermore, if opportunities to develop regional serving facilities are explored, a location at the Town's periphery would clearly be preferred by other municipal partners. This should be confirmed when actual sites are identified.

The differences in capital and operating costs for centralized and decentralized facilities. There is no question that multiuse complexes are more cost effective. Capital costs are reduced when space is shared. Operating costs are lower due to more efficient allocation of staff and, in some cases, energy savings from shared physical plants. Because of the operating cost savings, no municipality would develop a single pad arena if a twin pad were possible. The possible cost saving must be quantified and measured against other considerations to determine if Collingwood is prepared to pay a premium for decentralized facilities.

The impact on the downtown of relocating the Eddie Bush arena. We understand that relocating the arena was strongly opposed in the past by some segments of the community at least in part because of an anticipated negative impact on downtown business. This issue needs to be addressed and decisions made on the results of a study that would explore, among other questions, (1) the extent to which use of downtown businesses by residents using the arena or visitors (i.e., people in town for a tournament) is dependent upon the arena location in the downtown; and (2), whether alternative uses for the arena or the arena site could potentially draw more people into the downtown and have a more positive impact on local business. If a convincing case can be made that the arena has a positive and irreplaceable economic impact on the downtown, the facility should be retained until such time as capital conservation costs are prohibitive. However, in anticipation that the arena may be relocated at some time in the future, the multiuse complex should be sited and designed in a manner that would allow it to accommodate this ice surface in the future.

Action Plan #2: Prepare Feasibility Study and Implementation Strategy for Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities

The Town must prepare a detailed feasibility study and implementation strategy for future indoor facilities. This should include the assessment of alternative facility models, as discussed in Action Plan #1. The following are considerations to be addressed in the feasibility study.

Local or Regional Market Perspective

As noted earlier, there are compelling reasons to explore the feasibility of new major indoor facilities on a regional basis. However, if this is to be done, it must occur with the active involvement and commitment of Collingwood's neighbouring municipalities. While there will be significant financial advantages to a regional serving facility, the challenges of agreeing on a location and a partnership model for co-management and cost sharing are often impossible to overcome and desirable projects are abandoned. Despite these challenges, Collingwood should attempt to pursue this project as a partnership with adjoining municipalities.

Prepare Detailed Feasibility and Design Study

A detailed study should be prepared to establish the size and design of various facility components, including an operating model(s), preferred location(s), capital costs and financial proforma.

Whether developed separately or as a multiuse complex, facilities should serve the widest possible range of needs and interests and, therefore, emphasize multi-purpose design. All ages should be accommodated, with specific consideration being given to those for which expanded programming is needed. Additional youth programming is needed and seniors will comprise a growing segment of the population with mainstream facility needs. At the same time, specialized facilities such as a therapeutic pool will serve both

older adults and other individuals/groups with specific needs, and all facilities should be made accessible. The potential to further integrate recreation, health and social services should also be pursued.

This feasibility study will in many respects replicate the study conducted in 2004. It will be necessary to redo the market assessment because there have been significant changes in both the supply and demand in the regional market (e.g. new private sector facilities and the Recplex in Wasaga Beach as well as new Master Plans indicating needs for major indoor facilities). There have also been changes in population projections since the 2004 study that will have a bearing on the market assessment. Most importantly, however, the 2004 study was not undertaken jointly by Collingwood and other municipal partners represented in the assumed “market area” for the facility. The 2004 study also did not address the many issues associated with an effective partnership for a regional facility. Ideally, the feasibility study recommended here will be a joint effort from the outset and will be strongly focused on the regional market and an effective partnership model.

In addition to the possible relocation of the Eddie Bush arena as discussed above, there are two other issues associated with planning for major new indoor facilities. These are:

- The future of the Collingwood Fitness Centre; and
- The possible expansion of the YMCA at its existing site to accommodate additional facilities or services.

The Town’s existing municipal indoor pool (Contact Centre) has likely reached the end of its useful lifespan and additional investment in this facility is not likely to be cost effective. We would not recommend the replacement of the Contact Centre, either at its existing location or as a new replacement facility, particularly if it would preclude the possibility of developing a full service indoor pool as part of a multi-use facility, with or without regional partners. A stand alone replacement for the Contact Centre has a number of significant disadvantages, including:

- A replacement pool for the Contact Centre will be a much more modest facility than an indoor pool developed for the long-term, particularly if planned for a regional market. It is unlikely that the replacement pool would have all of the features associated with indoor pools today and would likely not serve the full range of recreational, fitness and sport, and therapeutic functions required. In short, we expect significant compromises would be required in the type of pool that was developed and consequently the pool would not meet future needs.
- Higher annual operating costs given the need to provide staff and supervision for major facilities at a number of locations; limited opportunities to maximize energy savings from co-locating facilities; and less potential to provide a full range of programs and activities that would generate use and revenue. Essentially, a decision to replace the Contact Centre would continue Collingwood’s existing, outdated and inefficient facility model that sees all major indoor facilities at different locations. This is not a desirable strategy for the future if it can be avoided,
- Less convenience for families using major indoor facilities at different locations,
- Less potential to interest other partners in participating in the development because key facilities of interest are not available and/or the costs and revenues are less attractive to external partners.

These are important considerations and should be fully investigated before the Town decides to build new facilities that are candidates for the proposed multi-use complex at alternative locations. Even if it was necessary for the Town to do without the Contact Centre for a number of years until a new major aquatic facility could be provided, this would be preferable to replacing the existing facility given the disadvantages noted above.

The second issue concerns the future of the existing YMCA and the potential that some of the recommended indoor facilities could be provided at an expanded Y at the existing location. (We have discussed the possibility that the YMCA would be a partner in the development of new indoor recreation facilities below. These comments pertain to the use of the existing Y building and site for this purpose). The viability of meeting the community's long range need for indoor facilities at the existing YMCA site is apparently an issue for some in the community and should be answered with the necessary architectural and site planning studies. In assessing the costs and benefits of expanding the YMCA to meet these needs, the following issues should be considered:

- Whether the site can reasonably accommodate the facilities recommended in the Master Plan but also provide the potential for future expansion beyond the term of the Plan. The Town should have the foresight to plan for a future beyond the Master Plan and any plans for major new facilities should accommodate expansion;
- Whether sufficient parking and access can be achieved at the existing site, particularly in view of any long range plans for existing facilities, including the Curling Club and the outdoor rink, which would presumably not be relocated;
- Replacement costs for existing outdoor facilities if they are relocated; and
- The recommended arena facilities could not be accommodated at this site. Consequently, if the YMCA were redeveloped to meet the community long-term needs for aquatic facilities, gyms and multipurpose space, a separate arena complex would be required. The financial implications of building at two separate locations should be considered.

We understand that there may be the possibility of relocating the existing lawn bowling facility, and if this was done it could provide a larger venue for YMCA operations. This might allow the YMCA to meet some of the Town's needs for additional indoor facilities or expanded programming and also allow the YMCA to better serve its membership. However, the site would still not be large enough to accommodate the full range of indoor facilities that could be co-located at a major multi-purpose facility developed elsewhere in the community. Consequently, while this question should be addressed with further study, we expect these considerations will suggest that the redevelopment of the YMCA at the existing site is not a preferred solution to meeting the need for all of the major indoor sports and recreation facilities recommended in this Plan.

Confirm Possible Partnership Opportunities

The Simcoe Muskoka YMCA is currently the primary provider of aquatic programming in Collingwood. The YMCA also has facilities in Midland, Orillia and Barrie and operates the new indoor pool and fitness centre owned by the Town of Wasaga Beach, confirming its role as a significant regional provider of aquatic and

fitness services in Simcoe County. The YMCA's possible interest and potential role in the operation of a future aquatic facility in Collingwood should be addressed as part of the feasibility study. The YMCA is an established service provider in Collingwood, and as noted above, the development of a new major complex that includes aquatic facilities that can address a full range of leisure, fitness, sport and therapeutic programs, plus multipurpose programming, gymnasium and fitness space, will have a major impact on the existing YMCA. It is not clear that the future market will support two facilities and as noted above we doubt if the existing Y can meet the community's long term needs at the present location. If this is the case, the Town and the Y should consider how best to use (or reuse) existing resources and explore opportunities to work together to meet future community needs.

As noted earlier, Collingwood's neighbouring municipalities could participate in the development of future major indoor facilities and these opportunities should also be investigated.

Summary Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities – Products of the Master Plan

The Major Indoor Sports and Recreation Facility Action Plans will result in the following products by the end of the planning period:

- An approved facility model to guide the future development of major indoor sports and recreation facilities in Collingwood;
- Feasibility studies (as warranted) for major indoor facilities and a detailed strategy and timeframe for provision; and
- Agreement on the role that partners may play in the future development of major indoor facilities.

4.0 SPORTS FIELD AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES STRATEGY

4.1 OVERVIEW

Despite the recent additions to the supply of soccer fields at Fischer Fields, there is a need for the Town to upgrade its existing supply of soccer pitches and to build at least one multi-purpose playing field. The Town must adopt new approaches to managing these facilities and plan for new interests and new approaches for sport field development. The Master Plan therefore provides direction on improved management and planning of outdoor sport fields. In addition, the Town must place greater emphasis on the supply of unscheduled outdoor facilities. While sports fields have been an over-riding concern of the Department, leisure trends clearly indicate a growing demand for other specialized facilities for unorganized use, such as skateboard parks, splash pads, high quality play structures, and multipurpose courts. These facilities are either of inferior quality or largely unavailable in Collingwood.

The Master Plan strategy for sports fields and unscheduled outdoor facilities is captured in three action plans, as noted below.

4.2 SPORTS FIELDS AND UNSCHEDULED OUTDOOR FACILITIES - RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS

Action Plan #1: Monitor Outdoor Field Interests and Explore New Approaches to Sport Field Development.

Action Plan #2: Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements.

Action Plan #3: Prepare a Detailed Development and Management Strategy for Outdoor Facilities.

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
Action Plan#1: Monitor Outdoor Field Interests and Explore New Approaches to Sport Field Development	
Research the Demand for Emerging Field Sports Regularly research the demand for new and emerging field sports, such as lacrosse, Ultimate, and cricket.	New needs are anticipated consistent with trends and an increasing number of new Canadians.
Confirm Requirements for Multipurpose Fields and Feasibility of Artificial Turf - Provide multi-purpose facilities as recommended. - Consider providing artificial turf fields to meet future needs.	Multipurpose and artificial turf may be the most cost effective strategy for future outdoor playing fields.
Institute Monitoring Program - Institute a program to monitor actual field use and develop an accurate, ongoing database on facility use and unmet demand for field time. - As required, assess opportunities to meet community interest in other field sports through multi-purpose and or artificial playing fields.	The monitoring program will verify continued need for fields to accommodate current uses and will identify longer- term changes in demand, which may result in need for new types of playing fields.
Action Plan #2: Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements	
Determine Capital Improvements and Upgrades Identify in consultation with users required improvements to optimize field use and programming potential and confirm a timeline and budget for required improvements.	Improvements will support organized and full capacity use of best quality fields.
Action Plan #3: Prepare a Detailed Development and Management Strategy for Unscheduled Outdoor Facilities	
Identify Design and Development Standards - Identify design standards appropriate for Collingwood for a major skateboard park and splash pad/water play feature. - Inventory and assess existing supply of unscheduled outdoor recreation facilities to determine potential for upgrades/conversion/replacement. - Determine the type, size, design and distribution of facilities to be installed at existing and proposed future park locations. - Adopt appropriate management practices to control undesirable behaviours at unscheduled outdoor facilities.	- Detailed design standards will indicate a preferred scale of development and confirm appropriate locations. - Potential may exist for under-used tennis courts or other facilities to be converted to multi-sport pads. - Existing playgrounds that are in need of upgrading, replacement or decommissioning should be identified (discussed further in park strategies). - A comprehensive, detailed assessment will identify other facilities to be considered for upgrades, replacement, etc. and is the basis for preparing a capital conservation policy, as discussed elsewhere in the Master Plan - Concept plans for new, proposed parks should consider the desirability of major splash pad/waterplay feature and a major skateboard park - There is a need integrate existing and new facilities in a comprehensive Town plan that creates activity focal points, and an appropriate hierarchy and distribution of unscheduled outdoor facilities.

Action Plan#1: Monitor Outdoor Field Interests and Explore New Approaches to Sport Field Development

Multi-Purpose Playing Fields

The existing inventory of outdoor sports fields and the existing user groups in Collingwood reflect traditional Ontario sports - primarily ball and soccer. Need for fields for other organized sports were not identified, and likely will not emerge in the short-term. The potential for new interests during the term of the Master Plan, however, should be anticipated for the following reasons:

- Broader trends suggest interests and participation is growing amongst field sports other than the historically popular ball, soccer, and football. Along with an upsurge of interest in rugby, field hockey and ultimate Frisbee are gaining momentum¹, and
- Collingwood, along with other GTA area municipalities, can expect a growing population of new Canadians with new areas of interest, such as cricket and field lacrosse.

In addition to planning for a possible expansion in the need for outdoor sports fields, Collingwood should consider the manner in which these needs will be met. As indicated in the needs assessment, it is unlikely that demand for any individual new field sport would support the provision of dedicated fields in the term of the Master Plan. Consequently, we have recommended multi-purpose fields that can not only accommodate growth in soccer but also, as required, be used for lacrosse, rugby, football, field hockey and Ultimate disc sports. Field dimensions and layout of multi-purpose fields meet requirements for all activities and structures such as goal posts and nets are incorporated so as not to present obstructions. Overuse, and wear related to the different traffic patterns of various sports, is of particular concern in the provision of multi-purpose fields. To some extent, these issues can be addressed in scheduling procedures that incorporate rest periods, and restricting the use of individual fields to sports that do not generate similar patterns of wear (e.g., twinning lacrosse/soccer and rugby/football on separate fields).

Artificial Turf Fields

While it has been customary in Ontario to build athletic fields as traditional, natural turf facilities, artificial turf is increasingly popular. Artificial turf can withstand heavier use than natural fields and, therefore, more intense scheduling. As a result, significantly fewer fields are required to accommodate the same level of play as natural fields. Artificial turf is most popular in communities that have no land (or no affordable land) to build natural fields. While a shortage of suitable parkland may not be an issue in Collingwood, there are competing demands for open space areas and a strong interest in preserving natural areas and further developing passive park space. This may best be accommodated if less park land is devoted to sport fields.

A lit artificial turf field would cost something in the order of \$1.4 million excluding land costs. From a financial perspective, artificial turf only makes sense if extremely high levels of use (as high as 60-80 hours per week) are achieved through intensive scheduling. This level of use would require scheduling beyond what is now considered prime time. The potential for tournament activity should also be considered, since

¹ Annual participation report of the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association, as published in the Toronto Star. February 1, 2006. p D8.

providing an artificial turf field rather than multiple natural fields will not support concurrent tournament play. The cost-benefit of providing artificial turf fields should be considered as future fields are developed.

Action Plan #2: Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements

The scope of this study did not include a review of current conditions at outdoor soccer fields or other sports fields. The Department in conjunction with the users should review current concerns and outline a work program, costs and timing to correct problems, as warranted. In terms of soccer pitches, if existing fields are suitable for upgrades, then these improvements should be implemented and with proper maintenance, would meet the demand for soccer fields during the term of the Master Plan.

The scope of this study did not involve detailed site assessments that would indicate opportunities to upgrade existing resources or convert underutilized facilities to new uses. This site specific examination and assessment should be undertaken by staff and a plan prepared to upgrade and convert facilities to alternative uses, as warranted. A timetable, costs and priorities should be a part of this assessment.

Action Plan #3: Prepare a Detailed Development and Management Strategy for Unscheduled Outdoor Facilities

Design Standards and a Development Strategy for Unscheduled Outdoor Facilities

As indicated above, the needs assessment recommends a number of unscheduled outdoor facilities that are not well represented in Collingwood's existing supply and/or are not adequately designed to meet the needs of users. Recommended unscheduled outdoor facilities include:

- A major Town serving skateboard park;
- Major splash pad(s); and
- Multi-purpose pads for informal activities including basketball and ball hockey.

The size and detailed design of skateboard parks and splash pads/outdoor water features varies considerably from one municipality to the next. These can be very large facilities that serve the entire municipality or smaller, neighbourhood facilities. We have recommended the former in Collingwood. Major facilities are much more attractive to the user, easier to supervise, and in Collingwood would be accessible, particularly if located with other major indoor facilities. This strategy for development must be confirmed, and detailed design standards adopted for the facilities. This should involve professionals involved with the design of these facilities and a full range of options should be explored to balance costs, appeal and programming potential. In addition to appropriate design standards, locations will need to be identified. The appropriate locations will of course depend in part on the design standards and scale of development. These facilities, and skateboard parks in particular, can be incompatible with other park uses and neighbouring residences if poorly designed, managed and sited. Issues such as appropriate buffers, compatible uses, landscaping, and required amenities for users (benches, sheltered seating areas, etc), should be addressed in the design standards. Management approaches for these facilities are discussed further below.

A number of local serving facilities, including multi-purpose pads and playgrounds will be added to existing parks and to neighbourhood parks developed in new urban areas. Appropriate locations should be determined and a plan put in place for providing these facilities as resources allow. The Town must confirm the number of required facilities, based on community interest and experience with the use of these facilities as they are provided. In addition, the opportunity to upgrade or convert existing facilities (e.g. underutilized and deteriorating tennis courts to multipurpose pads) should be determined. As with other outdoor, unscheduled facilities, appropriate criteria for locating multi-purpose pads must be determined.

Management Strategy for Unsupervised Facilities

A management strategy is required to limit management and operating issues associated with unsupervised municipal recreation facilities such as multi-purpose sports pads, play structures, skateboard parks, etc. The Town should develop an approach to developing these types of facilities that stipulates the desired terms and conditions for their provision. Cost-effective means to improving control for these types of facilities must be introduced.

Facility Design

Design requirements for all unsupervised facilities should be based on the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) - a concept based on the assumption that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and improve quality of life². These principles include:

- Improving natural surveillance - the “eyes on the street” concept and the simple idea that casual surveillance can reduce the incidence of crime;
- Improving maintenance and management - a poorly maintained park suggests that there is little attention directed to it and that, as a result, activities will go unnoticed;
- Developing territoriality and proprietorship - design of the built environment can alter the perception of the extent of private or semi-private space. The use of landscaping, decorative fencing or landforms, to name a few, can increase the sense of risk for potential criminal behaviour and extend a sense of “ownership” into the space from those living or working in the area; and
- Enhancing the control people have over places - limiting the points at which the public can enter private or semi-private spaces and denying access to crime targets with either physical built form (e.g., walls, fencing) or mechanical devices (e.g., doors, locks) makes it more obvious to the casual observer when someone is where they should not be.³

Design criteria should be a part of in the design standards discussed above. Volunteer management and operations involvement could be incorporated in policies on volunteer development and support and/or community funding. The relevant elements in each of these policies, therefore, would combine in practice to create a desirable context for providing unsupervised recreation facilities.

² Doyle, C. & Stiver, J. (2004). *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. The Ontario Planning Journal; Vol. 19, No. 5, 2004.

³ Ibid.

Skateboard Parks

Permanent skateboard parks are recent introductions to the supply of municipal recreation facilities, although they are fast gaining legitimacy as municipalities attempt to engage youth in meaningful leisure activities. However, effective management of undesirable behaviour is generally an issue. Experience at existing skateboard parks suggests a clean, vandalism and crime-free facility is more likely in the following circumstances:

- Supervision, and particularly around closing time at night;
- Direct, ongoing involvement of youth (e.g., fundraising, design, cleaning, standing park committee);
- High visibility from street, other buildings (e.g., schools, community centre etc.);
- An environment that is not conducive to undesirable behaviours (e.g., park elements allow for a variety of skill levels, attracting all ages; integrate facility in a community-serving park with other features for various ages/activities);
- An active committee to maintain the park, deal with issues and foster a strong relationship with, and involvement of, the police (e.g., officers regularly check on the park, especially after closing to ensure all users have gone home); and
- High level of municipal attention paid to keeping the facility and park well maintained and in good repair.

While all skateboard parks post rules and expectations for behaviour, adherence to these is directly related to hands-on community involvement in the operation of the facility and CPETD design principles as noted above.

Summary Sports Field and Unscheduled Outdoor Facility Strategy – Products of the Plan

The following products would be available to the community at the end of the planning period if these Action Plans are implemented.

- A long-range plan for playing fields to accommodate emerging sports on multi-purpose fields;
- Improvements to existing playing fields;
- A detailed plan, priorities and phasing for improvements to existing facilities and capital conservation requirements;
- A detailed development strategy indicating the number and type of new or replacement skateboard parks, splash pads/outdoor water play features, and multipurpose courts to be provided, as well as recommended locations and confirmed capital costs; and
- Design, development and maintenance guidelines for unscheduled outdoor facilities.

5.0 PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS STRATEGY

5.1 OVERVIEW

Collingwood is generally well serviced in the quantity of parkland available to the community. The Town has made a significant effort to assemble a connected waterfront parks system. These parks have master plans that have not been completed and will require considerable capital expenditure and long-term maintenance commitments. The Town also has an excellent trails system that is recognized as a regional amenity.

New development will create opportunities to expand the parks system in locations where development is occurring. The Town is deficient in Neighbourhood Parks and local amenities due in part to the strategy to acquire waterfront lands and the trails system. The Town needs to focus on providing new parks that meet needs of residents in newly developing areas and updating existing parks to better serve local needs.

Adequate and appropriate maintenance is an issue that the Town needs to address. Several stakeholders commented on the need for more attention to park's maintenance in older facilities. As new parks and facilities are built, the maintenance standards need to keep pace with higher development standards. Town's staff is assuming the care of beautification programs that place additional pressure on limited resources.

Collingwood has a history of environmental stewardship that continues to be an important objective within the community. The Town has a number of significant ecological resources including the Georgian Bay shoreline, Silver Creek, Bateaux Creek, Black Ash Creek and the Pretty River. Protection and enhancement of these environmentally sensitive areas and tableland woodlots need management strategies that are sustainable and integrated with the Town's acquisition and maintenance practices. With appropriate planning, the Town has the opportunity to create a linked 'green space' system that integrates the Town's parks, trail system and natural features into a comprehensive open space network.

The action plans with respect to parks and open space address acquisition, policies and standards to ensure that future parkland requirements are met with the appropriate types of parkland. It is essential that the design and development (or re-development) occurs in an effective, rationale, aesthetically desirable manner and that environmental management strategies are put into place. The action plans also address the completion of the Town's linked recreational trail system.

5.2 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE STRATEGY RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS

Action Plan #1: Update Park Acquisition and Development Policies and Practices

Action Plan #2: Update Park Standards and Maintenance and Practices

Action Plan #3: Update Environmental Protection and Management Policies and Practices

Action Plan #4: Continue the Implementation of the Trails Master Plan

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
Action Plan #1: Update Park Acquisition and Development Policies and Practices	
▪ Review and update OP policies with regard to acquisition and standards ▪ Address cash- in-lieu issues and provide direction with regard to disposal of surplus park lands	▪ Will ensure policies continue to generate sufficient future parkland in locations where it is needed and to Town standards. ▪ Will ensure policies continue to support parks and open space development and use that is environmentally sustainable ▪ Will more closely align the municipal inventory with Official Plan classifications
Action Plan #2: Update Park Standards and Maintenance and Practices	
▪ Identify standards and appropriate capital and maintenance budgets for parkland development	▪ Will provide consistent standards for park development and more consistent standards for parks maintenance ▪ Need to identify when more intensive maintenance is required and provide appropriate resources
Action Plan #3: Update Environmental Protection and Management Policies and Practices	
▪ Provide a strategy for integrating the Town's open spaces, parks, trails and environmentally sensitive lands into a comprehensive green space system	▪ Will advance the Town's 'sustainability' objectives ▪ Will support the establishment of a 'greenway system that links the Town's recreation and ecological amenities ▪ Will support the Town's environmental protection initiatives
Action Plan #4: Continue the Implementation of the Trails Master Plan	
▪ Extend the trail development activity in accordance with the Trails Master Plan	▪ Builds on current success ▪ Will support the Town's efforts to promote healthy, active lifestyles for all residents ▪ Will support the Town's tourism development activities

Action Plan #1: Update Park Acquisition and Development Policies and Practices

Parkland Inventory and Service Standards

No significant gaps in supply were identified during public consultation, and the review of overall Town-wide provision standards versus actual supply of municipal parkland; in fact, the supply of parkland is generous relative to other communities. Current supply of neighbourhood parkland is less than half of Official Plan targets; however, this shortfall is compensated with generous waterfront parks and is further supplemented with environmental open space lands.

The Master Plan anticipates an increase in the population 7,000 residents. This suggests that Collingwood will require an additional 31.5 acres of parkland, 14 acres for Neighbourhood Parks and 17.5 acres for Community Parks to serve new residents.

The need for new parkland by the end of the Master Plan planning period is significant. Future parkland needs are anticipated to be at the neighbourhood level, in support of new growth and in a Community Park as the setting for the multi-use complex.

The Town should undertake a site selection process for the location of a new multi-purpose Community Park to support a community centre and a range of outdoor recreational facilities. Ideally, this selection process should occur when the Town proceeds with the preparation of a Secondary Plan for the Mountain Road West area.

The Town should review OP policies to ensure that all mechanisms are being utilized to maximize acquisition and funding for park development and ensure that development applications are meeting the provisions for Neighbourhood Parks and associated amenities.

Park Classifications

Current hierarchy includes: Waterfront Parks, Community Parks and Neighbourhood Parks. Review the classification with regard to category and minimum size of park (review reducing the minimum size of a Neighbourhood Park to 5 acres) and expand the classification to include new categories such as:

- Linear Parks (facilitate green space corridors);
- Urban Parkettes (small downtown urban spaces);
- Revise the Waterfront Park category to 'Special Parks' (including waterfront, heritage sites, unique features); and
- Environmental Open Space (significant woodlots, significant wetlands, etc).

The latter are not considered as parkland in the inventory or accepted as dedications. In instances where tableland woodlots in whole or in part contribute to recreation uses can be considered as part of the park inventory.

The Town should review OP policies to determine if the parkland classification should be revised to reflect current and future parks needs.

Parkland Policies

Quality and suitability of sites for parkland dedications need to be identified and enforced as part of park development standards. When new developments are proposed, each should be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine the parkland needs. An evaluation process should be applied, based on criteria and the Town's standards including:

- Meets the needs of a new residential area not currently serviced by the existing parks system;
- Serves future neighbourhood expansion where development potential exists;
- Is suited to accommodating future recreation facilities;
- Contributes to linking the new neighbourhood with the overall parks system;
- Supports the protection of environmental features; or
- Provides waterfront access or trails access opportunities.

In addition, the updating of cash-in-lieu policies should be undertaken to ensure that adequate funds are available to meet all needs: parks development, acquisition of natural areas (not protected by planning policy); upgrading of parks (infill development where no new parks are needed); and trails development.

Cash-in-lieu should be taken in areas where no parkland need has been identified (i.e. land severance, small plan of subdivision, non residential lands, lands already well served by existing parks). Cash-in-lieu should be held in a general park reserve fund and used for parks improvements or future acquisitions.

The Town should review Cash-in lieu provisions to ensure that these are maximized so that park reserve funds are available for park development purposes.

Disposal of Surplus Park Assets

The Town has a substantial amount of non-park land holdings. In reviewing the parkland supply and calculating the reserve, only named (but not yet developed) parks were included, some of these lands, such as unopened road allowances, are of questionable purpose. The Town should review its non-park land holdings to determine what role and function they serve and consider the disposal of surplus lands. The criteria for selecting lands to be retained should include:

- Has sufficient size, access and configuration to be used as parkland;
- Is linked to the Town's trail system;
- Can be used for public recreation (trail head, parking, picnicking); and
- Development and expansion of public uses does not negatively impact existing adjacent uses.

Disposal of unsuitable and surplus non-park holdings should be considered following a detailed evaluation of the properties on a site-by-site basis.

Action Plan #2: Update Park Standards and Maintenance Practices

Park Design Standards

There is a need for consistent design standards for parks dedications and the development of amenities to be included in park plans. The Town should review and harmonize planning documents such as the Subdivision Development Standards, Site Plan Submission Guidelines and Subdivision Design Guidelines. Parkland development standards need to address:

- Accessibility to parks and facilities in terms of public transportation, design for special needs, and improved design standards for wheelchair access;
- Security and safety (i.e., vandalism);
- Minimum standards in all areas of service;
- Expanded park amenities (e.g., paths, signage, play facilities, water fountains, site furnishings, washrooms, picnic facilities); and
- Focal locations for active recreation (i.e., specialized outdoor sports field complexes).

To the greatest extent possible, parks should be fully developed and provide opportunities for multiple activities (i.e., picnicking, play structures, passive play areas, active play areas) to encourage maximum use and enjoyment of these resources by community residents. Parks and open space areas should be developed and maintained in a manner that is safe for users and protects the interests of the Town.

All major parks should be developed in accordance with a Master Plan that clearly indicates appropriate uses, functional areas of the park, natural and environmentally sensitive areas, and relationships among park activity areas. A Master Plan is required to ensure the park is developed in the most cost effective manner, to serve the broadest range of community needs and to ensure it implements the overall rationale development of the parks network. To the extent possible, multi-use trails should link parkland and open spaces to promote active living, encourage tourism, and protect significant natural or heritage features.

Secondary planning processes provide the opportunity to design a parks system comprehensively. This includes selecting the location of each category of park and detailing the extent and nature of facilities in each park to ensure that recreation needs that have been identified are addressed. During the Secondary Plan process, the open space system can and should be integrated with other community amenities such as schools, and environmental features other public infrastructure such as storm water management facilities.

The Town should review park design standards and harmonize planning documents that direct parks and recreation development.

Revitalization of Existing Parks

Existing parks need to be included in a regular, planned updating process that reviews existing facilities for current regulations and safety and identifies when existing facilities are no longer functioning effectively. There needs to be a regular review of parks for upgrading and repurposing as a consequence of underutilization (e.g. as new fields are provided in sports focused Community Parks) or decommissioning due to deterioration.

A regular parks renewal program could address emerging recreation trends such as:

- Youth oriented activities, skate parks, multi-purpose courts (tennis hockey/lacrosse);
- Water play/spray facilities;
- Running tracks and natural ice rinks;
- Informal open space 'free play';
- Dogs off leach area;
- Improved park amenities such as washrooms, picnic pavilions, water fountains, benches and waste receptacles;
- Tree planting to replace aging shade trees;
- Multi-use trails, specialty trail loops and trail heads;
- Park beautification in locations that are highly visible and associated with Town managed tourism destinations.

Park redevelopment should be undertaken using a master plan process involving community consultation. Master plans should be prepared in advance of major park rehabilitation to ensure that there appropriate capital budgets in place to complete the works on a timely basis.

Master plan updates should be prepared for existing Community Parks including Legion Park and Centennial Park. Currently, both parks are in need of revitalization and repurposing. The sports field use in Centennial Park has declined since new fields have been constructed at Fisher Field. The existing swimming pool needs renovation and should be augmented with an outdoor waterplay feature. The BMX facility needs to be updated to meet current safety standards and would benefit from being relocated to a site that has other more active youth oriented facilities.

Fisher Field has recently been updated to include three full size soccer fields. The site has capacity for two additional fields and support facilities such as picnic shelter and parking. In the future, additional adjoining lands should be acquired for a community centre that serves a fieldhouse function for the sports fields and has other compatible indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Uses such as a skate park, multi-purpose courts, gymnasium and indoor swimming pool could be considered for this location.

A capital reserve fund should be established to ensure that monies are available when improvement projects span several years. Detailed cost estimates should be prepared with phasing plans for implementation. Periodic review of the plans should be reviewed to ensure that budget allocations are 'on track' with revitalization commitments.

The Town should prepare a financial strategy for updating or completing master plans for Collingwood's Waterfront Parks including Sunset Point Park, Harbourlands Park and Harbourview Park. The Town has recently acquired additional waterfront open space a part of the Shipyards redevelopment. The waterfront park plans need to be reviewed to ensure that trail linkages, parking areas and other amenities are equitably distributed.

Parks Operations

For the most part, new parks have been designed and developed to current standards and in large part the parks appear to be well maintained. The park system and outdoor facilities have evolved without the benefit of over-riding principles or more detailed development and maintenance guidelines. The Town should develop design and maintenance guidelines to set standards of facility development and maintenance. While the current practices are serviceable for the current complement of parks, there are no agreed upon standards of development or maintenance and, in the opinion of some, inconsistencies are apparent among existing sites. Standard park design guidelines would describe how the community's parks are to be developed – including specifications for recreation facilities (e.g., outfield dimensions, lighting, fencing, etc.) and playgrounds (junior and senior structures), parking requirements, signage, etc. These design standards will ensure a consistent approach to park development that meets community needs, user expectations and maximizes safety and ease of maintenance.

Similarly, it would be useful to agree on consistent guidelines of municipal maintenance for parkland but more importantly for outdoor sport fields. These guidelines would specify a maintenance regime (e.g., frequency of grass cutting); confirm requirements associated with maintenance and use (e.g., to ensure

that the fields are in adequate condition before they are used at the beginning of the season; schedules to ensure turf is rested and can rejuvenate, etc.); and describe the maintenance responsibilities of both Town staff and users (e.g., responsibilities for dragging the field, lining fields, etc.)

Development and maintenance guidelines are important in Collingwood for two reasons. First, both the provision of new facilities and the maintenance of existing may be a shared responsibility – with the Town and volunteers acting together. There must, therefore, be clear and understood expectations and requirements. This will ensure that new recreation facilities, including those in which volunteers play major roles, are built to an appropriate standard for community use and cost effective operation. Second, the cost of maintaining parks in different categories varies. The cost of managing naturalized lands can be as little as \$500/acre/year, while the cost of maintaining Urban Linear Waterfront Promenades can be as high as \$5,000/acre/year because of beautification elements and high use. The Town needs to plan for significant increases in the amount of resources that are required to maintain parkland and recreation facilities.

The Town should prepare facility standards and parks and facility maintenance guidelines. Update and make provisions for increasing maintenance requirements.

Public Art Policy for Installations in Parks

In the past the Town has received donations of art and artifacts memory of community members. There is a need for a public art policy that provides criteria for accepting art or other donations. The policy should be prepared in consultation with knowledgeable arts stakeholders to ensure that it is harmonized with the Arts and Culture Master Plan. Criteria for accepting donations should include:

- The donor is responsible for all costs associated with the installation (planning, approvals, construction);
- The donor's gift is suitable for installation in a public space (safety) and meets all applicable regulations and by-laws;
- The donation is appropriate and enhances the parkland setting (to be determined by Leisure Services); and
- The donation has artistic merit (to be determined by visual arts specialists).

A Public Art Policy should be developed in consultation with the Arts Coordinating Committee.

Action Plan # 3: Update Environmental Protection and Management Policies and Practices

Environmental Open Space

The Town has extensive ecological resources that could be protected and managed as part of a comprehensive green space system. The Town should utilize all opportunities to identify and acquire natural environment areas including adequate buffers and connecting corridors. Key areas for protection include the Georgian Bay shoreline, Silver Creek Wetland, Black Ash Creek, Bateaux Creek and Pretty River EPA's. These lands should be conveyed to the Town through Hazard Land ESA's and other designations that make them unsuitable for development. Although core natural areas may also be unsuitable for trails or other public uses, it may be appropriate to locate trails within buffer areas.

The establishment of a 'green space strategy' would assist in the protection of Town's natural environment in developing areas. Through strengthened environmental policies, and more stringent application of policies at the time of subdivision or secondary planning, the Town could establish a green space system that included environmental protection areas, parks and trails with the objective of linking and enhancing the Town's ecological resources. A Collingwood green space system could connect the open space system and provide opportunities for passive recreation to accommodate low-cost, trails and nature based recreation for all age groups. The greenspace system could also provide the framework for determining development areas and informing the design of new neighbourhoods.

The Town should consider the establishment of a 'green space strategy' that integrates Collingwood's environmental lands, parks and trails, and builds a connected open space system.

Need to approve and Implement a Tree Protection By-law

The Town should implement a Tree Protection By-law to protect the Town's woodland resources and to ensure that all new development meets leading edge guidelines for preservation, restoration and enhancement of woodland resources. The Town should enforce the requirement for woodlot assessment, tree inventories and require the preparation of tree preservation plans.

A park and street tree replacement and infill program is needed to ensure continuity of, and increase in, the urban tree canopy in the Downtown area. Significant heritage trees should be documented on an inventory, and a replacement program for downtown street trees should be implemented.

A Tree Protection By-law should be established and the Town should create an inventory of significant heritage trees in conjunction with a replacement program.

Environmental Enhancement

Naturalization in existing parks, for both cost benefit and environmental enhancement should be extended to all parks, and a plan developed to identify suitable sites within parks, in collaboration with interested volunteers and community organizations. The range of potentials include reduced mowing to encourage regeneration to active naturalization in areas that support or create buffers to natural features such as creek valleys, woodlots, hedgerows and specimen trees. In doing so, there needs to be awareness of recreation uses.

A public awareness strategy should be developed and implemented to make sure these initiatives are clearly identified for both public and operations benefit. Naturalization areas need to be kept litter-free and tidy, particularly in early years of establishment. Volunteer organizations can be utilized to assist in these efforts.

The Town should expand naturalization in existing parks in conjunction with community volunteers.

Action Plan #4: Continue the Implementation of the Trails Master Plan

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

The trails system is often cited as an excellent model for other communities and a source of recreation, fitness and catalyst for healthy living. The policies identified in the Trails Master Plan need to be included in the next Official Plan update.

The Town needs to ensure that trails and walkways are built into new secondary plan areas, plans of subdivision and transportation infrastructure plans to connect complete the larger Town wide and regional trail network. Advance planning is needed to avoid conflicts and ensure that the system is safe and easy to use.

More bikeway and bike lanes need to be provided in the Downtown area. There is a need to determine how and where these additional facilities should be located.

Implementation of the Trails Master Plan needs to be supported and additional investigations are needed to explore how to improve bicycle facilities in the Downtown.

Summary Parks, Open Space and Trails – Products of the Master Plan

The Parks, Open Space and Trails Action Plans will result in the following products by the end of the planning period.

- Updated parks policies;
- Development and maintenance guidelines for parks and trails;
- Updated environmental protection and management practices; and
- Full implementation of the Trails Master Plan.

6.0 ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

6.1 OVERVIEW

There is a longstanding interest in the expansion of arts and cultural opportunities in Collingwood. There have been a number of studies in the past exploring the feasibility of arts facilities but no progress has been made with implementation, at least in part because the population has not been sufficient to support major facilities. The public consultation program for the Master Plan reiterated a strong interest in improved services and the limitations of existing facilities for arts and cultural activities. Input from the general public and the arts groups indicate:

- Organized groups generally expect expanded participation in their activities, and this would be consistent with general trends even before considering projected population growth;
- Existing facilities do not adequately meet the needs of this sector of the community; most are not appropriately designed and some are either unavailable or unaffordable;
- Additional facilities for both the performing and the visual arts were requested; and
- The current supply of programming does not adequately reflect art and cultural interests.

The interest in improving arts and cultural services in Collingwood is currently being pursued by an Arts Advisory Committee with broad representation from the arts sector. This group provided input as the Master Plan was being developed and is prepared to assist with the implementation of Master Plan recommendations.

The needs assessment indicated additional arts and cultural facilities are required in Collingwood. At minimum, additional multi-purpose programming space designed for arts and cultural activities is required. This may be developed in conjunction with other Town recreation facilities or as an anchor for other municipal developments (such as the waterfront or downtown) but would have a strong focus on arts programming. The scale of the development is to be determined. What is less clear is the need for specialized and higher order facilities, such as a performing arts centre or dedicated gallery space. While the arts community in Collingwood continues to support these facilities, their feasibility would be subject to additional study. Furthermore, in Collingwood the development of major facilities for the arts must follow a number of other initiatives that would clarify the Town's role and commitment to the arts; the role of the arts community and specifically whether this sector will organize in support of the arts; and the extent to which arts facilities should serve a regional market.

The recommended action plans address these issues.

6.2 ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY - RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS

Action Plan #1: Prepare an Arts and Cultural Policy

Action Plan #2: Identify Appropriate Organizational Structure and Improve Communication and Coordination in the Arts and Cultural Sector.

Action Plan #3: Enhance Municipal Support for Arts and Cultural Development

Action Plan #4: Identify Facility Requirements to Support Art and Cultural Development

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
Action Plan #1: Prepare an Arts and Cultural Policy	
▪ Prepare a comprehensive arts and cultural policy for the Town.	▪ Required to clarify the Town's commitment to and support for the arts. ▪ Will provide an overall Vision for the arts and the broad strategies required to further develop the arts. ▪ Will be the organizing policy framework for other municipal initiatives in support of the arts.
Action Plan #2: Identify An Appropriate Organizational Structure and Improve Communication and Coordination in the Arts and Cultural Sector	
▪ Create an Arts Coordinating Committee (ACC).	▪ The development of an effective arts policy and implementation of the other Action Plans requires a strong, active and representative organization that can speak for the arts in Collingwood. ▪ The Town requires a recognized and legitimate organization with whom to work for the promotion of the arts. ▪ Current limitations associated with coordination and communication among arts interests in Collingwood must be resolved.

Action Plan #3: Enhance Municipal Support for Arts and Cultural Development

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retain community development staff with specific expertise in arts and cultural services to work with the ACC and the arts community (see also Action Plans dealing with municipal staffing). ▪ Develop policies and approaches to support capacity building, organizational development and funding within the arts community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Town must become more directly involved with the arts and cultural community. |
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Action Plan #4: Identify Facility Requirements to Support Art and Cultural Development

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide facilities for local arts programming. ▪ Prepare a feasibility study for major, regional serving performing arts and gallery facilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Town currently has no facilities that are appropriate for community-based arts programming. ▪ Facilities are required to support an expanded arts and cultural programming focus. ▪ The feasibility of major arts facilities must be determined based on a detailed feasibility study. |
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Action Plan #1: Prepare an Arts and Cultural Policy

The Town of Collingwood should develop an Arts and Cultural Policy to clarify its commitment to and support for arts and cultural development. A good deal of this work has been initiated in recent months by the arts coordinating committee that worked in parallel with the master planning process. While this group did not attempt to establish a full policy, they discussed many of the elements that will be ultimately be reflected in a policy statement. This work should continue under the guidance of the Department and a draft Arts and Cultural Policy should be prepared for Council's consideration. While its authors should determine the structure and content of the policy, the following are suggested components:

- **Statement of Purpose** – broad purpose of the Policy; who and what it guides, who are the partners, etc.
- **Definitions** – key elements, particularly important to define what is included e.g., culture is often confused with multi-cultural and the policy should address how these are defined.
- **Vision** – planned future for which policy provides the framework and go-forward guidelines
- **Principles** – broad statements of basic assumptions e.g., equitable, inclusive, etc.
- **Broad Goals** – the end result, what the policy is intended to accomplish; these should be broadly stated and ultimately will be reflected in more specific action plans.
- **Monitoring approach** – how and when will success be measured
- **Resources** – organizational, procedural, material and financial resources assumed or needed

The following action plans address some of these components of the overall policy.

Action Plan #2: Identify An Appropriate Organizational Structure and Improve Communication and Coordination in the Arts and Cultural Sector.

In Collingwood, as in most other Ontario municipalities, arts and cultural services will be provided through a partnership among community organizations, public agencies and the municipality. This is only possible if current limitations concerning coordination and communication are addressed. Currently, there is not adequate liaison with municipal staff, and there is not effective coordination and communication within the arts community.

Improved communication and coordination with the arts community is consistent with the proposed role of the Department, as discussed elsewhere in the Master Plan. While the Department has attempted to work with this sector, most recently in facilitating the work of the Arts Advisory Committee and their input to this plan, the contact has generally been short-term, sporadic and issue-oriented. There has not been a concerted effort to build capacity within the arts sector in Collingwood. While this has been attributed by some as a stronger orientation to and history of working with sports and recreation groups, the more significant factor is likely lack of staff resources. The need for additional staff with specific focus on community development and the arts is discussed in a subsequent section of the Plan.

While the absence of municipal staff resources is an issue, an effective partnership also demands that an effective coordinating body represent the arts community. Arts and cultural organizations that responded to the questionnaires and requests for briefs that were a part of this study process unanimously agreed that better coordination and communication was required within the arts sector.

Consequently, both the municipality and the cultural community must take steps to improve their partnership for the advancement of arts and cultural pursuits in Collingwood. Staff within the Department of Leisure Services should establish a formal liaison with the cultural community. This liaison should be primarily with an Arts Coordinating Committee (ACC) that might function in a manner similar to the Trails Advisory Committee. This would be a formal committee of the Department and consequently would have a direct point of contact (initially the Director, but subsequently the new staff recommended for this role).

The ACC's primary roles and responsibilities include:

- Providing ongoing advice and assistance to the Department with the implementation of the Master Plan and other initiatives that may arise;
- Ensuring that initiatives and opportunities associated with arts and culture involving the Town or other community institutions (such as boards of education), are communicated to the arts community, and defining an appropriate role for the ACC in these activities;
- Facilitating communication with other major community institutions (i.e., Boards of Education, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism agencies, Public Library, Museum, etc.) regarding arts and cultural opportunities and possible partnerships and joint initiatives;

- Continuing to support the development of a comprehensive data base of arts and cultural organizations and businesses, including contact names, addresses, and major area of involvement (this work has already been initiated); and
- Compiling data and participating in the ongoing assessment of art and cultural needs and the planning for these services in Collingwood.

To be most effective, the staff liaison with the cultural community should have an understanding and background in this area and be designated as the arts community contact. This does not mean that the individual's only activities will be in support of the arts, but a single contact person with knowledge of the area is required to effectively fulfill the role envisioned here. This is discussed further in a subsequent section of the Plan. While municipal staff can assist with these communication and coordination activities, it is ultimately the responsibility of the arts community to form an effective ACC. The ACC must be broadly representative of the arts community, be in a position to speak for the community, and command the support of the community. The ACC must meet regularly, communicate with the Town's designated staff liaison and ensure ongoing information exchange and communication among its members and the community at large.

Action Plan #3: Enhance Municipal Support for Arts and Cultural Development

Financial Support for the Arts

Secure and ongoing funding is a significant issue for arts organizations. Arts organizations are often small, and while they may attract large consumer groups they may represent few people with limited potential to generate revenue from fees. Finally, the arts community is composed of many members for whom the arts represents the way they make their living, not only a leisure time experience, rendering the role of municipal government in the financial support of these groups and individuals more complex. While decisions regarding funding are not always straightforward, the economic and social benefits of a diverse and vibrant arts community are clear. The objective, therefore, is to support the development of stable funding to ensure that the community at large benefits from the availability of arts and cultural experiences.

The Leisure Services Department should support the financial self-sufficiency of arts and cultural organizations through initiatives, which include:

- Identifying available funding from all levels of government and other agencies that will support appropriate initiatives.
- Assisting arts organizations to prepare professional presentations for funding.
- Ensuring that the Town's presentations and promotions to tourism trade shows, business, and Economic development initiatives etc., incorporate promotion of Collingwood's arts and cultural opportunities.

Finally, as discussed elsewhere, the Department should develop a Community Funding Policy that outlines situations in which the Town will provide such support as interest free loans and occasional funding to bona fide, stable and incorporated community organizations, for initiatives that respond to the municipality's corporate objectives. (A further discussion of such a policy is provided in Section 8 of the Master Plan).

Building Organizational Capacity

Arts and cultural development demands a strong and stable arts community capable of communicating with its members and the Town, promoting its members and contributing to and defining, in a significant way, the arts and cultural identity of Collingwood. As noted above, we believe the Department should support the development of an ACC. Staff should work with the ACC to create a stable organizational structure, viable business plans, and to identify ongoing training and development requirements.

Community Awareness and Support

Arts experiences contribute to a community's sense of itself, to the local economy and to individual development and self-esteem. There is considerable evidence to show that exposure to and training in the arts enable people to think more broadly and creatively, contributing significantly to all aspects of community life. These are important messages to convey to the residential and business community.

The Department in conjunction with the proposed ACC can contribute to this awareness through the following types of initiatives:

- Ensuring that the ACC is familiar with the Town's vehicles for communication, including the Department brochures and websites. The Department currently has staff with media and promotional expertise who could work with the ACC to determine the most effective municipal promotion options and to support the use of these media;
- Promoting the benefits of participation in arts and cultural experiences to the public-at-large through its general promotion of leisure benefits;
- Promoting the Town's arts and cultural opportunities, and its artists, in its tourism and economic development initiatives; and
- Working with Town planning and economic development staff and the business community to develop appropriate opportunities for public art, special events, and donations to support public art.

Action Plan #4: Identify Facility Requirements to Support Art and Cultural Development

The full development of arts and cultural resources in Collingwood will demand new facilities. There are two separate facility considerations: appropriate space to support local arts and cultural programming and major facilities that serve a larger regional market.

Facilities for Local Arts Programming

The proposed feasibility study for major indoor facilities (see Action Plans in Section 3) should also include an assessment of specialized programming requirements for the arts. The intent is to confirm the specific facility requirements to support programs for Collingwood residents interested in instructional or arts appreciation programs (dance, photography, pottery, painting, drama, etc.). Multipurpose programming areas specifically designed to accommodate these activities should be provided to support this programming. Requirements should be determined in conjunction with existing private sector providers (e.g. private dance schools) and local artists and artisans. The intent is not to compete with the private sector but to provide programming that fills existing gaps in the supply. Existing members of the arts

community, including those in private business, should be approached as possible partners and programmers of this space.

Specific facility requirements will be determined as part of the feasibility study. However, initially an area of perhaps 3,000 - 5,000 sq. ft. that would be designed for arts programming (i.e. appropriate flooring, lighting, acoustics and other amenities), but may not be exclusively committed to these uses is envisioned. This is not space intended to serve a visitor market or to host major performances or exhibits. It is community programming space for the arts. As such, it should probably be part of a major community recreation complex. This would likely be the most cost effective strategy. This space should not be provided as a stand-alone facility because of the added operating and capital costs and the constraints on multiple uses. However, other possible partnerships with another educational or cultural facility, if identified, should be investigated as part of the feasibility study.

Feasibility Study for Major Arts and Cultural Facilities

As noted above, there has been a longstanding interest in a major performing arts centre and gallery in Collingwood. The feasibility of these ventures has been explored in the past and implementation has not proceeded, primarily because of a limited market and unsustainable finances. With population growth in Collingwood and the surrounding areas, a major performing arts facility and gallery may be feasible, particularly if pursued as a regional facility. A feasibility study will be required to confirm the market and prepare a viable business plan. The feasibility study must assess the regional market and regional competitors. In addition, a viable organizational structure for a performing arts facility must be in place. If the facility is financially self-supporting and seen as an appropriate and high priority economic development initiative, the Town might be the owner-operator. However, the Town's potential role and financial commitment, and that of other local and regional interests, is not clear and would need to be determined as part of the feasibility study.

This feasibility study is likely a longer-term project; perhaps to be undertaken towards the end of the Master Plan period. It should follow the development of the Arts Policy and the establishment of the ACC, both of which are important building blocks for the feasibility study.

Summary Arts and Culture – Products of the Plan

The key products of the Arts and Cultural Action Plans are:

- A detailed Arts Policy that will clearly define the Town's commitment to and support for the arts and articulate a Vision and broad goals for art and cultural development in Collingwood;
- The establishment of an Arts Coordinating Committee (ACC) as a vehicle for communication and coordination both within the arts community and with the Town and other organizations;
- A significantly expanded role for the Town through the Leisure Services Department in arts and cultural activities through improved policies, staff resources and an established working relationship with the ACC;
- New municipal facilities to support arts programming for local residents; and
- A feasibility study to establish the viability of a performing arts centre and gallery serving both a local regional market from Collingwood.

7.0 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

7.1 OVERVIEW

The community appears satisfied with the existing supply of programs, which can largely be attributed to a strong supply of sports programming in the volunteer sector, and the role played by the YMCA. It was noted that traditional sport and recreation programs are much better supplied than arts and culture programs and opportunities for unstructured leisure pursuits. Further, growing demand in both of these areas should be expected given changing social and demographic characteristics of the community. Finally, the growing emphasis on active living and health promotion suggests an immediate need to expand programming in this area. Finally, the Town has invested strongly in recreational trail development and reclaiming the waterfront. These resources suggest opportunities to expand unstructured outdoor recreation programming.

The recommended Action Plans focus on expanding the supply of currently underrepresented areas of programming/activities, but this will not be possible without additional staff, improved policies, a stronger commitment to community development and productive partnerships. These issues are discussed in the delivery system strategy in the following section.

We have not specifically addressed the role of the Simcoe-Muskoka YMCA in the recommended action plans. The YMCA has been and continues to be a significant program provider in Collingwood. Consistent with the YMCA's overall mandate, there is a strong emphasis on health, fitness and wellness programming, which are some of the areas where expanded opportunities are recommended. The YMCA and the Town have not had a strong history of cooperation and joint program provision in the past. As noted in our discussion of facilities (see Action Plans in Section 3 of the Plan), the YMCA should be considered as an important facility partner for new developments. Clearly, this also applies to program development. Consequently, while we have identified general program priorities in the following discussion, we assume the Town will pursue these in partnership with the YMCA and other providers in a manner consistent with the recommended program roles in the next section of the Plan.

7.2 PROGRAM STRATEGY - RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS

The following Action Plans should be pursued during the period of the Master Plan.

Action Plan #1: Expand Programming in Three Key Areas - Active Living, Outdoor Unstructured Recreational Activities and Arts and Culture

Action Plan #2: Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
Action Plan#1: Expand Programming in Three Key Areas - Active Living, Outdoor Unstructured Recreational Activities and Arts and Culture	
▪ While expanded programming is generally supported by the Plan, particular emphasis should be placed on active living, outdoor unstructured programming and arts and culture.	▪ Active 2010 implies an expanded role for municipalities in recreation service delivery, and a number of Ontario communities are in the processes of implementing this initiative. ▪ Arts and culture activities are of particular interest in Collingwood and were strongly represented in the needs assessment. ▪ In addition to these priorities, the study revealed interest in programs/activities that could be introduced using existing park and facility infrastructure (e.g., organized use of trail system). ▪ Programming directions supports the need for other recommended new facilities (e.g., arts programming space, multi-sport pads, a major skateboard park).
Action Plan #2: Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector	
▪ In conjunction with other relevant parties, conduct regular research on community needs/interests. ▪ Establish program needs and priorities based on a planning and evaluation mechanism coordinated by the Town but involving volunteers and other significant providers, such as the YMCA.	▪ A partnership approach to service provision requires ongoing joint planning to ensure that all needs are brought to the table in a timely manner, and that each party assumes the most effective role in responding to these needs based on their mandate and resources. ▪ The approach is consistent with the recommended Town programming role.

Action Plan#1: Expand Programming in Three Key Areas - Active Living, Outdoor Unstructured Recreational Activities and Arts and Culture

Physical Activity, Healthy Living and Unstructured Programs

The Province's Active 2010 program is directed at municipalities and other community service providers (including health units, school boards, YMCAs, Scouts Canada, hospitals, etc.) with the objective of significantly increasing physical activity levels in Ontario. The program is a direct response to alarming increases in health related problems due to child obesity and physical inactivity. Communities are being encouraged to marshal the resources of all relevant agencies to expand physical activity programming through special events (annual walks or fitness challenges); school based programs; seniors walking and fitness programs; social marketing and health promotion (e.g., encouraging residents to walk rather than drive, take the stairs instead of the elevator, etc.), revised policies that remove barriers to physical activity (e.g., financial or scheduling constraints) and selected improvements to infrastructure (e.g., recreational trails development).

The Active 2010 program is clearly the Province's priority in the recreation area and one of the very few initiatives for which funding is available. Active 2010 will encompass new services and the development of new partnership networks to implement, given its broader emphasis on lifestyle advocacy and stronger links to the health sector. At the same time, certain initiatives may require minimal resources, particularly in

the area of advocacy where services can be limited to advertising and promotion of messages regarding lifestyles associated with health. Some of this work, therefore, could be undertaken in the short-term, while larger tasks around plan and partnership development can be pursued over the longer-term.

Outdoor Unstructured Recreational Activities

During the community consultation activities for the Master Plan, expanded unstructured opportunities for recreation were requested. This request is consistent with trends and with the emphasis on active living. In large part, this need will be addressed with facility developments recommended elsewhere in the Plan, including continued trail development, an increased supply of multipurpose courts, playgrounds, skateboard parks and water play features, and general park improvements. The Town, in conjunction with other providers, should explore promotional and programming strategies to increase the appeal and use of these resources.

Arts and Culture Programming

A reoccurring theme in the community consultation surrounding this Plan was the need for an expanded supply of arts and culture programs to establish a better balance with existing sport opportunities. As noted elsewhere, this will depend on improved access to appropriate facilities and additional municipal staff resources. The Town should work with the proposed ACC, existing arts providers, including private sector dance instructors, visual artists, and musicians, to expand the supply of community programs, in a manner consistent with the facilitation and partnering roles discussed in a subsequent section of the Plan.

Action Plan #2: Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector

In Collingwood, program delivery will continue to be the primary responsibility of the volunteer sector and organizations such as the YMCA. There is need therefore for the Town to play a coordinating role in program planning and delivery.

Programs and services are the result of planning activities which identify emerging needs, gaps and overlaps in current services, required Town support (e.g., assistance with accessing appropriate facilities, equipment, staff recruitment, etc.), and joint promotion/publicity efforts. Ideally, the Town should undertake these activities with the local volunteer sector and with outside agencies. These procedures are not currently in place and will not be possible without additional staff resources. Given that a new process must be established in the short-term, this should be kept simple. The Town's focus should initially be increased coordination with key program providers, including agencies in the health and social service sectors.

Over time, the scope and sophistication of planning should be increased to create a community-wide inventory of programs and services in all sectors. This tool could be used locally for referral purposes by partner agencies, and beyond the community for tourism development. Individual agencies should carry out ongoing planning tasks in their service areas for use in community-wide program development and, to the extent possible, these efforts should be coordinated among partners to ensure comparable information sharing (e.g., ideally, program statistics among all agencies should track numbers at registration, loss of participants, waiting lists, etc.). The long-term outcome of these efforts should be a streamlined, responsive

service network in which each partner assumes an appropriate niche in program provision with the necessary Town support.

Summary Program and Activity – Products of the Plan

The following are the key products of the Plan's Program and Activity Action Plans:

- A significantly expanded supply of programs for physical activity and healthy lifestyles and arts and culture, supported by appropriate facilities and partnerships with the community to support this programming;
- Formal procedures and expanded partnerships with other community agencies for programming; and
- Improved procedures for planning, managing and evaluating programs provided by the Town but also the volunteer sector and other community interests.

8.0 DELIVERY SYSTEM STRATEGY

8.1 OVERVIEW

The Delivery System deals with the Town's policies, staff resources and partnerships to ensure that facilities, parks and programs are effectively provided. In Collingwood's case, improvements are required for the delivery system and the successful implementation of the Master Plan will depend on these recommendations. The actions plans attempt to clarify roles, establish adequate staff resources and create a strong policy framework for parks, recreation and arts.

The Town can improve the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services with the following four Action Plans.

8.2 DELIVERY SYSTEM STRATEGY - RECOMMENDED ACTION PLANS

Action Plan#1: Confirm the Department's Program Role

Action Plan #2: Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery

Action Plan #3: Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery

Action Plan #4: Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
Action Plan #1: Confirm the Department's Program Role	
▪ Establish a formal program role for the Department that confirms the current focus on facilitation and partnership. ▪ Clarify the Department's role in tourism and special events.	▪ To address both current and future program needs, the Town must expand its role in program development and support, particularly through facilitation and partnerships. ▪ A clear program role is needed to set priorities for Town resources and establish realistic expectations among partners and volunteers. ▪ The Department's current responsibilities, particularly for special events, suggest a tourism rather than leisure function that is more consistent with economic development. If this is a legitimate role for the Department, it should be acknowledged and appropriately funded.
Action Plan #2: Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery	
▪ Retain additional staff in the Leisure Services Department.	▪ Existing staffing complement cannot perform additional work associated with the Master Plan recommendations.
Action Plan #3: Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery	
▪ Develop policies for pricing/user fees, volunteer support, facility allocation, community funding, and capital conservation.	▪ Policies are required to clearly establish a consistent and Council approved approach to key aspects of leisure service delivery. Town policy must also be clearly communicated to partners and other stakeholders. ▪ Collectively, policies are directed towards achieving an overriding goal in the provision of recreation, arts and culture services, so should support and complement each other in their design and application.
Action Plan #4: Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning	
▪ Adopt a formal procedure for compiling information to evaluate services and prepare long-range plans.	▪ The Department should have the capabilities to update the Master Plan on a regular basis ▪ The Department's success in achieving desired outcomes should be evaluated on a regular basis

Action Plan #1: Confirm the Department's Program Role

Program Development

While continuing to rely on volunteers, many Ontario municipalities are assuming a larger role in program delivery to address new needs and interests (active living, arts and cultural programming, expanded general interest programming, youth needs, etc.), and greater complexities involved in service delivery (e.g., legislative requirements, higher user expectations). Collingwood's volunteer organizations, like those in most Ontario communities, reported a number of concerns, including the challenge of volunteer recruitment, training and certification, fundraising difficulties, and problems with marketing and promotion. These considerations suggest the Department should expand its role as a community programmer. The Town currently provides limited direct programming except in facilities it owns, and offers limited formal community development or volunteer support. While the program role described here is not inconsistent with the Department's understanding of its responsibilities (or with recommendations in previous master plans), not all of these functions are well reflected in current activities.

As a facilitator, the Town will:

- Provide support for volunteers offering high quality, cost-effective programs and services in the Town;
- Work with existing volunteer recreation, arts and cultural organizations to expand programming;
- Foster the development of new community groups; working with new and existing groups to expand programming to respond to needs and trends;
- Encourage, support and provide training programs to improve the quality of leadership in recreation activities by staff and volunteers;
- Serve as a liaison between volunteers and volunteer organizations, such as the recommended Arts Coordinating Committee, and other community service providers, such as the YMCA, School Boards, the Public Library and health and social service agencies;
- Expand marketing and improve community awareness of parks, recreation and culture services;
- Provide assistance, as required, in areas such as program design, evaluation, etc.;
- Help groups recruit, retain and recognize volunteers; and
- Assist groups with grant applications or fundraising efforts.

As a partner, the Town can bring resources and expertise to a particular project in combination with another agency or organization. In this case, the municipality would take a direct role in the program's development but costs and responsibilities would be shared. As noted earlier, the Town has not actively pursued programming partnerships with other providers and this may become a more significant focus in the future.

In a limited number of situations the Town may act as a direct program provider and assume responsibility for all aspects of the program, including design, delivery, staffing and evaluation. While most programs will be offered through facilitation or partnership, direct program delivery would be appropriate if:

- There is an immediate need to respond to continually high levels of community demand and no other provider is available;
- For reasons of liability, knowledge, skill level, and past experience, the Department is the only feasible program provider;
- Programs contribute to important or essential program goals that are not being met through other providers - such as preventative health and wellness, safety or environmental protection (e.g., learn to swim, water safety, life skills, environmental awareness); or
- The Town can through direct program delivery realize revenues that can be used to offset the cost of programs requiring a subsidy.

Currently, the Department's direct programming is largely focused on the Recreation Centre.

Tourism and Special Events

While Council has not officially recognized tourism as a component of the Department's mandate, considerable resources are currently committed to special events that primarily serve a visitor market (notably the Elvis Festival, but also recent events such as the Ontario Games). While Tourism usually falls within the economic development function of a municipality, and primary responsibility for attracting visitors rests with local and regional tourism authorities, it can be a legitimate role for a leisure services department. There are clear links between the Department's services and tourism, particularly in the areas of arts/culture, trails and special events. Consequently, there is merit in investigating opportunities to capitalize on the tourism potential of parks, recreation and culture services while maintaining the Department's focus on community-based services. The following outlines possible ways in which the Town can pursue the dual objectives of community leisure and tourism service development:

- The Town's trails are currently attracting visitors and the Department through promotion and the provision of amenities to accommodate self-directed trail users (e.g., parking, high quality mapping at trail heads, good directional signage, etc.) has strongly supported visitor use;
- Arts and cultural activities are often a significant attraction to visitors and opportunities to expand these attractions will serve the dual purpose of meeting local leisure needs and supporting tourism; and
- Special events such as the Elvis Festival are extremely successful and attract visitors with significant economic impacts. While festivals of this type are undoubtedly of some interest to local residents, they appear to be primarily directed to the tourism market.

These initiatives that attempt to meet the needs of residents and visitors provide both social and recreational as well as economic benefits. As such, they are to be encouraged. However, if the Leisure Services Department is to support tourism in this manner, it should be a recognized part of its mandate and funding, exclusive of that for resident leisure services, must be available. It is not clear that this has occurred in the past and Council needs to clarify the Department's mandate for tourism and establish the relative priority of tourism activities and leisure services in view of limited staff and financial resources.

Action Plan #2: Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery

A detailed assessment of staffing, job responsibilities and workload allocations was not within the scope of the study. We have not undertaken an operational audit as part of our assessment. We have, however, conducted interviews with Department staff, Council members and other corporate staff and volunteer groups. Based on this information, we have identified a need for additional staff and particularly staff that can fulfill necessary roles not currently reflected in the Department.

The Town's current organization and staffing structure for Leisure Services includes the Director, supported by an Executive Assistant and six direct reports. The Director is also responsible for the airport and represents Collingwood on the Municipal Services Board. The individuals reporting directly to the Director have primarily operational responsibilities for the arena; parks and sport fields; special events; the museum; and the Recreation/Fitness Centre.

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

There are two major functional requirements not reflected, or not adequately reflected, in the current job roles and responsibilities. These are programming/community development and planning and management of leisure services.

With the exception of occasional activities and ongoing liaison with the volunteer sector that can occur via the Director and/or the Executive Assistant, no one in the Department has responsibility for providing the full range of assistance and support required by volunteer organizations and for supporting new program development. Recommendations throughout the Master Plan indicate the importance of these functions.

The second limitation is the absence of staff with ongoing responsibilities for managing leisure service delivery in Collingwood. Currently, these responsibilities would rest solely with the Director. Consequently, insufficient attention is paid to a wide range of important activities, including:

- Ongoing planning and evaluation of services and research and identification of community needs;
- Staff and program development and management;
- Policy development pertaining to parks, recreation and culture;
- Review and assessment of program delivery approaches, direct delivery or alternate service approach;
- Marketing and promotion initiatives and strategies (outside of those connected with trails and special events); and
- Liaison with other providers of recreation or associated services, such as the YMCA, the boards of education, the health board, etc.

Elsewhere in this section of the Plan, we identify a number of core management tasks that should be undertaken in the Leisure Services Department. These tasks, which are increasingly necessary for effective management of municipal services, include development of performance measures, business plans and more sophisticated methods of service evaluation and planning. In addition, we have identified a number of areas where the Department does not have effective policies in place at this time. In the absence of effective policies, community resources are probably not being used effectively. These management requirements are currently not receiving the attention that they require, largely because of the Director's time constraints and the absence of other staff who could assume these duties.

We feel additional staff are needed to address three major functions: (1) the management of service delivery (2) community development, and (3) arts and cultural programming

As noted above, to undertake the recommendations in this report, the Director of the Department, or a designate, must commit more time to core management functions. It does not appear that any of the existing staff can assume these responsibilities and an additional management position should be created with responsibility for planning, policy and development. In the term of the Master Plan, this position would support the Director to implement a number of the recommended Action Plans, including the studies for major indoor facilities; policy development; supervision of parks and facility standards development and parks and open space planning.

Community development is a second area where in our view staff positions should be created.

While there are many definitions of community development, it generally implies a pro-active role in facilitating change at the local level and building capacity within new or existing organizations to deliver programs and services. Community development requires staff to take the lead in identifying and responding to needs and issues, to advance support in resolving issues, and to initiate processes and/or practices that will expand the community's capacity to work more effectively in meeting its own needs. The following Department functions will need to be implemented to realize this definition of community development.

- Planning: As discussed in a subsequent Action Plan, a comprehensive planning process is required to support effective decision-making. In terms of the Department's role in community development, it is the mechanism by which it will take the lead in identifying and anticipating needs in a pro-active manner - both in specific service areas (e.g., wellness, arts, culture) and among various groups in the community (e.g., youth, seniors, new Canadians).
- Community Outreach: As a community developer, the Department must have an ongoing, visible presence in the community in the areas of volunteer recruitment for both existing and new areas of interest, promotion/publicity, information-sharing, encouraging partnerships between organizations, seeking support from businesses, etc. Outreach should include efforts targeted at service areas that are underrepresented in current supply (e.g., arts and culture, active living etc.)
- Training/Transfer of Skills: A strong and regenerative volunteer base is essential to a community development approach. Volunteers and volunteer organizations will increase their capacity to provide more/better leisure services if they are provided with the appropriate skills. As a community developer, the Department is responsible for anticipating needs in this area - and particularly new needs resulting from changes in the service environment - and providing the training necessary to transfer required skills to individual volunteers. In addition, the Department will be required to provide volunteers with the tools and knowledge necessary to participate in planning and evaluation activities.
- Liaising: On behalf of volunteers or volunteer organizations, the Department should be prepared to liaise with other organizations/agencies, other levels of government etc. for a variety of purposes such as convening meetings, dealing with funding applications, setting up training programs, etc.
- Information Clearing House/Referral: As the local agency with primary responsibility for leisure services, the Department is the preferred agency to act as an information clearing house and referral for all matters related to community leisure services, which will require an ongoing effort to keep a current information base and promote its availability in the volunteer sector.
- Program Services: These would include services directly related to implementing programs such as assistance with preparing promotion/publicity material, help in designing and evaluating

programs, finding appropriate facilities, etc. As appropriate, these services could be provided directly by the municipality or by community businesses whose support has been gained through outreach activities.

Decisions concerning staff needs and how these are best represented in the municipal organizational structure should be based on a detailed review of current operations. We would suggest that an operational review be undertaken to investigate current staff roles and responsibilities, staff time allocated to various functions, opportunities for greater efficiencies based on new operating practices etc. While acknowledging the need to confirm requirements based on this operational review, we believe that two community development staff could be justified in the short term to undertake program support and community development activities and to assist the Director with management procedures. One of these positions should have a background in arts and cultural activities, as discussed elsewhere in the Plan. With two additional positions, external consulting assistance may be required to implement some of the action plans (e.g. policy development). Of course, additional programming and operational staff will also be required as new facilities and parkland are added to the leisure services system in Collingwood. As the system grows additional full time management staff, reporting to the Director, will likely be required. These needs should be investigated further as part of the proposed operational review.

Finally, the scope of this study did not include a review of the maintenance and operational staff assigned to the recreation facilities and open space areas used for programs and special events. Key informants and community organizations questioned whether sufficient maintenance and operational staff were available currently, and particularly, as parks and facilities are expanded. This issue should be explored further.

Action Plan #3: Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery

Policy should be developed to guide future planning and decision-making. The key areas to be addressed with new or expanded policies are noted below. The following discussion addresses recreation and cultural services. Park policies are discussed in Section 5 of the Master Plan.

Volunteer assistance

Future programming in Collingwood will be almost entirely pursued through facilitation and partnership, requiring the Department to become more involved in supporting the volunteer sector. In addition, as noted above, staff resources must be committed to this program development function.

The Department's activities in this area should be supported by a policy that states the purpose or goals of the Department's volunteer development initiatives, the way in which the Department will provide support to community recreation, arts and culture groups, and the nature and extent of the support to be provided. The Volunteer Development Policy should contain, at minimum, the following components:

- A statement recognizing the contribution of volunteers and community groups to the quality of life in Collingwood and to the services offered by the Leisure Services Department;
- A statement indicating the Department's commitment to support local volunteer and community groups in their efforts to provide leisure programs and services;

- Guidelines outlining the services and support available from the Department for volunteers and volunteer organizations; and
- Guidelines describing how the municipality will participate with volunteers in joint capital development projects or to support facility upgrades and improvements.

Table 8.1 describes some of the initiatives that might be undertaken in support of volunteers that would be documented in a Volunteer Development Policy. These initiatives would be consistent with the Department's program role and would largely be the responsibility of the community development staff recommended elsewhere.

Table 8.1: Volunteer Development and Support Policy Components

Municipal Responsibilities	Approach/Activities
Standardize procedures for maintaining regular contact with voluntary organizations and for providing administrative and operational assistance	▪ Assistance might involve providing guidance for establishing new groups, helping with promotion and publicity; identifying grants, and preparing funding applications; making arrangements for the use of facilities, etc. ▪ Ensuring communication and contact between the municipality and volunteer organizations with regular meetings and established procedures (such as a regular schedule for submitting budget requests).
Help volunteers to get established in new program areas	▪ Find suitable facilities for programs. ▪ Assist with promotion and marketing of new programs. ▪ Provide "seed money" for initial program development expenses (e.g., to contribute to equipment costs, publicity and organizations costs). This funding would be limited, on the expectation the group would be self-sufficient in an agreed-upon timeframe.
Encourage other sectors of the community to support volunteers	▪ Encourage business and service clubs to sponsor volunteer groups and to provide specific services (e.g., secretarial, printing, equipment).
Encourage volunteers to participate in training programs to improve effectiveness of their activities	▪ Investigate the availability of appropriate programs. ▪ Investigate interest in training programs among voluntary organizations. ▪ Identify other organizations (e.g., School Boards, Library Board, Health of Social Service agencies) to co-sponsor programs for volunteers.
Provide short term financial assistance	▪ Develop a community funding policy for this purpose (discussed below).

Pricing/User Fees

While the Town has a schedule of fees, it does not have a comprehensive user fee policy or a documented strategy for revenue enhancement. Increasingly, municipal leisure authorities are being asked to provide expanded and improved services without resources from senior levels of government. Capital grants from the Province of Ontario for recreation facility development were commonplace in Ontario in the past and contributed to the current supply of recreation and culture facilities in most communities. Grants of this type are no longer available. Similarly, operating grants and special program grants are rare and changes in legislation (e.g., the revised Development Charges legislation) make it increasingly difficult to access non-municipal funds for parks, culture and recreation facilities and programs. The full cost of leisure services is now largely the responsibility of the local municipality despite continued resistance among local taxpayers to increases in their assessments for municipal services.

For municipalities, therefore, the challenge is to generate a larger share of capital and operating funds from sources other than the local tax base without restricting the community's access to essential parks, recreation and cultural services. To accomplish this, municipalities require effective user fee policies and a more aggressive approach to securing alternative revenue sources.

Collingwood charges user fees for a number of recreation services. A policy is not in place, however, that provides a rationale for a full range of user fees and charges. Such a policy should be developed with the objective of maximizing revenues without restricting access to parks and recreation services. Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) has developed guidelines for municipalities preparing user fee policies with this objective in mind. The Leisure Services Department should obtain these guidelines and prepare a detailed user fee policy to maximize revenues from users.

An important consideration for this policy will be non-resident fees. Collingwood is a service centre for non-residents; however, it is likely that Collingwood residents are also using facilities in adjoining municipalities. This is the case for arenas and may also apply to other facilities. An initial consideration is the extent to which Collingwood is serving a disproportionate share of non-residents. This should be confirmed. If Collingwood is servicing non-residents who are not contributing to the cost of providing services, non-resident fees are appropriate and should be considered as part of the user fee policy.

General Facility Allocation Policy

A policy should be developed for all Town facilities that are scheduled by organized users that establish priorities for use if competing demands emerge. The following guidelines are appropriate for facility allocation:

- Determine the facilities to be addressed in the policy - the policy should distinguish between types of facilities or facilities that are intended for specialized use (e.g., league use versus informal use); the policy is primarily directed at ensuring fair and equitable access to facilities in situations where demand exceeds supply – consequently it is most relevant to major facilities that are used by organized groups;
- Determine whether policies apply at all times or only during prime time; most policies would only apply to prime time when competing demands should be anticipated.
- Determine various user groups that should be reflected in the policy - the policy might distinguish between leisure/non-leisure groups; age groups (e.g., children, adults, seniors); special populations; gender; and established versus new groups. These are customary criteria for allocating facilities;
- Determine the various types of uses to be reflected in the policy - the following uses might be assigned different priorities:
 - Profit/non-profit groups;
 - Special events;
 - Recreation skill level/advanced skill level;
 - Closed to the public/open to the public;

- Subsidized/revenue-producing; and
- Type of leisure activity (e.g., social, sport, cultural, etc.).

The final two considerations suggest the facility allocation policy may place a higher priority on different facility users or uses. Of course, these decisions are at the heart of the policy and must carefully reflect the municipalities desired outcomes associated with leisure services. An all-encompassing differentiation among users would suggest that Leisure Services places a higher priority on serving some community residents. This is some times reflected in a priority being placed on children; while this is a traditional approach, today it is questionable whether the municipal leisure services mandate should not apply equally to adults and children. In some cases the type of facility may indicate a priority user, for example a therapeutic pool with special design features for special populations or older adults might be largely reserved for their use. Similarly, it would be customary to reserve higher quality facilities for users with higher skill levels. Facility scheduling priorities would also generally reflect the age of users, for example forcing adults to play hockey late in the evening.

Gender and new versus established users can also be considerations in facility allocation. Fair and equal access to facilities has been a major issue in many municipalities as women and girls have become more involved in sports that were traditionally dominated by males. Hockey has been the greatest challenge due to the significant growth in female participation and the competition for prime time ice. Policies sometimes indicate that priorities will not be assigned on the basis of gender and that both males and females will have equal access to facilities. Gender is often dealt with in policies and procedures that allocate time to new groups versus established groups. Consequently a new or growing girls' hockey league is allocated time previously controlled by established groups. This generally can only be accommodated by removing time from other, generally male serving, hockey leagues, which indicates the challenge of establishing a facility allocation policy. A similar situation will emerge if the supply of outdoor playing fields is insufficient to meet the growing demands of soccer at the same time that new sports, such as Ultimate, lacrosse or cricket, become popular. Nonetheless, a central objective of the Master Plan is program development in new areas. It is essential, therefore, that facility allocation support this objective, even if it means existing programs may have to operate on reduced hours.

These policies might also distinguish between the types of uses and again priorities must reflect the municipalities anticipated outcomes. A municipality interested in the economic benefits of sport tourism and hoping to attract visitors to tournaments may not place priority on local recreational users, while this would be expected if the Town's priority was high levels of participation and active lifestyles for residents. It would be customary to assign priorities to uses for which the facility is designed (e.g. a specially designed dance studio).

The priorities assigned for facility allocation will have obvious implications for the programs and services available to residents, the residents served, and the revenues and costs to the municipality. These implications must be assessed in developing the facility allocation policy. Most importantly, it must be consistent with Council approved outcomes associated with the use of parks, recreation and cultural facilities owned by the municipality. With the possible exception of a comprehensive user fee policy, facility allocation will be the most controversial and challenging policy to put in place because it establishes

priorities among competing users and uses. The policy must be developed in consultation with users. It will, therefore, require a time commitment that is likely not possible until the additional staff recommended in the Master Plan are in place.

Community Funding Policy

The Town of Collingwood has a Financial Assistance Policy for the provision of financial support to community groups providing recreation and culture services. The policy is available for “seed funds”, special events and unique needs. Procedures are in place to manage applications and evaluate proposals. We understand the process operates satisfactorily, although grant requests always exceed available funds. The Department should review the policy and the recent history of grant applications to determine if new or expanded criteria are required to evaluate proposals. This may be the case to better reflect the priorities and directions in the Master Plan. In addition, a stronger distinction might be made among the three types of funding, as discussed below. This may require new procedures. Finally, based on past experience and future expectations, the funds available annually for the Financial Assistance Policy should be reviewed.

A Community Funding Policy outlines the parameters for project-specific funding to community groups and generally does not provide grants or subsidies on an on-going, regular basis to support a basic level of recreation or culture service in the Town. The Town should continue to support this level of service through its capital and operating contribution to facilities, support for marketing and program development and staffing. The Community Funding Policy should be used in situations where the Town is prepared to make a financial investment in a project or program operated by a community group. It is understood that this investment is made with the expectation of a return that benefits the community and justifies the expenditure.

Financial investment from the municipality could be requested for the following reasons:

- To build new or renovate existing facilities for the leisure activities of a group where this investment represents an enhanced level of service and is also financed by the group requesting assistance;
- To assist a new group with start-up costs with the expectation the investment will support a new community service that will be self-sufficient; and
- To directly subsidize the operating costs of a program or service, that would otherwise not be financially viable, because there is a social or economic return to the Town as a whole that justifies the investment.

These three cases should be addressed in a Community Funding Policy in a different manner.

A number of municipalities have introduced programs where they financially support community groups wishing to upgrade existing or develop new facilities. In some cases, this is on a cost-sharing basis and in others it is in the form of a no-interest loan. Both types of financial assistance are appropriate and can create very effective partnerships for facility development and upgrades. This type of arrangement would be appropriate for projects identified by a sport organization or other community group. The following considerations would generally be reflected in these policies:

**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

- In all situations where the Town provides financial assistance, the community organization should be expected to demonstrate benefits to the municipality that are consistent with broader corporate goals and objectives articulated by Council in its strategic plan or other similar documents;
- Facilities, parks or services in question must be publicly accessible and serve Collingwood residents;
- Funding would only be available to non-profit community organizations;
- All other sources of funding will be investigated before the funding application is considered;
- Requests for funding would have to be submitted in a prescribed fashion and according to a schedule that allows the Department to incorporate these in its annual budgeting process;
- Community organizations would be responsible for demonstrating the need for the facility or desired upgrades and, if a loan is involved, demonstrating financial viability;
- In situations where the Town provides a loan, this would be an investment that allows a viable community project to proceed more quickly. The community organization would be expected to contribute financing to the project as well; and
- In cost sharing situations, the community organization would be expected to come up with their share of the funds before the municipality made its contribution. This share would be clearly set out in the policy (e.g., 50% of the approved capital expenditure after grants from external sources); and
- The decision to cost share or provide a loan would be based on the Town's standards concerning core facilities. The municipality must define standards of service for all leisure facilities (discussed elsewhere in the plan). This involves both defining types of facilities to be provided by the municipality and an acceptable quality or standard of development for the facility. If the request for assistance will result in facilities that meet the Town's standards for core facilities, cost sharing would be appropriate. In other cases, the Town should consider an interest free loan.

Start-up funding for new organizations should also be considered in the Community Funding Policy. Start-up funding might be provided for a number of purposes, including purchase of equipment, access to facilities, staff assistance, marketing or organizational assistance and advice. This would be a short-term investment to help establish a self-sufficient program that can serve residents for a number of years. This funding should only be provided in response to a business plan. The business plan would demonstrate the financial viability of the project and the anticipated benefits to the community. Financing would generally be provided for the short term (2-3 years) on a declining basis. The business plan should demonstrate ongoing viability after the start-up period. As with the direct financing noted above, this funding would generally only be available to non-profit community organizations serving a demonstrated need in Collingwood.

Municipalities do not normally provide ongoing annual operating grants to community recreation or culture organizations, other than covering the shortfall in the costs of maintaining and developing community facilities that is not covered by user fees, and assuming staff costs for program development, community development and marketing. In special circumstances, however, the Town may wish to provide additional assistance. This might be the case, for example, if it can be demonstrated that there are directly related economic benefits that justify the investment (e.g., an investment in a special event that brings visitors into the community and supports local business). Similarly, a program directed at a special population – such as

youth at risk – might be worthy of a direct investment because of the unique social benefits associated with the program. In these situations, Council should consider a direct operating investment if justified by the anticipated social or economic return for the community. The onus, however, should be on the community organization to demonstrate that their program or facility is directly responsible for economic or social benefits that justify the investment. A business plan or similar assessment should be prepared by community organizations requesting a direct operating subsidy and they might be requested to demonstrate that the anticipated benefits are realized.

Capital Conservation Policy

Capital conservation deals with repairs and replacement of major building components and systems due to natural aging, facility design, construction or maintenance problems. Without a capital conservation fund, the Town could be faced with major capital repair expenses and no resources to undertake the work. The Town does not have a capital reserve fund where contributions to the reserve are based on anticipated capital costs and is guided by a policy that stipulates the requirement for an annual contribution of a designated magnitude.

Initially, the Town should undertake a comprehensive review of existing infrastructure to identify capital conservation requirements, life expectancy of major components, and future financial liabilities. This should be done so that the cost of maintaining the existing infrastructure is known and can be used in planning for future expenditures. Relevant costs would include those associated with the original infrastructure as well as those that have since become mandatory through legislation requirements (e.g., the Ontarians with Disabilities Act). These costs must be determined, and included with other standard capital conservation items, for the Town to have a complete understanding of its future financial liabilities.

Based on the costs identified by a detailed capital conservation assessment, the Town should annually allocate a specified amount to a capital conservation fund. Once a reserve fund is established, it should be monitored annually and its adequacy assessed based on the amount accumulated in reserve, the maintenance and repairs completed, and the anticipated costs of future repairs and renovations. In the absence of information provided by the capital conservation study, the Town might establish an interim reserve based on general guidelines that have been adopted for this purpose. It is sometimes recommended that municipalities establish reserves based on a minimum of 1% of the replacement cost of existing facilities.

Action Plan #4: Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning and Evaluation

The Leisure Services Department should establish a database to provide a solid and defensible basis for future planning and decision-making. At minimum, the Department should undertake the following activities:

- Annually update the inventory of culture and recreation facilities and parkland, and document parkland supply according to recommended parkland classifications;
- Identify measures to determine the capacity and use of facilities and ensure that scheduling procedures that are adopted provide data in this format. These data could then be used to ensure

all existing resources were at capacity before providing new facilities. Ideally, computer based scheduling software would be used for this purpose;

- As the population increases, update per capita ratios of facility and parkland supply;
- Meet regularly with all user groups and partners for planning purposes; and
- Develop and track simple performance measures (discussed below) to monitor/evaluate changes in the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery over time.

These tasks will contribute to an ongoing database useful for planning and decision-making. It would also be valuable to occasionally (perhaps every 3 years) collect more broadly based community input on parks, recreation and culture needs. This might be done through such vehicles as community meetings hosted by the Department and/or a short questionnaire for user groups.

Performance measures should be adopted as part of the ongoing planning process. It would be advisable to develop simple performance measures to track the Department's progress in meeting the objectives of the Master Plan and to track changes in service delivery over time. Performance measures such as the following might be tracked:

- Number of participants in Department direct or partnered programs;
- Total number of program hours by broad categories of program description (sports, arts, general interest, etc);
- Program hours per capita provided in partnership with non-municipal providers;
- Total number of volunteer organizations affiliated with the Department and staff hours committed to volunteer support;
- Net operating cost per operating hour for major facilities;
- Proportion of cost recovery for selected programs and/or facilities;
- Municipal parkland and trail provision per capita;
- Total funds committed to service improvements from community sources; and
- Proportion of total capital costs for local park or facility improvements contributed from non-municipal sources.

The Department could develop all of these measures from an in-house database. With additional information collection (e.g., a simple survey distributed to user groups annually or simple, consistent questions asked of people participating in the Department's programs or those of a partner) additional measures could be developed. The Department should identify a limited number of relevant performance measures to put in place immediately and add to these measures over time as resources permit.

Once data for a number of past performance periods is collected and analyzed, reasonable targets for the future can be established. This type of information can be used to determine where changes to the program/service mix, areas where new marketing strategies are warranted, etc., to improve financial and service-related performance. This type of performance-related data can also be used by the Department to help communicate the benefits of parks, recreation and cultural service to Council and to the community.

Summary - Delivery System – Products of the Plan

The following Delivery System products will be available if these Action Plans are implemented:

- A clearly defined role for the Leisure Services Department in programming, support for arts and culture, and tourism;
- Additional staff resources to support programming and community development;
- New policies to specifically address volunteer assistance, fees and pricing, facility allocation, community funding and capital conservation; and
- A comprehensive process for compiling data and evaluating services on an ongoing basis and a procedure for updating the Master Plan.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Table 9.1 outlines an implementation strategy for the Plan. The table lists each of the Action Plans and identifies the party responsible for undertaking the work, and provides estimated capital and operating costs, where applicable. Cost estimates are in 2006 dollars. These are preliminary estimates and must be confirmed. While the Town is ultimately responsible for all Master Plan recommendations, the distinction is made here between work that can be done exclusively by Department staff and that which will require them to consult or work with others. As can be seen from the table, implementing the majority of the Plan's directions will require the Department to work with other groups, agencies and individuals. The table also shows that the bulk of this work will be absorbed in staff costs, which emphasizes the need for sufficient staff resources to undertake it. Of course, implementing all of the recommendations assumes the Department's ongoing liaison with, and required approvals from, Town Council.

Priorities for action plans are noted as follows:

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- | | | |
|-----|------------|--|
| ▪ H | – High | – To be completed in Year One |
| ▪ M | – Moderate | – To be completed in Years Two to Five |
| ▪ L | – Low | – To be completed in Year Five or beyond |
| ▪ O | – Ongoing | – To be implemented, as warranted, during the period of the Plan |
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**Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008**

Action Plans	Responsibility	Priority	Estimated Cost	Comments
Major Indoor Facilities				
▪ Confirm Facility Model	Staff	H	Staff cost and/or with feasibility study	
▪ Prepare Feasibility Studies for Major Indoor Facilities	Staff/Consultants	M	\$75 – 100,000	▪ A comprehensive feasibility study should be completed within 2-3 years; however, some issues, such as the possible replacement of the Collingwood Fitness Centre will need to be addressed immediately. ▪ Ideally this study will be done in partnership with the adjoining municipalities to investigate a regional multiuse facility. If pursued as a regional facility, additional budget in the order of \$25-30,000 might be set aside to investigate the partnership model, cost sharing and co-management.
Outdoor Sports Fields and Unscheduled Outdoor Facilities				
▪ Monitor Outdoor Field Interests and Explore New Approaches to Sport Field Development	Staff	O		
▪ Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements	Staff	O	TBD	▪ Costs to be determined based on inspection of existing fields.
▪ Prepare a Detailed Development Strategy for Outdoor Facilities	Staff/Consultants	M-L	\$1 million	▪ Cost estimate for skateboard park, major splash pad and multipurpose pads. ▪ Costs phased over life of Plan.
Parks and Open Space				
▪ Update Park Acquisition and Development Policies and Practices	Staff/Consultants	H	\$25 – 35,000	
▪ Update Park Standards and Maintenance Practices	Staff/Consultants	H-M	\$30 – 35,000 \$15 – 25,000 per park	▪ Develop standards, guidelines and public art policy. ▪ Plans required for Sunset Point, Harbourlands, Harbourview, Legion, Heritage and Centennial Parks.
▪ Update Environmental Protection and Management Policies and Practices	Staff/Consultants	M	\$50 – 65,000	▪ Prepare an Environmental Management Plan for Town lands.
▪ Continue the Implementation of the Trails Master Plan	Staff/Consultants	O	\$20,000	▪ Trails design support, as required.
Arts and Culture				
▪ Prepare an Arts and Cultural Policy	Staff and Arts Coordinating Committee (ACC)	H	\$10,000	▪ Costs for outside assistance / facilitation.
▪ Identify Appropriate Organizational Structure and Improve Communication and Coordination in the Arts and Cultural Sector	Staff	H		

Town of Collingwood
Leisure Services Master Plan
Final Report – January 2008

Action Plans	Responsibility	Priority	Estimated Cost	Comments
Enhance Municipal Support for Arts and Cultural Development	Council/Staff	H		Additional staff are required; costs noted below.
Identify Facility Requirements to Support Art and Cultural Development	Staff/Consultants	L	\$75,000	- Cost for feasibility study for performing arts centre. - Local arts facility needs will be assessed in feasibility study for major indoor facilities.
Programs				
Expand Programming in Three Key Areas - Active Living, Outdoor Unstructured Recreational Activities and Arts and Culture	Staff	O		
Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector	Staff	O		
Delivery System				
Confirm the Department's Program Role	Council	H		
Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery	Council	H	\$100,000 annually	Assumes two additional community development staff.
Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery	Staff/Consultants	H-M	\$30,000	- Primarily a staff responsibility - Budget for external assistance with policy development.
Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning and Evaluation	Staff	M		