



# Town of Cobourg Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, the Town of Cobourg received grant from the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund through the Ontario Government and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to fund the development of a Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan. The consulting team of MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson (MHBC) Planning Ltd. and Raymond Consulting was retained by the Town to undertake this Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The purpose of the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is to provide the Town of Cobourg with a long term strategy to be used as a guide in developing recreational programs which strengthens the Town's existing sport and recreation program delivery structure and aligns it with the Canada Sport for Life model.

The Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is intended complement past studies (Cobourg Community Centre Campus Master Plan, Parks Master Plan, Seniors Action Plan) and provide a comprehensive strategy which focuses on program and service delivery to ensure the Town continues to meet the recreation needs of residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

The scope of the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is limited to the programs and services provided by the Town of Cobourg, which are delivered primarily through the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC). This Plan is a five-year plan with a

broader 10-year strategy to complement the existing strategic plans.

The Strategy and Implementation Plan was supported by public consultation program, which included a public workshop/public meeting(s), input from stakeholders, staff and other recreation program service providers, and on-line survey. Detailed results of this consultation are included in a compendium appendix document.

Based on the public input and background review conducted as part of this study, four general themes emerged, centered on the following issues:

- Accessibility/ affordability
- Corporate brand/ marketing/ communications
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Programs and training

As a result, over seventy key recommendations/strategic actions have been provided under these four general themes, which are intended to help the newly formed Recreation and Culture Division build capacity in programming; enhance diversity of opportunities for participants; establish a framework for identifying partnerships; and, provide training strategies for staff to increase technical and practical knowledge. Additional recommendations/strategic actions are also provided with respect to sport and staff development in order to deliver sport programs and align with the C4SL model.

Cobourg is on the cusp of change, navigating the new direction for recreation, sport, and community. This will require leadership and vision that will demand support and the combined efforts of the new Division and prospective partners from all community sectors in order to make changes that will allow for success.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is to provide the Town of Cobourg with a long term strategy to be used as a guide in developing recreational programs which strengthens the Town's existing sport and recreation program delivery structure and aligns it with the Canada Sport for Life model.

Several strategic plans are currently used to inform various aspects of the Town's Recreation model. These plans include the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC) Campus Master Plan (2014) and Parks Master Plan (2013); which guide facility and public space development; and, the Seniors Action Plan (2015) which is used to coordinate services, supports and opportunities specifically for seniors.

Although these plans and strategies are in effect, and serve as important planning tools for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and targeted demographic services within the Town, the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is intended to complement these documents and provide a comprehensive strategy which focuses on program and service delivery to ensure the Town continues to meet the recreation needs of residents and program/ service users from the surrounding area of all ages and abilities.

The scope of the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is limited to the programs and services provided by the Town of Cobourg, which are delivered primarily through the Cobourg

Community Centre (CCC). This Plan is a five-year plan with a broader 10-year strategy to complement the existing strategic plans.

This Plan also addresses current issues and opportunities for program delivery not envisioned in the existing strategies.

The Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan establishes a comprehensive recreation model for the Town, which will:

- Build capacity in programming;
- Enhance diversity of opportunities for participants;
- Identify a partnership development framework; and,
- Provide training strategies for staff to increase technical and practical knowledge.

## 1.2 Methodology

In 2015, the Town of Cobourg received a grant from the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund through the Ontario Government and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to fund the development of a Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan. The consulting team of MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson (MHBC) Planning Ltd. and Raymond Consulting was retained by the Town to undertake the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan. The foundation of the Strategy and Implementation Plan is based upon public consultation with the community, input from stakeholders, staff and other recreation program service providers, while considering recreation and leisure trends and the Town's demographics and population.

In order to get a better understanding of how the community currently utilizes programs offered by the Town and obtain input on the overall vision for the delivery of parks and recreation programs moving forward, a community consultation exercise was undertaken to identify program needs and areas for improvement. The consultation also assisted in answering fundamental questions like:

- What do you believe the long term goal (or vision) should be for parks and recreation in the community?;
- How could existing programs and services be improved?;
- What other programs and services would you like to see offered in the community?;
- What core programs and services should the Town focus on?; and,
- What partnerships, or collaborations, would you suggest the Town pursue?

In addition, an online survey was undertaken to obtain additional feedback regarding: the community's current participation in leisure programs offered by various organizations within and outside of the Town of Cobourg; facility usage within the Town; barriers to participation; level of service provided by the Town with respect to recreational needs and programming; areas for improvement; and, perceptions and opinions on partnerships between the Town and community organizations. The survey ran from February to April, 2016, and included additional targeted surveys to better understand the specific programming needs of youth and seniors within the community. In total, responses to the survey were as follows:

- General Survey- 530 respondents
- Seniors Targeted Survey (aged 50 and older)- 275 respondents
- Youth Survey (under 18 years old)- 41 respondents

Interviews were also conducted with staff, user groups; and, other community stakeholders to: assess the current demand and capacity for existing programs; understand how recreation and leisure service providers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the current delivery of programming; gauge the importance of partnerships between organizations; assess the organizational structure; and, identify staffing trends and training needs specific to those employed by the Town at the CCC.

These exercises assisted to identify major goals, identify gaps, opportunities and priority areas to direct the provision and delivery of future parks and recreation services in the Town. The results of the survey exercise and a summary of the community open house consultation and one-on-one interviews are included as appendices to this report.

Existing background reports and plans were also reviewed to assist in establishing an understanding of Town's existing recreation offerings in order to identify gaps and priorities for recreation and the future scale of any planned recreation facilities in the Town. These have included strategic master plans including the CCC Campus Master Plan, Parks Master Plan and Seniors Action Plan as well as the Town's recreation and leisure program offerings and other community organization program offerings.

Available data on user rates, program fees, and operating budgets made available by the Town were also relied upon. Additionally, site visits of the Cobourg Community Centre and other community facilities were conducted by the consultants to supplement information provided by the Town. Demographic data, obtained primarily from Statistics Canada, and local planning policy documents was also used in order to get a better understanding of the demographic profile and future demographic trends that could potentially influence parks and recreation program delivery in the Town.

## 1.3 Organization of the Plan

The Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan includes the following components:

- **A Review of Background Information**, including a review of local demographics, a summary of background studies completed by the Town, which inform and compliment the findings and directions of this Plan (Section 2.0); and, a review of current programming and recreation trends (Sections 3 and 4);
- **Identification and Summary of Key Themes**, which were identified through community consultation and background research and analysis (Section 5.);
- **Staff Training and Development Opportunities** are identified in Section 6.0; and,

- **Implementation/ Action Plan**, developed based on the recommendations proposed for each of the identified key themes (Section 7.0). Note, only high priority actions are identified in Section 7.0.

Detailed survey and consultation results are included as appendices to this report. Appendix J of the appendix document includes a more detailed Implementation/Action Plan.

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# 2.0 BACKGROUND REVIEW

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## 2.1 Cobourg Regional Context

The Town of Cobourg is located in Southern Ontario, halfway between Toronto and Kingston, within Northumberland County. The total population of the County, according to the 2011 Census, was 82,126. The County of Northumberland is comprised of seven municipalities:

- Township of Alnwick/Haldimand;
- Municipality of Brighton;
- Town of Cobourg;
- Township of Cramahe;
- Township of Hamilton;
- Municipality of Port Hope; and,
- Municipality of Trent Hills

With a population of approximately 18,000, Cobourg is the largest of the seven municipalities within the County and is considered to be an 'urban hub' for the neighbouring communities. The next largest is Port Hope. The Town is within close proximity to major employers, with many of the County's top manufacturing employers located within the Town of Cobourg (i.e. Weetabix of Canada Ltd., Maplehurst Bakeries Cobourg and BrandNeu Foods Canada Inc.,)

The Town of Cobourg provides a variety of parks and recreation facilities intended to serve residents of the Town and County,

including a community centre, recreation complex, marina, yacht club, and numerous public outdoor spaces (parks) of varying sizes.

In addition to the recreational facilities and public spaces provided and operated by the Town, many other private facilities exist and contribute to the recreation and leisure opportunities available to residents of the Town and County. These include a variety of private fitness facilities, yoga studios, dance academies, gymnastics centres, and organized sport leagues (e.g. soccer).

## 2.2 Demographics

With a population of 18,519 in 2011, the Town of Cobourg represents the largest municipality in Northumberland County. Port Hope (16,960); Trent Hills (12,590); the Township of Hamilton (11,320); and, Brighton (10,592) are the next most populous municipalities within the County. For the 2011 Census year, 26% of the County's overall population growth occurred in Cobourg. Based on population forecasts provided in the Northumberland County Official Plan, it is expected that Cobourg's population will grow by 9,641 by 2041, which represents a share of 48% of the County's Urban Areas population growth and 38% of the County's overall population growth. It is forecast that the 2034 population of the Town of Cobourg will be 26,105. Notwithstanding the growth projections allocated to the Town, the 2011 Census data shows that Cobourg's population is not growing as fast as in previous Census years. Population growth from the 2006 Census to the 2011 Census

was 1.7% (309 people). This is significantly less than the previous Census years, where Cobourg experienced a growth of 6.1% from 1996-2001 and 6% from 2001-2006.

The slow growth experienced from 2006-2011 points to an overall aging population, which suggests that it is not likely that Cobourg will experience population growth via current residents entering the parenting stage of the family lifecycle. This is further confirmed by analysis of median age. The median age of residents of the Town of Cobourg is 49.6 years old, which is significantly higher than the provincial (40.4) and national (40.6) median age. According to Statistics Canada, the average household size in Cobourg is 2.2 people, which is less than the provincial and national averages of 2.6 and 2.5 respectively. This is likely due to the demographic trend toward an aging population who have already gone through a majority of the family life cycle and are at the “empty nest” stage of life.

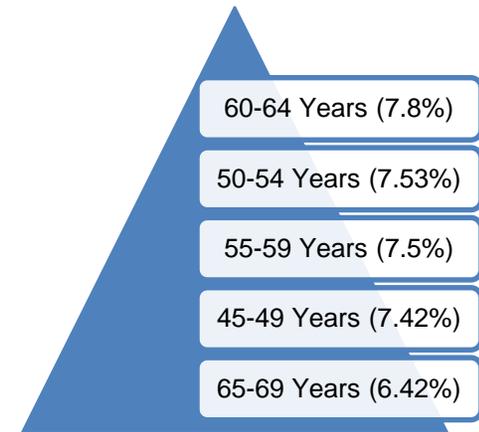
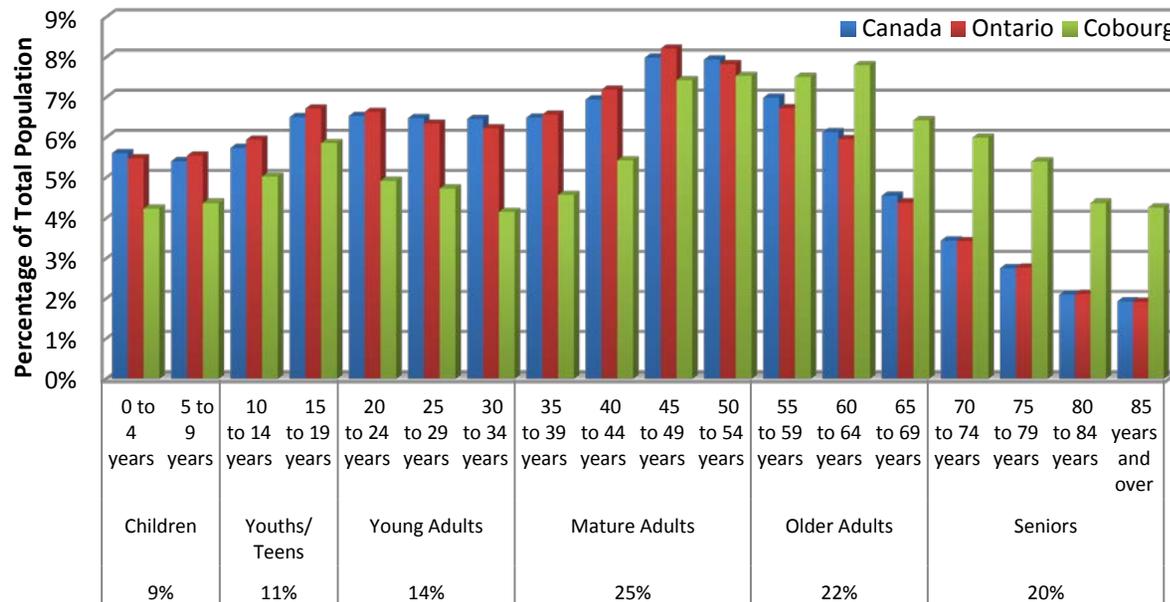
Analysis of immigration patterns suggests that growth is also not

likely to occur via immigration to the Town. Census data indicates that the proportion of new immigrants to the Town between Census years, as a proportion of the total population, is declining.

Research indicates that there is a correlation between income and participation in recreational activities whereby participation in recreation activities is often higher among higher income families. Studies have also shown that wealth and family income increases with age. Based on the latest Census data, the average household income in Cobourg is lower than the Canadian average. The National Household Survey determined that the median household income after tax for Cobourg was \$61,560 compared to \$71,523 for Ontario.

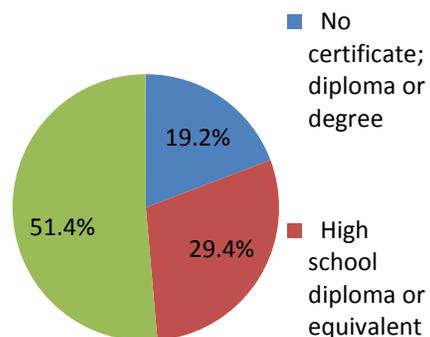
**Left:** Population Distribution by age cohort, Canada, Ontario and Cobourg

**Below:** Top five age cohorts, Cobourg



The level of education one achieves also influences the likelihood of engaging in healthy physical and recreational activities. As the level of education one achieves increases, so does the probability that participation in physical and recreational activities will increase.

Over half (51.4%) of the Town’s population has a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree, while the balance has either attained only a high school diploma or has no education whatsoever. Given these statistics and the links between educational attainment and physical activity levels, it can be inferred that residents of Cobourg actively participate in physical and recreational pursuits, and this trend will likely continue for the next



**Educational attainment, Cobourg (Statistics Canada, 2011)**

20-25 years.

Demographic analysis shows that the majority of Cobourg’s population speaks English as a first language. The top 5 languages, other than English and French, spoken by residents in Cobourg are German, Dutch, Italian, Persian (Farsi), and Spanish. Ethnicity can influence the community services provided by a municipality. The diversity of ethnic groups in the community can lead to greater demand for recreation pursuits that these ethnic groups enjoy. For example,

there may be greater demand on facilities such as cricket, bocce, or other culturally specific programs in order to serve the diverse community needs. It is therefore important for the Town to continue to monitor the changing demographics to ensure cultural, leisure and recreation services meet the socio-demographic demands.

Overall, the demographic trends suggest that Cobourg is currently comprised of an aging population and the future demographic makeup will be increasingly skewed toward older adults and seniors. The upcoming results of the recent 2016 Census of Canada will assist in determining whether the trend in the Town continues toward an aging, and possibly declining, population.

## 2.3 Planning Framework Review

### 2.3.1 Northumberland County Official Plan (2015)

The County of Northumberland Official Plan was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on July 29, 2015 and is currently the subject of Ontario Municipal Board appeals. The County of Northumberland Official Plan includes a series of policies, guidelines and regulations that direct the actions of the County and shapes growth and development to the year 2034. The Plan provides a broad, upper tier policy framework to guide local municipalities in establishing detailed strategies, policies and land

use designations at the local level. The Plan also establishes a framework for the coordination and cooperation amongst local municipalities and the County on planning and development issues that cross municipal boundaries.

The County Official Plan contains a variety of policies that are relevant to the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan. Specifically, the Plan states that *"every effort must be made to plan for a more healthy community, where residents and employees are encouraged to lead more healthy lifestyles as a result of the provision of a range and mix of uses, recreational amenities and open space areas"*.

Additionally, the Official Plan encourages development which supports a health promoting, age-friendly community. The County encourages each of the urban areas to become complete communities, where there is a strong live/work ratio; choice in the market place for obtaining goods and services; a range of educational and training opportunities; a range of housing types; a range of health care services; a range of community and social services; a range of cultural and recreational opportunities and facilities; and, a population level and density which supports the provision of public transit.

In order to achieve the vision of the Official Plan related to healthy communities, policies of the Plan direct municipalities to invest in, program and optimally maintain a diverse and interconnected system of public spaces that feature convenient, and comfortable access, encourage safe and healthy environments, minimize hazards and attract and appropriately serve all components of the population. Development of interconnected systems of cycling and

walking to provide access to activity and employment areas is intended to be undertaken by local municipalities, in conjunction with the County in order to plan for and encourage walking and cycling throughout the county. The parkland and open space policies of the Official plan provide support for, and encourage, municipalities within the County to establish trails that appeal to all ages and skill levels and can be used during all seasons. The County promotes the establishment of partnerships with the public, non-profit and/ or private sectors in the provision of trails.

### 2.3.2 *Town of Cobourg Official Plan (2010)*

The Town of Cobourg Official Plan (2010) establishes a framework for the future planning of the community and provides an overall vision, purpose, objectives and general guidelines for the planning of the community; policies to achieve the vision; and, a framework to guide the municipality in carrying out more detailed steps in the planning process. The Town's Official Plan 2010 Five Year Review Consolidation (OP 2010) was adopted by Cobourg Municipal council and Approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. OP 2010 is currently under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

The Official Plan envisions Cobourg as a Regional Centre for Northumberland County. Cobourg is positioned as a strong, livable and healthy community, which provides a full range of opportunities to live, work, play and shop within the Town.

Several of the Town's Community Development Principles aim to achieve a healthy community. It is a principle of the Official Plan

that *"decisions made with respect to the future of the Town of Cobourg will reflect the need to maintain a healthy and economically viable community"*. This involves encouraging a broadly based planning approach which will maintain and, where feasible, enhance the social and economic health of the Town and its residents. The Official Plan identifies that the provision of a variety of lifestyle choices for residents; the availability of community services and facilities; a safe community; and, general livability are all components which contribute to a healthy community. Objectives to support this principle include:

- Provide for a range of recreational, educational and cultural facilities and activities to meet the needs of all residents
- Build and maintain (as is financially feasible) the physical services required to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the community and to provide for the needs of employment uses
- Encourage accessibility for pedestrian, bicycle and other active transportation modes throughout the community
- Encourage design, particularly for public buildings and spaces, which results in the maximum degree of accessibility and visibility

Additionally, the Official Plan provides a series of design principles which are intended to guide community and site design. In particular, the design principles of "Create and Celebrate Public spaces" and "Promote Healthy Lifestyles and Physical, Mental and Spiritual Well-being" are of importance to the development of a Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan. With respect to these design principles, the Official Plan states public spaces for the

residents should consider continuity and connectivity between and within public spaces, neighbourhoods and employment areas. The Official Plan also encourages promoting a healthy and active living lifestyle and promoting alternative modes of transportation and the development of a Greenlands System that affords year-round recreational opportunities.

## 2.4 Review of Previous Studies Completed

Over the past five years, a number of other studies, strategies and plans have been completed regarding the planning and provision of parks and recreation in the Town. These studies, reviewed below, generally dealt with the planning and development of parks and recreation infrastructure. As previously noted, the scope of this study is not intended to address infrastructure needs, but rather program and service delivery. It is anticipated that the recommendations of this Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan will complement and build upon the recommendations of these other studies.

### 2.4.1 Cobourg Multi-Use Community Centre Feasibility Study

The Cobourg Multi-Use Community Centre Feasibility study was completed in 2009 and assessed the need for indoor recreation facilities in the Town and the feasibility of providing these in a single, multi-purpose complex. In order to understand the needs of

the community, the study comprised a public engagement program which included a survey and a design charrette. The public engagement program provided primary input into understanding service and facility needs of the community and allowed community members to participate directly in developing a concept drawing for a multi-use community centre.

The study found that indoor recreation facility requirements in the Town of Cobourg support development of a multi-use community centre. Short-term facility requirements include a twin pad arena, a gymnasium, multi-purpose program and meeting space, limited dedicated space for seniors, youth and a lawn bowling clubhouse, and an indoor track. Long term facility needs may include a third ice pad and an aquatics centre.

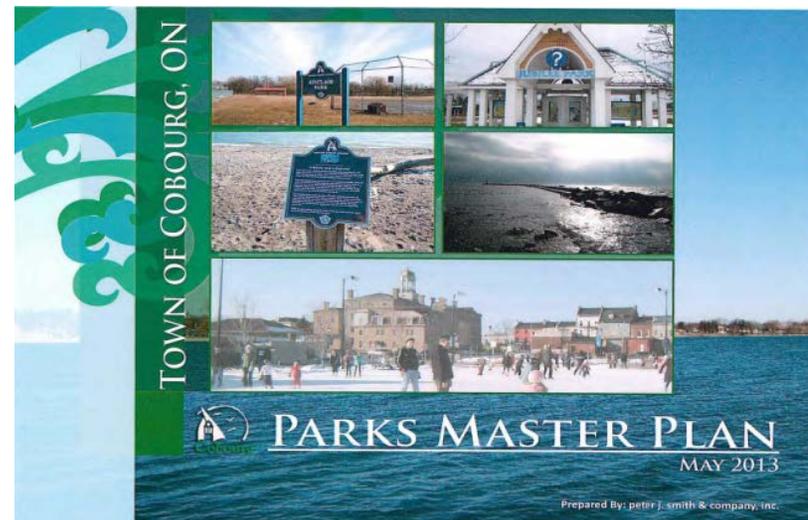
The study reviewed a number of potential sites for locating the new facility and projected costs for the facility. The report recommends a future partnership in managing and operating non-arena components of the CCC be explored. The report also recommends that future population growth may require the introduction of a recreation department. An implementation program is also included, which sets out the schedule for tasks to be completed in order for the CCC to be operational by the target date (end of March, 2011).

Although not directly related to the preparation of a building program and design concept for facilities required in the short-term, the report identifies that a full-facility aquatics centre should be planned after 2021. It also recommends that the following new facilities are not required:

- Specialized fitness facilities
- Banquet hall

## 2.4.2 Parks Master Plan

The Parks Master Plan for the Town of Cobourg (PMP) was completed in 2013 and provides a strategy for achieving the Town's vision for a strong, livable and healthy community. The PMP looks beyond the development of recreation facilities to improving and creating a comprehensive park system that meets the needs of the community and enhances recreational potential, identity and health of residents. An assessment of current supply and level of service analysis was conducted to determine how many parks and facilities are needed in the Town to provide residents with a sufficient level of service. It is the position of the PMP that the



Town should expand its supply of parks to encourage mobility and fitness within the community.

A community visioning exercise was completed, which included a vision session, focus groups and community meetings to provide a clear picture of the desired future for the parks and waterfront in the Town of Cobourg. Seven goals were identified to guide the development of the parks system and address the needs of the community: character, connectivity, diversity, environment, accessibility, management; and, waterfront issues.

Four of these seven goals are of particular importance to the Parks and Recreation Study and Implementation Plan, and are listed below:

- *Connectivity- link parks together and create a unified system of public destinations and active transportation circulation corridors*
- *Diversity- elevate the value of parks through the integration of educational and interpretative programming*
- *Accessibility- ensure residents and park users have complete access to all parks and equal opportunity to participate in the parks system; and,*
- *Management- encourage partnerships with local service clubs, community groups, and the private sector to enhance the parks system and delivery of services*

A detailed plan for implementation is included in the PMP, which: proposes a new park classification system for the Town; provides park prototypes and design guidelines; includes policies and recommendations to guide parks and recreation decisions; and,

identifies capital improvements required to achieve community goals for a comprehensive park system. The recommendations of the plan are as follows (implementation of these recommendations are at various stages):

- Develop waterfront project design plans
- Develop a Trails Master Plan
- Hire a recreation Coordinator
- Conduct a study to investigate the feasibility of developing a sports dome
- Conduct a study to investigate the feasibility of developing a public-private restaurant along the waterfront
- Develop dog park policy and “pilot project”
- Support and promote fishing where permitted
- Complete a parks maintenance and operations manual

### 2.4.3 CCC Campus Master Plan

The Cobourg Community Centre Campus Master Plan was completed in December 2014 in order to provide the Town with a strategic and operational CCC Campus development plan. The Master Plan was prepared some three years following the opening of the CCC. The CCC Campus Master Plan includes an analysis of the existing facilities, including buildings, sports fields, parking areas, green space, stormwater management facilities, which comprise the CCC campus and provides recommendations for improving facilities to improve the experiences of users and enhance the diversity of uses available to residents and visitors.

The report includes a conceptual master plan, which identifies elements for re-organization of the CCC Campus and provides site specific recommendations for facility improvement. Site specific recommendations include:

### The Conceptual Master Plan

The following image shows the proposed elements for reorganization of the CCC Campus. Following the image are descriptions of the components of the plan.



Image 3 The CCC Campus Conceptual Master Plan

- Continuous perimeter trail connections;
- Pedestrian paths to safely link facilities; formal ring road to sports fields and parking lots; redistributed parking facilities;
- Maintained option for swimming pool addition;
- Retrofit of existing building located to the south east of the CCC as a sports centre hub;
- Future outdoor recreation space located to the north of the existing CCC building;

- 6 pickle ball courts that can be converted to parking when not in use; upgraded soccer field complex;
- 1/3 kilometre outdoor walking loop; outdoor fitness equipment along the trail;
- Youth activity area;
- Children's play area;
- Hard surface plaza for events; and,
- Portable stage for concerts/ events

### 2.4.4 Seniors Action Plan

The Seniors Action Plan was completed in January 2015 was prepared in order move toward recognition of the Town of Cobourg as an 'Age Friendly Community'. The intent of the Plan is to focus on recreation and leisure needs of seniors and create a shared framework that ensures ongoing participation throughout the community. The Plan identifies five key areas of focus, with recommendations, priorities for action, and resource consideration required for implementation. In total, the plan provides over 30 recommendations under the following five broad focus areas:

- Communication and marketing of senior resources
- Volunteer and human resource management
- Senior program and event enhancement
- Community development
- Program supports and foundations

Key recommendations of the Plan include:

- Pursue recognition as an Age Friendly Community

- Develop e-mail communication tools to promote programs and services
- Review options for evening and weekend program expansion
- Work in partnership with community groups to provide informative workshops of interest to seniors
- Ensure that all individuals who work /volunteer with seniors are adequately trained or have opportunities to further their knowledge base as it pertains to working effectively with seniors, creating an age friendly environment and engaging seniors
- Intergenerational program options to enable interaction with youth
- Collect and act on program/ service feedback annually
- Work with the Join In Northumberland tools to develop/establish a policy that outlines accessibility as a priority, ensuring that financial barriers are eliminated or handled in a consistent manner.
- Monitor and report usage of senior spaces and spaces used by seniors to determine appropriate long-term staffing and program provision
- Complete review and training for Staff/Volunteers related to Corporate Operating Policies that impact daily function.
- Development of an Operations Manual clearly describing actions, decision making and guiding principles of the Seniors Activity Centre

Many of these recommendations are currently being implemented by Town staff.

## 2.5 Cobourg Community Centre

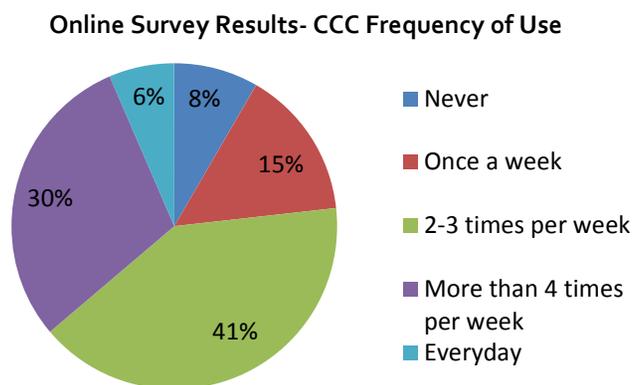


**Cobourg  
Community  
Centre-  
Exterior**

Built in 2011, the Cobourg Community Centre (CCC) is a recreation facility that hosts numerous events throughout the year, including hockey tournaments and concerts. The CCC is the only major community centre in the Town of Cobourg and serves not only the Town, but the broader region in Northumberland County. The facility includes a 2,000 seat spectator arena, a 400 seat recreation arena, an indoor track, a double gymnasium, 3 multi-purpose rooms, board room, a senior's room, offices, and outdoor soccer and baseball fields.

Space is available for rent to permanent and occasional user groups and the general public for sport, recreational and cultural purposes, including birthday parties and workshops. A variety of sport and recreation programming, for adults, youth and seniors, provided by the Town of Cobourg, are also run through the CCC.

Based on survey results, most respondents use recreational facilities within the Town, such as the CCC, 2-5 days per week. Specifically, fitness programs offered at the CCC are utilized by respondents at least once a week or more.



Currently, classes offered at the CCC through the Seniors Centre are operating at half to nearly full capacity and weekly attendance has increased from 2015 to 2016. Survey respondents noted that space within the CCC for seniors programming was becoming more limited and there are often timing/ availability conflicts with seniors programs and other programs offered (i.e. respondents indicated that they feel seniors programs have to compete for space and time with the expanding demand for youth and recreational programs).

Programs offered for seniors include the following:

- **Fitness Programs:** Pickleball, Smart Fit, Yoga, Let’s Get Physical, Active Bodies, Table Tennis, Line Dancing, Body Tone, Fun & Fit, Stretch it Out!, Muscle Mix, Tai Chi, Zumba, Circuit, Pilates, Badminton, Cardio Mix.

- **Recreation Programs:** Painting, Bridge, Wood Carving, Camera Club, Friendship Group, Scrabble, Rug Hooking, Shuffleboard, Euchre.

In 2015, there was a total of 20,516 participants in all classes and activities offered through both the CCC and Seniors Centre. Pickleball and “Let’s Get Physical” have been identified as the two most popular seniors programs.

A total of 972 paid recreational classes, which include child/ youth dance, adult fitness, ice programs and day camps, were offered to youth and adults through the CCC in 2015. Programs offered include the following:

- **Youth Dance:** Zumbini, Rock’N Tots, Creative Dance, Zumba Kids, Princess Ballerinas, Musical Theatre, Tween/ Teen Hip Hop, Rock’N Preschoolers, Jazz/Hip Hop
- **Adult Classes:** Fitness, Zumba, Yoga
- **Ice Programs:** Learn to Skate, Learn to Play Hockey, Private Lessons, Drop in/ Adjusted, Team Training, Girls Power Hockey, Body Checking Clinic, Pre-Season Prep
- **March Break Camps:** Crazy Camp, Extended Care, Hockey Development
- **Summer Camps:** Crazy Camp, Chef Camp, Into the Wild, Mad Science, Superhero Camp, Creative Camp, Messy Camp, Hockey Development

These classes had a total of 2,426 paid participants. Based on attendance, creative dance and zumbini are the most popular child dance classes offered; however, numbers appear to be decreasing for dance programs in the first half of 2016. The most popular adult

fitness class is zumba. The summer and March Break camp programs had a total of 599 participants.

Results of the online survey indicate that the majority of the recreational activities that youth participate in take place at the CCC or a facility outside of Cobourg. In general, the survey indicates that youth prefer activities that are programmed (i.e. organized sports). Additional new program ideas suggested by participants include youth walking club, youth cooking class, mountain bike trails, leadership programs for volunteer hours, affordable art/music/drama/singing classes, an artificial turf soccer pitch to be used year-round, indoor play area, computer diagnostic and repair class, competitive trampoline program and ringette.

Sports and recreation programs and services are also available to residents offered at the Northumberland YMCA facility located in the Town of Cobourg. Programs available at the YMCA include the following:

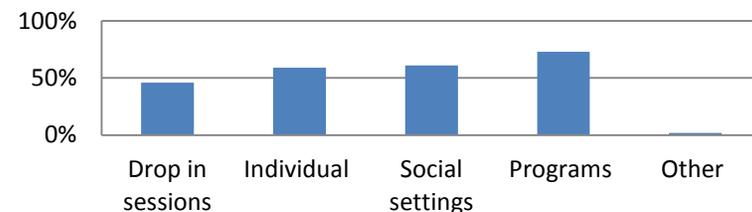
- **Adult Recreational Programs:** Pickle ball, Volleyball-indoor and outdoor, squash, hiking, snow shoeing, Adult Spanish lessons, ESL, Golf performance, YMCA Instructors Course, First Aid and CPR
- **Fitness:** Chair Yoga, Restorative Yoga, Prime Time- Low Intensity Seniors Class, Latin Dance, Barre, Muscfit-Strength and conditioning class, TRX Circuit, Yoga, Yoga for Runners, Pilates, Cyclefit, Strong Body Extreme- Cardio and Strength Training Class, Yoga Pilates/ Fusion,
- **Aquatics:** Aquafit, Aquaflow/ Yoga, Latin Dancing in the Pool, Power Fitness- strength training and cardio in the

pool, Adult Swim Lessons, Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross, National Lifeguard Service (NLS), Jr. Lifeguard, First aid and CPR advanced aquatic training, all swim lesson levels through YMCA Canada Swim Program, Swim Team

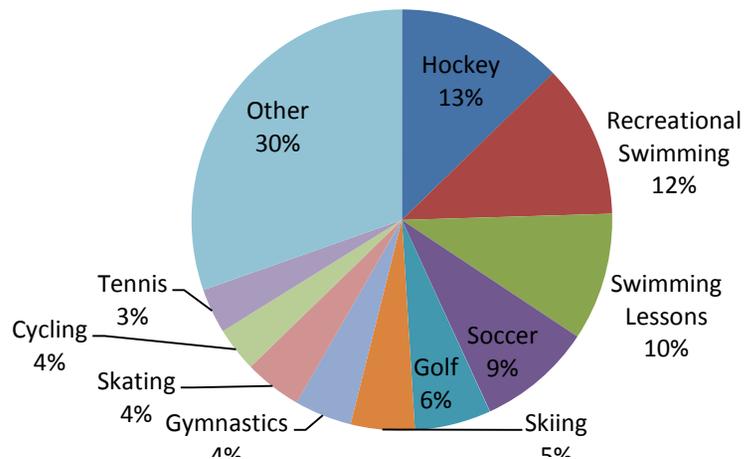
- **Youth Programs:** Ultimate Frisbee, Baseball, Road Hockey, Super Hero Training, Gymnastics, Cooking, Girl Empowerment, Boy Empowerment, Swim and Entertainment, Choose your own adventure, Family Zone, Drop-in Sports, Rock wall, Wrestling, Art Attack, Fun Factory, Kids in Motion, Youth Pickle ball, Youth Nights
- **Youth Fitness:** Youth Sport conditioning, Youth Yoga, Youth Hour, Teen Strength, Youth Access
- **Summer Camp:** Day Camp, Weekly Camp, Snap Camp, Extended Care, Fly Camp, Science Camp, Sports Camp, Culinary Camp, Art Camp, Outdoor Adventure Camp, Overnight Camps

In addition to the CCC and the YMCA, a variety of private fitness facilities in the Town offer private fitness classes/ programs, including: GoodLife Fitness; Anytime Fitness; Fitness Frenzy; Curves; Forma Pilates Studio; Jiu-Jitsu; Northumberland Gymnastics Centre; and, various dance studios.

**Online Survey Results- Youth Activity Preferences**



Results of the online survey indicate that 35% of respondents participate in recreation and leisure programs outside of the Town of Cobourg. The chart below shows that many respondents are leaving Town to participate in hockey, recreational swimming, swimming lessons, soccer, golf, skiing, gymnastics, skating, cycling, and tennis. The majority of these respondents have indicated that they travel to Port Hope to participate in recreation and leisure programs.



**Online survey results: recreation and leisure activities respondents leave Town to participate in**

This is not surprising, given the relative proximity of Port Hope to Cobourg. Recreation swimming/ lessons accounted for the largest single activity that respondents had travelled outside of Cobourg to satisfy their needs. Again, this result is not unexpected considering Port Hope has the only indoor pool in the region, with the exception of the pool of the YMCA.

## 2.6 Canadian Sport for Life Model

As previously noted, the purpose of this Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is to provide the Town with a long term



**Canada Sport for Life: 7 Stages**

strategy to guide the development of recreational programs based on the Canada Sport for Life model. The CS4L policy communicates the value and development benefits that can be achieved as outcomes of sport participation and identifies stages of engagement in physical literacy and sport.

What is Canada Sport for Life? The Canadian Sport for Life Strategy is a development pathway whereby athletes follow a process from childhood to senior years to get active, stay active, and even reach the greatest heights of sport achievement. The Strategy is based on developmental age rather than chronological age.

There are 7 stages within the model. These stages form part of the Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD) model. The LTAD model is based on the premise that if youth, children and adults do the

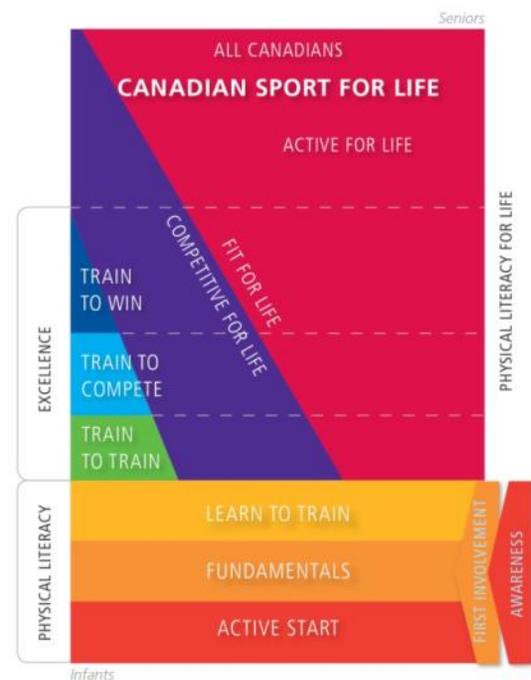
right things at the right stages in their life, that they will stay active and achieve greater success in reaching the highest level of sport achievement. The first three stages focus on the development of physical literacy so children have the basic skills to be active for life. Physical literacy also provides the foundation for those who choose to pursue elite training in a sport or activity. Stages 4 through 6 provide elite training for those who want to specialize in one sport and compete at the highest level. Stage 7 is about staying active for life through lifelong participation. Canadian sport organizations and councils have developed plans based upon this model and many municipalities are beginning to review and determine their role (if any) in the seven stages.

The Town of Cobourg has invested tremendous resources in the development of training facilities and programs for both recreational and elite level athletes. Organizations like the Northumberland Sport Council, Cobourg Soccer Association and other local sport bodies are aligned with the Canadian Sport for Life Strategy and a number of its initiatives.

The basis for CS4L is that quality sport and physical activity have unique attributes enabling the development of healthy individuals and communities. The Canada Sport for Life Model links sport, education, recreation and health; and, aligns community, provincial and national programming in order to enhance the experience of individuals in a community.

CS4L, with LTAD, represents a paradigm shift in the way Canadians lead and deliver sport and physical activity in Canada. (Canadian Sport for Life Website- [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)) Canadian Sport for Life identifies potential strategies for enhanced

collaboration between recreation and sport including physical literacy program development, municipal planning and sport strategy development, sport councils, facility planning and access and allocation.



The Canadian Sport policy, CS4L and many best practice models in sport align with the Ontario Sport and Physical Activity Strategy- commonly known as –Active 2010.

### **Ontario Sport and Physical Activity Strategy-(Active2010)**

Ontario’s Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was a comprehensive strategy designed to increase participation in sport and increase

physical activity levels for all Ontarians. The strategy identified seven (7) areas of action in sport development and increased physical activity including:

- Expanding the pool of talented athletes and teams;
- Supporting increasing the quality and quantity of trained coaches, volunteers, administrators and officials;
- Increasing communication and collaboration with in the sport and physical activity sector;
- Achieving a significantly higher proportion of Ontarians involved in quality sport activities at all levels and in all forms of participation and increasing physical activity levels of Ontarians from 48% to 55%;
- Supporting the development of initiatives to increase physical activity opportunities for Aboriginal Ontarians, ethnic minorities, women and girls, older adults, low-income families' children and youth and Ontarians with a disability;
- Supporting a community-driven approach to planning and program implementation that best meets local need; and
- Promoting policies supporting environments that offer opportunities for safe and affordable participation.

Whether it is programs that support physical literacy for children, greater opportunities for adults and seniors to pursue lifelong physical activity and wellness, or innovative approaches to facility usage, each sector recognizes that the others have something unique to offer, making the collective stronger and more positive for everyone in the community.

### 2.6.1 *Benefits of Aligning Recreation and Sport*

There are many benefits with aligning municipal recreation programs with the C4SL model. Some of these include the following:

**Ongoing Sport Play:** Municipalities are generally careful not to compete with community sport groups by providing similar participation programs. However, they will offer opportunities for those who wish to enjoy a sport outside of the sports system, or who have been excluded by sports not operating within the CS4L model. Examples of this are 'drop-in' basketball for youth not involved in school programs, after-school programs that include team sport and other activities, and programs aimed at skill development and play for young people who feel uncomfortable in a competitive environment.

**Increased Communication:** Municipalities commonly assign staff to act in a liaison role with all types of sport groups. The major liaison areas are with field sport, aquatic, and ice sport groups. The liaison staff will keep in touch with the groups, have them participate in seasonal scheduling sessions, and resolve issues and opportunities throughout the year. A growing number of municipalities have encouraged the development of sports councils to enhance coordination and joint advocacy among sport groups. The Northumberland Sport Council is such an example.

**Enhanced Coaching Capability:** A number of municipalities have supported the provision of National Coaching Certification

Programs (NCCP) offered by the Coaching Association of Canada for local coaches.

**Allocation Policies and Subsidies:** Municipalities commonly have allocation policies and fee schedules favouring community volunteer organizations over private or commercial organizations in terms of booking priority and rates. The highest subsidization levels for fees are generally for local minor age groups. This means local taxpayers subsidize community sport use. For example, ice groups pay far more when renting time from commercial arena operations. In most cases, the allocation of municipal facilities will involve the input and participation of involved community sport organizations at allocation meetings.

**Joint-use Agreements with School Districts:** Municipalities commonly develop joint-use agreements with school districts, allowing mutual uses of facilities and opportunities for sport group use of schools. The trend with these agreements has been to broaden them to include joint facility development and joint programming within “partnership agreements”.

**Sport Hosting:** Municipal governments are a key member of community sport hosting committees. They work with sport, tourism, and business organizations to both secure and support events. Municipal politicians are involved in bid solicitation, parks and recreation departments as venue hosts, and police in crowd and traffic control when required.

#### **Key benefits in other community sectors:**

##### **Schools**

- Higher individual self esteem

- Improved health and motivation, and lower absenteeism
- Improved cognitive functioning
- Better academic performance

##### **Recreation Services**

- Broader reach of programming
- Expanded facility use
- Lifelong participation in active living

##### **Sport Organizations**

- Higher participation levels and longer retention of athletes
- Stronger volunteer base
- Enhanced performance of athletes

Ultimately, by aligning the programming with C4SL Model, the Town, schools, and recreation sport groups can address three important areas:

- Multisport programs for physical literacy ;
- Programming for lifelong activity and excellence; and,
- Building capacity.

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# 3.0 TRENDS IN RECREATION AND PROGRAMMING

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## 3.1 Program and Recreation Trends

There are a number of trends in recreation and culture participation as observed at a national, provincial and local level that will influence the delivery of recreation programs in the Town. The following is a summary of some of these trends that the Town will need to continuously monitor in order to ensure that the programs and services offered align with these evolving trends.

### 3.1.1 *Physical Activity and Wellness*

The Canadian Health Measures Survey (Statistics Canada) concludes that the fitness levels of Canadian children and youth, as well as adults, have declined significantly between 1981 and 2009. Among youth aged 15 to 19, the percentage who were at an increased or high risk of health problems more than tripled; for adults aged 20 to 39 this percentage quadrupled.

In Ontario it appears that a number of demographic and socioeconomic factors contribute significantly to overall physical activity and wellness levels. In 2007, 50% of people in Ontario age 12 years and older reported participating in physical activities in which they were active or moderately active. Based on 36 public health units in Ontario, the highest proportion was 64% and the lowest was 43% of people age 12 years and older who reported participating in physical activities in which they were active or moderately active.

### 3.1.2 *Children's Participation*

The benefits of participation in physical activity and leisure have been demonstrated by a number of research and practical initiatives. Health Canada estimates that for each \$1 invested in physical activity there is long term saving of \$11 in health care costs. The benefits are particularly important for children, since physical recreation is crucial to physical, social, motor and emotional development.

In its Summer 2008 edition of Canadian Social Trends, Statistics Canada examined trends in regular sports participation of children aged 5 to 14 from 1992 to 2005. In the article entitled, "Kids' Sports", participation in sports is described as having declined from 57% to 51%. Sports participation is most prevalent among children from high-income households and lowest among children from lower income households. Children of recent immigrants are less likely to participate in sports than children of Canadian born parents (55%).

### 3.1.3 *Unstructured and Spontaneous Use Opportunities*

Citizens are demanding more flexibility in timing and activity choice, moving away from structured team sports to spontaneous activities such as fitness / wellness, leisure swimming, walking, and open gymnasiums for spontaneous activities. People are seeking individualized, informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. This does not,

however, eliminate the need for venues that accommodate structured activities and the stakeholder groups that utilize them. Instead, this trend suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for traditional structured use environments.

Statistics Canada, through the 2005 research document entitled “Sport Participation in Canada, 2005”, relates a number of key trends in sport participation occurring in the nation. In the period between 1992 and 2005, participation rates in organized sport dropped from 45% to 28% of the population. This drop was consistent across all age groups. Although many team sports offer a number of positive physical and mental benefits to participants, the concept of spontaneous recreation and the increasingly busy lifestyles of Ontarians have prompted a shared focus on infrastructure development that accommodates both team sports and individual pursuits. As both provide a myriad of benefit to health and wellbeing in a community, it is important that future infrastructure development have opportunities for both team and individual activities.

Approximately two-thirds of Canadian sport participants participate alone (65%) or with close family (69%). More Canadians report a preference for non-competitive activities (47%) than for competitive activities (9%); 44% of Canadians prefer competitive and non-competitive activities. This trend is reflected in the Cobourg survey data, which shows that participation in walking, and cycling (72%) and participation in fitness/exercise (63%) - programs that are generally individual by nature – were in demand by residents.

### *3.1.4 Recognize the Evolving Role of Community Recreation*

The parks, recreation and culture field is recognized as a vital element in overall community health, including improving fitness behaviours of residents and addressing social issues at the community level. Indeed, the largest impact in people’s health, well-being and happiness comes from improving where we live, work and play and participation in recreation can result in a more cohesive community.

Leisure needs and values change across an individual’s lifetime and there are generalizations that can be made about leisure behaviours of specific population groups. For example, as the population ages, the appreciation for physical well-being improves and there is an increased demand for spaces and activities that may not have previously been considered. Older adults and seniors are more active today than in the past and they are seeking opportunities for casual sports, active living and a greater variety of choices, including more readily accessible pursuits such as walking, picnicking, sightseeing, or attending sporting and cultural events; however, outdoor activities requiring significant physical exertion, excessive skill development or special equipment remain popular with the Baby Boomer generation of seniors.

There is also a clear shift in the adult and youth population toward more informal and individualized activities that can be done at convenient times and places and include (but are not limited to) walking, cycling, gardening, cultural events outdoor activities, environmental and cultural learning, ecotourism and physical

exercise. In addition, as people's schedules become increasingly busy, there is greater demand for informal and individual activities rather than scheduled programs.

The Cobourg survey data is in line with existing and future trends in that respondents are pursuing, adventure, environmental, outdoor sport and outdoor fitness based programs that can be accessed on an individual's leisure and are in most cases is unstructured.

The increased ethnic diversity in Cobourg population also affects recreation participation and programming. Newcomers to Canada in their first and second generation of settlement typically place value on family or large group recreation activities, using park amenities such as picnic facilities. Newcomers also view participation in recreation activities as being a way to learn about "being Canadian" and a place for their children to make friends and learn Canadian customs. Additionally, many ethnic families new to Cobourg bring activities and sports specific to their heritage. As the community evolves, attention will need to ensure that access to a diverse sport, recreation and cultural offering is available.

Parks, recreation and culture plays a role in improving quality of life within the broader community that includes people living on lower incomes or with disabilities as well as members of visible minorities. The on-line survey identified the following barriers to participation:

- Cost;
- Lack of information;
- Program or event times; and,
- Transportation.

Programs and services with continued emphasis on inclusion and access will be important as will a priority of creating safe and engaging public places, in order to build community.

In order to address the above trends, it is recommended that the Town develop a recreation programming policy to guide the delivery of community recreation programming that is aimed at enhancing the personal, social, environmental and economic well-being of the community and incorporates the principles of exceptional service, operational sustainability and community development. In developing this policy, the following should be considered:

- Develop opportunities for people to be active on an individual, informal basis.
- Ensure sport and physical activity programs and amenities reflect the range of interests, inspirations and abilities of the diverse community while aligning planning with community usages, participation and trends.
- Improve "learn-to" sport and physical literacy (fundamental movement and sports skills) programs to facilitate learning experiences for all ages and abilities.
- Delivery introductory programming in all service areas through a variety of delivery models.
- Embrace opportunities to build on and incorporate emerging sport and activities into program offerings.
- Consider facility and park design, programming and community partnerships that foster physical activity, social gathering, connection, and responsiveness to the recreation needs of the growing and changing community.

- Develop a Youth Strategy, Community Access, Volunteer and Inclusion policies and develop a Seniors (55+) Strategy that builds on the Seniors Action Plan 2015 to revitalize the programs associated with these strategies and address the barriers to access and participation and engage with non-users.

## 3.2 Volunteerism

The evolving nature of volunteerism is important for recreation service providers to understand, given the importance of volunteers in the delivery of community programs and events. Contrary to popular belief rates of volunteerism are on the rise nationally, increasing by 12.5% from 2004 to 2010 (Statistics Canada 2010). However the types of experiences volunteers are looking for is changing. Increasingly, volunteers are seeking more defined roles and terms as well as opportunities to gain new skills and experiences.

While the number of overall volunteers is on the rise, it is clear that the majority of volunteer hours are provided by the minority of volunteers. This is also true within the realm of sports and recreation. Seventy-nine (79%) of total volunteer hours contributed to sports and recreation organizations came from 25% of volunteers.

The 2007 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating also indicated that volunteerism is rising slightly, but experience in several other communities suggest that many groups still struggle

in finding volunteers. One key result of the national survey was that 18% of the volunteer hours in Canada are in sports and recreation sector, which is the highest of all sectors. However, while 46% of Canadians (15 years or older) volunteered in 2007, it must be noted that the absolute average volunteer hours per year decreased slightly from 168 hours per year to 166.

Ontario boasts a slightly higher volunteer rate than the rest of Canada, with 47.7% versus 47% as the Canadian average. When looking at the age group with the highest volunteer rate, Ontario displays very consistent results with the national average. Youth, aged 15 to 24, have the highest volunteer rate at 58.1% volunteering their time. This rate is likely due to a number of components, including the minimum of 40 hours of community involvement that is required by youth to complete an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. A slightly higher percentage of females volunteer, with 49.1% compared to 46.4% of the male population.

Cobourg Recreation and Culture Division will have to create opportunities for all ages to volunteer in various capacities. The future delivery of recreation and sport is dependent on ensuring that volunteers are engaged at all levels in program development and delivery; facility planning and operations; participating in leadership roles on community task groups, and sport delivery at all levels. The feedback from community organizations based on anecdotal data indicates that the stronger organizations owe a great deal to their volunteer recruitment, training, retention and recognition activities. It was also noted that all groups would welcome collaboration with other organizations that clearly have developed a number of “Best Practices” in volunteer involvement in their organizations. Collaboration is strongly encouraged amongst

all organizations in order to build a strong volunteer network in the community.

## 3.3 Social Inclusion

Research has demonstrated that recreation and leisure can foster social inclusion for residents facing social, financial, physical or mental health barriers. While always an important issue, its significance has risen as communities have become more diverse.

Social inclusion is about making sure that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected and contributing members of society. It involves the basic notions of belonging, acceptance and recognition. For immigrants, social inclusion would be manifested in full and equal participation in all facets of a community including economic, social, cultural, and political realms. It goes beyond including “outsiders” or “newcomers”. In fact social inclusion is about the elimination of the boundaries or barriers between “us” and “them”. There is a recognition that diversity has worth unto itself and is not something that must be overcome.

While issues of social inclusion are pertinent for all members of a community, they can be particularly relevant for adolescents of immigrant families. Immigrant youth can feel pulled in opposite directions between their own cultural values and a desire to “fit in” to their new home. This tension can be exacerbated in those situations in which parents are experiencing stress due to settlement.

Children living in families which are struggling are more likely to be excluded from some of the aspects of life essential to their healthy development. Children are less likely to have positive experiences at school, less likely to participate in recreation, and less likely to get along well with friends, if they live in families struggling with parental depression, family dysfunction or violence.

Increasingly, municipalities and other recreation providers are putting a focus on providing recreational opportunities for individuals with barriers to participation. Support for initiatives such as the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association’s ‘Everybody Gets to Play’ program, KidSport and JumpStart can help ensure that youth have access to programs and activities that can foster social inclusion and overall physical and mental health. Outreach programs, partnerships with social service providers and subsidized user fees are also potential mechanisms being used by providers to remove barriers. The City of Edmonton’s Leisure Access Program is one example of a municipally operated initiative, which provides low income families with subsidized access to programs and passes. The program provides qualified families with a 75% discount on programs free admission to a number of City facilities.

Cobourg will need to continue to grow programs and services for all ages of the population. This may create a need for access and subsidies to allow residents the opportunity to participate in sports and recreation programs, regardless of income.

A number of groups have sport equipment swaps, provide sponsorships for participants who identify barriers due to income, and the Town provides access where it sees a need. The Town has a fee assistance/ accessibility policy, which provides subsidies to

eligible residents. However, expanding the policy to include a more robust "Access Cobourg" program is necessary to ensure access for all. This can be as simple as a sponsored free skate, try it hockey time, or facilitating access through a sport or community organization. It is noted that the YMCA have identified "Best Practices" in the area of barrier-free access to programs and services and would be another opportunity to collaborate.

# 4.0 TRENDS IN RECREATION/ CULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE

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## 4.1 Creating Opportunities for All under One Roof

Although this study is not intended to focus on facilities, the design, allocation and distribution of parks and recreation facilities plays an integral role in the delivery of recreation programs. Without properly designed and equipped infrastructure, the range, type and quantity of programs offered can be limited. Therefore, infrastructure needs have to be considered along with exploration of facility development partnerships, ensuring balanced and equitable access and optimization of facilities and resources to best meet program needs.

A growing trend in the development of recreation, leisure and cultural infrastructure involves providing amenities that appeal to a variety of individual interests and ability levels. Including a variety of amenities in a facility can help maximize facility usage and ensure that a facility is viewed as being relevant by all residents. While traditional recreation facility components such as ice arenas, gymnasiums, fitness centres and aquatic areas continue to be important, many facilities are now including components and amenities that have previously been stand-alone in the community or not identified with recreation facilities. Examples include senior's centres, youth centres, indoor child play areas and libraries. Including these amenities can also help recreation facilities become community "hubs" of activity and further justify municipal investment.

## 4.2 Spaces that Encourage Social Interaction

A recent trend in recreation and cultural infrastructure is to create facilities, which are highly social in nature, and that can act as social gathering 'hubs' within a neighborhood or broader community. In active spaces such as fitness centres, walking / running tracks, and aquatic facilities, social interaction can be encouraged through the layout and design of these areas and adjacent support amenities (e.g. change rooms, stretching areas, information desks). Increasingly, many facilities are also focusing on increasing social interaction opportunities in passive spaces such as lobbies, corridors, spectator areas, and food service locations. This is often accomplished through a combination of facility design, facility aesthetics and by a creating warm and welcoming atmosphere. By increasing social interaction in passive areas, many facilities have been successful in attracting individuals and groups who might not typically visit recreation or cultural facilities.



**Cobourg  
Community  
Centre: lobby and  
spectator area**

Another growing trend is to include program areas within multipurpose facilities that focus on providing socially interactive opportunities to specific populations. Whereas in the past child care facilities, youth centres, adult social clubs and seniors centre were often built as stand-alone facilities; many municipalities are now including these spaces as components of multi-purpose recreation and cultural facilities.

## 4.3 Spontaneous and Scheduled Activities

While schedule (structured) activities remain important, there is a growing demand for opportunities to participate in spontaneous (unstructured) activities. People are seeking individualized, informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. Examples of spontaneous use activities include fitness / wellness, leisure swimming, walking, and open gymnasium time.

The public is placing greater demand on spontaneous, non-program forms of activity due to evolving households, schedules and lifestyles, prompting a transition of activities from organized to unorganized sports. In 2005, Statistics Canada reported that participation in organized sports declined from 57% in 1992 to 51%. The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Institute found that 61% of children were more likely to participate in unorganized physical activities, although this is a decline from 69% in 2000; suggesting an overall decline in physical activity. This trend is largely driven by lack of time, a general decline of many organized sports, socio economic status, and the desire for self-scheduled and accessible forms of activity. Research revealed that the top four physical activities with the highest participation rates among Ontarian's are 'spontaneous' in nature:

1. Walking for pleasure (81.4%);
2. Bicycling (41.9%);
3. Swimming in pools (40.5%); and
4. Aerobics / fitness / aquasize / yoga (37.7%)

The Cobourg online survey data agrees with the Ontario trends with the following activities being the top four indicated by respondents:

1. Outdoor fitness/walking, cycling (82.9%)
2. Aquatics (71.8%)
3. Indoor Fitness/Aerobic forms (82.8%)
4. Gardening (76.6%)

This does not, however, eliminate the need for venues that accommodate structured activities and the stakeholder groups that

utilize them. Instead, this trend suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for traditional structured use environments.

## 4.4 Integrating Indoor and Outdoor Environments

A new concept in recreation and culture infrastructure planning is to ensure that the indoor environment interacts seamlessly with the outdoor recreation environment. This can include such ideas as indoor / outdoor walking trails, indoor / outdoor child play areas and indoor / outdoor aquatics facilities. Although there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered when planning indoor/ outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, controlled access, etc.) the concept of planning an indoor facility to compliment the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader community parks and trail system is prudent and will ensure the optimization of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructure. Some of these types of concepts have previously been recommended. For example, the CCC Master plan contemplates an outdoor walking loop and outdoor fitness areas along the trail. The Parks Master Plan also recommends developing a Trails Master Plan. The Town should consider implementing some of these recommendations ensuring these outdoor features interact and complement the indoor infrastructure.

## 4.5 Including Convenience Amenities

Increasingly, recreation facility users and patrons are demanding that their facility experience be convenient and tailored to their personal and family needs. Convenience amenities such as child minding (temporary child care), food services, medical services (e.g. physiotherapy, chiropractic) and retail are being included in many new and retrofitted recreation facilities. In addition to enhancing the user experience, the inclusion of these amenities can generate increased revenues for a facility.

Providing an array of social amenities can further enhance the facility experience and increase overall facility visitations. Examples of social amenities include attractive lobby areas, common spaces, restaurants and cafeterias, spectator viewing, areas, meeting facilities, wireless internet and adjacent outdoor parks or green space. Including these amenities can also help attract residents who might not normally use a recreation facility, and increase facility traffic during non-peak hours.

## 4.6 Multipurpose Spaces and Expandability

The inclusion of spaces that are multi-purpose and multi-functional in nature can help a facility create the critical mass necessary to

maximize usage and expand revenue potential. Field houses and gymnasiums are examples of spaces that are commonly being designed and outfitted with dividing curtains, portable boards, temporary bleachers and multi-use flooring types. Many recreation facilities are also putting an increased focus on including multipurpose programs rooms that can be used for fitness classes, meetings, smaller social functions and a host of other activities.



**Cobourg  
Community Centre  
Multi-purpose  
Space (with  
dividing walls)**

When developing recreation infrastructure, it is also important to plan for potential expandability should community needs and population characteristics evolve. Ensuring that facilities are built on sites with adequate amounts of adjacent land can make future expansion both possible and more efficient. Many recreation facilities are also developing components and amenities in such a manner that they can be re-purposed in the future to meet user demand. Placing common or non-allocated spaces next to high demand amenities (e.g. fitness centres) can help make future expansion and re-purposing feasible. The CCC has, in fact, been designed with a potential pool expansion in mind.

## 4.7 Special Events and Competitions

Hosting special events and competitions remain important to many communities. Hosting events and competition can result in increased community pride and result in economic benefits through both local resident and visitor spending. The capacity of a community to host tournaments or events is in large part driven by the availability and quality of facilities and other public spaces.

When developing new recreation and cultural facilities it is important for municipalities to balance providing spaces and facility amenities that are relevant and needed by the whole community on a regular basis, while also considering spaces and amenities that can help attract tournament and events. Increasingly facilities such



**Cobourg Community Centre Arena can accommodate both regular community usage and special tournaments**

as field houses, gymnasiums, and ice arenas are being designed to accommodate regular community usage as well as special events and tournaments. This is commonly accomplished in many newer facilities by incorporating expandable seating, flexible change room options, audio / visual elements (e.g. sound systems, lighting, video boards) and equipment loading areas.

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# 5.0 EMERGING THEMES IN COBOURG

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*"More than any other service, recreation has the ability to reach all citizens, and to bring people together in a non-threatening, pleasurable atmosphere. However, a rebalancing of recreation is necessary if it is to strategically address the barriers and constraints to participation faced by some people, and to celebrate the diversity of Canada's population."*

*(A framework for Recreation in Canada 2015)*

## 5.1 Key Themes

Based on the background research completed, public input received through the on-line survey, interviews and facilitated workshops, four broad 'themes' emerged that would help influence and direct recreation programming in the Town. These themes include:

- Accessibility/ affordability
- Corporate brand/ marketing/ communications
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Programs and training

The following summarizes what we have heard, generally reviews current experiences/ practices of the Town, identifies gaps and opportunities, reviews trends and best practices and provides recommendations.

## 5.2 Accessibility/ Affordability

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 15% of the world's population lives with a disability, making this group the world's largest minority (World Health Organization, World Report on Disability, 2011). In Canada, the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 2006 estimated that approximately 4.4 million Canadians were challenged with a disability, with nearly one quarter of those living in Ontario. It is anticipated that this figure will continue to grow, increasing to 3.3 million Ontarians with a disability by 2025. As a result, the province has been responsive to this growing segment through enacting the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Accessible and affordable programs and services are essential to providing equitable parks and recreation services and maximizing participation. As the Town grows and demand for services increases, the Town will need to look for ways to ensure it is delivering its parks and recreation services fairly and equitably.

### 5.2.1 What we Heard

- 82% of survey respondents believe that there is a need for greater access to recreational programs and services.
- Certain activities (e.g. aquatics) require travel outside of Town. Accessibility could be improved by providing

additional opportunities for an expanded aquatics program in the Town.

- Survey and workshop respondents indicated that inconvenient times/ scheduling issues, lack of knowledge/ awareness of what is offered, and high fees are among the most common reasons they do not participate in programs.
- Survey respondents and workshop participants expressed that more opportunities for pay per use activities would be beneficial as they would allow users to try new activities without committing to a fee associated with a 10-week course.
- Stakeholder interview respondents and survey respondents indicated that there is a need for more qualified staff in order to expand range of programs offered and provide better physical activity opportunities. Accessibility to qualified staff is limiting programming options.
- Attendees of the community workshop indicated that inconsistent transportation hinders accessibility.
- Focus of programming offered should expand beyond sports and include programming such as photography, drama and music, to increase participation and foster an inclusive environment.
- In general, a consistent theme that emerged from the community workshop was that accessibility, in terms of physical accessibility, range of programs, cost, transportation and communications, could be improved.
- There is a lack of available space to expand programs/ need to expand space to offer a broader range of programs.
- There is a need to maximize gym and facility use to offer additional programs.

- Affordability- equity of cost sharing, lower cost of programs (e.g. swimming).
- More accessible parking at the CCC is required.
- Desire for a new swimming pool and skate park.
- Need more reliable locations for seniors programming. Seniors get “bumped” a lot for other programs.

The Town’s allocation policy commits to the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities to all sports organizations, both new and historic users and to both genders. The Policy states that first priority is always allocated to Town of Cobourg sponsored programs, services and events, and commitments to existing legal agreements. However, while the policy indicates that first priority is to be given to Town programs and events, historical practice shows that community groups, particularly child/youth sport groups, are typically provided overall priority. This practice limits access for new user groups and event opportunities to avoid displacing existing long-term users.

### *5.2.2 Gaps and Opportunities*

Given the challenges of funding new facilities, optimizing and maximizing the level of use in Town amenities is a fundamental obligation of the Town as well as all sports, recreation and cultural groups that provide these benefits to the community. This fundamental objective must be achieved if the highest efficiencies in services are to be reached, and if all areas of service are to be addressed and properly delivered in the longer term. There are many dimensions to this:

- The Town does not maximize indoor facilities that have fixed overheads and unused program capacity;
- Sports teams book quality turf fields for usage and the allocation is not used by anyone; and,
- Facility spaces sit empty because they have been designed for a single purpose.

All of these dimensions must be examined to ensure the optimal use of Cobourg’s resources.

### 5.2.3 Trends

Municipal best practice shows that across all communities, a clear shift from stand-alone to multi-use facilities is underway and it is becoming standard practice to design leisure and recreation facilities for multi-purpose uses, to allow greater flexibility, provide for less structured activities, and respond to increasing demands for new activities without major building retrofits. Current and future recreation and leisure interests, as well as participation levels and styles, need to be accommodated in these public buildings.

Demand is also increasing for passive and less rigorous recreation activities that promote socialization and community cohesiveness. This also indicates the need for multi-use/multi-generational community centres designed to provide informal and formal gathering spaces. Facilities need to be universally accessible and include accessible equipment and features.

The on-line survey highlighted a combined rate of 64% that agreed/strongly agreed that the Town offered good quality programs. This is reflective of responses from focus groups and organizational interviews wherein participants indicated the need for additional programs, increase in partnerships to deliver programs and services in facilities that are responsive to demand. As the Town grows, resources and facilities will be required to enhance program and service options with a focus on flexible and multi-use facility design, incorporating features to enhance feelings of belonging and connection, and facilitating opportunities within the community for established and emerging users.

Although library spaces and programs were not part of the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan, it is noted that best practices and trends in community connectivity and synergies amongst community service providers encourages library space development as part of the bigger program offering in a “Community Hub” based design. Libraries are becoming progressively more integrated with other civic spaces, such as within multi-use community facilities, in order to attain operating efficiencies, cross-programming optimization and cost savings through sharing common areas, storage space, programming rooms and facility management services.

If effectively designed and managed, this model has the potential to offer considerable benefits to residents who appreciate a one stop program experience.

## 5.2.4 Recommendations

The use of Town facility assets and indoor and outdoor amenities needs to be reviewed to ensure that basic sport, recreation, arts and culture needs are being met, that existing allocation are being properly and responsibly allocated and that opportunities are being provided for a variety of programs and services.

This includes all indoor and outdoor facilities, including sports fields. Pressures to meet current and new demands are increasing and demands exceed capacity based on current practice. Improved access to School Board joint-use facilities will provide increased opportunities for the community to maximize existing and potential partner facilities to grow programs and services where it meets established core program criteria.

Extending hours of operation and programming to evenings and weekends would provide some of the much-needed space to support introductory programming, as well as space for a variety of community groups including art and culture performance and rehearsal space. In summary, the following should be considered:

- Design new facilities as flexible multi-use spaces, avoiding specialty single use amenities. Trends should be monitored and facility use adapted over time;
- Maximize the use of public facilities including changing senior's only centres to serve a broader age range and provide space and programming for recreational arts and culture groups as well as general community offerings;

- Design and build centres as part of facility clusters and, in particular, commit to the development of a phased, comprehensive social/recreational hub in the eastern area of Town and explore partnering opportunities for re-purposing of the Cobourg Memorial Arena facility and amenities;
- Strategically plan for and fund the long-term provision of aquatic and arena needs;
- Investigate operational changes such as extending days and hours of operation, reviewing Fees and Charges Policy, subsidy rates, and updating the Allocation Policy to make changes that support more balanced and best use of publicly owned space.
- Establish clear operating procedures to guide the allocation of Town facility and amenity space, including Town programs and services, room bookings, and indoor and outdoor sport, recreation and culture use and allocation; and,
- Develop a youth strategy, review the Community Access Policy, Volunteers and Inclusion policies and continue to develop a Seniors Strategy that is relevant and consistent with changing trends, address the barriers to access and participation and engage with non-users. In Cobourg, the use of Town facilities and amenities such as sports fields is currently guided by an Allocation Policy. This Policy should be guided by considering the following five criteria:
  1. Equity;
  2. User Profile;
  3. Function Profile;
  4. Past Performance; and
  5. Economic Benefit to the Town

- To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility for all, including different ages, genders, abilities and culture:
  - Facilitate the continued support and operation of facilities and services targeting the needs of specific age groups, with particular reference to seniors and youth.
  - Encourage citizens of all ages to feel welcome and self-sufficient in all community facilities.
  - Explore opportunities for increasing a sense of belonging for youth.
  - Investigate the possibility of intergenerational programming.
  - Encourage physical environments that do not inhibit the movement of people with disabilities.
  - Ensure that people of all ethnicities benefit from, and feel welcome in Cobourg community facilities and services.
  - Continue to assist with and promote cultural events.

## 5.3 Brand/ Marketing/ Communications

The Recreation and Culture Division will need to evaluate how it is communicating with the community and surrounding catchment areas and develop an effective marketing plan that meets the needs of a diverse population. Before a marketing plan can be

realized, the Division needs to understand its “brand”. What describes the Division, its products, services, what image does the Division want to project? When brand, marketing and communication strategies are in-sync, great things happen.

### 5.3.1 *What we Heard*

- There is a need to improve communication between the CCC and residents/ increase awareness of programs offered.
- Registration process is difficult, could be improved by providing an online registration option.
- Residents feel that electronic communication is the best way to stay informed (e.g. via e-mail, the Town’s website and social media).
- Public meetings and news releases would assist in keeping residents engaged with what is happening.
- Those who participated in the youth survey indicated that social media is the best way to communicate with and inform youth of events and activities.
- CCC runs a strong seniors program and is excelling at communication of seniors programming.
- There is need for a better marketing plan.
- Lack of signage/ visibility in parks; way finding could be improved.
- There is a lack of knowledge regarding what programs are offered. Better communication of existing programs is required.
- The Town should increase advertisement of programs/ facilities to get the word out to more residents.

- Attendees of the community workshop felt that introducing an integrated community/ information hub would help improve awareness and communications.

### 5.3.2 Gaps and Opportunities

Effectively communicating and engaging various target markets is both a challenge and an opportunity as it continues to grow and become more diverse. A well-coordinated marketing program is a great investment that can have a direct, positive impact on participation and revenue. There are a variety of ways that the Division can approach its marketing plan. The plan should include the following:

- Situation Analysis: a thorough review of the division noting its assets, strengths, and weaknesses.
- Customer Analysis: a close look at your resident base. A good consumer analysis will include geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural segmentations.
- Competitive analysis: a determination of the competition and/or other providers of similar services (private and public).
- Market Analysis: a review of the dynamic forces that affect your product and service environment including legal, economic, and social conditions and the identification of opportunities, threats and barriers.
- Evaluation of the “4 P’s” of Marketing: Products, Price, Place and Promotion.

### 5.3.3 Trends/ Best Practices

**Generational Marketing:** Recreation programs have long had the image of being programs for youth. Many are making some changes in this perception by creating brochures that clearly target specific segments of multiple generations. For example, Fox Valley Park District in Aurora, IL has a brochure targeting active seniors (*not* Baby Boomers) called “Prime Times” (Learning Resource Network (LERN), Top Trends in Recreation Programming, Marketing and Management). Many brochures are featuring young families on the front cover in response to the interest of young parents in family activities. A few programs have even developed special promotional pieces for ‘Generation Y’ (aged 10-23) which are designed and developed with substantial input from the target group. For example, in the Township of Langley, BC, in addition to having a section inside the brochure designed with graphics and narrative to appeal specifically to ‘Generation Y’, the department also enlisted a 15-year old to design and draw a comic book aimed at promoting programs to youth (LERN). It was such a success, that it is going to become a regular feature of the program.

Many parks and recreation directors report seeing a gap in service delivery for boomers who refuse to participate in “senior” activities. For example, many directors in California reported that they are identifying activities that are geared toward active, healthy fifty (50) something’s as a starting point, and that there is movement toward target marketing with a separate brochure for this age group.

**The One-Year Marketing Plan:** Budgets are becoming tighter, accountability is increasing, and demands on departments to increase community participation are mounting. Many programs have begun to develop one-year marketing plans to guide their efforts and to help establish strategies that will increase the likelihood of growth and program success.

**Increased Importance of Technology:** Parks and Recreation directors are reporting that participants are increasingly turning to their websites for information (LERN). This does not mean that the brochure is obsolete, but it does mean that the brochure and website need to be designed to support and complement each other. The brochure needs to drive prospective participants to the website, and the marketing function of the website needs to be considered carefully in the design of the site. Quick loading, easy navigation, and good graphics are all essential to successful online marketing, as is online registration software.

Technology is changing rapidly, there were only 0.08 connected devices per person in 2003, but by 2020 there will be over 50 billion connected devices, more than 6 per person (Julia King Tamang, Senior Consultant LERN, Oregon Parks and Recreation Conference, 2015).

More and more agencies are going online to reach patrons and purchase registration systems, perform automatic monitoring of buildings and the environment, monitor public safety and employ technology to complete day-to-day tasks.

Parks and recreation is being dramatically affected by leaps in technology. In addition, younger adults are turning to technology to connect to nature and the outdoors in addition to their typical entertainment. The "Pokémon" phenomena is a clear indication of the immediate impact of technology on an individual's health and wellbeing.

**Email newsletters:** Email newsletters are an excellent way to promote the overall program or a specific class or event. Generally, this is a one-page email with graphics and color that has information of interest to the recipient in addition to promotional copy. There are some excellent templates and designs available for purchase. LERN (Learning Resource Network- USA) uses Great Big News as the provider for the email newsletter design.

**Social Media:** There is no longer any question about the validity of using social media today to communicate with consumers of all ages and demographics. While some audience segments may make less use of social media, the vast majority are using some form of it. Parks and Recreation organizations can make efficient use of social media to promote programs, services, facilities and events that encourage physical activity and overall health and wellness.

Social marketing is a way of communicating with various audiences in newer, quicker and more creative ways. It is also a more efficient way to build communities of interested, vested and dedicated people that share interest in parks, recreation and sport. The following social media trends are recommended to assist in promoting park and recreation programs and services:

- Daily Deal Coupon for Activities and memberships
- Managing Your Online Reputation
  - Google alerts
  - Twitter Saved Searches
  - Social Mention
- Location-Based Marketing: The Right Fit for P&R
- The Big Five Social Media Platforms
  - Twitter
  - Facebook
  - YouTube
  - Instagram
  - LinkedIn

- Integrating customer service, marketing and communication into staff meetings.
- Develop ongoing strategies for customer feedback for both internal and external customers.
- Improve the use of information technology and develop and increase the availability for online information, transactions, e-solutions and mobile applications.
- Continue to monitor need for personal contact with customers and grow customer staff to respond to changing desire by customers to connect with staff in the department.

### 5.3.4 Recommendations

It is important that the Town tells the “Story” of Cobourg Recreation and Culture. This can be accomplished by:

- Defining the department’s core services through a vision-driven Recreation & Culture Division that is determined to be a leader in community building.
- Implementing an interactive, innovative and community-driven marketing and outreach system specific to recreation, sport and culture.
- Creating a Customer-Centred Culture that focuses on core values and expectations of the organization.
- Implementing a customer service excellence training program for staff members and volunteers.

## 5.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

Municipalities can no longer be the central provider of all recreation and cultural facilities and services, so partnership arrangements are becoming increasingly important and prevalent in the service-delivery model. Municipalities are adopting a greater oversight role and providing leadership and support to non-profit agencies and organizations that can operate with greater autonomy and responsibility for their operation.

### 5.4.1 What we Heard

- There is a desire for a streamlining of services between different organizations to eliminate duplication.

- Need to improve communication between organizations (especially YMCA) in order to foster an effective partnership.
- Survey respondents and workshop participants indicated that there is a need for co-operation and partnerships across the various organizations and service providers in the Town.
- It would be beneficial to explore opportunities to collaborate/ partner with local businesses and downtown stores.
- Create a database of existing organizations/ activities within the Town and the County: consider asset mapping.
- Partner with transit to improve accessibility to recreation and leisure destinations.
- Apprehension surrounding amalgamation/ partnership with the YMCA. However, there is acknowledgement that a partnership is important.
- 78% of survey respondents indicated that they would support the Town of Cobourg in pursuing corporate partnerships, sponsorships and naming rights as a funding source for the provision of facilities, programs and events.
- 55% of survey respondents feel that there is a potential benefit to relocating the YMCA to the same site as the CCC.
- Top 3 considerations that need to be addressed to create a beneficial partnership, according to survey results: usage options (e.g. memberships vs. pay per use), increased traffic to the area and parking, peak usage times (e.g. overcrowding/ bottlenecks).

### 5.4.2 Gaps and Opportunities

Partnerships are a viable strategy for developing a service mix. However, they should be approached purposefully and not be seen as an exit strategy to simply divest of a struggling program or service.

A partnership is a cooperative venture between two or more parties with a common goal, who combine complementary resources to establish a mutual direction or complete a mutually beneficial project. Partnerships can be facility-based or program-specific. The main goal for Cobourg Recreation and Culture Division partnerships should be to enhance public offerings to meet the mission and goals of the Cobourg Recreation and Culture Division.

Partnerships can accomplish tasks with limited resources, respond to compelling issues, encourage cooperative interaction and conflict resolution, involve outside interests, and serve as an education and outreach tool. Partnerships broaden ownership in various projects and increase public support for community goals. Partners often have flexibility to obtain and invest resources/dollars on products or activities where municipal government may be limited. There must be support for the concept and process of partnering from the very highest organizational level – i.e. the Town Council, the Parks and Recreation Committee and Department heads.

It is very important to have a partnership policy in place before partner procurement begins. This will allow the Cobourg Recreation and Culture Division to be proactive rather than reactive when

presented with a partnership opportunity. It also sets a “level playing field” for all potential partners, so that they can know and understand in advance the parameters and selection criteria for a proposed partnership.

A partnership policy and process should set development priorities and incorporate multiple points for “go/no-go” decisions.

### 5.4.3 *Trends/Best Practices*

Emerging best practice in municipal partnership is extending to a variety of newer partners in health, justice, education, community and social services and the corporate sector. Interdepartmental municipal partnerships are also growing as cooperation between parks and recreation, planning, engineering and the police play a greater integral role in community design and public safety. Business partnerships such P3’s and not-for-profit organizations are also called upon to help deliver services that were once the sole responsibility of the municipality.

Traditionally, the calculation of facility needs within a community was based on its population and demand. Increasingly, recreation facilities are also expected to contribute to stimulating tourism. In particular, games, tournaments and cultural events are seen as a means of encouraging economic growth. Such events are often supported by a fee structure with variable rates for residents or non-residents, as well as new partnership arrangements with the local business community.

There is also a trend to include more partners in facilities. The most successful are those that involve program partnerships rather than simply having a traditional landlord-tenant relationship. Examples of facilities that work with this emerging model include public health offices and community services in partnership with physiotherapy and massage therapists, fitness coaches and day cares. An increasing number of community recreation facilities have provided shared space for commercial and retail opportunities to increase revenue and expand their client base.

There are also many best practice examples of partnerships between municipalities and YMCA’s in Ontario and across the country. It is becoming increasingly common to see YMCA-municipal partnerships for the operation of indoor aquatic facilities.

Municipalities can no longer be the central provider of all facilities and services, so partnership arrangements are becoming increasingly important and prevalent in the service delivery model. Municipalities are adopting a greater oversight role and providing leadership and support to non-profit agencies and organizations that can operate with greater autonomy and responsibility for their operation.

### 5.4.4 *Recommendations*

- Strategically explore and utilize both private and not for profit partnerships to deliver facilities and services wherever financially viable while ensuring standards of quality and that the general community good is being met.

- Develop strong operational models and ensure appropriate resources to ensure services provided in partnership are delivered reliably and effectively to the public.
- Investigate collaborative models at the County level to explore improvements to the planning and delivery of recreation and culture amenities and facilities in the Cobourg catchment area and where possible coordinate with neighbouring municipalities to allow each community to leverage their collective assets and focus on creating amenities that serve Northumberland County.
- Work with sports organizations and community groups to facilitate opportunities for learning experiences for all ages and skills.
- Recognize health and nutrition as contributing factors toward the development of healthy children and develop and strengthen existing and new partnerships with local health organizations, sport, YMCA and like-minded agencies.
- Develop a service continuum to meet the broad community needs that includes operating agreements with all partners to ensure coordination of programming and identifies service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector.
- Strengthen stewardship activities and programming within parks by collaborating with a variety of community partners.
- Review site-specific agreements and complete a reciprocal joint-use agreement with School Board's to guide future arrangements.

- Explore partnership options to deliver arena and aquatic services including an in-depth evaluation of capital reinvestment needs.
- Explore corporate marketing and sponsorship partnerships to fund facilities, programs and service enhancements.
- Develop a partnership policy and establish priorities that will guide future partnership opportunities.

*"Taking the time to connect with partners on a regular basis is an integral part of successful cross-sectoral collaboration; it prevents duplication, streamlines resources and ensures all partners feel heard and supported."*

Kristen MacDonald, Sport Development Specialist and Chair of the PL4ALLSteering Committee of Hamilton

## 5.5 Programs and Training

Community sport and recreation programs play a vital role in providing Canadians with the spaces, programs, and opportunities to gain the physical literacy skills they need to benefit from physical activity and sport participation. Cobourg's leaders in recreation, sport and physical activity must collaborate to establish a common vision for the development, promotion and delivery of physical activities for all residents.

### 5.5.1 What we Heard

- There is a need for staff training.

- Lack of availability/ accessibility of quality instructors is hindering the range of programs the Town is able to offer.
- There is a need for more structured management and operations within the department.
- Need a better understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Development of a memorandum of understanding for programming and training between YMCA and CCC would be beneficial.

### 5.5.2 Gaps and Opportunities

The evolution of Cobourg Parks and Recreation is a testament to tremendous leadership by a small, nimble, innovative, committed and hardworking team of staff. A team that was thrust into a large multipurpose environment and with a combination of skills, trust, and bold leadership made things happen from a “dry side” and a “cold side” perspective.

Leadership is not management, and leadership comes from all levels of an organization. In the case of the CCC in particular, leadership meant ownership, staff at all levels took ownership and built a strong team of recreation service providers to deliver quality services to the community and in doing so developed a high level of respect and gratitude from the many users of the facilities and services and the community. All efforts focused on the huge task of operating and delivering services in a multiplex that demanded a balance between business and community services. In the meantime, the community was changing and demands for more programs, consistency, partnerships, leadership and better alignment of services needed to be addressed.

A new Recreation and Culture Division brings tremendous opportunity at a time when the community has clearly indicated that it is ready to support changes in how services are delivered. There is an opportunity to not only enhance the quality and level of services in Town owned facilities, but to look outside of the physical infrastructure and connect the neighbourhoods, create collaborative organizations in sport, recreation, health and education. Opportunities exist to strengthen partnerships with organizations that better equip the community to prepare and be ready for a new benchmark in recreation, health, sport, education, fitness, neighbourhood connectivity, socialization, accessibility, affordability and community engagement.

### 5.5.3 Trends

**Cross Training:** The increased accountability and demand for high productivity has led many programs to establish cross-training programs. Administrative Staff and Divisions are increasingly changing, expanding and getting reclassified within agencies due to the changes in technology. Often key functions such as billing, purchasing, payroll and registration are on-line which requires more sophisticated staff and well trained staff. This also means that all staff, regardless of title, need to be able to do email and word processing. Organization is the key to the expected multi-tasking. Re-training and cross-training staff in all technical function areas can literally be a lifesaver when key staff are away from the workplace. Cross training also serves to integrate divisions within departments to increase intra-departmental support and to help avoid inefficiencies and reduced quality of customer service.

**Changes in Registration Patterns:** Some programs are reporting a noticeable change in registration patterns. The numbers of people choosing to register in person have increased noticeably, and in some programs is now the preferred means of registering (LERN). Perhaps one reason is that people are waiting until the start of the class to register and/or registering for the next one when their current class ends. With the increase of in-house registration, customer service is much more personalized than it has been with phone and on-line registrations. This is a trend to watch, as it may have a big impact on cancellation rates as well as staff organization during registration periods.

**Re-defining or expansion of therapeutic recreation, health and wellness** (with focus on needs of baby boomers and aging population) The Calgary Recreation-Active Aging Strategy identified a number of guiding principles that can be adopted when considering recreation and active pursuits for aging adults including:

- People want to remain active, creative and socially engaged as they age.
- Aging is a process that affects people differently; therefore, chronological age is not a good indication of abilities.
- A variety of approaches are needed to provide older adults with choices on how to meet their physical, creative and social activity needs.
- Participation in physical, creative and social activities contributes to an older adult's ability to maintain self-efficacy and independence.

- Social connections are one of the most important supports for participating in physical activity and they also contribute to quality of life.
- Inclusive opportunities for all adults with specialized opportunities for older adults where needed will be provided.
- Skill development and progression can happen at any age.
- Older adults will be involved in planning programs and services.
- Activities should incorporate both fun and functionality.

(Active Aging Strategy 2016-2018, City of Calgary Recreation Department)

**More family-oriented activities/programming,** recreation and sport can be an important vehicle for promoting family cohesion, adaptability and resilience. Culture and recreation build social capital in the form of arts, recreation and parks programs, and community celebrations, such as festivals, parades, and neighbourhood/ block parties. Community events help keep neighbours in touch with each other and reinforce relationships that make neighbourhoods strong. Participation in cultural and artistic programs has been shown to promote social connectedness and social cohesion, and positively influence civic behavior, mutual caring and volunteerism. Recreational activities can help build welcoming communities for people and families from diverse cultures. (A framework for Recreation in Canada 2015)

**Blurring of traditional limits on what recreation does.** Recreation programs are doing it all from recreation, sports, educational

enrichment programs, fine arts and performing arts Recreation's umbrella of programming focus and expertise continues to expand and grow. Arts, culture and community heritage programs and services play an important role in the community's social, emotional and economic well-being. Activities in this extremely diverse service area include public festivals, events, and celebrations, adult learning, visual and performing arts, public art, cultural expression, community heritage exhibitions and museums and many others. These represent opportunities for the community to remember and celebrate its past, expresses its self through diverse mediums and how citizens can connect to their community – socially, culturally, spiritually and emotionally.

**Self-sufficient/self-supporting programs and facilities.**

Elimination of subsidies for recreation departments – emphasizing operating more like a business with a prominent cash balance at the end of each fiscal year.

**Increased competition for the same participants and same programs.** Customer service becomes more important as people chose where to go and what to sign up for based on the level of customer service and personal relationships between participants and staff.

**General marketing is being replaced with generational marketing.** Geared specifically for generation segments —one size no longer fits everyone — if it ever did—some recreation programs have been slow to recognize this.

**Offering cooperative, consortium based programs allowing several communities and organizations to join partnerships to collectively offer programs in specific niche areas.** If one organization has best computer labs and facilities and computer instructors, then they should offer that program for the consortium. If another organization has largest and best access to aquatic center, then they offer aquatics programs for the consortium. The goal is to eliminate duplication programming.

### 5.5.4 Recommendations

**Core Services for Parks, Recreation and Culture:** The overall community recreation system is made up of three overlapping sub-systems:

1. Commercial providers,
2. Not-for-profit organizations; and,
3. The publicly funded recreation system.

The public system is the primary driver of community recreation opportunities as it provides services directly to residents as well as exercises varying levels of control over the ability of commercial or not-for-profits to offer services within its jurisdiction. The Town of Cobourg has a significant role to play in the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services. However, it is equally clear that the Town cannot and should not play a role in all areas. Consequently, it is important to define the Town's role, identify and focus on its core services.

The Town should develop a recreation programming policy to guide the delivery of community parks, recreation and culture

programming that is aimed at enhancing the personal, social, environmental and economic well-being of the community. The policy will provide a framework for providing facilities and developing programs that deliver the Town's core services as well as incorporate the principles of exceptional service, operational sustainability and community development. The policy will be applicable to programs delivered directly by the Town and those delivered through partnerships. It would be based on the following general principles and focus areas:

- Recreational and cultural services and programs for Cobourg residents, with priority being assigned generally to those programs and services that serve the largest number of residents and with secondary priority being given to the following target groups: children and youth, seniors, inactive adults and vulnerable or special needs groups;
- Introductory level sport, recreation, arts and culture opportunities through a variety of delivery models;
- Low- to no-cost opportunities while supporting third-party partnerships to provide enhanced and elite opportunities;
- Supply and maintenance of buildings and structures that focus on flexibility and multi-use/multi-function;
- Supply and maintenance of trails, appropriate areas of open space/parkland for passive and active pursuits across the Town as well as the protection of important environmental features while promoting neighbourhood connectivity;
- Staff to coordinate and program core services, including planning, policy development, facility allocation and volunteer management;
- Develop opportunities for people to be active on an individual, informal basis.; Ensure sport and physical activity programs and amenities reflect the range of interests, inspirations and abilities of the diverse community while aligning planning with community usages, participation and trends;
- Improve "learn to" "try it" sport and physical literacy (CS4L-fundamental movement and sport skills) programs to facilitate learning experiences for all ages and abilities;
- Deliver introductory programming in all service areas through a variety of delivery models;
- Embrace opportunities to build on and incorporate emerging sport and activities into program offerings;
- Consider facility and park design, programming and community partnerships that foster physical activity, social gathering, and connection, representativeness to the recreation needs of the growing and changing community;
- Improve citizens' opportunities to connect with nature and to pursue outdoor recreation within or immediately adjacent to neighbourhoods through a network of parks and trails;
- Design and manage parks and other civic spaces to maintain their reputation and functionality as safe, attractive amenities for all;
- Continue to improve walking and cycling opportunities to schools, along selected roadways and within and between parklands;
- Link arts, culture, health and fitness with outdoor recreation in program development and marketing; and,
- Monitor outdoor recreation trends and support expansion of such opportunities in all areas of the Town.

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# 6.0 STAFF TRAINING



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# 6.1 Staff Development Plan

The success of the Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan is dependent on a number of goals, but all of which are to be driven and directed by an engaged, committed, well trained and knowledgeable staff. The ability of staff to recognize potential linkages, partnership value, continuous change and the needs of a diverse and ever evolving community is paramount to the growth and sustainability of the Town of Cobourg and all who live, visit and play within its many public, recreation and sport spaces.

The Staff Development Plan is a component of the Division's Leadership Development and Succession Plan. The purpose of the Staff Development Plan is to provide opportunities to help employees and volunteers acquire core competencies necessary to fill leadership positions. The following identified competencies are considered essential for successful leadership in the public sector.

- Adaptability/ flexibility
- Accountability
- Communication
- Conflict resolution/ problem solving
- Cultural sensitivity
- Decisiveness
- Development oriented
- Ethics
- Political acumen

- Critical thinking
- Public relations
- Resilience
- Risk taking/ innovation
- Self-awareness
- Service orientation
- Strategic agility/ proactive
- Team orientation
- Vision
- Self confidence
- Big picture perspective

The Staff Development Plan combines traditional and non-traditional strategies as building blocks to develop these competencies for successful leadership development.

Leaders in recreation and sport include professional staff and volunteers. Both need the skills, knowledge and resources required to plan and deliver high-quality recreation and sport services, based on specific community needs and strengths.

Volunteers in recreation and sport make an extremely valuable contribution to community cohesiveness, Canadian society and the economy. Volunteers need to be recognized, trained and supported as an essential part of the delivery of recreation and sport experience in every community in Canada.

The recreation field needs to recruit and inspire new leaders (of all ages) who can address emerging trends and have knowledge in a variety of areas, such as cultural diversity, emerging technologies, urban planning, active transportation and nature conservation. All

who work in recreation need to acquire and attain the core competencies for recreation and the capacity to address changes in the physical and social environments that impact recreation (A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015).

Cobourg will need to grow a vision-driven Recreation and Culture Division that:

- Plays a proactive role in shaping the future of the community;
- Finds the balance between cost-recovery and subsidy-allocation to meet the department's fiscal responsibilities;
- Provides fair pricing;;
- Defines the department's core services;
- Provides safe, affordable and flexible services for any age or ability; and,
- Implements a recreation-specific marketing and outreach system that meets the community's desire for consistent and timely information, while being interactive, innovative and community driven.

### 6.1.1 *Critical Components of Moving Forward*

Focusing in critical areas must bridge the current circumstances with the preferred future. Based on all public input, organizational interviews and staff interviews it is fundamentally important that the newly created Recreation and Culture Division and the Northumberland YMCA develop an agreement that will address a

strategy that combines various strengths of both organizations to move forward and build a cohesive delivery structure that can make changes that will allow for success.

- **Celebrate past accomplishments.** A lot of great things have happened and should be celebrated, with appropriate credit given, as a step to move forward. Over time circumstances have changed, programs have been developed, facilities have been constructed, population demographics have changed, and organizational capacity to deliver services have created new challenges. Recreation, health, sport, and education has changed.
- **Focus on customer experience.** This ranges from opportunity to quality to consistency. Regardless of the resources available, if you are perceived to provide value to the community through their use, you are building advocates. This puts the focus on the customer experience (external) versus governmental agency (internal).
- **Use of terminology such as "consolidation," "collaboration," and "partnership" realistically and appropriately.** These are concepts that the public desire and demand however the implementation must match the concept.
- **Preserve and reinforce what works within the recommended context of a structure and operating practices that can deal more effectively with the reality**

**of responsibilities for separate components of programming and facility development and operation.**

- Cobourg has a great parks system that continues to develop and evolve.
- It has well located recreation facilities, with significant use and support by various community organizations.
- Both the CCC (CRCD) and the YMCA appear to have a strong reputation and credibility; both offer one-stop shop in the CCC and Northumberland YMCA respectively. Both enjoy good relations with local and regional partners. There is a proactive approach to the use of technology/social media to communicate with and solicit from the community.
- There is a strong history from neighbourhoods, volunteers, sport group funding and sponsorships.
- There is a dedicated, passionate, professional staff, always striving for the good, sustainable leadership and organizational structure within the CCC and CRCD.
- There have and continues to be exceptional cost effective and efficient accomplishments in recreation.

**Cobourg is on the cusp of change, navigating the new direction for recreation, sport, and community.** This will require leadership and vision that will demand support and the combined efforts of the new Department and prospective partners from all community

sectors to ensure a sustainable parks and recreation organizational structure.

“Sustainability” is a very popular and perhaps overused word in these changing times. Often, users have in mind only one of three basic elements of sustainability-Financial/Economic, Environmental, and/or social/recreation making it very challenging to come to any kind of consensus when others may be focusing on the other elements. In order to manage the system of parks, recreation, economic or financial, environmental, and or recreation sustainability needs to be balanced.

The financial resources must be adequate to maintain the system in to the future; the environment that we love cannot be “loved to death” and the people must be allowed appropriate use of the system to properly connect to and understand the value represented, creating stewardship while promoting the other benefits of physical activity and mental engagement. When all three are focused on, a dynamic yet sustainable system is possible.

The CS4L model has created a huge conversation about physical literacy, benefits of physical activity, collaboration between like-minded sectors that have spilled over into other aligned public sector service providers all have resulted in a more engaged Canadian public, more partnerships, an enhanced sport delivery system and so much more that really improves community and a commitment from many individuals and organizations to take responsibility for health, active living, wellbeing, community and all ages...they “OWN IT”.

A number of new “benchmarks” and “best practices” have emerged and the following is a number of useful resources for staff to use in the delivery of sport programs and those targeted at the Physical Literacy.

## [CS4L.ca/resources](http://CS4L.ca/resources):

[Partnering “Recreation” with “Sport” through Canadian Sport for Life Promising Practices, Important Opportunities](#)

[Vancouver Sport Strategy – Sport Summit Workbook](#)

[Building Enhanced Collaboration between Recreation and Sport](#)

[Developing Physical Literacy: A Guide for Parents of Children Ages 0 to 12](#)

[Active Communities Vancouver-Vancouver Park Board Sport Infrastructure](#)

[Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth \(PLAY\) Tool](#)

[Checklists for schools, coaches and sport organizations are available. An individual checklist is also available.](#) These are terrific resources for a workshop setting.



## Best Practices

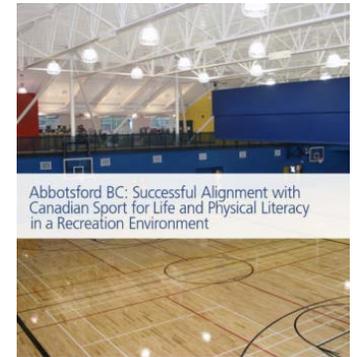
[Winnipeg Community Sport Policy, January 2012](#) – provides a shared strategy for developing, promoting and delivering physical activities for all people in Winnipeg.

[Vancouver Sport Strategy May, 2008](#) –

Provides a roadmap for the way ahead in sport for all Vancouver residents and charts a course for a new approach to sport in the City’s communities.

[Successful Alignment with Canadian Sport for Life and Physical Literacy in a Recreation Environment, January 2014](#)-

Provides an example for how other municipal recreation departments can use the Canadian Sport for Life framework to enhance the quality of programming. The report highlights the partnership between the City of Abbotsford Parks Recreation Culture and Pacific Sport Fraser Valley.



# 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION/ ACTION PLAN



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## 7.1 Strategic Directions and Implementation Plan

The first step in this Implementation Plan is for the Town and the Recreation and Culture Division is to declare Cobourg a “Canadian Sport for Life Community” and to adopt the CS4L framework by bringing together Education, Recreation, Sport, Health and other community stakeholders. This initial step is essential in ensuring the long-term commitment and implementation of the recommendations in the following strategic actions.

The following table summarizes the key/priority recommendations under the four identified themes of: accessibility/affordability; corporate brand/ marketing/ communications; collaboration and partnerships; and programs/training. A more detailed

implementation plan (including longer term priority actions) is included as an appendix (Appendix J) to this report. This detailed matrix also identifies the operational impact; responsible staff or department; and, the time frame for implementation.

Note, the numerical/alpha-numerical references in the following table correspond with the numerical references in the Implementation Plan found in Appendix J of the appendix document.

## 1.0 Accessibility and Affordability

**GOAL:** To ensure community facilities, services and procedures enhance accessibility for all.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Strengthen the Division's approach around access and affordability that increase healthy active living for all ages in all facilities

### ACTIONS

- a) Review rates and fees policies on an annual basis to ensure that they continue to respond to community needs with particular inclusion of the CS4L framework that promotes access for all regardless of age, culture, gender, and abilities.
- b) Review the Facility Allocation Policy as needed (minimum biannually) to align with the best use of public spaces and that encourage participation by all (not just sports organizations). This should be done in consultation with all facility user groups to ensure alignment with needs and optimization.
- c) Create opportunities for increasing a sense of belonging among youth by hiring a youth coordinator on an initial part-time contract who can focus entirely on youth initiatives and engagement.
- d) Introduce intergenerational programming which would involve special events, physical and creative activities that grandparent and grandchild can participate in together.
- e) Build on the CS4L model and support the involvement of everyone by auditing existing equipment and facilities; and ensure fair and equal access of all facilities.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Adopt an "Active Aging" strategy that aligns with the CS4L Physical Literacy framework that focuses on getting older adults into programs and facilities as they age.

### ACTIONS

- a) Use a life transition approach in the development and marketing of programs and services by introducing and supporting older adult volunteer programs, i.e. recruit, train and keep older adults engaged as they move into pre-retirement and retirement from their careers. i.e. engage aging adults throughout their pre-retirement years and encourage healthy lifestyles that they will commit to over the long term as they age beyond 60+ years. Have open houses to recruit older adults into community organizations, i.e. similar to a job fair.
- b) Develop a marketing campaign that promotes the benefits of increasing physical & creative activity and decreasing sedentary behavior. Encourage aging adults to try sport and recreation, get active and commit to their long term health through "Sport for Life" opportunities.
- c) Train staff on best/leading practices in Active Aging with particular emphasis being placed on accessibility for all and how best to reach out to persons facing barriers to active living through recreation and sport.

d) Address barriers to participation in recreation for older adults by introducing “Seniors Discounts” for low income seniors who are 65+ and who would be eligible under the Recreation Subsidy/Fee Assistance Program.
e) Review Seniors Coordinator job description and consider opportunities to grow beyond the current level of responsibility. The Town should fund this position and an additional support positions should be added through external agency funding as well as through partnership opportunities. This will improve access for a growing aging population in Cobourg.
f) Plan and host CS4L initiatives with particular reference to Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) and the growing Sport Tourism market, i.e. host a Masters Games, Provincial/National Pickleball Championships, Provincial Seniors Games” Continue to attract and host all sport events at the CCC and at major playfield facilities, i.e. Hockey, Soccer, Baseball, boating, Triathlons, Marathons.
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.3:</b> Review all hours of operation to optimize use of existing space and reduce barriers to access
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Extend hours of operation in non-peak periods to provide more opportunity for program offerings either in the mornings, blocks within the daily schedule and later in the evenings where need exists.
b) Promote the use of unused spaces to community groups including those involved in the arts and cultural community. Introduce “Discount Rentals” when rentals are cancelled within 48 to 24 hours’ notice.
c) Optimize existing operating hours by creating programs that attract persons who are faced with barriers, i.e. youth, persons with disabilities, new Canadians, unemployed, seniors, single parents and tots etc.
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.4:</b> Create facilities that are seen as Community “Hubs” that encourage socialization, connectivity and are flexible/multi-use.
a) Ensure to create facilities and spaces that are flexible multi-use and avoid single use amenities when designing or planning new spaces or facilities.
b) Ensure all activity rooms or facilities do not have specific ‘label’ (e.g. Youth or Senior’s room) to maximize flexibility of available rooms and provide for cross-programming of existing space.
c) Create facility clusters that enhance cross-programming value and sustainability. For example, any new sport conditioning centre, fitness room or training rooms should be clustered with the arena’s, walking tracks, etc.
d) Encourage an atmosphere that feels welcoming and where users can feel self-sufficient by repurposing the large CCC atrium space to enhance and encourage non-structured social and community engagement (e.g. more modular seating, access to power source for multiple charging connection along with Wi-Fi use).

**OBJECTIVE 1.5:** Protect and preserve Town-owned land for future civic use that ultimately will enhance healthy lifestyles and supportive and sustainable environments.

**ACTIONS**

- a) Ensure that town-owned lands are protected for future community use where "Hubs" can be created to maintain livability and walkability.
- c) The Recreation and Culture Division should provide regular input into the land use planning and development approval process to ensure long-term needs facility and programming needs are met.
- d) The Recreation and Culture Division, in cooperation with other Town departments, should continuously look for opportunities in the community to protect and secure parkland or other open spaces areas that has the potential to provide outdoor recreational program opportunities. i.e. nature programming, family activities, etc.

## 2.0 Branding/Marketing/Communications

**GOAL:** Be a leader in customer retention and growth through the implementation of an Active Recreation and Sport communication Strategy

**OBJECTIVE 2.1:** Implement a Communications Plan to advance Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L), Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) and Physical Literacy (PL) and increase participation

**ACTIONS**

- a) Coordinate a department-wide strategic session to define the department's 'core services' and the Cobourg "Active Recreation and Sport Brand". Develop promotional/messaging strategies regarding CS4L, LTAD, and coaching, for parents and the general public.
- b) Review, establish and up-date the Division's mission, target markets, logo's, staff clothing, signage and incorporate the CS4L logo on all Recreation and Culture print and electronic marketing mediums, i.e. brochures, posters, website pages, flyers and letterhead, etc.
- c) Advance Physical Literacy (PL) through positive networking among direct service providers and support agencies, involve CS4L partner organizations: education, sport and health. i.e. schools, sport clubs, parents, Provincial and National Sport Organizations.
- d) Engage residents and CS4L partners including: health, education, sport and other stakeholder organizations in the development and ongoing strategies for getting the Active Recreation and Sport and CS4L message out. Circulate information of CS4L, LTAD and PL to all interested parties. i.e. schools, sport groups.
- g) Continually update a comprehensive data base of key stakeholders and designate a staff person with the responsibility of keeping database current. This may require a review of staff responsibilities, including the possible appointment of a Division Administrative Assistant position.

h) Design and locate Cobourg Active Recreation and Sport banners in key facilities and at special events, i.e. festivals, tournaments, registration periods etc.
i) Create a web link for Cobourg Active Recreation and Sport that provides information and resources to community leagues, sport organizations, neighbouring municipalities, community groups, parents, residents and others.
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.2:</b> Enhance current marketing methods that strengthen customer service, improve retention and create growth.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Carry out customer service surveys on a regular basis (minimum manual on site surveys) to strengthen customer relationships and engagement but also to get a clear understanding of needs that can change quickly.
b) Use email newsletters to get the message out to existing and prospective customers.
d) Create a customer-centered culture amongst staff that focuses on core values and expectations of the organization.
e) Enhance the use of the department's five social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn and others as new technologies are introduced.
g) Ensure that the Division maintains control of what message is ultimately released by designating a staff member with IT skills the responsibility of control and dissemination of information.
i) Educate the Town Communication staff on the Division vision and mission and Division/Recreation role within the CS4L framework as it works in partnership and collaborates with the community on Active Recreation and Sport initiatives and the creation of a "Healthy Cobourg".
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.3:</b> Expand and enhance the use of electronic technology to deliver programs and services that encourage participation in CS4L, LTAD and PL and improve data collection.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Improve the access to information technology for visitors to sport and recreation facilities and develop and increase the availability for online information from all areas of the operation, i.e. through website access, video monitors, touch-screens in social spaces and facility entry points (hardware and software focus).
b) Encourage resident/ customer use of online transactions, registration, bookings, and mobile application. i.e. at home, at work, or through smart phones.
d) Introduce an access pass system for all fee based programs at CCC/Division sponsored programs that includes CS4L activities.
h) Ensure that the Division and the Active Recreation and Sport program is equipped with the necessary software and hardware to create the necessary Community engagement and buy-in to getting active and understanding "Physical Literacy", i.e. Active for Life online resource where parents can find fun ways of making sure their children get the recommended daily amount of physical activity, strategic locate video monitors in high traffic and social spaces within facilities with scrolling program screens, information on CS4L, LTAD, PL and events.

**OBJECTIVE 2.4:** Employ a variety of Advertising strategies in all internal and external Division facilities as well as through partnerships with CS4L partners and other stakeholders.

**ACTIONS**

- a) Adopt a Department wide advertising signage policy that permits access by potential partners, sponsors, businesses and community groups to advertising space in facilities where possible (i.e. incorporate the CS4L and other related Active Recreation and Sport logo's where possible).
- b) Allow community partners through negotiated agreements to access potential sponsorship revenues from facility and/or program signage (i.e. share revenue generation with Soccer, Baseball, Sport Council and other stakeholders when advertising campaigns are a result of joint efforts).

**OBJECTIVE 2.5:** Build human resource capacity in the area of customer service.

**ACTIONS**

- a) Integrate customer service, marketing and communications in all staff meetings.
- b) Implement customer service excellence award system and adopt a training program for staff and volunteers in the delivery of recreation, sport and active/healthy living.

### 3.0 Collaboration and Partnerships

**GOAL:** Promote the CS4L, LTAD and PL through partnership, collaboration, and capacity building.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Develop effective and strategic working policies that contribute and encourage public, private, and not-for-profit partnerships. i.e. Northumberland Health, Sport Council, Business

**ACTIONS**

- a) Establish principles, and policies for each type of partnership the Town engages in (i.e. public/public, public/private, and public/not-for-profit).

<b>OBJECTIVE 3.2:</b> Develop innovative and collaborative facility and operational models that strengthen partnerships between sport and stakeholder organizations
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Strategically explore and utilize both private and not for profit partnerships to deliver facilities and services wherever financially viable while ensuring standards of quality and where general community good is being met.
b) Encourage partners and stakeholders to collaborate in assessing current program gaps and overlaps in order to maximize multisport choice options for children and youth
c) Investigate and encourage County and neighbouring community partnerships that will enhance public awareness and support for Physical Literacy (PL) programming.
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.3:</b> Develop a service continuum that recognizes the value of partnerships between the grassroots sports, recreation and public health.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Evaluate operating agreements with partners to ensure coordination of programming and identifies service areas that may be best suited to be delivered by the private sector (i.e. concessionaire/retail services, commercial hockey, facility rental for profit (private yoga instructor with own business)).
b) Strengthen stewardship activities and programming within parks by collaborating with a variety of community partner's i.e. public, business, not for profits/service groups, Sport Council.
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.4:</b> Adopt a coordinated approach to facility improvement, repurposing and development that enhances the ability of the recreation and Culture Division and CS4L partners and other stakeholders to address future program and service needs.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
b) Investigate corporate marketing and sponsorship partnerships to fund facilities, programs and service enhancements
c) Align facility development/space clustering with like-minded partners so as not to duplicate efforts and to ensure that expertise of any given organization is maximized.

**OBJECTIVE 3.5:** Develop and implement a sponsorship policy that connects sport providers with business, and other potential partners in the community

**ACTIONS**

- a) Increase opportunities for sponsorship, corporate volunteerism and shared expertise, i.e. list all potential sponsorship opportunities within sport and recreation and develop a menu that potential sponsors can select from to support sport and active living.
- b) Host focus groups/roundtable discussions and create networks to provide regular opportunities for idea generation, consolidating feedback, reviewing policies and identifying needs in the sport community.

## 4.0 Programs and Training

**GOAL:** Develop an active recreation and sport program that encompasses opportunities for skill development, training and community engagement

**OBJECTIVE 4.1:** Adopt general principles and focus areas that incorporate Physical Literacy into programming that aligns with the Canadian Sport For Life (CS4L) model.

**ACTIONS**

- a) Assign priority of recreational, sport and cultural services generally to those that serve the largest number of residents and secondary priority to be given to the following target groups:
  - Children and youth
  - Seniors
  - Inactive adults
  - Vulnerable or special needs groups
- b) Introduce multisport, recreation, arts and culture opportunities to all ages to encourage physical literacy, fundamental skill development and healthy living to all ages
- d) Increase community sport and recreation capacity to increase participation and leadership for women and girls.
- g) Staff need to coordinate and program core services, including planning, policy development, facility allocation and volunteer management.
- h) Ensure sport and physical activity programs and amenities reflect the range of interests, aspirations, and abilities of the diverse community while aligning planning with community usage, participation and trends. i.e. ensure programs are designed for all, while balancing the overall community vision and plan.

<b>OBJECTIVE 4.2:</b> Improve and enhance Program delivery models to align with CS4L, LTAD and Physical Literacy (PL)
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Improve “ <i>learn to</i> ” “ <i>try it</i> ” sport and physical literacy (CS4L- Fundamental movement and sport skills programs to facilitate learning experiences for all ages and abilities that can be programmed throughout the year to encourage Physical Literacy and healthy/active living. i.e. promotion and learning paying soccer, Tennis, table tennis etc.
b) Embrace new opportunities to build on and incorporate emerging sport and activities into program offerings, i.e. pre-school mix it up sports, Family Pickleball, Late Night Drop-in for Teens, Open Playtime, Bounce Basketball, Stick and Puck.
c) Reorganize and restructure current management/supervisory staff roles to incorporate the CS4L, LTAD and PL to deliver in an evolving new market that is based on the CS4L model.
d) Develop programs that follow the following CS4L, LTAD and PL framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Active START- 0-6 Years</li> <li>o FUNdamentals- 6-9 years males, 6-8 years females</li> <li>o Learn to TRAIN- 9-12 years males, 8-11 years females</li> <li>o Active for LIFE- males and females of any age (see related Action 3.2(d))</li> </ul>
e) Ensure all programs are led by certified instructors that follow the CS4L principles to encourage skill development, physical activity and enjoyment at any age.
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.3:</b> Introduce and continue to build enabling and engaging policies that support an active and vibrant community
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Develop a youth strategy that involves youth in their program planning and the future delivery of activities that engage them in various roles, i.e. volunteers, coaches, leaders, trainers and participants. Review and adopt a Community access Policy.
c) Continue to develop and enhance the Seniors Strategy –engage Health Promoters from Public Health, Community Centres, adult day programs and fitness clubs to identify opportunities which will improve health, mobility and well-being of older adults.
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.4:</b> Facilitate neighbourhood engagement and ownership for recreation and sport within the neighbourhood setting.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Improve citizens’ opportunities to connect with nature and pursuit of outdoor recreation within or immediately adjacent to neighbourhoods through a network of parks and trails.
b) Continue to improve walking and cycling opportunities to schools, along selected roadways and within and between parklands.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) Create linkages in arts, culture, health, fitness, sport and outdoor recreation program development and marketing. i.e. create opportunities for group collaboration on large events through sport tourism, festivals/mini-celebrations, and neighbourhood events.</li> <li>e) Designate a staff person or volunteer with the responsibility to engage residents in the neighbourhoods where they live and play to encourage physical literacy, i.e. neighbourhood walk and runs, clean ups, garden parties, friendly sport competitions etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 4.5:</b> Maintain a leadership role in the planning, coordination, facilitation and engagement of community partners in facility development that supports physical literacy, healthy living and community sustainability</p>
<p><b>ACTIONS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Work with all Town Departments/Divisions responsible for Transportation and public services to implement bike trails in public right-of-ways (e.g. streets).</li> <li>b) Designate Parks staff to collaborate and be involved with other Town departments to move forward the Trails Master Plan and coordinate efforts to ensure sustainable guidelines are being adopted and that trails are designed multi-use for safe and active recreation, Physical Literacy, health and well-being.</li> </ul>
<h2 style="margin: 0;">5.0 Sport Development</h2> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>GOAL:</b> Develop a shared leadership model for the implementation of an Active Recreation and Sport Strategy</p>
<p><b>OBJECTIVE 5.1:</b> Adopt a Sport Leadership and engagement strategy that brings champions together from active living, recreation, sport, education, health, local government and other related stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>ACTIONS</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Adopt a CS4L (Sport) Community Leadership Team that would be responsible for the engagement of key organizations in the building process for Community active recreation and sport.</li> <li>c) Play a more active leadership role at the Northumberland Sports Council table that is representative of Cobourg's -alignment with the CS4L framework.</li> </ul>

<b>OBJECTIVE 5.2:</b> Commit to “Active Recreation and Sport for All” that builds capacity and strengthens Cobourg as a CS4L Community
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Develop and deliver sport programs to increase participation of communities of interest (i.e. new Canadians, persons with disabilities, older adults, women/girls and youth/youth-at-risk)
b) Continue to develop, administer and promote subsidy programs (i.e. Jumpstart, Kids-sport, YMCA-Kids Programs, etc.)
c) Partner with private sector through sponsorship programs to establish new funding sources that improve access to community sport.
e) Research, collaborate and provide training on inclusive policy development, sensitivity and inclusion for sport providers within the community and catchment area that helps educate and build capacity within all sports, i.e. Partner with Sport Council and sport leaders.
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.3:</b> Promote Sport for Life in all recreation and sport programming to advance physical literacy on a continuous basis.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Conduct an analysis of existing sport programs to identify gaps and opportunities related to the CS4L model and LTAD and PL.
b) Adopt a physical literacy action plan with key stakeholders that ensures consistent and streamlined programming.
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.4:</b> Host sport events that promote the philosophy of CS4L and LTAD that ultimately improves, celebrates and promotes sport.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Develop and adopt a marketing strategy to increase awareness of and attendance at existing sport promotion and recognition events.
c) Develop an annual series of events during “Sport Weeks” to recognize the achievements of community sport athletes and volunteers.
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.5:</b> Strengthen Capacity in the Sport System by researching and staying current on changes and best practices in the CS4L model.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Continuously research and share best practice models for community sport group governance, financial planning, administration and organizational structures.
b) Determine training gaps for organizations, coaches and volunteers and host training and provide resources to address those gaps.
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.6:</b> Advance Cobourg as the Sport Tourism/Events leader in the region.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Develop and adopt a Sport Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan

b) Build a database of volunteers and resources to support sport tourism events.
c) Adopt and promote the CS <sub>4</sub> L model in all sport tourism and event planning.
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.7:</b> Prepare and plan to advance Sport Infrastructure based on the Canadian Sport framework and alignment with Healthy and active aging.
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Establish and organize an annual user group exchange to discuss ongoing maintenance and repair of existing facilities, i.e. ice and field users, gymnasium, seniors, youth programming participants.
<b>6.o Staff Development</b>
<b>GOAL</b> Be a vision-driven Parks, Recreation and Culture department that is determined to be a leader in community building and development and aligns with the CS <sub>4</sub> L model.
<b>OBJECTIVE 6.1:</b> Adopt a Division Vision and engage staff by providing opportunities for input and ownership for future programs and services
<b>ACTIONS</b>
a) Engage staff in a neutral environment and discuss a visioning plan for the Division and how best the organization can respond to its implementation.
b) Set overall organizational, team and individual staff goals. i.e. review best practices in Employee Evaluation Processes.
c) Focus on creating a nimble organization where staff can be cross-trained and have the ability to fulfill more than one role. Designate a staff person to coordinate all CS <sub>4</sub> L related activities to ensure consistency and equity where applicable.
d) Ensure Staff are educated in all roles to better understand function. (Form- follows- function).
e) All vacancies should be reviewed and position role reconsidered to see if it can be done more efficiently with existing staff or can be changed before filling any position.

**OBJECTIVE 6.2:** Incorporate a Training plan into the Division operational budget that will be sustainable, measureable and makes staff accountable for their training goals.

**ACTIONS**

- a) Ensure staff at all levels have a clear understanding and total grasp on the concept of CS<sub>4</sub>L and Physical Literacy, as well as the Implementation Plan.
- b) Share knowledge with staff about CS<sub>4</sub>L, physical literacy and staff's role when delivering programs.
- c) Train staff in all technical aspects of designing, coordinating and delivering appropriate CS<sub>4</sub>L programs for various ages that encourage physical activity.
- d) Highlight one staff member to become a NCCP Fundamental Movement Skills Learning Facilitator to:  
Deliver in-house training to staff
  - Deliver in-house training to staff
  - Be the point of contact for NCCP Fundamental Movement Skills Course for community coaches
  - Provide parent letters and conduct surveys (before and after)
- e) Staff need to attend workshops and conferences for their function and be members of organizations that keep their skills focused and in tune with current and future trends i.e. Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO), Ontario Recreation Facilities Association(ORFA) National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), Business/Marketing and others where applicable.

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