

To: Community and Operations Services Committee

From: Kevin Alexander, Commissioner,  
Community and Operations Services Department

Report Number: CO-24-27

Date of Report: May 2, 2024

Date of Meeting: May 13, 2024

Subject: 2024 Update to the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture  
Facility Needs Assessment

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide to Council the 2024 Update to the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment (the P.R.L.C).

Attachment 1 contains the Update to the P.R.L.C.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Community and Operations Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That in accordance with Report CO-24-27, dated May 2, 2024, the 2024 Update to the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment be endorsed.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

Not Applicable.

## **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

- Corporate Leadership Team
- Legislative Services
- Finance Services
- Legal Services

## **5.0 Analysis**

### **5.1 Background**

At its meeting of November 9, 2015, City Council approved the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment (“2015 P.R.L.C.”) as attached to Report CS-15-127.

The purpose of the 2015 P.R.L.C. was to examine Oshawa’s Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture facilities, consult with residents and stakeholders regarding the ideal facility mix and provide guidance to City Council and the Oshawa Public Libraries on opportunities to meet the growing needs of the community.

Since 2015, the City has experienced significant population growth and community diversity. In November 2022, the City engaged Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants (“Monteith-Brown”) to undertake an update to the 2015 P.R.L.C. The project included a situational review of supporting documents, an analysis of population growth, distribution and demographics, and a review of recreation facility usage and registration data, trends and best practices. Community consultation allowed for valuable input from residents, staff and community partners.

Staff has worked with the consultant to complete the project in three phases: (1) Situational Analysis; (2) Community Consultation; and (3) Final P.R.L.C.

### **5.2 Situational Analysis**

The consultant conducted a Situational Analysis between November 2022 and January 2023 as a first step in the development of the updated P.R.L.C. This phase included a review of existing plans, studies, demographic profiles, key trends and an inventory of all City facilities in the P.R.L.C. sectors in Oshawa. This phase also included a compilation and analysis of all facility usage and program registration data.

### **5.3 Community Consultation**

Staff undertook a 12-week consultation process beginning on January 17, 2023 through to April 13, 2023 to engage residents, Council, staff and community partners on the P.R.L.C.

The consultation process was comprised of various engagement initiatives that included the use of Connect Oshawa ([www.connectoshawa.ca](http://www.connectoshawa.ca)), the City’s online engagement platform. Promotion of the feedback form to residents and community partners used a variety of communication channels.

A breakdown of the feedback received is as follows:

- 367 completed feedback forms, available online on Connect Oshawa and on paper at Service Oshawa, City recreation facilities and all Oshawa Senior Community Centres and Oshawa Public Libraries branches between January 17 and February 28;

- 128 Community Partners and/or user groups were invited to provide feedback through 5 focus groups or via written comment through the P.R.L.C. mailbox and/or Feedback Form;
- 6 workshops were conducted with Oshawa Public Libraries Board, OSCC55+ Board, OSCC55+ Membership Council, Oshawa Youth Council, Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle;
- 10 interviews were conducted with Institutional/Agency Partners that have a vested interest in Oshawa's parks, recreation, library and culture system;
- 10 staff roundtables took place, including front-line and management staff from the City, Oshawa Public Libraries and OSCC55+ and the Corporate Leadership Team;
- 8 interviews with the Mayor and City Councillors representing all City wards.

### **5.3.1 Findings**

Internal and external consultations touched on a number of themes. The following themes summarize the most notable and common points:

- Residents, elected officials, partners and staff value Oshawa's parks, recreation, library and culture facilities. Consultations emphasized the important role these facilities play in making Oshawa a great place to live and to keep residents healthy and connected.
- Oshawa's population growth in the north and through significant infill is placing pressure on existing infrastructure that is already busy. Intensification may see new residents seeking increased access to public spaces if personal spaces (eg. backyards) are too small for their leisure needs.
- Diversification of Oshawa's population was recognized as creating a need for new types of services and ways to communicate. The importance of facilities being accessible, age-friendly and affordable was noted.
- Existing facilities are under pressure. Residents and partners face challenges accessing City facilities at the day or time that is preferred. Space constraints were noted by partners and staff as all attempt to respond to the the growth in population.
- Existing models of co-locating services offers convenience to residents and partners. Facilities that are multi-use, multi-generational and multi-seasonal, with indoor and outdoor amenities are sought by all.
- Outdoor activity has increased since the pandemic and the desire to spend time outdoors has been noted by residents and partners, even in non-traditional settings (eg. libraries).
- Many equity-deserving groups face barriers to accessing traditional P.R.L.C. facilities. Policies and programs that are supportive can ensure that all residents are able to derive the health, social, mental and economic benefits of participation.

#### **5.4 Final P.R.L.C**

The final P.R.L.C. includes several potential initiatives that may help guide strategic planning to the year 2031, at which time Oshawa's population is projected to reach 220,000. Potential initiatives reflect the depth of data collected and documents reviewed in the situational analysis and the general themes expressed through extensive community consultation.

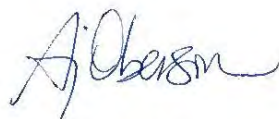
The 2024 Update to the P.R.L.C. is intended as a reference document for staff to consider when planning and designing new facilities or renovating existing facilities as the city continues to grow and diversify.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications directly related to this report.

#### **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

The recommendation in this Report responds to the Oshawa Strategic Plan goal of "Economic Prosperity and Financial Stewardship."



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ARTS  
RESOURCE  
CENTRE

CO-24-27  
Attachment 1



April 2024

# Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment



RON KOUDYS  
LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTS<sup>®</sup>





# Parks, Recreation, Library, and Culture Facility Needs Assessment

April 30, 2024

Prepared by:



in  
association  
with



## Acknowledgments

The City of Oshawa would like to thank the hundreds of people who have dedicated time to developing the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment through participation in community engagement activities, and the preparation and review of the document. Your efforts are sincerely appreciated and have contributed to shape the future of Oshawa's parks, recreation, library and culture facilities.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Section 1. Parks, Recreation, Libraries &amp; Culture in Oshawa</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of the P.R.L.C. Assessment	2
1.2 Vision for the P.R.L.C. Assessment	6
1.3 Notable Achievements	7
1.4 Departmental Responsibilities	8
1.5 P.R.L.C. Assessment Consultations	10
<b>Section 2. Trends Influencing P.R.L.C. Facilities</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Population of Oshawa	14
2.2 Community Age Structure	22
2.3 Efforts to Promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	23
2.4 Reconciliation through P.R.L.C. Facilities	28
2.5 Aging P.R.L.C. Facilities and Asset Management	32
2.6 Potential Impacts of COVID-19	32
2.7 General Initiatives	36
<b>Section 3. Parkland Assessment</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Defining Parkland	38
3.2 Parkland Classification System	38
3.3 Active Recreational Parkland Supply	39
3.4 Future Parkland Needs	43
3.5 Parkland Acquisition Policies	45
3.6 Privately Owned Public Spaces	48
3.7 Parkland Revitalization & Enhancement	49
3.8 Urban Agriculture, Horticulture & Forestry	54
3.9 Off-Leash Parks	58
3.10 Recreational Trails System	60
3.11 Parkland Initiatives	64
<b>Section 4. Recreation Facility Assessment</b>	<b>66</b>
4.1 Arenas & Outdoor Skating	67
4.2 Aquatic Facilities	72
4.3 Gymnasiums	81
4.4 Fitness Facilities	89
4.5 Youth Spaces	92
4.6 Rectangular Sports Fields	94
4.7 Ball Diamonds	101
4.8 Cricket Grounds	104
4.9 Racquet Sport Courts	106



4.10	Basketball Courts	112
4.11	Board and Bike Parks	115
4.12	Playgrounds	117
4.13	Bocce & Lawn Bowling	120
4.14	Frisbee & Disc Sports	121
4.15	Recreation Facility Initiatives	123
<b>Section 5. Library Facility Assessment</b>		<b>126</b>
5.1	Library Supply	127
5.2	Trends in Library Design	129
5.3	Library System Benchmarking	139
5.4	System-Wide Space Requirements	140
5.5	Branch-Specific Space Requirements	144
5.6	Library Facility Initiatives	150
<b>Section 6. Cultural Facility Assessment</b>		<b>151</b>
6.1	Major Cultural Facilities in Oshawa	152
6.2	Trends Influencing Arts & Cultural Space	155
6.3	Cultural Facility Needs	162
6.4	Festival & Event Space	165
6.5	Public Art	169
6.6	Cultural Facility Initiatives	172
<b>Section 7. OSCC55+ Facility Assessment</b>		<b>173</b>
7.1	OSCC55+ Branches	174
7.2	Older Adults in Oshawa	174
7.3	OSCC55+ Facility Needs	175
7.4	OSCC55+ Facility Initiatives	182
<b>Section 8. Implementation Strategy</b>		<b>183</b>
8.1	Monitoring & Updating the P.R.L.C. Assessment	184
8.2	Facility Development Triggers	185
8.3	Potential Capital Funding Sources	186
8.4	Implementation Schedule Components	190
8.5	Implementation Schedule	192

Appendix A: Results of P.R.L.C. Assessment Consultations

Appendix B: Implementation Status of 2015 P.R.L.C. Recommendations

## List of Figures

Figure 1: City of Oshawa Historical and Forecasted Growth, 1996-2041 .....	15
Figure 2: M.T.S.A. Boundary for Central Oshawa.....	18
Figure 3: Distribution of Parkland.....	42
Figure 4: Waterfront Master Plan Boundary.....	52
Figure 5: Potential Expansion Plan, Donevan Recreation Complex.....	87
Figure 6: Potential Expansion Plan, Civic Recreation Complex.....	88
Figure 7: Potential Expansion Plan, Delpark Homes Centre .....	147
Figure 8: What Respondents Like Most About Oshawa’s Parks .....	205
Figure 9: Participation in Recreation Activities .....	207
Figure 10: Support for Additional Spending on Recreation Facilities .....	208
Figure 11: Library Usage in the Last Year or Prior to COVID-19 .....	209
Figure 12: Participation in Arts and Culture Activities.....	211
Figure 13: Importance and Satisfaction for P.R.L.C. Services.....	212

## List of Tables

Table 1: Past Estimate of Population Distribution, 2019-2029.....	15
Table 2: Planned Part II Plan Populations.....	17
Table 3: Median Age, City of Oshawa (2011 to 2021).....	22
Table 4: Population by Age Group, City of Oshawa (2011 to 2021) .....	22
Table 5: Notable T.R.C. Calls to Action for Municipalities.....	31
Table 6: Official Plan Classification of Parks.....	40
Table 7: City of Oshawa Parkland Inventory.....	40
Table 8: Summary of Parkland by Classification .....	41
Table 9: Projected Parkland Requirements by Classification.....	44
Table 10: Oshawa Active Transportation Network .....	60
Table 11: Oshawa Public Libraries Branch Profiles.....	128
Table 12: Comparison of Space to Selected Library Systems .....	139
Table 13: Spectrum of Festivals & Events .....	166
Table 14: Ranking Improvements to City Parks .....	205
Table 15: Ranking Barriers to Participate in Recreation Activities.....	206
Table 16: Ranking Barriers to Participating in Library Activities.....	210
Table 17: Ranking of Improvements for Oshawa Public Libraries .....	210
Table 18: Barriers to Participation in Arts and Culture Activities.....	211

## List of Maps

Map 1: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Indoor Aquatic Facilities .....	78
Map 2: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Outdoor Aquatic Facilities.....	80
Map 3: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Gymnasiums .....	84
Map 4: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Fitness Centres .....	91
Map 5: Existing and Proposed Distribution of Rectangular Fields .....	99
Map 6: Existing and Proposed Distribution of Ball Diamonds .....	103
Map 7: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Tennis and Pickleball Courts .....	110
Map 8: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Basketball Courts.....	113
Map 9: Distribution of Playgrounds.....	119
Map 10: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Oshawa Public Libraries Branches.....	141
Map 11: Existing & Proposed Distribution of OSCC55+ Branches .....	181

## List of Acronyms Used

A.O.D.A.	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
A.R.C.	Arts Resource Centre
C.A.A.W.S.	Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport
C.B.C.	Community Benefits Charges
C.L.O.C.A.	Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority
D.C.	Development Charges
D.R.A.A.C.	Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle
G.T.A.	Greater Toronto Area
M.T.S.A.	Major Transit Station Area
O.C.C.N.A.	Oshawa Central Council of Neighbourhood Associations
O.P.L.	Oshawa Public Libraries
OSCC55+	Oshawa Senior Community Centres
P.O.P.S.	Privately Owned Public Spaces
P.R.L.C. Assessment	Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment

## Executive Summary

Oshawa's first Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment ("P.R.L.C. Assessment") was approved in 2015 and the City has successfully implemented a number of its recommendations. Over the past decade, Oshawa's population has experienced substantial growth and socio-cultural diversification, provincial legislation has changed, and participation rates have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This 2024 P.R.L.C. Assessment provides potential considerations for the City to build on its achievements and reflect changes in Oshawa. It integrates perspectives from the people living and playing in Oshawa today while considering current trends and best practices so that the City may direct its investments to maximize community benefits.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment engaged the public, user groups, partners, City Council and staff, and others to identify needs. General themes from consultations and the P.R.L.C. Assessment as a whole include:

- **The Value of Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facilities is Evident:** Residents and partners emphasized the value of these facilities, stating that having them makes Oshawa a great place to live while keeping residents healthy and connected.
- **The Urban Structure is Changing:** New populations are generating growth-related needs in designated greenfields such as in the north, as well as in established neighbourhoods through infill and intensification. Population growth is placing pressures on existing facilities and creating needs for new ones, with observations stating that it is becoming more difficult for people to register for programs or rent facility times.
- **Limited Land & Escalating Costs:** Building on the above point, there are challenges to find space for new or expanded facilities along with escalating costs of constructing and operating them. Facilities that are experiencing capacity pressures are finding it more difficult to balance needs for municipal programming with times that partners are seeking to deliver their own programs.
- **Inclusion & Diversity:** Shifting ethno-cultural composition is creating a need for new services and ways to communicate with equity-deserving groups. Supportive policies, programs and spaces can help reduce or eliminate barriers that prevent residents from deriving the health, social, mental or economic benefits of participation.
- **Northwest Oshawa:** The site of new community centre and parks is an opportunity to alleviate growth related pressure in the northwest.
- **Co-Location:** Residents value the current model of co-locating multiple community services at one location to create multi-use, multi-generational, multi-seasonal spaces.
- **Outdoors:** Many residents were reconnected to the outdoors following the pandemic and are appreciating the benefits of being outside whether by themselves, with friends or family, or with the community as a whole.

Over the P.R.L.C. Assessment's planning period, Oshawa's population is forecasted to grow from 191,600 at present to nearly 220,000 by the year 2031. To ensure services keep pace with this growth, new facilities will need to be explored while existing facilities may need to consider expansions and renewals in accordance with their respective asset management plans.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment offers 64 Initiatives for the City to consider over the next 10 years to address community needs for parks, recreation, library and cultural services for a broad range of ages, abilities, and interests. Given the tremendous growth in Oshawa's population, and the forecasted growth anticipated in future years, Initiatives are provided for consideration with the understanding that these are contingent upon capital and operating budget requirements and may be prioritized or modified as municipal priorities change. An annual review of the P.R.L.C. Initiatives would allow for consideration of other factors including, but not limited to, legislated or mandated requirements, updated population forecasts and socio-economic changes in the community, emerging trends, and input by the public.

## Listing of P.R.L.C. Assessment Initiatives

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### General Initiatives

- G1** Explore opportunities to increase engagement of Indigenous communities and Indigenous designers/consultants in the design of new and significantly renovated parks, recreation, library and cultural facility projects to inform the types of spaces, amenities and other considerations that reflect Indigenous cultures and knowledge.
- G2** Explore opportunities to increase engagement of equity-deserving populations in the design of new and significantly renovated parks, recreation, library and cultural facility projects as well as discussing ways to improve inclusivity in existing spaces.
- G3** Consult with Indigenous Peoples to discuss how new and existing facilities could be adapted to be respectful of Indigenous rights and Indigenous culture (also see Initiatives #G1 and #G2), with a view to "Indigenize" and "Decolonize" public policies and spaces.
- G4** Ensure that staff of the City, Oshawa Public Libraries and OSCC55+ are familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, so that staff may consider ways in which to apply these documents to parks, recreation, library and culture facility planning and programming.
- G5** Explore ways to encourage greater participation among 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ communities within parks, recreation, library and culture facilities, potentially using Positive Space, Safe Space or similar designations.

## Parks Initiatives

- P1** Strive to provide active and tableland forms of parkland at a rate of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 population, thereby targeting a total active parkland supply of 440 hectares by the year 2031.
- P2** Update the City of Oshawa Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law to reflect amendments to the Ontario Planning Act resulting from Bill 23.
- P3** In conjunction with Initiative #P2, an inter-departmental exercise to review and standardize the parkland classification system contained in Section 2.6.2.2 of the City of Oshawa Official Plan for use across City Departments would help ensure consistency in municipal planning, design and operations activities.
- P4** Utilization of this P.R.L.C. Assessment as well as financial analysis examining per unit valuations and other residential developments would be helpful in supporting the Parks Plan and Parkland Dedication By-Law.
- P5** Consider preparing a Privately Owned Public Space (P.O.P.S.) Policy or establish criteria to guide the acquisition, location, development and operating responsibilities for Privately Owned Public Spaces in Oshawa. Appropriate sections of the City of Oshawa Official Plan may need to be reviewed and amended to reflect integration of P.O.P.S. and strata forms of parkland.
- P6** Consider establishing criteria for accepting suitable land for developing active parkland including street frontage, proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities, opportunities for future expansion, grading, drainage, and other site conditions.
- P7** Explore integrating parkland conveyance tools contained in the Planning Act with other land acquisition tools to maximize public access to parkland and natural areas (e.g., land purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.).
- P8** Plan for and consider resources required for renewal and rejuvenation of existing parks and their associated infrastructure through ongoing municipal budgeting processes.
- P9** Consider evaluating the types of washrooms that are appropriate within the City of Oshawa Official Plan's Parkland Classification System, along with criteria and costs of providing washroom facilities.
- P10** Conducting CPTED Reviews (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) for all parks will assist with prioritizing changes to locations that have been subject to more frequent incidents along with those that are intensively-used and/or identified by Parks Operations staff and emergency services personnel.

- P11** Explore opportunities to integrate Indigenous stories, names and other information within park and trail signage, and communications materials.
- P12** Any future update to the City of Oshawa Active Transportation Master Plan should reflect progress made in recent years, support efforts to develop recreational trail networks, and explore ways to enhance connectivity within established and future residential areas in light of the evolving the City's urban structure. As part of this exercise, the City's trail classification system may be reviewed and presents an opportunity to update the Off-Road Facility Standards to integrate current best practices into the design and maintenance of recreational trails.
- P13** Consider the feasibility, benefits and costs associated with the development of regional trail networks including those contained within hydro corridors and other easements.
- P14** Determine whether it remains appropriate to implement any outstanding directions from the City of Oshawa Draft Waterfront Master Plan, the Lakefront West Park Master Plan, Pumphouse Marsh Master Plan and other studies prepared specifically to inform the recreational, cultural and natural functions of the waterfront.
- P15** In consultation with residents, volunteers and local horticultural organizations, explore the suitability of integrating additional community gardens in existing and future City of Oshawa parks. Provision of community gardens can make use of community volunteers who contribute resources to management of these gardens, upkeep and general operation based on the City's current Policies and Procedures.
- P16** Consider the development of an inter-departmental action plan to align corporate objectives and define resource requirements associated with current and future integration of horticultural displays on municipal lands.
- P17** Investigate potential sites in conjunction with the Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee to determine opportunities for an off-leash area to improve geographic distribution west of Simcoe Street. New and existing off-leash areas can consider ways to minimize environmental impacts through designated walking routes and fencing, where necessary, and providing sufficient parking at a minimum.
- P18** Explore how the design and redesign of parks, recreation, library, and cultural facilities can support the City of Oshawa's urban forestry objectives through tree preservation, reforestation, contributions to the tree canopy target, and other applicable strategies.

## Recreation Initiatives

- R1** Recreational components to be considered for inclusion at a future community centre in the north may include: a 25-metre lane rectangular pool with a minimum of 8 lanes plus separate leisure and therapeutic pools; a gymnasium designed to high school regulation specifications including adequate playout dimensions, ceiling heights and floor surfacing; a fitness centre and group fitness studio with a sprung wood floor; an indoor track; space for Indigenous programs and activities; and dedicated youth room. As noted in Initiatives #L2 and #S1, a community centre could also include dedicated spaces for OSC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries. Exploring sport-friendly and age-friendly accessibility features, and designing a community centre in a manner that would allow it to readily be expanded if required, may provide added flexibility to address future needs.
- R2** Recreational components to be considered for inclusion at the future Windfields Community Park (adjacent to a future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) may include: a minimum of one lit full size rectangular sports field; a refrigerated outdoor skating trail; a major splash pad; 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; a skateboard park; and an adventure or natural playground structure.
- R3** Recreational components considered for inclusion at the future Kedron Community Park may include: a minimum of 2 lit full size rectangular sports fields; a major splash pad; 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; and an adventure or natural playground structure.
- R4** Recreational components considered for inclusion at the future Columbus Community Park may include: a minimum of 2 lit hardball diamonds; a major splash pad; 3 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; and an adventure or natural playground structure.
- R5** At least one of the rectangular fields recommended at future Community Parks in the Windfields, Kedron, and Columbus Park II Plan area may be considered to be enclosed for indoor use.
- R6** Consider engaging local ball organizations in a review of existing ball diamonds that they are using to discuss improvements that could help build capacity in their programs, and confirm feasibility of such improvements through requisite studies that explore setbacks to adjacent land uses, topography, infrastructure serving, and associated costs.
- R7** Consider the construction of a regulation-size cricket grounds at either the Kedron Community Park or the Columbus Community Park.



- R8** Consider expanding the Delpark Homes Centre to add a second gymnasium to alleviate capacity pressures currently faced for programs delivered by the City, OSCC55+ and community-based providers. In addition, the City may consider enhancements to its courtyard, construct a full basketball court while exploring the feasibility of converting the Delpark Homes Centre skateboard park into a permanent installation employing a progressive design template.
- R9** Consider expanding either the Civic Recreation Complex or Donevan Recreation Complex to include a gymnasium subject to confirmation through architectural and/or engineering analyses. Whichever option is not chosen should be deferred for consideration after the year 2031.
- R10** Consider expanding the Donevan Recreation Complex to add a fitness centre as well as carry out façade improvements to increase the facility's visual presence along Harmony Road. A gymnasium may also be considered subject to the City's decision regarding Initiative #R9.
- R11** Consider the preparation of an interior configuration plan for the Civic Recreation Complex that rectifies current challenges regarding facility control and staff supervision along with enhanced visibility and access into the fieldhouse. A gymnasium may also be considered subject to the City's decision regarding Initiative #R9.
- R12** New and existing fitness centres operated by the City of Oshawa should consider emerging trends in the fitness industry such as high intensity and functional training, use of on-demand technologies and other best practices to provide a meaningful fitness experience.
- R13** Consider capital and/or operating cost obligations if/when negotiations arise with Scouts Canada regarding Camp Samac Pool. Should negotiations not achieve a result deemed satisfactory to the City's interests, the City may cease operating the Camp Samac Pool particularly if the opening of new or redeveloped indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities sufficiently meet community needs.
- R14** Consider initiating a youth-specific consultation process to determine whether improvements or adjustments are required to youth-focused space, amenities and programs provided at the Civic Recreation Complex, South Oshawa Community Centre and Northview Community Centre. The Oshawa Youth Council and other representatives of youth/teens in the city should be engaged through this process.
- R15** Explore expanding the number of barrier-free, natural and adventure playground structures as part of new park developments and during playground renewal projects.
- R16** Consider engaging representatives of the local and regional disc golf community to explore the feasibility of integrating a 9-hole course at an existing City park.

- R17** In anticipation of growth-related recreation needs after the year 2031 - most notably for gymnasium space, arenas, indoor turf, and other large facilities - opportunities to assemble land may be considered for a future community centre while being open to potential partnerships for a mixed-use or stacked community centre model as part of a private sector or institutional land development project.
- R18** Consider the City's replacement program when planning the capital budget. Playgrounds still employing sand and stone surfacing should be prioritized for replacement with engineered wood fibre, cast-in-place rubber, or other surface material deemed appropriate by Parks Operations.
- R19** Consider emergency preparedness requirements in new facilities or renovations to existing facilities (i.e. back up power, large assembly areas) so that in the event of an emergency, municipal facilities are suitable as reception centres.
- R20** Investigate opportunities to upscale existing facilities to accommodate multi-use opportunities outside of traditional sport and recreation (i.e. use of space for weddings, special events).

### **Oshawa Public Libraries Initiatives**

- L1** Targeting a total Gross Floor Area of 132,000 square feet by the year 2031 will achieve a rate of 0.6 square feet per capita and meet growth-related needs of the population. This would require a net addition of 38,000 square feet of library space across the library system.
- L2** Consider a 20,000 square foot Oshawa Public Libraries branch as part of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. In the event that this gross floor area cannot be accommodated in its entirety, commence a site selection exercise to determine how to address the remainder of library space in the Columbus and/or Windfields Part II Plan areas.
- L3** Explore the ability to expand the Delpark Homes Centre Library branch and carry out an associated interior reconfiguration that results in a new multi-purpose room, space for seating and study, an enlarged children's area, expanded staff work area and storage, and potentially a separate library entrance.
- L4** Consider the expansion of the John Aker Northview Library along with creating an outdoor reading garden and improved pedestrian connection to the adjacent Northview Community Centre. Opportunities to improve lighting levels within the library should also be explored.

- L5 Investigate the ability to extend the customer services desk at Jess Hann Library to sit adjacent to the exterior wall and book drop-off bin in order to improve administrative workflows of branch staff and make better use of the space as a whole.
- L6 Continue to assess the feasibility of distributing “express” library service points in strategic areas using vending machines and kiosks, holds lockers, and other means deemed appropriate to increase the reach of library services and address geographic gaps. Potential locations to consider include the Donevan Recreation Complex, OSCC55+ Conant Branch and within areas of intensification such as the Downtown and Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area.
- L7 Consider investments in technological infrastructure at all Oshawa Public Libraries branches through expansion of Wi-Fi capabilities, computer hardware and software, under carpet cabling, electrical outlets, and other needs that emerge as technologies evolve over time.
- L8 Consider expansion of the number of Storywalks in parks and outdoor areas with locations determined in conjunction with Oshawa Public Libraries, Parks Operations, Culture, and others as appropriate.

## Culture Initiatives

- C1 Consider an outdoor festival and event space at the Windfields Community Park (adjacent to the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) that is intended for use by community-based organizations but also large enough and contains the requisite servicing infrastructure to host city-wide gatherings.
- C2 Explore potential locations to provide a community hall with a minimum capacity of 500 persons that can enable gatherings such as ethnocultural functions, receptions, business functions, smaller-scale community performances, and programs delivered by the City, OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries. This type of facility could form part of a community centre required after the year 2031 and should be factored into land acquisition strategies identified in Initiative #R17 of this P.R.L.C. Assessment.
- C3 Explore the integration of smaller spaces through parks and other civic spaces that are conducive to neighbourhood and community-based events and gatherings, where appropriate.
- C4 Explore areas that are conducive to hosting a Farmers Market and other vendor markets at either the Windfields Community Park or Delpark Homes Centre depending upon availability of space.

- C5 Investigate additional sites for public art throughout the city, integrating public art into the planning and development process as recommended through the City of Oshawa Public Art Master Plan.
- C6 Assess opportunities to enhance the support of Indigenous Arts, Disability Arts, support to Black artists, artists of colour, newcomer artists, and other artists historically underrepresented in the arts to ensure artwork presented within municipal buildings, parks, civic spaces and communications materials is reflective of all residents.
- C7 Carry out a cost-benefit analysis of establishing a funding program for public art involving consultation between Culture, Planning and Finance that explores a “Percent for Public Art” and Community Benefits Charge policy approach, as well as establishing consistent funding envelopes for maintenance.
- C8 Consider an update to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan and the preparation of a Festivals and Events Strategy to determine operational and service delivery needs that will be considered in conjunction with facility-based recommendations contained in this Parks, Recreation, Libraries & Culture Facility Needs Assessment.

## OSCC55+ Initiatives

- S1 Having sufficient dedicated space for OSCC55+ will allow for delivery of a wide range of social, physical, arts and cultural, educational, congregate dining, and other activities. A minimum floor area of 6,000 square feet is recommended for the new OSCC55+ branch while the entire community centre may be designed with age-friendly principles to ensure can be shared in a manner that allows equitable use by the OSCC55+ at all times of the day.
- S2 Consider the expansion and/or refresh of the Delpark Homes Centre OSCC55+ branch in tandem with the gymnasium and library expansions recommended through this P.R.L.C. Assessment per Initiative #R8 and #L3. For the OSCC55+, the expansion may focus on enlarging the dining area, program room, lounge and staff offices.
- S3 Consider an expansion, interior reconfiguration and general refresh of the Northview Community Centre to allow OSCC55+ to address growth-related pressures for its adult day program, fitness programs and other services.
- S4 Ongoing collaboration between OSCC55+ and the City of Oshawa will help to determine if/how time can be allocated for seniors programs within gymnasiums and fitness space being recommended at the Civic Recreation Centre and Donevan Recreation Centre (per P.R.L.C. Assessment Recommendations #R9 and #R9).
- S5 OSCC55+ should be engaged in park planning and design activities to contribute age-friendly perspectives and articulate needs that assist the organization in building its outdoor programming portfolio.



# 1.0

## Parks, Recreation, Libraries & Culture in Oshawa

## 1.1 Purpose of the P.R.L.C. Assessment

The City of Oshawa has a long history of facilitating access to parks, recreation and sport, library, and arts and cultural services. The sector has flourished in Oshawa with investments from multiple levels of government along with contributions from local agencies, community partners and a dedicated volunteer base. The City considers the Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment (the "P.R.L.C. Assessment") when planning and designing new builds or major renovations to existing facilities in a fiscally sustainable manner and to respond to the needs of people living in Oshawa.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment is organized as follows:

- Section 1 Purpose, Vision and Consultations**
- Section 2 Demographic and Trends Analysis**
- Section 3 Parkland Assessments**
- Section 4 Recreation Facility Assessments**
- Section 5 Library Facility Assessments**
- Section 6 Cultural Facility Assessments**
- Section 7 OSCC55+ Assessments**
- Section 8 Implementation**

Oshawa City Council endorsed the first P.R.L.C. Assessment in 2015 and staff have successfully implemented a number of its recommendations. Since that time, the planning landscape has been dramatically altered due to Oshawa's considerable population growth, changes to provincial legislation guiding how parks and community facilities are funded, continued socio-cultural diversification, as well as changing leisure time participation patterns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing periods of economic uncertainty.

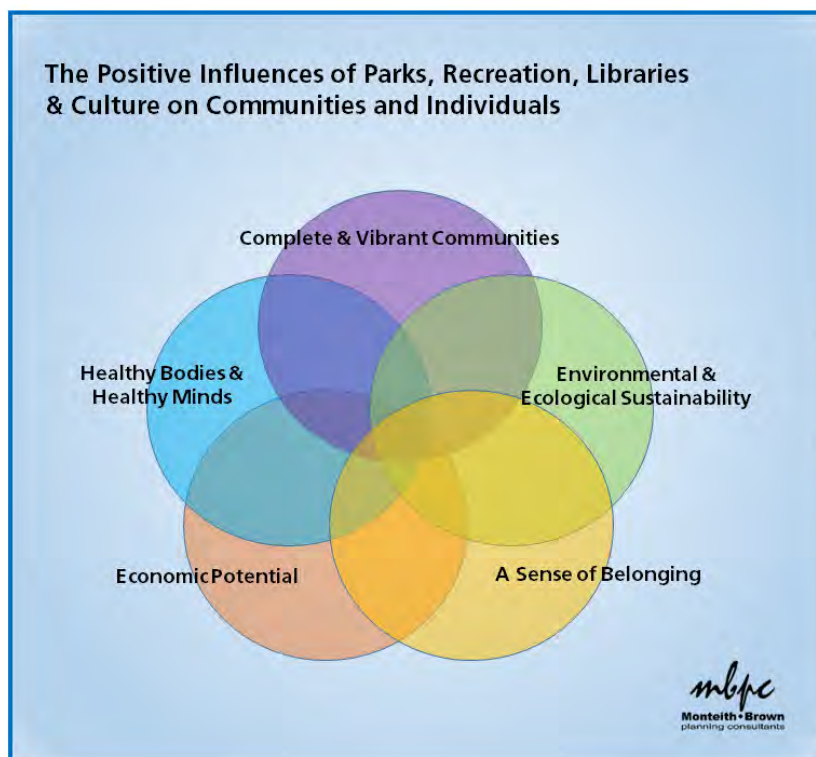
This 2024 P.R.L.C. Assessment provides potential options for consideration that can build on achievements and reflect changes in the city. It integrates perspectives from the people living and playing in Oshawa today while considering current trends and best practices so that the City may direct its investments to maximize community benefits. The P.R.L.C. Assessment supports the enhancement of physical, social and mental health while promoting inclusion and the overall wellbeing of all Oshawa residents. Consistent with the last P.R.L.C. Assessment, this update provides information that can be considered to inform strategies for capital investment to the year 2031 at which time Oshawa's population is forecasted to reach 220,000.



It bears noting that Oshawa's Official Plan and Strategic Plan are undergoing review at the time of this writing. Accordingly, Initiatives noted in this updated P.R.L.C. Assessment may help to support or fall within these keystone documents. A harmonizing of these documents, including the master plans that guide individual Departments of the city, provides a valuable opportunity for collaboration within the City.

This update to the P.R.L.C. Assessment builds on a legacy of planning for, and investing in the local parks, recreation, library and culture system. The City recognizes that proactive planning leads to effective decision-making and fiscally sound management practices. Planning allows the City to be responsive so that residents can access the many benefits of parks, recreation, library and culture systems which:

- encourage healthy living through physical, creative, educational and social activities;
- aid in the planning and design of healthy communities;
- create a sense of place and belonging;
- spur economic development and tourism; and
- strengthen environmental health, sustainability and resiliency to climate change.



## **A Chance to Be Healthy and Active**

The parks, recreation, library and culture sectors facilitate many forms of activity and connection. Physical activity is encouraged through sport, dance, and other activities including gardening and walking. Being active is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle and personal well-being. Many Canadians do not engage in sufficient levels of physical activity for a number of reasons such as lack of time, automobile-centric community planning and development, growing disparities between various socio-economic status factors as they relate to health, and the prevalence of sedentary activities (e.g. watching television, online activities, etc.). Based upon the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and studies such as the ParticipACTION Report Cards on Physical Activity, many people across the country are not obtaining the amount of daily physical movement necessary to maintain healthy lifestyles.

Parks, recreation, library and cultural services are also critical to mental and emotional health. The City, OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries (O.P.L.) deliver programs that support cognitive development among children but also retention of cognitive abilities among older populations which can help prevent onset of diseases such as dementia. Throughout the City and its operating partners, there is an emphasis on evidence-based outcomes that are enabled by principles of early childhood literacy and development, positive youth development, and age-friendly communities to promote health outcomes across the age spectrum.

As such, Oshawa's parks, recreation, library and culture facilities result in a number of health benefits that can lead to prevention of chronic ailments and disease, increased self-esteem, and a higher propensity to engage in positive lifestyle and behaviour choices (particularly among children and teens). The City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ each facilitate connections to the outdoors, something that is proven to be essential for physical and emotional health.

## **Contributing to a Sense of Place and Belonging**

Oshawa's built form influences levels of physical activity, well-being and community vibrancy with parks, recreation, library and culture infrastructure forming an important element of urban design and place-making. A number of City policy documents emphasize parks, recreation, library and culture spaces as part of city-building objectives including the Strategic Plans for the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ along with the Oshawa Official Plan and more.



Oshawa has designed certain parks, recreation, library and cultural facilities as community focal points and destination areas where residents from all walks of life can gather. The McLaughlin Library, Robert McLaughlin Gallery and Arts Resource Centre campus is an example of a multi-faceted civic hub located in proximity to City Hall and amenities such as Memorial Park, the OSCC55+ John Street Branch, other institutions and downtown businesses; this campus is also accessible by the road, public transit, and trail networks. Other examples include the Lake Ontario waterfront parks and trail system, the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens, and many of the City's community centres, libraries and associated parklands. Residents use parks, recreation, library and culture infrastructure to participate in physical and cultural activities together, interact at a social and personal level, and partake in festivals and special events. All of these activities help Oshawa residents feel connected to their neighbourhoods and the broader community.

### **Economic Development and Prosperity**

Parks, recreation, library and culture systems contribute to local businesses, tourism and economic development in some way. Having high quality civic spaces assists in attracting new businesses, highly demanded professionals, and new residential growth. Since these facilities are highly sought amenities among employers and employees alike, having a strong parks, recreation, library and culture system provides Oshawa with a competitive advantage. The system also facilitates sport and cultural tourism opportunities as tourists visit the City's horticultural displays, partake in special events and festivals, and play in tournaments. Use by tourists and non-residents can generate significant economic spin-offs for local businesses.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Preservation, conservation and management of green space can be achieved through the parks system, while facility design and service delivery practices can promote environmental sustainability. Securing parkland augments naturalized areas and adds green space capable of functioning as carbon sinks, onsite stormwater retention, habitat areas, etc. while parks, recreation, library and culture facilities can be designed in a manner to minimize energy consumption or use renewable energy sources, integrate native plantings, and more.

## 1.2 Vision for the P.R.L.C. Assessment

### Facilities that Inspire an Active and Creative Community

This document's vision reflects three key tenets first heard through community engagements in 2015 and reconfirmed through consultations held in 2023. By providing 'Facilities that inspire an active and creative community', the P.R.L.C. Assessment recognizes the role of parks, recreation, library and cultural facilities in maintaining the quality of life enjoyed by residents, and building upon the historical achievements of the City, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. Supporting the P.R.L.C. Vision are 4 guiding principles that have been formulated based on consultations and may be considered during strategic planning and designing future facilities.

### P.R.L.C. Assessment Guiding Principles

The City of Oshawa, OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries provide parks, recreation, library and cultural facilities in order to:

1. Build a healthy community, foster active lifestyles, and stimulate discovery, lifelong learning, and creativity.
2. Provide inclusive, affordable, and accessible opportunities for all Oshawa residents.
3. Foster and support partnerships that create synergies, leverage resources, and allow the City, OSCC55+ and Library to maintain core services
4. Provide multi-use, multi-generational, programmable spaces, supportive of sport and cultural tourism, and responsive to community needs.

### 1.3 Notable Achievements

The City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ have achieved much in the time since the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment was approved, such as:

- Functional, accessibility and aesthetic improvements to the OSCC55+ John Street building including refresh of the adult day program room. OSCC55+ also added the General Sikorski Polish Veterans Hall (temporary location) and increased the number of active outdoor programs available for seniors.
- Investments in and around the waterfront such as renewal of the playground and splash pad at Lakeview Park, and development of Ed Broadbent Park which includes a stage with amphitheatre seating and an expansive 'Garden of Human Rights'.
- Refreshed the McLaughlin Library children's area, auditorium, and added makerspace elements. O.P.L. continues to integrate technology with self-service kiosks and investments in Wi-Fi, while its virtual branch has been bolstered with enhanced online content and services.
- Over 25 new parks throughout Oshawa along with many redevelopment projects.
- Initiated the full replacement/redevelopment of the aging Rotary Pool, bathhouse, and splash pad, along with new park amenities.
- Initiated the Arts Resource Centre Feasibility Study.
- Development of Oshawa's first BMX Bike Park.
- Prepared "Guidelines for the Design and Placement of Off-Leash Areas" and a new off-leash area at Cordova Valley Park.
- Passive recreational space such as Gold Point Wildlife Reserve which includes interpretive nodes, gathering space and a formal butterfly garden aimed at education and raising awareness about the areas significance as a migratory butterfly stopover and significant wildlife habitat.
- The acquisition of McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, donated to the City by General Motors.



## 1.4 Departmental Responsibilities

Delivery of parks, recreation, library and culture services through municipal spaces is a coordinated effort involving multiple departments and relationships with community partners. The following divisions are those most closely involved with the delivery of these services:

The **Community and Operations Services Department** includes:

- The Recreation Services Branch that delivers recreation, leisure and cultural opportunities through the management and physical operation of facilities, the direct delivery of programs, partnerships with the community, as well as centralized facility bookings, program registration and business analytics.
- The Operations Services Branch, through its Parks Operations, which is responsible for maintenance and operation of local parkland, natural areas, trails and associated outdoor infrastructure. This Branch also works with agencies and organizations involved with outdoor greenspaces and natural areas.

The **Economic and Development Services Department** includes:

- Planning Services who develop and implement land use planning policy, perform development reviews and approvals, and provide growth-related data concerning planning areas and population.
- The Business and Economic Development Services Branch which includes Events & Community Engagement and Cultural Development staff who oversee a number of community-focused initiatives, programs and events in facilities, parks, and public spaces.

The **Safety and Facilities Services Department** includes:

- The Facilities Management Services Branch that delivers capital projects and works with the Recreation Facilities Operation for a consistent approach to operation and maintenance of all City facilities.
- The Parks Planning and Redevelopment Division which oversees capital projects related to recreation and parks.

The Corporate and Finance Services Department includes:

- The Finance Services Division which includes financial reporting and planning, procurement, taxation;
- Human Resources Services Division which oversees compensation, benefits, labour relations, recruitment and organizational development;
- Innovation and Transformation Division which oversees Accessibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Indigenous Relations;
- Information Technology which oversees business applications and support of clients and projects
- Legal Services which provides Legal Representation on City business and operations matters.

**Oshawa Public Libraries** is a distinct operating entity governed by the Oshawa Public Library Board and funded by the City of Oshawa. O.P.L. provides a vast collection of materials and equipment, access to online content, and directly delivers programs oriented to a wide range of ages and interests.

**Oshawa Seniors Community Centres (OSCC55+)** is an external not-for-profit agency that works closely with the City of Oshawa. The City provides an annual grant to support the programs and services delivered by OSCC55+ through staff that are employed by the City as well as volunteers. OSCC55+ owns its property at 43 John Street West, leases space at one branch, operates the Conant Branch under a service contract with Durham Community Health Centre, and operates under Memorandums of Understanding for two branches located in City recreation facilities. OSCC55+ is governed by its Board of Directors.

## 1.5 P.R.L.C. Assessment Consultations

A multi-faceted consultation process underpinned the P.R.L.C. Assessment. Feedback was obtained from the general public, agency and community partners, local user groups, elected officials, Boards and Advisory Committees, along with staff responsible for delivering facilities and services. Internal and external engagement efforts consisted of the following activities:

- A project portal through Connect Oshawa and City website;
- Community feedback form;
- Five Focus Groups with parks, recreation, library, and arts and culture users as well as representatives of Indigenous, multicultural and equity-deserving populations;
- Interviews with the Mayor and members of City Council;
- Workshops with the Board of Directors for O.P.L. and OSCC55+ as well as the Oshawa Youth Council;
- Agency and Partner interviews; and
- Roundtables with leadership, management and front-line staff teams from the City of Oshawa, OSCC55+ and O.P.L.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment was supported by the City of Oshawa's Corporate Communications along with staff from the City, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. These staff spent considerable time and effort to raise awareness of the planning process and promote opportunities to participate among internal and external audiences.

A project page for the P.R.L.C. Assessment was hosted on Connect Oshawa as well as the City of Oshawa website. During the initial consultations held in Phase 1 of the P.R.L.C. Assessment, the Connect Oshawa project site received more than 1,800 visits.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment was promoted using multiple channels of communication through print and digital means. Consultations involved in-person and virtual engagements recognizing different user expectations around convenience and safety as the COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing for part of the planning process.



Internal and external consultations with the public, elected officials, opinion leaders and community providers touched on a number of themes. Some themes are specific to parks, recreation, libraries or culture while other input pertains to all of these areas of focus. The following list, while not intended to be exhaustive, summarizes notable and common points arising from all consultations carried out.

- The Value of P.R.L.C. Facilities is Evident** The importance and value placed on Oshawa’s parks, recreation, library and culture system came across loud and clear. All consultations emphasized the role of these facilities in making Oshawa a great place to live along with keeping residents healthy and connected.
- The Urban Structure is Changing** Oshawa’s population growth is top of mind for many people, particularly in the north end of the city but also observations that growth in established neighbourhoods is increasing pressures on existing parks and facilities that are already busy. There is a need to be ready for intensification and infill projects as new populations – such as in the downtown and around the future Oshawa GO Station – will seek access to public space in parks, community centres and libraries since personal space (e.g. backyards, size of homes) may be too small for their leisure needs.
- Oshawa’s Population is Evolving** People recognize Oshawa’s continued diversification along many socio-economic lines. The shifting ethno-cultural composition of the community appears to be creating needs for new types of services and ways in which to communicate with residents. Age-friendly and affordable opportunities were also emphasized.
- Parks and Facilities Appear to be Under Pressure** A number of user groups indicated that they are facing challenges to secure access to the City’s facilities at the times that they want. User groups generally recognize the need to balance prime time allocations between municipal programs and community rentals, as well as competition between different organizations for the same facilities. Space constraints are not a City of Oshawa concern alone as educational partners, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. all reported growth-related pressures being placed on their facilities as well.

**An Opportunity in the Northwest**

With the City's intentions to develop a community centre at Thornton Road North and Britannia Avenue West formally announced in early 2022, a number of internal and external consultations point to that site as a means to relieve pressures as areas north of Taunton Road develop. The community centre is seen as an opportunity to showcase modern design elements along with the City's commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous communities and environmental leadership.

**Co-Location is Convenient**

The City's more recent models of co-locating multiple community services in one facility – such as recreation, library and seniors spaces – offers convenience to the public and user groups. Multi-use, multi-generational and multi-seasonal indoor and outdoor spaces are highly sought by many people living in Oshawa.

**Desire to be Outside**

The pandemic has reminded many people how important being outside is to personal health and that there are many recreation, library, and arts and cultural experiences that can be found in parks and outdoor spaces. Consultations suggest that there will be a continued desire to spend time outdoors in both individual, family and community settings which is likely to create demands for new park spaces and revitalization of existing ones.

**Equity-Deserving Groups Deserve Attention**

Many engagements touched on certain segments of the population who face systemic and personal barriers to participation in parks, recreation, library and culture experiences. These barriers can prevent people from deriving the health, social, mental and economic benefits from the P.R.L.C. services provided by the City and its partners. Finding ways to address these barriers through space, programs and supportive policies will be critical if the local P.R.L.C. system is to be truly inclusive.





# 2.0

Trends Influencing  
P.R.L.C. Facilities

## 2.1 Population of Oshawa

### Historical and Forecasted Population Growth

The 2021 Census of Canada recorded Oshawa's population at 175,383 persons, representing growth of 26% since 2001. The Region of Durham's Official Plan – branded as Envision Durham – has been adopted by Regional Council and is presently under Provincial review; this new Official Plan allocates population growth throughout Durham Region in accordance with provincial mandates.

The City of Oshawa's population is estimated at 191,600 persons based on Region of Durham planning forecasts.<sup>1</sup> Envision Durham allocates a population of 219,990 persons to Oshawa by the year 2031 and ultimately 298,540 persons by the year 2051 which is the second-highest total population increase in Durham.<sup>2</sup> It bears noting that the Region's new forecast for 2031 exceeds that identified in the current City of Oshawa Official Plan and the City can reasonably expect additional demands for park, recreation, library and culture services in order to keep pace with the nearly 28,000 new residents projected to arrive over the P.R.L.C. Assessment's planning horizon.

### Distribution of Population Growth Across Oshawa

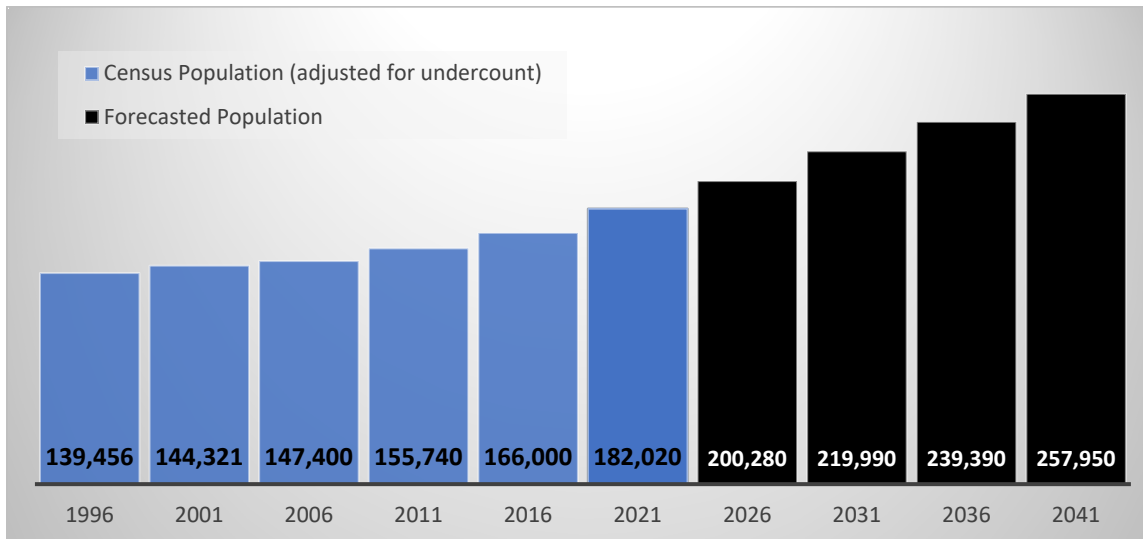
To inform an understanding of parks, recreation, library and culture facility needs in different parts of Oshawa, it is helpful to look at how population will change in established and new growth areas. Oshawa's Development Charges Background Study<sup>3</sup> provides an indication of the future distribution of growth (Table 1), however, this distribution should be interpreted with caution as the forecast precedes the 2021 Census, the new Region of Durham Official Plan, and Provincial Bill 23.

Growth within the P.R.L.C. Assessment period will be primarily directed to designated greenfield communities of Kedron, Columbus and Taunton - which could collectively accommodate 64% of future residential populations by 2029 - as well as Central which is an existing built-up area including the downtown where intensification and infill projects would absorb 10% of projected residential growth. As will be noted in the pages that follow, populations could be higher than shown due to ongoing planning processes in the Columbus Part II Planning Area and the Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area (M.T.S.A.).

<sup>1</sup> The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report #2022-INFO-97: Monitoring of Growth Trends, File: D01-02-01, Attachment 3. December 2, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Region of Durham Official Plan, as adopted by Regional Council on May 17, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> City of Oshawa. 2019. Development Charges Background Study.

**Figure 1: City of Oshawa Historical and Forecasted Growth, 1996-2041**

Note: population figures include 3.79% net Census undercoverage rate.

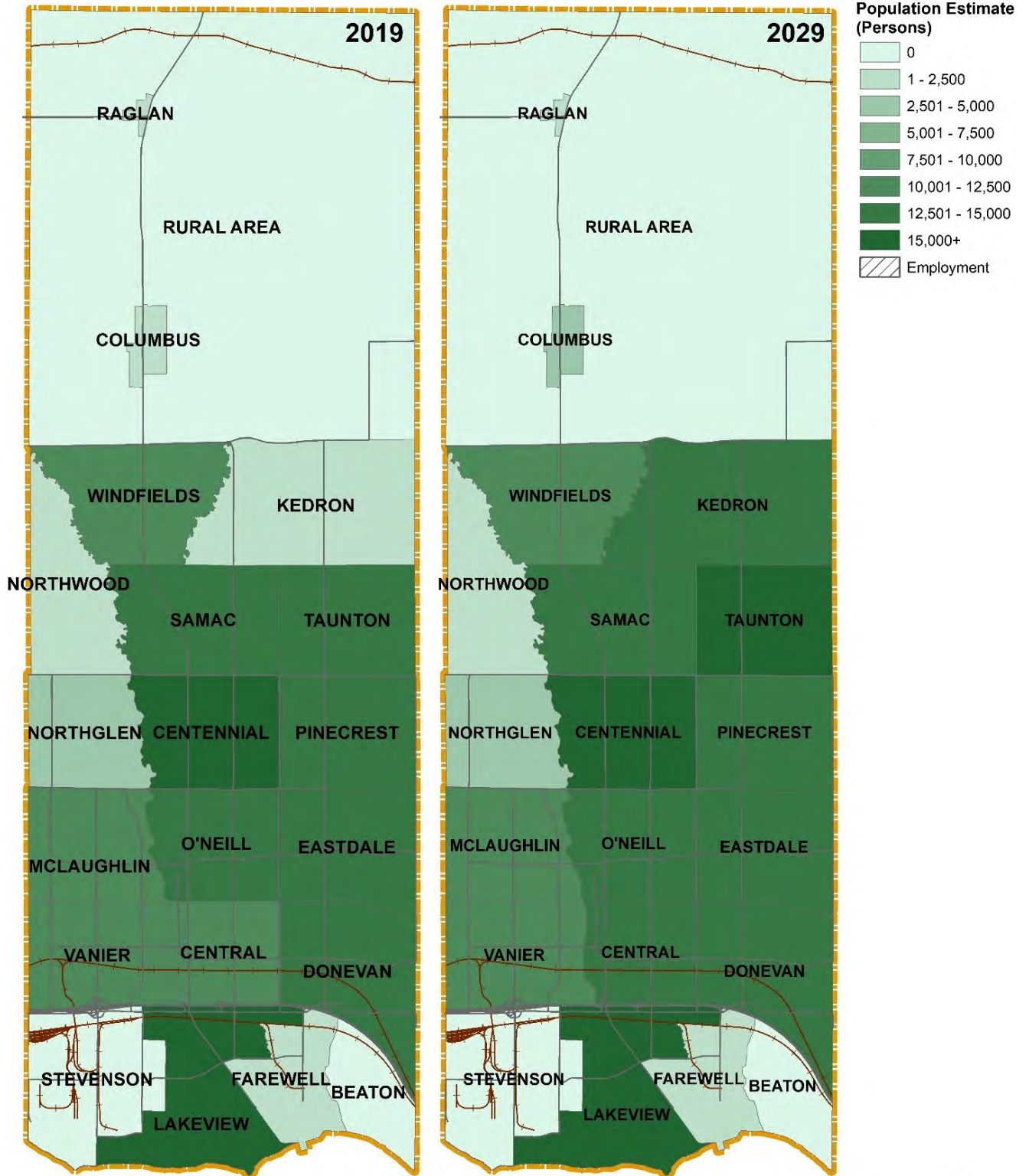
Sources: Statistics Canada Census; Region of Durham Draft Official Plan, February 2023.

**Table 1: Past Estimate of Population Distribution, 2019-2029**

Community	Population Early 2019	Population Early 2029	Population Difference	Rate of Growth
Centennial	16,583	16,542	-41	-0.2%
Central	11,280	14,019	2,739	24%
Columbus	371	3,486	3,115	840%
Donevan	12,596	13,024	428	3%
Eastdale	12,608	13,688	1,080	9%
Farewell	431	1,038	607	141%
Kedron	1,401	13,237	11,836	845%
Lakeview	18,014	18,267	253	1%
McLaughlin	12,481	12,481	0	0%
Northglen	4,520	4,454	-66	-1%
Northwood	217	211	-6	-3%
O'Neill	13,009	14,006	997	8%
Pinecrest	13,949	14,926	977	7.0%
Raglan, Rural	861	860	-1	-0.1%
Samac	14,025	14,448	423	3%
Taunton	14,362	16,340	1,978	14%
Vanier	11,261	11,434	173	2%
Windfields	9,254	11,119	1,865	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>167,224</b>	<b>193,579</b>	<b>26,355</b>	<b>16%</b>

Notes: Figures have not been updated to align with 2021 Census data nor does it reflect recent Regional conformity exercises. The Table is intended for illustrative purposes to show where growth is being directed more so than the number of people that will ultimately live in each community.

Source: Economic and Development Services Dept. and Watson & Associates Economists, 2018.



Population Estimate Source: City of Oshawa Development Charges Background Study



## Greenfield Growth

Residential development in the Taunton, Kedron, Columbus and Windfields communities collectively have a planned population of 79,000 persons based on their Part II Plans (Table 2). Growth will primarily occur on vacant, readily developable parcels guided by the City's Official Plan as having a mix of low, medium and some higher density land uses. These populations will create a demand for parks, recreation, library and culture facilities.

**Table 2: Planned Part II Plan Populations**

Part II Plan Area	Planned Population at Build-out
Columbus	24,000
Kedron	22,000
Taunton	20,000
Windfields	13,000*
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,000</b>

\* Excludes populations in the planned Commercial Centre and post-secondary student populations

Source: City of Oshawa Official Plan 2022 Office Consolidation; Columbus Part II Plan (Draft, 2023)

Most land development in the Taunton Part II Planning Area and Windfields Part II Planning Area is well underway and/or close to completion, along with some portions of the Kedron Part II Planning Area. Oshawa Planning Services indicates that the Columbus Part II Planning Area is poised for substantial growth towards the end of the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning horizon and beyond. Planning Services estimates that construction in Columbus could begin in the next 5 to 10 years, however, this is dependent on many factors (e.g. servicing constraints, etc.).

Additional greenfield growth potential is limited beyond the City's remaining designated lands unless an expansion to the supply of lands is approved, something that could prove challenging due to provincial legislation and regional planning policies such as the *Places to Grow Act* and *Greenbelt Act*. However, the Province of Ontario's passing of Bill 23 and Bill 97 are still being evaluated by municipalities in terms of their implications to lands available for housing along with the funds available for community services such as parks, recreation facilities and libraries. Notwithstanding this, greater pressures can be anticipated for infill and intensification-related developments as remaining designated greenfield areas begin to "build out" as will be discussed in the pages that follow.

### Intensification & Infill Growth

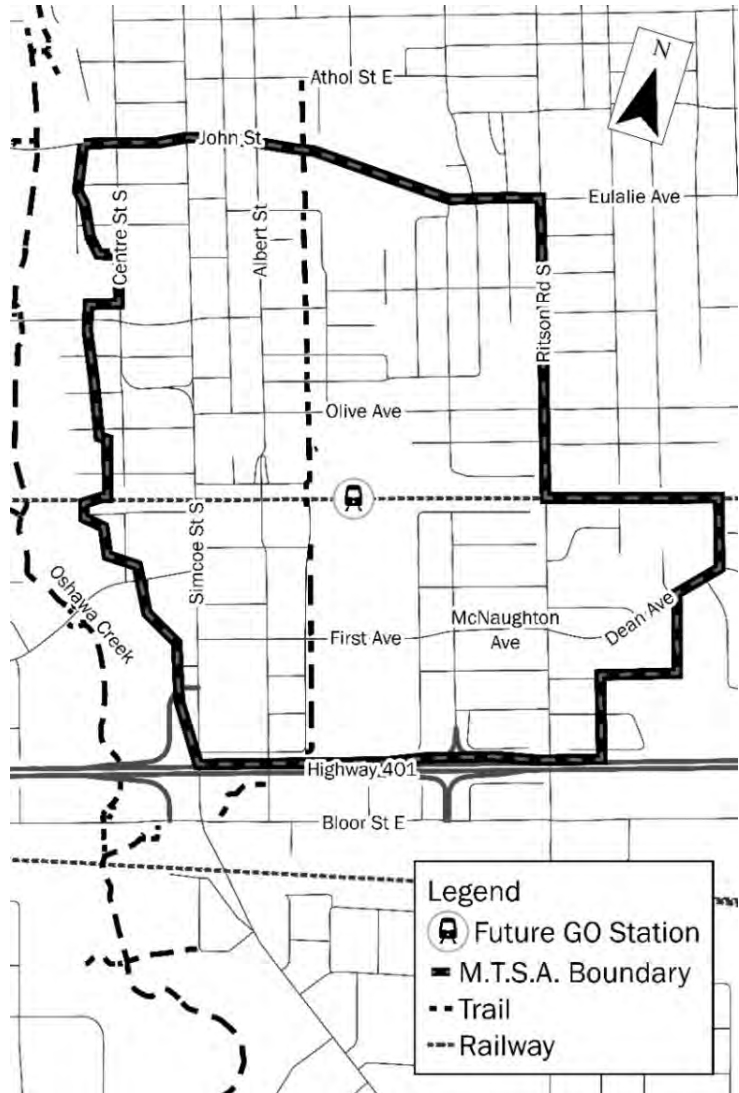
In Oshawa, municipal and regional initiatives are shifting the focus towards intensification of established areas of the City. Land for traditional subdivision development characterized by single detached homes is becoming increasingly scarce and expensive while municipal plans for transit-oriented development (e.g. the Integrated Major Transit Station Area Study for Central Oshawa) in response to local and regional transit service will eventually stimulate additional growth along major corridors.

A share of future population growth can thus be expected to occur through intensification and infill development. While it can be assumed that much of the residential growth projected over the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period will occur in greenfield areas such as the Columbus and Kedron communities, demand for higher density developments and a range of housing choice will likely result in populations also being directed to areas such as Central Oshawa.

The boundary of the aforementioned Integrated M.T.S.A. Study for Central Oshawa (Figure 2) is planned to meet a density target of approximately 310 – 350 people and jobs combined per hectare which could result in an upwards of 45,000 – 51,000 people living in that area (at full build-out). It should be noted that refined population forecasts have not yet been prepared as the M.T.S.A. Study is presently in its initial stages.

Growth through intensification presents different opportunities and challenges to address community needs for parks, recreation, library, and culture services compared to traditional 'greenfield' areas. The most notable challenges are optimizing existing community facilities and programs to accommodate the hundreds – if not thousands – of new residents moving into their respective catchment areas as well as finding and funding the acquisition of new properties in the event new parks and community facilities are required.

Figure 2: M.T.S.A. Boundary for Central Oshawa



Source: City of Oshawa, 2022

With small or no backyards, people living in higher density dwellings rely upon civic infrastructure to meet their recreation, culture and parks needs as the public realm essentially becomes their backyard. With growing dependence on public areas for personal enjoyment, it is not simply about providing space but rather establishing a sense of place containing high quality amenities. The reality for many of Oshawa's areas of transition, where infill and urban regeneration is starting to occur, is that parks, recreation, library and cultural spaces were built at a scale required to service historical needs. These spaces may not have the capacity, the types of infrastructure, or the level of quality to meet the needs of the thousands of new persons surrounding them in intensifying areas.

Furthermore, the future demographic profile of communities originally served by parks, recreational and cultural spaces is likely to be very different than the characteristics of those persons living there today. For example, the preferences of those living in higher-density areas may be different than persons living in traditional lower density subdivisions. Accordingly, they will have different needs and expectations when it comes to using indoor and outdoor recreational space. For example, millennials choosing to live in condominium apartments without a backyard or a car may create demands for more localized opportunities, while older adults choosing to downsize may require targeted services that differ from those previously available in the area.

It is important that parks, recreation, sport and arts and cultural infrastructure remain hubs of activity in areas of intensification and regeneration without becoming lost or forgotten pieces of the urban fabric. Not only do urban recreational and cultural spaces provide a wealth of outdoor opportunities and variety of uses, urban park and recreation projects can stimulate economic development and renewal (carrying on the intent from principles formed in decades past), and have been found to support highly populated, livable, urban areas. Community groups and other stakeholders often desire public spaces as the location to hold community programs, special events in urban settings such as downtown or other open spaces. Integrating parks and open spaces in these areas have become a key component in providing livable urban spaces for a community to come together and contribute to 'place-making', while also softening the streetscape with green features.

In maintaining the dynamic nature of public recreation, culture and park spaces, and re-establishing them as focal points in redeveloping areas, the use of such services to form centralized community hubs is a key for high density developments. Public spaces should be inviting, accessible, bright, safe, and designed on a human scale. Key considerations in planning of urban spaces include location, microclimate, surrounding land uses, and proximity to key destinations and amenities. Other factors such as accessibility, street views, seating, and vegetation contribute to the design of these spaces.

## **Refocusing on the Neighbourhood**

Expansion of regional transit and neighbourhood revitalization projects are catalysts for growth, typically for medium and higher density residential developments. Development or redevelopment of parks, recreation and cultural infrastructure can also be catalysts for change. The trend to better understand local recreation and culture needs as a means to strengthen neighbourhoods has been gaining momentum in municipalities in Ontario within the last 10 years, particularly in areas of growth where the defined sense of place/community is critical. The purpose from a recreation, culture and parks service provision perspective is to animate neighbourhoods and increase activity as well as to work with groups to self-determine and organize their own neighbourhood-based activities.

A neighbourhood-based approach goes a long way in increasing local opportunities by empowering groups and providing opportunities for social interaction given the number of working/commuting families. Staff work with community leaders and early adaptors to create a dialogue and assist residents to discuss and form opportunities for social interaction. The end goal is to create a greater sense of belonging, empowerment, pride and cohesion within local neighbourhoods. The strategies are at varying degrees of maturity and results are evident in the increasing percentage of residents that engage with their neighbours to address local issues and volunteer to develop neighbourhood events. As part of initiatives to strengthen neighbourhoods, municipalities are making each of their community centres, libraries, and/or local schools community hubs as central meeting places for the neighbourhood. Inspiring results are occurring whereby residents are providing and implementing the solution with great ownership.

## **Finding the Space**

With land at a premium in established areas, municipalities are centralizing their services within a common location to provide flexible, multi-purpose spaces that contain a variety of municipal services ranging from recreation, arts and culture, and libraries (the benefits of multi-use spaces are further explored in subsequent pages). In addition, strategic partnerships are being formed between different public agencies with synergistic mandates resulting in parks, recreation and sport facilities being often co-located with schools, hospitals, childcare or other community services.



There are many recent examples of Oshawa's efforts to explore options to best serve community needs and both maximize capital resources and reduce operational ones. Efforts to make efficient use of lands include projects between the City, O.P.L. and the OSCC55+ for the Delpark Homes Centre and the Northview Community Centre campus. Some communities previously used the Ontario Planning Act's former bonusing provisions (Section 37) and other tools by working with the land development community to integrate public parks and recreational facilities in condominium developments. Bonusing has been repealed from the Planning Act and has been replaced by the new Community Benefits Charge, which could be a new tool for the City of Oshawa, particularly for higher density planning applications, to fund the provision of new recreation, library, arts and culture (previously ineligible for Development Charges), and park amenities.

Redeveloping underutilized brownfield sites including buildings and surface parking lots in urbanized areas to public open spaces have also been an increasing trend found in communities throughout Ontario. OSCC55+ has creatively used its parking lots to deliver certain programs such as line dancing. Repurposing these areas provide opportunities to turn underutilized lands into public open spaces with the potential to offer a range of outdoor recreation facilities to attract use by the community. Green amenities in urban areas can strengthen the surrounding community, promote quality of life and trickle-down redevelopment and rejuvenation in surrounding areas through private investment.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2007. A Practical Guide to Brownfield Redevelopment in Ontario.

## 2.2 Community Age Structure

Age is an important factor for planning parks, recreation, library and culture facilities. The age of an individual and those living in a household can influence the types of physical, social, educational and creative opportunities that they pursue. Based on the median age of the population, the City of Oshawa is attracting younger individuals and households in recent years which has reduced its median age by over 2 years between the 2016 and 2021 Census periods (Table 3). This is a significant change and one that is contrary to provincial and national trends that demonstrate an overall aging of the population. The amount of new housing that has been created in Oshawa, particularly in its north end, would appear to be attracting younger households to the city. The 2021 Census records Oshawa's median age as being nearly 1 year younger than that of Durham Region and being more than 2 years younger than Ontario as a whole.

This said, all age groups are experiencing positive growth rates (Table 4). On a percentage basis, Oshawa's older adult (55+) population has grown faster than any other age segment over the past 10 years and there are more than 53,000 older adults living in the city who account for 30% of all residents. The 25% growth rate in the under 10 and the 20 to 34 year age groups supports an observation that an increasing number of younger families have arrived in the city, and has contributed to the reduction in Oshawa's median age.

**Table 3: Median Age, City of Oshawa (2011 to 2021)**

Location	2011	2016	2021
Oshawa	40.6	41.2	39.2
Durham Region	39.2	40.2	40.0
Ontario	40.4	41.3	41.6

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2011 to 2021

**Table 4: Population by Age Group, City of Oshawa (2011 to 2021)**

Age Group	2011	2016	2021	Change Last 5 Years (2016-2021)	Change Last 10 Years (2011-2021)
0 to 9	16,350	17,900	20,465	14.3%	25.2%
10 to 19	18,720	17,890	20,025	11.9%	7.0%
20 to 34	29,155	31,485	36,430	15.7%	24.9%
35 to 54	44,625	44,015	45,390	3.1%	1.7%
55 to 69	25,330	30,310	32,600	7.5%	28.7%
70+	15,440	17,860	20,470	14.6%	32.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>149,607</b>	<b>159,458</b>	<b>175,383</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data, 2011 to 2021. Figures exclude Census undercount.

## 2.3 Efforts to Promote Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

### Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity

Oshawa's ethnocultural diversity has been steadily increasing over the years. Whereas 15% of the city's population in 2006 was born outside of Canada, Census data shows that percentage exceeded 23% in 2021. Over this 15-year period, the foreign-born population nearly doubled to 41,000 persons and demonstrates that Oshawa is an attractive destination for newcomers to the country. The degree of immigration can affect local preferences for certain sports depending upon the popularity of certain activities in their home countries. As an example, libraries are frequently the first point of contact for newcomers to Canada to learn about the services available to them. In terms of recreation, ice sports are not played in the majority of Asian and South American nations that have accounted for a greater share of the city's recent immigration, and as such, a lower percentage of these newcomers may partake in arena activities compared to the share of immigrants coming from the United States or Europe.

The 2021 Census recorded 29% of Oshawa's population as racialized compared to 8% in 2006. Racialized communities across Ontario are under-represented in certain leisure activities but over-represented in others for a variety of reasons, while an American study found that racialized neighbourhoods have less access to greenspace.<sup>5</sup> In pursuit of inclusive service delivery, municipalities are becoming increasingly aware of the need to engage immigrants and racialized persons in their parks, recreation, library and culture systems so that all residents benefit; reducing the complexity of registration systems is another important way to increase access.

99% of Oshawa's 2021 Census population knows at least one official language though nearly 27,000 residents have a mother tongue other than English or French. The top five non-official languages spoken in Oshawa were Urdu (9%), Tamil (8%), Tagalog (6%), Spanish (6%), and Polish (5%). Culturally diverse communities recognize values and needs for parks, recreation, library and culture may differ, including interests in non-traditional activities. The City, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. continually evaluate and adjust their programming and communications with the intent of better engaging diverse cultural populations; O.P.L. indicates that demand is increasing for books in languages other than English and more support is being provided for E.S.L. (English as a Second Language) services.

The City of Oshawa Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee advises City Council and staff on many matters while O.P.L. has recently implemented a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The OSCC55+ is active in the provision of culturally diverse programming through initiatives such as the Creating Cultural Connections

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<sup>5</sup> The Trust For Public Land. 2020. The Heat is On: With temperatures rising and quality parks too few and far between, communities of color face a dangerous disparity.

Grant that resulted in an opportunity for the community to experience South Asian Cultural events, Lunar New Year special event, speaker series, and an event in Memorial Park; these events helped to reduce social isolation among seniors that recently moved to Oshawa including new Canadians. OSCC55+ is constantly seeking ways to provide high quality, affordable and diverse programs. Relationships have been developed with partner agencies to connect with their culturally diverse programs and events.

### **Income and Affordability**

Income can influence participation in recreation, library, arts and culture, and park opportunities. Generally speaking, the greater a person's level of income, the more likely they are to participate in leisure activities as cost tends to become less of a barrier among households with greater levels of disposable income. The 2021 Census reported a median household income of \$86,600 in Oshawa, lower than regional and provincial medians (\$107,000 and \$91,000, respectively). On the basis of income alone, this could infer that Oshawa may have a lower level of participation than regional and provincial counterparts. Statistics Canada recorded 17,750 Oshawa residents living under its Low-Income Measure, After Tax (LIM-AT) representing 1 out of 10 people; more than 4,800 of these people were below the age of 18 and 2,900 people were 65 years and over. The 10% of Oshawa residents living below the LIM-AT is similar to the provincial average.

Affordability is thus a critical aspect for the City to consider in providing a broad range of opportunities through its core service mandate. To help people experiencing low incomes participate, the City of Oshawa has a Recreation Fee Assistance Program that provides subsidies to individuals requiring financial assistance to participate in community recreation opportunities. Other fee assistance programs exist through other providers, not-for-profit organizations, and agencies such as the Region, Jumpstart, and policies/practices in place by local community groups (e.g. minor sports, arts and cultural service providers, service club contributions, etc.). Certain municipalities also target fee assistance or the delivery of low/no cost programming to specific neighbourhoods. Other initiatives could be linking to regional/agency assistance programs (e.g. Ontario Works), through municipal pricing of services and associated targeted levels of cost recovery, and ensuring that there are low fee / no fee options to supplement services that may be more expensive to participate in.

Building upon the previous paragraphs, John Crompton's article published in the National Parks and Recreation Association's Parks & Recreation Magazine speaks to the role of pricing in relation to social justice. The article recognizes two concepts of fairness, being 1) "The Benefit Principle" that states fees should be reflective of the benefits received from a service; and 2) "The Ability to Pay Principle" that states pricing should reflect income-related differences so that no residents are excluded

because of an inability to pay. The model argues that not only does the exclusion of individuals on the basis of income inhibit fairness, exclusion also forgoes revenues otherwise earned on services and could actually require a greater degree of tax support since many municipal recreation services have fixed operational costs. To ensure fairness, fee assistance can be targeted to low-income residents, unemployed residents, children, and/or large households which reflects the Ability to Pay Principle while ensuring a degree of operational sustainability provided through the Benefit Principle. In addition, the use of pricing premiums to reflect value-added benefits or intentions of individuals to operate for-profit enterprises through the use of municipal infrastructure could redistribute resources in a manner that maximizes a municipality's objectives for social justice.<sup>6</sup>

### **Persons with Disabilities**

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability recorded one in five Canadians aged 15 years and over - amounting to 6.2 million individuals - as having one or more physical, sensory, cognitive or mental health disabilities. The survey found that the prevalence of disability increases with age, as well as persons with more severe disabilities and lone parents / persons living alone as being more likely to be living in poverty.<sup>7</sup> As the average age of Canadians continues to increase, so can the number of persons expected to be living with disabilities. While there is no data that quantifies how many Oshawa residents live with a disability, applying the national proportion to the local population suggests that there could be over 35,000 people in the community that have one or more disabilities.

Accessibility-related barriers may affect persons with disabilities from achieving the benefits of participating in parks, recreation, library and culture activities, as well as other aspects of daily life. Since play and social connections are essential for physical, cognitive and emotional development, it is extremely important to engage persons with disabilities within the recreation, sport, library, arts and culture, and parks service spectrum. Doing so can provide such individuals with opportunities to bolster quality of life and health outcomes. The Canadian Survey on Disability found that a mental health-related disability accounted for 60% of youth with a disability; access to the outdoors along with exposure to recreation and the arts has been shown to have therapeutic effects on a person's mental state and mitigate anxiety, illustrating the importance of such services. Similarly, exercise and cognitive stimulation afforded through recreation and culture can mitigate the onset of chronic conditions associated with aging such as limited mobility and dementia.

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<sup>6</sup> Crompton, John. January 2020. *Pricing Strategies that Combat Social Injustice: Using Price Premiums and Discounts for Optimizing Economic Equity*. Parks & Recreation Magazine. pp. 36-39. National Recreation & Park Association.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. November 2018. Canadian Survey on Disability: A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.) seeks to “improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province” (c.32, s.1). Barriers are defined to include anything that prevents a person from fully participating in all aspects of society because of disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barriers. The Oshawa Accessibility Advisory Committee identifies issues for persons with disabilities along with its mandate of educating the public, and increasing barrier-free accessibility in the community for residents and visitors. The Oshawa Accessibility Design Standards guide the development of future municipally-owned facilities. In addition to accessible design considerations, municipalities often consider principles of ‘universal design’ that guide the design and development of new facilities as well as the retrofit and renovation of existing facilities; universal design is different from accessible design in the sense that the former is designed for use by all people, including persons with disabilities (i.e. a single design can serve persons of different ages, abilities, gender identities and family structures).

For parks, recreation, library and culture facilities, elements of universal design include (but are not limited to) barrier-free accessibility to buildings such as ramps to entrances, proper lighting, use of Braille and large print, clearly marked identification signs, appropriate surfacing for pedestrian paths, and integration of cognitive and sensory experiences into play areas. It is important to recognize that accessibility to enter and exit parks and facilities is part of barrier-free design, but so is the ability to access areas within a park or facility including the playing surface. As an example, a number of accessible ball diamonds that are conducive to play by ball players with disabilities have been constructed in Oshawa and other municipalities across Ontario in the past decade (e.g. Windsor, Amherstburg, and Mississauga to name a few).

### **Girls and Women in Sport and Recreation**

Participation by girls and women often decline as females reach 10+ years and older. The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (C.A.A.W.S.) supports and enables women in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, and keeps women actively engaged in building community capacity. C.A.A.W.S.’ 55 to 70+ Project for “Young Senior” Women is a recent initiative aimed at keeping young senior females engaged in sport and physical activity. 35 pilot projects were developed to enhance opportunities in soccer, pickleball, Nordic pole walking, synchronized skating and many other active opportunities. The project seeks to develop and support sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities.

## The 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+ Community

The Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer or Questioning and other Gender Diverse identities (2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+) community has historically faced a number of societal barriers to inclusion. Homelessness, suicide and harmful practices are reported in the 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ community because of exclusion, bullying and resultant mental health issues. Negative health outcomes are further exacerbated when 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+ individuals cannot attain the benefits of recreation, sport, library, arts and culture activities due to fear or discomfort of participating.

The role of municipalities and libraries is to ensure that 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+ residents are welcomed, included and free from harassment, hatred or bias within public spaces. The introduction of "Safe Spaces" is one way of welcoming the 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+ community to public places where they may otherwise experience exclusionary behaviours. Safe Spaces was developed by Safe Spaces Canada whereby signage on the front door of a community space indicates that staff have been trained in reducing homophobic gestures and slurs and in creating welcoming environments.

Separately, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants developed the Positive Spaces Initiative through Citizen and Immigration Canada to denote public spaces that are safe for and welcoming to the 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+ community. Signage including the Pride flag in the graphic denotes that the space is positive for the 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q+ population.



## 2.4 Reconciliation through P.R.L.C. Facilities

Approximately 5,300 Oshawa residents identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) through the 2021 Census, representing more than 3% of the population, excluding net Census undercount. There are also Indigenous Peoples that live outside of the City or on Indigenous territories that make use of services in Oshawa. As learning and gathering places, settler community centres, parks and libraries can foster exploration of Canada's pre-colonial past and enrich our outlook with the deep knowledge that comes from seeking a wide representation of views and alternative understandings.

Events of the past few years have highlighted the critical importance that public education plays in reconciling the difficult history of Canada's past with new actions that begin to bring hope for a unified future. There are important commitments at the national level to ensure that the City, Library and OSCC55+ recognize their respective roles in reconciliation, honour and respect Indigenous rights holders, and continue to support and engage Indigenous Peoples, including:

- Recognizing and acknowledging Indigenous people, culture and their treaty rights through education and celebration of Indigenous Peoples.
- Linking reconciliation back to nature and environment, through plaques, trail markers, place-making, wayfinding, education opportunities, tour guides with front-line staff that are trained with Indigenous history and understandings of the people, etc.
- Greater sharing of Indigenous history through diverse platforms such as websites, at libraries and community centres, integration within camp programs, etc.
- Ensuring that Indigenous communities are consulted early in planning processes, whether it be related to land developments, archaeological projects, parks planning, Indigenous programming and events or something else where Indigenous Peoples have a vested interest.
- Opportunities to consider the North American Indigenous Games.
- Considering ways to "Indigenize" and "Decolonize" policies and spaces to be respectful of Indigenous rights (e.g. access to sacred fire space, waiving of fees to access park land for ceremony, ability to smudge in facilities, etc.)

The Aboriginal Sport Council of Ontario is an excellent resource for recreation and culture providers. It advocates for the Indigenous community to engage in healthy and active lifestyles. The Regional Coordinators in Ontario work to better engage the community and offer grants to fund programs and activities through the Power to Play Program.



The development or renovation of municipal facilities presents an opportunity to move to a deeply embedded commitment to collaborating with Indigenous communities. The facility planning and design process should learn from Indigenous ways of seeing while collectively exploring how a facility might better integrate its past and present with its future plans, enrich how a facility transforms from space to place, and shape the way people inhabit and use it. Within the built space, municipal parks, community centres and libraries are places to showcase Indigenous art and integrate their history and promote principles of Truth and Reconciliation. Common areas, program rooms, makerspaces and other areas are places to collaboratively deliver programs for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous residents (e.g., to share knowledge, teach language, create video or audio recordings of oral traditions, etc.). Similarly, outdoor spaces can be designed to reflect the connection to the land.

To promote awareness and understanding of Indigenous culture, the physical space can be designed to reflect design elements found in Indigenous communities. Considering built structures “as part of the land” on which they are situated is a design principle long embodied by Indigenous communities that is also congruent with current principles of environmental sustainability.

Toronto Public Library’s design for Dawes Road Library celebrates Indigenous values of living on the land, sharing gifts of knowledge and supporting creativity. It reflects traditions such as the star blanket, roundhouse and is targeting zero-carbon emissions. The Saskatoon Central Library is also taking design cues inspired by Indigenous and Métis culture, including a mass timber structure to express the importance of wood, rooted in the log poles of the tipi and the log cabin. Dawes Road Library and Saskatoon Public Library retained Indigenous architects and are consulting with Indigenous communities.

The design and development of Oshawa’s community centre in the Northwood Business Park is an opportunity to work with Indigenous communities. The future community centre design includes dedicated space and places for Indigenous communities to smudge along with other ceremonial practices which at a minimum considers appropriate ventilation systems and windows, orientation of the building and its entrances, and interconnections between various building components. Similarly, the Windfields Community Park adjacent to the future community centre could be designed to reflect the connection to the land by using native species plantings to incorporate built elements such as sacred fires and spaces conducive to sharing circles.

While some consultations have been held with Indigenous representatives through the P.R.L.C. Assessment process, including a presentation to the Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle, more consultations with Indigenous communities should be considered to support future architectural and landscape architectural design processes. Best practices point to engagement of Indigenous architects, landscape architects, interior designers, and other consultants to inform the space for new or redeveloped parks and community facilities that intend to meaningfully act on principles of Reconciliation and decolonization.

## Truth and Reconciliation

The Government of Canada established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (T.R.C.) to provide persons affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences, and to create a historical record of the residential schools system. The T.R.C. called upon all levels of government, educational and religious institutions, civil society groups and all Canadians to recognize and respond to the 94 Calls to Action identified in its final report.

The T.R.C. explains that *“Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder”* and that the term reconciliation has different meanings to different people. To the T.R.C., *“reconciliation is about maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.”*<sup>8</sup> Therefore, reconciliation is about building understanding and relationships with Indigenous communities to learn about their lived experiences, recognize systemic barriers facing them, and collectively finding ways to collaboratively promote understanding, awareness and respect for Indigenous people.

Municipal governments and libraries have a role to play in advancing many of the T.R.C. Calls to Action. In 2021, Oshawa Public Libraries hosted a collaborative panel discussion with Indigenous Peoples and First Nations from Durham Region that focused on how to amplify their voices in the pursuit of the T.R.C. Calls to Action. In 2022, the City Council recognized the T.R.C. Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, committing to meaningful relationship building with Indigenous communities and using these two documents as frameworks for reconciliation efforts. The P.R.L.C. Assessment supports efforts to promote Truth and Reconciliation through spaces and services delivered through the parks, recreation, libraries and culture system. The City, OSC55+ and O.P.L. can play a leading role in recognizing and supporting Indigenous communities through the incorporation of Indigenous art in facility design as well as highlighting Indigenous history through programs and interpretive/commemorative features.

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<sup>8</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015. Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. p.vi, p.6.

**Table 5: Notable T.R.C. Calls to Action for Municipalities**

- #43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
- #47. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.
- #57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- #75. We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.
- #77. We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
- #87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
- #88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

Note: Calls to Action listed above are those that specifically mention municipalities, however, there are others that have relevance to the work of municipalities and libraries.

Source: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. 2015.

## 2.5 Aging P.R.L.C. Facilities and Asset Management

There are a number of aging capital assets under the purview of the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ that are in varying states of condition but collectively have multi-million dollar capital renewal considerations over the next 15 years. Oshawa is facing similar circumstances with respect to aging infrastructure as other municipalities across Canada with older parks and facilities within the City's portfolio expected to require greater levels of attention if they are to remain operational and offer the level of service that residents are seeking.

In accordance with O. Reg. 588/17 (Asset Management Planning for Municipal Infrastructure), municipalities are required to prepare asset management plans that help track the supply, age, condition, value, and effectively coordinate the eventual replacement of publicly-owned infrastructure. The City maintains detailed asset management information across its portfolio including for its parks, recreation, library and cultural facilities. Over the past number of years, the City has demonstrated its commitment to providing high quality parks, recreation, library and culture facilities through reinvestment and renewal projects including those stated in Section 1.3 of this Report.

## 2.6 Potential Impacts of COVID-19

Given the rapid pace of change that the COVID-19 global pandemic initiated, planning for an uncertain future is a challenge for people trying to find new ways of living, working, playing, and connecting with each other. This is uncharted territory and parks, recreation, and culture facilities along with public libraries have had to continually assess and adjust expectations, practices, and norms.

The pandemic has affected the long-term demand for and delivery of park, recreation, arts and culture, and libraries services; however, the ultimate scope and scale of change is unknown. Long-range planning and strategic investment are believed to be as vital as they have ever been in order to support the significant role that the recreation, library, culture and parks sectors play in the personal, social, and economic recovery/revitalization of the community.

Recognizing that new information and public health guidance emerges on a regular basis, municipalities and libraries must prepare for a wide range of scenarios. The following are some preliminary thoughts about how the COVID-19 pandemic may affect the sector in the short to longer-term.

## **The Importance of Parks, Recreation and Culture**

Parks, recreation, libraries and culture play a critical role in the mental and physical health recovery of residents – particularly those living in urban environments – and serve an equally important role in community economic revival. 82% of Canadians said that parks have become more important to their mental health during COVID-19 and 70% indicated that their appreciation for parks and green spaces has increased during the pandemic.<sup>9</sup>

Access to public spaces and programs is a fundamental service for Canadians, especially children, seniors, and marginalized populations. The pandemic helped to create a greater appreciation for the benefits of library and leisure services, many of which provide respite from the growing social isolation faced by Canadians. Recent Canadian surveys suggest that park use has increased during the pandemic. With the knowledge that many activities may be safer outdoors than indoors, Canadians are living in a time where more parks and public spaces are needed, not less. To respond to the needs of residents, investment in parks, recreation, libraries and culture must continue. The large majority (87%) of Canadians support increased spending on parks in particular.<sup>10</sup>

## **Infrastructure and Community Design**

There may be new infrastructure needs in a post-COVID-19 setting with a priority being placed on accessible, safe, resilient, and human-scaled spaces that provide for adequate separation. Supporting amenities such as hand washing stations, improved H.V.A.C. systems and outdoor ventilation within indoor environments, easy-to-read directional signage, non-porous cleanable furniture and equipment, touchless amenities, and more should be considered to support the health and safety of users. An emphasis may be placed on flexible spaces that can be closed off from other areas and subdivided for a variety of small and large group activities, as well as non-recreational use during public health emergencies. Non-traditional spaces such as car-free streets (or temporary street closures) may prove to be desirable places for creative outdoor programming and community interaction.

## **Operations**

Visitor management will become more critical as Canadians are likely to have new expectations and concerns around the public health and safety of parks, recreation, library and culture facilities and programs. This has already led to the introduction of improved protocols and policies that ensure the safety of both customers and staff, such as cleaning and sanitization (spaces, surfaces, shared

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<sup>9</sup> Park People. COVID-19 and Parks Survey. July 2020.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Park People, 2020.

equipment, etc.), load capacities, crowd control (including pre-registration for drop-in activities) and enforcement, forms of payment, services for vulnerable populations, etc. Contact-free services and experiences may be in demand such as pre-booking, online registration/reservations, etc. Extra effort is often required to communicate these new protocols to the public and gain their confidence, including real-time reporting of capacities and occupant densities. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association estimates that new disease deterrence procedures (e.g., hygiene, cleaning, and physical distancing) could raise operating costs.<sup>11</sup> While operations are not part of the scope of the P.R.L.C., the City will need to monitor changing legislative requirements, trends, and other operational standards to understand implications.

### **Health Equity**

COVID-19 may lead to a closer working relationship with the public health sector, including the use of a health equity lens in all aspects of municipal operations, ensuring that the most vulnerable members of the community have access to essential services and opportunities to safely spend time outdoors. The sector may also have a role to play in the dissemination of credible information, as park, recreation, library and cultural services reach a wide audience and are often the means through which community members engage in their social networks. A light is also being shone on the equitable distribution of public space as people seek localized opportunities. Now more than ever, municipalities have an obligation to target investment (e.g., engagement activities, programming, park renewal, facility development, etc.) within neighbourhoods without adequate access so that residents can gain health and other benefits associated with recreation, parks and culture opportunities.

### **Activities and Sport Participation**

The COVID-19 pandemic imposed a new lifestyle on Canadians and – while there is concern that overall physical activity levels have declined – many people have found new ways to stay active and connected. Most notable are unstructured outdoor activities during all four seasons, often undertaken as a family (e.g., walking, hiking, cycling, visiting natural areas, swimming in backyard pools, etc.). Conservation areas, provincial/national parks and open spaces have been in particularly high demand, often reaching capacity on weekends. Opportunities to maximize outdoor play and learning, especially amongst children, have been a focus in recent years.

From a customer perspective, there may be heightened interest in health and wellness services, active transportation, and food security, and moving “indoor” activities to outside, which could increase demand for community gardens, trails

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2020.

and bike lanes, outdoor group activities, and interaction with nature. The increase in outdoor activity, along with restrictions placed on other sectors, has also underlined the importance of shade and washrooms in parks and public spaces, which can be expected to be in even greater demand going forward.

The newfound ability for many to work from home has translated to greater flexibility, which may allow for increased participation in activities during daytime hours, times that have traditionally been difficult to fill. Understanding the long-term impact of the pandemic on people's values and priorities will require regular monitoring and discussion.

### **Lifestyles and Behaviours**

The pandemic could have an extended impact on the individual behaviours of Canadians, including travel as people may be more hesitant to leave their local surroundings. Even before the pandemic, there was a strong trend toward close-to-home recreation. This could continue to enhance interest in neighbourhood parks, trails and other local / low-cost activities (including virtual classes and online services); communities that rely on seasonal or tourist markets could be negatively affected, at least in the short-term, particularly if tournaments and sport/cultural tourism destinations are adversely impacted.

### **Looking Ahead**

The longer-term projection is less certain. Concerns about gatherings may keep some people away from large group events and crowded spaces. Some people may take it a step further and spend more time in, or relocate to less populated, suburban or rural areas. Complete communities with a mix of residential, education, employment, recreational, and active transportation opportunities that function as self-sustaining and connected neighbourhoods will be most desirable. This will require a rethinking of how many aspects of public space are designed and managed – maybe even a shift away from large multi-use complexes towards smaller localized facilities – which could take decades to fully realize.

To be successful, municipalities must continue to look to research and lessons from across the world and invest time and resources in new technologies and approaches that assist in realizing the many benefits associated with recreation, culture and parks participation.

## 2.7 General Initiatives

- G1.** Explore opportunities to increase engagement of Indigenous communities and Indigenous designers/consultants in the design of new and significantly renovated parks, recreation, library and cultural facility projects to inform the types of spaces, amenities and other considerations that reflect Indigenous cultures and knowledge.
- G2.** Explore opportunities to increase engagement of equity-deserving populations in the design of new and significantly renovated parks, recreation, library and cultural facility projects as well as discussing ways to improve inclusivity in existing spaces.
- G3.** Consult with Indigenous Peoples to discuss how new and existing facilities could be adapted to be respectful of Indigenous rights and Indigenous culture (also see Initiatives #G1 and #G2), with a view to “Indigenize” and “Decolonize” public policies and spaces.
- G4.** Ensure that staff of the City, Oshawa Public Libraries and OSCC55+ are familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, so that staff may consider ways in which to apply these documents to parks, recreation, library and culture facility planning and programming.
- G5.** Explore ways to encourage greater participation among 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ communities within parks, recreation, library and culture facilities, potentially using Positive Space, Safe Space or similar designations.





**3.0**

**Parkland Assessment**

### 3.1 Defining Parkland

Oshawa's parks system facilitates many recreational, cultural and social opportunities. Continued enhancement and provision will extend the quality of life for current and future generations. Based upon input provided through the P.R.L.C. Assessment, residents stated that parkland is one of the most highly valued components of Oshawa's community fabric, and its presence enhances the quality of life for the city as a whole.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment focuses upon recreational parkland that is intended for regular use by the public. Parkland to be assessed herein includes lands that are owned, leased or otherwise managed by the City of Oshawa as classified in Table 4 under Section 2.6.2.2 of the City of Oshawa Official Plan. These parks typically consist of readily developable tableland that is suitable for built recreational, cultural and/or social infrastructure and other civic amenities that are suitable for organized and spontaneous/drop-in park-based activities such as sports, gatherings and relaxation.

While some of these parklands may incorporate naturalized areas and the benefits of co-location are supported, the P.R.L.C. Assessment's focus does not include green spaces, naturalized open spaces (e.g. woodlots, ravine lands, etc.), the Natural Heritage System nor does it include cemeteries and stormwater management facilities. However, the significance of such naturalized areas is recognized as being complementary to recreational parkland and the City's efforts to support resiliency and stewardship.

### 3.2 Parkland Classification System

For parks planning activities to be successful, they must be aligned with municipal land use planning frameworks particularly since the *Ontario Planning Act* prescribes conditions for how parkland is conveyed through the land development approval process. Land use planning is generally governed by the Region of Durham Official Plan and implemented locally through the City of Oshawa Official Plan, of which the latter contains specific policies regarding the provision of parks.



Section 2.6.2.2 of the Oshawa Official Plan prescribes a parkland classification system that guides decisions of City staff as to how parkland is acquired, where new parkland will be directed, and what amenities are to be provided. Each park type identified in the Official Plan hierarchy defines specific functions, forms, size, and offers varying amenities. As summarized in Table 6, park classifications include Neighbourhood, Community, City and Regional Park typologies. While the Official Plan has not yet been amended to include proposed additions to the parkland classification from the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment, the City's Parks Design Standards have been updated to include Parkettes alongside Neighbourhood Parks as was previously recommended.

It bears noting that different Departments within the City classify parkland differently for their internal purposes and that these internal classifications do not always reflect the functions, service levels, sizes or amenities outlined in the Oshawa Official Plan. An inter-departmental exercise to standardize park classifications would help ensure consistency in planning, design and operations and inform municipal decision-making processes.

### **3.3 Active Recreational Parkland Supply**

The City maintains 323 hectares distributed across 155 parks defined under the Official Plan classification system (Table 7). These parks provide residents with outdoor recreation and cultural opportunities through sports fields, hard surface courts, picnic areas, bandshells, playgrounds, splash pads and other facilities. The supply results in a service rate of 1.7 hectares per 1,000 residents.

Excluded from the above noted supply are 749 hectares of naturalized open spaces. These naturalized spaces consist of woodlots, ravine and valleylands, un-manicured lands adjacent to active parkland, and other naturalized municipal lands that contribute to the City's objectives of maintaining green space. While there may be passive recreational amenities in some of these naturalized areas (e.g. unpaved trails, benches), these lands are primarily intended for environmental and ecological purposes.

City staff recently re-evaluated the parkland inventory to better differentiate active and tableland forms of parkland from naturalized areas. This results in a different methodology used to arrive at baseline parkland inventory figures compared to those last used in the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment; therefore, any direct comparisons between current and past inventory figures should be interpreted cautiously.

**Table 6: Official Plan Classification of Parks**

Park Type	Function	Facilities	Service Level	Approximate Size
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	Serves up to 5,000 persons with active and passive amenities	Playgrounds, sports fields, hard surface courts, landscaped and passive areas, parking	0.8 hectares (2 acres) per 1,000 pop.	Size: 1.8 to 4 hectares Service Area: 180 to 800 metres
<b>Community</b>	Serves up to 20,000 persons with active, recreational, and passive activities	Lit sports fields, community centres, hard surface courts, playgrounds, landscaped and passive areas, parking, amenities	0.6 hectares (1.5 acres) per 1,000 pop.	8 to 12 hectares
<b>City</b>	Servises the entire City of Oshawa	Civic sports centres, cultural and entertainment centres, historical sites, sports fields, hard surface courts, landscaped and passive areas, areas for unstructured use, parking, amenities	2.43 hectares (6 acres) per 1,000 pop.	Greater than 12 hectares
<b>Regional</b>	Serves both local and regional residents	Natural and landscaped areas, areas of unstructured use, passive recreational uses, camping, parking, amenities	Not Defined	The size shall be sufficient to contain unique physical features or major recreational facilities.

Source: City of Oshawa Official Plan, 2022 Office Consolidation, Table 4

**Table 7: City of Oshawa Parkland Inventory**

Park Type	Number of Parks	Total Area (Hectares)	Official Plan Service Level Target (Ha per 1,000)	Service Level Attained (Ha per 1,000)
Regional Park	2	38.5	Not Defined	0.2
City Park	5	24.5	2.43	0.1
Community Park	29	106.4	0.6	0.6
Neighbourhood Park	109	150.6	0.8	0.8
Parkette*	10	2.6	Not Defined	0.01
<b>Total Active Parkland</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>322.6</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.7</b>

\* Parkettes are reflected in the City of Oshawa Parks Design Standards but not the Official Plan

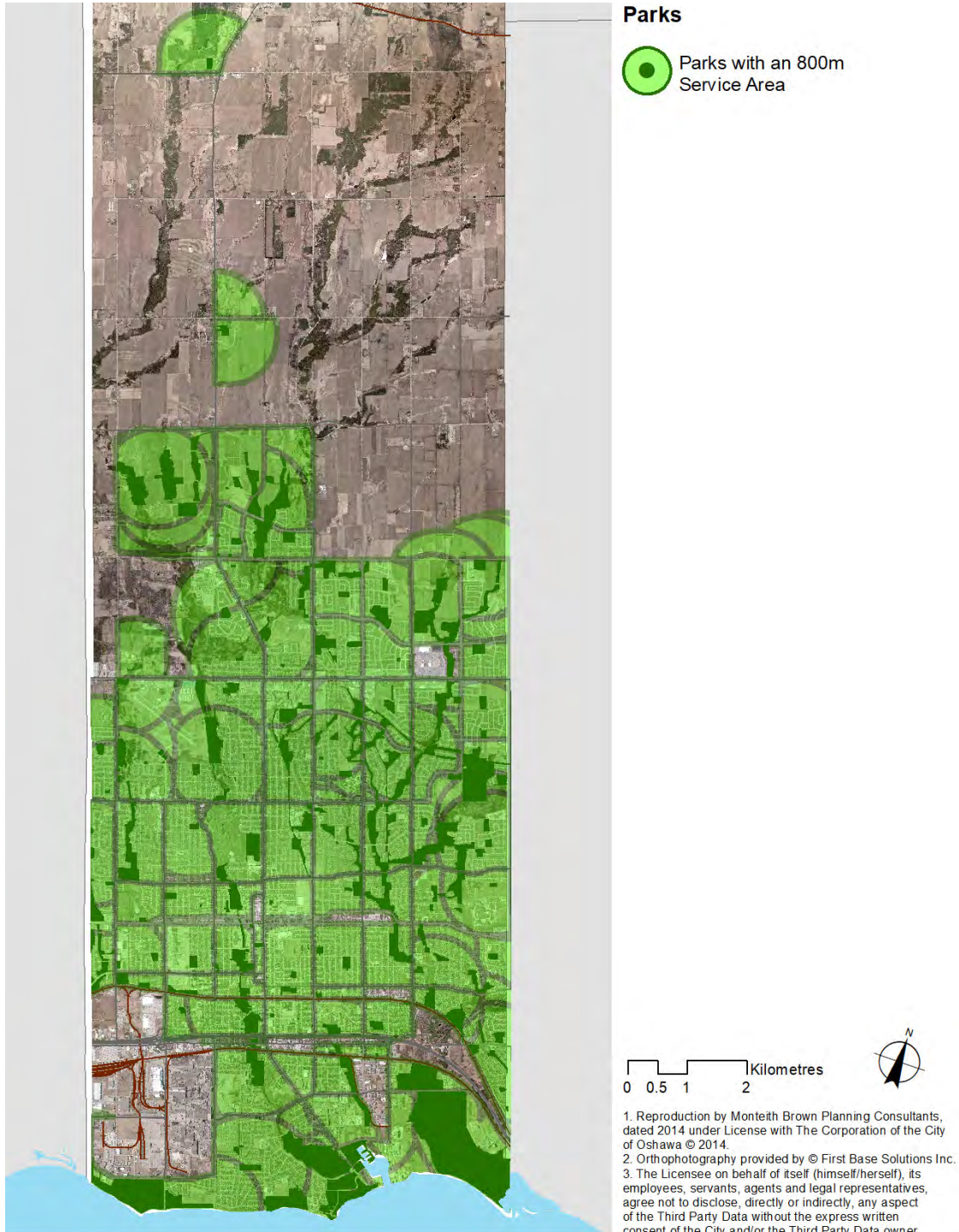
**Table 8: Summary of Parkland by Classification**

Regional Parks			
– Lakefront West Park	– Lakeview Park		
City Parks			
– Civic Fields	– Memorial Park	– Ted McComb Field	
– Kinsmen Stadium	– Ritson Fields		
Community Parks			
– Airport Soccer Field	– Easton Park	– McLaughlin Park	– Somerset Park
– Alexandra Park	– Ed Broadbent Park	– North Oshawa Park	– Southmead Park
– Brick Valley Park	– Farewell Park	– Northway Court Park	– Stone Street Park
– Centennial Park	– Florell Drive Park	– Radio Park	– Storie Park
– Centre Street Parkette	– Glen Stewart Park	– Ridge Valley Park	– Sunrise Senior
– Conant Park	– Harman Park Arena	– Rose Valley	– Woodview Park
– Cordova Valley Park	– Knights of Columbus	– Rotary Park	
– Delpark Homes Centre	– Mackenzie Park		
Neighbourhood Parks			
– Airmen's Park	– Eastview Park	– Kinsmen/Valleyview Park	– Russett Park
– Ansley Park	– Edenwood Park	– Kettering Park	– Saguenay Park
– Arborwood Park	– Elena Park	– Lake Vista Park	– Sandy Hawley Park
– Attersley Park	– Everglades Park	– Lakewoods Park	– Sherwood Park
– Baker Park	– Exeter Park	– Laval Park	– Silverado Park
– Bathe Park	– Fenelon/Venus Park	– Laval Park	– Snowbird Park
– Bermuda Park	– Fernhill Park	– Limerick Park	– Southport Park
– Bloor Parkette	– Galahad Park	– Mackie Park	– Southridge Park
– Bridle Park	– Gentry Tot Lot	– Margate Park	– Steeplechase Park
– Brookside Park	– Glenbourne Park	– Mary Street Park	– Stonecrest Parkette
– Cedar Ridge Park	– Goodman Park	– Milton Park	– Summerglen Park
– Central Park	– Grand Ridge Park	– Mitchell Park	– Sunnyside Park
– Charles Taylor Park	– Grandview Village Park	– Mount Joy Park	– Sunnyside Park
– Chopin Park	– Greenbriar Park	– Niagara Park	– Swiss Height Park
– Coldstream Park	– Greenhill Park	– Nipigon Park	– Tampa Park
– Columbus Park	– Griffith Park	– North Pond Park	– Terry Fox Park
– Conlin Meadows Park	– Gulfstream Park	– Northview Park & Community Centre	– Thornton Park
– Conlin Woods Park	– Harmony Village Park	– Park Rd S & Gibb St	– Trowbridge Park
– Connaught Park	– Homestead Park	– Parkwood Meadows Park	– Tylor Park
– Copperfield Park	– Howard Park	– Patricia Tot Lot	– Veterans Tot Lot
– Corbett's Park	– Humewood Park	– Pinecrest Park	– Walter Beath Park
– Cordova Park	– Huron Park	– Prestwick Park	– Warne Park
– Cowan Park	– Hyde Park	– Raglan Park	– Wellington Park
– Crimson Court Park	– Iroquois Shoreline Park	– Renaissance Park	– Whitehall Park
– Deer Valley Park	– Kedron Park	– Reservoir Park	– Willowdale Park
– Dundee Park	– Keewatin Park	– Rimoso Park	– Woodland Heights
– Durham Court Park	– Kingside Park/ Community Hall	– Rundle Park	
– Eastbourne Park			

### Distribution of Parkland

Figure 3 illustrates strong distribution of parkland with nearly all residential areas having access to some form of parkland within an 800 metre service radius, or a 10 to 12 minute walk without having to cross major pedestrian barriers such as highways and arterial roads, railways, and major watercourses.

Figure 3: Distribution of Parkland



### 3.4 Future Parkland Needs

The Oshawa Official Plan Parkland Classification System establishes a targeted service level of 3.83 hectares per 1,000 population, distributed across the Neighbourhood, Community and City Park typologies. This service level allows for non-tableland or naturalized components within the classification.

Given the facility-focused nature of the P.R.L.C. Assessment and the City's recent efforts to quantify tableland park inventories, it is helpful to establish a parkland service target for active forms of parkland. The 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment defined an active parkland provision rate of 2.0 hectares that is distributed as follows.

Neighbourhood Parks and Urban Parkettes	1.0 hectares/1,000 (collectively)
Community Parks	0.5 hectares /1,000
City Parks and Regional Parks	0.5 hectares /1,000
<b>Total Parkland Provision Target</b>	<b>2.0 hectares /1,000</b>

The City's 322.6 hectares of recreational parkland results in a current service level of 1.7 hectares per 1,000 and thus the City should strive to increase parkland provision to meet the standard rate of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 for active parkland over the P.R.L.C. Assessment's planning horizon. Based on the estimated 2031 population projection of 220,000, Oshawa would need 440 hectares, an additional 117 hectares of active parkland.

Over the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period there is a reasonable expectation that 52.5 hectares will be added based on a review of Oshawa's 2022 Approved Budget and Part II Plans as follows:

- Kedron Part II Plan – 29 hectares to be distributed across one Community Park (12 hectares), two Neighbourhood Parks (3.6 hectares), and an additional 12 Parkettes (13.7 hectares) based on its Land Use Schedule.
- Taunton Part II Plan – one Neighbourhood Park estimated to be 2 hectares.
- Fittings Site (135 Bruce Street) – a 1 hectare Neighbourhood Park parcel.
- Columbus Part II Plan – 20.5 hectares to be distributed across one Community Park (8.5 hectares), six Neighbourhood Parks (12 hectares), with the addition of parkettes (to be determined).

The above noted additions would reconcile 44% of the quantum required to attain 2.0 hectares per 1,000 population. A deficit of 64.5 hectares will remain.

Table 9: Projected Parkland Requirements by Classification

Population Threshold Attained	191,600 (2023)	220,000 (2031)
<b>City / Regional Park Provision Target at 0.5 ha per 1,000 population</b>		
City/Regional Parkland Required	95.8 ha	110.0 ha
City/Regional Park Supply	63.0 ha	63.0 ha
Outstanding Difference	- 32.8 ha	- 47.0 ha
<b>Community Park Provision Target at 0.5 ha per 1,000 population</b>		
Community Parkland Required	95.8 ha	110.0 ha
Community Park Supply	106.4 ha	106.4 ha
Expected Park Additions	--	20.5 ha
Outstanding Difference	+ 10.6 ha	+ 16.9 ha
<b>Neighbourhood Park and Parkette Target at 1.0 ha per 1,000 population</b>		
Neighbourhood Parkland Required	191.6 ha	220.0 ha
Neighbourhood Park Supply	150.6 ha	150.6 ha
Expected Park Additions	--	32.3 ha
Outstanding Difference	- 41.0 ha	- 37.1 ha
<b>Overall Parkland Target at 2.0 ha per 1,000 population</b>		
Overall Parkland Required	383.2 ha	440.0 ha
Overall Parkland Supply	322.6 ha	322.6 ha
Expected Additions	--	52.8 ha
Outstanding Difference	- 60.6 ha	- 64.6 ha



### 3.5 Parkland Acquisition Policies

There are several provincial and municipal regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland, notably Sections 42 and 51.1 of the *Ontario Planning Act* and Section 2.6.3 of the City of Oshawa Official Plan. The Official Plan sets out policies through which the City may acquire parkland for parks, recreation and open space purposes including the following measures:

- a) The land dedication and cash-in-lieu provisions of the *Planning Act*;
- b) Subsidies for park acquisition from other levels of government or agencies;
- c) Donations, gifts, contributions or bequests of individuals or corporations;
- d) Funds allocated in the capital budget; and
- e) Expropriation.

Official Plan Section 2.6.3.2 allows for the suitable dedication of land for park or other recreational purposes in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act* which consists either of a percentage of land to be developed or an amount indexed to the number of dwelling units being proposed. In November 2022, the Province of Ontario enacted the *More Homes, Built Faster Act*. Also referred to as Bill 23, the Act made significant amendments to the parkland dedication requirements of the *Planning Act* that will reduce the amount of parkland being dedicated to City as well as cash-in-lieu thereof, particularly for areas of higher density. A summary of some of these recent changes is provided below:

- The **alternative dedication rate** often used to provide parkland that supports medium and high density developments has been **reduced** to 1 hectare per 600 units for parkland and 1 hectare per 1,000 units for cash-in-lieu. Further, the legislation caps the maximum alternative dedication rates at 10% of the land for sites less than 5 hectares in size and at 15% for sites greater than 5 hectares.
- Affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential unit developments are **exempt** from parkland dedication requirements.
- **Parkland rates** are frozen as of the date that a zoning-by law or site plan application is filed. The freeze is effective for two years after approval.
- Developers will be able to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland. These lands may include **encumbered lands** and privately-owned public space (P.O.P.S.). If agreement cannot be reached, the City or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This may result in less suitable lands being accepted as parkland dedication.
- There is a new requirement for the City to **spend or allocate** at least 60% of the monies in its park reserve account at the beginning of each year.

- The City must develop a **Parks Plan** prior to passing a parkland by-law. Previously, this requirement applied only to those municipalities that authorized use of the Section 42 alternative rate, but now includes those that include the standard rate.

In addition to changes to parkland dedication, Bill 23 allows for Development Charge rates to be phased in over a five year period, while previously eligible costs for land and studies are no longer recoverable. The maximum charge for Community Benefit Charges is capped at 4% of the value of land, and then multiplied by a ratio based on floor area. The result of these changes will be less funding for growth related needs.

At the time of writing this P.R.L.C. Assessment, the Oshawa Official Plan policies and the City's Parkland Dedication Bylaw is being reviewed to address the legislative changes introduced by Bill 23. Striking an appropriate balance across the City's urban structure is vital, particularly within Oshawa's intensification areas and the Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area.

Planning, designing, and maintaining parks in densely populated areas presents several new challenges, including smaller parkland blocks that are used more intensely and are more costly to construct and maintain. The City of Oshawa has already felt the effects of Bill 23 as exemplified through its Part II Plans. For example, the Columbus Part II Plan has seen a significant reduction in parkland whereby the size of its Community Park has been reduced by 3.5 hectares while the size of certain Neighbourhood Parks have been reduced by as much as 2 hectares. This will result in smaller park blocks and no longer allow the same range of recreational, social and cultural amenities as originally envisioned. In turn, reduced parkland and development charges received through land developments increases the potential for the City having to assemble lands and construct facilities to meet the needs of new growth using taxation funding.

Moving forward, the City should consider greater acquisition efforts on receiving unencumbered tablelands. There has been a significant shift in communities expectations over the last few decades resulting in today's parks becoming much more complex and requiring a higher level of design standards and amenities (e.g. tennis, pickleball, and multiuse sports courts, splash pads, community gardens, washroom and storage facilities, shade structures, full sized lit and irrigated sports fields, etc.). While the City of Oshawa strives to maintain connections to natural corridors and creek valleys, acquisition of parkland that is encumbered by environmentally sensitive areas and C.L.O.C.A. regulated flood plains makes it very difficult to meet current expectations for active recreation, social and cultural uses. Areas intended for such human-focused activities should be avoided through park conveyances due to environmental impacts, the complexity of construction, regulated fill constraints, accessibility limitations and higher maintenance costs.

Similarly, reliance on parks to meet drainage and low-impact development (L.I.D.) features from adjacent land developments should be approached cautiously since these can serve to reduce the amount of usable parkland for recreational, social and cultural uses. With reduced parkland quantities being conveyed as a result of Bill 23, the City will also need to revisit the inclusion of parkland particularly within Neighbourhood Park blocks.

### **Note about Operations and Maintenance**

While service delivery assessments do not form part of the P.R.L.C. Assessment's scope of work, it would be remiss to not identify certain operational challenges faced by Parks Operations. City staff are doing a commendable job in ensuring parks are safe, clean and otherwise well maintained; through P.R.L.C. Assessment staff workshops, it is clear that Parks Operations staff at management and front-line levels are passionate about the parks system and are proud of their contributions.

Staff are doing their best to keep pace with the city's growth and resulting expansion of the parks and trails system, not to mention changing expectations from the public about design and maintenance standards. An expanding territory of trails and parkland will place additional pressures on the City to be able to adequately service these areas.

To move towards a lifecycle approach across all phases of park development including planning, design and appropriate maintenance and care, an inter-Departmental approach to monitoring park and outdoor recreation needs consistent with the broader vision of this Plan will be required to inform both the Capital Plan and Operating Budget. As the City intensifies, the parks within it will move away from traditional subdivision-type parks with often-standardized facilities and maintenance regimes, towards a new era of more urban parks that are much more complex to build and maintain and often require unique solutions to provide recreational opportunities for all in much smaller park spaces. More urban parks come at a cost, not only because of intensified usage but also because, similar to maintaining other infrastructure in an urban area, specialized equipment, training and staffing resources are often needed to do so.

### 3.6 Privately Owned Public Spaces

It has become challenging for municipalities to assemble parkland in areas of intensification due to land scarcity, land cost, and changes to the *Planning Act*. Progressive municipalities are working with like-minded private sector interests, particularly those partners that see the benefits of parkland for their individual developments and the community as a whole, to create P.O.P.S. (Privately Owned Public Space). P.O.P.S. are privately owned and maintained outdoor spaces that are universally accessible and open to the public.

Bill 23 amended the *Planning Act* to allow the conveyance of P.O.P.S. and strata parks as a condition of development approval. In certain circumstances P.O.P.S. can alleviate localized pressures for parks but will likely pose a challenge in other instances as the amount or configuration of the P.O.P.S. parcel may not be sufficient to meet the growth-related parks, recreation and/or cultural needs of residents living nearby. While P.O.P.S. do not replace the needs provided in a municipal park system, they are recognized as supplementing the City's larger place-making, urban design, or cultural needs as expressed in the Official Plan or Part II Plans for the growing centres and corridors. Oshawa's Community Benefits Charge Strategy and By-law provides a new funding tool for such matters associated with the growing centres and corridors such as Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre and Central Oshawa M.T.S.A.

Formalizing an approach to P.O.P.S. may further increase their appeal to property developers and ensure conveyance of privately-owned parks meet criteria and standards that are consistent with the City's expectations. The City should consider developing a policy to address acceptance of portions of privately owned properties as public open space. Such policies typically specify conditions such as:

- Lands that remain in private ownership are covenanted as public space;
- The park is built to municipal standards and specifications;
- The park is maintained to municipal standards; and/or
- An agreement for the foregoing is in place.

In addition to a P.O.P.S. Strategy, appropriate sections of the City of Oshawa Official Plan may be updated to reflect P.O.P.S. and strata parkland.

#### Parkland with Stratified Title

There is increasing pressure for public spaces to be developed on parking garages or other roof slab construction in areas of urban intensification. This is a potential solution for achieving new parks, facilities or programmable space in areas with land constraints. However, this type of development brings encumbrances and long-term risks associated with strata ownership, maintenance and infrastructure

replacement. Developing criteria to guide how stratified parks may be accepted or built would assist City staff in making effective and sustainable decisions.

Some municipalities consider acceptance of parkland under a stratified title (e.g. condominiums) where the public has a reasonable degree of access to those lands. While this approach has yet to occur in Oshawa, land development trends suggest that the City could be presented with requests in the near future or see merit in the approach as it explores developments in the evolving urban structure. It is important to bear in mind that parklands accepted under stratified title will create a perpetual relationship between the City and a developer or condominium corporation for ongoing and future maintenance. The costs and associated responsibilities of the park, or works associated above or below it, will result in short and long-term administrative, financial, risk and maintenance obligations for the City. There may be tools such as encroachment agreements with the landowner of the adjacent stratified title lands to simplify on-going and long-term maintenance requirements.

### **3.7 Parkland Revitalization & Enhancement**

The park experience is tied to its design, intended function, and the quality of amenities found within it. These factors are often influenced by the era of original construction. A park built decades prior can impart positive feelings of history, sentiment, and pride; however, older parks may also be in need of rejuvenation if deterioration is apparent and/or if the intended functions no longer respond to modern interests or the demographics of the community surrounding the park.

Park revitalization is thus an important part of attracting continued use over time. Rejuvenation efforts can be complete park redevelopments, renewal of major amenities or adding new facilities where space permits. Revitalization can also take more basic or minor forms in response to specific needs or limited budgets. Often, a park redevelopment is initiated because of:

- population growth pressures or an evolution that has occurred in demographics of surrounding areas (e.g. intensification or infill developments, a greater proportion of older adults and fewer children living around a park compared to the past, etc.);
- changes in demographics or user preferences that trigger the desire for new facilities or changes to park designs (e.g. emerging sports or activities, shade structures, washrooms and seating);
- volunteer initiatives (e.g. fundraising or service club contributions); and/or
- multiple park-based facilities or amenities approaching the end of their lifecycle.

## Celebrating Inclusion through Parks

Oshawa's diverse socio-economic and multicultural profile is one of the city's most desirable attributes. The local parks system presents an excellent opportunity to exemplify the City's commitment to providing opportunities for residents of many backgrounds to experience recreation outdoors as Oshawa's parks can be used to:

- introduce affordable activities to people who may not otherwise have the means to participate in sports or events (e.g. outdoor fitness equipment);
- provide access and opportunities for able-bodied and differently-abled residents to connect with the outdoors by developing parks in accordance with accessible design standards;
- provide multi-generational experiences that benefit residents of all ages, including application of Youth-Friendly and Age-Friendly lenses;
- recognize the interests of culturally diverse populations through their ability to host community cultural events and leisure activity/sporting needs (the cricket overlays at Stone Street Park and Canadian Martyrs Catholic School is an example of the City testing ways to encourage sport among its South Asian, Caribbean and European populations);
- provide unstructured areas in parks for picnicking and social gatherings (many cultures view recreational activity as family events);
- explore opportunities for place-making through parks and public space, informed through public participation to honour and celebrate inclusion and culture; and
- promote the City's commitment to providing safe and inclusive spaces for all residents to feel welcome.

As discussed in Section 2.3 and 2.4, consideration of Indigenous communities through park planning, design and maintenance practices is paramount to support the City's efforts in reconciliation and showcasing Indigenous culture and their role of stewards of the land.

As such, pressures will continue to be placed upon a broad variety of park-based components for all residents whether it be for sports fields, non-programmed spaces and amenities (e.g. shade structures) for social activities such as chess, open fields or outdoor fitness infrastructure for yoga or "boot camps", as well as attractive features such as fountains, gardens and landscaped areas.

## Waterfront Parks

Oshawa's waterfront is a major community asset and one of the park system's defining features. It is home to a number of parks, natural areas, and the Waterfront Trail that are used by thousands of residents and visitors every year.

The City of Oshawa Official Plan reinforces the significance of the waterfront to the community. Specifically, Section 5.7.2 of Official Plan articulates the following key policy statements regarding the Lake Ontario Waterfront.

- "The City recognizes that the Lake Ontario waterfront is an important ecologically sensitive area";
- "The City shall, where feasible, promote and undertake initiatives to provide public access to and along City-owned waterfront lands having regard to the protection of ecological and environmental features of the shoreline"; and
- "The City shall acquire waterfront lands where feasible and subject to the availability of funding, and shall integrate such lands with other City-owned lands in accordance with any Council approved program for the acquisition of lands."

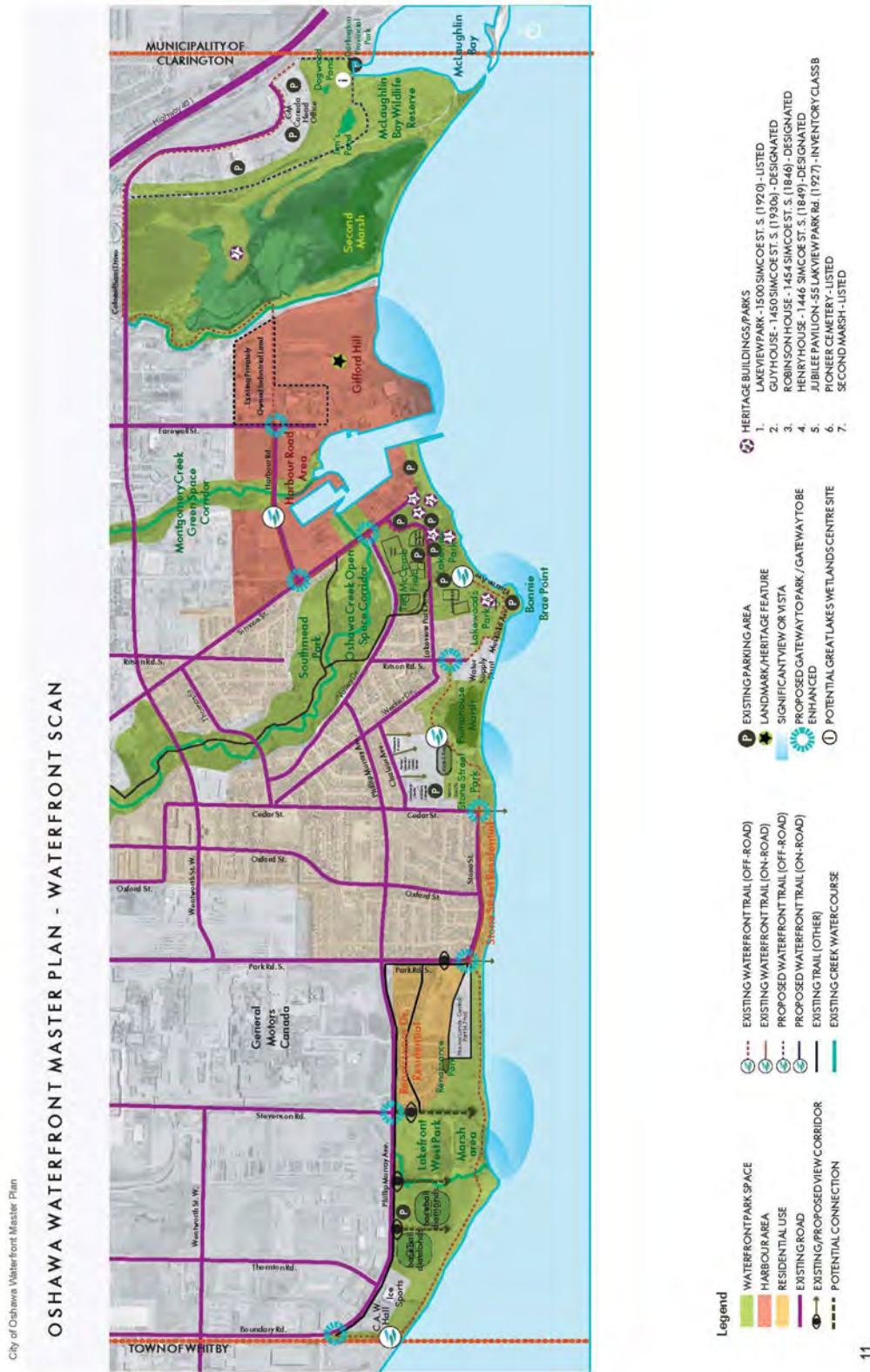
The City of Oshawa's Draft Waterfront Master Plan<sup>12</sup> involved extensive community consultations to define the vision for how waterfront is to function over the long term. Through this document, the vision for Oshawa's waterfront is an "Urban Waterfront Jewel" and identified policies and recommendations for the following six precincts:

- i) Lakefront West Park and Maurac Lands Precinct
- ii) Stone Street Residential Precinct
- iii) Stone Street Park and Pumhouse Marsh Precinct
- iv) Lakeview Park and Lakewoods Park Precinct
- v) Oshawa Harbour Precinct
- vi) Second Marsh and McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve Precinct



<sup>12</sup> Brook McIlroy Inc. City of Oshawa Waterfront Master Plan: Draft Preferred Waterfront Master Plan. May 2011.

Figure 4: Waterfront Master Plan Boundary



Source: Brook McIlroy Inc. 2011. City of Oshawa Waterfront Master Plan.



The Oshawa waterfront already exhibits many best practices observed in other successful waterfront communities. Examples of these include:

- Creating linkages and multi-modal connections to the waterfront through the Joseph Kolodzie Trail connection to the Waterfront Trail, availability of transit, and the provision of parking (though the latter is somewhat limited in relation to the level of intensity of use).
- Provision of quality recreational infrastructure such as the playground and splash pad at Lakeview Park and the Lakefront West Park ball diamond complex.
- Provision of quality cultural amenities such as the Oshawa Museum and the recently opened Ed Broadbent Park with its performance area and Garden of Human Rights.
- Integrating a mix of land uses in and around the waterfront areas including but not limited to the presence of residential and commercial lands, the diverse range and functions of the green spaces.
- The many comfort amenities along the Waterfront Trail and within the parks including seating areas and benches, shade structures, washrooms, and wayfinding signage.
- The City's beautification efforts and focus on horticultural displays as evidenced by the gardens, recent coniferous and deciduous tree plantings, the maintenance staff centralized at Lakeview Park, etc.
- Provision of interpretative signage and lookouts to educate the public about the natural heritage system and shoreline areas through which they are travelling.

It is of utmost importance that the waterfront facilities continue to be accessible to residents. This means that trail connectivity is paramount, and parks need to be provided with sufficient parking spaces given that they are attracting users from the wider Oshawa community. The City should continue to consider enhancement of the waterfront through ongoing implementation of the Waterfront Master Plan. In doing so, the City may continue to explore the addition of appropriate amenities, ongoing beautification efforts and infrastructure development.

The waterfront enables a number of other uses such as angling, boating, canoeing/kayaking, birdwatching, cultural expression, photography, etc. and these are supported through appropriate amenities (e.g. piers, boat launches, beach areas, etc.). The expansion of tourism-based infrastructure will create capacity and support for water-related activities and events (i.e. through extension of municipal servicing and development of trail extensions, special event/entertainment venues, gazebos, concessions and leasable space, etc.).

### 3.8 Urban Agriculture, Horticulture & Forestry

#### Community Allotment Gardens

Gardening is one of the most popular forms of leisure activity in Canada and visits to public gardens and historic sites is expected to increase as the population ages and demands more passive types of outdoor leisure activities. Furthermore, trends towards higher density forms of housing are resulting in more residents living with smaller (or no) yards thereby restricting their ability to plant and maintain their own gardens. Allotment gardens (e.g., community garden plots, “Plant a Row – Grow a Row” programs, etc.) are being embraced by municipalities seeking to beautify their communities and supplement a growing reliance on the public realm for personal use.

Community allotment gardens involve community members directly maintaining their own individual plots. These gardens encourage social interaction, horticultural education and awareness of the benefits of healthy diets, while they can also enhance safety within parks due to the presence of gardeners during the early morning and evening hours. Community gardens fit well with the City’s diversifying cultural population, objectives surrounding food security, and its aging population as older residents may be more inclined to participate in such activities.

Consistent with best practices, the City of Oshawa utilizes a community development model with respect to the provision of community allotment gardens. Five community gardens are presently on City-owned lands located at Cordova Valley Park, Delpark Homes Centre, North Oshawa Park, the Pepper Patch Community Garden, and Oshawa Executive Airport.

Building upon the success of allotment gardens on City and privately owned properties, the demand for these spaces and commitment by community volunteers provides an impetus for the City to provide additional sites on a case-by-case basis. Opportunities to do so include integrating allotment gardens into appropriate park sites, at the Neighbourhood, Community and City Park levels so long as they are consistent with the City’s Community Garden Procedure which prescribes site selection criteria, volunteer or organizational responsibilities and governance, etc.



Potential locations include Stone Street Park (the secondary school has a greenhouse and horticultural program, creating potential partnership synergies) and/or Lakewoods Park. Both of these parks are located in the Lakeview neighbourhood area that exhibits a number of high social vulnerability criteria (as defined by Durham Region's Health Neighbourhoods Project).<sup>13</sup> Inclusion of community gardens at these possible locations may be investigated further through the proposed Lakeview and Lakewoods Park Master Plan. A site in proximity to the O.V.B.G., but not necessarily within it, could also be considered since it aligns with the horticultural focus of that site while such a centralized location would be accessible, walkable, in proximity to medium and higher density forms of housing, and would also serve a number of vulnerable populations identified through the Region's Health Neighbourhoods Project.

The volunteer-maintained model is an excellent approach moving forward though recruiting and retaining volunteers is a country-wide challenge. Support for volunteers through the City's community development approach will continue to be required but there may also be an opportunity to leverage other resources. For example, OSCC55+ has over 300 volunteers within their membership base of whom some may have an interest and knowledge of gardening that can help expand the number of community allotment gardens in Oshawa. Similarly, O.P.L. also has a base of volunteers and knowledge-based resources that can support urban horticulture. Both OSCC55+ and O.P.L. also have the ability to integrate horticulture into their program delivery and any gardens located adjacent or near their buildings could potentially tie into amenities such as water, washrooms, etc.

### **Horticultural Displays**

In addition to allotment gardens, many principles related to progressive land use planning movements such as New Urbanism, Creative Cities, etc. involve centering significant residential and commercial areas around key focal points, including **public/horticultural gardens** and landscaped parks. It is envisioned that by creating such destinations, people will be drawn to utilize the public space and, thus, fosters vibrancy and economic prosperity through socialization and the creation of a positive ambiance in the community node.

The City also provides floral beds and other plantings as part of its land development and place-making initiatives through boulevard buffer strips, entrance gardens in subdivision entrances, etc. The City's commitment to beautification through plantings is laudable as it helps to define a 'sense of place' and helps foster community pride. The City has been involved with the Communities In Bloom movement and "Doors Open" events that have benefited Oshawa through greater community involvement and awareness for local horticultural entities.

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<sup>13</sup> Region of Durham. Health Neighbourhoods. Accessed at <https://www.durham.ca>

The City takes on the majority of maintenance efforts for its horticultural gardens, though from time to time it partners with certain organizations for special or unique projects. Some municipalities have had success in developing community-based partnerships with horticultural organizations, neighbourhood associations, etc. to plant and maintain horticultural displays while providing a means for sponsorship, cost sharing, and volunteer assistance. The key to such partnerships is having a strong, committed base of volunteers and partners in place otherwise gardens could become unsightly areas if partners can no longer fulfil their duties which can happen for a number of reasons including losing internal expertise if a volunteer moves to another municipality, lack of future interest or succession within an organization, etc.

The City should consider continuing the practice of providing horticultural displays at appropriate destinations including major parks, recreation and cultural facilities, library branches, high profile or high visibility intersections, etc. as part of its continued commitment to civic beautification. Such a commitment will require the City to devote additional human and financial resources towards the ongoing maintenance. The development of a horticultural business plan would ideally involve staff from the Parks Services, Recreation Services, Facilities Management Services, and Development and Urban Design. Such a plan would align corporate objectives as it pertains to horticultural plantings through revisiting planning policy (e.g. site plan control), prioritizing key locations where plantings are encouraged, exploring where community-based partnerships may exist, and the level of staffing and financial support required to carry out horticultural aspirations.



## Urban Forestry

The urban forest encompasses every tree in the city, whether found on a street, private residential lot, or the broad natural heritage system. The urban forest is a vital component of the ecosystem whose many benefits include increasing resiliency to climate change, providing fresh air, carbon sequestration, stormwater retention, creating wildlife habitat and increasing biodiversity, and minimizing urban heat island effect. The urban forest connects people to nature which can reduce levels of anxiety, improve mental health and encourage physical activity.

While analysis of Oshawa's urban forest and municipal urban forestry practices is outside the scope of the P.R.L.C. Assessment, recreational parkland contributes to the urban forest. The City's 155 parks contain thousands of trees through the 323 hectares provided which makes these lands an important part of the urban forest; these parks also provide optimal growing conditions for trees to thrive relative to other areas such as along busy thoroughfares and complement the greenspace found in the parks for people as well as urban flora and fauna. Conservation areas are another key contributor to the urban forest both in terms of conservation and reforestation efforts but also in terms of developing public outreach, engagement and stewardship programs.

Continuing to explore opportunities to strengthen the City's urban forest can be supported through implementation of new parks, revitalization of existing parks as well as ongoing development of recreation, library and culture facilities. The City participates in the L.E.A.F. Backyard Tree Planting Program and is incorporating sustainable tree planting practices including as part of a move to "re-green" the downtown. The P.R.L.C. Assessment support these and ongoing efforts around tree preservation, increasing the tree canopy, and building the urban forest.



### 3.9 Off-Leash Parks

The 10-hectare Harmony Valley Off-Leash Dog Park is a quality space that allows residents to enjoy nature and socialize their dogs. The park is owned by the City of Oshawa and operated by O.D.A.W.G. (Oshawa Durham Area Walkers Group), the latter of whom are responsible for general park maintenance, park improvements and delivery of education sessions for pet owners. The off-leash park contains six trail loops spanning seven kilometres in total ranging from easy to challenging levels of difficulty. The park contains a separate enclosure for small dogs.

Cordova Valley Off-Leash Area was opened in April 2023. Located in south-east Oshawa along the Oshawa Creek system and with access to the Joseph Kolodzie Trail, 0.3 hectares is reserved for off-leash use in a fenced enclosure with separate area for small or vulnerable dogs. In addition to a mix of mulched and grassed surfacing, the off-leash area includes mature tree plantings for shade along with rest and seating areas.

Off-leash areas have become much more common in Ontario municipalities over the past decade, though there are no measurable provision standards for the development of leash-free dog parks, as this facility type is generally assessed based on qualitative needs. Municipalities typically consider the provision of leash-free dog parks on a case-by-case basis if significant local demand exists for such a facility and if there is a willing community organization with the ability and resources to operate a leash free dog park. The partnership with O.D.A.W.G. appears to have been a successful endeavour thus far, however, that organization like many in the country has been challenged by declining levels of volunteerism which is increasing pressures on Parks Operations staff.

36% of feedback form respondents walked a dog on or off-leash in the past 12 months which made it the sixth most popular recreational activity. Support for investments in off-leash areas ranked outside of the top twenty priorities. Anecdotal input from O.D.A.W.G. and City staff suggest Harmony Valley Off-Leash Dog Park is well used throughout the year (noting annual visitation rates are not formally tracked).

The City's two off-leash areas provide good geographic distribution to the eastern areas of Oshawa, south of Taunton Road. The recent opening of Cordova Valley Off-leash Area will alleviate some pressure on Harmony Valley over the next 10 years. Both sites are located within reasonable driving distance to established neighbourhoods east of the Simcoe Street corridor including the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre and Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. where the two off-leash areas would serve pet owners living in higher density developments.



With the opening of the Cordova Valley Off-leash Area, it is anticipated that sufficient capacity has been added that will suffice for the next 5 to 10 years. Growth in Oshawa's north combined with the absence of off-leash areas west of Simcoe Street are such that the City may explore a site(s) for a new off-leash area to address geographic distribution.

The City of Oshawa may consider the following criteria to help determine an optimal location for a future off-leash area:

- appropriate zoning and compatibility with adjacent land uses;
- safety of park users and residents;
- an appropriate buffer from residential areas, schools and environmentally sensitive areas (buffers can range anywhere from 15 metres to 100 metres);
- ensuring long-term access for dog parks (i.e. a site should not be chosen if it is intended to be redeveloped in the short to medium term);
- the park is of appropriate size (1.0 to 1.5 hectares is an ideal size for high volume dog parks, though the appropriate size must consider local circumstances such as the ability to manage and maintain the given park area);
- the site is accessible from an arterial or primary collector road, and provides sufficient parking, provision of benches, water fountains, waste containers, etc.

The City may contemplate design, amenities and the environment at existing and any future off-leash sites in consideration of any feedback provided by the Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee and guidelines for off-leash areas. For example, sustained and increasing levels of use at Harmony Valley Off-Leash Dog Park may approach a 'tipping point' that unduly affects the environmental or ecological integrity of this former conservation area. At this and other locations with natural heritage elements, defining formalized trails and installing wayfinding signage can help direct use to areas of the park that can support the level of use/intensity while fencing off environmentally sensitive areas can also be a tool. Adequate parking to support the site will be beneficial as many off-leash park users tend to drive to these facilities.

While larger and dedicated off-leash areas remain as the prevalent model, certain municipalities are creating fenced enclosures in their new or existing parks for pet-owners to run their dogs off-leash. This has been met with mixed perceptions notably regarding safety and noise but is something that can be managed through design and enforcement. As noted earlier in this section, it is becoming increasingly difficult for municipalities to acquire large park blocks through the land development process, especially in areas of intensification where pet-owners that do not have private yards are looking to the public realm to exercise their dogs.

### 3.10 Recreational Trails System

Oshawa's recreational trails system is part of the City's active transportation network. Active Transportation refers to human-powered modes of travel which are intended for recreational or utilitarian purposes (i.e. non-motorized travel for the purposes of accessing all aspects of daily life). While the most common forms of active transportation are walking and cycling, other examples include running, skateboarding, skating, snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, and use of non-mechanized wheelchairs.

Oshawa's comprehensive active transportation network totals 872.5 kilometres of trails, multi-use paths, sidewalks, park pathways, along with off-road and signed on-road cycling routes and lanes (Table 10). Oshawa's commitment to developing off-road trails and multi-use pathway is demonstrated by an extensive 48 kilometre network, which includes the Harmony Creek Trail, Waterfront Trail, Michael Starr Trail, and Joseph Kolodzie Oshawa Creek Bike Path.

Another 33 kilometres of park pathways supplement the trails system by creating linkages to the trails system but also to an extensive sidewalk system which facilitates commuter and utilitarian trail use along with potential for intra-neighbourhood walking/cycling routes for personal enjoyment and health.



**Table 10: Oshawa Active Transportation Network**

Trail Type	Length
Park Pathways	33.7 km
City-Wide Trails (off-road)	31.3 km
Multi-use Path	17.0 km
Sidewalks	704.8 km
Signed On-Road Cycling Routes / Lanes	85.7 km
<b>Total</b>	<b>872.5 km</b>

Source: City of Oshawa G.I.S. data, 2023

Recreation trails and internal park pathways provide a healthy, free and environmentally-friendly option for people to travel which makes trails a critical part of sustainable and equitable transportation systems. More people choosing active forms of transportation will lead to a reduction in the number of motorized vehicles on the road and ultimately the amount of land consumed for road-based infrastructure. There are also significant capital and operational savings to the City by having to build and maintain less roadway.



By shifting travel from automobiles to non-motorized modes of transportation, Oshawa's recreational trails bring about a number of benefits to individuals and the environment including:

- The ability to serve residents representing a broad range of ages, abilities and interests through paved and unpaved pathways in urban and natural settings;
- The ability to facilitate many recreational and utilitarian uses including leisurely or strenuous walks, jogging, and cycling activities;
- Increasing physical activity which has positive health effects such as reducing levels of obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease;
- Improving physical and mental health through prevention of ailments associated with chronic disease and anxiety;
- Providing a no-cost way of accessing destinations across the City such as parks, schools, commercial areas, etc.;
- Providing a convenient and accessible way to travel for persons not having regular access to a vehicle, while also improving the financial well-being of car owners through fuel savings; and
- Improved air and water quality by minimizing vehicular emissions such as carbon dioxide and ground level ozone, which positively contributes to ecological and human health;
- Community and social vibrancy by encouraging compact developments and more livable communities where people are more likely to have personal contact with each other; and
- Financial well-being by reducing expenditures on gasoline and certain vehicular costs (such as parking, less frequent oil changes), as well as health care (which benefits society as a whole through lower taxes).

Three of the top 10 recreational pursuits recorded in the P.R.L.C. Assessment feedback form can be carried out in the Oshawa trails system including walking, hiking, cycling, and dog walking; in addition, trails received the highest priority for future investment among feedback form respondents. Through parks and recreation planning exercises undertaken across Ontario, walking is often cited as the most popular recreation activity while pathways are often identified as one of the most pressing recreational infrastructure needs. Oshawa's commitment to its trails system bodes well for future demand given that local trails will serve growing populations of children, youth, younger adults and seniors across the city over the course of the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period.

## The Integrated Transportation Master Plan

Oshawa's Integrated Transportation Master Plan (I.T.M.P.) guides the development of a sustainable, integrated, and multi-modal transportation system. Enhancing the City's active transportation network is a focus of the I.T.M.P. to provide cycling and pedestrian transportation options that connect users to destinations. The scope of the P.R.L.C. Assessment excludes technical analyses of the trails system but considers and supports the I.T.M.P.'s comprehensive assessments and findings.

Providing an interconnected system of parks, trails and open spaces is an important component of human health and ecological function. As many parks are "destinations", ensuring they are accessible can encourage more people to visit them. Linking parks with trails, sidewalks, bicycle paths and roads provides choices for people to travel to these areas while creating infrastructure for commuter, utilitarian, and library, culture, and recreational uses. Recognizing this, the I.T.M.P. placed significant emphasis on active transportation infrastructure. During the early stages of the I.T.M.P., a need for a comprehensive framework for active transportation was identified. An Active Transportation Master Plan (A.T.M.P.) was developed concurrently with the I.T.M.P. and includes recommendations for planning, designing, implementing and supporting active transportation facilities.

Oshawa's A.T.M.P. advances the following six key goals that underpin the City's efforts to provide an expanded network of pedestrian and cycling facilities linking urban and rural centres, connect the various communities and major destinations in Oshawa, and provide routes for cross-city recreational and utilitarian trips.

- 1) Meet community needs for active transportation facilities;
- 2) Provide convenient access to and connectivity within the active transportation network;
- 3) Develop an active transportation system that offers a high degree of comfort and safety;
- 4) Adopt a phased approach to implementation;
- 5) Promote active transportation; and
- 6) Integrate on- and off-road active transportation facilities.<sup>14</sup>

The A.T.M.P. defines a classification system for off-road trails consisting of Class I, II and III typologies that are supported by Off-Road Facility Standards. A review of these standards suggest the City could consider updating the content to reflect current best practices which should be applied to future trail developments.

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<sup>14</sup> City of Oshawa Active Transportation Master Plan: Technical Report – Executive Summary – Policy, Planning, Design and Implementation. Revised February 2015 (Draft).

## Future Needs

The City has expanded its trails and pathway network within new and established residential areas as well as through new park developments. This is commendable as the City's efforts have created new linkages between neighbourhoods and selected community destinations though aforementioned notes about operational and maintenance capacities that play a part in the ongoing experience. In determining priorities for trail maintenance and renewals, the City should consider factors including, but not limited to:

- condition of the path surface, including whether there are any immediate safety concerns;
- the importance of the trail section as part of an active transportation route (e.g. whether it is part of a major trail route);
- the type and degree of use and foot/bicycle traffic on the section of trail; and
- whether there are park or trail redevelopments proposed at, or in proximity to, the location being evaluated.

Expanding the off-road trails, multi-use pathways and sidewalks as part of future residential developments, particularly in the Part II Plan areas north of Taunton and Conlin Road corridors, will enable active forms of travel. Since trail development within established urban areas can be a challenge, the use of sidewalks is encouraged – in accordance with the I.T.M.P. – and the integration of off-road trails should be pursued over the long-term, potentially through infill and redevelopment opportunities. The City of Oshawa's capital forecast identifies nearly \$22 million in investments for 30 trail links between 2023 to 2031.

The Region of Durham is leading a study with support of its lower-tier municipalities to explore a potential regional trail network using hydro corridors. Branded as the Durham Meadowway, a 30-kilometre route for pedestrians and cyclists is envisioned between Rouge National Urban Park and Oshawa. Early phases of the ongoing Durham Meadowway Visioning Study planning process identify potential for linear parks as well as integration of ecological enhancements, public art and community amenities. In Oshawa, the Meadowway Trail is currently shown as generally following the Highway 407 corridor and terminating at the intersection of Harmony Road North and Winchester Road East. For all trails, consideration of barrier-free accessibility, comfort (e.g. seating, shade, washrooms), and wayfinding signage should be undertaken where appropriate.



### 3.11 Parkland Initiatives

- P1.** Strive to provide active and tableland forms of parkland at a rate of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 population, thereby targeting a total active parkland supply of 440 hectares by the year 2031.
- P2.** Update the City of Oshawa Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law to reflect amendments to the Ontario Planning Act resulting from Bill 23.
- P3.** In conjunction with Initiative #P2, an inter-departmental exercise to review and standardize the parkland classification system contained in Section 2.6.2.2 of the City of Oshawa Official Plan for use across City Departments would help ensure consistency in municipal planning, design and operations activities.
- P4.** Utilization of this P.R.L.C. Assessment as well as financial analysis examining per unit valuations and other residential developments would be helpful in supporting the Parks Plan and Parkland Dedication By-Law.
- P5.** Consider preparing a Privately Owned Public Space (P.O.P.S.) Policy or establish criteria to guide the acquisition, location, development and operating responsibilities for Privately Owned Public Spaces in Oshawa. Appropriate sections of the City of Oshawa Official Plan may need to be reviewed and amended to reflect integration of P.O.P.S. and strata forms of parkland.
- P6.** Consider establishing criteria for accepting suitable land for developing active parkland including street frontage, proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities, opportunities for future expansion, grading, drainage, and other site conditions.
- P7.** Explore integrating parkland conveyance tools contained in the Planning Act with other land acquisition tools to maximize public access to parkland and natural areas (e.g., land purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.).
- P8.** Plan for and consider resources required for renewal and rejuvenation of existing parks and their associated infrastructure through ongoing municipal budgeting processes.
- P9.** Consider evaluating the types of washrooms that are appropriate within the City of Oshawa Official Plan's Parkland Classification System, along with criteria and costs of providing washroom facilities.
- P10.** Conducting CPTED Reviews (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) for all parks will assist with prioritizing changes to locations that have been subject to more frequent incidents along with those that are intensively-used and/or identified by Parks Operations staff and emergency services personnel.

- P11.** Explore opportunities to integrate Indigenous stories, names and other information within park and trail signage, and communications materials.
- P12.** Any future update to the City of Oshawa Active Transportation Master Plan should reflect progress made in recent years, support efforts to develop recreational trail networks, and explore ways to enhance connectivity within established and future residential areas in light of the evolving the City's urban structure. As part of this exercise, the City's trail classification system may be reviewed and presents an opportunity to update the Off-Road Facility Standards to integrate current best practices into the design and maintenance of recreational trails.
- P13.** Consider the feasibility, benefits and costs associated with the development of regional trail networks including those contained within hydro corridors and other easements.
- P14.** Determine whether it remains appropriate to implement any outstanding directions from the City of Oshawa Draft Waterfront Master Plan, the Lakefront West Park Master Plan, Pumphouse Marsh Master Plan and other studies prepared specifically to inform the recreational, cultural and natural functions of the waterfront.
- P15.** In consultation with residents, volunteers and local horticultural organizations, explore the suitability of integrating additional community gardens in existing and future City of Oshawa parks. Provision of community gardens can make use of community volunteers who contribute resources to management of these gardens, upkeep and general operation based on the City's current Policies and Procedures.
- P16.** Consider the development of an inter-departmental action plan to align corporate objectives and define resource requirements associated with current and future integration of horticultural displays on municipal lands.
- P17.** Investigate potential sites in conjunction with the Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee to determine opportunities for an off-leash area to improve geographic distribution west of Simcoe Street. New and existing off-leash areas can consider ways to minimize environmental impacts through designated walking routes and fencing, where necessary, and providing sufficient parking at a minimum.
- P18.** Explore how the design and redesign of parks, recreation, library, and cultural facilities can support the City of Oshawa's urban forestry objectives through tree preservation, reforestation, contributions to the tree canopy target, and other applicable strategies.



# 4.0

## Recreation Facility Assessment

## 4.1 Arenas & Outdoor Skating

The City of Oshawa owns a total of 9 ice pads. In order to accurately reflect the capacity available for community users, the two ice pads at the Tribute Communities Centre – which is subject to an agreement with the City – apply an equivalency factor for periods not bookable for community use (due to event bookings and OHL requirements).

- **City-Owned & Operated** – Delpark Homes Centre (4 ice pads), Donevan Recreation Complex (1 ice pad), and Harman Park Arena (2 ice pads)
- **City-Owned, Third Party Operated** – Tribute Communities Centre (2 ice pads)

In addition to the above, there are 2 ice pads at Campus Ice Centre where the City contributed capital to the original construction in exchange for defined periods of community access until the current agreement expires in August 2024. Due to declining participation trends and under-utilization of City-owned facilities, the City has decided not to renew the agreement and thus will no longer be responsible for allocation of ice at Campus Ice Centre.

The four ice pads at the Tribute Communities Centre and Campus Ice Centre have historically offered the equivalent capacity of 2.6 ice pads. For the purposes of the P.R.L.C. Assessment, it is assumed that these two arenas combined with the 7 ice pads directly operated by the City results in an effective supply of 9.6 ice pads in Oshawa being available for community use.

Unlike the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment, Children’s Arena is no longer included in the municipal ice pad supply as its ice plant was decommissioned in 2016 after the City demonstrated ice sport needs could be accommodated more efficiently at its other arenas. Children’s Arena is now dedicated to year-round dry-floor uses which provides a strong benefit for sports such as box lacrosse, ball hockey and roller derby.

The privately owned and operated Canlan Ice Sports twin pad arena is not included as part of the municipal supply due to different allocation and pricing philosophies but it does alleviate pressures on the City’s arena system, particularly for adult users. Future updates to this P.R.L.C. Assessment or arena-specific studies may treat the Campus Ice Centre in the same way.



## City of Oshawa Arenas

### **Delpark Homes Centre**

Year Built: 2006  
Ice Pads: 4 @ 200' x 85'  
Dressing Rooms: 20

The arena is part of a multi-use community centre. The approved capital budget for 2023-2031 does not identify any major projects for this facility.

### **Donevan Recreation Complex**

Year Built: 1974  
Ice Pads: 1 @ 180' x 80'  
Dressing Rooms: 5

The arena is part of a multi-use community centre and was upgraded in 2006. The approved capital budget for 2023-2031 does not identify any major projects for this facility apart from a parking lot renewal.

### **Harman Park Arena**

Year Built: 1969  
Ice Pads: 2 @ 180' x 80'  
Dressing Rooms: 8

A \$3 million refurbishment took place in 2013 to replace rink boards, concrete slabs and header trenches, and mechanical components. The capital budget identifies approved short-term renewal works primarily towards roof, ceiling, dehumidification unit and parking lot replacements. Dressing rooms can only be accessed via stairs to rink level thereby making them inaccessible to persons with disabilities. An elevator provides access to the second level viewing area, multi-purpose room and accessible washrooms.

### **Tribute Communities Centre**

Year Built: 2006  
Ice Pads: 2 @ 180' x 80'  
Dressing Rooms: 12

The City owns the facility but outsources operations to a private sector management firm. The spectator rink ('A' Pad) has seating for 5,000 persons plus standing room, and is primarily utilized by the OHL's Oshawa Generals and for special events. One arena dressing room is dedicated to the Oshawa Generals. Limited community ice rental opportunities are available on the 'A' pad but the 'B' Pad is focused on community rentals, mainly for adult recreational leagues and some minor hockey practices. The private operator prepares its own capital plan for the facility.

The City operated two outdoor ice rinks in 2023 and 2024 at the Delpark Homes Centre and Stone Street Park (adjacent to the South Oshawa Community Centre), resulting in skating opportunities in the north and south ends of the city. Both rinks were natural ice surfaces, meaning that there is no mechanical refrigeration system in place to keep them frozen.

Consistent with a number of G.T.A. municipalities, City of Oshawa Policy No. 1.6.3-003 (dated January 1, 2006 – revised) provides the opportunity for a community volunteer or a community group to install outdoor ice rinks on parkland or open space owned by the City. The City will loan wooden boards and hose for outdoor ice rinks. These are made available at the request of community volunteers who fulfill the requirements of an Outdoor Ice Rink Permit application.



## Market Considerations

Participation trends in ice sports across the G.T.A. and the rest of Canada continue to be influenced by immigration patterns, equipment and travel costs, and perceptions regarding player safety. 28% of P.R.L.C. Assessment feedback form respondents skated recreationally in the past 12 months while 13% reported playing an ice sport such as hockey, figure skating or ringette. Before the onset of COVID-19, there were 3,200 children and youth registered with Oshawa-based ice sport organizations in 2019. This registration is 400 participants fewer than recorded in 2013 and the 2022/23 season recovered approximately 75% of pre-pandemic registrations.

10,000 hours were booked across City-operated ice pads in 2019, lower than historical averages which were in the range of 11,000 hours. This resulted in 82% of all prime time hours being rented or programmed which means capacity exists within the arena system. Combined with fewer reported ice sport registrations, lower prime time utilization suggests pressures on arenas are waning outside of the most sought hours (typically weekdays between 6pm and 9pm). Of note, arenas were closed due to COVID-19 for a portion of 2022 but were back to 75% of the pre-pandemic usage by the end of that year.

Skating outdoors is a Canadian tradition although maintaining outdoor rinks has become increasingly difficult due to warming climates. Natural ice rinks are the most affordable method to build and maintain given that expenses are largely relegated to water and staff time. Consistently cold temperatures are required to provide a safe and level skating surface. However, municipalities across Ontario are experiencing increasingly warmer winters which is not suitable for outdoor skating since maintenance is cumbersome when temperatures are near or above the freezing mark during the winter. As a result of milder winters, municipalities are forced to shorten skating seasons and in some cases, outdoor rinks are closed completely. In 2023 and 2024, Oshawa's two outdoor rinks were operational only for two and three days, respectively, due to above-average winter temperatures and thus were not able to deliver value in relation to the operational costs of setting up and maintaining the rinks.

Alternatively, municipalities can construct refrigerated outdoor rinks or skating trails although this approach requires a greater upfront capital expenditure due to the mechanical infrastructure along with associated operating costs. The City of Montreal committed \$7.5 million in its 2019 Capital Budget towards constructing refrigerated outdoor skating rinks. In addition to cost challenges, there are other limiting factors specific to outdoor ice rinks including safety and liability concerns, proximity to residences, less daylight in the winter, having hydro and water services in place, etc. However, outdoor skating opportunities can enhance social connections among individuals during the winter months when people tend to spend more time indoors, thereby allowing the community to come together and provide passive recreation activities in a convenient, drop-in manner.

## Facility Needs

### Arenas

Oshawa's historical supply of 9.6 equivalent ice pads resulted in one ice pad per 333 child and youth ice sport participants based on 2019 registrations, more favourable than the one ice pad per 400 to 500 minor participants typically accommodated in municipal arena systems. The level of service remains similar to the City's provision level when the last P.R.L.C. Assessment was prepared in 2015.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment continues to target one ice pad per 500 affiliated child and youth ice sport participants. Assuming that registrations among local ice sport groups fully recover to pre-pandemic rates, the City could have 4,000 minor participants by the year 2031 that in turn would require a supply of 8 ice pads.

Notwithstanding this projected surplus, the City should retain the current supply of ice pads for the next 5 years until the arena analysis is updated through the next P.R.L.C. Assessment cycle. This will provide flexibility to respond to post-pandemic participation trends, continue to offer a degree of convenience to local users, provide the City with flexibility to deliver its own ice programs such as learn to skate and public skates, and adjust to any changes that may affect the amount of community use available through the Tribute Communities Centre. Of note, the Town of Whitby is opening a new twin pad arena just 5 minutes from Oshawa's future community centre in the Northwood Business Park; due to the regional nature of ice sport participation, Whitby's new arena catchment area is expected to encompass a portion of north Oshawa.

While Children's Arena is not included in the supply of ice pads, the age and condition of the building are worth mentioning since the dry pad continues to serve certain recreation and sport users. Children's Arena was constructed in 1956 (the front was renovated in the 1980s) and a number of lifecycle components are in an advanced state and require significant capital investments. The City's capital forecast has allocated funding to renew structural and mechanical components – notably roof and HVAC replacements – along with certain functional improvements by the year 2026. As the P.R.L.C. Assessment has not identified the need for any new facilities that could potentially rationalize repurposing Children's Arena for ice, these approved improvements must be balanced with use of the dry pad until a time where a broader site redevelopment is required.

### **Outdoor Rinks & Skating Trails**

Despite weather-related challenges affecting natural rinks and escalating costs associated with refrigerated ice surfaces, experience across the province suggests that outdoor ice rinks and skating trails continue to be highly desirable facilities that provide outdoor winter activities where residents can enjoy one of Canada's oldest recreation activity. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have contributed to a resurgence in interest for outdoor skating as people sought out these facilities when arenas and other community buildings were closed.

There is generally no accepted provision target for outdoor ice rinks or skating trails as municipalities provide these facilities on a case-by-case basis as opportunities become available. Outdoor ice rinks can also be positioned as distinct destination-type amenities, particularly in high traffic areas. As a result, there is still merit for the City to consider outdoor skating rinks.

City staff have been investigating natural, synthetic and refrigerated rinks in recent years in response to resident requests. One staff report identifies a capital cost of \$50,000 to build a natural rink and another \$36,500 annually to maintain it while another staff report estimates the cost of a refrigerated rink in the range of \$4 million to construct and \$200,000 annually to operate;<sup>15</sup> both staff reports correctly state that capital and operating costs can vary depending on size and design of a rink as well as climatic conditions in any given year.

Given local demand that has been expressed for skating in recent years along with the City's challenges in operating natural rinks and encouraging community volunteers to participate in the Outdoor Ice Rink program, there is merit in exploring a refrigerated ice surface in Oshawa. Municipalities such as London, Mississauga, Toronto, Brampton and Newmarket have successfully built civic-focused skating rinks/trails in strategic destinations or alongside community centres, and have designed skating trails in a manner that they can be used for summer events or water features.

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<sup>15</sup> City of Oshawa. Staff Report CS-21-93 (September 2021) and Staff Report CS-22-68 (September 2022).

## 4.2 Aquatic Facilities

The City of Oshawa operates four indoor aquatic centres, each of which offers a slightly different aquatic experience through their respective designs and in turn influences how the City programs them or how conducive they are for aquatic sports. The indoor aquatic centres are well distributed across Oshawa as people living in most residential areas can reach one of the City's indoor pools with a 15 minute drive. The Oshawa YMCA and Boys and Girls Club Durham also operate indoor pools that are not included in the municipal supply but absorb a sizeable portion of local aquatics programming demand for both children and adults thereby alleviating pressures on the City. The Boys and Girls Club's Eastview location has a five lane 25 metre rectangular pool while the Y.M.C.A. offers a 25 metre leisure pool containing splash features and a bubble pit with spray jets.

In addition, the City has historically operated two outdoor pools between June and late August. The Camp Samac outdoor pool is publicly available through an agreement with Scouts Canada and is wholly operated by the Recreation Services Branch; the City's approved 2023-2031 capital budget identifies capital upgrades and pool equipment replacements for Camp Samac in 2025. At time of writing, the Rotary Pool and its bathhouse are being completely reconstructed. In addition, the City residents have the benefit of being able to swim at Lakeview Park Beach which is supervised by lifeguards between late June and early September (weather permitting).

Splash pads are provided at 12 parks across the City with three new splash pads being added to the supply since 2015. The scale of the splash pads varies considerably from large-scale facilities with interactive features to basic templates consisting of a single pole or jets functioning as a cooling station. Oshawa's splash pads are categorized as being major or minor facilities, and in a select number of instances as more basic cooling stations.



## City of Oshawa Aquatic Centres

### Civic Recreation Complex

Year Built: 1964

- 25 yard, 6-lane rectangular pool
- Teaching pool
- Lift for persons with disabilities
- Upper-level spectator viewing area
- Sauna

The aquatics centre forms part of a multi-use community centre whose sauna and fitness centre offer a holistic wellness experience with the pools, while the indoor running track and racquet courts also create a unique 'club-like' atmosphere that the public can affordably access. The older specification measuring its length in yards does not allow it to be used for competitive swim meets (which require 25 metres at a minimum) but is used for training. The capital budget includes an estimated \$600,000 to replace pool filtration in 2024.

### Delpark Homes Centre

Year Built: 2006

- 25 metre, 3-lane hybrid pool
- Waterslide, beach entry, lazy river and sauna
- On-deck spectator viewing area, hot tub

The aquatics centre is part of a multi-use community centre that are complemented by the fitness centre, OSCC55+ branch and gymnasium to create a holistic, multi-generational destination. The approved capital budget for 2023-2031 does not identify any projects for this aquatic centre.

### Donevan Recreation Complex

Year Built: 1974

- 25 metre, 6-lane rectangular pool
- Lift for persons with disabilities
- On-deck spectator viewing area
- Sauna

The aquatics centre is part of a multi-use community centre and is heavily used by the Oshawa Aquatic Club for training, programs and competitive purposes. The approved capital budget for 2023-2031 does not identify any projects for this facility.

### South Oshawa Community Centre

Year Built: 2006

- 25 metre, 3-lane hybrid pool with integrated leisure pool area
- Waterslide, beach entry, hot tub and sauna
- On-deck spectator viewing area

The aquatics centre is part of a multi-use community centre that is complemented by the fitness centre and gymnasium.

## City of Oshawa Splash Pads

### Major Splash Pad

Characterized by a number of high quality, interactive waterplay features serving a City-wide catchment.

Facilities: Delpark Homes Centre, Lakeview Park, Rotary Park and Pool

### Minor Splash Pad

Characterized by one to two interactive spray features and/or floor-based fountains servicing a community-wide catchment (multiple neighbourhoods).

Facilities: Cordova Valley Park, Easton Park, Glen Stewart Park, Pinecrest, Sandy Hawley Park

### Cooling Station

Characterized by a spray stick or jet centrally located within a concrete pad, serving a highly localized catchment area.

Facilities: Baker Park, Lake Vista Park, Mackenzie Park, Northview Park

## Market Considerations

The P.R.L.C. Assessment's feedback form revealed strong interest in recreational swimming – it was the third most popular activity – while three out of four respondents prioritized investments in indoor pools ranking fourth. The Oshawa Aquatic Club attended consultations and requested additional times for training and facility design amenities conducive to competitive swimming.

### Indoor Pools

Delpark Homes Centre is the only indoor aquatic centre presently serving areas north of the Adelaide Avenue corridor. By serving a number of established neighbourhoods and rapidly growing areas in the north, the Delpark Homes indoor aquatic centre is under significant pressure for aquatic programs. In 2019, this aquatic centre accommodated 8,100 of the 14,300 (57%) of all registered aquatic program participants in Oshawa and had waiting lists totalling almost 700 participants. Delpark Homes had nearly 2,000 more aquatic program registrants in 2019 compared to 2011 registrations, with the majority of Oshawa's new aquatic program growth being directed to this aquatic centre over that period. Even with 2022's pandemic-impacted months in 2022, Delpark Homes indoor aquatic centre recovered 94% of its pre-COVID-19 registrations and continues to be the City's most popular pool through which Oshawa residents access aquatic programs. Program attendance rates leading up to the pandemic at the other three aquatic centres were fairly consistent.

The number of hours used across the entire indoor aquatics system for programs, rentals and drop-in swims increased by 3,600 (12%) between 2017 and 2019 suggesting pressures are building. As Oshawa's population increases among all age groups, continued demand for aquatic programming can be expected to increase as well. Pressures are likely to be most prevalent in the Kedron and Windfields Part II Plan areas over the next 10 years, thereby continuing to further intensify pressures at the Delpark Homes Centre; while there is some capacity at the Civic, Donevan and South Oshawa aquatic centres to accommodate additional use, the experience of aquatics staff is that people living in north Oshawa have not shown a strong willingness to travel to Donevan, Civic and South Oshawa pools. Beyond the current P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period, available program capacities currently found at the three pools south of Adelaide Avenue can be expected to be filled as future growth is directed to the neighbourhoods that surround these facilities.



## Outdoor Pools

While the public outdoor pool was once a focal point within communities, the prevalence of backyard pools becoming more affordable along with municipal shifts to indoor aquatic centres has led to fewer investments across the province in municipally built and operated outdoor pools. A short operating season – usually the months of July and August – combined with a relatively high operating cost, aquatic staff shortages and popularity of splash pads is another factor for municipalities reprioritizing other needs over outdoor pools. No comments were received through in-person consultations of the P.R.L.C. Assessment though 41% of feedback form respondents swam recreationally in the past year – which could be at indoor aquatic centres, outdoor pools, backyard pools and beaches – and two out of three respondents prioritized investments in outdoor pools ranking eighth.

That being said, municipal reinvestments in outdoor pools have been rationalized on the basis of serving priority neighbourhoods where people may not have the ability or means to regularly travel to a pool. More frequent occurrences of extreme heat events resulting from climate change are being used to support the case to offer cool down opportunities for people of all ages who may not otherwise be able to access a pool. Pursuit of city-building/place-making, economic development and tourism benefits can also be influencing factors to expend capital; certain municipalities have also found that renovating or revitalizing their outdoor pools can attract greater usage as residents are more likely to visit a pool that they find comfortable, modern and clean compared to a deteriorating facility.

Prior to the pandemic, Rotary Pool was only available for drop-in swimming and rentals. Total attendance had been historically waning, however, a no-fee pilot project run in 2019 resulted in over 14,000 visits to Rotary Pool which was more than double the prior year. The reconstruction of Rotary Pool will hopefully result in stronger usage among nearby residents but also draw from across the city by creating a destination, and possibly acting as a catalyst for other redevelopments occurring near the downtown core.

The Camp Samac pool is used for aquatic programs and drop-in swims. Pre-pandemic drop-in swim attendance typically ranged between 6,000 and 8,000 swims while registered outdoor aquatic programs have typically been in the range of 450 to 600 participants (a program fill rate of about 60%).

### Splash Pads

Splash pads are popular facilities and are a common feature in many parks, particularly those serving district and community-level catchments. They provide a fun and interactive waterplay experience that is popular among families with younger children. Splash pads have become an alternative to outdoor pools and wading pools since they do not require staff to be present during operating hours, they usually only use water when activated by buttons by users, and they are easier to maintain than deep-water pools; however, splash pads still require investments of time and capital though the extent to which is dependent upon their size, design and type of mechanical system. Splash pads can be designed thematically to reinforce a park's sense of place and complement a broader park theme but can also take the form of public art or fit within a civic plaza through fountain features that still allow users to cool down in the summer.

Three out of 10 feedback form respondents indicated that somebody in their household had used a splash pad in the last 12 months, ranking as the eighth most popular recreational pursuit; investments in splash pads were prioritized by three-quarters of all respondents which placed it sixth among recreational facilities being sought.

### Beaches

Beaches are natural amenities that complement built facilities by providing residents with a different type of aquatic experience, allowing swimming, and cooling along with enjoyment of the outdoors. Beaches contribute to the overall aquatics experience in Oshawa but should not be treated as providing the same opportunity as would a pool or splash pad. Swimming in Lake Ontario requires a relatively strong skillset, water quality/water levels can be inconsistent as demonstrated by Durham Region Health Department weekly monitoring data in recent years, and the City does not offer open-water aquatic programs at Lakeview Park.

There are typically over 50,000 visits each year to the Lakeview Park Beach, providing the only lifeguarded beach in Durham Region which offers safe and supervised beach access between mid-June and Labour Day weekend.





## Facility Needs

### Indoor Pools

The City of Oshawa is presently servicing its population at a rate of one pool per 47,900 residents with its four indoor aquatic centres but without further investment that service level will decrease to one per 55,000 by the year 2031 and further amplify the pressure being placed on the entire aquatic system. The City targets one indoor aquatic centre per 40,000 – a service level consistent with G.T.A. benchmarks that target one per 35,000 to 50,000 – which would result in a deficit of nearly one full aquatic centre at present time. In fact, there would be a need for the equivalent capacity provided by 5.5 indoor aquatic centres based on the year 2031 population projection using the targeted rate of service.

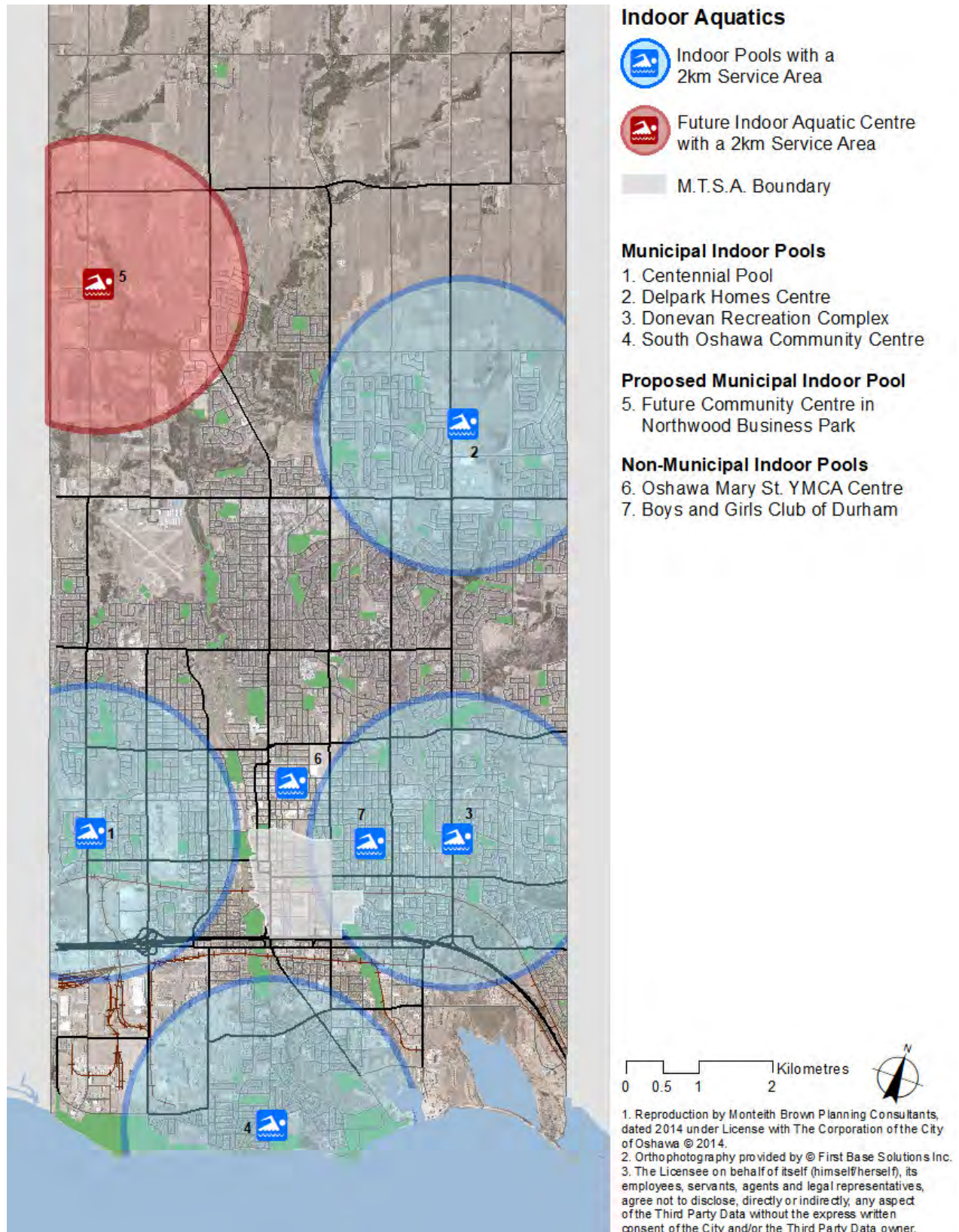
The rate of population growth lends support to including an indoor aquatic centre if developing a community centre in the future. The degree of growth projected beyond 2031 - particularly in the northwest - supports a slightly larger design template whereby the indoor aquatic centre contains a 25 metre pool with a minimum of 8 lanes. A separate leisure pool and a separate therapeutic tank, designed to allow barrier-free entry, may also be included for warmer water activities and would benefit the city's burgeoning older adult population and OSCC55+ members. A larger pool may merit selected sport-friendly features that considers adequate depths, on-deck space, and storage that is conducive for use by swim and/or diving clubs, water polo, and underwater sports.

### Outdoor Pools & Beaches

Service level targets are no longer applied to outdoor pools given the shift towards splash pads and the fact that construction of outdoor pools now typically occurs when either an aging pool is reconstructed or a municipality chooses to build a new outdoor pool intended to serve a city-wide catchment area. The redeveloped Rotary Pool may allow the City to reintroduce aquatics programming which could create value to the user experience and add back a revenue stream to offset a portion of operating costs.

If investments are directed to new and existing aquatics facilities in Oshawa, the City may need to reconsider its ongoing role in operating the Camp Samac Pool. Under the terms of the lease, the City is responsible for costs associated with pool renewals and operations in the context of an asset that it does not own. While attendance has generally recovered to pre-pandemic levels, Camp Samac pool is in an advanced lifecycle state and could require a fulsome renewal within or shortly after the current P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period.

Map 1: Existing &amp; Proposed Distribution of Indoor Aquatic Facilities



Until a time another indoor aquatic centre is constructed, the City will need to decide whether ongoing investments in Camp Samac are appropriate in relation to its level of use. There may be support to continue operations until a new indoor aquatics centre is constructed based on Camp Samac alleviating some summer-time pressures for programming at indoor pools but the City's return on capital and operating investment in relation to level of use may result in a decision to not renew the current lease.

With no concerns expressed regarding Lakeview Park Beach and no requests for other guarded beaches, no initiatives are specifically advanced for beaches. Lakeview Park Beach is a popular destination and its co-location with the broader park and waterfront system positions it to deliver beach experiences effectively for the foreseeable future.

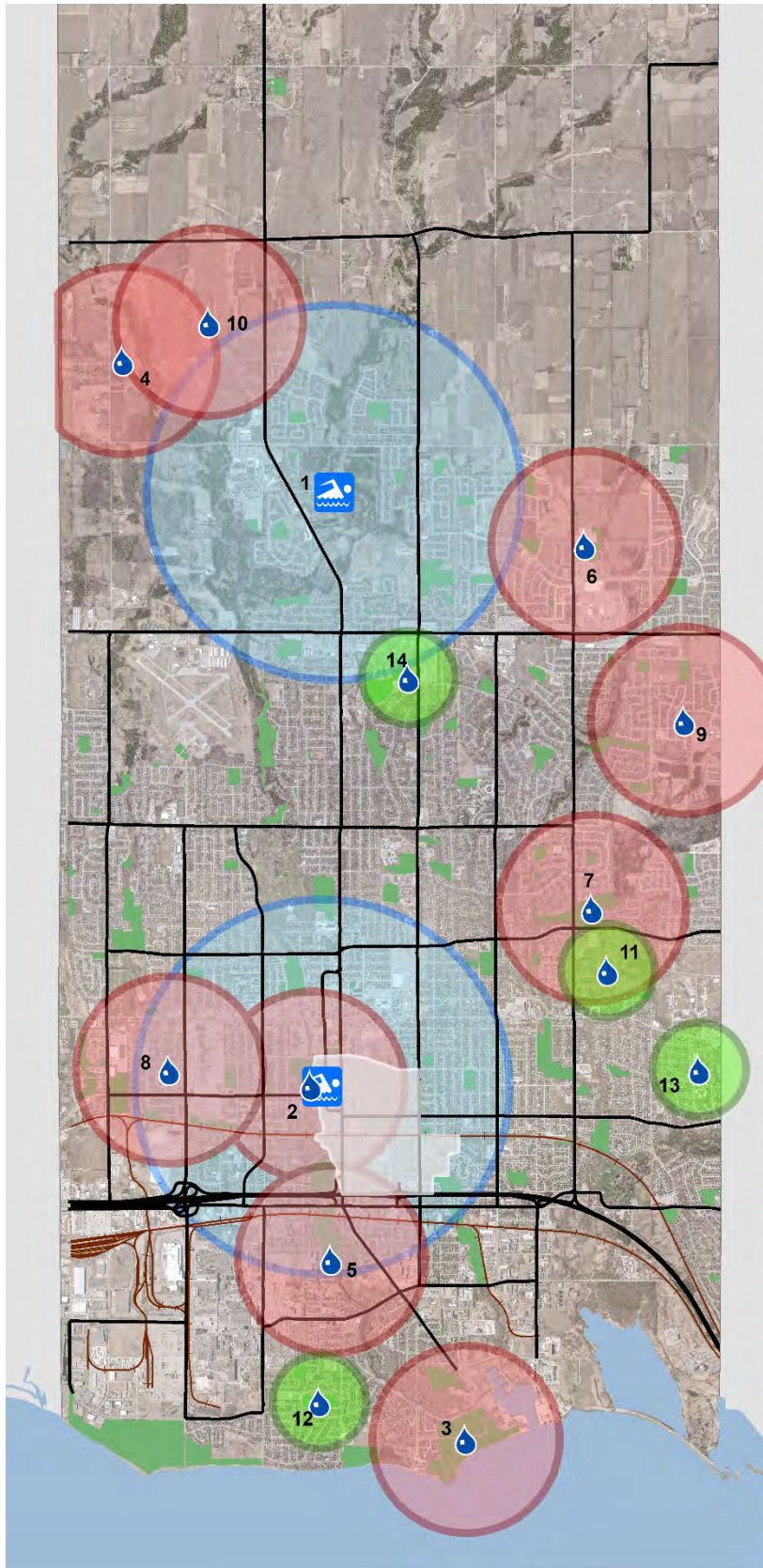
### **Splash Pads**

As noted, the City has made progress in enhancing its splash pad supply and implemented the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment recommendation to upgrade Lakeview Park in conjunction with other park redevelopment initiatives. A service level target of 1 splash pad per 3,000 children up to the age of 9 continues to be recommended for major and minor configurations (but excluding cooling stations). Oshawa is presently achieving a service level in the range of 1 splash pad per 2,500 children which combined with strong geographic distribution (Map 2) sets the City up well to respond to future growth-related needs.


Based on the City-wide growth forecast for the year 2031, there could be upwards of 25,500 children living in Oshawa at the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period, Oshawa would be in a slight deficit position for splash pad provision. The Windfields Community Park adjacent to the future community centre in Northwoods Business Park may be considered to reconcile needs over the planning period and as a higher order park that can be expected to attract high visitor volumes particularly among families with children.



Map 2: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Outdoor Aquatic Facilities



**Outdoor Aquatics**

-  Outdoor Pools with a 2km Service Area
-  Major and Minor Splash Pads with a 1km Service Area
-  Cooling Stations with an 500m Service Area
-  M.T.S.A. Boundary

**Outdoor Pools**

1. Camp Samac\*
2. Rotary Pool

**Major Splash Pad**

3. Lakeview Park
2. Rotary Park
4. Windfields Community Park (Proposed)

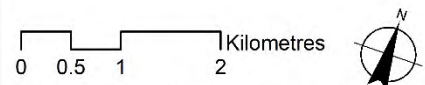
**Minor Splash Pad**

5. Cordova Valley Park
6. Delpark Homes Centre
7. Easton Park
8. Glen Stewart Park
9. Pinecrest Park
10. Sandy Hawley Park

**Cooling Stations**

11. Baker Park
12. Lake Vista Park
13. Mackenzie Park
14. Northview Park

\* Non-municipal pool but programmed by the City



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### 4.3 Gymnasiums

The City of Oshawa owns and directly operates two gymnasiums found at Delpark Homes Centre and Northview Community Centre. The gym at Northview Community Centre supports the OSCC55+ branch but is also shared with the Boys & Girls Club of Durham who receive a set number of hours to deliver their own programs. The City has reciprocal agreements with Durham District School Board for use of gymnasiums that are co-located between the South Oshawa Community Centre and G.L. Roberts Collegiate and Vocational Institute. The OSCC55+ Conant Street Branch's gymnasium is shared with the Community Health Centre.

Further supplementing the supply (and distribution) are a number of non-municipal gymnasiums located throughout the city. The Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre, which opened in 2007 at the Ontario Tech University/Durham College campus, contains a 28,500 square foot divisible triple gymnasium with seating for 2,000 spectators along with a separate secondary gymnasium (13,500 square feet divisible in two) with bleacher seating for 1,000 spectators. The Campus Recreation and Wellness Centre, while not included as part of the municipal supply, contributes a high quality spectator gymnasium space to Oshawa that is available to students and for special events when not required for varsity use.

Also not included in the supply, but whose contributions are recognized, are elementary and secondary school gymnasiums available through the provincial Community Use of Schools initiative, since costs, scheduling and permitted uses are subject to the school boards' sole discretion. Both the Oshawa Y.M.C.A. and the Eastview Boys and Girls Club also contain gymnasiums (and rock climbing walls) that are available for general community rental while gyms are also integrated within certain private properties including places of worship and social/cultural clubs.



## Market Considerations

With 10,000 hours booked at the City's gymnasiums for programs and community rentals in 2019, usage rates nearly tripled compared to 2014. Consultations with user groups, as well as City and OSCC55+ staff, indicate difficulties in accessing the hours being sought for rentals and programming. Increased usage is being driven by gyms at Delpark Homes Centre and Northview Community Centre where bookings have doubled and tripled, respectively, between 2014 and 2019; with about 2,000 more hours also being used at the South Oshawa Community Centre gyms over the same period, demand is increasing across the entire city and gyms are at capacity for 2023 and 2024.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment feedback form did not suggest a strong desire for gymnasiums and focus groups were not attended by gymnasium sport representatives. However, input contributed by representatives of community service and multicultural providers suggested that large spaces such as double/triple gyms and halls were sought for indoor gatherings, celebrations and events. Further, gymnasium space is a critical component for program delivery of the City and OSCC55+ as it is flexible to deliver passive and active activities ranging from cards to sports (e.g. pickleball, badminton, basketball and volleyball).

## Facility Needs

While the City has access to four gymnasiums, the Delpark Homes Centre gym is the only one that is considered to be 'unencumbered' for the broadest range of programming. The OSCC55+ is the primary programmer of gyms at Northview Community Centre and Conant Street branch but shares these with its building partners. Similarly, the gym shared between South Oshawa Community Centre users and G.L. Roberts C.V.I. is only available for Recreation Services programming outside of school hours.

While the OSCC55+ relieves considerable pressure on Recreation Services by providing seniors programs, the OSCC55+ is challenged by limited time in gymnasiums in many of the same ways that the Recreation Services Branch is. While service level standards for gymnasiums are not typically consistent among municipalities due to differences in design specifications and varying degrees of access depending upon relationships with school boards, typically municipally-operated gymnasiums range from one per 30,000 to 50,000 population.

To account for shared usage at Northview, Conant and South Oshawa Community Centre gyms, these are assumed to provide the equivalent of 0.5 gymnasiums each or 1.5 gymnasium equivalents in total. Added to the Delpark Homes Centre gym as a full equivalent, the resulting supply of 2.5 gymnasiums available to the City and OSCC55+ result in a service level of one gym per 76,640 population. Capacity provided through the equivalent of 4 gyms would be required to meet

current needs if targeting the lower end of the range at 1 gym per 50,000 population while the equivalent of 4.5 gymnasiums would be needed by 2031 when Oshawa's population is planned to reach 220,000. As such, the P.R.L.C. Assessment finds that the City of Oshawa could support at least two additional gymnasiums to meet growth-related needs for municipal program delivery and community sport group rentals.

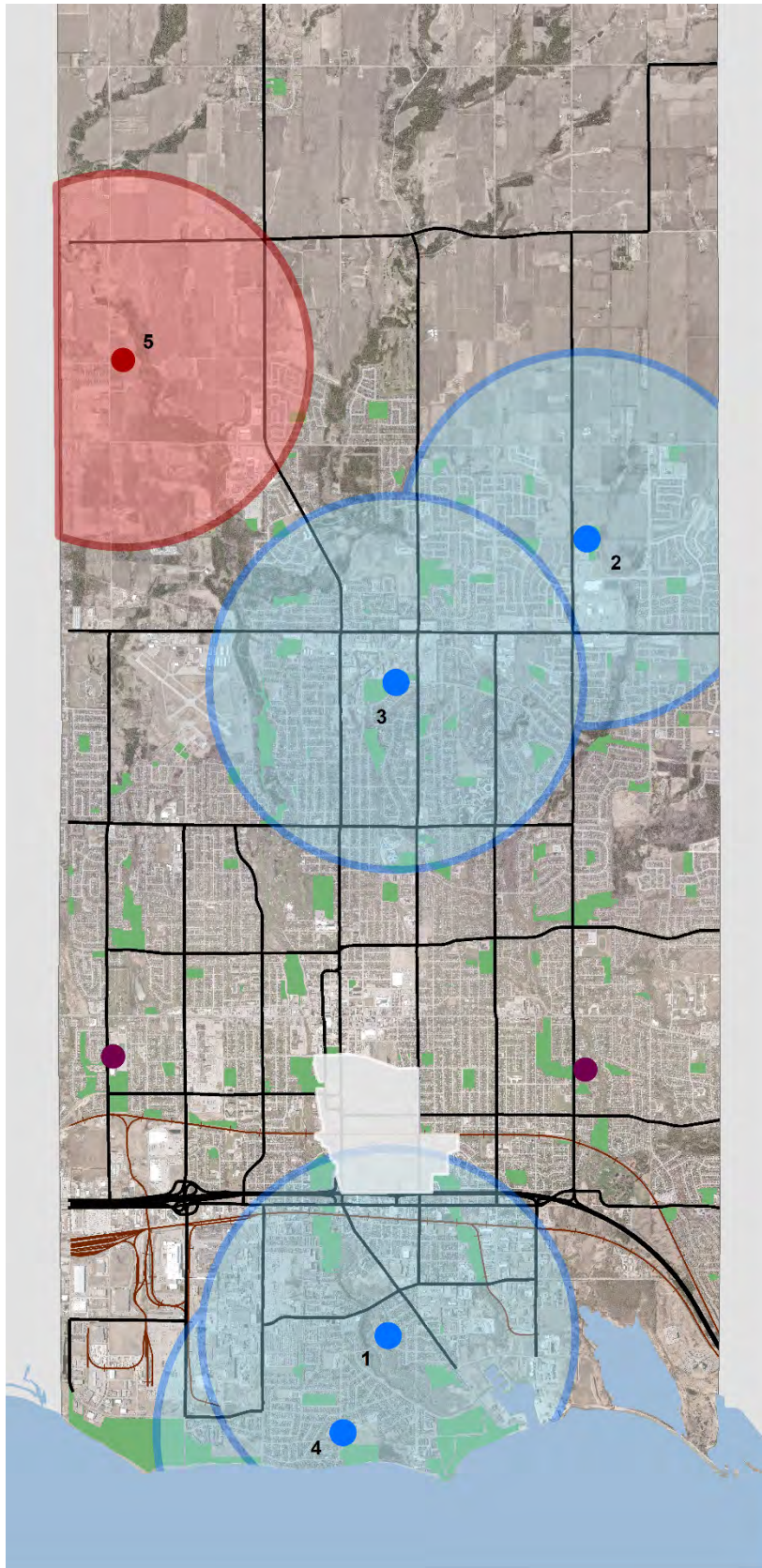
As noted in Section 2.1 of this P.R.L.C., the majority of future residential growth is planned for the north where there could be 79,000 people living in the Taunton, Kedron, Windfields and Columbus Part II Plan areas. These areas may be supplied with additional gymnasium capacity in one of the following ways:

- Option 1 Expansion of the Delpark Homes Centre:** this gymnasium was designed to an undersized standard and population growth in surrounding areas has rendered it at full capacity for programs offered by the City, OSCC55+ and community providers. Architectural analysis prepared for the P.R.L.C. Assessment illustrates that a gymnasium could be accommodated by expanding the existing gym eastwards, alongside an expansion to the Oshawa Public Libraries branch. The preliminary concept is shown in the Library Assessments (Section 5.5) through Figure 7.
- Option 2 Future Community Centre in the Northwood Business Park:** A gymnasium has been approved for the future community centre.





A future community centre in the Northwood Business Park may augment geographic distribution north of Taunton Road while adding capacity alongside an expanded Delpark Homes Centre. The Northview Community Centre catchment covers residential areas between Taunton Road and Rossland Road, again noting that gym is largely programmed by the OSCC55+ and Boys and Girls Club Durham. Neighbourhoods south of Highway 401 are served by South Oshawa Community Centre and OSCC55+ Conant Branch.

There is a geographic gap between Rossland Road and the 401 with access no longer available to the Mary Street School gymnasium. Although the Oshawa YMCA and Eastview Boys and Girls Club gyms help to address needs in and around the core, there will be a need to consider municipal gymnasium space in this area. Intensification and infill developments in the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre and Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. will add thousands of new people and amplify the geographic gap in the area.

Map 3: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Gymnasiums



**Gymnasiums**

-  Gymnasiums with a 2km Service Area
-  Future Gymnasium with a 2km Service Area
-  Potential Gymnasium
-  M.T.S.A. Boundary

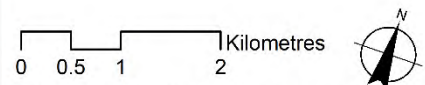
**Gymnasiums**

1. OSCC55+ (Conant Branch)
2. Delpark Homes Centre
3. Northview Community Centre
4. South Oshawa Community Centre

**Proposed Gymnasium**

5. Future Community Centre in Northwood Business Park

*Note: A gymnasium is proposed by expanding Civic Recreation Complex or Donevan Recreation Complex*



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High-level architectural analysis prepared for this P.R.L.C. Assessment suggests that the Civic Recreation Complex and Donevan Recreation Complex have space onsite for the facility to be expanded for a gymnasium. In the event that a gymnasium is not provided in north Oshawa, the City may consider one of the following options within the P.R.L.C. Assessment period and consider the remaining options in the post-2031 timeframe.

#### **Option 1: Expand Donevan Recreation Complex**

Planned population growth in the areas surrounding Donevan Recreation Complex can be expected to create new pressures for programming and drop-in activities. A gym could complement the pool, arena and even the skateboard park from a youth-serving perspective. Figure 5 illustrates that a gymnasium could potentially be situated by expanding the Donevan Recreation Complex southwards and still retaining the skateboard park; as discussed in Section 4.4, there is also potential to expand towards Harmony Road to address the need for a fitness centre onsite and would create an added benefit of street-facing façade improvements to strengthen the community centre's visual presence and place-making. This would likely result in a loss of some parking but there is a likelihood that transit-related improvements including those resulting from developments in the M.T.S.A. (i.e. the future GO Transit Station) may reduce dependability on private automobiles for some community centre users.

#### **Option 2: Expand Civic Recreation Complex**

Figure 6 illustrates that the Civic Recreation Complex could be expanded eastwards towards the existing parking lot while still retaining Field #5. By filling out the space, there is also potential to reconfigure access and control within the community centre which staff note as presenting challenges with supervision and user fee collection. Improvements to accessing the field house could also be accomplished while added parking associated with a new gym could be directed towards the south end of the property by converting the natural grass sports field (which would need to be relocated).

A potential advantage to expanding the Civic Recreation Complex would be the possibility of engaging Trent University GTA Durham to discuss interest in a cost-sharing model for a gymnasium as the University already partners with the City to provide athletic memberships. The Durham campus does not offer any athletic facilities and uses multipurpose rooms in the Civic Recreation Complex as classrooms, while its students frequently make use of common areas for study and socialization.

**Option 3: Mixed-Use / Stacked Community Centre**

If presented with the opportunity, the City may explore a gymnasium in tandem with a high density mixed-use development (e.g. condominium tower) and/or institutional development (e.g. future school), potentially in the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre or near the future Oshawa GO Station using a 'stacked' community centre model. The City of Toronto, Town of Richmond Hill and certain other municipalities have had success to varying degrees with integrating community centre space as part of residential developments. The One Yonge Community Centre in downtown Toronto has recently opened with a gymnasium, fitness studio and multipurpose space.

Land development applications in the downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre and the Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. (i.e. the future GO Station) could be explored with a view of public-private collaboration. The model of co-locating community centres with schools – as Oshawa has done with South Oshawa Community Centre – presents another opportunity as the school boards will also be presented with challenges in meeting needs in areas of intensification and thus opportunities may exist for a joint-facility development. Given that much intensification growth and development is forecasted after the year 2031, any collaborative developments in the core could be more likely to occur after this current P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period.

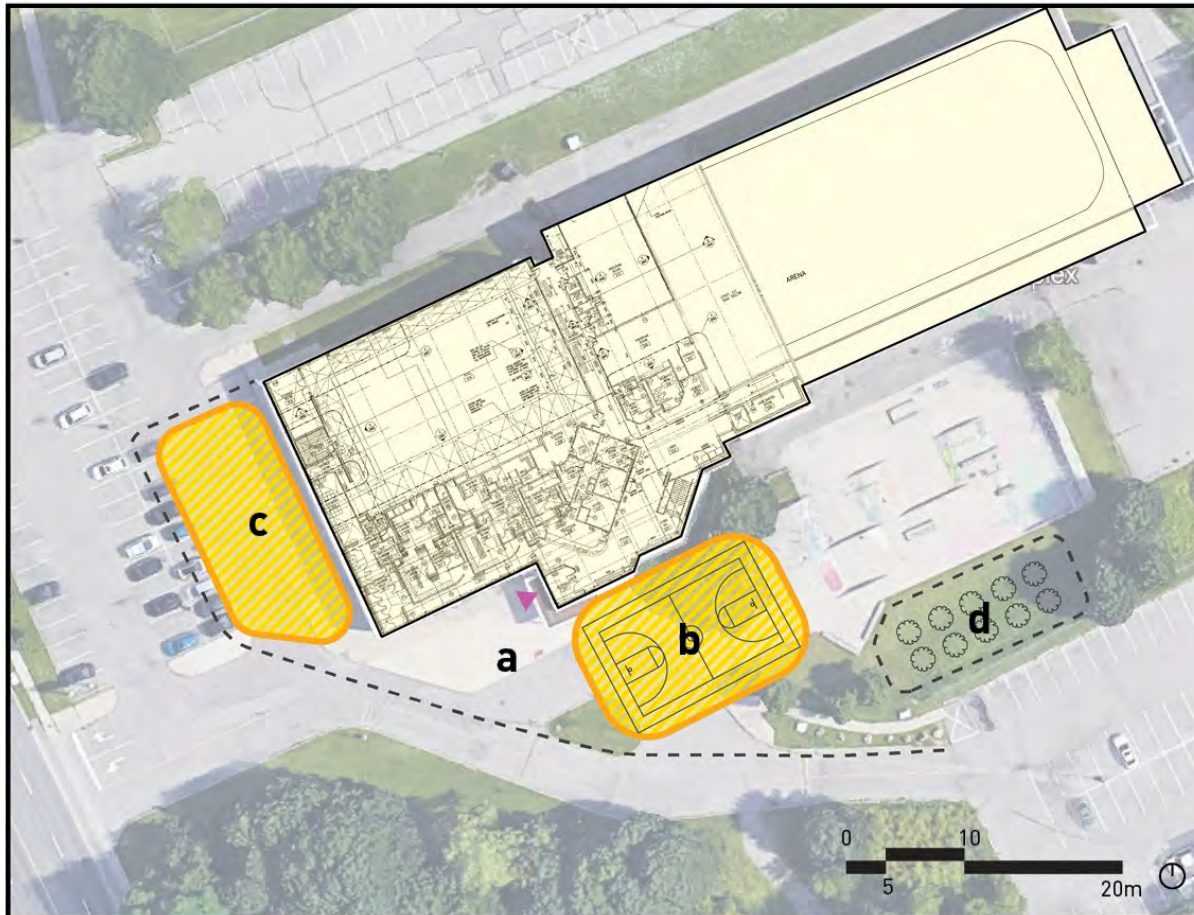
It is imperative that new or expanded gymnasiums are designed to an appropriate size and design specification that allows for sufficient playout distance to the structural walls, have an appropriate ceiling height, and preferably use a sprung-wood flooring system. Sport-friendly amenities such as a scoreboard, spectator viewing and adequate storage would improve the user experience and functionality of the space and are worthy of consideration.

Figure 5: Potential Expansion Plan, Donevan Recreation Complex

**RECOMMENDATIONS** DONEVAN RECREATION COMPLEX

Site

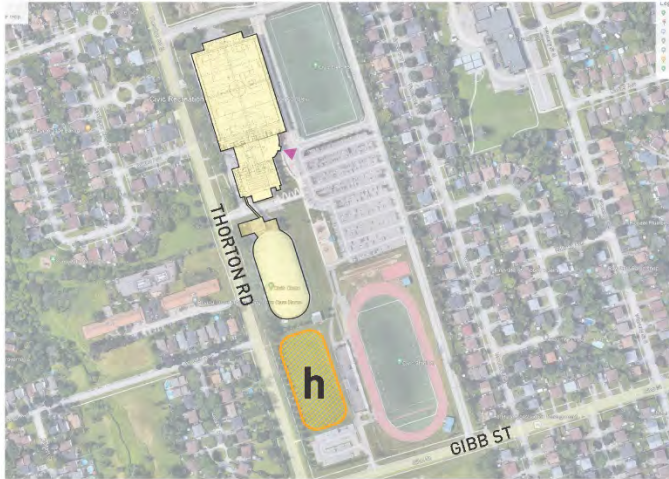
- a.** New entrance that identifies building as a public facility with visibility into interior
- b.** New Gymnasium at Arena level with views out to Skate Park
- c.** New street facing addition for Fitness and expanded Change Rooms
- d.** Landscaping for shade onto existing Skate Park



Enlarged Concept Plan

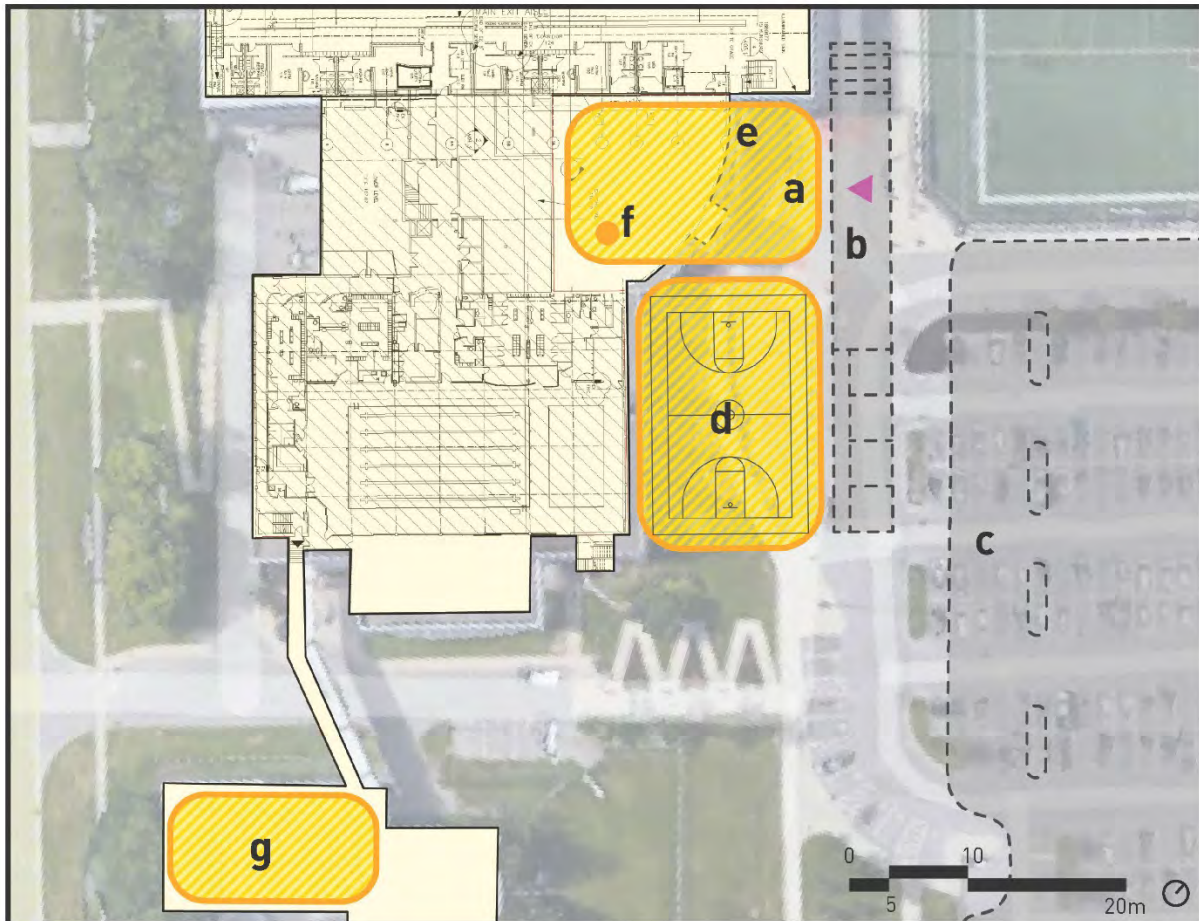
Figure 6: Potential Expansion Plan, Civic Recreation Complex

**RECOMMENDATIONS** CIVIC RECREATION COMPLEX



- a. New entrance
- b. Landscaping with ramps and steps
- c. Reconfigure lay-by and parking lot
- d. Gymnasium with high school sized basketball court with access to Change Rooms and Fitness
- e. Entrance to Indoor Soccer Field with more visibility from Lobby, better stair access and ability to restrict access
- f. New front desk for Aquatics and Fitness
- g. Upgrade security system and wireless internet access. Review emergency exit paths.
- h. Event parking

Site



Enlarged Concept Plan

## 4.4 Fitness Facilities

The Civic Recreation Complex, Delpark Homes Centre and South Oshawa Community Centre have fitness centres containing cardio and weight-training equipment along with group fitness studios for floor-based programs. There is an aerobics studio at Donevan Recreation Complex (but no equipment-based fitness centre). The Delpark Homes Centre has an indoor walking track while the Civic Recreation Complex dome has a five-lane indoor running track with banked corners encircling the tennis courts.

The City delivers most of its fitness programs at community centres along with modest offerings at the Arts Resource Centre and Boot Camps at Stone Street Park. OSCC55+ delivers a robust range of fitness programs for their older adult members through their branches and in outdoor settings while Oshawa Public Libraries also offers limited wellness programs such as meditation and educational seminars focused on lifelong health.

### Market Considerations

Participation in fitness programs, weight training and jogging ranged from 20% to 26% among feedback form respondents while support for investments in indoor tracks and fitness centres ranked tenth and eleventh, respectively. A few organizations attending P.R.L.C. Assessment focus groups, largely representing field sports and arena sports, spoke of fitness spaces adding secondary benefits for dry-land training. The 3,000 registered fitness program participants in 2019 continues a declining trend dating back to the 2014; however, the City's fitness membership sales remained strong prior to COVID-19 and in fact peaked at 10,500 memberships sold in 2019. This may suggest that while there is increasing competition in the local fitness market, people still see value in the City's fitness offerings.

Co-locating fitness centres and studios reinforces City community centres and OSCC55+ branches as holistic wellness hubs where fitness programs and equipment complement activities offered in gymnasiums, pools, and program rooms. While the fitness market is saturated with private sector and quasi-public operators (the Durham Y.M.C.A. is an example of the latter), the City differentiates its fitness product by co-locating complementary recreation facilities. Oshawa was an early adopter of integrating equipment-based fitness centres into its recreation facilities, something that has become a prevailing trend among many municipalities that have built community centres. Municipal fitness centres typically operate at or close to a revenue-neutral basis and can offset other community centre components that cannot be expected to recover their costs (e.g. pools and arenas).



## Facility Needs

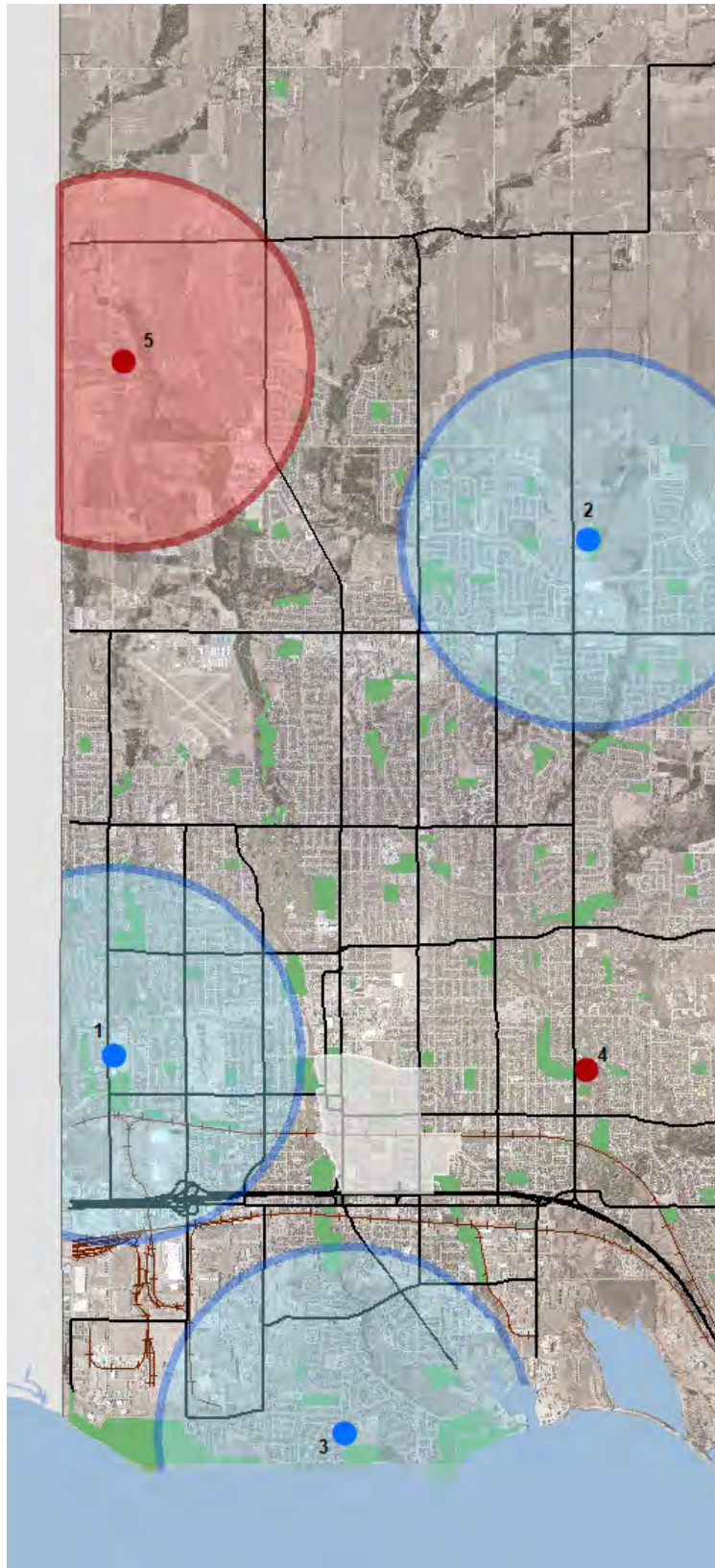
There are no generally accepted population-based service level targets for municipal fitness centres. Market economics, segmentation and saturation guides private sector decisions as to whether they invest in equipment-based fitness centres; however, most municipalities view fitness studios for group programs as a core level of service while others construct fitness centres based on the wellness philosophy described above. Municipal fitness centres are in a more competitive environment as the private sector is now entrenched in the low-cost/discount membership market that used to be dominated by municipalities and the Y.M.C.A.

Oshawa has always been ahead of the curve in terms of municipally-delivered fitness experiences – both indoors and outdoors – and there is strong rationale to include a training club and group fitness studio at the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. These fitness spaces will complement the aquatic centre, gymnasium and OSCC55+ branches being recommended there while also leveraging an established organizational infrastructure that will generate operational economies of scale in fitness program planning and delivery. Inclusion of an indoor track is also recommended to reinforce opportunities for passive year-round physical activity and/or dry-land training for local sports groups.

Building on the City's history of innovating its fitness services, an opportunity exists to reflect leading industry trends in the design of new fitness centres. For example, providing functional forms of fitness - such as High Intensity Interval Training and TRX – can be achieved through exercise equipment as well as providing a strip of synthetic turf to push weighted sleds and more. Incorporation of technology is another leading trend through self-directed, on-demand classes using a drop-down screen with a virtual instructor and/or use of a fitness app that can enable outdoor fitness options within a park or on an indoor track; technology will require appropriate digital infrastructure to be in place such as cabling, hardware, and strong Wi-Fi.

In reviewing the distribution of municipal fitness centres (Map 4), the proposed fitness centre at the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park will reconcile a gap in that area. However, few recreational fitness amenities exist between Taunton Road and Highway 401, east of Simcoe Street. While there are private sector options in this area, considering a fitness centre at the Donevan Recreation Complex could complement activities occurring in its fitness studio and potentially drive new revenues as a fitness centre would create an incentive for more users to purchase the City's fitness memberships. Given active land development applications in the area that could add hundreds of new residents, market economics of providing a fitness centre where the market size of the immediate catchment is expanding in size could further justify the business case. A fitness centre would also provide dryland training for the Oshawa Aquatic Club and arena users.

Map 4: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Fitness Centres



**Fitness Centres**

-  Fitness Centres with a 2km Service Area
-  Future Fitness Centre with a 2km Service Area
-  M.T.S.A. Boundary

**Fitness Centres**

1. Civic Recreation Complex
2. Delpark Homes Centre
3. South Oshawa Community Centre

**Proposed Fitness Centres**

4. Donevan Recreation Centre
5. Future Community Centre in Northwood Business Park

0 0.5 1 2 Kilometres



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## 4.5 Youth Spaces

The City of Oshawa is a progressive example of a municipality that integrates youth spaces within multi-use facility settings. Dedicated youth areas are located within the Civic Recreation Complex, South Oshawa Community Centre and the Northview Community Centre, the latter of which is used primarily by the Boys and Girls Club Durham (who also operate their own facility at Eastview Park).

### City of Oshawa Youth Spaces

<b>Civic Recreation Complex "Rec Room"</b>	The Rec Room is largely promoted for use by local youth but is available to all age groups. There are no age restrictions for use of this space, although children under 8 years of age must be accompanied by a guardian over the age of 14. The Rec Room is equipped with a pool table, foosball table, ping pong table, video games, and TV. This space is open during weekday afternoons and is accessible for a daily fee or included in a fitness membership.
<b>Northview Community Centre "Games Room"</b>	The Games Room is used by the Boys and Girls Club Durham who are responsible for delivering programming. The space is oriented as a lounge with supporting amenities such as a pool table and multimedia consoles. The Boys and Girls Club's Eastview location also has a Games Room and Fun Room equipped with tables and chairs, ping pong, pool and air hockey tables, TV and selected board games.
<b>South Oshawa Community Centre "Youth Room"</b>	The Youth Room is the City's only true space dedicated for use by local youth between the ages of 10 and 17. Users must purchase a low cost annual membership in order to access the Youth Room, which provides a range of amenities such as lounge area, TV/video game room, pool table, pinball machine, foosball and air hockey tables, computer area. The broad range of amenities in the Youth Room are conducive to attracting a variety of youth interests ranging from hanging out to doing homework in a safe, supervised space. The Youth Room is open on weekday afternoons and evenings, as well as on Saturdays.

### Market Considerations

The 2021 Census recorded over 20,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 19 as living in Oshawa, amounting to 11% of the total population. The Census also recorded 20,500 children under 10 years of age in Oshawa, many of whom will move into the youth category at some point over the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period. Although age-specific population forecasts are not available to inform the P.R.L.C. Assessment, there could be 25,000 youth living in Oshawa by the year 2031 assuming that 11% of the population remains between the ages of 10 and 19.



Oshawa Youth Council feedback provided specifically for the P.R.L.C. Assessment touched on the fact that community centres and libraries are highly valued along with desires expressed for food services, public art, and greater awareness and supports for social challenges being experienced by youth. Other consultations reinforced the value of providing meaningful spaces and programs for youth and teens through parks, libraries, gymnasiums, sports fields and creative spaces.

### **Facility Needs**

Oshawa recognizes that the planning and programming of youth-oriented spaces should reflect the diverse range of interests and abilities of young people. As noted earlier, the City's integrated facility provision model means that youth visiting Oshawa community centres have their own space but can also participate in sports, arts and culture, educational, and socialization activities at a single site. More promising research also points to youth increasingly seeking opportunities to be empowered through regular engagement, youth-led programming, employment and access to social and health services within recreational settings.

The dedicated youth-room model is regarded as a success based on positive feedback received through consultations. These rooms create a safe and welcoming environment that are co-located with many other appealing elements such as gymnasiums, libraries, and skateboard parks. The plethora of opportunities allows youth to make choices around the types of activities and their level of participation; in most cases, quality experiences will lead to continued and increased participation, and promote principles of Positive Youth Development. The City's service delivery practices for youth fall within a 'wrap-around model' and provides many avenues for youth to become engaged and supported in recreation, sport, arts and culture which can allow them to ultimately progress into becoming community leaders.

There is no generally accepted provision level for the development of youth space as this facility type is generally constructed based on need, ability to be co-located with other complementary facilities, and potential for cross-programming opportunities. Dedicated drop-in space would suit any future community centre provided complementary amenities are co-located. As the interests of youth are constantly evolving, a youth-specific consultation process may be undertaken to understand if the space, amenities and programs being delivered at the three youth rooms are in line with what local youth are in fact looking for. Any improvements for the Games Room at Northview Community Centre may be explored in collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club Durham.

## 4.6 Rectangular Sports Fields

The City of Oshawa maintains 60 outdoor rectangular sports fields that are classified in three levels (A,B, and C) based on their type, size, and amenities. The City has increased its supply by five fields since 2015. The rectangular field supply consists of:

- 2 lit artificial turf fields;
- 6 multi-use fields (3 lit and 3 unlit);
- 26 11v11 fields (2 lit and 24 unlit); and
- 26 unlit fields ranging in size for 5v5 to 9v9 play.

Recognizing that Oshawa's lit sports fields provide extended periods of play during the shoulder seasons and into the evening, equivalency factors of 1.5 and 2.0 unlit fields are applied to lit natural fields and lit artificial turf fields, respectively. With five lit natural fields and two artificial turf fields, Oshawa offers a playable supply equivalent to 65.0 unlit natural grass fields.

To facilitate opportunities for year-round play, the City of Oshawa operates a premier indoor turf fieldhouse at the Civic Recreation Complex which contains an international FIFA regulation size synthetic turf field. This field can be divided into four smaller fields to allow for separate but simultaneous bookings when full or half field configurations are not required.

In addition to the municipally-owned supply, Vaso's Field at the Ontario Tech University/Durham College campus was converted to a FIFA approved artificial turf surface in 2018. The facility features stadium lighting, eight change rooms, varsity team rooms, a press box with television broadcasting capabilities, VIP viewing box and bleacher seating for up to 500 people. Ontario Tech University has its own indoor turf fieldhouse which is primarily used for its own programs and thus has limited public availability (and as such is not included in the municipal supply of indoor fields). There are also dozens of outdoor sports fields located on school properties across Oshawa that are in various states of repair.

As the City does not control any aspect of scheduling or maintenance of secondary and post-secondary facilities, these sports fields are not included in the supply unless otherwise noted for context.



## Market Considerations

### Soccer Trends

Registrations in Ontario Soccer's affiliated organizations have been declining for well over a decade. In 2019, Ontario Soccer reported 272,664 players which is 28% below registrations from 10 years prior. Ontario Soccer's declining registrations are driven by factors such as aging demographic trends, growing competition from other sports and activities, and the emergence of soccer clubs and academies that are not affiliated with the provincial governing body. Despite declining participation trends, soccer continues to be a popular sport due to its worldwide appeal, high fitness quotient, and relatively low cost to participate. The popularity of the sport drives the high demand of soccer fields in most municipalities.

In 2022, the primary rectangular sports field users were Oshawa Kicks Soccer Club, Oshawa Turul Soccer Club, and O'Neill C.V.I. who collectively booked 66% of hours while the remainder was used by organizations such as NASC Soccer and adult leagues. Registration data collected by the City in 2019 along with feedback received during P.R.L.C. consultations quantifies a collective registration of 4,600 soccer players. Clubs place value on indoor fields as well as multi-field complexes to support efficiencies and convenience in their programming. Among feedback form respondents, participation in soccer and priority placed on investments in soccer fields ranked outside of the top 15.

Since Ontario Soccer adopted its Long-Term Player Development (L.T.P.D.) model, organizations have been evolving the delivery of their programs. With less emphasis on scoring and winning, L.T.P.D. focuses on improved coaching, fewer games, more ball time, and skill development. New standards specific to each age group were developed, which included varying coaching styles, number of players per team, playing time, field sizes, and other variables. Some of these new standards have a direct impact on the provision of soccer fields, particularly with respect to standards for field sizes and the number of players per team, which has influenced the demand for field time.

**Football Trends**

Football is a sport with cyclical popularity and is generally played by minor age groups under the age of 20, although the sport is popular to follow among adults. Anecdotally, participation in the sport is steady or has grown marginally across different communities. The sport is often challenged by access to well-lit artificial turf fields (or dedicated football fields), as football is traditionally an autumn sport and night falls earlier during this time of year. Seasonal leagues that avoid the high school football season are emerging, which are leading to increased demand throughout the year. Concerns over head injuries due to the physical nature of the sport has also been a limiting growth factor, although some community groups are adapting programs to reduce the likelihood of injuries such as non-contact football at the grassroots level.

Oshawa's progressive approach to providing artificial field surfaces helps to minimize damage to natural grass fields. The Oshawa Hawkeyes are a youth football club for ages 6-19 based at the Civic Recreation Complex who deliver programs in the City. Of all football users in Oshawa, the Oshawa Hawkeyes account for nearly 90% of all hours booked. Total hours booked for football use in 2022 was just under 450 hours, which is nearly returning to pre-pandemic booking rates. P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations did not receive any comments pertaining to football.

**Rugby Trends**

Rugby has been steadily growing in many parts of the Province as well as across Canada. Rugby Canada attributes membership growth to the introduction of grassroots programming (known as Rookie Rugby), as well as international exposure of the national Canadian team. Rugby Canada reports approximately 31,000 youth and adult rugby players registered with their affiliated clubs, which is a growth of 13% from 2015.<sup>16</sup> While the organization recognizes that registration levels have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the group has made strong efforts to promote the sport through its "Return to Play" initiative. Similar to national trending, Rugby Ontario reports consistent growth at the introductory level (under age 11) over the past few years, though Junior programming (age 12-19) has been stable and participation historically wanes as players get older due to the physical nature of the sport. The Oshawa Vikings Rugby Club play out of their own facility at the Thomson Rugby Park. P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations did not receive any comments pertaining to rugby.

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<sup>16</sup> Rugby Canada. 2015 and 2021. Annual Report. Retrieved from <https://rugby.ca>

### Lacrosse Trends

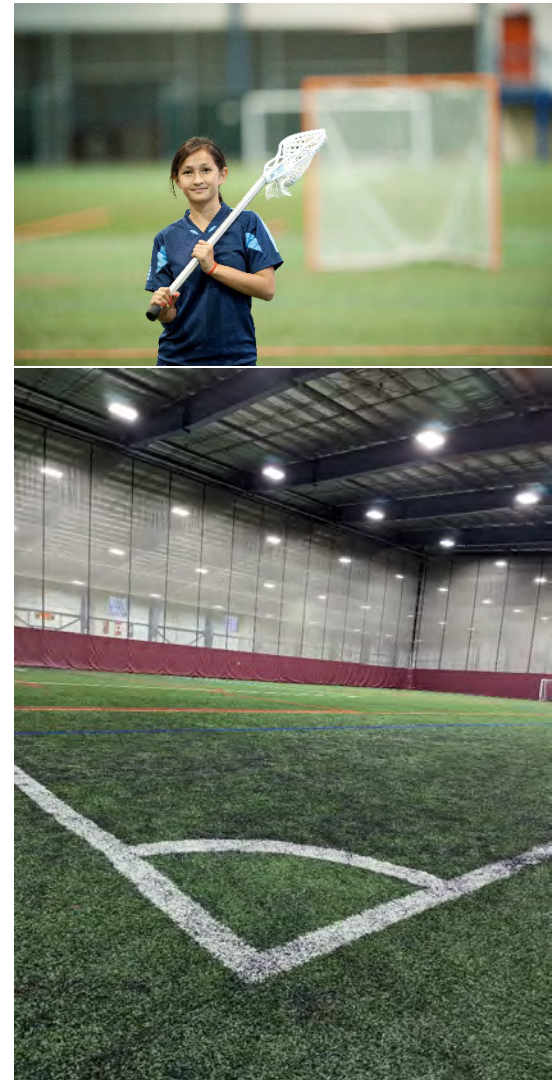
Lacrosse is considered to be one of North America’s oldest sports and while its popularity has not gained the same level of soccer, it is becoming more popular for children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18.<sup>17</sup> Local lacrosse groups include Durham Junior Lacrosse League, Durham Master Lacrosse League, Oshawa Lady Blue Knights Lacrosse, and Oshawa Minor Lacrosse Association. The sport is typically played during the early spring, although elite teams are seeking opportunities throughout the year. In 2022, lacrosse groups booked nearly 2,100 hours at Oshawa facilities, which is a significant increase since pandemic seasons although still 19% lower than hours booked in 2019. The largest lacrosse user of Oshawa facilities is the Oshawa Lady Blue Knights Lacrosse, accounting for nearly 60% of lacrosse bookings. Lacrosse organizations participating in P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations were largely focused on indoor box lacrosse and did not express a need for additional rectangular field times.

### Indoor Turf

Indoor artificial turf facilities have become prevalent in communities with populations over 50,000 and those with robust soccer programs; with the indoor turf market well established, it is not uncommon to find multiple indoor fields in mid-size and large municipalities. While soccer tends to be the primary user of indoor turf, other field sports such as baseball and softball, cricket, football and rugby, field lacrosse, field hockey and Ultimate Frisbee are increasingly seeking out indoor field times. This results in strong and well-rounded utilization profiles for these facilities which combined with typically higher rates of cost recovery makes a strong business case for investment in these facilities.

Field sport users contributing to the P.R.L.C. Assessment’s focus groups – including representatives from ball, cricket and soccer – expressed support for additional artificial turf fields to be provided in indoor and outdoor settings. Feedback form responses did not indicate a high participation rate in field sports nor did additional investments in indoor fields rank as a high priority among respondents.

The equivalent of 5,000 quarter field hours were used at the Civic Recreation Complex Fieldhouse in 2019 which is 10% higher than 2017 (comparisons to prior years was not possible due to a change in the City’s definition of prime time); as of 2022, bookings had returned to 70% of pre-pandemic levels noting there were government-mandated closures that affected use during a period of the facility’s peak season. While 2019 bookings amounted to a field utilization rate of



<sup>17</sup> The Canadian Business Journal. Canadian Lacrosse Association. Retrieved from <http://www.cbj.ca>

68%, achieving full capacity usage cannot be reasonably expected as there are periods when half or quarter field bookings prevent bookings from taking place on the rest of the field.

In addition to use by a wide range of sports, the City has been receiving more requests for large community gatherings at the Civic Recreation Complex fieldhouse. The City tries to address these requests as best as it can but large gatherings can be difficult to accommodate due to existing primetime capacity pressures as well as limited washroom and kitchen facilities in the fieldhouse, and a need to manage wear and tear on the field surface. The Children's Arena dry-floor could be an option for some of these community activities to take place.

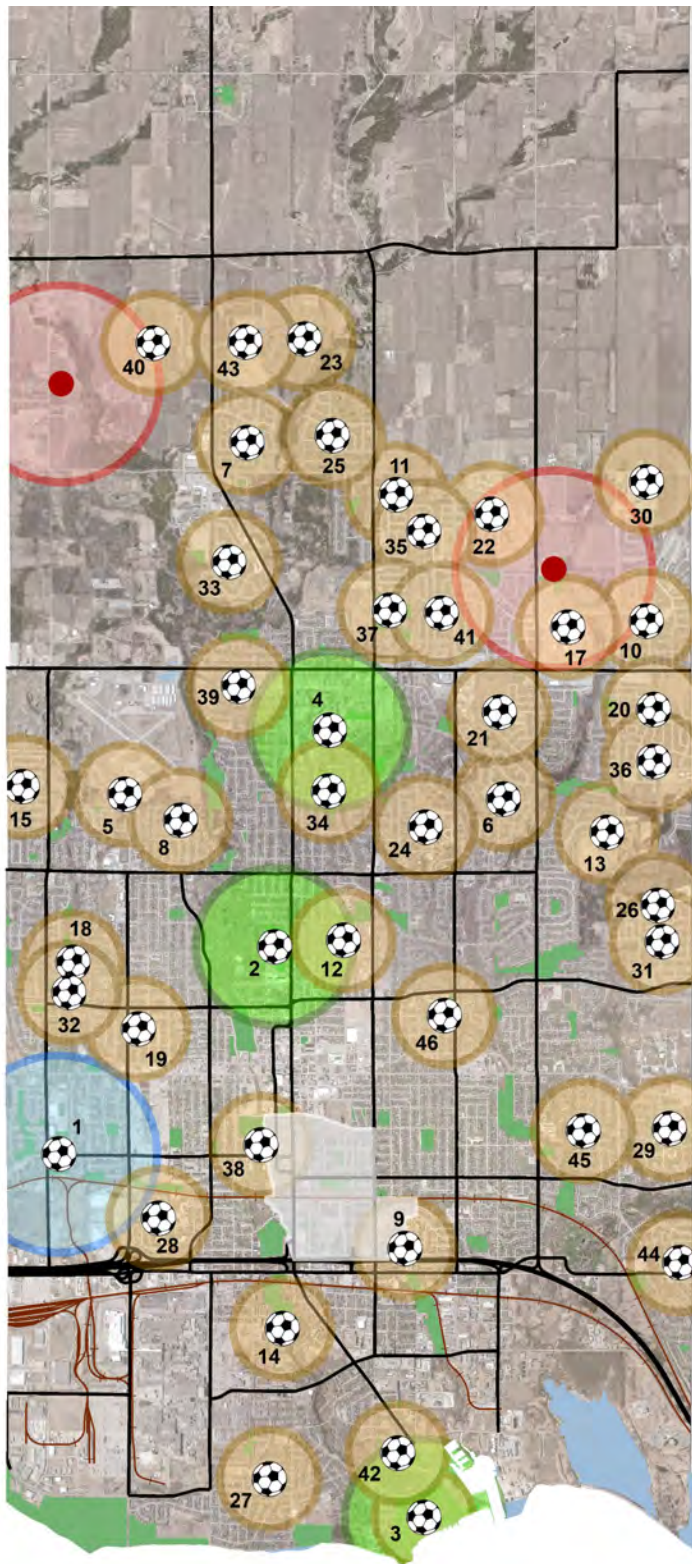
## **Facility Needs**

### **Outdoor Fields**

The City has historically calculated rectangular field needs using a standard of one field per 80 to 90 registered soccer players. The City of Oshawa is presently achieving a service rate of one field per 70 registrants based upon an estimated 4,600 players using an effective supply of 65 fields. A review of field utilization data shows that the number of hours booked has slightly decreased since the pandemic and that there is capacity available on unlit fields; conversely, demand is high for regulation lit fields in 2022 with 736 hours booked, the most over the last 6 years and resulting in an 88% utilization rate.

The rectangular field supply is considered to be adequate over the next five years based on utilization and registration metrics. Registrations are projected to grow to 5,300 players by 2031 which would result in a service level of one field per 82 players with no net changes to the supply. However, the demand being placed on lit fields suggests that the City may explore the ability to increase its supply of lit rectangular fields potentially by constructing a minimum of one lit regulation field at the Windfields Community Park (adjacent to the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) and two lit regulation fields at the future Kedron Community Park. Adding three lit fields at these parks would add the unlit equivalent of 4.5 fields (more fields may be considered based on the size and configuration of each Community Park) and strengthen geographic distribution as residential areas in the north develop over time. By constructing these as full-size fields, these additions would add capacity for a range of field sports including soccer, football, field lacrosse, ultimate frisbee and more.

Map 5: Existing and Proposed Distribution of Rectangular Fields



**Rectangular Fields**

- Class A Rectangular Sports Fields with a 1km Service Area
- Class B Rectangular Sports Fields with an 800m Service Area
- Class C Rectangular Sports Fields with a 500m Service Area
- Proposed Rectangular Fields

M.T.S.A. Boundary

**Class A**

- 1. Civic Fields (5) / Civic Fieldhouse

**Class B**

- 2. Alexandra Park
- 3. Lakeview Park (3)
- 4. North Oshawa Park

**Class C**

- 5. Airmen's Park
- 6. Attersley Park
- 7. Bridle Park
- 8. Brookside Park
- 9. Chopin Park (2)
- 10. Coldstream Park
- 11. Conlin Meadows Park
- 12. Connaught Park
- 13. Corbett's Park
- 14. Cordova Valley Park
- 15. Cowan Park
- 16. Deer Valley Park
- 17. Delpark Homes Centre
- 18. Dundee Park
- 19. Fernhill Park
- 20. Glenbourne Park
- 21. Grand Ridge Park
- 22. Greenhill Park
- 23. Gulfstream Park
- 24. Hyde Park
- 25. Kedron Park
- 26. Kettering Park (2)
- 27. Lake Vista Park
- 3. Lakeview Park (2)
- 28. Laval Park
- 29. Mackenzie Park
- 30. Mackie Park
- 31. Margate Park
- 32. McLaughlin Park
- 33. Niagara Park
- 34. Northway Court Park
- 35. Parkwood Meadows Park
- 36. Pinecrest Park
- 37. Ritson Fields Park(3)
- 38. Rotary Park
- 39. Russett Park
- 40. Sandy Hawley Park
- 41. Sherwood Forest Park
- 42. Southmead Park (3)
- 43. Steeplechase Park
- 44. Terry Fox Park
- 45. Willowdale Park
- 46. Woodview Park

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0 0.5 1 2 Kilometres

### **Indoor Turf**

While there are no set service levels for the provision of indoor turf facilities, they are generally common in communities with 50,000 to 100,000 or more residents (although there are examples where communities with lesser population have an indoor turf facility). At a very high level, demand can be estimated based on the number of outdoor soccer players in Oshawa.

As discussed in the outdoor recreation field assessments, there are 4,600 players in the City. Applying an assumption that 25% of outdoor players participate in indoor soccer, it can be estimated that there are about 1,150 indoor soccer players residing locally. The average indoor soccer program requires one hour per week on an indoor field for approximately every ten players; this ratio can vary slightly depending on the age of the participant (the field can be divided in two for games involving smaller children) and the level of competition (rep teams require more practice time). Based on this metric, there could be demand of 115 hours per week which is generally in line with the City's 2019 bookings that averaged 100 hours per week (over 50 weeks although usage would be substantially higher in the fall/winter/spring compared to the summer).

The P.R.L.C Assessment finds a case to consider a second indoor turf in Oshawa. Doing so would:

- alleviate prime time pressures on the Civic Fieldhouse;
- improve geographic distribution of indoor turf in Oshawa;
- provide flexibility for the City to meet population growth-related demands as it grows towards a population of 220,000 by 2031; and
- capture a portion of the regional indoor turf market to improve cost recovery rates and overall fiscal viability.

A fieldhouse will not be included at the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. As such, plausible options for the City to consider in providing a second indoor turf field are as follows.

- Consider designing the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park in a manner that allows it to be expanded through a future phase of construction whereby sufficient space is retained for a potential fieldhouse (noting a similar approach has been proposed for arenas).
- Explore assembling lands for a new community centre in the north in advance of growth-related needs for indoor recreation facilities after the year 2031.
- Consider designing at least one of the rectangular sports fields recommended at a future Community Park (see preceding pages) in a manner that allows it to be enclosed on a year-round or seasonal basis.



## 4.7 Ball Diamonds

Oshawa provides access to 52 ball diamonds consisting of:

- 36 softball diamonds (2 lit and 34 unlit);
- 8 lit slo-pitch diamonds; and
- 8 hardball diamonds, including Kinsmen Stadium (3 lit and 5 unlit) and Knights of Columbus Park (noting, however, that these diamonds do not have pitching mounds but whose playout lines are suitable for hardball).

Recognizing that lit ball diamonds can accommodate extended periods of play into the evening compared to unlit diamonds, an unlit equivalent factor is applied to City's diamond supply. Each lit ball diamond is assumed to provide an equivalent capacity of 1.5 unlit diamonds. With 13 lit diamonds, **Oshawa has an effective supply of 58.5 unlit equivalent diamonds.**

### Market Considerations

After being considered a sport in decline for the better part of the past two decades, baseball and its variations (including softball, fastball, etc.) are experiencing a resurgence. Baseball Ontario reported nearly 16,000 competitive participants in 2019, which was a growth of 39% compared to 2007, though that figure excludes recreational/house leagues and non-affiliated ball groups (thus actual participation figures are greater). Baseball Ontario's regional affiliate, the Eastern Ontario Baseball Association, also grew by 45% during the same period.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, registration data submitted to the City of Oshawa recorded approximately 3,625 players in 2019 which was 22% below the previous year and considerably below the 4,150 players recorded at the time of the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment.

The renewed interest in ball diamond sports is driven by factors such as a greater focus on skill development, and grassroots programs to engage children and youth at a young age to participate in the sport. The popularity of the Toronto Blue Jays are also a contributing factor. Since Baseball Canada adopted the Long-Term Player Development model, organizations have focused on developing and honing skills and coaching styles, while fostering leadership. Suitable competition formats and facility types are also core components of the Long-Term Athlete Development model, which has implications on ball diamond types and sizes that are required.



<sup>18</sup> Baseball Ontario. Annual General Meeting Reports.

## Facility Needs

The City of Oshawa has historically calculated needs using a standard of one ball diamond per 100 registered players. The City is presently achieving a service rate of one diamond per 62 registrants based upon an estimated 3,625 players using an effective supply of 58.5 diamonds.

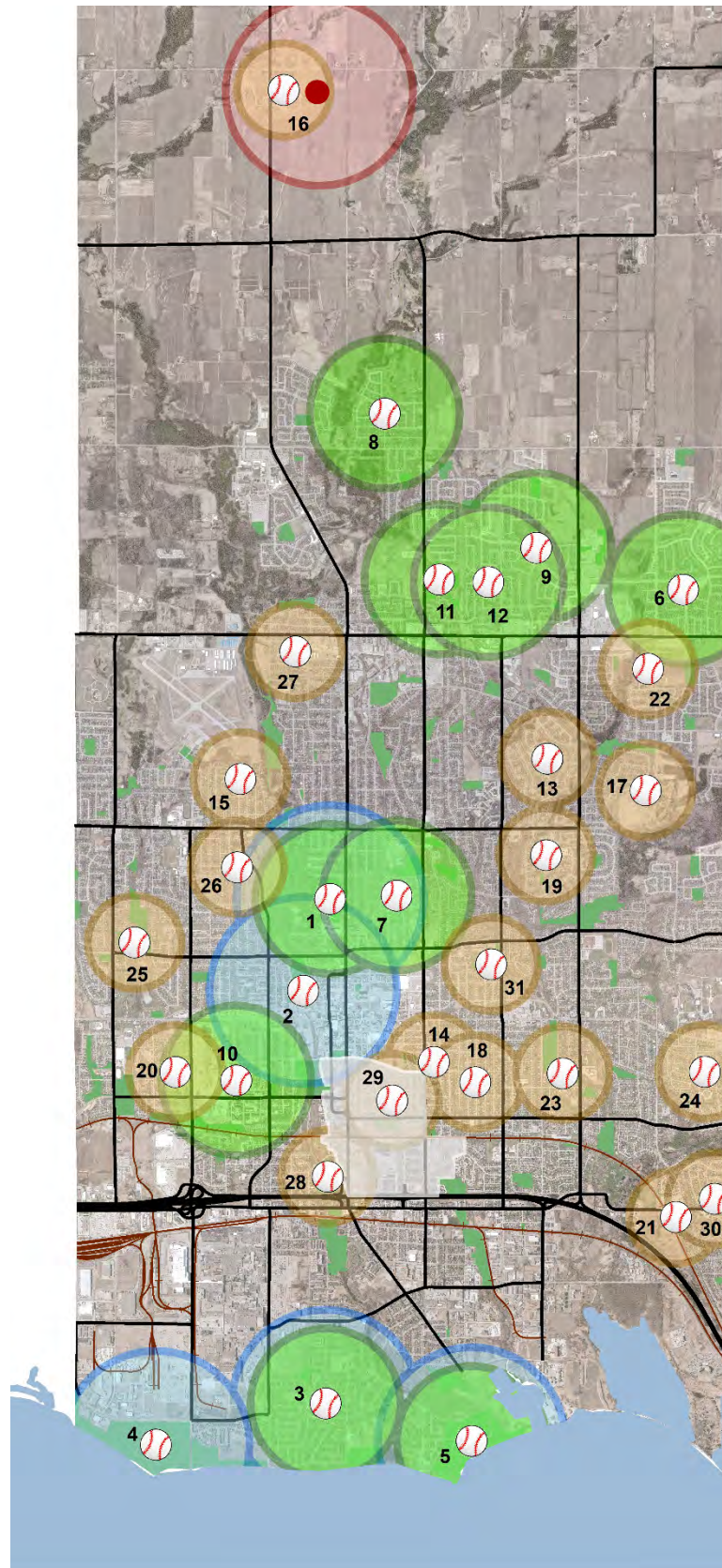
While application of the standard would suggest that there is an ample supply of diamonds in relation to local players, consultations with minor baseball and softball organizations during the P.R.L.C. Assessment suggest that there may be an insufficient number of diamonds for hardball and fastpitch play. There may be merit to this observation as the City's supply of diamonds is heavily weighted to softball diamonds.

It bears noting that Kinsmen Stadium has been identified as a Class "A" property on the Heritage Oshawa Inventory. The original concrete outfield walls, with thick ivy coverage, are a component of this heritage classification. Kinsmen Stadium houses a 122 metre baseball diamond with irrigation and drainage, backstop, field fencing, grandstands, bullpens, and lighting. Existing buildings and ancillary structures on the site include a storage bunker, combined washroom/office facility, and a ticket booth. Many onsite structures and buildings are nearing their end of serviceable life, and are in various states of disrepair. Over the last number of years, a patchwork approach to capital improvements has been undertaken to increase the immediate lifespan of the facility and playability of the field. The City and Oshawa Legion Minor Baseball Association have held an agreement between 2009 and until 2023 as partners in the maintenance of the facility. Given the considerable capital investment required, a review of this agreement may assist in developing a plan to maintain this facility moving forward.






To help build capacity for hardball and fast-pitch programs, the City should engage local ball organizations to explore existing diamonds that might be appropriate candidates for upgrades. Further, the City may co-locate two hardball diamonds at the future Columbus Community Park to address needs arising from the residential areas that are developing in the north.



Map 6: Existing and Proposed Distribution of Ball Diamonds



**Ball Diamonds**

-  Class A Ball Diamonds with a 1km Service Area
-  Class B Ball Diamonds with an 800m Service Area
-  Class C Ball Diamonds with a 500m Service Area
-  Proposed Ball Diamond
-  M.T.S.A. Boundary

**Class A**

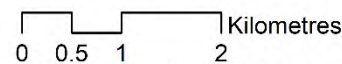
1. Alexandra Park
2. Kinsmen Stadium
3. Lake Vista Park
4. Lakefront West (8)
5. Lakeview Park (2)

**Class B**

1. Alexandra Park (3)
6. Coldstream Park
7. Connaught Park
8. Kedron Park
3. Lake Vista Park
5. Lakeview Park
9. Mount Joy Park
10. Radio Park
11. Ritson Field
12. Sherwood Park

**Class C**

13. Attersley Park (2)
14. Bathe Park (2)
15. Brookside Park
16. Columbus Park
17. Corbett's Park
18. Eastview Park (3)
19. Galahad Park
20. Glen Stewart Park (2)
21. Grandview Village Park
22. Iroquois Shoreline Park
23. Knights of Columbus (3)
24. Mackenzie Park
25. McLaughlin Park
26. Nipigon Park (2)
27. Russett Park
28. Storie Park (2)
29. Sunnyside Park
30. Terry Fox Park
31. Woodview Park



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## 4.8 Cricket Grounds

The City recently installed a cricket pitch at Stone Street Park in the open space found between the South Oshawa Community Centre and the waterfront trail. This cricket pitch was planned as a temporary facility as it is undersized relative to regulation specifications but is intended to facilitate opportunities for recreational play. A modified cricket pitch has also been constructed at the former Canadian Martyrs Catholic School (adjacent to Stone Street Park) under agreement with the school board which will result in two cricket pitches in the south.

### Market Considerations

The popularity of cricket is growing in Canada, particularly in urban municipalities with diverse cultural populations whose residents have immigrated from South Asia, Caribbean and certain European countries where the sport is popular. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cricket Canada estimates that there are 130,000 cricket players and 820 clubs across the country, with the largest concentration of players residing in southern Ontario.

Cricket play requires a large circular field that encompasses an area similar to two soccer fields, resulting in unique design specifications that can sometimes be challenging to accommodate. Some municipalities have developed cricket pitches across multiple sports fields or in sub-optimal remnant spaces, while others have provided dedicated cricket pitches. There are multiple formats of cricket play that vary in duration and rules. At the international level, there are three variations known as Test Cricket, One Day Internationals, and Twenty20 (T20) Internationals. At the community level, playing formats vary considerably with altered rules. Common forms of the played sport are described below:

- Long-format cricket is typically played over an 8-hour period (40 to 50 overs) and is played for competitive purposes.
- Short-format cricket allows the game to be played within a one-to-four-hour period. This is the fastest growing format in Canada, usually in the form of T20/T25 (e.g., 20 to 25 overs).
- Tennis ball / Tape-ball cricket uses a tennis ball or a tennis ball wrapped in tape to add additional weight. Given that a tennis ball is not as hard as a cricket ball, safety equipment is generally not worn.



Members of the Oshawa Hawks Cricket Club participated in P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations and indicated that they have men's, women's and youth teams playing locally. The Hawks report positive relationships with the City's booking staff but indicate that the lack of a properly sized cricket grounds is limiting their ability to deliver a quality grassroots program (they also expressed interest in an indoor turf facility). The Hawks also suggested relocating the Stone Street Park pitch by a few metres to improve playability and as noted earlier, there are plans to develop a cricket pitch on the school grounds which will hopefully address the club's stated needs. In terms of feedback from the general public, limited input was provided regarding cricket and it ranked low in terms of participation and priority among feedback form respondents.

### **Facility Needs**

Oshawa's cultural mix is gradually diversifying, particularly with growth spreading eastwards throughout the G.T.A. There is a growing South Asian community in the developing residential areas in Oshawa's north and the 2021 Census records more than 17,000 residents having immigrated from South Asia, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom which provides an informal measure of the target market for the sport. Cricket pitches are now found in all south Durham municipalities but Oshawa and Whitby are the only ones with temporary fields at present time.

Certain municipalities – primarily larger, culturally-diverse, G.T.A. communities – have adopted a target of one cricket pitch per 100,000 residents. With Oshawa at 191,600 residents and projected to grow to 220,000 residents by 2031, the move to formalize a cricket pitch with the school board is opportune.

It is likely, however, that an additional cricket grounds will be warranted based on population as well as geographic distribution given the distance to reach the Oshawa waterfront for most residents. A cricket grounds may be provided at a future park in the north to address growth-related needs.

## 4.9 Racquet Sport Courts

There are 15 outdoor tennis courts located at seven municipal parks, 11 of which are lit and 4 are unlit. While this is fewer than recorded in the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment's inventory, this is due to a reclassification as the City has overlaid pickleball lines on certain tennis courts to create a multi-use template (see below). There are also five indoor tennis courts and two squash courts at the Civic Recreation Complex.

The City substantially enhanced its supply of outdoor racquet sport courts by adding outdoor pickleball courts to its core facility portfolio. The City constructed 8 dedicated outdoor pickleball courts by converting former tennis courts at Kingside Park - resulting in four pickleball courts there – and repurposing an underutilized asphalt pad at Radio Park to also provide four pickleball courts.

The City has overlaid lines for pickleball onto existing tennis courts to create 4 multi-use courts that are designed for both sports. These shared/overlay courts are provided at Alexandra Park and Stone Street Park, and effectively implements the recommendation from the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment.

With the exception of Conlin Woods Park, Oshawa's tennis and pickleball courts are provided in pods of two or more which creates convenience for users along with operational efficiencies at the time of court maintenance and renewals.



Park Name	Courts	Surface	Amenities
<b>Indoor Tennis Courts</b>			
Civic Recreation Complex	5	Concrete with acrylic treatment	Pro Shop
<b>Indoor Squash Courts</b>			
Civic Recreation Complex	2	Sprung wood	Not applicable
<b>Outdoor Tennis Courts</b>			
Alexandra Park	1	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Lighting, perimeter fencing
Baker Park	2	Asphalt	Lighting, perimeter fencing
Brookside Park	2	Asphalt	Perimeter fencing
Conlin Woods Park	1	Asphalt	Perimeter fencing
North Oshawa Park	5	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Lighting, benches, perimeter fencing, windscreens, shade structure
Radio Park	2	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Perimeter fencing, windscreens
Stone Street Park	2	Asphalt	Lighting, perimeter fencing
<b>Outdoor Pickleball Courts</b>			
Kingside Park	4	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Perimeter fencing
Radio Park	4	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Perimeter fencing, windscreens
<b>Shared / Overlay Courts</b>			
Alexandra Park	4	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Lighting, perimeter fencing
Stone Street Park	4	Asphalt with acrylic treatment	Lighting, perimeter fencing

## Market Considerations

The Ontario Tennis Association states that 2022 was a banner year for the organization with 65,000 people playing in clubs across the province and 6,000 children being introduced to the sport for the first time. The popularity of tennis at the national and provincial levels can be partly attributed to the growing segment of baby boomers that seek social, and to some degree, lower impact activities while governing bodies and community tennis clubs are promoting the sport at the grassroots level. Part of the sport's growth is also linked to the success of Canadian men and women playing on the professional tours.

One of Tennis Canada's top priorities is to make tennis more accessible to Canadians. It is working with partners to develop year-round community tennis courts with the aim of building 160 year-round courts across up to 30 facilities by the year 2029 through a \$5.6 million fund that includes \$200,000 of seed money for each project. Further, Tennis Canada's Play Your Court program is aimed at working with municipalities to update more than 100 outdoor community courts with \$3 million in funding for resurfacing, fencing, nets and signage.<sup>19</sup>

Indoor tennis is largely played by those seeking club-type experiences with programs, round-robin play, etc. along with those looking to train in the sport year round. Accordingly, indoor tennis courts have long been dominated by private sector racquet clubs and are not a core level of service in most municipalities. Oshawa is unique in that it is one of few municipalities that owns an indoor tennis facility and uses a progressive model of outsourcing court times to qualified tennis providers who deliver leagues, clinics and other programs. The Civic Recreation Complex indoor tennis courts bookings have grown substantially over pre-pandemic levels; the 20,000 hours booked in 2022 were 65% higher than 2019 bookings; in fact, non-prime time utilization rates in 2022 were higher than prime time usage at 96% versus 70% respectively.



<sup>19</sup> Tennis Canada Annual Report 2022



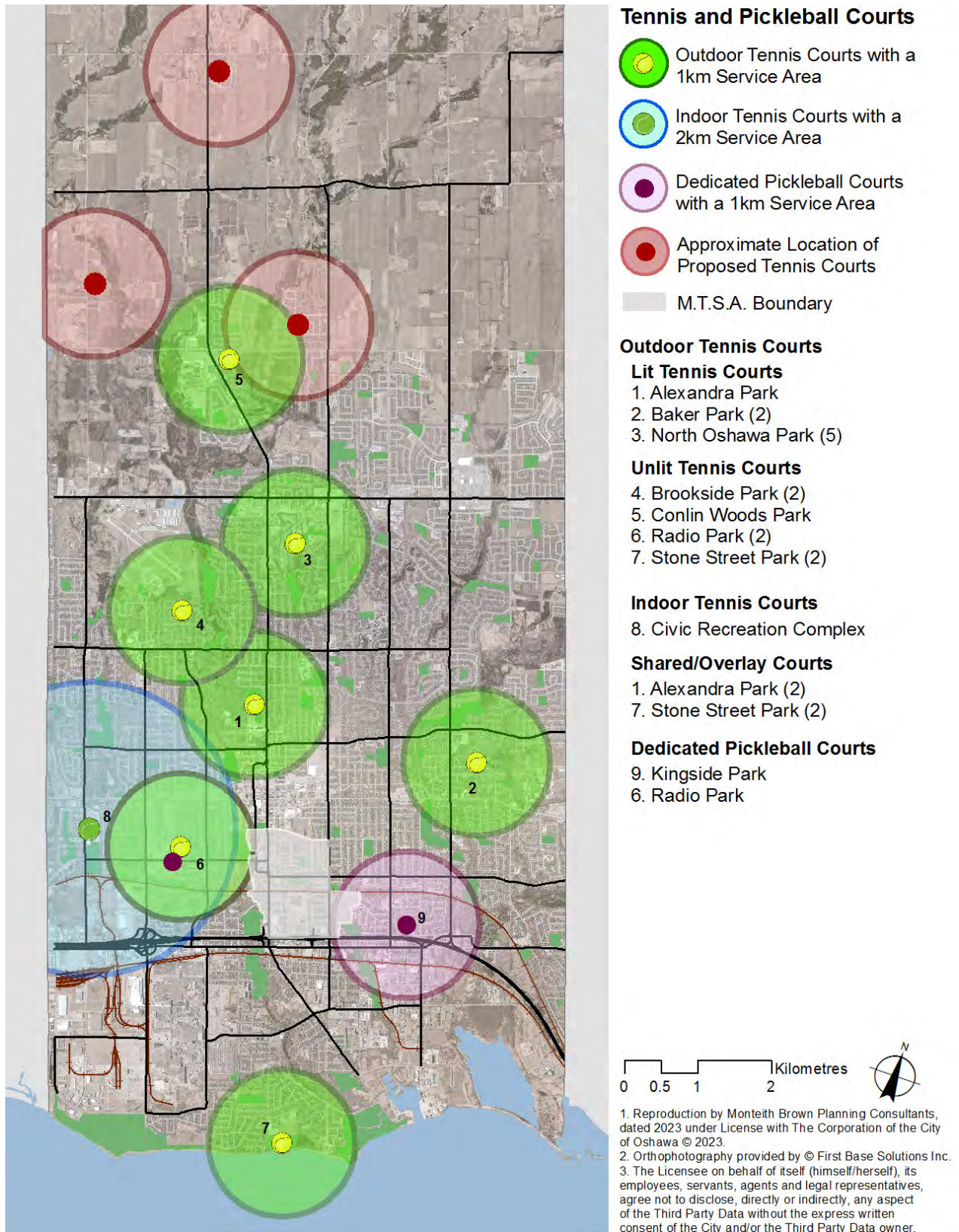
Pickleball is still primarily played indoors but growth in the sport is leading to requests for outdoor courts as well as people look to play outside in the warmer months; requests for outdoor courts are also becoming more frequent as a result of pickleball players being displaced from gymnasiums when municipalities need that space for their children's and youth camps/summer programs. Older adults that are uninterested in the fast-pace of tennis are still able to hit the courts to play pickleball, which is a lower intensity sport. There is evidence that baby boomers are creating a boost in pickleball as participation trends suggests that older adults have a greater desire to remain physically active in their retirement years. This segment has driven pickleball to become one of the fastest growing sports in Canada and its popularity continues to spread across the Province. The prominence of pickleball is further bolstered for being played at the Ontario Senior Games. That said, pickleball clubs and other representatives of the sport indicate that they are experiencing greater interest from younger people as well.

I.C.M. Tennis and representatives for outdoor pickleball contributed feedback for the P.R.L.C. Assessment and reinforced a number of the above noted trends. The OSCC55+ Membership Council and staff indicate that pickleball is one of their most sought-after activities during daytime and evening periods. Among feedback form respondents, 18% reported a member of their household playing pickleball in the past 12 months and 12% reported playing tennis.

Like a number of municipalities, use of the City's squash courts has been declining over time which led to a decision to repurpose two of the four courts at the Civic Recreation Complex. The City was creative in converting one of these courts to a cycle spin studio, a practice employed by others to reclaim underutilized space; as an example, the City of Niagara Falls repurposed two squash courts to an indoor playground while a number of others have converted squash courts to group fitness studios.

Most new community centres built in the past 15 years have not included squash courts as municipalities have largely left this service to private clubs; there are exceptions such as areas where demand for squash is growing as a result of cultural diversity and immigration from countries where racquet sports are popular. The City of Oshawa recently started administering its own squash league in an attempt to increase usage of the two courts. However, approximately 400 fitness members purchased the 'racquet sports add-on' in 2022 - which is shared between the squash and indoor tennis courts - amounting to a 45% increase compared to 2019 but remains below the 530 add-ons purchased in 2017; of note, a portion of members that purchased the 'all-inclusive add-on' may also use the racquet courts but it is not possible to isolate usage by these individuals.

Map 7: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Tennis and Pickleball Courts



## Facility Needs

Outdoor tennis court needs are assessed using a combination of geographic distribution and population-based service standards. Including the four overlay courts, Oshawa provides outdoor tennis courts at a rate of 1 per 10,000 population which is below the recommended service level of 1 tennis court per 6,000 population; even after including the five indoor courts at the Civic Recreation Complex, the City's service level is lower than would be desired. In looking at geographic distribution of courts (Map 7), notable gaps are identified north of Taunton Road where there is only one tennis court at present as well as in the core area east of Simcoe Street.

A total of 32 tennis courts would be required to meet a service level of 1 : 6,000 at present time, growing to a need for 36 tennis courts by 2031; doing so would require up to 13 additional tennis courts over the P.R.L.C. Assessment period while still counting the indoor courts as part of the supply. The deficit is similar to the projection articulated in the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment.

The following implementation strategy considers developing tennis court and pickleball court supplies north of Taunton Road given the degree of population that currently exists and planned through future residential developments, as well as in areas of planned residential intensification:

- 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts at the future Windfields Community Park (beside the future community centre in Northwood Business Park);
- 3 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts at the future Community Park identified in the Columbus Part II Plan;
- 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts at future Community Park identified in the Kedron Part II Plan; and
- 2 tennis courts at a location to be determined, preferably in the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Area or the Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. (i.e. the future GO Station) at the time of a park development or renewal project.

As there are no generally accepted service level standards for dedicated pickleball courts in Ontario, the above strategy is based on geographic distribution and allows for pickleball to be provided in each Part II Plan area. With indoor tennis courts bookings appearing to have some prime time capacity available, provision of additional indoor tennis courts is not rationalized by the P.R.L.C. Assessment at this time.

## 4.10 Basketball Courts

Oshawa provides basketball courts at 25 municipal parks. Collectively there are a total of 27 courts consisting of 9 full courts, 13 half courts (of sufficient size to accommodate three-on-three play) and 5 single hoops that are characterized by a narrow strip of asphalt suitable for a shoot-around.

Full Basketball Courts	Half Basketball Courts	Single Hoops
1. Bloor and Simcoe Park	1. Edenwood Park	1. Eastview Park (3)
2. Connaught Park	2. Grand Ridge Park	2. Mackenzie Park
3. Fenelon/Venus Park	3. Kedron Park	3. Steeplechase Park
4. Knights of Columbus Park	4. Kettering Park	
5. Lakeview Park	5. Lakewoods Park	
6. North Oshawa Park	6. Mackie Park	
7. Northview Park	7. Mitchell Park	
8. Stone Street Park	8. Mountjoy Park	
9. Warne Park	9. Niagara Park	
	10. Sandy Hawley Park	
	11. Swiss Heights Park	
	12. Veterans Tot Lot	
	13. Woodview Park	

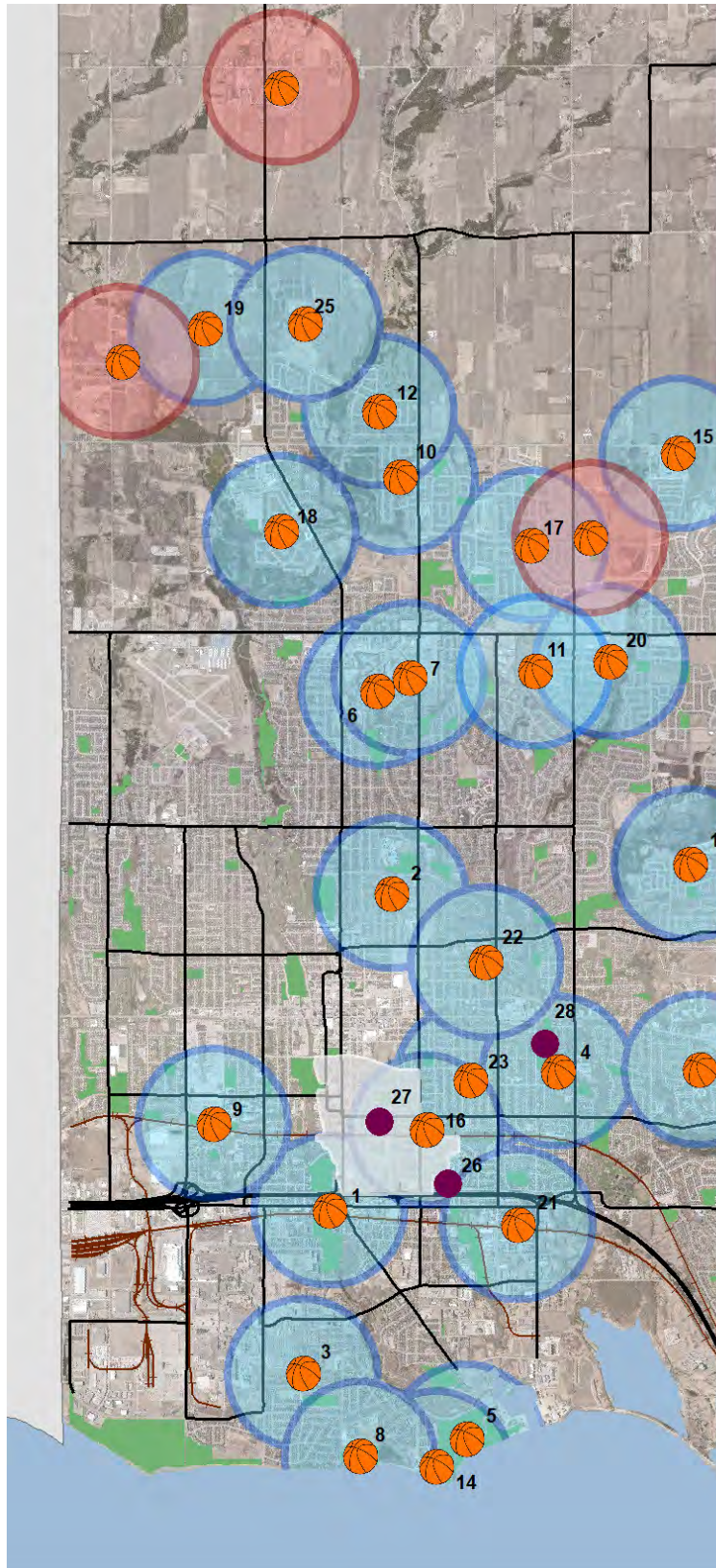
There are also a considerable number of school properties that contain outdoor hoops, somewhat alleviating pressure on the municipal supply. School courts are of varying size and quality (which the City cannot directly influence as maintenance is under the control of the school boards), thus their presence is recognized but these courts cannot solely be relied upon to address gap areas.

### Market Considerations




Durham Region has produced national and international calibre basketball players. The local popularity of basketball is fueled by factors such as its affordability and access to free outdoor courts, strong interest among youth and immigrant populations from basketball-playing countries, an energized Toronto Raptors fan base stemming from the team's N.B.A. Championship victory in 2019 and a strengthened national program as evidenced by growing numbers of Canadians playing in the N.B.A. and W.N.B.A. Although the City does not directly program its outdoor courts, basketball programs are offered within its gymnasiums.

The P.R.L.C. Assessment feedback form recorded 11% of responding households having played basketball in the past 12 months. Support ranked in the top 15 facility priorities with 56% agreeing with future investments in basketball courts. Little feedback specific to basketball was received through other consultations.

Map 8: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Basketball Courts



**Basketball Courts**

-  Basketball Courts with a 800m Service Area
-  Proposed Basketball Courts
-  Asphalt Pads
-  M.T.S.A. Boundary

**Full Basketball Courts**

1. Bloor/Simcoe Parkette
2. Connaught Park
3. Fenelon/Venus Park
4. Knights of Columbus Park
5. Lakeview Park
6. North Oshawa Park
7. Northview Park
8. Stone Street Park
9. Warne Park

**Half Basketball Courts**

10. Edenwood Park
11. Grand Ridge Park
12. Kedron Park
13. Kettering Park
14. Lakewoods Park
15. Mackie Park
16. Mitchell Park
17. Mount Joy Park
18. Niagara Park
19. Sandy Hawley Park
20. Swiss Height Park
21. Veterans Tot Lot
22. Woodview Park

**Single Hoops**

23. Eastview Park
24. Mackenzie Park (3)
25. Steeplechase Park

**Asphalt Pads**

26. Chopin Park
27. Cowan Park
28. Farewell Park



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## Facility Needs

Basketball courts are best provided on the basis of distribution and in consideration of youth populations, given persons between the ages of 10 and 19 tend to be the primary users of outdoor courts and this age segment relies heavily on walking/cycling for travel. With approximately 20,000 youth between 10 and 19 years of age in the City, the service level amounts to one basketball court per 750 youth which is in line with targets used across the G.T.A. and the rate of service recommended in the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment.

Assuming a youth population of 25,000 in the year 2031, the City would need to consider increasing its supply by 4 basketball courts to reach 31 courts in total. As shown in Map 8, geographic distribution is fairly strong with the most notable gap located in McLaughlin planning district though these and other gap areas are serviced to a certain extent by school courts subject to previously noted limitations.

Each of the three future Community Parks identified in the Windfields, Kedron and Columbus Part II Plans may include a minimum of one full basketball court. The Gore Meadows Community Centre in Brampton provides an excellent model that integrates a full court along with a series of smaller courts with lowered nets that are ideal for young children; this could be an example to replicate where space exists. The fourth new basketball court may be added to the Delpark Homes Centre site given its proximity to a local high school and its connection to the Harmony Creek trail network.



## 4.11 Board and Bike Parks

Oshawa provides three skateboard parks. While these facilities are also used by bicycles, scooters and inline skates, it is important to note that the City's skateboard parks were not originally designed for these other uses and use particularly by bicycles is exerting a toll on some of the concrete components (damage from scooters and rollerblades is fairly minimal). The City also implemented a recommendation from the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment by recently opening a B.M.X. course at Rose Valley Community Park.

### Market Considerations

Cycling and mountain biking ranked in the top 10 recreational pursuits among feedback form respondents at 30% (which would include cycling on roads and paths) while 9% of households had a member that skateboarded in the past year. Little feedback was received through other P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations regarding wheeled action sports.

One of the key design principles of skateboard park developments is to create unique, fun and engaging skating experiences. Large skateboard parks are generally designed to serve a broad community. Smaller skateboard parks (or "skate spots") may have fewer, introductory-level components that draw from a smaller catchment area. Oshawa's skateboard parks contain a mix of permanent concrete and modular fixtures with differing design specifications between them.

### Oshawa Skateboard & Bike Parks

<b>Delpark Homes Centre Skateboard Park</b> Year Built: 2008	A basic modular setup in the west parking lot featuring a couple of ramps and bleacher seating area.
<b>Donevan Recreation Complex Skateboard Park</b> Year Built: 2003	A large concrete bowl containing formed ramps, curbs and rails that is located adjacent to the Donevan Recreation Complex building.
<b>North Oshawa Skateboard Park</b> Year Built: 2010	A large concrete bowl featuring formed ramps, curbs, steps and rails that is situated in the northwest corner of the park.
<b>Rose Valley B.M.X. Park</b> Year Built: 2022	A 54,000 square foot dirt jump style B.M.X. course with beginner, intermediate and advanced lines that incorporates bermed corners, rolling step ups/downs, rollers, double rollers and tilted rollers.

Historically, skateboarding and other wheeled action sports such as in-line skating (sometimes referred to as roller blading), scooters, and B.M.X. bikes were commonly associated with negative behaviour. This perception has evolved over time as these activities have become mainstream among youth and young adults. Prior to the existence of skateparks and pump tracks, skateboarders and other action sport enthusiasts would use a variety of municipal and private properties due to the lack of a better venue, resulting in excessive wear and damages as well as safety concerns.

### **Facility Needs**

As youth-oriented facilities, geographic access to substantial youth populations is important. The City's current service level is in the range of one skateboard park per 6,600 youth between the ages of 10 and 19 and close to the service level target of 1:6,000 youth established in the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment. With the youth population estimated to grow 5,000 persons by the year 2031 assuming similar proportional age structure rates, one new skateboard park may be considered. The Windfields Community Park has the potential to service the northwest and balance geographic distribution in the north in tandem with skateparks already found at North Oshawa Park and the Delpark Homes Centre. Skateboard parks are an excellent complement to an outdoor basketball court, gymnasium or youth centre. The future Kedron Park may be an alternative location.

In addition, the City may explore the feasibility of formalizing the skateboard park at the Delpark Homes Centre as a more permanent installation with features found in modern skatepark designs. Assuming that it remains visible from the Harmony Road corridor, a plaza-style design template could be employed to contribute towards enhanced urban design in the public realm though more standardized concrete bowl templates can also impart an aesthetically pleasing look as well. The site constraints are recognized but the populations found in the Taunton and Kedron Communities are such that pressures for positive youth amenities such as skateboard parks are only likely to grow.

The Rose Valley B.M.X. Park which opened in 2022 provides an excellent venue for local residents to enjoy and develop their skills for years to come. Integration of beginner, intermediate and advanced courses was insightful to attract users of all skillsets. The model of engaging volunteer stewards to help design and maintain the park is best practice and to be commended. As such, B.M.X. needs are anticipated to be met over the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period.



## 4.12 Playgrounds

The City provides 113 playground locations across Oshawa. Playgrounds are commonly found at municipal parks and community centres with senior, junior, and combined age creative play equipment.

### Market Considerations

Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development, foster cognitive development and social skills, and encourage physical activity. Playground designs have evolved overtime from traditional play equipment (i.e., swings, slides, etc.) to creative structures that facilitate environments that encourage users to use their imagination to create unique play experiences. This may include design elements such as vibrant colours, interactive play features, thematic designs, barrier-free features for children and their caregivers, and components that stimulate the senses.

The feedback form recorded 37% of responding households as having visited a playground in the past 12 months, making it the fourth most popular facility, while respondents prioritized future investments in playgrounds behind only trails.

### Facility Needs

The supply achieves very strong geographic coverage (Map 9) with nearly all residential areas being located within 800 metres of a playground, or a 10 to 12 minute walk. The strength of the spatial coverage is also strengthened by the fact that private playgrounds exist throughout the city (e.g. through condominiums or apartments, schools, etc.), though these are not included in the P.R.L.C. Assessment's supply since they are typically not accessible to the general public nor does the City have influence regarding their design and maintenance as these are under the purview of private landowners.

Inclusion of playgrounds has become standard practice for the City's new Community and Neighbourhood Park developments. With strong geographic distribution in established neighbourhoods, there is every reason to believe that new residential developments in the Windfields, Kedron and Taunton Communities will also provide playgrounds in walking distance as their parks are developed.



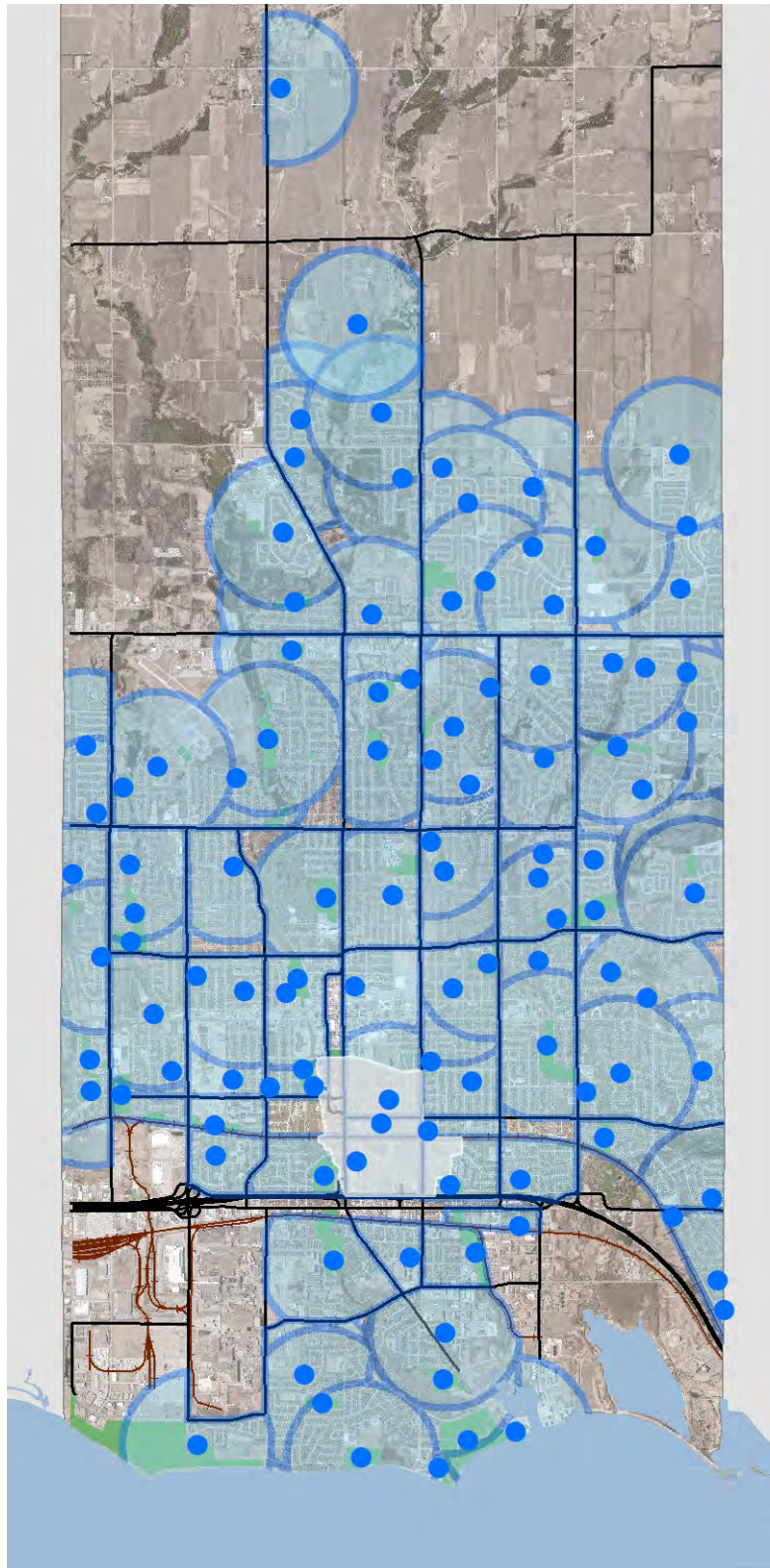
As an alternative to the traditional and creative playground model, natural and adventure playgrounds are becoming more popular around the world; Oshawa has built a playground with natural elements at Sandy Hawley Park's western parcel (fronting along Windfields Farm Drive). Natural playgrounds encourage the use of the existing landscape and materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders to allow users to create more daring opportunities. Still designed in compliance with CSA Z614 standards, natural/adventure playgrounds may appear to be precarious but are proven to stimulate greater sensory and imaginative play compared to traditional plastic structures; research also shows that children's immune health can benefit from exposure to natural materials.

Other play-oriented approaches seen in municipalities in Ontario include the addition of large plastic toys within playgrounds (such as play kitchens, dump trucks, tricycles etc.) to capture children's imaginations and increase their outdoor play time. Some cities have added a simple pile of dirt or sand where children and caregivers alike augment their time by playing, digging, building, climbing, sliding down, etc. This solution is a simple low cost means of keeping caregivers and children outside longer while engaging in creative play.



The 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment highlighted the aging state of many of the City's existing playgrounds and recommended a review of the municipal playground replacement policy. While the City has renewed or replaced a number of playgrounds, site tours show that there are still a number of playgrounds that remain in an advanced lifecycle state. These playgrounds may be considered for replacement within the current P.R.L.C. Assessment period and therefore will require funding to do so. With 113 playground locations and assuming a 15 year lifecycle, at a high-level the City may consider a plan to redevelop the parks with playgrounds along with considering the associated capital budget investments (noting actual costs will vary depending on the year and type of playgrounds being replaced). Whether a new or replacement playground structure, consideration should be given to incorporation of barrier-free accessibility through the structure, its components (e.g. ramps, sensory boards, accessible swings), and the type of surface provided depending on the classification of park in which the playground is situated.

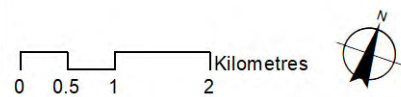
In addition to prioritizing play equipment that is at or near end of life, another trigger for replacement may be the type of surfacing at a playground as there are still sites that use pea stone or sand which are no longer desirable materials due to health, safety and barrier-free accessibility reasons. Engineered wood fibre is generally the standard in neighbourhood settings while cast-in-place rubber is well suited for Community Parks and higher-use sites noting, however, the latter is expensive and can be prone to premature wear depending on site conditions and level of use – the City has experienced this challenge at Lakeview Park.

Map 9: Distribution of Playgrounds



**Playgrounds**

-  Playground locations with an 800m Service Area
-  M.T.S.A. Boundary



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### 4.13 Bocce & Lawn Bowling

The Oshawa Lawn Bowling Club has a dedicated clubhouse and green attached to the Northview Community Centre. The Club is responsible for rentals and programming of the space.

A bocce court complex at Radio Park was used by the Oshawa Bocce Club who until recently were largely responsible for operations including organizing league play; it is understood, however, that the City will be assuming permitting of the bocce courts.

Bocce and lawn bowling in Ontario have largely been provided to the general public through community based clubs, some of which are located on municipal lands and using different operational models run by clubs, the municipality, or a combination thereof. Like Oshawa's past approach, both the City of Pickering and the Town of Whitby provide land for lawn bowling greens with their facilities maintained by the local lawn bowling clubs. In addition, both Whitby and Pickering also own and maintain two bocce courts.

At the provincial and regional level, there is little evidence suggesting that lawn bowling or bocce will meaningfully grow beyond their current participation rates as these sports have not been taken up by younger generations. Apart from limited feedback from the OSCC55+ Membership Council about lawn bowling, no input was received specific to bocce or lawn bowling through the P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations.

With the absence of demand indicators such as local participation rates and significant capital required to address aging infrastructure, provision of additional facilities is not deemed to be warranted at this time.



## 4.14 Frisbee & Disc Sports

### Disc Golf

Disc golf is a sport in which players throw a flying disc on a course consisting of between 9 and 18 targets (or baskets). The sport is a century old game that originated in Canada in the early 1900s that is now played across the world. It has been gaining in popularity in recent times as an increasing number of young adults have been taking up the sport. The governing body for the sport is the Professional Disc Golf Association, which reported a total of 150,000 professional and amateur members in 2021.<sup>20</sup> Interest in the sport continues to grow as people continue to seek casual and active outdoor physical activities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. While there is no organized Oshawa-based disc golf group, there is likely an unquantified base of casual disc golf players.

The P.R.L.C. feedback form recorded a 5% participation rate in disc golf and 31% of respondents supported investment in disc golf course facilities (ranking near the bottom of priorities). Representatives of Chainlink Disc Golf participated in one of the focus groups, speaking to the growth potential and benefits of introducing a disc golf course in Oshawa. They indicate that disc golf can be a way to rejuvenate outdated parks as well as to enhance safety in parks where such concerns exist by introducing new users; Chainlink indicates that at least four acres of land would be required for a 9-hole course.

While the sport continues to gain in popularity across the Province, there is no standard level of service guiding municipal provision of disc golf courses. While Oshawa does not have a disc golf course, the growing post-secondary population alongside with the City attracting younger households in general and a number of opportunities for park revitalization could yield support to test the market. The City may engage industry and player representatives of disc golf to determine an optimal location for a 9-hole course as well as exploring a funding model for capital and operating costs. Subject to the outcomes of this feasibility analysis, a decision can be made whether to invest in a disc golf course on a trial or permanent basis.



Image Source: Toronto Region Conservation Authority

<sup>20</sup> Sports Illustrated. 2021. Paige Pierce Is Taking Disc Golf To the Moon. Retrieved from <https://www.si.com/>

## Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate Frisbee is a non-contact sport that emerged in the 1990s. While it continues to be a niche sport, it has experienced surging popularity particularly among young adults (including social clubs). As a result, the sport has been recognized by international sporting organizations including the International World Games Association and the International Olympic Committee; however, the International Olympic Committee elected not to include ultimate frisbee in upcoming Olympic Games after giving it consideration for the better part of the last decade.

The popularity of the sport is partly driven by the low cost to participate as well as the sport attracting players from other field sports who bring transferable skills to the game.<sup>21</sup> Ultimate Frisbee fields generally measure 110 metres by 37 metres (120 yards by 40 yards), including the end zones, allowing the sport to be played on the indoor and outdoor rectangular fields. Most municipalities direct ultimate frisbee to fields shared with soccer but the City of Waterloo is one example that has chosen to construct a dedicated ultimate frisbee field complex by repurposing a former soccer field to house seven ultimate frisbee fields.

With the P.R.L.C. Assessment considering investments in the rectangular field supply, this should allow for a degree of use by those wishing to play ultimate frisbee. No community feedback or market-specific information has been received that would suggest a dedicated field or field complex is required in Oshawa at this time.

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<sup>21</sup> Blasiak, Nick. Ultimate Frisbee teams find early success. The Brock Press. 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.brockpress.com>

## 4.15 Recreation Facility Initiatives

- R1.** Recreational components to be considered for inclusion at a future community centre in the north may include: a 25-metre lane rectangular pool with a minimum of 8 lanes plus separate leisure and therapeutic pools; a gymnasium designed to high school regulation specifications including adequate playout dimensions, ceiling heights and floor surfacing; a fitness centre and group fitness studio with a sprung wood floor; an indoor track; space for Indigenous programs and activities; and dedicated youth room. As noted in Initiatives #L2 and #S1, a community centre could also include dedicated spaces for OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries. Exploring sport-friendly and age-friendly accessibility features, and designing a community centre in a manner that would allow it to readily be expanded if required, may provide added flexibility to address future needs.
- R2.** Recreational components to be considered for inclusion at the future Windfields Community Park (adjacent to a future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) may include: a minimum of one lit full size rectangular sports field; a refrigerated outdoor skating trail; a major splash pad; 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; a skateboard park; and an adventure or natural playground structure.
- R3.** Recreational components considered for inclusion at the future Kedron Community Park may include: a minimum of 2 lit full size rectangular sports fields; a major splash pad; 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; and an adventure or natural playground structure.
- R4.** Recreational components considered for inclusion at the future Columbus Community Park may include: a minimum of 2 lit hardball diamonds; a major splash pad; 3 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; and an adventure or natural playground structure.
- R5.** At least one of the rectangular fields recommended at future Community Parks in the Windfields, Kedron, and Columbus Park II Plan area may be considered to be enclosed for indoor use. When considering such a venture, partnerships with post-secondary institutions and/or user groups may assist with the development and/or operation of the indoor/outdoor fields.

- R6.** Consider engaging local ball organizations in a review of existing ball diamonds that they are using to discuss improvements that could help build capacity in their programs, and confirm feasibility of such improvements through requisite studies that explore setbacks to adjacent land uses, topography, infrastructure serving, and associated costs.
- R7.** Consider the construction of a regulation-size cricket grounds at either the Kedron Community Park or the Columbus Community Park.
- R8.** Consider expanding the Delpark Homes Centre to add a second gymnasium to alleviate capacity pressures currently faced for programs delivered by the City, OSCC55+ and community-based providers. In addition, the City may consider enhancements to its courtyard, construct a full basketball court while exploring the feasibility of converting the Delpark Homes Centre skateboard park into a permanent installation employing a progressive design template.
- R9.** Consider expanding either the Civic Recreation Complex or Donevan Recreation Complex to include a gymnasium subject to confirmation through architectural and/or engineering analyses. Whichever option is not chosen should be deferred for consideration after the year 2031.
- R10.** Consider expanding the Donevan Recreation Complex to add a fitness centre as well as carry out façade improvements to increase the facility's visual presence along Harmony Road. A gymnasium may also be considered subject to the City's decision regarding Initiative #R9.
- R11.** Consider the preparation of an interior configuration plan for the Civic Recreation Complex that rectifies current challenges regarding facility control and staff supervision along with enhanced visibility and access into the fieldhouse. A gymnasium may also be considered subject to the City's decision regarding Initiative #R9.
- R12.** New and existing fitness centres operated by the City of Oshawa should consider emerging trends in the fitness industry such as high intensity and functional training, use of on-demand technologies and other best practices to provide a meaningful fitness experience.
- R13.** Consider capital and/or operating cost obligations if/when negotiations arise with Scouts Canada regarding Camp Samac Pool. Should negotiations not achieve a result deemed satisfactory to the City's interests, the City may cease operating the Camp Samac Pool particularly if the opening of new or redeveloped indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities sufficiently meet community needs.



- R14.** Consider initiating a youth-specific consultation process to determine whether improvements or adjustments are required to youth-focused space, amenities and programs provided at the Civic Recreation Complex, South Oshawa Community Centre and Northview Community Centre. The Oshawa Youth Council and other representatives of youth/teens in the city should be engaged through this process.
- R15.** Explore expanding the number of barrier-free, natural and adventure playground structures as part of new park developments and during playground renewal projects.
- R16.** Consider engaging representatives of the local and regional disc golf community to explore the feasibility of integrating a 9-hole course at an existing City park.
- R17.** In anticipation of growth-related recreation needs after the year 2031 - most notably for gymnasium space, arenas, indoor turf, and other large facilities - opportunities to assemble land may be considered for a future community centre while being open to potential partnerships for a mixed-use or stacked community centre model as part of a private sector or institutional land development project.
- R18.** Consider the City's replacement program when planning the capital budget. Playgrounds still employing sand and stone surfacing should be prioritized for replacement with engineered wood fibre, cast-in-place rubber, or other surface material deemed appropriate by Parks Operations.
- R19.** Consider emergency preparedness requirements in new facilities or renovations to existing facilities (i.e. back up power, large assembly areas) so that in the event of an emergency, municipal facilities are suitable as reception centres.
- R20.** Investigate opportunities to upscale existing facilities to accommodate multi-use opportunities outside of traditional sport and recreation (i.e. use of space for weddings, special events).



What Your Neighbours Are Reading

# 5.0

## Library Facility Assessment

## 5.1 Library Supply

Oshawa Public Libraries (O.P.L.) long history of serving residents dates back to 1864. Today, O.P.L. offers extensive collections, materials, equipment, direct programming and other services out of its four library branches and the O.P.L. website. Of the physical branches (i.e. bricks and mortar locations), two libraries are located in stand-alone buildings, one is integrated as part of a multi-use community centre, and one is housed in a storefront space within a retail plaza. A library branch has been included as part of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park with a targeted opening in 2026.

O.P.L. is organized under a centralized structure with McLaughlin Branch acting as the 'main library' housing corporate functions such as library administration and technical services. The three other branches serve community-level catchment areas consisting of groups of neighbourhoods. As Oshawa's population continues to grow to reach 220,000 by 2031 and ultimately 300,000 by the year 2051, library services will need to keep pace through improvements to existing branches and/or construction of new branches.

The following core directives are brought forward from the 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment to guide the library space provisioning framework as they remain relevant and continue to be consistent with O.P.L.'s Strategic Plan and the P.R.L.C. Assessment's strategic framework.

Oshawa Public Libraries facilities will be:

1. Strategically located so as to maximize access for all residents; visible and accessible locations are a must.
2. Co-located or in proximity to community facilities such as recreation centres, parks, schools, or other public uses, wherever possible, so as to encourage partnerships and synergies.
3. Planned for maximum flexibility so that spaces can be easily reconfigured to accommodate changing requirements over time.
4. Designed and operated with inclusive and sustainable practices in mind through safe, barrier-free and energy efficient designs, and use of "green" technologies.
5. Properly maintained and refreshed when necessary to ensure that they remain modern, vibrant, and responsive to needs.



**Table 11: Oshawa Public Libraries Branch Profiles**

Facility Profile	McLaughlin Branch	John Aker Northview Branch	Delpark Homes Centre Branch	Jess Hann Branch	Total
Address	65 Bagot Street	250 Beatrice Street	1661 Harmony Street N.	199 Wentworth Street W.	n/a
Year Constructed	1954	1987	2006	1977	n/a
Size (Sq. Ft.)	65,000	12,800	9,785	7,500	95,085
Program / Activity Room Space	Large multi-purpose room (2,900 ft <sup>2</sup> )	Large multi-purpose room (1,500 ft <sup>2</sup> )	Program room (365 ft <sup>2</sup> )	Shared activity space (750 ft <sup>2</sup> )	n/a
Facility Type	Stand-alone Main Branch	Stand-alone	Integrated with Recreation Centre	Donated Space in Retail Plaza	n/a
Public Computers	16	12	11	10	49
Public Seating	94	36	60	44	234
Weekly Hours of Operation	57	61	64.5	57	n/a
<b>Usage Statistics*</b>	McLaughlin Branch	John Aker Northview Branch	Delpark Homes Centre Branch	Jess Hann Branch	Total
In-Library Visits (Estimated)	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	687,600**
Collection Size (current, excluding eBooks)	163,934	69,190	63,296	36,144	332,564
Annual Circulation (excluding eBooks)	256,401	210,498	209,448	59,072	735,419
Programs Held Annually (excluding outreach)	333	249	332	174	1088
Annual Program Attendance (excluding outreach)	7,935	4,465	5,852	2,579	20,831

\* Usage statistics reflect the period between June 2022 and May 2023

\*\* Annual estimate based on 13,752 visits recorded during a week-long survey and assumed across 50 weeks to account for holidays and maintenance activities.

## 5.2 Trends in Library Design

Modern libraries offer engaging and innovative environments to attract a diverse range of patrons. Successful spaces offer intimacy, warmth, and comfort on a public scale. Libraries must accommodate an unprecedented diversity of clientele as demographics continue to evolve. Collections, service points, and lounge spaces must consider a range of physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, a broad age range, and diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

### Libraries as a Place for All

O.P.L. is an institutional member of the Canadian Centre of Diversity and Inclusion. O.P.L. has adapted its collections and programs to respond to diverse cultural, economic and age groups, with Library staff remaining apprised of trends and interests pertaining to each. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 of the P.R.L.C. Assessment describe the evolving age and socio-economic structure across Oshawa; changes in different age groups should inform space and service delivery in libraries but always ensuring sufficient flexibility to recognize the inherent multi-generational usage that takes place in all library branches.

Libraries are multi-generational settings that attract parents and toddlers, school-age and post-secondary students, young professionals, and seniors. O.P.L. has refreshed the McLaughlin Branch children's area, incorporated areas for teens and other age groups through seating and study space, and added maker-oriented rooms. Other examples used in modern library designs include comfortable lounges, stroller parking areas, dedicated youth rooms, and other elements that encourage people of all ages to spend more time in a branch.

More than 41,000 Oshawa residents were born outside of Canada<sup>22</sup> with a recent influx of newcomers moving into the City's north. Libraries have long been some of the first community destinations sought out by newcomers and are places for recent immigrants to hone language and literacy skills through collections and programs such as E.S.L. while providing a safe space to meet people in their community. O.P.L. is an invaluable access and referral point for newcomer services offered by all levels of government and agencies operating locally. Its libraries can be places that showcase the cultural backgrounds found within the communities they serve, while providing a welcoming and comfortable environment through the design of space, collections, and staffing.

Public libraries are one of the few free spaces available to marginalized populations. The *Public Libraries Act* supports provision of equal and universal access to information and ensures free and equitable access to public libraries for all members of the community. Among other items, the *Act* specifies that there are to be no charges for admissions to library, in-library use of materials, borrowing or reserving materials, nor

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<sup>22</sup> Statistics Canada Census, 2021

for information services. According to 2021 Census data, there are 17,750 Oshawa residents living below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After Tax and therefore are a number of lower income households in Oshawa that benefit greatly from affordable and accessible public library services. Oshawa Public Libraries has made substantial and targeted efforts to better service vulnerable populations, most recently exemplified through removal of late fees for children and teens, Wi-Fi and computer upgrades to bridge the digital divide. Pressures continue to mount on library space and library staff, consistent with experiences in other library systems, as Oshawa Public Libraries tries to balance inclusion in an increasingly challenging social services context where people relying upon the library may include those experiencing homelessness, mental health and addiction issues.

The provincial Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (A.O.D.A.) aims to make public spaces in Ontario accessible for persons with disabilities by the year 2025. Oshawa Public Libraries' capital projects have regard for the A.O.D.A., the Oshawa Accessibility Design Guidelines along with accessibility plans and input from the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Some considerations being explored by Oshawa Public Libraries is the ability to shorten bookshelves to suit individuals with low reach abilities, widening circulation paths for larger mobility devices and strollers, providing gender-neutral and universal washrooms with change tables, and improving service counter configurations to suit different needs of staff and patrons. Further, providing accommodation for those who have hearing and vocal challenges such as hard-of-hearing technology or assistive speaking devices in meeting rooms and at service counters would go a great distance with ensuring comfort for all. Lower lighting, sound attenuation and comfortable colour schemes can also aid those with sensory needs. However, Library staff have found that necessary barrier-free improvements can only be made if there is sufficient physical space to accommodate the changes.

### **The Library as a Beacon of Resiliency**

After the 2008 financial crisis, the American Library Association (A.L.A.) found that the recession drove more people to libraries in search of employment resources. The A.L.A. stated that libraries were a critical part of helping unemployed workers navigate the online job market, learn new skills (including resume building), deliver continuing education programs, and access government services.<sup>23</sup> A more recent A.L.A. report stated that despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, 2021 "proved to be a year of opportunity, as libraries kept Americans connected in ways that brought our communities closer. Buildings may not have been open, but libraries were never closed."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> American Library Association. 2010. *The State of America's Libraries*. p.i

<sup>24</sup> American Library Association. *State of America's Libraries Special Report: COVID-19. Libraries Serve as First Restorers*. p.4

The A.L.A.'s findings are applicable to libraries in Canada. With certain parallels between the 2008 economic downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada's public library systems are once again being relied upon as a pillar of resiliency. However, the 2008 A.L.A. report found that funding lagged following the recession as state and city budgets were cut, resulting in reduced library budgets and hindering their ability to operate at full capacity in the months that followed. In Canada, it remains to be seen if pandemic-related stimulus from senior levels of government will be sufficient to allow libraries to maintain their current funding allocations, and how funding will compare to the level of need being placed on the public library system as a result of any economic downturn. To be successful, O.P.L. must continue looking to research and lessons from across the world and invest time and resources in new technologies and approaches that assist in realizing the many benefits associated with access to library services.

### **Partnerships and Community Hubs**

Public libraries are recognizable community destinations and are increasingly being designed as attractive public spaces with an enjoyable atmosphere. Many libraries embrace their role as community hubs and are focusing efforts on becoming civic integrators, particularly through partnerships and directly providing information or acting as a referral point for other civic and social services. The evolution of libraries as gateways and hubs of civic activity has resulted in non-traditional library spaces for creation, collaboration, socialization, and programs.

Each O.P.L. branch incorporates some of these elements to varying degrees, with three of its four libraries being co-located or in close proximity to other municipal services (while in the case of the Jess Hann Branch being integrated within a shopping plaza which admittedly benefits foot traffic more so than synergistic program delivery potential). Although not the primary intent of the O.P.L. service model, the use of the term "community hub" has gained traction in recent years. A community hub is a central access point for a range of health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life. O.P.L. partners with the Region of Durham to provide Community Hub visits by outreach workers at library branches and also partners with Durham Community Legal Clinic and Meta Employment Services to bring community supports on site.

A community hub can be a library, recreation centre, school, early learning centre, older adult centre, community health centre, place of worship, or another public space. This concept offers many social benefits, strengthens community cohesion, and fosters enhanced quality of life by providing a central location to deliver a range of services in consultation with the residents who will use them. In 2015, the Province of Ontario published "Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan" to assist in the planning and delivery of integrated hub projects and has offered partial funding for a number of initiatives. Community hub projects are beginning to be implemented across the province, with some good examples emerging.

## The Role of Technology in Libraries

Libraries are operating in a period of rapid technology innovation, enabling them to meet the needs of their customers in new and exciting ways such as through use of wireless devices that have made Wi-Fi and independent work/study stations more vital. “Digital inclusion” is a term that refers to ensuring all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, are able to access and use digital technologies in today’s information-based society. Oshawa Public Libraries is a primary resource to advance digital inclusion and digital literacy through the technological infrastructure provided in its branches while also building technological capacity and incubating innovation within communities.

While computer commons are still at the heart of many libraries, Wi-Fi technology and people bringing their own mobile technology - such as laptops, tablets, e-books and smartphones - is resulting in all areas of a library branch being used for digital purposes. This is creating needs for strong Wi-Fi signals in all corners of a library building and electrical outlets for charging. Some libraries have customized laptop lounges, seating bars, and cafés that provide unique amenities to complement other ‘traditional’ in-branch uses such as reading, socializing and studying.

As Oshawa Public Libraries embraces larger electronic collections and the “internet of things”, its library branches will need to explore upgrades to their electrical infrastructure as well as consider new spatial configurations and types of furniture to suit the expectations that library users have about access to technology. For example, under-carpet cabling systems that allow for power and data connection flexibility could open up potential for adapting former bookshelf spaces to work, or lounging spaces. Smaller details may include providing seating with a surface for laptop use while lounging and lighting that does not create a glare on monitors.

Broader considerations such as designing flexible spaces that extend beyond books and paper to enable content creation, virtual collaboration and equipment collections will challenge standards of what must be considered when planning for new library branches. The Library has already improved convenience to users by installing self-service checkout kiosks at all branches which also alleviates pressures on staff working at the customer service desks.

Makerspaces are an important and frequently requested program element found in any new library that support efforts to advance technological creativity and productivity. These spaces may contain equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, button makers, VHS to DVD digitizing tools, sewing machines and more. O.P.L has started to explore the concept with investment in equipment mainly





found at the McLaughlin Branch, with 3D printers found at all branches. Some library systems position their makerspaces as 'Digital Innovation Hubs' that advance a fundamental premise of working with other agencies and delivering a broader range of programming. As an example, Brampton Library's MakerSpace Brampton initiative is a joint venture with the City's Economic Development Office and Sheridan College's Faculty of Applied Science and Technology with interactive equipment and program offerings for all ages.

Digital literacy is quickly expanding and libraries play a key role in the education process. New technologies are leading to the emergence of new public experiences, allowing libraries to reinforce their value to their community, including to younger generations. Through the provision of computer commons, makerspaces, program rooms and other areas, the public library has become a place for residents of all ages and backgrounds to learn about the types of technology prevalent in the global arena along with how to use technology for the betterment of their daily lives.

Libraries are also witnessing challenges relating to what is known as the "digital divide" where there are segments of the population that cannot afford and/or have the ability to navigate technology. O.P.L. is a critical community resource that bridges the digital divide by enabling free access to the internet, provision of computers and tablets for library visitors to use, delivering programs and technical assistance to help residents navigate technology, and providing affordable printing, scanning and access to makerspace equipment. To support digital inclusion outside of the branch and enable online connectivity when libraries were closed due to COVID-19, the Library loaned out Wi-Fi hotspots 571 times in 2021 and continues to loan hotspots to this day.

A focus on digital content and programming has proven popular and even invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic. The act of borrowing printed books is still by far the most popular activity at libraries, however, the desire for variety and different library formats have increased considerably in recent years. A 2015 Market Probe Survey commissioned by the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries revealed that 66% of library cardholders mostly read in hard copy while 17% mostly read in electronic format and 18% read both. Although there may be a growing tendency away from physical collections and toward digital access, broad trends indicate that many people, including children and youth, still prefer books and other physical items. As a result, physical collections will continue to coexist with emerging digital formats for the foreseeable future and illustrates the necessity of maintaining a diverse collection to meet the needs of the entire community.

Therefore, the impact of technology has not significantly lessened the demand for traditional materials but in fact has led to greater space needs, particularly for

study/learning spaces and creative spaces. Self-serve technologies are now ubiquitous and have “unchained” library staff from their desks thereby allowing them to be flexibly deployed wherever and however necessary within the branch or community.

### **Food Security and Food Literacy**

Modern libraries systems are taking an active role in food provision, food nutrition, food security and food justice. In doing so, libraries are educating the public as well as advancing the fun aspects of food by promoting “farm to table” concepts and bringing communities together through “a common language of food” using a combination of space, programs and initiatives. Durham Region’s agricultural heritage lends itself well to localized food literacy initiatives through Oshawa Public Libraries including education and stewardship of some Canada’s most fertile farming lands and rapidly growing ethno-cultural diversity.

Food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.<sup>25</sup> Food justice is a similar principal to food security, however, it is a social movement oriented to provide access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food particularly where there may be “food deserts.” Progressive library systems across North America are promoting food justice primarily through: distribution of food through branches; food literacy and food education/nutrition programs; culinary instruction; and supporting community-based organizations with a mandate towards food justice through promotion and/or partnerships. Some library systems directly provide or partner with local food-oriented organizations to deliver outdoor programs. Kingston Frontenac Public Library has developed a community garden at one of its libraries in partnership with a local agency with produce grown being shared among volunteers and donated to the community. That Library also has plans to host a weekly Community Harvest Market at that same branch during the growing season to provide the community with access to affordable produce.

A newer trend is the integration of teaching kitchens into the library setting in order to support programming delivered by a library; these can be larger facilities inspired by the “commercial/industrial” kitchen concept that provides quality finishes, ventilation systems and appliances to smaller warming kitchens akin to what might be found at home. Mississauga Library is including a large teaching kitchen as part of the reconstruction of its Central Library. “The Kitchen” at Edmonton Public Library’s Stanley A. Milner branch is an open concept 2,100 square foot space promoting food literacy, health and nutrition, experimentation and other culinary opportunities while responding to interests of local “foodies.”

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<sup>25</sup> Report of the World Food Summit, 1996.

The Kitchen also supports Edmonton's growing ethno-cultural populations looking for community space, particularly those where food and cooking are a major part of their culture. The Kitchen is programmed with live and virtual classes along with cooking demonstrations led by instructors, local chefs and restaurateurs; much like a makerspace is optimally staffed by a person experienced in creative industries, Edmonton Public Library employs a 'Kitchen Coordinator' with a background in restaurants and catering. A teaching kitchen is found at the South Oshawa Community Centre though this is outside of the library setting (but could still create for inter-departmental program delivery opportunities).

The availability of food and beverage retail services (e.g., cafés and other forms of concessions) is now an established trend building on the coffee shop experience that has been combined with bookstores for many years. Food services is not necessarily viewed as a revenue generator – although it can provide a non-traditional revenue stream – as much as it is intended to be a comfort-oriented service that encourages more frequent visits and longer stays in the library. Cafés and staffed food services tend to be best suited in larger, higher-order branches where foot traffic supports the business viability; however, neighbourhood-level branches can support consumption of food through vending machines and operating practices that allow library users to bring food and drink into appropriate areas of the library.

Whether providing cafés or kitchens, availability of space is crucial in terms of providing the necessary infrastructure and equipment, as well as the ability to program the space and allow for consumption. For example, electrical and plumbing servicing may be needed along with fire suppression and exhaust systems for kitchens. The size of some library branches is also such that partnerships with the lower-tier municipalities and/or community partners (e.g. faith-based organizations, cultural clubs, service clubs, etc.) would be required, potentially in conjunction with the recreation departments that are responsible for the buildings shared with libraries.

### **Bringing the Library Outside**

The public library is growing its outdoor presence in response to public demand. Requests for outdoor reading areas through patios and gardens are common as people seek a connection to nature or to simply get fresh air. Libraries are delivering programming and events in outdoor spaces for the benefit of their users as well as to support cultural creatives, economic development and place-making objectives of others. The Central Library in downtown London, Ontario is one example where weekly concerts (pre-COVID) featuring local musicians were introduced over the office lunch hour in its 16,000 square foot Rotary Reading Garden while tying in similar library programs within that garden to support community events held along London's pedestrian-oriented "Flex Street."

COVID-19 highlighted that people are looking for library services outside of the branch interior. Library systems showed how the pandemic exposed the “digital divide” whereby users reliant on public Wi-Fi were left vulnerable when libraries were closed. The Somerville Library in Massachusetts, like many systems in North America, observed people sitting in library parking lots trying to obtain a Wi-Fi signal. Somerville Library transformed an empty courtyard at its Central Branch into a public workspace using basic wood pallets, chairs, tables, umbrellas, and a heater (for the winter) with access to power outlets and use of Wi-Fi extenders. This form of ‘tactical urbanism’ yielded immediate benefits and was a low-cost endeavour compared to a traditional design build process.<sup>26</sup>

Building on the Little Free Library concept where community members lend their own materials, some library systems are advancing their own outdoor enclosures. The HollisWealth Story Pod in Newmarket is a community-supported lending library located in the historic downtown area. The Story Pod is an abstract, black box that is open during the day – like the covers of a book – where visitors can take or leave something to read, or lounge on the built-in seating for reading or story times. At night, the doors are locked and use solar powered lighting to create a lantern like effect to provide ambience for night markets or community events.<sup>27</sup>

## Storywalks

A storywalk includes enlarged pages from a children’s book that are placed in a display case and installed along an outdoor path. As park visitors stroll down the trail, they are directed to the next page in the story (generally 20 to 50 metres away). The stories can be replaced periodically throughout the year to ensure continued interest. These installations promote literacy, can showcase the work of local authors or historic events, foster exposure to nature, encourage social interaction and support physical activity – all of which support community health and wellbeing. They have been successfully installed in parks and along trails throughout Ontario as well as other parts of Canada and the United States. Oshawa Public Libraries has provided storywalks at Brick-by-Brick Park, Lakeview Park, and outside of the John Aker Northview Branch.

Neighbourhood organizations, local libraries or engaged residents are often encouraged to support use of storywalks through guided tours or promotional displays at other public facilities (e.g., community centres, arenas, libraries, etc.). Storywalks are often developed in partnership with local library associations while community librarians can be a valuable resource for selecting appropriate stories to display and may assist with seasonal rotation of the books on display. Well-designed Storywalks combine literacy with physical activity and public art, with Oshawa Public Libraries adopting a promising practice in line with other progressive library systems.

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<sup>26</sup> Project for Public Spaces. How a Library is Reimagining Public Wi-Fi during COVID-19.

Greiner, A. (2021, Feb. 7). Accessed from <https://www.pps.org>

<sup>27</sup> Arch Daily. Story Pod / Atelier Kastelic Buffey. Accessed from <https://www.archdaily.com>

## Emerging Library Spaces and Service Formats

Borrowing books and materials remains one of the most popular reasons for visiting libraries. However, lending services are evolving (e.g., a physical collection that is more focused on popular materials and growing digital resources) and being supplemented by an increasing focus on creation and collaboration in library spaces. This is leading to a reduced collections footprint that allows room for more seating, meeting and study.

However, this is not to say that libraries require less space; in fact, the opposite is true as greater demands are being placed on floor area for the “library of things”, barrier-free accessible features, and program space. The public library is taking new forms in relation to its evolution towards serving a broader range of community needs but also in response to increasing access to the number of service points, the digital age that libraries are operating in today, as well as capital and operational funding challenges. The challenge of having enough space to provide knowledge is embedded in the concept of a library.

Some library systems are looking to prefabricated buildings in response, offering simple structures that can be built within a factory so that disruption with construction is minimized. Oakville Public Library’s Sixteen Mile Branch is a 5,000 square foot prefabricated structure that recently opened as a pop-up location in order to maintain library services during the construction of a new permanent building (being built on the site of the original demolished library). The pop-up is made up of seven, 60 foot long modular units that were built at a factory, transported to Oakville and then connected onsite. The facility is fully demountable and will be deployed elsewhere once the new branch is built. Although construction costs are not necessarily less, modular libraries do provide an option for longer term as well as interim solutions which could be deployed to multiple locations within its service life and may be worth considering as part of a larger plan to expand library services.

Vaughan Public Library and Oakville Public Library have taken a new approach to increasing the number of service points to supplement their branch model. A traditional branch is being built in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre alongside a 400 square foot storefront library space known as the V.M.C. Express; these are being built as part of a mixed-use project involving multiple partners including the land development community. Express locations are specifically targeted with convenience in mind for time-pressed residents by providing service points in high-traffic community centres.

O.P.L. installed a book lending kiosk at the Civic Recreation Complex in January 2024 building on precedent established by other library systems. Oakville Public Library Express locations enable pick-ups through holds lockers, returns via drop-

off bins, as well as browse and borrow through self-serve kiosks/book vending machines. Middlesex County Library and Kingston Frontenac Public Library both provide a “Novel Branch” (kiosk); Middlesex County Library’s kiosk is placed at the Adelaide Metcalfe Municipal Office while Kingston Frontenac’s is located at a community centre and has plans to install another at a new secondary school. Library users scan their library card and enter a P.I.N. to open the kiosk, and then browse and borrow materials. The kiosk tracks and records what is removed using R.F.I.D. For extended community access models to be successful, improvements to physical space are required. For example, modifications to doorways, locking mechanisms, video surveillance and other infrastructure will be needed to secure a library’s assets and ensure public safety.

Among challenges brought on by COVID-19, the acceleration of digital media literacy and an exposure to accomplishing tasks online can be perceived as a positive outcome of the pandemic. This does not imply that technology has become accessible to all but it further emphasizes the critical need to ensure that access to technology is available to all. A transition to technological services gained momentum with the advent of personal computers. The extreme manifestations of this are libraries that have computer labs in place of physical book collections. Bexar County’s BiblioTech System in San Antonio, Texas, focuses completely on providing access to technology and spaces for collaboration and creative production. All three branch locations are located in at-risk neighbourhoods where many families do not have the means to own their own computer equipment. This system operates in cooperation with the city’s traditional library system.

Bookless libraries also focus on programming and community social spaces in place of book collections. The City of Cambridge with Cambridge Library opened Canada’s first bookless library. The award-winning project is a partnership between the City and its Idea Exchange Division (the Public Library) who focus on delivering programs that support lifelong learning and creativity. The City needed to find a way to restore a national, heritage post office building into a vital part of its public urban infrastructure and the Idea Exchange needed spaces for their programs. The Old Post Office, which is an integration of new spaces within the restored building, houses a black box theatre, film and audio recording suites, maker spaces, wood and metal workshop tools, a roof top terrace and a community lounge area.

### 5.3 Library System Benchmarking

In relation to library systems across Ontario serving populations between 100,000 to 250,000, Table 12 shows that Oshawa Public Libraries:

- supply of 4 physical library branches is below the average of 6 branches in mid-size municipalities (after excluding three geographically large rural library systems, however, Oshawa's average is similar to urban systems);
- provides 20% more library space than the benchmark average of 78,950 square feet as measured by gross floor area which ranks it sixth in terms of total library space among the other 17 mid-size systems; and
- provides 7% less library space per capita than the mid-size municipal average, with other library systems providing between 0.35 and 0.85 square feet of library space per capita.

**Table 12: Comparison of Space to Selected Library Systems**

Library System	Population (Estimate)	Number of Branches	Total Floor Area (square feet)	Square Feet Per Capita
Ajax	133,000	3	56,100	0.38
Barrie	149,964	2	56,200	0.37
Brantford	102,257	2	68,000	0.66
Burlington	176,802	6	106,684	0.60
Cambridge	135,060	5	93,900	0.70
Chatham-Kent	102,042	11	68,557	0.67
Greater Sudbury	161,531	13	Not Reported	
Guelph	131,790	6	62,852	0.48
Kingston Frontenac	161,750	16	130,184	0.85
Milton	120,500	3	53,337	0.44
Oakville	211,000	7	100,935	0.48
Richmond Hill	215,316	4	102,000	0.47
St. Catharines	133,113	4	Not Reported	
Thunder Bay	107,909	4	53,500	0.50
Waterloo	146,010	3	60,120	0.41
Whitby	137,300	3	68,000	0.50
Windsor	224,134	10	103,887	0.46
<b>Average</b>	<b>149,969</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>78,950</b>	<b>0.53</b>
Oshawa	191,600	4	95,085	0.50

Sources: Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2021; Oshawa Public Libraries, 2023; Monteith Brown Planning Consultants data

## 5.4 System-Wide Space Requirements

### Distributional Analysis

Effective space allocation and distribution is essential to this evaluation as there is an expectation that branch libraries be geographically accessible to all Oshawa residents, to the greatest degree possible. Spatial distribution of Oshawa Public Libraries branches illustrated in Map 10 shows a sizeable geographic gap northwest of Taunton Road and Simcoe Street where new residential subdivisions are being developed in the Windfields and Columbus communities, but will be largely reconciled by the library branch approved at the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. Another gap exists in established neighbourhoods in the city's west between the Rossland Road and Highway 401 corridors. As will be discussed in the pages that follow, provision of a sufficient amount of floor area will also be of paramount importance to the future library branch given northwest Oshawa can be expected to be home to upwards of 40,000 persons based on planned build-out populations identified in the Windfields and Columbus Part II Plans along with existing residential populations in Northwood and Samac which would also be in the future library's catchment.

Map 10 also identifies potential express service points to increase neighbourhood-level access that do not necessarily have to take the form of a traditional bricks and mortar library building; express service points are discussed in Section 5.2 of the P.R.L.C. Assessment and further expanded upon in the pages that follow,

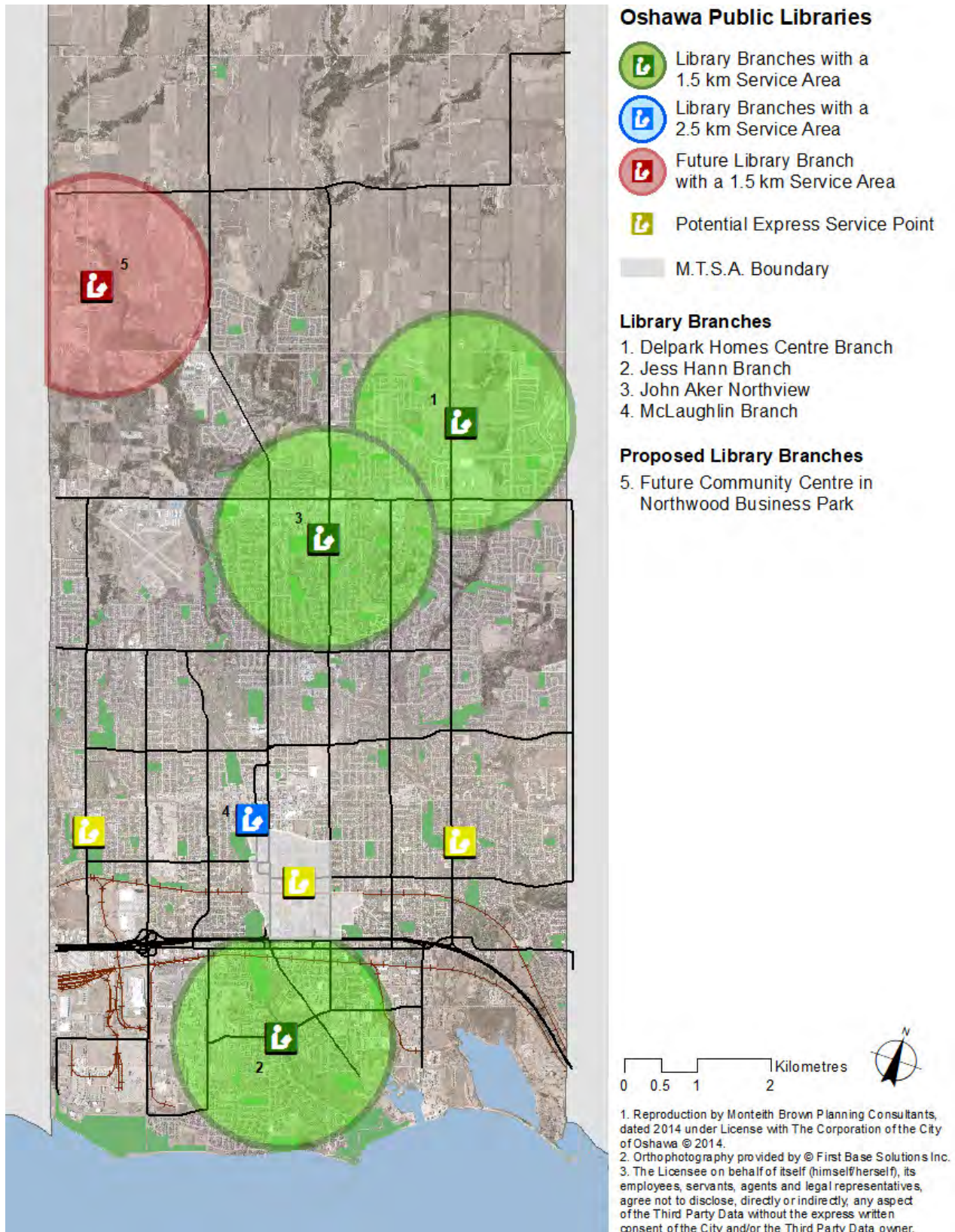
### Per Capita Analysis

An estimated 687,600 in-person visits were made to O.P.L. branches in 2022, recovering to about 80% of pre-COVID-19 levels. Applying a similar visitation rate to the 2031 population suggests that O.P.L. libraries could attract 800,000 in-person visits at the end of the P.R.L.C. Assessment period to the four existing libraries. In fact, there could potentially be more visits across the entire library system given the capacity that will be added by the library branch proposed at the community centre in the Northwood Business Park. As such, O.P.L. will need to be prepared for this level of demand being placed on its physical infrastructure, staffing, collections, service requests, and programming.

O.P.L.'s space needs are calculated based on 0.6 square feet per capita using the Library's historical service level target. A service level of 0.6 square feet per capita is consistent with guidelines advanced by the Administrators of Rural-Urban Public Libraries of Ontario and in alignment with targets set by a number of G.T.A. public library systems. As previously noted, O.P.L.'s service level has slipped by 0.1 square feet per capita given the degree of population growth in the city since 2015 and now stands at 0.5 square feet per capita.



Map 10: Existing & Proposed Distribution of Oshawa Public Libraries Branches



Based on Oshawa's year 2031 population forecast, approximately 132,000 square feet of library space will be required across the City at that time. This would require 38,000 square feet to be added by 2031 in order for O.P.L. to deliver the broad range of collections, materials, programs and other services being sought through physical library space.

### **Northwest Oshawa**

Looking at anticipated build-out populations of 37,000 persons collectively between the Columbus and Windfields Part II Plan areas (per Table 2 in Section 2.1), a long-range total of 22,200 square feet of library space would be required to serve these two communities alone. As such, there is substantial need for additional library space in northwest Oshawa. In line with progressive library designs, space should be allocated to the following (but not necessarily limited to):

- collections and materials, including those reflective of Oshawa's Indigenous and multicultural communities as well as "The Library of Things";
- adequate areas for seating, individual study and group collaboration;
- a makerspace and other areas through which to access technology;
- multi-purpose space conducive to O.P.L. programs and events (e.g. storytimes and early childhood literacy, STEAM, author readings, etc.);
- a community kitchen shared with OSCC55+ and the Recreation and Culture Divisions other operating units in the community centre;
- appropriate back-of-house needs for staffing and storage; and
- an outdoor garden and/or activity space to enable enjoyment of the outdoors and ability to deliver programs (e.g. the Library's gardening programs)

The northwest library branch could be serving upwards of 37,000 persons. A total gross floor area of 20,000 square feet can be adjusted depending upon access to other community centre components such as multi-purpose program rooms, food and concessions, computer labs, etc. that have the potential to be shared with the OSCC55+ and Recreation Services.

### **Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. & Established Neighbourhoods**

As discussed in Section 2.1 of the P.R.L.C. Assessment, the Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area (M.T.S.A.) could be home to upwards of approximately 45,000 to 51,000 people at full build-out, generating a space requirement of 30,000 square feet for the M.T.S.A. alone. The McLaughlin Branch is the closest library to the M.T.S.A. and can be expected to attract much of the growth-related needs for library services. While Jess Hann Branch is less than a 10 minute drive from the M.T.S.A., it is less likely to attract M.T.S.A. populations due to the library's small size, lack of dedicated program space, and library customers having to cross Highway 401 which acts as a physical and psychological barrier particularly for people traveling by foot or bicycle.

There is little opportunity to expand McLaughlin Branch as the site is largely built-out and already intensified. Similarly, the leased storefront model at Jess Hann is such that any footprint alterations are not a viable option due to the configuration of the retail plaza in which it is located. There may be opportunities to improve certain functional aspects of the interior of both libraries but these alone will not replace the need for new library space to serve residents living in the Downtown, Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. and the residential areas that surround them.

The degree of residential intensification and transit-supportive development principles currently being envisioned in the Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. create a potential for the City of Oshawa to explore public-private mixed use projects. Larger urban municipalities in the G.T.A. on the forefront of intensification such as Toronto, Vaughan, Brampton, and Mississauga have either constructed community centres in tandem with schools and condominiums, or are actively exploring these opportunities. The Town of Ajax is similarly exploring a public-private mixed use community centre in its Pickering Village through which a library branch is being proposed. This model could be applied to a library branch in the Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. to provide a localized or neighbourhood serving branch since the McLaughlin Branch functions more closely as a central library.

In terms of other established neighbourhoods, the pages that follow articulate opportunities to expand the Delpark Homes and John Aker Northview Branches to address a portion of the growth-related need for library space across Oshawa. As noted in Section 5.2 of the P.R.L.C. Assessment, library systems in Ontario are recognizing that alternatives exist to the traditional bricks and mortar branches and are using "express" service points to increase their reach through book vending machines, kiosks, holds lockers, smaller storefront spaces, and more. Such express service points could be integrated at key locations such as the Downtown and Central Oshawa M.T.S.A. at transit terminals, condominium developments, OSC55+ branches and other community destinations. Further, express service points should be installed at the Civic Recreation Complex and Donevan Recreation Complex as these are located in gaps beyond the catchment of O.P.L. community-level branches (previously shown in Map 10).

## 5.5 Branch-Specific Space Requirements

Building upon the system-wide space needs analysis, opportunities and constraints specific to each existing library branch are examined in this subsection. Preliminary architectural investigations suggest that expansions to the Delpark Homes and John Aker Northview Branches could add 7,500 square feet which if combined with 20,000 square feet at the future branch at the community centre in the Northwood Business Park – assuming this floor area is provided through its ongoing design process – would address 72% of the 38,000 square feet in net new library space required by the year 2031 to attain a system-wide service level of 0.6 square feet per capita.

In addition to facility expansions, the pages that follow articulate certain functional and aesthetic improvements for each existing library branch for consideration as part of meeting the O.P.L. Strategic Directions 2020-2023 document. All considerations and proposed improvements will need to be confirmed and refined through future architectural and business planning analysis.

### McLaughlin Branch

The McLaughlin Branch is the largest in the O.P.L. system at 65,000 square feet distributed across three floors. The McLaughlin Branch has operated out of this location since 1954 meaning that it will be over 75 years old by the end of the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period.

Publicly accessible space housing collections, seating and study areas, and programmable space is provided on the ground floor and basement level. Administrative space is provided on all three levels with the third floor exclusively devoted to staff, storage, and IT functions. Site tours suggest that sightlines for supervision on the ground floor can be limited due to the height of the book shelves while aisle widths may pose a challenge for certain persons with disabilities. There is limited potential to rectify these challenges as lowered shelving will require relocation of existing materials and there is insufficient public space within the branch to house public-facing materials. One of the most prevalent challenges noted for this branch during P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations is the absence of free parking, and competition for parking spaces with those also using City Hall, the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, the Arts Resource Centre and nearby businesses who all share the same parking lot with the library.



The site configuration is such that expansion of the building footprint is unlikely while interior reconfiguration potential is generally cost-prohibitive due to structural and mechanical conditions. While there is a generous allocation to administration and storage, particularly on the third floor, a major renovation would be required should O.P.L. wish to reallocate any of these areas to public use. This course of action is not recommended during the current P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period but may be required as residential intensification activities accelerate in and around the City's core post-2031.

As such, no facility-specific recommendations are advanced for McLaughlin Library as the focus of 10-year capital activities – beyond requisite asset management and upkeep – are deemed to be better directed towards the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park and expansions of the Delpark Homes and John Aker Northview Branches.

### **Delpark Homes Branch**

The Delpark Homes Centre library branch is 9,785 square feet that primarily serves the Kedron and Taunton communities along with a portion of other established neighbourhoods that have resulted in considerable pressures being placed on this library. Not only is there a high demand for library programs and study/seating at the Delpark Homes branch, its 21.4 circulated items per square foot ranks as the highest among all O.P.L. branches. In comparison to libraries constructed in Ontario over the past 15 years that are intended to service a community-wide catchment, Delpark Homes Branch is undersized which further amplifies the pressures that it faces for collections, programs and general use. It is unlikely that the Delpark Homes branch will meet future growth-related needs based on its current size and configuration.

While the new library branch recommended at the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park can be expected to alleviate a degree of pressure among those living outside of the Delpark Homes Branch catchment, the branch will still be relied upon by tens of thousands of people. The Kedron, Taunton and Pinecrest communities – which are most likely to rely upon Delpark Homes Branch – could have upwards of 44,500 persons<sup>28</sup> living there by the year 2029 which would necessitate 26,700 square feet of floor space to achieve a service level of 0.6 square feet per capita for those two communities alone. The amount of floor space could be higher and will need to be reconfirmed once the City of Oshawa has updated its population forecasts by neighbourhood/community to reflect new residential growth that will be generated through provincial Bill 23.

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<sup>28</sup> Oshawa Department of Development Services and Watson & Associates Economists, 2018. Note that population has not been updated to align with 2021 Census data nor recent Region of Durham municipal conformity exercises.

Preliminary analysis suggests that there may be potential to expand the library eastward (Figure 7) and add up to 3,500 square feet which would increase the branch's total gross floor area to 13,325 square feet. This would fall substantially short of the aforementioned space requirement to meet 0.6 square feet per capita – essentially of half what is required in Kedron, Taunton and Pinecrest – there is little opportunity to expand further without encroaching on the recently constructed garden and pathway that are adjacent to the branch. Although there may be potential to expand southward, due to the onsite grade differential this would contribute only a limited amount of additional square footage that would not generate strong fiscal value unless the City were to undertake a more comprehensive community centre expansion into the large open space that presently houses a sports field and temporary outdoor ice rinks.

Nevertheless, addition of 3,500 square feet would still result in selected improvements to overall functionality and useability of the Delpark Homes Branch. For example, an expansion could accommodate a new and larger multi-purpose room for library programs and thereby allow the existing staff work area to expand into the existing undersized program room. Expansion could also allow for the children's area to be enlarged while providing additional space for seating and/or study. Enhancement of the courtyard adjacent to the OSCC55+ branch could provide benefit to library and other community centre users with a library expansion potentially creating an exterior access to the courtyard and pollinator garden. Creation of a library entrance separate from the community centre should also be explored based on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 7: Potential Expansion Plan, Delpark Homes Centre

**RECOMMENDATIONS** DELPARK HOMES CENTRE



Site

- a. Gymnasium and Storage with access through existing Gymnasium
- b. Extend existing Outdoor Courtyard
- c. Extend OSCC55+ Program Room
- d. Enlarge Dining area
- e. More Office space for staff and barrier free access at Reception for guests
- f. Enlarge Lounge area
- g. Administration space for future staff
- h. Addition with new Program Room
- i. Expand Children's Area
- j. New Study Rooms
- k. Enclosed Outdoor Reading Terrace
- l. Reconfigured arrival area
- m. Increase Staff Area



Enlarged Concept Plan

### John Aker Northview Branch

The John Aker Northview Branch is a 12,800 square foot library built in 1987. It offers a warm ambience accentuated by an exposed wood ceiling and roof truss along with its open concept layout. John Aker Northview Branch is a fairly busy location and houses the largest physical collection and highest total circulation outside of the McLaughlin Branch; John Aker Northview Library circulation rate of 16.4 items per square foot is the second highest rate in the O.P.L. system behind the Delpark Homes Branch.

The primary catchment area of the branch encompasses approximately 35,500 people living in the Centennial, Samac and Northglen communities whose collective populations are not expected to change significantly as mature neighbourhoods (unless impacted by City land use planning decisions resulting from Bill 23). That degree of population would require 21,300 square feet of library space to serve Centennial, Samac and Northglen. Site conditions are such that a modest expansion could occur northwards adding an estimated 4,000 square feet to the library's GFA, bringing its size to 16,800 square feet in total.

In addition, there would be merit in adding an outdoor reading garden/patio to benefit from the mature trees and natural aesthetic of the adjacent park block. A more formalized pedestrian connection between the library's parking lot to the Northview Community Centre next door would also be helpful as some library customers also make use of the OSCC55+ branch, lawn bowling club and Boys and Girls Club Durham found there. The same ceiling that creates an attractive interior is also reported to have challenges with low lighting but will potentially be rectified as a consultant has recently been retained to determine how to improve in-branch lighting.





## Jess Hann Branch

The Jess Hann Branch is the smallest library in the O.P.L. system and is the only location that is not owned by the City / O.P.L. as it is a leased space in a retail plaza whose rent is funded by a grant through the Hann family. It is the only library in Oshawa that is located south of the Highway 401 corridor which combined with its small floor size (7,500 square feet and no dedicated program room) and stand-alone format results in it being the least busy branch in terms of visitation, circulation and program attendance. The library is somewhat hidden from view being embedded well within the plaza and its signage competes with the other businesses located there which is also likely affecting its use as certain people may not be aware of the library's existence.

As a leased space in a busy retail plaza, there is no ability to expand the branch footprint and the funding model is such that its external operating grant covers rent for the existing square footage. O.P.L. has done a commendable job of working within the library's floorplate by lowering shelving height and widening aisle widths, enhancing aesthetics and comfort through painting and furniture, as well as carving out shared spaces for seating and programming.

As a future activity, O.P.L. could extend the customer service desk to sit flush with the exterior wall and reclaim the area adjacent to the book drop-off bin. This would increase the amount of space for Library staff to sort materials – as there is no other space for this in the branch – and negate the need for them to walk around the desk to retrieve materials from the drop-off bin. Most importantly, this activity would be a relatively low-cost endeavour and would make use of an area in the branch that is presently under-utilized.



## 5.6 Library Facility Initiatives

- L1.** Targeting a total Gross Floor Area of 132,000 square feet by the year 2031 will achieve a rate of 0.6 square feet per capita and meet growth-related needs of the population. This would require a net addition of 38,000 square feet of library space across the library system.
- L2.** Consider a 20,000 square foot Oshawa Public Libraries branch as part of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. In the event that this gross floor area cannot be accommodated in its entirety, commence a site selection exercise to determine how to address the remainder of library space in the Columbus and/or Windfields Part II Plan areas.
- L3.** Explore the ability to expand the Delpark Homes Centre Library branch and carry out an associated interior reconfiguration that results in a new multi-purpose room, space for seating and study, an enlarged children's area, expanded staff work area and storage, and potentially a separate library entrance.
- L4.** Consider the expansion of the John Aker Northview Library along with creating an outdoor reading garden and improved pedestrian connection to the adjacent Northview Community Centre. Opportunities to improve lighting levels within the library should also be explored.
- L5.** Investigate the ability to extend the customer services desk at Jess Hann Library to sit adjacent to the exterior wall and book drop-off bin in order to improve administrative workflows of branch staff and make better use of the space as a whole.
- L6.** Continue to assess the feasibility of distributing "express" library service points in strategic areas using vending machines and kiosks, holds lockers, and other means deemed appropriate to increase the reach of library services and address geographic gaps. Potential locations to consider include the Donevan Recreation Complex, OSCC55+ Conant Branch and within areas of intensification such as the Downtown and Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area.
- L7.** Consider investments in technological infrastructure at all Oshawa Public Libraries branches through expansion of Wi-Fi capabilities, computer hardware and software, under carpet cabling, electrical outlets, and other needs that emerge as technologies evolve over time.
- L8.** Consider expansion of the number of Storywalks in parks and outdoor areas with locations determined in conjunction with Oshawa Public Libraries, Parks Operations, Culture, and others as appropriate.



**6.0**

**Cultural Facility  
Assessment**

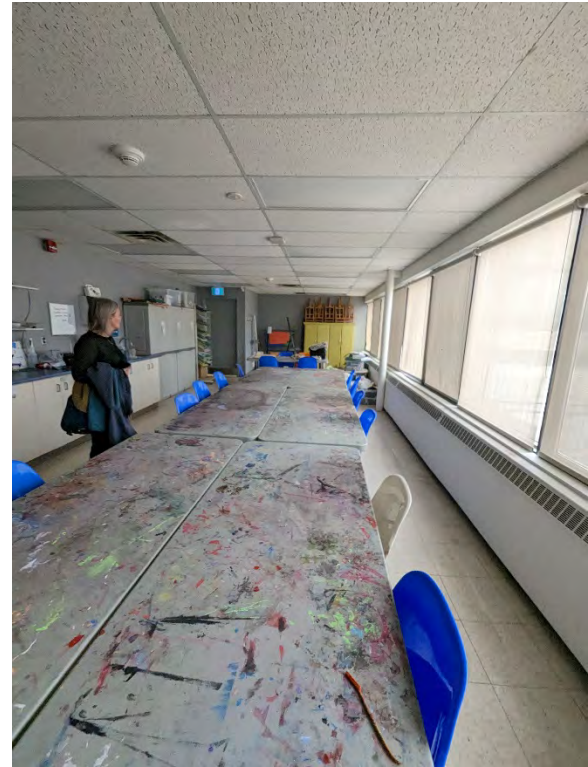
## 6.1 Major Cultural Facilities in Oshawa

The City of Oshawa owns arts and culture facilities that are either directly operated by the City or are managed by City-funded external agencies. These facilities include the Arts Resource Centre, Oshawa Museum, Robert McLaughlin Gallery, and Parkwood Estate.

The **Arts Resource Centre (A.R.C.)** is part of the core institutional campus with Oshawa City Hall, the McLaughlin Library Branch and the Robert McLaughlin Gallery. The A.R.C. is the only dedicated arts and culture facility directly managed by the City of Oshawa. This 11,500 square foot building was originally constructed in 1950 as a police station, and repurposed to the A.R.C. in 1986. It currently contains three studios (including a pottery studio), a kiln room, two multi-purpose rooms, an auditorium (seats approx. 110), administrative space for City staff and tenants, and storage space. The City is in the midst of preparing the Oshawa Cultural Hub Feasibility Study focused on enhancement and redevelopment options for the A.R.C.

The **Oshawa Community Museum (O.C.M.)**, located at Lakeside Park, is managed by the Oshawa Historical Society with funding provided by the City. The O.C.M. has three primary structures onsite consisting of the Guy House, the Henry House and the Robinson House that remain on their original foundations (these buildings are owned by the City of Oshawa and leased to the Historical Society) plus an Anniversary Drive Shed that was opened in 2009 as an additional area of exhibition. Managed by an elected board of directors, the Historical Society maintains the O.C.M. as a repository for artifacts and written records of historical interest to Oshawa. With the intent of collecting and showcasing Oshawa's history, the O.C.M. collection currently contains over 50,000 objects covering social history, science, technology, and Indigenous history.

The **Robert McLaughlin Gallery (R.M.G.)** building is owned by the City of Oshawa and leased to the R.M.G. as a non-profit gallery governed by a board of directors. In addition to annual funding from the City, R.M.G. also receives annual operating grants from senior levels of government, provincial and national agencies, and is proactive in attracting support from the private sector. Designed by noted Canadian architect Arthur Erickson, the R.M.G. is designated as a 'Category A' Gallery meaning it meets requirements to receive works from quality lenders, and has the requisite storage and security measures to keep works safe. Accordingly, the Gallery is recognized at the national level which in turn has enabled strong collaboration with other



communities, public galleries and stakeholders across Canada to showcase high quality exhibitions to local residents. In addition to exhibition space, the R.M.G. has an interactive multi-media room, an Art Lab, Imagine Station (family arts room), a Learning Lounge (small library and reading area), an arts and crafts room, gift shop, and a multi-purpose meeting room. The Gallery also contains administrative space along with a secure, climate controlled vault to store collections.

The **Parkwood Estate** is a National Historic Site, managed by the Parkwood Foundation which is a not-for-profit, registered charitable organization that is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and receives annual funding from the City. The Estate comprises 12 acres of manicured lands and the 55 room mansion. Its 2022 Business Plan notes efforts to improve inclusivity and accessibility as well as capital projects centred around maintenance, repair and conservation of items in the collection.

The **Memorial Park Bandshell and Ed Broadbent Park** are other examples of City-owned and maintained cultural space. The City delivers broad arts, culture and heritage focused programs at many of its multi-use facilities such as the Northview Community Centre, Donevan Recreation Complex, and Delpark Homes Centre (South Oshawa Community Centre and Civic Recreation Complex are also used, though primarily for dance programs). OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries also directly or indirectly service the arts and culture sector along with City staff working in areas such as economic development.

Municipal program delivery spans a broad spectrum of arts and culture pursuits that are generally oriented to beginner to intermediate level skills. Examples of programs include crafts, music and dance, digital arts, pottery, fashion, and photography, to name but a few. These programs serve a broad range of ages though are most heavily focused on children and adults, with fewer programs oriented specifically to youth/teen ages (many of the adult programs have a minimum age of 15 or 16 years).

The Tribute Communities Centre is home to the Oshawa Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, operated by an independent Board of Governors, which features a substantial collection of artifacts, memorabilia and photographs. O.P.L. provides cultural focused programs out of their four library branches (as well as many library-specific and other programs) while OSCC55+ delivers cultural offerings at each of their locations as part of their broader program portfolio.



## Community-Based Arts and Culture Facilities

Facilities and programs provided by the City of Oshawa are complemented by those offered through the private sector and community-based arts and cultural service providers. There are dozens of community-based providers of cultural space and programming. While not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following facilities are key non-municipal contributors to the cultural sector in Oshawa.

The **Regent Theatre** is a 609 seat venue whose origins dates back to 1919. It is owned and operated by Ontario Tech University who largely use it for classroom lectures and music events after school hours. The Theatre is also regularly used by the Ontario Philharmonic Orchestra. The interior of the theatre was completely restored and recreated using original techniques. Ontario Tech University manages and rents the space for non-academic uses, relying on private promoters for programming and shows.

The **Oshawa Little Theatre** is a 354 seat venue for the performing arts. Originally constructed for industrial uses over 50 years ago, the building was expanded in the early 1970s that now forms the current theatre and stage. The original building has been retained as a Rehearsal Hall (capacity for 150 persons) and is frequently rented to dance groups. Also in the Theatre is a Green Room and kitchen, orchestra pit, and a basement lounge/change room for the actors. Accessibility within the theatre is limited with the absence of an elevator which restricts access to the basement and second floor, the latter of which houses a costume design room and board room. The Theatre indicates that it would also like to expand the number of accessible seats as their membership base ages.

The **Canadian Automotive Museum** opened in 1963 through conversion of a former car dealership. This 25,000 square foot building presently exhibits 92 vehicles (77 of which are on the floor with the remaining vehicles stored in a rear parking lot).

The **Ontario Regiment R.C.A.C. Museum** showcases military artefacts and historic vehicles. The Museum, located near the Oshawa Airport, is staffed by volunteers and receives funding from the City. In addition to drop-in visits, the Museum offers group tours largely to schools and community organizations which are guided by their volunteers.

## 6.2 Trends Influencing Arts & Cultural Space

### The Value of Arts and Culture

A vibrant arts and culture system brings about a multitude of benefits to people and the communities in which they live. The World Cities Culture Report states that “Culture is now supporting communities, improving health and wellbeing, engaging young people, boosting jobs and the economy, giving our cities a distinctive identity and bringing in tourists.” The same report states that cultural infrastructure is an important way to “anchor neighbourhoods and build social cohesion, as well as provide cultural services and access locally.”<sup>29</sup>

Research based on Statistics Canada’s General Social Survey finds a strong connection between cultural participation and physical/mental health as well as with satisfaction with life and community belonging.<sup>30</sup> The economic impact of the arts and culture sector is notable, accounting for 4% of Ontario’s gross domestic product (G.D.P.) at \$28 billion, growing 29% between 2010 and 2020. Further, the sector was responsible for 269,000 jobs which is in the range of 4% of all employment in Ontario.<sup>31</sup> There is also a developing body of research about the role of culture in climate change resiliency. In short, the value of arts and culture can be demonstrated through health, place-making, the environment and the economy.

### Forces Shaping the Future of Ontario’s Arts & Culture Sector

The arts and culture sector can be heavily influenced by the increase in economic interconnectivity and interdependencies associated with globalization. The connection between people, companies, and countries are expanding, thus bringing increased trade, investment, and international movement and migration of people. The influx of immigration from other countries opens up an opportunity for Oshawa to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for the celebration of global culture (e.g., Cultural Festivals celebrating Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year, or Nowruz).

In Ontario, the economic growth is forecasted to be weak for the foreseeable future. According to Ontario’s Long-Term Report on the Economy, the average annual growth in potential real GDP is projected to be 2.0 per cent for Ontario, slower than previous average annual growth. This is a result of the slower projected growth in the labour force.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> World Cities Culture Forum. 2022. World Cities Culture Report 2022.

<sup>30</sup> Hill Strategies. 2021. Canadians’ Arts Participation, Health and Wellbeing. SIA report 53.

<sup>31</sup> Ontario Arts Council. Economic Contribution of Arts and Culture in Ontario. September 15, 2022. Accessed at <https://www.arts.on.ca>

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Finance. 2020. Ontario’s Long-Term Report on the Economy.

Although not largely considered an impact to arts and culture, the municipal economies may face fiscal challenges, especially among smaller, rural, and northern communities. These challenges are greater with the recent impact of COVID-19 on the economy. Since municipalities play a key role in supporting community-based arts and culture, they must take into consideration the volatility associated with the economy and the ability to support arts and culture facilities and programs.

Changing demographics, as discussed in Section 2.0 of this Report, will also play a role. Age and diversity are an important driver of arts and culture. Ontario is Canada's most populous and culturally diverse province, which fuels innovation and attracts creative individuals and companies to locate here. The province of Ontario is also home to the most First Nation, Metis and Inuit people than any other province or territory, and is home to the largest Francophone population in North America outside Quebec. In terms of Oshawa, 3% of its population identified as Indigenous in the 2021 Census. In addition to demographic-driven changes, there is a growing realization that mainstream arts and culture providers - including the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ - must be purposeful in showcasing and holding space for voices that have not traditionally been heard. For Indigenous art and culture, reclamation for culture lost through colonialization is of importance and thus the provision of space along with inclusion of Indigenous perspectives is but one act of Reconciliation.

The arts and culture sector must be able to adapt to the changes in the economy and community demographics. Accommodating forms of art and artistic practice that represent the population will be critical. Increasing support of Indigenous Arts, Disability Arts, along with support to Black artists, artists of colour, newcomer artists, and other artists historically underrepresented, along with embracing the rise of the digital age and resulting emergent disciplines, will be imperative.<sup>33</sup>

### **Creative/Culture Hubs**

Creative/Cultural spaces give artists the platforms and access to tools they need to succeed creatively. It is about bringing people together – artists, cultural entrepreneurs and organizations – in spaces that encourage collaboration, innovation, and development. These hubs are key economic drivers to attract skilled labour and innovation to specific places.

Hubs can also take the form of individual facilities that inherently become multi-use spaces. The process includes building, adapting or retrofitting existing spaces – such as schools, community centres and parks – to not only include recreation and education spaces but also creative and social spaces. These spaces could also include adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings or a cluster of underutilized areas to support arts and culture activities, indoor vendor markets, and creative incubators.

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<sup>33</sup> Toronto Arts Council Strategic Plan 2016-2025; Ontario Arts Council  
<https://www.arts.on.ca/grants/priority-group>, August 2023.



Adaptation of existing spaces allows access for various users without additional development in cities where land is limited or an emphasis on intensification is eminent. The provision of multi-use spaces is a solution undertaken by communities that undergo urban and suburban land use intensification and concentrated population growth.

Oshawa is aligning with best practices in a multitude of ways in its downtown through investment in the Robert McLaughlin Gallery and potentially in the Arts Resource Centre, pending completion of its redevelopment feasibility study. Together with the McLaughlin Library branch, these buildings have the potential to form a city-wide hub by creating a campus for arts and culture to thrive.

According to the Creative Canada Policy Framework (2017), the Canadian Government intends to support the next generation of cultural spaces, known as creative hubs, by investing an additional \$300 million over 10 years in cultural spaces through the Canada Cultural Space Fund. In addition, the government has budgeted \$1.3 billion for culture and recreational infrastructure and \$80 million to support the modernization or construction of community educational infrastructure in official-language minority communities across Canada through the Development of Official Language Communities (D.O.L.C.) program at Canadian Heritage. Through these investments, Canadian creative talent has access to spaces where they can build their entrepreneurial skills, collaborate and innovate, create, and help generate new markets for Canadian creativity.

The City of Oakville is currently undertaking the creation of a Downtown Cultural Hub, playing on the many cultural facilities currently occupying the downtown. The project aims to identify, assess and evaluate development opportunities and options to reconsider the use of municipal properties and facilities within the downtown Oakville study area. The project also includes the revitalization of Centennial Square facilities including the Central Library Branch and Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, to further strengthen the cultural presence and relevance for long-term viability.

### **Arts & Culture as Catalysts for Revitalization**

Over the last 30 years, the importance of arts and culture in cities has proliferated as the essence for creating economically and socially prosperous communities. Arts and culture can add to the quality of life of a downtown and a city as a whole by attracting people to these places and providing activity and vibrancy.

According to Richard Florida's creative city theories, creativity follows creativity; that is, creative people tend to follow and locate with other creative individuals to form creative clusters. Florida argues that cities should expand and stimulate their economy by competing for talented, creative individuals – this can be done through investing in creative hubs that pool talent.

Cultural/Creative hubs discussed in the previous page have the ability to attract talent pools but also provide economic and social benefits for disadvantaged areas. For example, cultural facilities can lead to an increase in economic growth and positive exposure through increase in domestic and international tourism, a new market for local goods and services, and creating a friendly and exciting environment that retains a talent pool of creative people. For social benefits, cultural/creative hubs can improve the image of areas with bad reputations, improve social cohesion, and overall promote neighbourhood regeneration.<sup>34</sup>

A Feasibility Study for a Creative/Culture Hub in Toronto<sup>35</sup> states that creative people and organizations gravitate to neighbourhoods that have a combination of low rent opportunities, a critical mass of creative enterprises and a range of services and amenities to support these creative activities. Clusters of creative/culture hubs have been demonstrated in Toronto neighbourhoods to have a dramatic and catalytic effect by attracting businesses such as galleries, cafés and specialty retail and ultimately putting challenged neighbourhoods on the map for creative people.

Place-making is an important individual-based approach to encourage revitalization. Place-making is a community driven process that creates well utilized and enjoyed spaces through capitalizing on local community assets.

### **Digital Transformation of Arts & Culture**

The cultural sector has been transformed by the growth of the digital space. Digital technologies have allowed creative individuals to self-publish, produce, market, distribute and sell their creations, no longer relying on traditional means of production, distribution, and marketing. Digital culture has allowed the creator to engage with audiences directly, and allows for creators to reach mass markets and tailor their products to suit consumers across borders.

The Arts and Culture Sector must adapt to digital transformation to keep up with the interests of Canadians. According to Statistics Canada, in 2018, 91% of Canadians aged 15 and older used the internet, with approximately 71% of seniors reporting internet use – an increase of 23% from the 2012 Canadian Internet Use Survey.<sup>36</sup> As such, utilizing the internet to raise awareness of the present arts and culture scene of a community is imperative to remain relevant.

For museums, a report by the Canadian House of Commons noted that visitors of museums are now expecting technology to play a role in their museum experience

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<sup>34</sup> City of Toronto. 2011. Cultural/Creative Hubs in Priority Neighbourhoods: Feasibility Study for a Cultural/Creative Hub in Weston Mount Dennis.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. City of Toronto, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Internet Use Survey. The Daily, October 29, 2019.

and that museums have a responsibility to meet this public access expectation. However, the issue lies in the fact that museums find it hard to catch up on digital technologies when their energy is dedicated to preserving their current collections.<sup>37</sup>

These trends afford significant opportunities for arts and culture, allowing for innovative products and services, operating on new business or revenue models, and responding to new forms of engagement. Municipalities are acknowledging the rise of the digital revolution, incorporating the development and optimization of cultural spaces to utilize digital technology and infrastructure to enhance the creative industry scene.

### **The Gig Economy**

Many involved in the creative and cultural industry are part of the growing gig economy, which is a free market system where organizations or individuals will hire independent workers for short-term commitments (similar to freelance work). The gig economy, coupled with the digital transformation, is accelerating the transition of large proportions of the traditional workforce into freelance work, self-employment, and atypical work profiles where one person holds several jobs.

As such, municipal arts and culture sectors must adapt to accommodate these changes. As discussed in preceding pages, creative hubs – spaces conducive to collaboration, networking, innovation, and creativity – allow those in the gig-economy to exchange experiences, access education, training and employment opportunities, seek advice and even lobby and collectively bargain on work-related issues.<sup>38</sup>

### **Tactical Urbanism**

Tactical urbanism is the collection of temporary changes, typically of low-cost, to the built environment to improve local neighbourhoods and community gathering spaces. Tactical urbanism as a place-making initiative has the ability to influence the public's vision of what can be. Tactical urbanism provides a temporary pop-up initiative that can help test out concepts or projects in the community; such projects allow for organizers to gather feedback, make quick changes, and build the public's imagination.

An example of successful tactical urbanism was the proliferation of the arts and culture scene in Hamilton, Ontario. The city experienced serious emptying and decline with the fall of the once lucrative-steel industry. To reinvent itself, in the

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<sup>37</sup> Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. 2018. Moving Forward – Towards a Stronger Canadian Museum Sector.

<sup>38</sup> Savanović, A. & Marko Orel. 2018. The Role of Creative Hubs in the Freelance Labour Market.

early 2000s, a group of community organizers and local businesses took advantage of Hamilton's emerging art scene to hold a monthly Art Crawl on James Street in the downtown area. The success of the event instituted a once-a-year spin-off event called SuperCrawl, where the street is shut down for a day-long festival of music and activity. Another example is Jardins Gamelin in Montreal, Canada, which uses the principle of tactical urbanism to bring culture and gathering for the Montreal community in the heart of downtown. The eastern edge of the Quartier des Spectacles, which has been described as a dreary and empty spot, is transformed to include temporary infrastructure and installations, a community garden, outdoor bar and café, play areas and seating areas.

### **Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Intangible Cultural Heritage, as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is a practice, representation, expression, skill, or knowledge that is part of cultural heritage through a non-physical form.<sup>39</sup> These are aspects of a community's culture that cannot be represented by traditional physical artifacts, buildings or monuments. Typically these intangible items are created, transmitted, and maintained organically by a community and is something that is transmitted from one generation to another.

With the rapid change in demographics and globalization, communities are faced with the challenge of preserving and maintaining the existence of intangible heritage. Organizations and groups are pushed to document these intangibles for future communities as well as for cross-cultural learning and understanding. Many museums and galleries are using technology to collect, archive and exhibit local intangible heritage assets. The Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museum Project (I.M.P.) was started in 2017 as a way to explore the variety of approaches and practices on preserving intangible cultural heritage in museums in European Countries. I.M.P. works to build the capacities for museums to safeguard intangible heritage.

Various domains of Intangible Cultural Heritage are represented at the Amsterdam Museum, for example. 'Het geheugen van West' is one of Amsterdam Museum's well-known example of intangible culture heritage initiatives, which is an interactive website where local residents from culturally diverse parents could present their personal memories and experiences.<sup>40</sup> Such opportunities can be translated in the Ontario context by utilizing technology to cultivate intangible cultural heritage from Indigenous communities, as one example.

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<sup>39</sup> UNESCO. What is Intangible Cultural Heritage? Retrieved from <https://ich.unesco.org>

<sup>40</sup> Albert van der Zeijden & Sophie Elpers. 2017. Intangible heritage & the museum in an age of superdiversity. Dutch Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

## **Immersive and Interactive Participatory Experience**

There is a rise in self-organized experiences in arts and culture, where individuals are consuming and interacting with the world around them. This trend influences arts and culture through the ability for participants to become co-creators or contributors rather than spectators. These experiences emphasize and require creators to provide meaningful user experiences at events, festival, shows and programs. As stated in the Mississauga Cultural Master Plan (2020), *“People are looking to interact with various art platforms or performances, either to see something that represents themselves in the art form or to take part in some aspect that is personal to them”*.

For example, Stockholm Sweden introduced a program called “Colour by Numbers” which converted an abandoned telephone tower into a light installation art piece. The installation allows for participants to change the colours in the tower using their mobile devices.<sup>19</sup>

For museums and galleries, there is a shift towards interactive and Virtual Reality experiences in the way exhibitors interact with objects. This coincides with the increased demand by visitors for technology to play a role in their museum and gallery experience. For example, Philadelphia’s Franklin Institute launched a Virtual Reality experience in 2016 that allowed visitors to immerse themselves in an interactive adventure: journey to the depths of the ocean, the far edges of outer space or inside the human body.<sup>22</sup> Another example is the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki, which opened a V.R. exhibit in 2018 that allowed V.R. headset users to feel as if they are stepping inside R. W. Ekman’s painting “The Opening of the Diet 1863 by Alexander II”.<sup>22</sup> An Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit is currently touring across Canada offers a digital arts show anchored by large projections within a former industrial building. Virtual reality and the digital expression of art provides new, more immersive ways of telling stories and presenting objects and knowledge from museum and gallery collections.

### 6.3 Cultural Facility Needs

The 2015 P.R.L.C. Assessment recommended positioning the Arts Resource Centre as the premier destination for arts and cultural programming in Oshawa. In support of this recommendation, the City retained a Consultant in 2021 to prepare an 'Oshawa Cultural Hub Feasibility Study' which is presently in Draft form and has advanced three potential design concepts at the time of writing this P.R.L.C. Assessment:

- a) renovate the existing building;
- b) renovate the building and create a small addition; and
- c) renovate the building and create multiple additions.

Assuming that the City proceeds with any of the above noted or other major enhancements of A.R.C. including those proposed through the ongoing Feasibility Study, such investment would be deemed appropriate to meet arts and cultural hub needs for the current P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period. The City would be presumably focused on developing and/or adjusting program and service offerings out of a renewed A.R.C. and monitoring how that facility is serving the arts and cultural community before directing additional major investments elsewhere in the system. As this project would serve to bolster arts and culture in the city's core, supplemental municipal efforts can be directed to providing supportive environments conducive to community gatherings as well as the arts and cultural programs delivered through the City, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. over the next 10 years.

The City's last comprehensive analysis of the arts and culture sector that included service and program delivery was carried out nearly a decade ago through the 2014 Culture Counts: Oshawa's Arts, Culture & Heritage Plan. City staff have made considerable progress in implementing many of that Plan's recommendations and it should be updated to reconfirm and supplement the facility-based recommendations developed for the P.R.L.C. Assessment.



## **Community Hall**

The P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations and analysis suggest the need for a multi-purpose hall conducive to community gatherings and events for up to 500 persons. Further, the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ all utilize multi-purpose rooms of varying sizes for meetings and programs at all of their facilities. The co-location of multi-purpose spaces with other recreation, library and cultural amenities is a common template used to facilitate cross programming opportunities while achieving economies of scale in construction and operating efficiencies.

The Leisure Room at the Delpark Homes Centre is the only large hall-type space found north of Rossland Road. This space alone cannot be expected to meet the needs of a projected 79,000 persons planned for the Taunton, Kedron, Windfields and Columbus Part II Plan areas at their collective build-outs. This degree of growth along with a highly diverse cultural composition is likely to create pressures for indoor gathering space to meet needs for social gatherings, cultural events, programs and other community rentals.

There will be a need to secure space for community rentals and programming in the north. One option would be to design the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park in a manner that would allow a future second phase expansion through which a hall could be added. Another option would be to provide a hall through a separate community centre though which would require assembly of new lands in the north.

## **Community Kitchen**

A kitchen has been included as part of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. It is recommended that the kitchen be able to support community needs and be available for use by others in the building. For example, OSCC55+ could use a kitchen in support of meal programs, while the City and O.P.L. could deliver culinary programs that support food literacy and food security (possibly in partnership with the local hospitality industry). If designed as a 'community kitchen', the City could support cultural or economic development initiatives such as food incubators or social enterprise, and serving growing ethnocultural populations that view food as an integral part of coming together.

## Display Space

While the City, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. integrate local art at some of their facilities, conversations with the local visual arts community indicated that a lack of affordable space to display their art is a significant barrier that prevents artists from showcasing their work and limits exposure of the creative arts to the broader public. Community exhibition spaces at facilities such as the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa Museum and a potentially enhanced A.R.C. can address some of the needs for exhibition space, however, community centres and libraries can also carve out spaces for artists to exhibit their work. Display areas can be worked into the design of common areas and furniture (e.g. shelving, wall units, etc.) that showcase the work of local artists. For example, community centres can:

- dedicate wall space to paintings or photographs;
- build display cases to hold smaller items;
- use furniture such as the top of library shelving to display content such as items created in the recommended makerspace or works created offsite;
- incorporate small nooks to hold certain exhibits; and
- integrating appropriate lighting in support of areas dedicated to displays.

## Incorporating Flexibility for Arts & Cultural Uses

Building on the spirit of collaboration and integration between various individuals and entities that exist in the arts and cultural system, components included in the rest of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park can be adapted in a manner that is conducive to arts and culture:

- Designing a library makerspace to support digital and multimedia arts by providing “traditional” equipment such as 3D printers, vinyl cutters, and sewing machines as well as studios for sound recording/music production and video creation/editing.
- Installing sinks and storage in multipurpose rooms to enable activities such as painting and crafts, but potentially also providing dedicated arts and crafts room(s) that could support O.P.L., OSCC55+ and City-led recreational arts programs.



## 6.4 Festival & Event Space

### Festivals & Special Events

The City invests resources to host and support a number of festivals and special events throughout the year. City Council supports special events as they benefit the community in terms of promoting Oshawa and the return to local businesses in deriving business from residents and visitors. Notable events range from large gatherings - such as Canada Day celebrations at Lakeview Park, Kars on King and the Peony Festival at the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens - to smaller-scale Events in the Park using neighbourhood open spaces for concerts, movies, live theatre and more. Many of the events are free, family-oriented and bring the community together. Oshawa's special events are provided in two ways to the community:

- Through the leadership of community groups whereby City staff provide supports in terms of promotion and the set up and break down of physical amenities, close roads where required and to assist as the event is underway as needed.
- Through City staff that organize and execute special events through a team of staff members and often volunteers.

The scale of festivals and events offered in Oshawa is varied. The City of Richmond Hill's Festival & Events Manual is a relevant resource that identifies a spectrum of event types (Table 13). With the City of Oshawa serving both ends of this spectrum, it can be difficult to identify, dedicate and prioritize supports offered to event-providers. Signature/Mega Festivals and Events are an important part of the local employment base and Oshawa's overall economy since they attract substantial tourism-spending, and are often accompanied by large corporate budgets for advertising and event delivery. On the other end of the spectrum are organizers of Local and Major Events who may be operating as volunteers or not-for-profit providers, and whom may have limited organizational and/or financial capacity as they serve the local resident base.

Festivals and events provide an opportunity for residents to gather while serving as important platforms to celebrate local culture, heritage, talent, and achievements. Arts and cultural representatives providing input to the P.R.L.C. Assessment note that outside of the Oshawa waterfront, there is not a lot of event space that is conducive to a wide variety of festivals and special events. Waterfront parks such as Lakeview Park also have restrictions including those related to sale of food due to the agreement with the concession operator there which in turn limits the types of festivals and events that can take place there.

**Table 13: Spectrum of Festivals & Events**

<b>Private Festivals &amp; Events</b>	Restricted to a limited, invited group of patrons.
<b>Local Festivals &amp; Events</b>	Geared to a specific neighbourhood or stakeholder group. Events in the Park and Doors Open are examples of this category.
<b>Major Festivals &amp; Events</b>	Originates from within the local community and often produced by local residents, and the event is typically promoted to the community at large.
<b>Signature Festivals &amp; Events</b>	A public one-time or recurring festival or event that possesses significance, tradition, attractiveness or publicity that provides the host community with a competitive advantage. The Peony Festival and Canada Day celebrations are examples of Signature events.
<b>Mega Festivals &amp; Events</b>	A public one-time or recurring festival or event that is distinguished by its focus on international participation and visitation, level of public funding, infrastructure, legacy development and economic impact.

Source: adapted from the City of Richmond Hill Festival & Events Resources Manual, 2019.



Arts and cultural stakeholders expressed interest in having additional spaces for festivals and events, but also to showcase local diversity and creativity. Comments ranged from exploring larger 'fairground style' open spaces that can host large gatherings to integrating vehicular parking, access to transit, washrooms, hydro servicing, and covered areas to open spaces of all sizes including smaller parks. The stated intent was to support grassroots events that could ultimately grow into Major or Signature Events that support economic development objectives. This would also be tied to service delivery processes such as making it easier to navigate the permit process and supporting the development of artists.

There is merit in investigating a potential location for a purpose-built festival and event space oriented to both the City and community-based event organizers in order to create and facilitate more special events in Oshawa. The Windfields Community Park is a plausible location given the population densities and cultural diversity being achieved in the surrounding areas as well as the adjacent community centre in the Northwood Business Park potentially providing opportunities for shared infrastructure and operations. The Community Park may be examined for its ability to be programmed for events while also considering any infrastructure servicing needs required to facilitate the events (e.g. electricity and water access, appropriate seating and staging areas, provision of an amphitheatre, washrooms, etc.). Should the Windfield Community Park not be deemed able to accommodate an event space, consideration may be given to the future Columbus or Kedron Community Parks, or assembling lands elsewhere.

In addition to a space(s) oriented to city-wide audiences, the City may look to parkland and other open spaces to determine opportunities to encourage neighbourhood-based events and gatherings. Not only can this help to animate parks and public spaces, it can help build community cohesion and instill a sense of pride among neighbours. Again, thought will need to be given to supporting infrastructure, servicing capabilities, and amenities that are scaled to the classification of park (i.e. Neighbourhood, Community or City per the Oshawa Official Plan parkland hierarchy).

To support the facility-based scope of the P.R.L.C. Assessment, the City may develop a Festivals & Special Events Strategy that engages both internal and external festival and event providers in specific conversations, articulates operational needs and supports from the various Departments involved, and provides metrics to measure Return on Investment and other quantitative performance measures.

## Farmers' Markets

Oshawa is home to two farmer's markets that run between May and October in the parking lots of the Oshawa Centre mall and the Delpark Homes Centre. Farmers' markets are one of the oldest forms of commerce for farmers in the centre of towns and villages, often the very reason for a settlement's existence. Farmers use these markets as a point of sale for their products. Markets in Ontario are typically sponsored by vendors' associations and non-profit community groups.

Farmers' markets now represent a strong trend within culture and arts, specifically their alignment with creative/cultural hubs. Examples include the Niagara Falls Exchange cultural hub and market, as well as the CreativeHub 1352 in Mississauga which launched the Lakeview Farmer's Market for local, sustainable, organic and artisanal products that provides an important source of income for local farmers, growers, producers and artisans. A study by the Greenbelt Farmers' Market Network concluded the following:

- markets are growing as a trusted source for fresh local food;
- farmers are deriving more of their business income from farmers markets as a secure and predictable sales channel;
- sales are prompting farmers to grow new varieties and increase acreage for market production;
- markets are bringing together farmers with buyers – chefs, food service, caterers, local retailers, etc.; and
- markets are increasingly becoming a hub to access other sales channels.<sup>41</sup>

A dedicated area for a farmer's market could complement the designated festival and special event space being contemplated through this P.R.L.C. Assessment. As outdoor space will be at a premium, should a farmers market space not be able to fit then formalizing a space instead at the Delpark Homes Centre should be pursued.

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<sup>41</sup> Greenbelt Farmers' Market Network. 2015. Tracking Market Farmer and Vendor Performance 2009-2015: 2015 Research Report.

## 6.5 Public Art

Public art significantly contributes to a community's vibrancy, creativity, place-making, and enjoyment. It is a symbol of a progressive municipality, showcasing a level of maturity and inspiration that many prospective residents and employers may base a decision to relocate upon. The City of Oshawa has invested in public art over the years and its Public Art Master Plan documented 17 murals on public and private property at time of publishing in 2018 along with eight sculptures, as well as a small collection of works on paper and canvas in the City's public art collection.

Many municipalities have commissioned public art installations as permanent pieces although there is a growing trend towards temporary or non-permanent installations (e.g. pop-up public art, rotating collections) which can reduce costs and risks associated with perpetual maintenance. Progressive municipalities are also working with Indigenous communities to develop public art that reflects Indigenous culture and promote awareness/understanding within public spaces such as parks, plazas and community centres; past and current generations of Indigenous Peoples living in Oshawa and surrounding areas have played an integral role in the shaping of the area/region and thus there is strong opportunity to reflect their history and stories through public art; the same applies to all B.I.P.O.C. (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) communities.

The Public Art Master Plan provides guidance to implement the City's Public Art Program and incorporate public art projects into city beautification, creative place-making, and community engagement initiatives. The Master Plan establishes a vision where "Oshawa will be a community where Public Art is innovative, diverse and accessible to create vibrant public spaces and meaningful connections." It identifies a number of priority zones for public art including the Downtown, trails and lakefront, corridors, gateways into the city, the Delpark Homes Centre, Harmony North and North Oshawa.



Selected actions arising out of the Public Art Master Plan that are notable in the context of the P.R.L.C. Assessment include:

- Explore public art opportunities that correlate to the Official Plan.
- Conducting a review of the downtown to further identify specific sites and attributes for prioritization and partnership within this zone.
- Incorporating public art into the capital asset management process and applying applicable standards and approaches according to the City's asset management initiatives.
- Investigate and implement temporary or semi-permanent public art projects on an annual basis and determine suitable locations for installation.

The Master Plan defines public art as "art in any medium that is situated in a public space." The City of Oshawa also has a Public Art Policy that defines the types of public art, acquisition methods, conservation and maintenance roles and responsibilities. The City should continue to commission public art inside and outside of its community centres, including the future Windfields Community Park, which will reinforce sites as places for art and culture. Further, the future Windfields Community Park and its adjacent community centre in the Northwood Business Park should explore use of public art as a way to honour the history and legacy of the Windfields Farm, Indigenous communities, and other community contributions over the years. The City should aim to encourage a mix local, regional, national and international artists to provide its public art and should examine ways to minimize barriers faced by individual artists who wish to bid on municipal public art projects.

There are a number of means through which public art can be funded. A global movement known as "One Percent for Public Art" has been applied in many Canadian municipalities who dedicate funding using a percentage of land development values. Application of the Percent for Public Art is achieved through Official Plan policy to enables a municipality to collect one percent of gross construction costs for the purposes of public art which often supports voluntary contributions from land developers. In Ontario, the introduction of Community Benefits Charges to fund growth-related infrastructure in areas of higher densities is another possible means though the collection of these Charges would have to be enacted by a municipality through by-law.

The City of Oshawa should explore the feasibility of applying the “Percent for Public Art” concept and Community Benefits Charges as a potential funding source for a Public Art Fund. The Downtown and Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area would be logical areas to apply these funding tools but would not preclude such policies from also being applied to future or amended Part II Plans such as in the Columbus, Windfields and Taunton communities.

As with the construction of built facilities and parks, the cost of public art is not relegated to a one-time capital expenditure at the time of commissioning and installing the work. In order to realize the ongoing benefits for public art, the works must be maintained to keep up the appearance originally intended by their artists. Public art installations in Oshawa can be supported by a Maintenance Plan that reflects the cost of maintaining or restoring public art pieces, and is something that is supported by City documents such as the Public Art Master Plan and the 20Thirty Action Plan. Of note, the City is currently preparing a Mural Evaluation Plan that will be informed by community feedback and analysis from a consultant.

In developing a maintenance plan, the City can determine whether annual funding dedicated to public art is sufficient and establish a long-range plan to fund maintenance or restoration works specific to future years. To aid in future maintenance, original artists may submit a design and maintenance manual that articulates elements such as colour codes, materials used, design techniques, etc. so that public art can be sustained by future generations of artists in the event that the original artist is unable to do so.



## 6.6 Cultural Facility Initiatives

- C1.** Consider an outdoor festival and event space at the Windfields Community Park (adjacent to the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) that is intended for use by community-based organizations but also large enough and contains the requisite servicing infrastructure to host city-wide gatherings.
- C2.** Explore potential locations to provide a community hall with a minimum capacity of 500 persons that can enable gatherings such as ethnocultural functions, receptions, business functions, smaller-scale community performances, and programs delivered by the City, OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries. This type of facility could form part of a community centre required after the year 2031 and should be factored into land acquisition strategies identified in Initiative #R17 of this P.R.L.C. Assessment.
- C3.** Explore the integration of smaller spaces through parks and other civic spaces that are conducive to neighbourhood and community-based events and gatherings, where appropriate.
- C4.** Explore areas that are conducive to hosting a Farmers Market and other vendor markets at either the Windfields Community Park or Delpark Homes Centre depending upon availability of space.
- C5.** Investigate additional sites for public art throughout the city, integrating public art into the planning and development process as recommended through the City of Oshawa Public Art Master Plan.
- C6.** Assess opportunities to enhance the support of Indigenous Arts, Disability Arts, support to Black artists, artists of colour, newcomer artists, and other artists historically underrepresented in the arts to ensure artwork presented within municipal buildings, parks, civic spaces and communications materials is reflective of all residents.
- C7.** Carry out a cost-benefit analysis of establishing a funding program for public art involving consultation between Culture, Planning and Finance that explores a "Percent for Public Art" and Community Benefits Charge policy approach, as well as establishing consistent funding envelopes for maintenance.
- C8.** Consider an update to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan and the preparation of a Festivals and Events Strategy to determine operational and service delivery needs that will be considered in conjunction with facility-based recommendations contained in this Parks, Recreation, Libraries & Culture Facility Needs Assessment.





**7.0**

**OSCC55+ Facility  
Assessment**

## 7.1 OSCC55+ Branches

There are presently four OSCC55+ branches distributed across Oshawa plus one temporary location in the northwest at General Sikorski Polish Veterans Hall that will be in place until a permanent branch is constructed in north Oshawa. These five branches in total offer strong distribution across Oshawa which is critical since transportation mobility and accessibility is a central factor influencing the ability for certain segments of the older adult population to be engaged in physical and social activities (noting OSCC55+ also offers its own transportation service).

In addition, selected spaces within the City's community centres such as pools, gymnasiums and fitness studios are used by OSCC55+ for program delivery while the City and Oshawa Public Libraries offer amenities and programs that supplement those offered by OSCC55+.

## 7.2 Older Adults in Oshawa

The 2021 Census recorded 53,000 people living in the City as being 55 years of age or over, meaning that more than one out of every five Oshawa residents are older adults. The City's older adult population has increased by over 12,000 people since 2011 or 30%. It can be expected that the older adult population will continue to attain strong rates of growth in line with national aging trends but also the fact that Oshawa's new residential growth areas appear to be attracting older adults (including those living in multi-generational households) as well as younger populations based on anecdotal information received through conversations with City Planners, School Board representatives and others.

P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations indicate that OSCC55+ services are highly valued by Oshawa's older adults and seniors, as well as others that appreciate the importance of having leisure experiences at all ages. Certain organizations participating in focus groups – particularly those serving underrepresented populations and older adult clientele noted the value of having OSCC55+ available to supplement services offered by other community providers while 21% of feedback form respondents or members of their household made use of OSCC55+ programs in the past 12 months.



OSCC55+ had 7,300 members in 2019 but was significantly impacted by COVID-19 as seniors are particularly vulnerable to the virus and membership has been slow to rebound (4,000 members had returned by the end of 2022). Assuming that OSCC55+ captures a similar percentage of the older adult market as it did prior to the pandemic, it could have upwards of 9,000 members by 2031. In addition, OSCC55+ membership is likely to become more culturally diverse in line with Oshawa's immigration patterns.

As such, there will be a need for additional space and programming in Oshawa that supports healthy aging. In addition to a new OSCC55+ branch and improvements to existing branches that will be presented in the pages that follow, there are a number of recommendations throughout this P.R.L.C. Assessment that will benefit Oshawa's older adults as well as OSCC55+.

As new facilities are considered, OSCC55+ should continue to work with Recreation Services to determine how seniors programs may be allocated times regardless of whether there is an OSCC55+ branch at the location.

### 7.3 OSCC55+ Facility Needs

Considerations for the OSCC55+ branch approved for the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park are presented below. Improvements to existing OSCC55+ branches are also advanced in the pages that follow based on observations carried out through site visits as well as input of OSCC55+ staff and membership. All considerations and proposed improvements will need to be confirmed and refined through future architectural and/or business planning analysis.



### **Future Community Centre in the Northwood Business Park**

City Council has confirmed inclusion of an OSCC55+ branch as part of the future community centre which will provide a highly beneficial and synergistic service to the burgeoning older adult population. An OSCC55+ branch will reinforce the site as a multi-generational destination where older adults of varying interests and abilities have a place to be active and connected. OSCC55+ will be able to share in the benefit of co-located amenities.

The OSCC55+ branch at the future community centre will create operational efficiencies and cross-programming potential, however, facilities such as the indoor aquatic centre and gymnasium (as examples) will need to be designed to be large enough or allocated in such a way that OSCC55+ can access them alongside other users. Today, many older adults are working past retirement age or caring for others which precludes them from participation during the traditional daytime hours associated with seniors. There are more older adults looking to participate during the evenings which creates competition for the same times as other municipal or community programs delivered to other age groups, which in turn reinforces the need for adequate space and times if OSCC55+ programs are to be successful.

The new branch may contain a congregate dining cafeteria for gathering and would allow OSCC55+ to access provincial funding as a community support service for seniors. Discussions with the OSCC55+ Board and staff suggest that a new branch is an opportunity to further innovate the types of experiences provided to the City's older adults. OSCC55+ and the City of Oshawa are well regarded across Ontario in their approach to serving their older adults; there is a sentiment that OSCC55+ can continue to be a progressive leader and expand programs if provided with community centre amenities such as kitchens, group fitness studios, technology, etc. As such, cooperation between OSCC55+, City and Oshawa Public Libraries will be key to effective use of the space and delivery of services.

To maximize program delivery potential and accommodate continued growth in the older adult populations beyond 2031, an OSCC55+ branch containing a minimum of 6,000 square feet of dedicated space may be considered. Depending on the size of the new branch, the future of General Sikorski Hall will be determined.

## John Street Branch

The John Street Branch is located near City Hall, McLaughlin Library and Arts Resource Centre. Its ground floor contains a congregate dining area, games room, fireplace lounge and adult day program room along with the reception area and administrative offices. The basement level contains a number of program rooms and a large hall. The branch was originally built in 1968 and underwent a substantial renovation in 2017 that refreshed many interior spaces and now generally meets barrier-free accessibility standards.

The major constraints reported by staff are largely a function of the site and age of the building. Climate control is a challenge particularly between the two floors resulting in rooms being too cold for meetings but too warm for fitness programs. Parking is at a premium and staff administration areas are becoming constrained as John Street Branch is home to most of OSCC55+ corporate services supports including management and transportation staff; as the OSCC55+ membership grows, so will the need for staffing.

Site constraints combined with the fact that the building is owned by a third party limits feasibility of expansion. With the major renovation completed in 2017, the P.R.L.C. Assessment has not identified the need for any major capital alterations for the John Street Branch from a program or service delivery perspective.



## Delpark Homes Branch

OSCC55+ operates a branch that is integrated within the Delpark Homes Centre providing a dining area which provides exterior access to the community centre's courtyard along with an interior program room. There is also a small lounge and staff offices. In total, areas dedicated to the OSCC55+ branch encompass 5,543 square feet.

The OSCC55+ also works with the Recreation Services to schedule and program an adjacent multi-purpose room found in the hallway corridor leading to the OSCC55+ entrance. Programming pressures associated with strong member use are inhibiting the ability for OSCC55+ to deliver the range of services being sought within the branch itself and there is limited ability for OSCC55+ to make use of the broader community centre's fitness studio or gymnasium as Recreation Services is facing similar constraints in delivering their programs as well.

With the P.R.L.C. Assessment recommending an expansion to the community centre's gymnasium and library, expansion of the OSCC55+ branch may also be undertaken and could be accommodated by pushing the building envelope northward as previously illustrated in Figure 7 found in Section 5.5 of this report. This would result in new square footage that could enlarge the program room as well as the dining area and lounge potentially through reconfigurations. The orientation of the customer service should also be reconsidered as its present location can create bottlenecks at the narrow entranceway during peak times. Adding additional administrative space for branch staff is another potential opportunity through an expansion as OSCC55+ staff resourcing will need to keep pace with service and space additions in response to the growing needs of the membership. It is hoped that OSCC55+ will also be able to gain programmable capacity by way of securing time within the aforementioned gymnasium expansion.



## Northview Branch

The Northview Branch is located within the Northview Community Centre. OSCC55+ shares the building with the Oshawa Lawn Bowling Club and the Boys and Girls Club Durham, the latter of whom have a dedicated program room and staff office and are allocated a set number of hours in the gymnasium.

The last major capital reinvestment in the building occurred in 2004 when the facility was expanded and updated. While the facility offers a clean and comfortable aesthetic due to proactive maintenance efforts of City and OSCC55+ staff, growth in OSCC55+ membership over the past 20 years along with changing expectations for seniors programming are creating capacity pressures including for the adult day program.

There is an opportunity to expand the adult day program room in response to growing community needs. Refreshing the outdoor patio would provide greater amenity to all community centre users and the City/OSCC55+ should consider enclosing it for the safety of adult day program participants whose room would likely have a direct access point to it. In addition, growth-related pressures being generated for OSCC55+ fitness programs should be addressed by converting one of the community centre's multi-purpose rooms to a group fitness studio with sprung wood floors from an injury prevention standpoint as fitness programs at this branch presently take place on less forgiving surfaces.

As part of the above noted capital project, opportunities to refresh other aesthetic and functional amenities at the community centre may be considered including equipment, furniture along with any major lifecycle renewal activities that may be required. Engaging the Boys and Girls Club Durham in the process would be helpful to inform whether its space remains sufficient for their needs and any ability for that organization to contribute capital towards desired improvements.



### Conant Street Branch

The Conant Street Branch is shared with the Durham Community Health Centre. The building was originally built as an elementary school in 1955 before the City redeveloped it in 2008 with the Community Health Centre; it is understood that the land and building are not owned by the City.

OSCC55+ operates in the northern half of the building and staff report that the branch is a good fit with the services offered by the Community Health Centre; while both parties have dedicated sections within the building, they share the gymnasium. The branch has good accessibility for persons with disabilities, has an aesthetically pleasing congregate dining area supported by a quality catering kitchen, has an outdoor community garden, and can offer a broad range of programs.

Site tours and discussions with branch staff reveal that space is becoming limited for programming and administrative functions. Unfortunately, there is little ability to expand the building due to its ownership status and tight setbacks to the north and west property lines. As such, no capital recommendations have been advanced for the Conant Street Branch at this time.

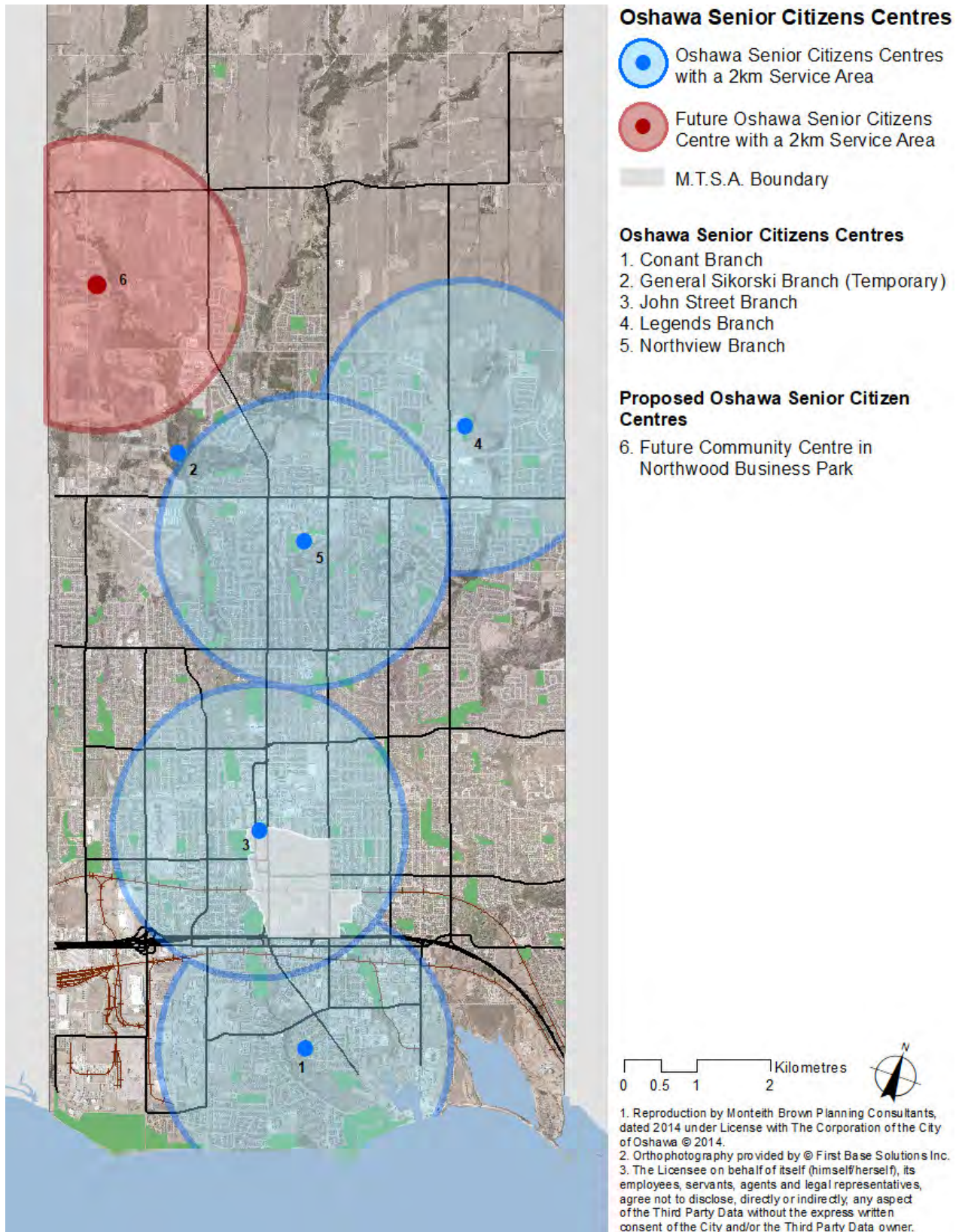
### General Sikorski Branch

The OSCC55+ branch at the General Sikorski Polish Hall is intended to be a temporary location to serve seniors in the northwest until a new community centre is built. The future use of General Sikorski Polish Hall will have to be considered once the new community centre is opened.





Map 11: Existing & Proposed Distribution of OSCC55+ Branches



## **7.4 OSCC55+ Facility Initiatives**

- S1.** Having sufficient dedicated space for OSCC55+ will allow for delivery of a wide range of social, physical, arts and cultural, educational, congregate dining, and other activities. A minimum floor area of 6,000 square feet is recommended for the new OSCC55+ branch while the entire community centre may be designed with age-friendly principles to ensure can be shared in a manner that allows equitable use by the OSCC55+ at all times of the day.
- S2.** Consider the expansion and/or refresh of the Delpark Homes Centre OSCC55+ branch in tandem with the gymnasium and library expansions recommended through this P.R.L.C. Assessment per Initiative #R8 and #L3. For the OSCC55+, the expansion may focus on enlarging the dining area, program room, lounge and staff offices.
- S3.** Consider an expansion, interior reconfiguration and general refresh of the Northview Community Centre to allow OSCC55+ to address growth-related pressures for its adult day program, fitness programs and other services.
- S4.** Ongoing collaboration between OSCC55+ and the City of Oshawa will help to determine if/how time can be allocated for seniors programs within gymnasiums and fitness space being recommended at the Civic Recreation Centre and Donevan Recreation Centre (per P.R.L.C. Assessment Recommendations #R9 and #R9).
- S5.** OSCC55+ should be engaged in park planning and design activities to contribute age-friendly perspectives and articulate needs that assist the organization in building its outdoor programming portfolio.



# 8.0

## Implementation Strategy

## 8.1 Monitoring & Updating the P.R.L.C. Assessment

Successful implementation of the P.R.L.C. Assessment requires the City, Oshawa Public Libraries and OSCC55+ to continually assess and confirm directions and priorities. Outcomes of this Assessment may require other actions and efforts to be undertaken including (but not limited to) reconfirming timing and need for facilities, creating supplementary policies to guide allocation and effective utilization, investigating opportunities for partnerships, exploring traditional and non-traditional funding sources, etc.

Regular review, assessment, and revision of the P.R.L.C. Assessment will ensure that it remains reflective of community needs. This may require monitoring activity levels, utilization, demographics, and continuing dialogue with community organizations. The development of annual work plans and reporting in preparation of the annual budget process is valuable to track achievements and lessons learned in order to determine the success of the P.R.L.C. Assessment. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustment in resource allocations and priorities may be required. The following steps can be considered during annual reviews of the P.R.L.C. Assessment.

- Review of the past year (Initiatives considered, capital projects undertaken, success of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, areas for improvement or adjustment, etc.).
- Review the P.R.L.C. Assessment to identify and/or confirm short-term initiatives based on staff reviews and consideration (e.g., trends, consultation, usage data, funding, partnerships, etc.).
- Identify potential challenges for the upcoming year.
- Communicate the status of ongoing and future projects with staff, Council, and the public.
- Revise capital budget forecasts and identify external funding opportunities, as necessary.

It is suggested that a comprehensive review of the P.R.L.C. Assessment be undertaken in the year 2028. Doing so will allow the City to inform other growth-related studies and Official Plan policy (where applicable), assess implications of continued population growth and socio-demographic changes, consider future market conditions and participation patterns, and re-engage residents and community providers to understand their needs at that future time.

## 8.2 Facility Development Triggers

The P.R.L.C. Assessment is a point of departure through which further assessments may take place. City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ Staff can consider a number of factors to confirm needs as stated herein prior to constructing recommended facilities. This process should involve an examination into (but not be limited to):

- local/regional/provincial trends pertaining to usage and popularity of the activity/facility;
- local demand for the activity/facility and any known constraints;
- examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- the ability of existing facilities to accommodate the proposed service;
- potential risks and liability to the City of Oshawa/O.P.L./OSCC55+ in providing new facilities or services;
- the feasibility of the City, O.P.L or OSCC55+ to reasonably and cost-effectively provide the service/facility as a core level of service (includes a determination of capital and operating costs, cost recovery thresholds and funding sources, etc.);
- whether the request can be adequately addressed in partnership with a community-based provider; and/or
- the willingness and ability of a requesting partner organization(s) to deliver the service, if provided with appropriate municipal supports.

For facilities that currently do not have sufficient demand to warrant a specific recommendation in the P.R.L.C. Assessment, the City must be prepared to respond to future requests. Such demands may evolve according to future trends and preferences. When requests are brought forward for investment in non-traditional, emerging and/or non-core municipal services, the City/O.P.L./OSCC55+ should evaluate the need for these pursuits contingent upon the level of community requests and sound business planning practices. The above noted criteria should be used as a guide to rationalizing entry into new levels of service.

### 8.3 Potential Capital Funding Sources

To guide annual and long-range budgeting processes, order of magnitude capital cost estimates will need to be developed by City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ staff. Costing can be determined through architectural and engineering studies when considering P.R.L.C. Assessment Initiatives, along with requisite business planning.

Any considerations for projects will be brought forward to the Mayor and City Council on an annual basis through the budgeting process once the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ have the information needed to develop costs (e.g. amount of parkland being conveyed, site selection, design characteristics, financial contributions from non-municipal sources, etc.). In addition, operating impacts and lifecycle costing assessments and identification of funding sources will be carried out to inform budgets and project approval decisions prior to implementation of individual projects.

#### Development Charges & Community Benefit Charges

Development Charges (D.C.'s) are collected for new development and applied towards the projects identified in the City's Development Charge Background Study.<sup>42</sup> The Development Charge Background Study addresses the additional capital assets required in order for the City and O.P.L. to maintain their service levels as Oshawa's population increases. Development Charges are collected based on the Province of Ontario's Development Charge Act (1997), though it should be noted that components of the Act are currently under review and changes are expected to be passed in the future through Bill 73.

Any growth related projects identified in the P.R.L.C. Assessment that are also in the Development Charge Background Study are eligible to be partially financed from D.C.'s. Based on legislation no project can be financed entirely by D.C.'s. The *Development Charge Act* does not permit the collection of D.C.s for cultural, entertainment and tourism facilities, thus such funding would have to come from other sources even if required to service growth-related needs.

Community Benefit Charges (C.B.C.s) are a relatively new tool introduced through the Planning Act to collect growth-related funds associated with new developments. The City of Oshawa passed its Community Charges By-law in May 2023 (By-Law 50-2023) which will apply to all development or redevelopments containing 5 or more storeys at or above grade and consisting of 10 or more residential units. The City plans to review its C.B.C. By-law again in 2024.

The timing of growth and development in Oshawa directly impacts the City's ability to collect sufficient D.C.s and C.B.C.s to finance the capital projects included

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<sup>42</sup> City of Oshawa. 2019 Development Charges Background Study.

in the D.C. Background Study. As a result, City/Library Staff and Officials may adjust timing of the projects during the annual budget cycle to better match expected need in the community. Should projects not be deferred as required, it would potentially result in the City financing through additional long-term debt. Since the City's 2019 D.C. Background Study predates the P.R.L.C. Assessment, a review of the D.C. Background Study to ensure that eligible growth-related facilities identified herein are factored into any growth-related funding forecasts may be considered.

### **Municipal Reserves**

On occasion, municipalities may decide to set aside monies accrued from tax dollars or other revenue sources for special projects, such as the development or expansion of a specific facility or park. Lifecycle or maintenance reserves are primarily contributions from the municipality. Through capital forecasting, the City is able to plan and submit funding plans for lifecycle and maintenance needs and is thus in a position to estimate renewal costs over time.

Lifecycle reserves proactively enable a municipality to fund the maintenance and state-of-good-repair of existing facilities, and have a contingency should unexpected maintenance be required for a facility. For the latter, an added benefit is that a major repair does not significantly impact one annual budget since a municipality is putting away small contributions for many years prior. Utilization and continued contributions to reserves and reserve funds represents sound and sustainable fiscal planning, and allows the City to efficiently allocate capital costs over asset lifecycles.

### **Partnerships**

The City of Oshawa may continue to consider engaging in partnerships with the private sector, non-profit sector or other levels of government to develop various facilities and services. Detailed feasibility studies and the development and use of agreements will be required to ensure the partnerships yield the desired results, building off the partnership evaluation criteria ultimately established.

### **Grants**

In the past, some major municipal capital projects have received financial support from upper levels of government such as the Green and Inclusive Buildings Program. Presently, there are no known provincial or federal infrastructure programs specifically for the development or renovation of major parks, recreation, library and cultural facilities. Should a new grant program be launched, the presence of an approved long range planning strategy (such as the P.R.L.C. Assessment, a master plan, etc.) is often a requirement to securing funding.

### **Parkland Cash-in-lieu**

The *Planning Act* establishes a framework for the dedication of parkland and possible alternatives, with the implementation policies identified through local official plans. The conveyance of cash-in-lieu of parkland generated by development or redevelopment is an example of an alternative under the Act. At the municipality's discretion, the cash-in-lieu may be used for land acquisition or for the erecting or repair of buildings and other uses defined by the Act.

### **Fundraising and Sponsorships**

Occasionally assistance is provided from the community towards the construction and/or operation of parks and facilities. It can be an effective way to help provide services and spaces that are desired by residents, however this has been a decreasing source of revenue for the City for a number of years. This is consistent with trends in other municipalities since there is fierce competition among many interests for a household's charitable dollars.

### **User Fees & Surcharges**

User fees and surcharges are a way to direct some of the operating and capital costs of the facility away from the general taxpayer, and onto the users who directly benefit from them. User and rental fees vary considerably based on the type of activity / facility in question. For example, rentals by far comprise the bulk of the operating revenue stream for an arena, but are much less consequential for lower use spaces such as meeting rooms. Nevertheless, increases in user fees, can be used to offset the costs associated with operating budget pressures / increases. This important source of revenue, however, is often difficult to increase (beyond inflationary levels), and over time has been a decreasing source of revenue when compared to the total operating costs of the facilities.

### **Cooperation between Municipal Neighbours**

The physical focus of this Assessment set the boundaries within the borders of Oshawa, however given the City's proximity to Whitby and Clarington (both who have approved plans to open new community centres), cooperation between municipalities to coordinate effective delivery of future recreation, library and cultural services may be beneficial for the City's taxpayers. In certain parts of Oshawa, residents do not appear concerned about municipal boundaries as long as their access to and enjoyment of a recreational/library experiences are unencumbered by local politics.

Throughout Ontario, municipalities benefit from various types of cooperation, including joint services agreements that allow cost-efficient access to facilities by residents in another municipality. There are, however, few examples involving the joint development/funding of facilities to accommodate the needs of two or more



jurisdictions. This is largely due to the intricacies of achieving mutually beneficial agreements such as reaching consensus on capital and operating commitments, in which municipality a facility is ultimately located, public opinion about tax funding supporting a facility located external to one's own community, management and staffing, etc.

### **Long Term Debt Financing**

In the case where alternate sources of funding are unavailable at the time of construction, major capital expenditures can be financed through long term debt. In the long run this is a more expensive funding alternative due to interest charges and could impact the municipality's borrowing rate and capacity, however this could be a beneficial financing alternative as it lessens the immediate impact to the taxpayer and municipal reserves. Long term debt spreads the initially large capital costs over a number of years, allowing future users who benefit from the facility to contribute to these costs. Typically the amortization period chosen is tied to the anticipated useful life of the capital project.

Any practical major projects identified in the P.R.L.C. Assessment that are not identified in the D.C. Background Study could possibly increase the City's need for additional Long Term Debt financing and resultant tax increase to address the annual repayments.



## 8.4 Implementation Schedule Components

### Implementation Schedule Components

An Implementation Schedule for the P.R.L.C. Assessment is presented in Section 8.5. It is comprised of a number of parts that will assist the City, OSCC55+ and O.P.L. when considering the P.R.L.C. Assessment's outcomes including:

- The outcome itself;
- The Lead responsible;
- The estimated timing; and
- Potential funding sources to finance capital development.

The Implementation Schedule is presented in the following format, with subsequent pages describing the intent of each component in greater detail.

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Estimated Costs	Potential Capital Funding Sources
Recommendation Number and Text	Municipal Department or Division	Short, Medium or Long-Term	Capital Estimates and Operating Implications, where applicable	Funding Source, where applicable

#### i) Lead

Identifies the lead responsible (e.g., Department, Division, O.P.L., OSCC55+, etc.) for initiating and overseeing the consideration of an Initiative, noting that all outcomes will require inter-departmental coordination to ensure effective outcomes. Identified Project Leads for potential Initiatives are subject to change as the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ sees fit depending on municipal resources, workloads, changes in departmental or divisional mandates, etc.

#### ii) Suggested Timing

Timing is often, but not always, synonymous with priority. The potential timing of Initiatives is organized into the following categories:

- Short-Term (2024 to 2026)
- Medium-Term (2027 to 2029)
- Long-Term (2030 to 2031)
- Ongoing (regularly throughout the P.R.L.C. Assessment planning period)

Attention to medium and long-term Initiatives is generally required when short term actions have been initiated/completed or when suitable partners have been identified for funding. Timing, however, is also contingent upon a number of other factors and should be revisited annually prior to City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ capital and operating budget development exercises. In addition to funding availability, factors that might change timing or priority from year to year may include:

- capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- legislation and mandated requirements;
- changes to service standards;
- public input and community interests;
- emerging trends and changes in usage;
- participation of partners; and
- socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts, including attaining the population thresholds as assumed in this document.

### **iii) Potential Funding Sources**

Section 8.3 provides a selected listing of funding sources that may be used to fund the cost of implementing the P.R.L.C. Assessment's recommendations (note: it is not intended to be an exhaustive list).



## 8.5 Implementation Schedule

### General Initiatives

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>G1</b> Explore opportunities to increase engagement of Indigenous communities and Indigenous designers/consultants in the design of new and significantly renovated parks, recreation, library and cultural facility projects to inform the types of spaces, amenities and other considerations that reflect Indigenous cultures and knowledge.	Innovation & Transformation and Facilities Management Services (F.M.S.)	Ongoing	Project-dependent
<b>G2</b> Explore opportunities to increase engagement of equity-deserving populations in the design of new and significantly renovated parks, recreation, library and cultural facility projects as well as discussing ways to improve inclusivity in existing spaces.	City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+	Ongoing	Not Applicable
<b>G3</b> Consult with Indigenous Peoples to discuss how new and existing facilities could be adapted to be respectful of Indigenous rights and Indigenous culture (also see Initiatives #G1 and #G2), with a view to "Indigenize" and "Decolonize" public policies and spaces.	City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+	Ongoing	Not Applicable
<b>G4</b> Ensure that staff of the City, Oshawa Public Libraries and OSCC55+ are familiar with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, so that staff may consider ways in which to apply these documents to parks, recreation, library and culture facility planning and programming.	City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+	Ongoing	Not Applicable
<b>G5</b> Explore ways to encourage greater participation among 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ communities within parks, recreation, library and culture facilities, potentially using Positive Space, Safe Space or similar designations.	Innovation & Transformation and F.M.S.	Ongoing	Not Applicable

## Parks Initiatives

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>P1</b> Strive to provide active and tableland forms of parkland at a rate of 2.0 hectares per 1,000 population, thereby targeting a total active parkland supply of 440 hectares by the year 2031.	F.M.S. and Planning Services	Ongoing	Park dedication and C.I.L., Municipal Reserves
<b>P2</b> Update the City of Oshawa Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law to reflect amendments to the Ontario Planning Act resulting from Bill 23.	F.M.S. and Planning Services	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<b>P3</b> In conjunction with Initiative #P2, an inter-departmental exercise to review and standardize the parkland classification system contained in Section 2.6.2.2 of the City of Oshawa Official Plan for use across City Departments would help ensure consistency in municipal planning, design and operations activities.	Recreation Services, F.M.S., and Parks Operations	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<b>P4</b> Utilization of this P.R.L.C. Assessment as well as financial analysis examining per unit valuations and other residential developments would be helpful in supporting the Parks Plan and Parkland Dedication By-Law.	Planning Services and Finance	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<b>P5</b> Consider preparing a Privately Owned Public Space (P.O.P.S.) Policy or establish criteria to guide the acquisition, location, development and operating responsibilities for Privately Owned Public Spaces in Oshawa. Appropriate sections of the City of Oshawa Official Plan may need to be reviewed and amended to reflect integration of P.O.P.S. and strata forms of parkland.	F.M.S. and Planning Services	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<b>P6</b> Consider establishing criteria for accepting suitable land for developing active parkland including street frontage, proximity to existing parks and recreation facilities, opportunities for future expansion, grading, drainage, and other site conditions.	F.M.S.	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<b>P7</b> Explore integrating parkland conveyance tools contained in the Planning Act with other land acquisition tools to maximize public access to parkland and natural areas (e.g., land purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, donations, etc.).	F.M.S.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>P9</b> Consider evaluating the types of washrooms that are appropriate within the City of Oshawa Official Plan's Parkland Classification System, along with criteria and costs of providing washroom facilities.	F.M.S.	Short-Term	To be determined
<b>P10</b> Conducting CPTED Reviews (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) for all parks will assist with prioritizing changes to locations that have been subject to more frequent incidents along with those that are intensively-used and/or identified by Parks Operations staff and emergency services personnel.	Parks Operations	Ongoing	To be determined
<b>P11</b> Explore opportunities to integrate Indigenous stories, names and other information within park and trail signage, and communications materials.	F.M.S., Innovation & Transformation and Culture	Ongoing	To be determined
<b>P12</b> Any future update to the City of Oshawa Active Transportation Master Plan should reflect progress made in recent years, support efforts to develop recreational trail networks, and explore ways to enhance connectivity within established and future residential areas in light of the evolving the City's urban structure. As part of this exercise, the City's trail classification system may be reviewed and presents an opportunity to update the Off-Road Facility Standards to integrate current best practices into the design and maintenance of recreational trails.	F.M.S. and Parks Operations	Short-Term	Municipal Reserves
<b>P13</b> Consider the feasibility, benefits and costs associated with the development of regional trail networks including those contained within hydro corridors and other easements.	F.M.S.	Ongoing	Not Applicable
<b>P14</b> Determine whether it remains appropriate to implement any outstanding directions from the City of Oshawa Draft Waterfront Master Plan, the Lakefront West Park Master Plan, Pumphouse Marsh Master Plan and other studies prepared specifically to inform the recreational, cultural and natural functions of the waterfront.	F.M.S.	Ongoing	To be determined

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<p><b>P15</b> In consultation with residents, volunteers and local horticultural organizations, explore the suitability of integrating additional community gardens in existing and future City of Oshawa parks. Provision of community gardens can make use of community volunteers who contribute resources to management of these gardens, upkeep and general operation based on the City's current Policies and Procedures.</p>	F.M.S. and Parks Operations	Short-Term	Grants, Fundraising, Municipal Reserves
<p><b>P16</b> Consider the development of an inter-departmental action plan to align corporate objectives and define resource requirements associated with current and future integration of horticultural displays on municipal lands.</p>	Parks Operations	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<p><b>P17</b> Investigate potential sites in conjunction with the Oshawa Animal Care Advisory Committee to determine opportunities for an off-leash area to improve geographic distribution west of Simcoe Street. New and existing off-leash areas can consider ways to minimize environmental impacts through designated walking routes and fencing, where necessary, and providing sufficient parking at a minimum.</p>	F.M.S. and Parks Operations	Medium-Term	To be determined
<p><b>P18</b> Explore how the design and redesign of parks, recreation, library, and cultural facilities can support the City of Oshawa's urban forestry objectives through tree preservation, reforestation, contributions to the tree canopy target, and other applicable strategies.</p>	F.M.S. and Parks Operations	Ongoing	To be determined

**Recreation Initiatives**

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<p><b>R1</b> Recreational components to be considered for inclusion at a future community centre in the north may include: a 25-metre lane rectangular pool with a minimum of 8 lanes plus separate leisure and therapeutic pools; a gymnasium designed to high school regulation specifications including adequate playout dimensions, ceiling heights and floor surfacing; a fitness centre and group fitness studio with a sprung wood floor; an indoor track; space for Indigenous programs and activities; and dedicated youth room. As noted in Initiatives #L2 and #S1, a community centre could also include dedicated spaces for OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries. Exploring sport-friendly and age-friendly accessibility features, and designing a community centre in a manner that would allow it to readily be expanded if required, may provide added flexibility to address future needs.</p>	Recreation and F.M.S.	Short-Term	D.C., C.B.C., Grants, Municipal Reserves
<p><b>R2</b> Recreational components to be considered for inclusion at the future Windfields Community Park (adjacent to a future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) may include: a minimum of one lit full size rectangular sports field; a refrigerated outdoor skating trail; a major splash pad; 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; a skateboard park; and an adventure or natural playground structure.</p>	Recreation and F.M.S.	Short-Term	D.C., Grants, Municipal Reserves
<p><b>R3</b> Recreational components considered for inclusion at the future Kedron Community Park may include: a minimum of 2 lit full size rectangular sports fields; a major splash pad; 4 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; and an adventure or natural playground structure.</p>	Recreation and F.M.S.	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C., Parkland C.I.L. Reserve
<p><b>R4</b> Recreational components considered for inclusion at the future Columbus Community Park may include: a minimum of 2 lit hardball diamonds; a major splash pad; 3 tennis courts and 4 pickleball courts; a minimum of one full basketball court; and an adventure or natural playground structure.</p>	Recreation and F.M.S.	Long-Term	D.C., Parkland C.I.L. Reserve
<p><b>R5</b> At least one of the rectangular fields recommended at future Community Parks in the Windfields, Kedron, and Columbus Park II Plan area may be considered to be enclosed for</p>	F.M.S.	To be determined	To be determined



Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>R6</b> Consider engaging local ball organizations in a review of existing ball diamonds that they are using to discuss improvements that could help build capacity in their programs, and confirm feasibility of such improvements through requisite studies that explore setbacks to adjacent land uses, topography, infrastructure serving, and associated costs.	Recreation and F.M.S.	Long-Term	Municipal Reserves, User Fees
<b>R7</b> Consider the construction of a regulation-size cricket grounds at either the Kedron Community Park or the Columbus Community Park.	F.M.S.	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C., Parkland Reserve
<b>R8</b> Consider expanding the Delpark Homes Centre to add a second gymnasium to alleviate capacity pressures currently faced for programs delivered by the City, OSCC55+ and community-based providers. In addition, the City may consider enhancements to its courtyard, construct a full basketball court while exploring the feasibility of converting the Delpark Homes Centre skateboard park into a permanent installation employing a progressive design template.	Recreation and F.M.S.	Medium to Long-Term	D.C., C.B.C.
<b>R9</b> Consider expanding either the Civic Recreation Complex or Donevan Recreation Complex to include a gymnasium subject to confirmation through architectural and/or engineering analyses. Whichever option is not chosen should be deferred for consideration after the year 2031.	Recreation and F.M.S.	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C.
<b>R10</b> Consider expanding the Donevan Recreation Complex to add a fitness centre as well as carry out façade improvements to increase the facility's visual presence along Harmony Road. A gymnasium may also be considered subject to the City's decision regarding Initiative #R9.	Recreation and F.M.S.	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C.
<b>R11</b> Consider the preparation of an interior configuration plan for the Civic Recreation Complex that rectifies current challenges regarding facility control and staff supervision along with enhanced visibility and access into the fieldhouse. A gymnasium may also be considered subject to the City's decision regarding Initiative #R9.	F.M.S.	Medium-Term	Municipal Reserves
<b>R12</b> New and existing fitness centres operated by the City of Oshawa should consider emerging trends in the fitness industry such as high intensity and functional training, use of on-demand technologies and other best practices to provide a meaningful fitness experience.	Recreation	Ongoing	To be determined

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<p><b>R13</b> Consider capital and/or operating cost obligations if/when negotiations arise with Scouts Canada regarding Camp Samac Pool. Should negotiations not achieve a result deemed satisfactory to the City's interests, the City may cease operating the Camp Samac Pool particularly if the opening of new or redeveloped indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities sufficiently meet community needs.</p>	Recreation	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<p><b>R14</b> Consider initiating a youth-specific consultation process to determine whether improvements or adjustments are required to youth-focused space, amenities and programs provided at the Civic Recreation Complex, South Oshawa Community Centre and Northview Community Centre. The Oshawa Youth Council and other representatives of youth/teens in the city should be engaged through this process. Consider initiating a youth-specific consultation process to determine whether improvements or adjustments are required to youth-focused space, amenities and programs provided at the Civic Recreation Complex, South Oshawa Community Centre and Northview Community Centre.</p>	Recreation	Short-Term	To be determined
<p><b>R15</b> Explore expanding the number of barrier-free, natural and adventure playground structures as part of new park developments and during playground renewal projects.</p>	F.M.S.	Ongoing	D.C., C.B.C., Parkland Reserve
<p><b>R16</b> Consider engaging representatives of the local and regional disc golf community to explore the feasibility of integrating a 9-hole course at an existing City park.</p>	Recreation and Parks Operations	Short-Term	To be determined
<p><b>R17</b> In anticipation of growth-related recreation needs after the year 2031 - most notably for gymnasium space, arenas, indoor turf, and other large facilities - opportunities to assemble land may be considered for a future community centre while being open to potential partnerships for a mixed-use or stacked community centre model as part of a private sector or institutional land development project.</p>	Planning Services and Recreation	Short-Term	To be determined
<p><b>R18</b> Consider the City's replacement program when planning the capital budget. Playgrounds still employing sand and stone surfacing should be prioritized for replacement with engineered wood fibre, cast-in-place rubber, or other surface material deemed appropriate by Parks</p>	Parks Operations	Ongoing	Municipal Reserves

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>R19</b> Consider emergency preparedness requirements in new facilities or renovations to existing facilities (i.e. back up power, large assembly areas) so that in the event of an emergency, municipal facilities are suitable as reception centres.	Project-dependent	Ongoing	Project-dependent
<b>R20</b> Investigate opportunities to upscale existing facilities to accommodate multi-use opportunities outside of traditional sport and recreation (i.e. use of space for weddings, special events).	Project-dependent	Ongoing	Project-dependent

### Oshawa Public Libraries Initiatives

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>L1</b> Targeting a total Gross Floor Area of 132,000 square feet by the year 2031 will achieve a rate of 0.6 square feet per capita and meet growth-related needs of the population. This would require a net addition of 38,000 square feet of library space across the library system.	O.P.L.	Ongoing	D.C., C.B.C., Municipal Reserves
<b>L2</b> Consider a 20,000 square foot Oshawa Public Libraries branch as part of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park. In the event that this gross floor area cannot be accommodated in its entirety, commence a site selection exercise to determine how to address the remainder of library space in the Columbus and/or Windfields Part II Plan areas.	F.M.S.	Short-Term	D.C., Grants, Municipal Reserves
<b>L3</b> Explore the ability to expand the Delpark Homes Centre Library branch and carry out an associated interior reconfiguration that results in a new multi-purpose room, space for seating and study, an enlarged children's area, expanded staff work area and storage, and potentially a separate library entrance.	F.M.S.	Medium to Long-Term	D.C., C.B.C.
<b>L4</b> Consider the expansion of the John Aker Northview Library along with creating an outdoor reading garden and improved pedestrian connection to the adjacent Northview Community Centre. Opportunities to improve lighting levels within the library should also be explored.	F.M.S.	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C., Municipal Reserves
<b>L5</b> Investigate the ability to extend the customer services desk at Jess Hann Library to sit adjacent	O.P.L.	Short-Term	Municipal Reserves

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>L6</b> Continue to assess the feasibility of distributing “express” library service points in strategic areas using vending machines and kiosks, holds lockers, and other means deemed appropriate to increase the reach of library services and address geographic gaps. Potential locations to consider include the Donevan Recreation Complex, OSCC55+ Conant Branch and within areas of intensification such as the Downtown and Central Oshawa Major Transit Station Area.	O.P.L.	Ongoing	To be determined
<b>L7</b> Consider investments in technological infrastructure at all Oshawa Public Libraries branches through expansion of Wi-Fi capabilities, computer hardware and software, under carpet cabling, electrical outlets, and other needs that emerge as technologies evolve over time.	O.P.L.	Ongoing	To be determined
<b>L8</b> Consider expansion of the number of Storywalks in parks and outdoor areas with locations determined in conjunction with Oshawa Public Libraries, Parks Operations, Culture, and others as appropriate.	O.P.L., Parks Operations, Culture	To be determined	Parkland C.I.L. Reserve, Municipal Reserves

## Culture Initiatives

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>C1</b> Consider an outdoor festival and event space at the Windfields Community Park (adjacent to the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park) that is intended for use by community-based organizations but also large enough and contains the requisite servicing infrastructure to host city-wide gatherings.	Culture and F.M.S.	Short-Term	Grants, Municipal Reserves
<b>C2</b> Explore potential locations to provide a community hall with a minimum capacity of 500 persons that can enable gatherings such as ethnocultural functions, receptions, business functions, smaller-scale community performances, and programs delivered by the City, OSCC55+ and Oshawa Public Libraries. This type of facility could form part of a community centre required after the year 2031 and should be factored into land acquisition strategies identified in Initiative #R17 of this P.R.L.C. Assessment.	Culture and Recreation	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C.
<b>C3</b> Explore the integration of smaller spaces through parks and other civic spaces that are conducive to neighbourhood and community-based events and gatherings, where appropriate.	Culture and F.M.S.	Ongoing	Project-dependent
<b>C4</b> Explore areas that are conducive to hosting a Farmers Market and other vendor markets at either the Windfields Community Park or Delpark Homes Centre depending upon availability of space.	Culture and F.M.S.	Short-Term	Municipal Reserves, Parkland C.I.L. Reserve
<b>C5</b> Investigate additional sites for public art throughout the city, integrating public art into the planning and development process as recommended through the City of Oshawa Public Art Master Plan.	Culture	Short-Term	Project-dependent

Initiative	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>C6</b> Assess opportunities to enhance the support of Indigenous Arts, Disability Arts, support to Black artists, artists of colour, newcomer artists, and other artists historically underrepresented in the arts to ensure artwork presented within municipal buildings, parks, civic spaces and communications materials is reflective of all residents.	Culture and Innovation & Transformation	Ongoing	Project-dependent
<b>C7</b> Carry out a cost-benefit analysis of establishing a funding program for public art involving consultation between Culture, Planning and Finance that explores a “Percent for Public Art” and Community Benefits Charge policy approach, as well as establishing consistent funding envelopes for maintenance.	Culture, Planning Services and Finance Services	Short-Term	Grants, Municipal Reserves
<b>C8</b> Consider an update to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan and the preparation of a Festivals and Events Strategy to determine operational and service delivery needs that will be considered in conjunction with facility-based recommendations contained in this Parks, Recreation, Libraries & Culture Facility Needs Assessment.	Culture	Short-Term	Municipal Reserves

**OSCC55+ Initiatives**

Recommendation	Lead	Suggested Timing	Potential Funding Sources
<b>S1</b> Having sufficient dedicated space for OSCC55+ will allow for delivery of a wide range of social, physical, arts and cultural, educational, congregate dining, and other activities. A minimum floor area of 6,000 square feet is recommended for the new OSCC55+ branch while the entire community centre may be designed with age-friendly principles to ensure can be shared in a manner that allows equitable use by the OSCC55+ at all times of the day.	OSCC55+	Short-Term	D.C., Grants, Municipal Reserves
<b>S2</b> Consider the expansion and/or refresh of the Delpark Homes Centre OSCC55+ branch in tandem with the gymnasium and library expansions recommended through this P.R.L.C. Assessment per Initiative #R8 and #L3. For the OSCC55+, the expansion may focus on enlarging the dining area, program room, lounge and staff offices.	F.M.S.	Medium to Long-Term	D.C., C.B.C.
<b>S3</b> Consider an expansion, interior reconfiguration and general refresh of the Northview Community Centre to allow OSCC55+ to address growth-related pressures for its adult day program, fitness programs and other services.	F.M.S.	Medium-Term	D.C., C.B.C., Municipal Reserves
<b>S4</b> Ongoing collaboration between OSCC55+ and the City of Oshawa will help to determine if/how time can be allocated for seniors programs within gymnasiums and fitness space being recommended at the Civic Recreation Centre and Donevan Recreation Centre (per P.R.L.C. Assessment Recommendations #R9 and #R9).	OSCC55+ and Recreation	Short-Term	Not Applicable
<b>S5</b> OSCC55+ should be engaged in park planning and design activities to contribute age-friendly perspectives and articulate needs that assist the organization in building its outdoor programming portfolio.	OSCC55+ and F.M.S.	Ongoing	Not Applicable

## Appendix A: Results of P.R.L.C. Assessment Consultations

### Community Feedback Form

A feedback form for the P.R.L.C. Assessment was open over a five-week period between January and February 2023 for the public to provide input into Oshawa's parks, recreation, library and culture facilities. More specifically, the feedback form explored use of facilities along with future improvements, users' values, satisfaction and barriers.

Engagement opportunities included a feedback form, available online on Connect Oshawa and on paper at Service Oshawa, City recreation facilities and all Oshawa Senior Community Centres and Oshawa Public Libraries branches. Note that the self-administered format of the feedback form is such that findings should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of Oshawa's population and results should be considered in conjunction with input received through the full range of P.R.L.C. Assessment consultations. A total of 367 online and hard copy feedback forms were submitted and analyzed. Notable socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are as follows:

- The median age of feedback form respondents was 48 years, almost ten years older than the 2021 Census median age of 39. The average household size was 3.3 persons.
- 96% of respondents speak English at home while other languages commonly spoken in respondents' homes included Hindi (5%), French (4%), Spanish (2%), and Urdu (1%).
- Oshawa residents and business/property owners accounted for 91% of responses. The remaining 9% were non-residents or chose not to specify their place of residence.

### Parkland Usage and Improvements

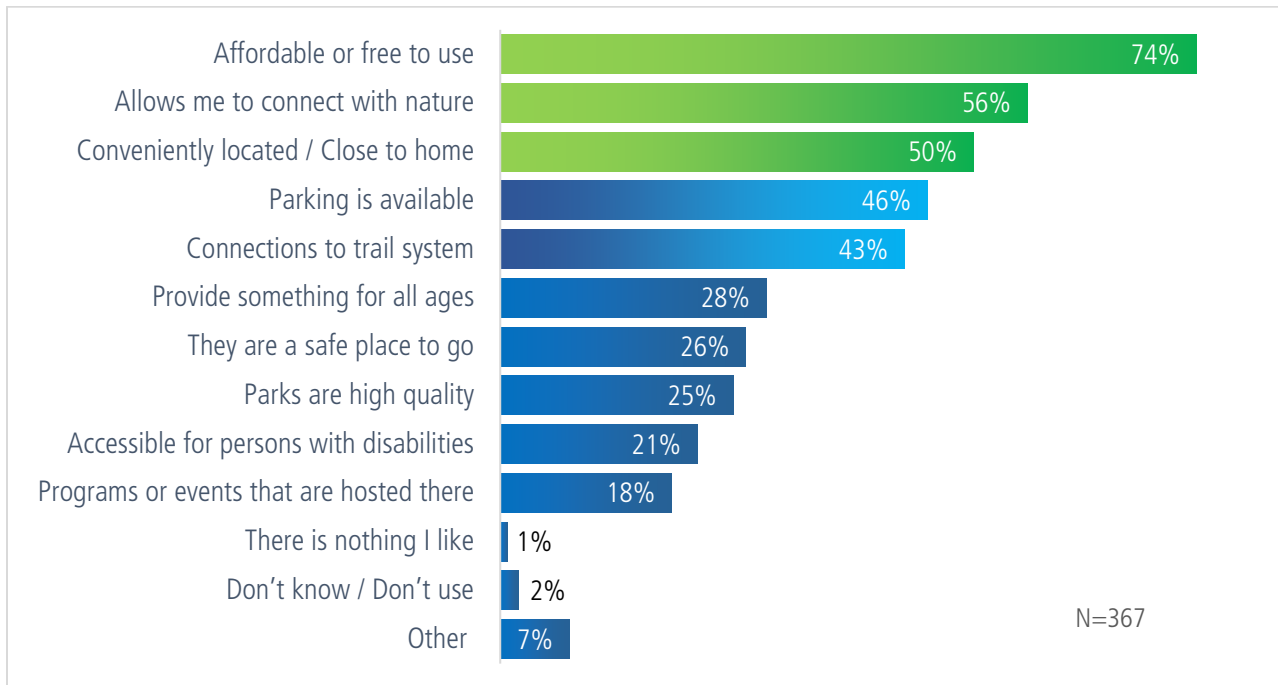
Nearly three out of four respondents indicated that the affordable or free use is what they like most about Oshawa's parks. At least half of respondents also liked that parks allowed them to connect with nature or that they are conveniently located/close to home (Figure 8). The top five things that the City could do to increase use of parks among respondents is to::

1. provide washrooms;
2. incorporate more shade and seating;
3. expand the trail network;
4. increase the number of parks in Oshawa; and
5. explore new types and designs of parks that differ from the parks found today.

Based on the overall ranking, the higher ranked options typically included aspects related to park design and amenities while some of the lower ranked options included access to parks and transportation infrastructure such as bike racks and parking. Table 14 shows the ranking for improvements to City parks.



**Figure 8: What Respondents Like Most About Oshawa’s Parks**



**Table 14: Ranking Improvements to City Parks**

1	Provide washrooms	11	More areas for festivals and special events
2	Provide more shade and seating	12	Provide more information about where parks are located or what they contain
3	Expand the trail network	13	More parking for vehicles
4	Increase the number of parks	14	Improve barrier-free accessibility
5	Explore new types and designs of parks that differ from existing parks	15	Design parks to better reflect Oshawa’s cultural diversity
6	Better maintenance / upkeep	16	More bike racks / bike parking
7	Rejuvenate or upgrade existing parks	17	Provide open areas to casually use / hang-out
8	Design parks for a wider range of ages	18	Locate parks closer to public transit stops
9	Improve safety in parks	19	Nothing would make me use parks more
10	More areas for picnics and small gatherings		

## Recreation Usage, Barriers and Improvements

Feedback from respondents reported participation in a broad range of recreational pursuits in the past 12 months, or that they undertook regularly prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 9). Approximately two out of three reported taking the time to visit parks as well as walking or hiking, making these the most popular activities; this is a common result in surveys as visiting parks and walking or hiking are activities that can be done by all ages. Other popular recreation activities that were identified included swimming for fun, use of playground equipment, attending picnics or outdoor gatherings with family and friends, and walking their dog. It is notable that the 11 most popular activities are unstructured or self-scheduled activities, which is consistent with broad participation trends. Interestingly, the “Big 3” sports of hockey, soccer and baseball/softball all ranked in the bottom 20 and it is unknown to what degree - if any - the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on participation in these activities.

39% of respondents are unable to participate in recreation activities as often as they would like with the primary reason stated being that programs are not offered at times convenient to them. Other common barriers included facilities or programs being too crowded or busy, a lack of time, expense or affordability concerns, and locations being too far from their home, school or place of work. Selected self-reported responses include difficulties using the online portal to register or hear about programs (13%) and classes filling up too fast/waitlists (16%). Table 15 shows the full ranking for barriers to participation in recreation activities.

**Table 15: Ranking Barriers to Participate in Recreation Activities**

1	Program not offered at convenient times	7	Unaware of recreation facilities in Oshawa or what they offer
2	Facilities / programs are too crowded or busy	8	Health problems/Disability
3	Lack of time / Too busy	9	Lack of childcare
4	Lack of money / Too expensive	10	Lack of Motivation / Not interested
5	Locations are too far away from my home, school, or place of work	11	I don't feel welcome
6	Facilities or programs don't reflect my or my households interests	12	Language or cultural barrier

**Figure 9: Participation in Recreation Activities**

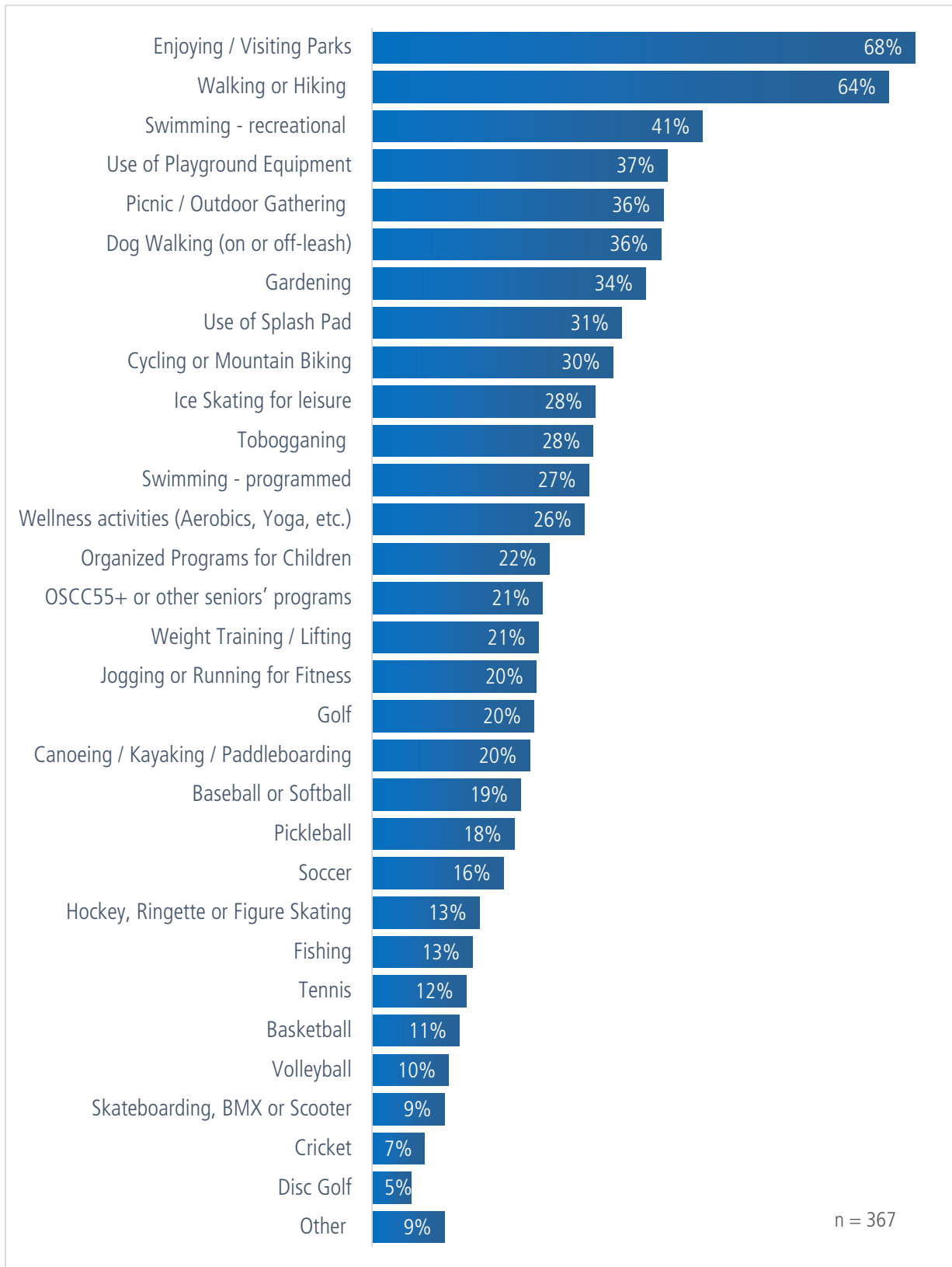


Figure 10: Support for Additional Spending on Recreation Facilities

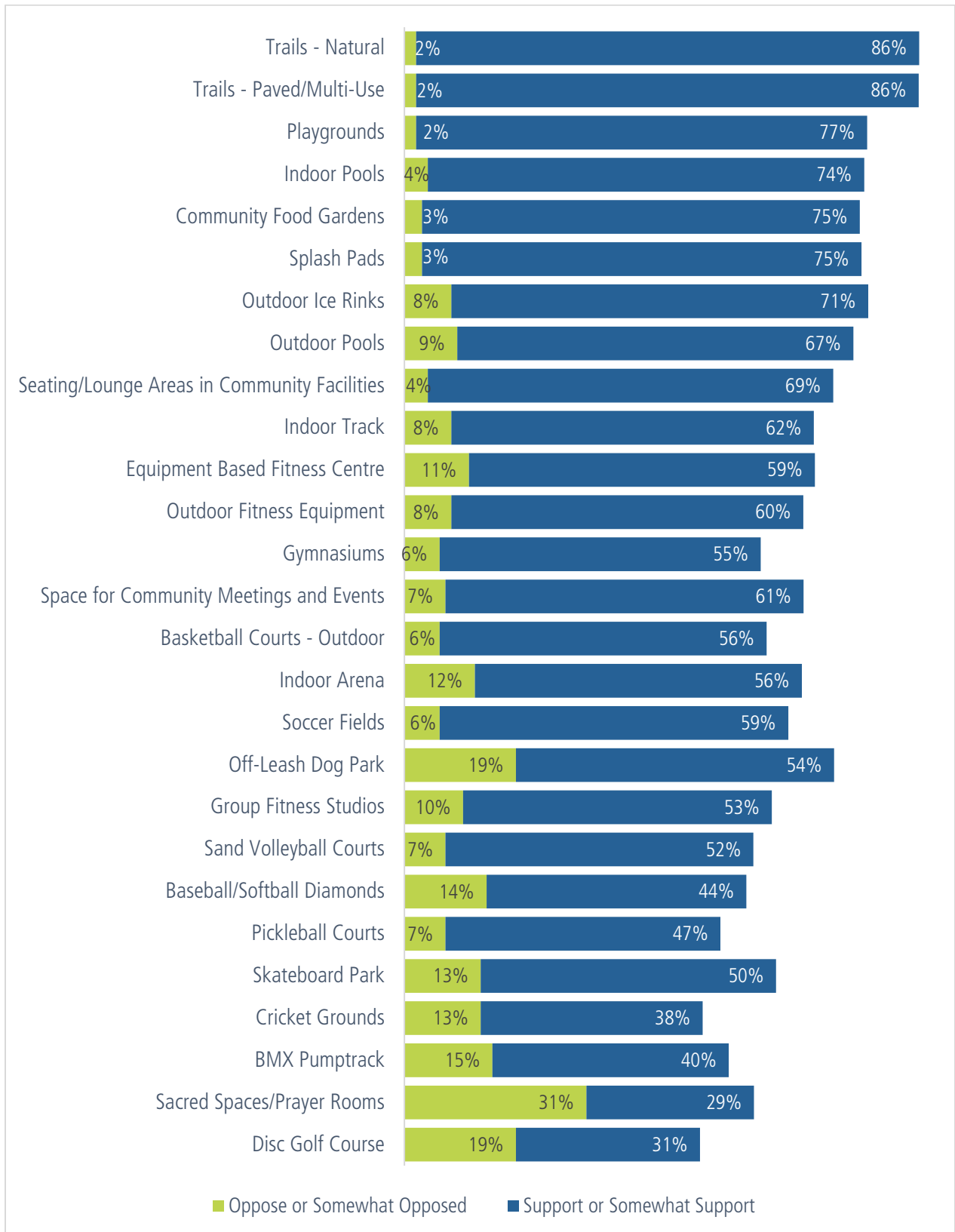
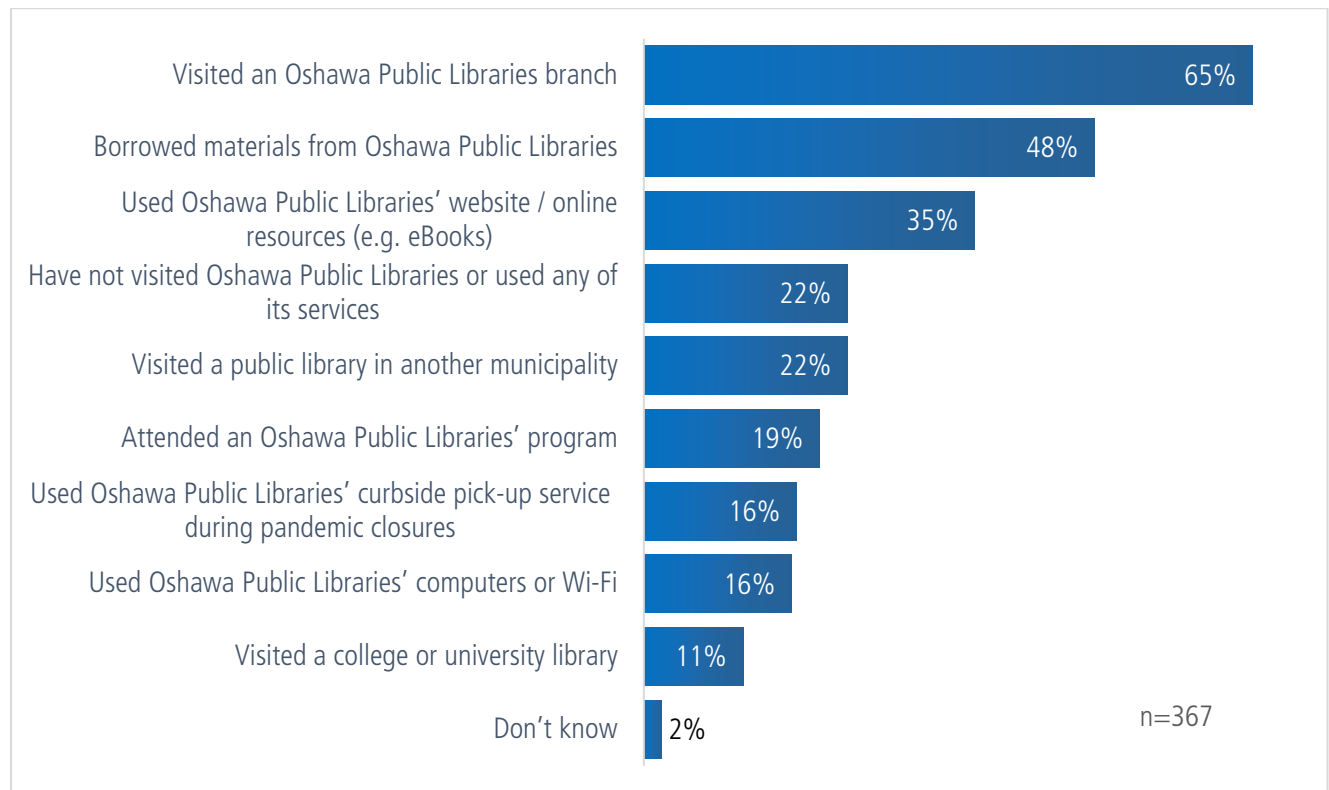


Figure 10 on the previous page illustrates respondents’ level of priority for municipal spending on different types of recreation facilities, whether to improve existing facilities or develop new ones. Consistent with trends in the sector, the highest priorities identified were generally facilities or amenities that facilitate unstructured and self-scheduled activities such as natural trails, paved/multi-use trails, playgrounds, community food garden, and splash pads. Indoor pools were the only facility in the top five that can be used for structured/organized programming but also accommodate drop-in activities such as public swims. Facilities for niche activities ranked lower in priority, although it is understood that some sports such as pickleball and cricket are popular among a subset of the community. Other self-reported facilities were naturalized outdoor spaces, indoor turf, badminton courts and lacrosse.

**Library Usage, Barriers and Improvements**

Approximately 65% of respondents visited an O.P.L. branch in the past 12 month period (or regularly prior to the pandemic), with 22% reporting that they did not use the local library. Top reasons for use were to visit a library branch, borrow library materials, or access the O.P.L. online resources (Figure 11). 74% of respondents reported being able to use O.P.L. services as often as they would like. Among those that reported a barrier to their use, a lack of time was the reason most frequently stated followed by hours of operation being too limited or not working with respondents’ schedule, locations being too far away, and library programs not being offered at times convenient to them (Table 16).

**Figure 11: Library Usage in the Last Year or Prior to COVID-19**



When asked what O.P.L. could do to increase use of its facilities and services (Table 17), the top five things scored highest by respondents were to:

1. combine libraries with community centres;
2. have more programs or events at library branches;
3. provide outdoor reading areas/gardens;
4. integrate new technologies such as makerspaces; and
5. improve children's or teen areas.

**Table 16: Ranking Barriers to Participating in Library Activities**

1	Lack of time/Too busy	7	Unaware of library locations in Oshawa or what they offer
2	Hours of operation are too limited / do not work with my schedule	8	I prefer to use public libraries in other municipalities
3	Locations are too far away from my home	9	Too crowded or busy
4	Not interested in using libraries	10	I don't feel welcome
5	Program not offered at convenient time	11	Language or cultural barrier
6	Programs don't reflect my or my household's interests		

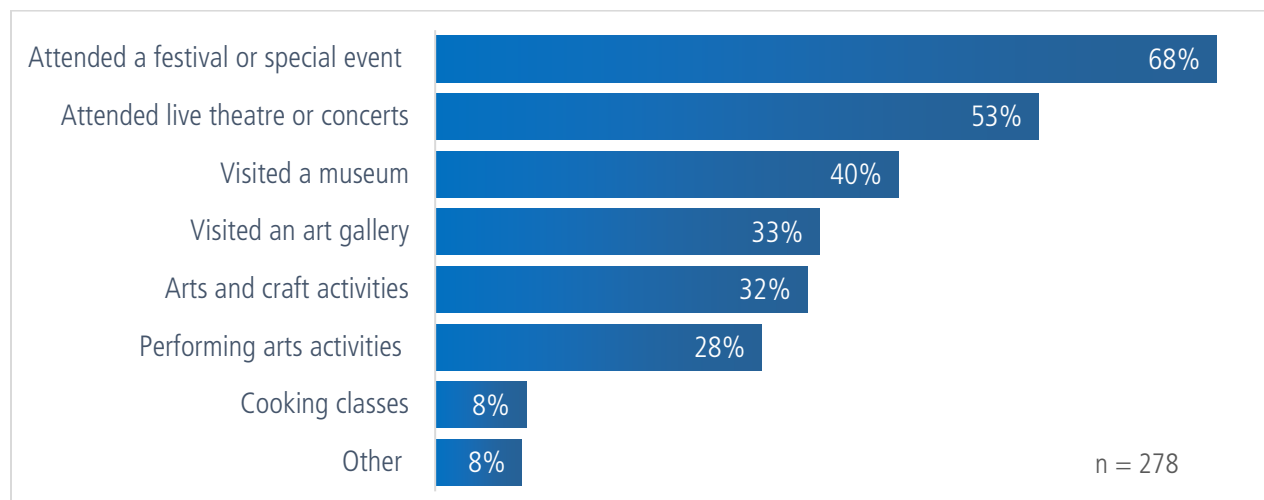
**Table 17: Ranking of Improvements for Oshawa Public Libraries**

1	Combine libraries with community centres	9	Renovate / modernize existing libraries
2	Having more programs or events at branches	10	More virtual / online library programs
3	Provide outdoor reading areas/gardens	11	Having a library closer to home
4	Integrate new technologies (e.g. makerspaces)	12	Design libraries and their programs to better reflect Oshawa's cultural diversity
5	Improve children's or teen areas	13	Improve access for persons with disabilities
6	Offer longer hours of operation	14	More bike racks / bike parking
7	Build more libraries in the city	15	Locate libraries closer to public transit stops
8	Provide more free parking		

### Arts and Culture Usage, Barriers and Improvements

The most popular arts and cultural activities reported in the last 12 month period, or regularly pursued prior to the pandemic, were going to festivals or special events such as Canada Day, multicultural gatherings or art shows. Other popular activities included attending live theatre or concerts and visiting a museum (Figure 12). 60% of respondents were able to participate as often as they would like in arts and culture activities. Among those that reported a barrier to their use, the primary reason for being unable to take part was that these respondents were unaware of arts and culture facilities that exist in Oshawa or what they offer (Table 18) while other common barriers pertained to affordability and expense as well as a lack of time.

**Figure 12: Participation in Arts and Culture Activities**



**Table 18: Barriers to Participation in Arts and Culture Activities**

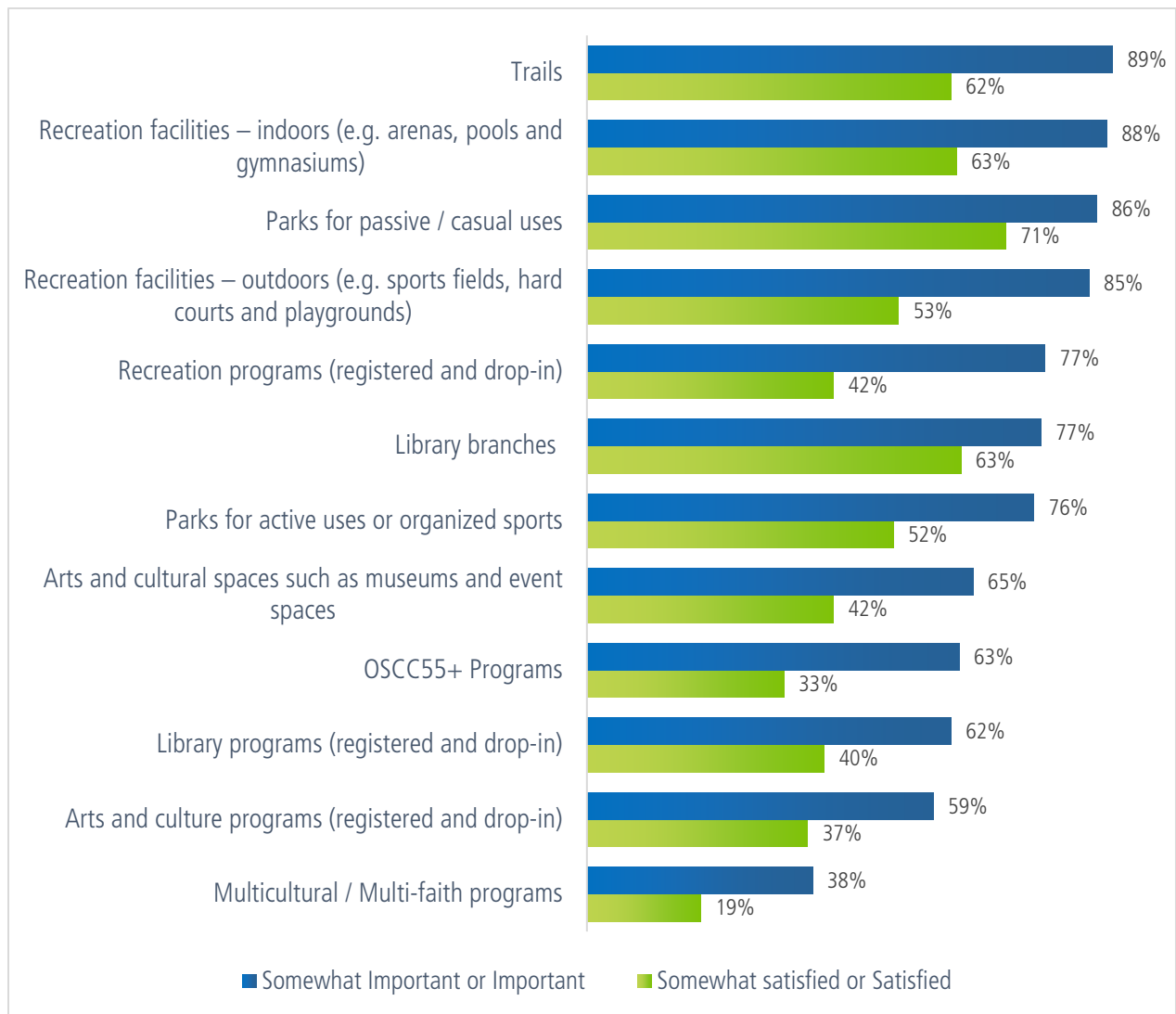
1	Unaware of arts and culture facilities in Oshawa or what they offer	8	Lack of childcare
2	Lack of money / Too expensive	9	Lack of programs that reflect my culture or community
3	Lack of time / Too busy	10	Lack of motivation / Not interested
4	Program not offered at convenient time	11	Health problems / Disability
5	Facilities or programs don't reflect my or my household's interests	12	I don't feel welcome
6	Locations are too far away from my home	13	Language or cultural barrier
7	Facilities / programs are too crowded or busy		

### Importance and Satisfaction on P.R.L.C. Facilities and Programs

Figure 13 illustrates the level of importance and satisfaction placed on parks, recreation, library, and culture facilities and programs. Generally speaking, when importance ratings exceed or are similar to satisfaction ratings for a specific facility or program, it provides an indication that needs may be met; conversely, if satisfaction rates are below the level of importance placed on that facility or programs, needs may not be met. With this in mind, the largest percentage gaps were associated with recreation programs and recreation facilities with a 36% and 32% difference in ratings, respectively, indicating where respondents' generally see the greatest room for improvement.

On a positive note, the smallest gaps – where ratings for satisfaction are closest to importance – were for O.P.L. branches as well as parks for passive use where rating differences were in the range of 15%.

**Figure 13: Importance and Satisfaction for P.R.L.C. Services**





## Board and Advisory Council Workshops

### Oshawa Public Libraries Board

The Oshawa Public Libraries Board was informed of the planning process and discussed future space needs at their February 2023 meeting with notable points as follows:

- **Service Excellence:** The Board is proud of O.P.L. programs and services, and especially the exemplary customer service provided by staff. The library embodies service excellence through adapting and getting things done quickly.
- **Evolution:** The role of O.P.L. resources, spaces and usage has evolved. Borrowing of once popular CDs and DVDs has diminished and are being removed in favour of other materials.
- **Community Destinations:** Board members have a vision for O.P.L. to act as community hubs that can be used by all residents. They want libraries to embody modern architectural design principles that people are proud of when using a library or simply passing by them. There was discussion about a potential library branch in the city's northwest to be designed as a "flagship" branch that promotes sustainability and Indigenous perspectives.
- **Meeting and Program Space:** O.P.L. needs additional auditorium space for community events and meeting rooms for collaboration. Medium-sized rooms are in high demand for programs and rentals.
- **Co-Location:** Libraries co-located with community centres creates benefits for families where different age and interests have a place to go at the same time. Since multi-use community centres can be very busy and are operated by the City, the Board suggested value in having separate entrances to the library while also considering layout of the branches to manage noise and be supportive for neuro-diverse persons and those with social anxieties.
- **Paid Parking:** McLaughlin Branch customers must pay for parking which is a barrier or deterrent for some. Free parking for O.P.L. users is desired but there may be other solutions such as having a drive-thru book return.
- **Back-of-House Areas:** Workspaces for O.P.L. Staff are limited at most locations but particularly at the Delpark, Jess Hann and John Aker Northview Branches. Storage space for equipment, supplies, and furniture is also inadequate with O.P.L. delivering more programs and services to its growing community.
- **Other Comments:** The Board discussed topics such as making libraries flexible enough to accommodate different uses at different times, providing outdoor reading areas and rooftop gardens, improving signage, integration of technology for staff and public purposes (e.g. electronic sorting systems, book vending machines, etc.), and strategies to engage and support under-represented communities living in the city.

## OSCC55+ Board

The OSCC55+ Board was engaged in January 2023 to make them aware of the P.R.L.C. Assessment and receive feedback regarding the needs of the organization. Selected feedback is presented below:

- **Access:** Proximity to public transportation is important for existing and new OSCC55+ branches as is the ability to provide services in walking distance of concentrations of older adult populations and having accessible vehicular parking spots.
- **Diversity:** Emphasis that OSCC55+ evolve its spaces and programs to reflect the growing cultural diversity of Oshawa, including developing and redeveloping branches with aesthetically pleasing and comfortable elements to bring people in. Engaging places of worship and representatives of cultural communities to understand needs and how OSCC55+ can play a role in meeting these needs was discussed.
- **Affordability:** Cost is a barrier for some older adults who must balance program costs with groceries, rent and other household expenditures.
- **Value:** Any space and programs provided by OSCC55+ should consider what the service is worth to senior and the 'value-added' factor that determines if people will visit the branches.
- **Incentives:** As a means to help boost membership, ideas such as a "Try-It" pass or guest pass were advanced.

## OSCC55+Membership Council

The Membership Council is comprised of OSCC55+ staff and representatives from the membership at all branches. Through a meeting and submission of written comments, the following summarizes key points of emphasis from the Council:

- **Room to Grow:** Ensuring any new OSCC55+ branch be large enough to accommodate current and future membership demand. There was support to locate the branch as part of a future community centre in the Northwood Business Park and to have design features that meet barrier-free accessibility standards (e.g., wheel chair ramp, front desk near entrance, way finding signage, wheel chair parking).
- **Transit:** Any future location(s) should be located close to public transit to make it more accessible to users.
- **Activities:** Indoor spaces should allow for the delivery of supportive programming through the provision of a dementia/Alzheimer space for adult day programs, space for health, nutrition and wellness programming, a cafeteria area and an event room with storage available for programming supplies were also suggested.
- **Outdoor Space:** Demands for outdoor space to participate in pickleball and lawn bowling, as well as areas for outdoor programs, a sitting area and a short distance trail.

- **Diversity:** Promoting and celebrating equity, diversity and inclusion in the community through the delivery of cultural events, particularly those that make connections through food, music, storytelling, etc.
- **Dedicated Areas:** The Council suggested having designated rooms within a centre that do not have to be set up/taken down for every program (e.g. card tables, craft rooms, etc.) to reduce wear and tear on equipment, burden on staff, and ease of scheduling/coordination of program times.
- **Storage:** Providing sufficient storage space to enable effective and functional programming by having place to keep fitness equipment, arts and crafts supplies, and woodworking tools, as specific examples that were provided.

### **Oshawa Youth Council**

Notable comments received from the Oshawa Youth Council included:

- **Activities:** Members identified that they like skating, swimming, and playing tennis the most. Interestingly, pickleball was brought up as an enjoyable activity for teens.
- **Community Centres:** arenas and pools were specifically mentioned as being essential to teach youth how to skate and swim.
- **Libraries:** Libraries are valued since they provide teens with access to the internet and technology (that some cannot afford), and offer a place to study.
- **Awareness:** Getting youth more active and involved in parks, recreation, libraries and culture by advertising facility jobs and programs to youth through Instagram and TikTok social media platforms was strongly suggested throughout the discussion. Posting advertisements in schools and through Google Classroom were also suggested.
- **Discovery:** Teens enjoy spending their free time in spaces that allow for “discovery” that they defined as including, downtown Oshawa and in malls and food courts, outdoor skating rinks and skating trails.
- **Public Art:** Public art in spaces that represents the community itself (e.g., graffiti wall, murals, showcases, statues) are important. The provision of a youth designated space for intramurals and youth led initiative programs.
- **Food:** Providing food at parks and community facilities through concessions, specialty food trucks, and cooking workshops would help youth who cannot or do not bring food with them. There was support for community gardens.
- **Social Awareness & Supports:** The importance of gender neutral changerooms and washrooms, free feminine hygiene products, mental wellness hallways, resources for teens regarding sexual health and substance abuse, and accessible features was highlighted from an inclusion perspective.

## **Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

The City of Oshawa Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee received a presentation as part of the P.R.L.C. Assessment and offered the following to consider:

- Persons requiring mental health and disability supports often look outside of Oshawa for services. Leisure is a mental health solution.
- As a free public space, the Library is a space that many people rely upon to access community services and programs. Parks are also low-cost options and can be engaging to people if programmed with festivals and events.
- Many people are looking for free activities that they can learn and then practice at home (e.g. baking). There is a sense that all people cannot afford to participate in recreation or culture programs, even if they are eligible to receive fee assistance.
- With many languages being spoken in Oshawa, multi-lingual strategies to communicate available services will need to be considered to a greater degree. The Library can be a place to showcase language-related diversity.
- Online registration can be difficult for people that do not have access to technology or are less comfortable using it, and thus in-person registration or having staff supports to help would be appreciated. Further, a “first-come, first served” approach does not work for the most vulnerable residents.
- Parks, recreation, library and culture services should be delivered in partnerships with community organizations where possible to take a holistic approach to complex issues and avoid duplicating services.

## **Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle**

Members of the Consulting Team and City of Oshawa Staff attended a meeting of the Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle (D.R.A.A.C.) in February 2023 to provide information about the P.R.L.C. Assessment, the various opportunities to contribute and receive advice about how the P.R.L.C. Assessment could reflect Indigenous perspectives. D.R.A.A.C. members offered initial feedback including emphasizing the importance of public spaces such as Sacred Fires and large gathering spaces that allow Indigenous communities to express their culture through Ceremony, Pow Wows and more. Public spaces should be affordable, help with healing, and promote learning about Indigenous communities among Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

## Agency Partner & Opinion Leader Interviews

Interviews were carried out in March 2023 with the following organizations who provided input for consideration in the P.R.L.C. Assessment.

- Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority
- Durham Catholic District School Board
- Durham District School Board
- Durham College
- Oshawa Central Council of Neighbourhood Associations
- Ontario Tech University
- Robert McLaughlin Gallery
- Sport Durham
- Trent University Durham G.T.A.
- YWCA of Durham

The list below represents common and notable points arising out of the conversations:

- Support for co-locating parks and community centre blocks with school blocks, particularly with respect to sharing parking lots and snow removal responsibilities, but also with educational partners facing challenges in obtaining lands large enough for their facility needs.
- There are common challenges that organizations are facing similar to the City such as keeping pace with the demands of a rapidly growing and diversifying population, ability to acquire lands in locations where services are needed the most, cost escalations for capital projects, as well as operating in the midst of constantly changing legislative and funding environments.
- Many partners are advancing principles of equity, diversity and inclusion, Truth and Reconciliation, and climate change resiliency through facility design, programs, and organizational culture. Partners are generally open to sharing their knowledge gained in these areas and/or potentially working with the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ to deliver programs.
- Partners are open to continued dialogue with the City of Oshawa as a means to strengthen working relationships, seek areas of alignment and coordination, and discuss opportunities of common interest / mutual benefit.

## Community Groups and Volunteers Focus Groups

Representatives of 27 community groups using Oshawa’s parks, recreation, library and culture spaces were engaged in five focus groups held in January and February 2023. Organizations representing equity-deserving populations were also invited to attend which, together with user groups, provided a broad range of insights with respect to how Oshawa’s facilities can better serve those that use them as well as potentially respond to the needs of those that may not be currently using these spaces. Input offered by the following community providers and user groups represented the perspectives of the hundreds of Oshawa residents that they serve.

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| – AIDS Committee Durham Region         | – Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum       |
| – Boy & Girls Club Durham              | – Oshawa Aquatic Club                |
| – Chainlink Disc Golf                  | – Oshawa Community Museum            |
| – Community Development Council Durham | – Oshawa Double B                    |
| – Durham Artistic Swim Club            | – Oshawa Hawks Cricket Club          |
| – Durham Black Artists’ Collective     | – Oshawa Legion Minor Baseball       |
| – Durham Oldtimers - Oshawa Italia     | – Oshawa Minor Lacrosse              |
| – Durham Region Roller Derby           | – Oshawa Skating Club                |
| – EarlyON                              | – Oshawa Youth Council               |
| – I.C.M. Tennis                        | – Outdoor Pickleball                 |
| – Invado Volleyball                    | – Oshawa Library Board (past member) |
| – Living Room Community Arts Studio    | – Robert McLaughlin Gallery          |
| – Matchpoint Tennis                    | – Simcoe Settlement House            |
| – Ontario Philharmonic Orchestra       |                                      |

Key themes identified through the five sessions are summarized in the pages that follow.

### P.R.L.C. Facilities are a Source of Pride

- Many groups appreciate the broad range of facilities provided by the City, O.P.L. and OSCC55+ that provide programs and services for many ages, interests, abilities. A number of organizations reported having a positive relationship with Staff, receive excellent customer service, and indicated that facilities are well managed.
- Oshawa’s sport, arts and culture were an identified strength and that there is a long history of municipal and community involvement in building these assets. Investments in parks, recreation, library, arts and culture spaces can help keep community providers and volunteers in Oshawa, generate additional revenues through rental and program fees, and attract new residents.
- For the most part, facilities are well designed and well maintained. Parks and facilities commonly mentioned included Delpark Homes Community Centre, the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Lakeview Park, Civic Recreation Complex and Civic Fields, and the Tribute Communities Centre.

### Contributions to Quality of Life and Community Vibrancy

- Conversations indicated that parks, recreation, library and culture spaces make - or have the potential to make – Oshawa a better place for all. Investments in these spaces keep people healthy, encourage people to give back to their community, and can provide financial benefits to residents, businesses and the city as a whole.
- Public art is seen by some as a way to define a sense of place and make the public realm more inviting. The use of public art and park design in general could allow for places for personal expression and reflection, something that could help peoples’ mental health especially coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic with high levels of anxiety abound.
- An appreciation that arts and cultural investments have been focused to help rejuvenate the downtown but also an impression that arts and culture should be distributed outside of the core as well. Providing these opportunities in neighbourhoods could allow for smaller scale gatherings and building vibrancy in peripheral areas by connecting people to place.
- Rejuvenating existing parks, recreation, library and culture infrastructure is viewed to be as important as building new facilities. One participant stated that reinvesting in existing spaces allows residents and user groups to “bloom where we’re planted.”

### Needs for Space

- Many groups reported that they cannot deliver the full extent of programs and services being sought, or are unable to grow their programming because the City’s facilities are full. Certain groups requested that the City look to build facilities that allow organizations to deliver higher calibre programs and events. Specific examples given included a competition pool and a performing arts centre. Other organizations indicated that unless funding was expanded, focus should continue to be placed on facilities that serve the widest range of community needs.
- Other requested facilities included gymnasiums, multi-use sports fields preferably with artificial turf, a disc golf course, multi-purpose program and meeting rooms, and places to study.

### Ensuring Equity & Inclusion

- Community providers and user groups embody equity, diversity and inclusion to varying degrees. Many have policies or informal practices in place to ensure participation among persons experiencing low-income through internal fee assistance programs or referrals to external programs such as Jumpstart.
- Oshawa’s multicultural diversity was acknowledged though organizations are in varying stages of understanding or developing their internal capacities as to how they promote their services to multicultural communities and/or engage these residents in programs and services.

- The needs of persons with disabilities and special needs is something that parks and community facilities need to consider. Groups indicated that internal and external design considerations must be factored into account including barrier-free elements to gain access to a space as well as areas where programming occurs, sensory considerations, and more.
- A compassionate approach is needed in parks, community centres and libraries that may be relied upon by Oshawa's unsheltered populations and persons experiencing mental health challenges. Conversations also discussed that compassion needs to be balanced with public safety and the impact that "undesirable" behaviours - which is a subjective term - may have in terms of other residents not using facilities (families with young children were often the example of facility users that may be uncomfortable or avoid spaces subjected to social issues).
- Certain organizations would like to see Indigenous communities better reflected in park and facility design, providing spaces which allow for cultural expression and use by these communities but also to showcase contributions and history of Indigenous peoples to settler populations.

### The Role of Community Providers

- Recreation, culture and community groups alike support a holistic approach to addressing community needs recognizing each plays a role in delivering the experiences and activities that make Oshawa a great place to live.
- Discussions across all focus groups referenced a desire for consultation and dialogue between groups and the City at more regular intervals, as well as when parks and facilities are being designed. Finding ways to remain informed of what community groups exist and what they provide could help organizations work better together, discuss solutions to common challenges, and avoid duplicating services.
- Additional help from the City to promote/advertise services being offered by community providers would be appreciated.



## City, Library & OSSC55+ Staff Roundtables

### City of Oshawa Parks and Recreation Staff

A series of roundtables engaged more than 45 staff working as part of the City of Oshawa's leadership, management and front-line teams responsible for parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs. Notable points of conversations with City staff are as follows (listed in no order of importance or priority):

- **Impact:** Parks, recreation and culture facilities have a positive impact on the community by providing different experiences, ways to stay active, nurturing creativity, and providing places for people to interact with each other. Staff are proud of their work in building, operating and maintaining these spaces.
- **Inclusion:** Staff believe in principles of inclusion and are of the view that Oshawa's parks and facilities should offer something for everyone with a hope that residents can benefit in some way from the City's programs and facilities. Staff are proud that there are free and low-cost programs available that are of high quality but also believe that more can be done to directly engage equity-deserving populations.
- **Grassroots:** A feeling that the City is community-focused and doing very well of addressing needs for grassroots/introductory activities within parks and facilities. Some staff believe that there is a gap in higher order facilities for people and organizations looking to advance beyond the introductory level (e.g. space for competitive sport groups looking to develop their athletes, arts or cultural venues that have specialized or purpose-built components for more comprehensive events, etc.).
- **Supportive Amenities:** If the City is not able to build high-performance facilities, then it should consider supportive amenities. In the case of arts and culture, providing sufficient storage, technology, and slightly larger floor areas that are conducive to larger events. In the case of aquatics, if a 50 metre pool is not feasible, then instead consider sport-friendly amenities such as viewing areas, adequate deck space, pool depths, etc.
- **Tree Coverage:** The importance of preserving and planting trees was emphasized in terms of "greening" the city, advancing climate change resiliency, and civic beautification. Actions to minimize loss of mature trees during land development and parkland redevelopment, planting with appropriate soil depths and tree species to increase chances of longevity, and establishing a formal tree canopy coverage rate were discussed.
- **Lack of Space:** A challenge of being limited by physical infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population. There is strong demand for gymnasium sports, exhibition space, aquatics, etc. that cannot be met in existing facilities due to space and time constraints. The Delpark Homes, Donevan and South Oshawa community centres were frequently mentioned as facing space-related constraints in relation to the demand for programs and rentals.

- **Comfort:** More comfort elements are needed in parks such as shade, seating and washrooms while recognizing that there are passive activities being sought out (and not just sport facilities like fields and courts).
- **Growing Market Segments:** A need to consider growing segments of Oshawa's population including seniors and culturally diverse communities who may have needs for facilities and programs beyond what the City has historically provided. Warm water / therapeutic pools and cricket pitches were mentioned as were ways to promote City services to these populations since they may receive information in different ways and/or in different languages.
- **Partnerships:** Support for partnerships and coordinated approaches with others operating in Oshawa such as OSCC55+, the Robert McLaughlin Gallery, minor sports, and volunteers. There is a recognition among staff that they play an important role but that they cannot and should not necessarily do it alone.
- **Staff Capacity & Engagement:** Greater involvement of staff at all levels during parks and recreation planning activities was desired as staff believe they have experience, training and functional insights that can ensure effective development, operations, and maintenance over the life of an asset or program. Staff also emphasized a need for more professional development and more staff resources being required not only to maintain what is in place but to also keep pace with population growth and changing expectations.
- **Trails:** The benefits of an interconnected trails network were advanced from both recreational and utilitarian perspectives by supporting physical health for individuals and environmental health overall. While north-south trail connections were generally seen as being strong (with some gaps, particularly in the core), staff believe that east-west linkages are lacking. Connecting trails to major destinations in Oshawa – including parks, recreation and culture facilities, and libraries – would make these places more inclusive for people that do not drive.
- **Other:** Other comments touched on a general lack of storage, a need to improve barrier-free accessibility as well as sensory-friendly environments for neuro-diverse users, gender identity in washroom/changeroom designs, and a general desire for facilities to provide modern and welcoming experiences to their users.

## OSCC55+ Staff

Roundtables were held with the OSCC55+ Management Team and customer-facing staff, revealing that OSCC55+ staff at all levels are clearly proud of the work that they do and take pride in being recognized leaders in the delivery of seniors' programs. There appears to be a strong culture of innovation, continuous improvement and service excellence based on comments provided by staff. Common themes that came out of the roundtables are as follows:

- **Aging in Place:** The five OSCC55+ branches are places where seniors can be physically active, socially connected, and are important pieces of the city's fabric so that people can "age in place" in their communities. Its programs span parks, recreation, and cultural interests both indoors and outside.
- **Something for Every Senior:** OSCC55+ prides itself on being able to provide something for almost everybody regardless of economic status, cultural background, disability and overall health. Staff believe that programs and services deliver excellent value to their members.
- **Multicultural Seniors:** Finding ways to engage multi-cultural populations is seen to be a key component of OSCC55+ future sustainability and its ability to serve the broadest range of Oshawa residents as possible.
- **Space Constraints:** OSCC55+ is constrained by space as membership rebounds after the pandemic and Oshawa's older adult population continues to grow. Whether through new and dedicated facilities, or finding a better way of sharing co-located facilities (e.g. gymnasiums and fitness studios in multi-use community centres), the success of OSCC55+ will be tied to its ability to deliver the range of programs and services being sought by its membership.
- **Right-Sizing:** Ensuring that any new or significantly redeveloped OSCC55+ branches are designed to be of sufficient size (or allow for future expansion) to meet future needs, as there were some sentiments that more recent branches were at or near capacity shortly after their opening.
- **Getting Outside:** Outdoor space to support OSCC55+ adult day programs as well as offer gardening programs would be nice complements to indoor space.
- **Awareness:** Promoting OSCC55+ facilities and services is a critical aspect, particularly for people that are moving to Oshawa and/or those whose first language is something other than English.
- **Access:** Ensuring that branches are easy to get to by public transit and having sufficient free parking. Staff are also proud of the OSCC55+ transport service which brings members who would not otherwise be able to travel on their own.
- **Flagship Branch:** Desire for a new OSCC55+ as part of the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park and having it be designed as a flagship centre that embodies the organization's trailblazing spirit. The Abilities Centre in Whitby was one example provided. In addition, there is a desire for dedicated/priority spaces for OSCC55+ programming such as rooms for arts and crafts, cards, classes, etc.

## Oshawa Public Libraries Staff

Roundtables held with O.P.L. Management Team and customer-facing staff touched on the value that people place on O.P.L. branches and staff who provide residents with information, programs and a compassionate ear. Common themes that came out of the Library staff roundtables are as follows:

- **A Trusted Hub:** The Library is a trusted public institution where people feel safe and welcome regardless of their background. As a result, the library is important to many people ranging for parents with young children, teens looking for Wi-Fi or a place to study, adults furthering their education or working remotely, and seniors that come to stay connected with their community.
- **Inclusion:** Staff are proud to embody principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. Some would like to see Indigenous communities better represented in library design, collections and programs while others talked about enhancing barrier-free accessibility and an ability to serve the city's multicultural communities.
- **Parking and Access:** Paid parking is a barrier to use of McLaughlin Library while transit access can be a challenge at Delpark Homes Library for people that are not comfortable crossing its large parking lot from the bus stop.
- **Noise:** Finding ways to manage noise levels across each branch, recognizing that libraries need to be exciting and dynamic but also offering places for quiet study and personal reflection. This could be done through architectural design, use of glass walls for study rooms (still allows sightlines), acoustic panelling and more.
- **Teens:** Better serving teen populations as much focus has historically been placed on young children and their families (e.g. through children's areas, early childhood literacy programs, etc.). Music labs, STEAM labs and makerspaces were suggested as potentially appealing to teens.
- **Food and Drink:** Staff think that a café or coffee shop in libraries – particularly McLaughlin Library – would entice more people to visit and stay longer.
- **Storage and Staff Areas:** Lack of storage is a concern at all branches while areas devoted to staff to carry out their work is also limited.
- **Technology:** An interesting perspective on makerspaces was shared. While most staff see the value in a dedicated space, others suggested bringing emerging forms of technology into an entire branch whereby the "library becomes the makerspace."
- **A Branch to Showcase:** A desire for a new library branch at the future community centre in the Northwood Business Park that provides a "wow factor" and be designed to be a leader in sustainability and climate change resiliency.

## City Council Interviews

Interviews were carried out with the Mayor and City Councillors to inform the early stages of the P.R.L.C. Assessment. Notable and common themes from conversations with City Council included:

- **Value:** City Council recognizes that parks, recreation, library and culture facilities benefit Oshawa in a number of different ways including health of people and making the city a desirable place to live.
- **The Northwest:** There are pressures in the northwest that can be expected to increase as the population increases in that area of the city. A site designated for a future community centre at Britannia Road and Thornton Road North provides an opportunity to address indoor and outdoor facility needs.
- **Infill:** Residential developments in the downtown and other established neighbourhoods is placing pressures on existing parks and facilities – some of which are already busy – while creating demands for the City to provide additional space where land can be difficult to assemble or purchase.
- **The Outdoors:** Demands being placed on the City’s greenspaces, trails and other outdoor spaces seem to have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain Councillors would also like to see the renewal/rejuvenation of older parks.
- **Cultural Diversity:** In addition to the City’s more historical/traditional service offerings, Oshawa’s facilities and programs should consider Indigenous communities and multicultural populations in light of the growing diversity.
- **Requests for Space:** Council indicates that it frequently receives requests from the public for outdoor skating rinks, cricket pitches, pickleball courts and event space were commonly mentioned. There was also discussion on improving the reach and connectivity of the local trails system, with some conversations focused on the merits and challenges of potentially using hydro corridors.
- **Co-Location:** Support articulated for co-located, multi-use community centre models that combine parks, recreation, library and/or culture amenities for the benefit of people with different ages and interests.

## Appendix B: Implementation Status of 2015 P.R.L.C. Recommendations

### Parks

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
P1. At the time of the next Official Plan Review, revise the parkland classification contained in Section 2.6.2.2 to add Urban Parkette (or similar terminology) to denote open spaces primarily in areas of infill and intensification where achieving the Official Plan's minimum size for Neighbourhood Park is not possible. Also to be added is a Linear Park typology to define areas used as connecting links between other forms of parkland or major community destinations.	✓
P2. Undertake a review of the City's park design guidelines, as well as through plans of subdivision, as they pertain to the integration of vehicular parking lots within Neighbourhood Parks in order to balance the provision of useable green space with any parking-related impacts on surrounding residential areas.	✓
P3. At the time of the next Official Plan Review, revise the parkland classification system contained in Section 2.6.2.2 to target a level of service of 1.5 hectares per 1,000 population for Neighbourhood Parks /Urban Parkettes (combined), 0.5 hectares per 1,000 population for Community Parks, and 1.0 hectares per 1,000 population for City/Regional Parks (combined), thereby targeting an overall parkland provision level of 3.0 hectares per 1,000 population.	✓
P4. Supplement parkland acquisition policies prescribed in Section 2.6.3.1 of the Oshawa Official Plan with other appropriate means of acquisition, particularly with an emphasis towards securing suitably sized and quality tableland parcels oriented to active recreational and cultural uses.	✓
P5. Based upon the parkland service levels proposed in Recommendation P3, Oshawa will require an additional 106 hectares of parkland upon reaching a population of 197,000.	✓
P6. Of the total parkland requirement articulated in Recommendation P5, a minimum of 86 hectares are required in the form of developable tablelands capable of accommodating active recreational and cultural facilities.	✓

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
P7. Subject to any required community consultations and/or refinements to the Draft Preferred Concept of the Waterfront Master Plan, implement the directions of that Master Plan as appropriate as it pertains to its six precincts.	✓
P8. Through Recommendation P7, proceed with the City of Oshawa Waterfront Master Plan (once finalized) draft preferred option regarding Lakefront West Park including exploring the feasibility of integrating additional sports fields (potentially a minimum of two ball diamonds and one rectangular field as per Recommendations R22 and R28) in the parcel of land southwest of Phillip Murray Avenue and Stevenson Road, and rejuvenating the existing concession and change room pavilion.	
P9. Through Recommendation P7, proceed with the City of Oshawa Waterfront Master Plan (2011) direction to "Prepare Master Plan for Lakeview Park and Lakewoods Park and prepare an implementation strategy." This initiative should be undertaken concurrently with a Master Plan and visioning exercise for the Oshawa Harbour given the inherent synergies between these waterfront park parcels.	
P10. Reinforce the importance of Second Marsh and McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Area through continued commitments to conservation and partnerships with organizations such as (but not limited to) the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Friends of Second Marsh and Ducks Unlimited to assist with physical, functional and program-related improvements.	✓
P11. In consultation with residents, volunteers and local horticultural organizations, determine the suitability of existing and future City of Oshawa parks in which to integrate additional community gardens on a case-by-case basis. Provision of these gardens should largely be contingent upon community volunteers contributing resources to their management, upkeep and general operation based on the City's current Policies and Procedures.	✓
P12. Continue to implement the Oshawa Valley Botanical Garden Master Plan, although adjusting key priorities as necessary in order to further objectives of the P.R.L.C. Assessment and other municipal initiatives. Such efforts include, but are not limited to, aligning with downtown revitalization initiatives, exploring potential synergies within the envisaged 'Cultural Campus' (see Recommendation C1), and complementing future use/re-use(s) ultimately determined for Children's Arena and the Parkwood Estate.	✓
P13. Prepare an inter-departmental business plan to align corporate objectives and define resource requirements associated with current and future integration of horticultural displays on municipal lands.	✓

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
P14. Secure a second off-leash park to balance geographic distribution, provided that the City's partnership-based operating model is maintained through an agreement with a third party such as ODAWG.	✓
P15. Undertake an ecological study and/or management plan for Harmony Valley Park to determine whether the existing off-leash area can be expanded without adversely compromising the ecological integrity of the park, and that sufficient vehicular parking can be accommodated to support any capacity added through expansion.	✓
P16. Augment the system of trails and pathways by implementing the Active Transportation Master Plan and developing a Trails and Pathways Renewal Strategy, the latter which prioritizes resurfacing and other required remediation activities according to short, medium and long-term priorities.	✓

## Recreation Facilities

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
R1. Target an arena supply of 7 ice pads plus the G.M. Centre and Campus Ice Centre ice pads.	✓
R2. Arena usage and financial performance should continue to be monitored on an annual basis in relation to population growth, particularly with respect to the number of children and youth in the City. A particular focus will need to be placed on how the arenas respond to any adjustments to the supply of ice pads in the short-term.	✓
R3. After five years has elapsed, the City should review its arena provision strategy to confirm whether the 7 Category 1 ice pads and 4 Category 2 ice pads remains the appropriate long term provision target.	✓
R4. Engage the Oshawa Central Council of Neighbourhood Associations (O.C.C.N.A.) and any other interested residents to explore whether interest exists in establishing a community rink volunteer program whereby residents are responsible for ongoing maintenance and supervision of outdoor natural ice rinks to serve individual communities within Oshawa.	
R5. Continue City practice of draining stormwater management facilities prior to the winter for the purposes of ensuring resident safety.	✓



2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
R6. Construct a new multi-use community centre containing an indoor aquatics facility, pending confirmation through a feasibility study and business plan that is initiated in advance at the time Oshawa reaches a minimum population of 185,000 persons.	✓
R7. Operate the Camp Samac Outdoor Pool, with capital investments relegated to basic health and safety improvements, until the time at which a new indoor aquatic centre opens to the public (see Recommendation R6). However, should major capital contributions be required to remediate structural and mechanical components of the Camp Samac Outdoor Pool, such investments should only be done if a long-term lease and/or joint funding agreement can be secured with Scouts Canada.	✓
R8. Initiate a community consultation exercise with area residents to determine the feasibility of repurposing Rotary Pool to a major splash pad (potentially tying into the Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens Master Plan concept), or whether to undertake the requisite capital lifecycle renewal activities for Rotary Pool.	✓
R9. Undertake a business plan, economic analysis and architectural concept in the event that Rotary Pool is retained as an outdoor swimming venue (see Recommendation R8) in order to explore the feasibility of reconfiguring the pool to accommodate greater programming potential and waterplay elements to create a destination-type pool.	✓
R10. Construct one new major splash pad after the population reaches 185,000.	✓
R11. Upgrade the Lakeview Park splash pad to a major splash pad provided this complements the vision associated with the Master Plan proposed for the park (also see Recommendation P9).	✓
R12. Upgrade all splash pads to a minimum design standard reflective of a minor splash pad template (major splash pads should continue to be provided in key destination areas).	
R13. Construction of new gymnasiums should only be considered at the time of new multi-use community centre construction, pending confirmation through the feasibility study and business plan (also refer to Recommendation R6).	✓

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
R14. Construction of a new fitness centre, aerobics studio and/or indoor walking track should be considered at the time of new multi-use community centre construction, pending confirmation through the feasibility study and business plan that is to be initiated at the time Oshawa reaches a minimum population of 185,000 persons (also refer to Recommendation R6).	✓
R15. Resurface the existing internal pathway at Brick Valley Park that connects the outdoor fitness equipment, as the pathway is exhibiting signs of deterioration that may deter use of the fitness circuit.	
R16. Select one new or redeveloped park in which to integrate a fitness circuit containing outdoor fitness equipment.	
R17. A new youth centre should be considered at the time of new multi-use community centre construction, using an integrated model in remaining consistent with the City's current practices.	✓
R18. An expansion to the Legends Centre seniors centre should be undertaken in tandem with the proposed expansion to the Library branch at that facility (also refer to Recommendation L2).	
R19. Construction of a new older adult and seniors' centre should be considered at the time of new multi-use community centre construction, contingent upon sound business planning and market research (as advanced in Recommendation R6) that determines the needs of the older adult segment and the ability of a future community centre to accommodate such space.	✓
R20. Multi-purpose program and meeting rooms, capable of accommodating suitable municipal programs and community rental opportunities, should be considered at the time of new multi-use community centre construction and/or explored as part of private land development projects in areas of intensification.	✓
R21. Target an effective supply of 68 rectangular fields (unlit capacity equivalents) upon reaching a population of 197,000, thereby requiring an additional 8.0 unlit field equivalents to be constructed.	✓
R22. One of the rectangular fields proposed in Recommendation R21 should be constructed as a lit multi-use sports field with uprights capable of accommodating field sports beyond soccer.	
R23. Review and revise the Rectangular Field Inventory used for allocation purposes to establish field sizing, goal sizes and classification based on the provincial sport regulations.	

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
R24. Implement a temporary field closure/resting period program for Class A and B fields to accommodate recovery from intensive permitting requirements or major events in a manner that balances revenue with field maintenance costs.	
R25. Continue to implement appropriate strategies pertaining to rectangular fields as identified in the City of Oshawa Sports Field Study in concert with this P.R.L.C. Assessment.	✓
R26. Ongoing monitoring of the Civic Recreation Complex indoor field house, along with market assessments of how private sector indoor turf providers are servicing the adult market, should be required to determine whether additional municipal investments are warranted in the longer term.	✓
R27. In lieu of new diamond construction, undertake selected upgrades pertaining to turf, lighting, play-out dimensions and/or supporting facilities for appropriate diamonds as a means to ensure the supply is responsive to the profile of ball diamond users including converting a minimum of two existing diamonds for use by hardball. Such improvements should be implemented in consultation with Baseball Oshawa, other ball groups, area residents and other stakeholders, where appropriate. Using a similar process, repurpose underutilized or undersized ball diamonds that are no longer deemed to be responsive to the needs of organized ball users including (but not limited to) those at Bathe Park, Brookside Park, Corbett's Park, Galahad Park, Kingside Park, and Sunnyside Park. Repurposed diamonds could retain a backstop for spontaneous play or be converted into another use that would be better suited to the needs of park users in surrounding areas. Actions undertaken should have regard for appropriate strategies pertaining to ball diamonds as identified in the City of Oshawa Sports Field Study.	✓
R28. Prepare a facility fit diagram for the north-east portion of Lakefront Park West in order to determine how many ball diamonds and/or rectangular sports fields (see Recommendation R22 for the latter) can be accommodated in this open space. Pending this outcome as well as confirmation by the proposed Lakeview Park Master Plan, relocate all of the ball diamonds located at Lakeview Park to Lakefront West Park with any outstanding diamonds considered within a future Community Park located in the north (also refer to Recommendations P8 and P9).	

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
R29. Reconfirm the vision and preferred concept for the 1994 Alexandra Park Master Plan Study, in consultation with area residents and local ball organizations, to determine whether to retain, reconfigure or relocate any or all ball diamonds at that site. A similar exercise should be undertaken for Eastview Park in consultation with the Eastview Boys and Girls Club and other stakeholders.	
R30. Conduct necessary capital improvements to Kinsmen Memorial Stadium ranging from addressing accessibility to strategic aesthetic and functional improvements aimed at modernizing the facility and align with downtown revitalization efforts.	✓
R31. Construct a total of 15 outdoor tennis courts, distributed in accordance with residential areas achieving population growth and where required to address underserved areas. Provision of new courts, particularly in established residential areas, should be subject to ongoing review by City Staff and community consultations to ensure that the City does not overbuild its outdoor supply.	
R32. Remediate tennis courts at Kingside Park within the next five years, while engaging the community surrounding Radio Park and Brookside Park to determine whether to rejuvenate or repurpose their respective tennis courts.	✓
R33. Future needs for outdoor pickleball courts should be accommodated within existing tennis courts as per the City's current model.	✓
R34. Seek ways in which to maximize use of the Civic Recreation Complex indoor courts, including accommodating a greater number of program and rental opportunities during daytimes and weekends. Given the success of the current operating agreement and available capacity at the Civic Recreation Complex, municipal investment in a second indoor tennis facility is not required unless a third party can satisfactorily demonstrate, through its own business plan and feasibility study, such investment is a sound, sustainable, and would not otherwise be detrimental to existing municipal operations.	✓
R35. In the event that additional indoor tennis courts may be rationalized based upon growth in player numbers or displacement from private courts, the ability to include additional tennis courts in the air-supported structure at the Civic Recreation Complex should be considered as an option.	✓
R36. Construct 4 outdoor basketball and/or multi-use courts, distributed in accordance with residential areas achieving population growth and where required to address underserved areas.	✓

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
R37. Remediate outdoor basketball courts at Lake Vista Park, Mackenzie Park and Mitchell Park within the next five years, while the basketball courts at Connaught Park, Eastview Park, Northview Park and Veterans Tot Lot should be remediated within the next ten years.	
R38. Explore the feasibility of converting existing asphalt pads into basketball or multi-use courts, or whether to repurpose these facilities altogether to a use that is more responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighbourhood after engaging in consultations with area residents.	
R39. Construct one new major skateboard park as the population of youth, between the ages of 10 and 19, reaches 23,000 persons or attaining a minimum total population of 197,000. This facility should be designed in a manner that accommodates the needs of extreme sport enthusiasts beyond the skateboarding community and is preferably co-located with other indoor and/or outdoor youth-focused facilities.	
R40. Integrate beginner level “skate zones” or “micro” skateboard parks, containing one or two basic features, into appropriate neighbourhood-serving parks since the major skateboard parks are expected to meet intermediate to advanced level needs over the long term.	
R41. Initiate a feasibility study involving community engagement, site selection and design processes to investigate whether a need exists for a BMX/mountain bike park.	✓
R42. Undertake a review of the City’s playground replacement policy to define the cost and timeframe associated with replacing aging structures in a financially sustainable manner, while considering needed improvements to facilitate safe, inclusive and interactive play.	✓
R43. Through the playground inspection and renewal process, evaluate opportunities in which to incorporate barrier-free components for persons with disabilities.	✓

## Library Facilities

2015 Recommendation	Completed or In Progress
L1. A standard of 0.60 square feet per capita remains appropriate as a long-term target for Oshawa Public Libraries' space needs. Based on a projected population of 197,000 residents in 2031, O.P.L. will require a total of 118,200 square feet of space by this time – an additional 24,200 square feet over current provision levels.	✓
L2. Expansion of the Legends Centre Branch is recommended in the short-term (i.e., before 2020) in order to address current shortfalls and to serve this growing community. An additional 6,000 square feet would increase the Library's floor space to 16,000 square feet, making this a true community branch capable of serving a young and growing area of the City.	
L3. A new branch should be developed when the City reaches between 185,000 and 197,000 population, in order to address longer-term residential growth in North Oshawa. This library should be approximately 18,000 square feet in size (to allow for a larger program room and makerspace/creative elements) and be co-located with another civic or public use, such as a multi-use community centre or community hub. A facility-specific planning study (as proposed through Recommendation R6 for a future indoor aquatics centre) should be undertaken to confirm the library branch size, location, timing, and partnership options.	✓
L4. Together with the City, Oshawa Public Libraries should monitor projected residential growth patterns to enable future planning, including long-term facility development and/or expansion in areas of residential growth.	✓
L5. Monitor changing demands for quick-serve off-site options, such as kiosks (e.g., at GO Station) and emerging technologies.	✓
L6. Begin planning for the next phase of the Robert McLaughlin Library Branch's renewal, to occur over the course of the next decade. A focus should be placed on renovating the auditorium, enhancing the children's area, renovating washrooms, adding individual and small group study spaces, ensuring barrier-free access, and making better use of the existing second floor rooftop patio.	✓
L7. Pursue expansion of the Legends Centre Branch as articulated in Recommendation L2.	
L8. Coordinate with the City to explore the potential for relocating the Jess Hann Branch to a municipally-controlled site (e.g., South Oshawa Community Centre) should the lease not be renewed. The timing of this action is dependent on the current lease arrangement and is subject to further study and public consultation.	

## Cultural Facilities

Recommendations	Completed or In Progress
<p>C1. As part of the ongoing implementation of the Culture Counts Plan, undertake a comprehensive consultation and visioning exercise with local arts, culture and heritage representatives to define how to better position the Arts Resource Centre to be a premier, multi-dimensional hub for the incubation and development of Oshawa's creative and cultural sector. An alternative location should be considered in the event that it is not feasible to convert the Arts Resource Centre for such use. Based on the outcomes of this exercise, undertake subsequent business planning to explore partnerships that may be secured and understand the potential costs of implementing the vision.</p>	✓
<p>C2. Initiate the recommendation from the Culture Counts Plan to "Explore the long-term need and business case for a new Performing Arts Centre serving Oshawa and the surrounding region, following the completion of the comprehensive inventory of arts, culture and heritage spaces and facilities" to determine if such a facility forms part of the 'cultural campus' concept advanced in the P.R.L.C. Assessment.</p>	✓
<p>C3. Investigate opportunities to build and display the City of Oshawa's public art collection, as well as opportunities to expand exhibition and cultural programming space for other collecting institutions or artists groups, through the provision of multi-use space located within expanded or newly constructed community centres. The intent of such space is to provide exhibition space that acts as a satellite location for municipal and community-based cultural providers in order to expand their audience through greater marketing, awareness and exposure.</p>	✓
<p>C4. Through the proposed waterfront master planning process for Lakeview Park (see Recommendation P9), prepare a concept that illustrates how a visitor centre, designed for use by the City of Oshawa and the Oshawa Community Museum, could fit within the site.</p>	
<p>C5. Planning and design processes for park development and renewal projects should consider integration of appropriate cultural infrastructure and amenities that can facilitate a range of structured and spontaneous cultural activities and events.</p>	✓
<p>C6. Carry out the necessary capital renewal activities for the Memorial Park Bandshell so that the park continues to be a prominent destination for cultural events and festivals in the Oshawa downtown and effectively addresses the requirements of its users.</p>	

## Implementation Strategies Plan

Recommendations	Completed or In Progress
IS1. Requests for facilities not falling under the spectrum of the City's and/or Library's core service delivery mandate should be investigated on their individual merits after considering a number of criteria including, but not limited to, the City's/Library's role and ability to cost-effectively deliver a needed service, its ability to jointly deliver the service through partnership, and if it has the resources available to deliver the service.	✓
IS2. Review existing facility allocation practices every five years or as required based on circumstance, with a continued focus on tracking participation of resident and non-resident membership and usage to inform future parks, recreation, library, and culture facility assessments.	✓
IS3. Using criteria identified in the P.R.L.C. Assessment as a guide, establish a partnership framework that can be consistently and transparently applied to evaluate the merits of entering into a partnership agreement with a suitable third party to efficiently improve activity choices to residents in a financially responsible manner.	✓
IS4. The various Divisions/Units falling within the Community Services Department and Oshawa Public Libraries should jointly identify service gaps and offer a summary of partnership opportunities transparently utilizing the procurement policy.	✓
IS5. Building upon the City's and Library's existing efforts and resources devoted to local volunteers, engage volunteer groups in the creation of an updated Volunteer Management Strategy. This Strategy should consider principles of the partnership framework proposed through Recommendation IS3 to confirm whether a volunteer-based approach is in the interest of all parties as well as identify contingency options (e.g. staffing or financial resources) for the City/Library should volunteer participation cease in the future, while also discussing ways in which to bolster volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition efforts.	✓
IS6. Consider the use of technology in the recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers to increase service delivery.	✓
IS7. Evaluate potential sites for the proposed multi-use community centre and multi-sports field parks based upon application of a wide range of site selection criteria, including those advanced in the P.R.L.C. Assessment.	✓



Recommendations	Completed or In Progress
IS8. Undertake a review of the City of Oshawa Development Charges Background Study to determine the degree to which growth related parks, recreation and library facility needs identified in the P.R.L.C. Assessment can be funded through development charges and the amount remaining to be funded through other sources.	✓
IS9. Develop a multi-year training and development program to identify and address opportunities relating to delivering effective parks, recreation, library and cultural services to the community. Topics include, but are not limited to, engaging diverse populations, strengthening neighbourhoods, use of technology, and effective collaboration.	✓
IS10. In anticipation of population growth and required adjustments to facilities provisioning frameworks, form cross-functional staff teams to explore ways to optimize service delivery processes through periodic reviews of staffing and service standards, customer service practices, use of technology, etc.	✓
IS11. Trend tracking and monitoring efforts should be undertaken and applied in the context of the P.R.L.C. Assessment's recommendations to ensure relevancy to future circumstances. Such efforts include, at a minimum, regularly engaging sport facility users, allocating appropriate staff resources to research and data collection tasks, and application of performance measurement metrics.	✓
IS12. Regularly communicate with staff in area municipalities (including Whitby and Clarington, at a minimum) to remain apprised of any planned regional facility developments, closures or policy adjustments that have the potential to affect usage occurring within Oshawa's facilities.	✓
IS13. Create an inter-departmental team with a mandate to regularly review, maintain and update the City's inventory database of parks, recreation, library and cultural facility assets that can be applied with consistency throughout the municipality.	
IS14. Assign resources specifically dedicated towards monitoring unstructured usage of parks and park facilities including, but not limited to, trails, off-leash areas, hard surface courts and splash pads, as appropriate to inform future facility development decisions.	✓

Recommendations	Completed or In Progress
IS15. Building on existing municipal and library processes, develop and implement a more comprehensive performance measurement framework as part of the annual planning and evaluation process. The intent is to determine strengths and opportunities in facility and program operations while providing opportunity to compare year-over-year results and report out annually to Council, the public and stakeholders.	✓
IS16. Develop outcome measures over time to quantify, where possible, the return on the investment in parks, recreation, libraries and culture to individuals, respective age cohorts and the community as a whole.	
IS17. Prepare an update to the P.R.L.C. Assessment every five years.	✓
IS18. Prepare and publish an annual Progress Report that, at a minimum, articulates progress being made on implementing the P.R.L.C. Assessment and can be shared with City Council and the Oshawa Public Library Board, City and Library Staff, local stakeholders and the general public.	



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RON KOUDYS **LANDSCAPE** ARCHITECTS