



August 20, 2004

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Joe Halstead, Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism

Subject: Recreation Facilities Report
All Wards

Purpose:

To present Committee and City Council with the Recreation Facilities Report which outlines directions for the planning and provision of the City's recreation facilities.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report. The implementation of recommendations contained in the attached report will have impacts on the future capital budget process.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

Aquatics

- (1) the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism be requested to report on an indoor pool provision strategy to the Economic Development and Parks Committee by year end of 2004;
- (2) the City not provide additional outdoor pools;
- (3) the City assess the need and viability of outdoor pools that require major investments to allow them to remain operational in light of pool requirements, including options for replacement with other facilities;

Community Centres

- (4) the City include the following areas as community centre projects in its capital plan for 2005-2009 in order of priority:
 - (a) York;
 - (b) Thorncliffe;
 - (c) North-east Scarborough
 - (d) Edithvale/North York Centre;
 - (e) Western North York;
 - (f) Victoria Village/O'Connor-Parkview; and
 - (g) Parkdale;
- (5) the City include the following areas as community centre projects in its capital plan for 2010-2014 in the approximate order of priority:
 - (a) Scarborough City Centre;
 - (b) Sheppard Corridor, Bayview to Don Mills;
 - (e) Sheppard Corridor, Don Mills to McCowan;
 - (f) Etobicoke City Centre;
 - (g) North Rexdale;
 - (h) Railway Lands; and
 - (i) Central Waterfront;
- (6) the City confirm and secure sites for proposed community centre facilities;
- (7) the City identify partnership opportunities for the development of community centre facilities, including joint-use facilities;

Ice Facilities

- (8) the City develop a long-term strategy for the City's provision of indoor ice, to be initiated in 2004 and completed in early 2005;
- (9) the City continue research into the use and role of outdoor artificial ice rinks as part of the City's supply of artificial ice facilities;
- (10) the City assess the need for and viability of outdoor artificial ice rinks where major investment is required to remain operational;
- (11) for any additional or replacement outdoor artificial ice facilities, the City consider low provision areas a priority and any such facilities focus on designs that emphasize pleasure skating;

Skateboarding

- (12) the City continue to monitor current trends, popularity of skateboarding, user profiles and satisfaction levels for Toronto's existing skateparks;
- (13) the City engage the skateboarding community through workshops, open houses, website or other venues to determine needs, quantify the extent of support and identify focus areas in the City for facilities;
- (14) the City focus on development of skateparks at the district and City-wide level to provide a limited number of higher quality facilities in the 2005-2009 timeframe, based on
 - (a) one City-wide facility (e.g. proposed facility on Ashbridge's Bay treatment plant lands); and
 - (b) minimum of three additional district level facilities (locations to be determined with respect to other facilities, potential locations currently identified include South Etobicoke and Exhibition Place);
- (15) the City consider other smaller skateboard facilities as opportunities arise (e.g. new park at Wychwood car barns site);
- (16) the City monitor the use of skateboard facilities and demand over time to adjust the program of facility provision;

Specialized Sports - Bocce

- (17) the City monitor participation in bocce and potential facility requirements;

Specialized Sports - Golf

- (18) the City consider acquisition of existing golf courses for additional public golf or greenspace purposes if they become available for acquisition;
- (19) the City consider opportunities for land acquisition for public golf in north-east Scarborough;

Specialized Sports - Skiing and Snowboarding

- (20) the City pursue phased facility improvements at Centennial Park and Earl Bales Park ski facilities to improve service and attract users;

Sportsfield - Overview

- (21) the City monitor sports field use to improve understanding of current and future demands and ensure efficient allocation of sports fields;
- (22) the City pursue conversion of underused sports field to accommodate facilities that are in greater demand;
- (23) the City employ a range of design and development options that can increase sports field capacity, including lighting and artificial turf;
- (24) the City pursue partnership opportunities for provision of more sports fields;

Soccer

- (25) the City increase provision of soccer fields across the City, especially in areas where current provision is low and population growth is expected;
- (26) the identified needs for soccer fields, estimated at 89 fields at present and an additional 77 by 2021, be addressed through a variety of means, including partnerships with school boards and other agencies (e.g., Hydro);

Ball Diamonds

- (27) the provision of additional ball diamonds be considered primarily in areas of new development to offer basic access to these facilities;
- (28) the City evaluate existing ball diamonds for potential conversion to other field types that are experiencing greater demand;

Multi-Purpose Fields

- (29) the City establish a network of "multi-purpose" sports fields, to accommodate uses such as soccer, rugby, field hockey, football, and Ultimate (disc football) as part of the City's sports field inventory;
- (30) the City pursue the designation or development of 31 "multi-purpose" sports fields as part of sports field planning and implementation on City lands or in conjunction with school boards or other partners;
- (31) the City consider the introduction of artificial turf surfaces as part of the network of "multi-purpose" sports fields to promote land use efficiency and operational savings;

Cricket

- (32) the City support the establishment of a competitive cricket facility at Parc Downsview Park;
- (33) the City work with existing cricket groups/leagues to ensure efficient allocation of existing facilities and identify opportunities for additional facilities over time as confirmed demand supports;

Tennis

- (34) the City pursue conversion of under-used and deteriorated tennis facilities to other uses (e.g., multi-purpose sports pads);
- (35) the City consider the provision of additional tennis courts in areas of development where tennis courts do not exist to provide basic access to these facilities;

Trails

- (36) the City improve and expand its trail system through the following key areas:
 - (a) identify and address gaps in trail systems along the waterfront and in river valleys;
 - (b) identify existing and potential municipal interests in Hydro and rail corridors with respect to trail uses;
 - (c) coordinate trail planning, land acquisition and trail development activities with other agencies and neighbouring municipalities;
 - (d) develop and implement a trail signage program in parks, including the provision of reference markers for emergency services; and
 - (e) address issues related to the environmental impact of hiking and mountain biking on informal trails and in natural areas;
- (37) the City upgrade the existing trail network to address state-of-good-repair and to achieve current standards such as those identified in the Toronto Bike Plan;
- (38) the City develop the CP-PS Lead and the CN Leaside Spur properties for trail purposes as priorities within the 2005-2009 timeframe;
- (39) the City develop an implementation program for the Rouge Park Trail Development and Management Plan in consultation with Rouge Park partner groups;

- (40) the Recreation Facilities Report (Attachment 1) be used by staff to inform and direct the planning process with respect to future capital budget submissions (five to 10 year), capital project development, studies and analysis, and future land acquisition with respect to recreation facilities; and
- (41) the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting of April 19-23, 2004, Council, in dealing with the Parks and Recreation Capital Program, referred a number of motions to the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism. One of the motions requested a report to the Economic Development and Parks Committee "that identifies the areas in the City, in order of priority, that have a need for improvement in recreation facilities and that the framework for the requested report on recreation facilities be tabled at the Economic Development and Parks Committee on June 7, 2004 and the final report be submitted in September 2004." The attached Recreation Facilities Report is being submitted for Committee and Council approval.

Comments:

Staff of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Parks and Recreation Division, recently completed a Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation, titled "Our Common Grounds", which was adopted by Council, as amended, at its meeting on July 20, 21 and 22, 2004. *Our Common Grounds* recognizes the importance of quality of life as an indicator of a great city and sets the direction for the City's Parks and Recreation priorities from now to 2020 with an emphasis on Environmental Stewardship, Child and Youth Development and Lifelong Active Living.

The Recreation Facilities Report (RFR) (Attachment No. 1) will help in achieving many of the objectives set out in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. The RFR identifies the factors that will influence both the use and provision of recreation facilities, includes an inventory of current recreation facilities across the City and provides recommendations on directions for future facility planning over the next 5 to 10 years.

In developing the RFR, staff examined information on demographics, facility supply and distribution, reviewed trends in the major recreation activities associated with the facilities, and reviewed trends in facility design and development.

The findings of the RFR reveal that many recreational activities continue to experience growth and will require additional or expanded facilities to accommodate anticipated future requirements. Greatest needs appear to be related to sportsfields, community centres (new and existing), and skateboarding. Work is currently underway to assess the needs for indoor pools and hockey arenas.

Maintaining and renewing the City's existing system of recreation facilities is a significant challenge with an additional half a million people expected to settle in Toronto over the next 30 years. Recreational facilities will grow and change over time in response to demographics, user preferences and recreation trends. The Recreation Facilities Report suggests that meeting the City's current and future facility requirements will need to include the following:

- (1) ongoing recreation facility planning (i.e., plan for recreation facilities at the community level, guided by strategic direction from the city-wide level and backed by regular facility monitoring);
- (2) planning "smarter" (i.e., maximize the use of existing facilities, explore further partnership approaches, build multi-use facilities that can serve a wide range of purposes); and
- (3) providing adequate resources to plan, build, maintain and monitor Toronto's recreation facilities.

In outlining facility directions, there is a need for continuous effort in clarifying and assessing the City's service and facility priorities through research, policy and planning activities. It is also important to underscore the potential of school board facilities and their availability in accommodating recreation and leisure activities. As a significant factor in the supply of public facilities, access to these facilities is important in terms of existing facility requirements, not to mention their potential significance in meeting future needs.

The RFR anticipates ongoing development and refinement of service objectives and priorities for parks and recreation as a follow-up to the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. It is important to emphasize that facilities are only one aspect of the system of parks and recreation services in Toronto, and need to be considered in the context of overall service objectives, program priorities and standards. Planning for parks and recreation services and facilities should be guided by strategic directions and priorities supported by Council, such as Council's Strategic Plan, the Official Plan and the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan - *Our Common Grounds*.

Conclusions:

The Recreation Facilities Report has examined many factors that influence the provision of recreation facilities including demographics, trends in recreation and corporate directions and priorities. It identifies immediate needs for some types of sports facilities in certain areas of the City and anticipated needs over the next 5 to 10 years. The RFR outlines key planning directions and recommendations to help meet these needs. The adoption of the Recreation Facilities Report will help implement the facility requirements which are integral to the City's parks and recreation system.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment No. 1: Recreation Facilities Report

Attachment No. 1

Recreation Facilities Report

August 2004

**City of Toronto
Economic Development, Culture & Tourism Department**

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Executive Summary

The City of Toronto's recreation facilities are a valued and integral part of the Parks and Recreation system, one that contributes significantly to the quality of life for the city's residents. This report:

identifies the factors that will influence both the use and provision of recreation facilities over the next five to ten years;

includes an inventory of current recreation facilities across the City and identifies how many there are, what kinds exist and where they are;

assesses the "provision rate" – the number of residents per facility;

reviews other planning initiatives on recreation facilities that have been completed or are underway;

identifies areas for more detailed analysis and planning; and

provides recommendations on directions for future facility planning.

Key Factors Influencing Need for Recreation Facilities

Demographics will have a great influence on the need for recreation facilities. Toronto will experience significant growth, with an estimated half million people expected to settle here within the next 30 years. Cultural diversity will continue to grow. The number of children and youth will continue to grow rapidly, and overall, the population will age.

Many trends in recreation are apparent and important. There is a growing understanding of the need for physical activity at all ages to ensure physical and mental health. Family dynamics are changing, with more families being led by single parents. Poverty (well recognized as a barrier to physical activity and well-being) is rising in many sectors. Family preferences for activities are changing, with less emphasis on team sports and more on individual activities and activities that the entire family can do together. Overall, there is a trend away from team sports and towards low cost, casual and convenience activities that are more self-actuated and challenge personal growth. Countering this somewhat is increased female participation in sports that have traditionally been considered "male" such as hockey, soccer, basketball and rugby.

Key Challenges for Provision of Recreation Facilities

There are a number of key challenges facing the City with respect to the provision of recreation facilities. These challenges include:

defining the City's role;

maintaining and renewing facilities;

responding to growth and redevelopment;

meeting the needs of high performance sport development;

harmonizing facilities across the former municipalities; and

rationalizing facilities to improve efficiency.

Current Inventory and Needs

There is a good understanding of current and future needs for many (but not all) types of municipal recreation facilities. There is currently adequate provision of municipal facilities for bocce, baseball and softball, and tennis. More work has to be done to assess the needs for indoor pools and hockey arenas.

In contrast, there are significant needs for additional recreation facilities of some types. These include:

14 new or significantly expanded community centres over the next 10 years;

skateboard facilities including 1-2 facilities at the city-wide scale, 4-8 at the district scale, and potential for additional facilities at the local and micro scales;

89 soccer pitches needed now, with an additional 77 by 2021;

31 multi-purpose sports fields needed now, and an additional 4 by 2021;

a major competitive cricket facility; and

additional off-road trails for cyclists, in-line skaters and pedestrians.

Key Directions for Moving Ahead

Analysis of demographics, recreation trends, corporate priorities and facility needs provides planning direction on how to proceed with the provision of recreation facilities in Toronto. These are listed below.

The Planning Process

Two levels of planning

Plan for recreation facilities at the community level, guided by strategic direction from the city-wide level.

Monitoring and review

Conduct a city-wide review of recreation facilities at 5 year intervals, to monitor use of facilities and changes in recreation trends and community preferences.

Existing Facilities

Protect our investment

Provide adequate funding for facility renewal and preventive maintenance.

Maximize use of existing facilities

Consider converting underused facilities (such as tennis courts and ball diamonds) into desired facilities such as multi-use sports pads.

Continue to adjust facility use from team sports to individual activities in facilities where interest in team sports is declining.

Continue to explore ways to increase the capacity of facilities through design improvements such as the installation of lighting and artificial turf on sports fields.

Increase use of facilities

Explore strategies to improve access to facilities, especially for groups such as seniors and children.

Continue to improve access for females to facilities for hockey, rugby and other sports that have traditionally been dominated by males.

Planning for Future Facilities

Use corporate priorities to guide planning

Meet the recreation needs in areas of the City that are currently underserved.

Meet the future recreation needs in areas of the City that will experience significant growth or redevelopment.

Follow the recommendations contained in Our Common Grounds (e.g., the emphasis on trail building and sports fields).

Meet key needs for facilities

Meet the needs for facilities outlined in Chapter Three of this report.

Conduct research in key areas

Develop a long-term strategy for arenas to guide the provision of indoor ice facilities (targeted completion date is early 2005).

Complete the strategy for indoor pools (target completion is fall 2004).

Examine the benefits and cost-effectiveness of seasonal facilities (especially outdoor pools and outdoor artificial ice rinks).

Maximize the use of existing facilities

Examine the potential to meet the needs for new facilities through re-using, converting or expanding existing facilities.

Explore further partnership approaches

Continue to explore conventional and innovative ways to deliver recreation facilities through partnering with other agencies, community boards, service organizations, sports clubs and the private sector.

Ensure that partnership facility projects:

- are consistent with corporate and department service and facility directions;
- are based on needs analysis and feasibility studies appropriate to the nature and scale of the project ;
- advance through the capital program with regard to identified facility requirements and priorities, although recognition of special circumstances or opportunities may be a basis for acceleration.

Potential clustering of municipal facilities

Continue to explore ways to cluster or bundle recreation facilities with other appropriate municipal facilities such as schools, libraries and daycares.

Emphasize multi-functionality

Continue to encourage the creation of multi-use recreation facilities where appropriate rather than single-use facilities.

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

The 2.5 million residents of Toronto enjoy access to an unparalleled parks system – 7,400 hectares of ravines, meadows, beaches, river valleys, gardens and lawns. An integral part of this park system is the recreational facilities contained within it. These facilities – pools, community centres, ice rinks, sports fields and tennis courts – are major amenities for the City's residents. It is here that Torontonians gather to play sports, meet with friends, learn to swim or practice yoga. Toronto's recreational facilities support healthy living by providing opportunities for a variety of activities and for social contact. In so doing, they provide a wide range of benefits to both individuals and the community.

Recreational facilities do not occur by chance. Each of the facilities operated or used by Toronto's Parks and Recreation Division of Economic Development Culture and Tourism (EDCT) was developed to meet needs. These needs change over time, as people's interests change, as populations change and as priorities change. Recreational facility planning is vital to ensure that Toronto Parks and Recreation continues to meet the needs and priorities of a changing city.

EDCT has recently completed a Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation, entitled "*Our Common Grounds*". This plan will provide overall direction for the City's Parks and Recreation services over the next 20 years. Under the umbrella of *Our Common Grounds*, detailed planning in many forms will take place in order to implement its recommendations and meet its targets.

Purpose and Scope of Report

This report examines the City's recreation facilities from a number of important perspectives. It:

- identifies the factors that will influence both the use and provision of recreation facilities over the next five to ten years;
- includes an inventory of current recreation facilities across the City and identifies how many there are, what kinds exist and where they are;
- assesses the "provision rate" – the number of residents per facility;
- reviews other planning initiatives on recreation facilities that have been completed or are underway;
- identifies areas for more detailed analysis and planning; and
- provides recommendations on directions for future facility planning.

The report anticipates the ongoing development and refinement of service objectives and priorities for parks and recreation as follow-up to the *Our Common Grounds* Strategic Plan. As the Strategic Plan is pursued through various departmental activities and initiatives, the basis for identifying facility needs and priorities will improve, as will the ability to project long-term capital budget requirements.

It is important to emphasize that facilities are only one aspect of the system of parks and recreation services in Toronto, and need to be considered within the context of overall service objectives and priorities. For example, recreational programming (such as the types and levels of recreation programs operated by the department) will ultimately influence facility requirements. Program priorities are beyond the scope of this report but clearly need to be considered when planning future recreation facilities for the City of Toronto.

Planning Framework

Parks and recreation services and facilities are integral to the quality of life in Toronto's dynamic and diverse communities.

The planning for these recreation services and facilities needs to be flexible and responsive to the varying conditions and differing needs across the city, consistent with Toronto's tradition of strong neighbourhood and community-level planning.

The planning for facilities should take place within the following framework:

- the evolving strategic directions for the overall parks and recreation system;
- city-wide needs and long-term priorities; and
- local community-level needs and preferences.

The recently approved Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, *Our Common Grounds*, is an important milestone and foundation for parks and recreation services and facilities in Toronto.

The department has also completed, or is in the process of conducting, a number of studies that examine the needs and priorities for various aspects of the parks and recreation facility system. This includes work on sports fields, state of good repair audits, indoor swimming pools, and indoor ice.

In terms of local planning, needs assessments and feasibility studies for parks and recreation facilities are part of the Parks and Recreation ongoing planning processes. Toronto Parks and Recreation also participates in a number of multi-department exercises that address community planning, including services and facilities.

This report recognizes the need for a planning framework that translates high-level directions and priorities into the many levels of planning for services and facilities that shape the City's delivery of this important municipal service.

Chapter Two: Planning Context

Chapter Overview

This chapter examines several key factors that provide a planning context for recreation facilities. These are discussed in the following sections and include:

- demographics;
- social trends affecting recreation;
- corporate directions and priorities; and
- other challenges of providing recreation facilities.

Demographics

The City's population will continue to grow

Toronto's population in 2001 was 2,481,500, reflecting a growth of approximately 4% between 1996 and 2001¹. While growth was experienced across the city, the largest increases were seen in the former municipalities of Scarborough, Toronto and North York.

Toronto is part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which is known for its rapid population growth. In 2001, the population of the GTA was 5,081,000 people, an increase of 9.8% over the level in 1996. With only 9% of the GTA's total area, Toronto accounted for nearly 49% of the GTA's population in 2001.

In terms of total population, the current Official Plan projects a minimum of an additional 537,000 residents over the next 30 years. By 2011, there will be approximately 2.76 million people in the City, an increase of more than 300,000 people (UDS Nov. 2002). *Map 1* shows the projected changes in population from 2001 to 2011, by individual census tract.

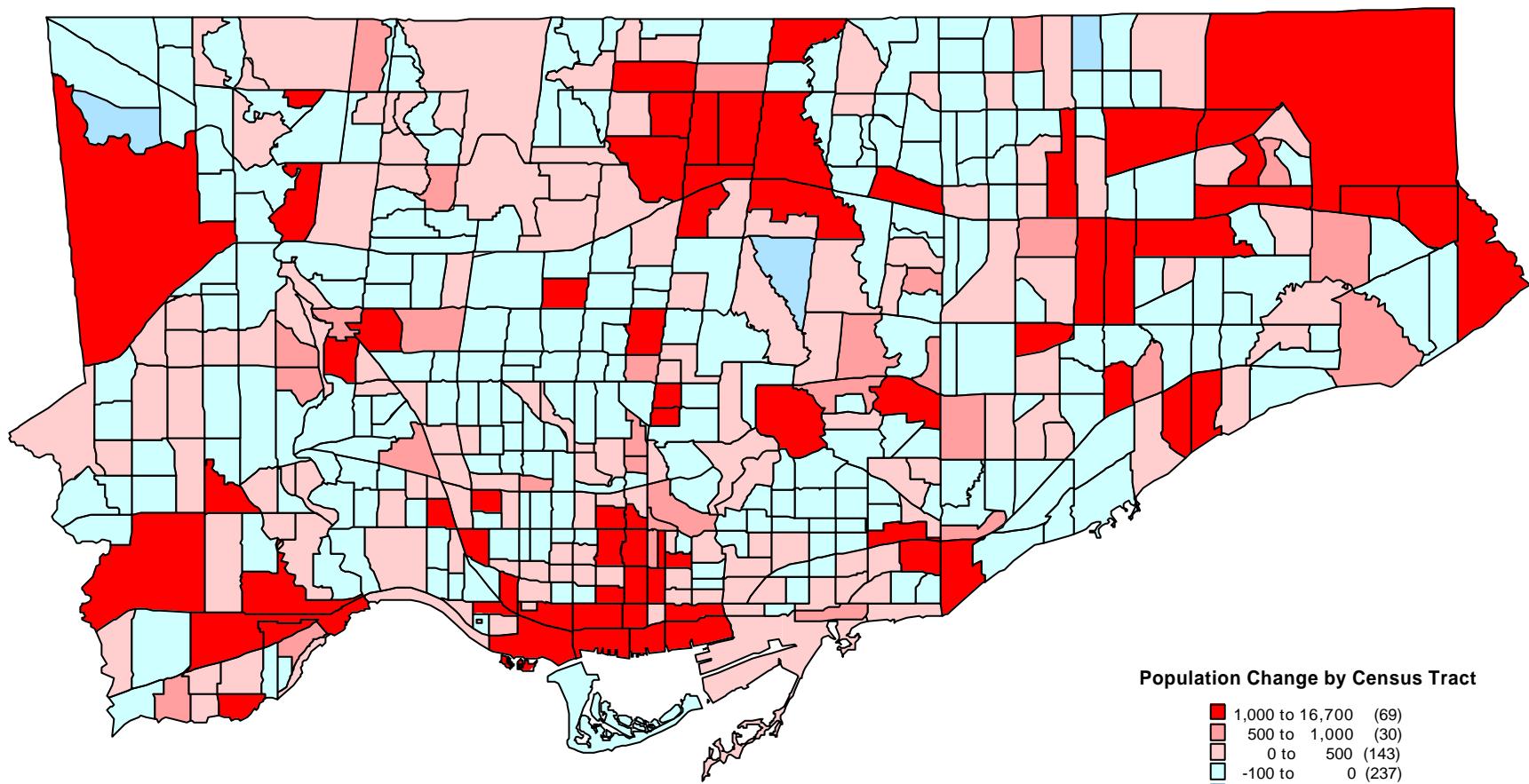
The Official Plan will help guide future growth to areas of the city suited for intensification and redevelopment, with the following being among the more prominent areas:

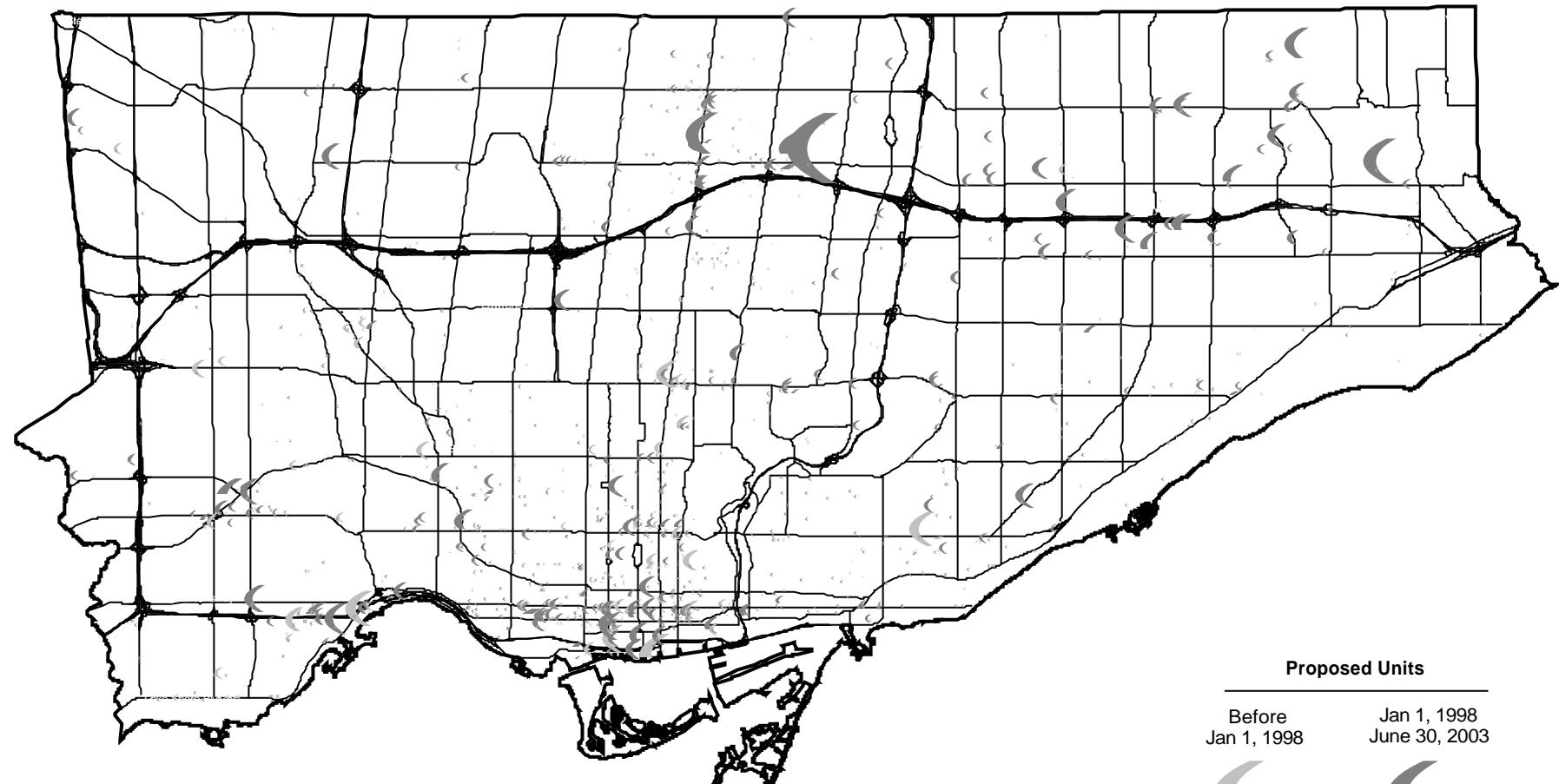
- Downtown;
- City Centres (Etobicoke, North York, Yonge and Eglinton and Scarborough);
- Sheppard corridor;
- Northeast Scarborough (e.g., Morningside Heights);
- Central Waterfront (West Donlands and the Portlands);
- Railway lands; and
- Finch and Weston.

Map 2 shows active residential development applications, and provides an indication of where population growth through development will create the greatest pressure on parks and recreation services in the next decade.

What is not evident from the maps is that development will take place differently in different parts of the city. Some areas, such as the City Centres, are likely to experience much more residential development than the office developments that were originally planned for the same areas. In such areas, opportunities for parks and outdoor recreation facilities are more limited due to their intensely built-up nature. Growth in areas along "The Avenues" will likely occur more incrementally than in the larger brownfield and greenfield sites. These different patterns of development will present differing challenges for the provision of parks and recreation facilities.

¹ From Urban Development Services – Toronto Plan Flashforward
June 2002



**Sources:**

Application Tracking System entries as of June 30, 2003
 District updates to the 1998 Residential Land Inventory to March 31, 2000
 Toronto Urban Development Services, Research and Information

Application Timing	Applications	Units
All Applications	1,234	157,744
Received Before 1998	179	21,963
Received on or after Jan 1, 1998	1,055	134,776

In addition to population growth from new development, it is expected that the city will experience population changes within existing residential areas, as young families move into established neighbourhoods². These areas of "transformation" will pose additional challenges in terms of upgrading older, existing recreation facilities as well as to responding to demands for new ones.

Choosing Where to Live, published in 2000 by the Urban Development Services Department, suggests that one of the greatest population challenges facing the city will occur in neighbourhoods dominated by "non-mover" households, typically occupied by the older age groups. The report estimates that 58% of the city's 1996 single family housing stock (single detached, semi-detached or row/townhouse) is owned by households headed by someone aged 50 or over³. These are the areas where there is the greatest potential for the population structure to change as the supply of housing comes on the market.

The number of children and youth is growing rapidly

Municipal parks and recreation services have traditionally had a strong focus on children and youth, encouraging involvement in recreation from a young age, fostering active citizenship and social inclusion, improving physical and mental health and increasing self-esteem.

During the 1990s, the number of Toronto children (0-14 years of age) and youth (15-24) increased at almost double the rate of the overall Toronto population (19.3% versus 10.6%), rising from 361,200 in 1990 to 430,800 in 1999⁴.

² Where more than 50% of the housing is single family (single detached, semi-detached, or row/townhouse)

³ City of Toronto, Urban Development Services Department, *Choosing Where to Live* (Toronto, June 2000), 3.

⁴ United Way & Canadian Council on Social Development, *A Decade of Decline: Poverty and Income Inequality in the City of Toronto in the 1990s* (Toronto, 2002) 5.

Chapter Two: Planning Context

Demographers predict that by the year 2010, the growth rate of children under 12 will slow down somewhat to 6% but the number of youth will continue to grow some, by 21% in five years. These are the children of the ageing baby boomer. Currently there are 308,400 youth in the city; in five years there will be 370,000.

Many factors influence the participation of youth in structured recreation and thereby the demand for recreation facilities. Interest in "arm-chair" hobbies such as computer games, Internet surfing and television watching have had a great influence over the free time of many children and youth. For many children and youth, participation in such sedentary pursuits has largely replaced participation in more active recreation.

Perhaps a greater influence than peer pressure on youth participation is the role of the family on the participation rates of children and youth in sports. A study published by Canadian Social Trends, and based on Statistics Canada's 1998 General Social Survey, reports that children were significantly more likely to be active participants in recreation if their parents were also involved in sport, either as participants or volunteer coaches, administrators or team helpers⁵.

Although peer pressure and parental encouragement can influence the demand for children and youth recreation facilities, the nature of such influences is difficult to measure, predict or apply.

The overall population is ageing

Over the last three decades, the growth of seniors (65 years and over) has far outstripped overall growth in Toronto's population (98% vs. 19% change between 1971 and 2000). The population of adults in Toronto aged 60+ is expected to

⁵ Frances Kremerik. "A Family Affair: Children's Participation in Sports", *Canadian Social Trends* (Statistics Canada), 11-008 (Autumn 2000):21.

increase by 12% by 2011 and at that time will constitute 17.8% of the total population. The changing age structure of the city's population will have implications for the physical accessibility of recreation facilities and the provision of senior-specific facilities and programs.

Participation in recreation and leisure activities is essential to seniors. Over time, access to the City's recreation facilities and programs will become increasingly important to those seniors who cannot afford recreational and leisure opportunities elsewhere. Despite improvements in the financial situation of Canada's seniors from Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan, many seniors still live in poverty. According to a recent joint study completed by the United Way and the Canadian Council on Social Development, the largest increase in Toronto's poverty rate between 1995 and 1999 occurred among seniors. The study found that the poverty rate among seniors rose from 9.2% in 1995 to 12.2% of all Toronto's seniors in 1999. This represents a nearly 40% increase in the number of seniors in poverty⁶. Women are more vulnerable to poverty in old age than men, as women live longer and generally have fewer pension benefits than men.

In 1999, the Final Report of the Seniors' Task Force identified a number of issues and priorities affecting seniors in the city. Their concerns included the loss of, and charging of fees for recreation programs. Seniors identified community or locally delivered programs as being important services to be provided and maintained.

Cultural diversity will continue to grow

Toronto is a city with a rich history of immigration, one that has made the city culturally diverse and vital. This cultural diversity

is widely recognized as being one of the city's greatest assets. In 2001, Statistics Canada Census found that 49% of the City's population was born outside of Canada and nearly 43% were members of a visible minority.

Toronto remains the destination of choice for most new immigrants to Canada. About 25% of all new immigrants to Canada settle in Toronto, even though the City represents only 8% of the nation's total population⁷. The country of origin for new immigrants to Toronto has changed significantly over the past 40 years. Prior to 1961, 91% of immigrants arriving in Toronto originated from Europe. The proportion of immigrants from Asia has been rising since the 1970's and during the 1990's accounted for 60% of new immigrants⁸.

Immigration offers Toronto many advantages in terms of cultural and economic diversity. The ability of new immigrants to settle in the City is often facilitated by the existence of established immigrant communities that can provide a network of supports. However, some new immigrants arriving in Toronto do not have established communities to rely on and may be more dependent on settlement services provided by government and social service agencies in order to integrate successfully into the local community. This has implications for the types and locations of recreational facilities that are in demand by various cultural groups.

Accommodating the needs of these new residents may require innovative designs for recreation facilities such as restricting viewing areas for indoor pools to allow for greater privacy of women swimmers.

⁶ United Way of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development, *A Decade of Decline Executive Summary: Poverty and Income Inequality in the City of Toronto in the 1990s* (Toronto, 2002), 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., page 3.

Social Trends Affecting Recreation

This section outlines the major social trends that are expected to affect the demand for recreational services and facilities. Trends relating to specific recreation facilities are discussed in Chapter Three.

There is growing attention to the need for physical activity

Physical inactivity is a major contributor to chronic disease and premature death. According to the Canadian Fitness Lifestyle Research Institute's 2001 Physical Activity Monitor, 57% of Canadian adults aged 18 and older are considered to be insufficiently active. According to a 2000-2001 Statistics Canada Community Health Survey, only 33% of Torontonians aged 12 and older are moderately active and 56% are physically inactive. Almost daily, newspapers report the growing medical evidence that regular physical exercise can reduce the risks of contracting long term health problems such as coronary heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis. In addition, medical evidence suggests physical activity, at any level, is beneficial to mental health by reducing depression and anxiety and reducing feelings of loneliness in seniors.

This issue is becoming increasingly important as researchers witness a substantial and alarming increase in obesity in all Canadians. The Canadian Community Health Survey reported that the number of obese Canadians aged 20 to 64 in 2001 was 32%, up 24% from 1994. According to a study released in April 2002, 33% of Canadian boys aged 7-13 were overweight, and 30% of those were obese. For girls aged 7-13, 27% were overweight, and 33% of those were considered obese. (International Journal of Obesity, April 2002.)

This focus on the importance of participation in recreation for healthy bodies and minds may place higher expectations on municipalities to deliver facilities and programming "on demand". Many municipalities also encourage participation in recreation to reduce youth crime, and youth development.

Family dynamics are changing

Increased divorce and separation rates have led to a rise across Canada in families led by single parents. Single parent families tend to earn less than two parent families. Lower levels of income are considered one of the key indicators of reduced levels of participation in recreation activities.

The rate of poverty among Toronto's families has risen substantially over the last two decades, with almost one in every five families in 2001 living in poverty. (United Way, Poverty by Postal Code)

According to the 2001 Census, 30% of families with children under age 15 in Toronto lived below the Low Income Cut Off point, which is defined as the point in which families spend 56.2% or more of their income on food, shelter and clothing. About 19% of all families and 38% of people living on their own had incomes below the Low Income Cut Off. The rate of poverty is rising in families headed by people aged 25 to 34, seniors, women, single-parent families and renters. Poverty is well recognized as a barrier to physical activity and well-being, and is linked to shorter lifespans. It will be a challenge for recreation service providers to ensure continued access to those with lower incomes.

There is increasing evidence that family patterns of recreation are changing. Families appear to be volunteering less, participating in team sports less and participating in outdoor, low cost, low scheduled activities more. Participation is growing in activities that all family members can do at their own level at the same time. This includes walking, cycling, swimming, golf and to a lesser extent skiing and snowboarding. The City is responding to this trend by ensuring that community centres serve multi-purpose functions and offer cross-programming opportunities and by developing trails to accommodate a range of users and abilities.

Female participation in “non-traditional” sports is increasing

Participation is increasing by girls and women in sports that have traditionally been dominated by men, including hockey, soccer, basketball and rugby. As permit allocation policies change to enable girls and women to gain equitable access to sports that have traditionally been dominated by boys and men, there can be conflicts over access to facilities in some sports or locations. Greater participation by girls and women can have the effect of significantly increasing the demand for access to facilities.

What is uncertain at this time is how the more traditional constraints to women’s participation in sports (family commitments, social stereotyping, and concerns for personal safety) will play out over the coming decades.

There is a trend away from team-centred sports

The trend in recreation participation is away from team centred “all for one” sports, such as baseball toward participation in low cost, casual scheduling and convenience activities which are more self-actuated, and challenge personal growth. This trend is reflected in the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute findings that the most popular activities for Canadian adults in 2000 were walking, gardening, home exercise and swimming. Between 1995 and 2000, adult participation in weight training, swimming, golf and home exercise all increased by more than 20%. Notable declines during the same period were participation in skating (-24%) and baseball (-27%)²¹ (Canadian Fitness Lifestyle Research Institute, 2000). In fact, golf has replaced hockey as the number one sport activity for men¹⁹ (Stats Canada, Sport Participation in Canada, 1998).

This trend is also reflected in participation trends of Ontario’s children and youth. According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute’s 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, the most popular physical recreation activities for Ontario children and youth aged 5-17 were swimming, walking, bicycling and

swings, slides, teeter-totters for those 12 and under. As examples, the Children’s Garden and Exploring Toronto Programs have grown significantly since their inception five years ago. The City of Toronto now offers classes for yoga to children under 10. A growing number of youth under 20 are participating in alternative or extreme sports such as in-line skating, skateboarding and snowboarding.

There is increased recognition of the benefits of designing for Healthy Communities

Modern day planners understand the need to include more physical activity in people’s daily lives, and this has become integrated into urban planning and design. “Good” planning today means neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable and which integrate community services into daily life. Safe and accessible parks and recreation facilities and greenways for cycling and walking contribute to a more “liveable” urban environment, ultimately making a link with the notion of healthy communities.

There is a trend to more centralized facilities

Many communities are moving to more centralized, multi-purpose facilities instead of standalone, single-purpose facilities that tended to be the norm in days past. In such facilities, rinks, pools, gymnasiums and tracks may be housed in one single building, providing economies of scale in terms of staffing, parking and utilities.

Corporate Directions and Priorities

This section of the report identifies the major corporate plans that provide guidance with respect to the provision of parks and recreation services in the City of Toronto. These directional plans include the recent Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation, *Our Common Grounds*. They are varied in scale and purpose and include high-level corporate plans, departmental and inter-departmental strategies, and action plans to establish and develop service directions for the amalgamated city.

City Of Toronto Council Strategic Plan (1999-2000)

The Toronto City Council Strategic Plan provides an overview of Council's strategic direction. It addresses the various roles that the City performs and the departments through which it acts. The Plan has four visions:

- Toronto is a caring and friendly city.
- Toronto is a clean, green and sustainable city.
- Toronto is a dynamic city.
- Toronto invests in quality of life.

The Strategic Plan describes more refined principles including: advocacy, community participation, equity, effectiveness, leadership, partnership and sustainability. The Plan's goals are: social development, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, good governance and city building.

The Strategic Plan identifies three key ways in which the City can make these goals a reality:

- the City can use its role as a provider and funder of public services;
- the City has important policy and regulatory functions; and
- the City can establish partnerships and influence and facilitate contributions by others.

Fiscal Sustainability Principles and Capital Budget Process (2001)

The "Fiscal Sustainability Principles" form a companion document to the Strategic Plan. The principles build on the goals and direction of the Strategic Plan and guide fiscal decision-making. Although there are over a dozen principles, the first two principles are particularly important with respect to recreation facilities:

Infrastructure should be evaluated for replacement when it is no longer cost-effective to maintain in a state of good repair.

Investment in new infrastructure should be based on analysis of shifts in demographic growth and existing, unmet needs.

Council has also developed a "Capital Budget Process" in response to the fiscal pressures facing the City, which states that:

Any capital budget request will be subject to the following process:

Prioritize projects with the prescribed categories:

- Health and Safety
- Legislated
- State of Good Repair
- Service Improvement and Enhancement
- Growth Related

Review all previously approved projects

Focus of budget is on first three priority categories

Minimize debt and other operating budget impacts

Council Priorities for 2003-2006 Term

In addition to the Strategic Plan, the current City Council has adopted priorities for the 2003 – 2006 term. The following are most directly relevant to the City's parks and recreation services:

- Improve public services.
- Make progress on the waterfront.
- Improve the business climate.
- Make Toronto a clean and beautiful city.
- Strengthen our at-risk neighbourhoods.
- Increase public involvement in civic affairs.

Council also adopted the following motions with respect to its 2003-2006 priorities:

the CAO be asked to co-ordinate responses from the Toronto Public Service on options to allow Council to make progress in each of the priority areas over the balance of the term; and

that the Budget Advisory Committee, Standing Committees, Departments and Agencies be guided by these priorities during the 2005 and 2006 budget processes.

City of Toronto Official Plan (2002)

The new Official Plan is a key policy document for the City. It sets out the strategic direction for Toronto as a vital part of the GTA, including growth management and the planning of public infrastructure. The Official Plan outlines a number of policies for improving the city's quality and balancing social, economic, and environmental needs and priorities.

Parks and recreation services are prominent in the Official Plan. For example, the chapter on "Building a Successful City" provides direction for parks and greenspace as well as facilities to serve Toronto's communities and neighbourhoods. With

respect to community services, Section 3.2.2 of the Official Plan states that:

Adequate and equitable access to community services will be encouraged by:

- providing and preserving local community service facilities across the City dedicated to this purpose;
- improving and expanding local community service facilities in established neighbourhoods that are under or poorly served; and
- ensuring that an appropriate range of community services and facilities are provided in areas of major or incremental physical growth.

Social Development Strategy (2001)

The Social Development Strategy identifies the City's social priorities and provides a set of directions to guide future action. It recognizes that the City should take action in three strategic areas: strengthening communities, investing in a comprehensive social infrastructure and expanding civic leadership and partnerships.

To achieve these goals, the report suggests the City pursue 11 strategic directions, many of which apply to the Parks and Recreation facility program. In an effort to strengthen communities, the report suggests "actively supporting the building of community capacity". To accomplish this, the city must, among other steps, encourage a mixed-system of service provision in which both the city and community-based agencies share the responsibility for delivering programs and services. While still maintaining an effective balance between its dual roles as manager of service systems and as a direct provider of service, the City can facilitate these "alternative" service providers by providing stable funding and access to city-owned space.

The Strategy also recognizes the importance of investing in a comprehensive social infrastructure. To do this, both community need and the principle of equitable access throughout the city must guide decisions about investing in recreation facilities. The Strategy also emphasises the importance of developing and refining evaluation techniques to regularly measure the effectiveness and cost efficiency of programs.

Five Year Tourism Action Plan (2003)

Tourism is an important and increasingly visible sector of Toronto's economy but the city needs to improve its share in the growing international tourism market. Quality of place and quality of life influence a city's ability to support tourism. Parks and recreation infrastructure is a significant resource for tourism activities and events. The Action Plan identifies five priority areas:

- defining leadership and governance;
- raising industry profile;
- enhancing tourism product;
- making Toronto investment-friendly; and
- increasing marketing reach and impact.

Of these priorities, enhancing the tourism product and making Toronto investment-friendly are closely linked to a high quality parks and recreation system.

Culture Plan For The Creative City (2003)

The Culture Plan stresses the importance of Toronto's arts, cultural and heritage assets to the City's expanding economy, its international status, and quality of life for residents and visitors. The document supports the important role played by these assets and their relationship with the parks and recreation system.

Toronto Bike Plan (2001)

The Toronto Bike Plan proposes a network of approximately 1,000 kilometres of bikeways, including 495 kilometres of bike lanes, 260 kilometres of signed on-road routes, and 249 kilometres of off-road paths.

The Toronto Bike Plan also establishes a vision of a city which is more bicycle friendly, setting out integrated principles, objectives and 42 recommendations for safety, education and promotional programs as well as cycling related infrastructure, including a comprehensive bikeway network.

Toronto Economic Development Strategy (2000)

The Economic Development Strategy is focused on how Toronto can improve its economic position both regionally and globally. To achieve this, a number of points relate directly to the parks and recreation system through the larger discussion relating to 'quality of place'. A high quality place encourages businesses and residents to locate in Toronto and fosters a creative and innovative workforce.

Clean, Green, & Healthy: A Plan For An Environmentally Sustainable Toronto (2000)

The Environmental Plan for the City of Toronto was a collaborative effort prepared by the Environmental Task Force. The document examines how to get to a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable future. It will lead in the direction of environmental sustainability, increasing the interconnectedness of the City's greenspaces and create or enhance linkages between greenspaces and greenway corridors.

Our Common Grounds: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (2004)

The Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan defines a program of action through 2020 for three major areas: environmental stewardship, lifelong active living, and child and youth development. By setting broad objectives for increased

investment by the City in parks and recreation services, *Our Common Grounds* is the touchstone for identifying facility directions and requirements.

Our Common Grounds contains the following vision and mission statements for the Parks and Recreation Division:

Vision

Parks & Recreation's vision is that Toronto will become known as the City within a Park. Quality of life starts with health, but for most of us it is also about savouring beauty in all its forms—especially natural ones. What is more spectacular than a majestic maple tree in full leaf, or a chapel architecture of living green connecting road to neighbourhood and neighbourhood to park? Parks & Recreation's vision is that Toronto will incorporate new neighbourhoods along our broad thoroughfares, extending our urban forest until a continuous greenscape envelopes communities across the lakefront, and north to the Oak Ridges Moraine. Toronto's children and youth will be engaged in vigorous physical activity every day. Our seniors and people with a disability will be too. The majority of Torontonians will live active lives from their earliest days to their sunset years, connecting through Toronto's varied recreational facilities, its parks and pathways.

Mission

Parks & Recreation will bring all of Toronto's diverse communities together on our common grounds. We will provide a wide variety of leisure and recreational opportunities that welcome everyone. In our centres, parks and playing fields, we will help communities help themselves, and encourage all Torontonians to become the best they can be. We will measure our success by quality, satisfaction and community development outcomes. Our parks, playing fields and recreation centres, our trails, forests, meadows, marshes, and ravines, will be beautiful, clean, safe, and accessible, meeting all our communities' needs.

Many of the recommendations in *Our Common Grounds* explicitly or implicitly address recreational facilities. For example, the plan views sports field development as a priority. It calls for stronger relationships between the City and other public agencies in the development of active recreation opportunities; and seeks to ensure that adequate facilities are available in communities with a large youth population. The Strategic Plan includes aggressive targets for environmental stewardship, child and youth development and lifelong active living. These include a target for 20 percent increase in physical activity by city residents by 2020.

An implementation framework for *Our Common Grounds* is expected later in 2004.

Other Challenges of Providing Recreation Facilities

This section outlines several major challenges that face the City with respect to the provision of recreation facilities.

The challenge of defining the City's role

The provision of parks and recreation services and facilities is a well-established part of the City's mandate, and is viewed as part of a family of community services that supports a healthy urban community. The City's extensive network of parks and recreation services and facilities illustrates the commitment to providing opportunities for leisure and recreational activities.

The City is not, however, the only provider of recreation facilities. The community is also served by a variety of other agencies and organizations, including school boards, other public agencies, public-oriented service organizations (such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs), and private and commercial facilities (such as the fitness clubs, racquet clubs, etc.).

Within the range of "traditional" municipal parks and recreation services and facilities that involve the City, the City's role varies. This reflects a number of factors such as partnerships with boards of education, arrangements with other partner groups, and efforts to enhance service to particular segments of the community. The City's role in service and facility provision includes:

- being a direct provider of services and facilities;
- being a partner (e.g., providing the building, land, funding or in-kind support to fellow agencies, community boards of management or other partners); and
- carrying out planning to help ensure that opportunities are available in the community.

This diversity of service provision and arrangements is expected to continue in a city the size and complexity of Toronto. While

Chapter Two: Planning Context

this report does not attempt to define the City's role and mandate in recreation services and facilities, it is important to look ahead with the certainty of further changes. Amalgamation, downloading, and the role of other providers will continue to prompt the City to consider its role in providing services and facilities, both as a direct provider and as a partner with various agencies and groups. The expectation to take on more responsibilities as a result of changes in the services provided by other agencies will, for example, continue to exert pressure on service and facility decisions.

The challenge of maintaining and renewing facilities

The City has a large inventory of parks and recreation facilities, presenting significant costs for facility operation and maintenance. Council direction on capital budgeting recognizes this, and has placed an emphasis on achieving and maintaining a "state of good repair" for existing capital assets.

Achieving a good state of repair is a significant challenge, given the extent of the City's established system of parks and recreation facilities. State of good repair audits for a wide range of capital assets and facility types have been completed or are underway, and these will be used to help set priorities for capital investment in parks and recreation assets.

Audits have been completed on a number of facility types in the parks and recreation portfolio. To date, arenas, outdoor artificial ice rinks, community centres, outdoor recreation facilities, indoor pools, outdoor pools, and other facilities and park assets have been assessed using a combination of visual audits and in-depth testing.

Table 2-1 shows the results of these assessments done over the past several years. The ten-year total includes work identified for 2005 to 2014.

Table 2-1 Facilities/assets audited and costs to bring up to a good repair standard

Facility Type	10 Year Total \$
Arenas	46,792,202
Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks	16,266,617
Community Centres	24,184,485
Outdoor Recreation Facilities	16,653,990
Indoor Pools	9,146,760
Outdoor Pools	7,598,530
Special Facilities	10,455,160
Tennis Courts	15,806,860
Sports Pads	1,626,975
Bridges	4,116,224
Parking Lots	37,775,655
Total	190,423,458

Audits are presently being carried out for a number of other asset types as well as due diligence audits. This includes, but is not limited to, trails, retaining walls and sea walls. The results of these additional audits will add to the total of deferred maintenance.

As well, work is underway on auditing parks and recreation facilities for accessibility. This audit will indicate the measures required to achieve desired levels of accessibility and will be used to develop a program of work to address accessibility concerns, including costs.

The City's existing recreation facility system contains a number of major facilities (such as arenas, swimming pools and community centres) that were built before or during the 1970's. While many older facilities remain serviceable and can be maintained to extend service life, there will be facilities where further investment is not economically efficient. In such

circumstances, replacement or elimination will need to be considered.

The challenge of responding to growth

Population growth and redevelopment in various parts of the city will have impacts on facility provision levels (the number of residents per facility). Maintaining facility provision levels as the city's population grows implies creating additional facility capacity (i.e., developing new facilities or expanding or enhancing existing facilities to add capacity). Facility planning needs to consider population projections, longer term recreational trends and operational requirements, as well as current community preferences.

As outlined earlier, conditions across the city will vary in terms of what facilities are needed to achieve or maintain levels of service in the face of growth. Where growth is significant, it will be important to provide facilities as the community develops.

Where population growth is more incremental in nature, it may make more sense to add to existing facilities in phases as the community develops more fully.

In meeting the challenge of population growth, it is important to recognize that facility provision rates are useful references or benchmarks, and should not be considered as absolute requirements.

The challenge of high performance sport development

Our Common Grounds recommends that the City prepare a sports strategy framework to increase and improve sport opportunities in Toronto at all levels of participation. Recreation facilities will be an important element of the sport strategy framework, recognizing the need for infrastructure to support the "playground to podium" continuum of sport.

Currently, the City's facility system has a limited ability to support higher-level athletic activities, such as competitive swimmers. Developing facilities suitable for higher levels of

sport achievement would increase the opportunities for Toronto residents to excel at sport.

The amalgamation of several municipalities into one city provides the opportunity to consider the requirements of high performance athletics, including what role the municipality could play in meeting those requirements through its recreation facilities.

The challenge of harmonization

Despite many similarities in the type and range of facility provision across the City of Toronto, there are differences in the provision of some kinds of facilities that reflect the different municipal systems that were in place prior to amalgamation. The resulting difference in facility provision rates presents a number of issues that relate to the ongoing harmonization of municipal services.

As detailed in Chapter Three of this report, the variation in provision rates is more pronounced for some types of facilities (such as outdoor swimming pools and outdoor artificial ice rinks) than others. These differences need to be understood within the context of provision rates for related facilities (e.g., indoor aquatic facilities or indoor arenas).

Ultimately, differences in the quantity and quality of recreation facilities needs to be viewed with a broad lens that goes beyond one-by-one comparisons within a given category of facility. Historically, investments in facilities have occurred in response to community needs, choices and, of course, the availability of resources. The resultant set of facilities may be viewed as a “basket of goods” that reflect many factors and choices made by the community over the years. While comparing the size and content of the “baskets” is more difficult than comparing the number of each type of facility, it is probably a more meaningful way to understand and compare differences across the city. The tools to make this kind of balanced comparison need to be developed, and may include indicators of facility provision or

“supply” with indicators of population characteristics and service needs or “demand”.

The use of city-wide provision levels as “benchmarks” for recreation facilities will tend to exert some harmonization effects over time (e.g., as low provision areas are identified and efforts are made to address facility supply).

For those recreation facilities for which there are large differences with respect to provision rates across the City, the most important initial step is to consider the existing and potential role of that type of facility in meeting the city’s service objectives, following which harmonization strategies may be developed.

The challenge of rationalization

The need to “rationalize” recreation facilities has arisen at various times in Toronto, as a function of amalgamation, because of concerns with redundant facilities, and in response to operating and capital budget pressures.

Facility rationalization may mean a number of things. Generally speaking, rationalization may be defined as the process of reorganizing a system or operation to improve efficiency in delivering a desired product or service, and can involve concepts such as “streamlining” and “consolidation”.

Within the framework of municipal parks and recreation facilities, rationalization typically implies adjustments to facility provision to improve the efficiency of resources. This may be achieved through the reduction of overhead (e.g., through concentration of facilities or the shared use of facilities) or the replacement or elimination of facilities where maintenance and operating costs are a concern.

Rationalization of municipal recreation facilities may be prompted by concerns about the role of a facility or its quality. More commonly, it may be prompted by redundancies where

two facilities in a geographic area appear to fulfil a similar function.

To be pursued in a meaningful and constructive manner, facility rationalization requires a clear understanding of the service objectives and priorities for the parks and recreation system. This entails identifying the range of services and facilities to be provided, establishing the desired level(s) of service, and assessing the adequacy of the facility system to support that service delivery.

Service objectives and priorities at the City are becoming more focused as corporate- and department-level planning progresses. The completion of *Our Common Grounds* and the follow-up work on service priorities, or the development of an indoor pool provision strategy, are examples of defining service directions and resource requirements, including facilities. This type of work will provide a broader context for facility provision issues and allow questions such as facility rationalization to be addressed thoroughly.

Chapter Three: Current Facilities and Future Needs

Chapter Overview

This section of the report provides information on the City's current stock of recreation facilities, by type. For each major category of facility within the parks and recreation system, the report presents information on supply (the number of facilities) and distribution (where they are). Trends associated with the specific facility are noted, and potential areas for more detailed analysis are identified.

The following points should be kept in mind in reviewing the facility categories:

The focus is on City-operated or City-owned facilities, although for several facility types other providers are considered as they are an established part of the overall recreation facility and service delivery system.

The data on supply and distribution of recreation facilities is quantitative in nature and does not differentiate with respect to qualitative factors, such as facility age or level of maintenance.

The use of facility provision ratios (e.g., city-wide provision per capita) or comparisons other cities (e.g., Ontario cities with population greater than 250,000) does not imply provision levels should be the single determinant of facility needs. Facility provision data should be used in conjunction with other information such as facility utilization, needs assessments and community preferences. Provision levels are, nonetheless, a useful indicator in facility planning and are useful in considering long-term facility needs at a city-wide level.

For most facilities reviewed, spatial assessment of facility distribution and coverage is based on assumed service radii, informed by a review of registration-based programs for activities associated with facility type or on user surveys.

Facility totals in each section are presented with reference to two geographic systems: four districts (based on Community Council areas) and the six former area municipalities. These geographic areas are used to provide a coarse analysis of distribution patterns. The use of the former municipal boundaries provides some insight into how the municipal approaches to facility provision differed. The use of these boundaries is not meant to suggest using them as a basis for service delivery or facility planning.

Aquatics

The aquatic facilities reviewed in this report include indoor pools and outdoor pools. Indoor pools include pools in schools where they are used regularly by the City for programs and public swims.

At present, the City is in the process of developing a strategy for indoor swimming pools that will identify pool requirements in more detail and develop a long range plan for their provision.

Indoor Pools

Inventory

The City currently delivers aquatic programs in 71 indoor pools, of which 30 are City pools and 41 are located within schools. Pool locations are shown on *Map 3*. On a city-wide basis, indoor pools are provided at a per capita ratio of approximately 1 34,951, including both City-owned and Toronto District School Board (TDSB) pools used by the City.

According to provincial data, the 1996 average indoor pool provision rate for Ontario municipalities with a population over 250,000 was 1:43,326, based only on municipally-owned facilities (excluding school board pools).

The level of total provision varies somewhat among the City's former municipalities, with the highest per capita provision levels existing in the former Toronto and East York and the lowest in the former North York. When only City-owned pools are considered, the former Etobicoke, East York and Toronto have provision levels better than the city-wide level. The former Scarborough's reliance on school facilities is apparent, with a provision level of City-owned pools being less than half that of the City-wide average.

Table 3-1 Inventory of Indoor Pools and provision rate by district

District	City Pools #	TDSB Pools Used by City #	Total #
North	6	11	17
East	3	11	14
South	11	11	22
West	10	8	18
City	30	41	71

District	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
North	103,566	56,490	36,553
East	197,766	53,936	42,378
South	59,723	59,723	29,861
West 33,881	60,985	76,231	

Map 3 - City and City-Used TDSB Indoor Pools

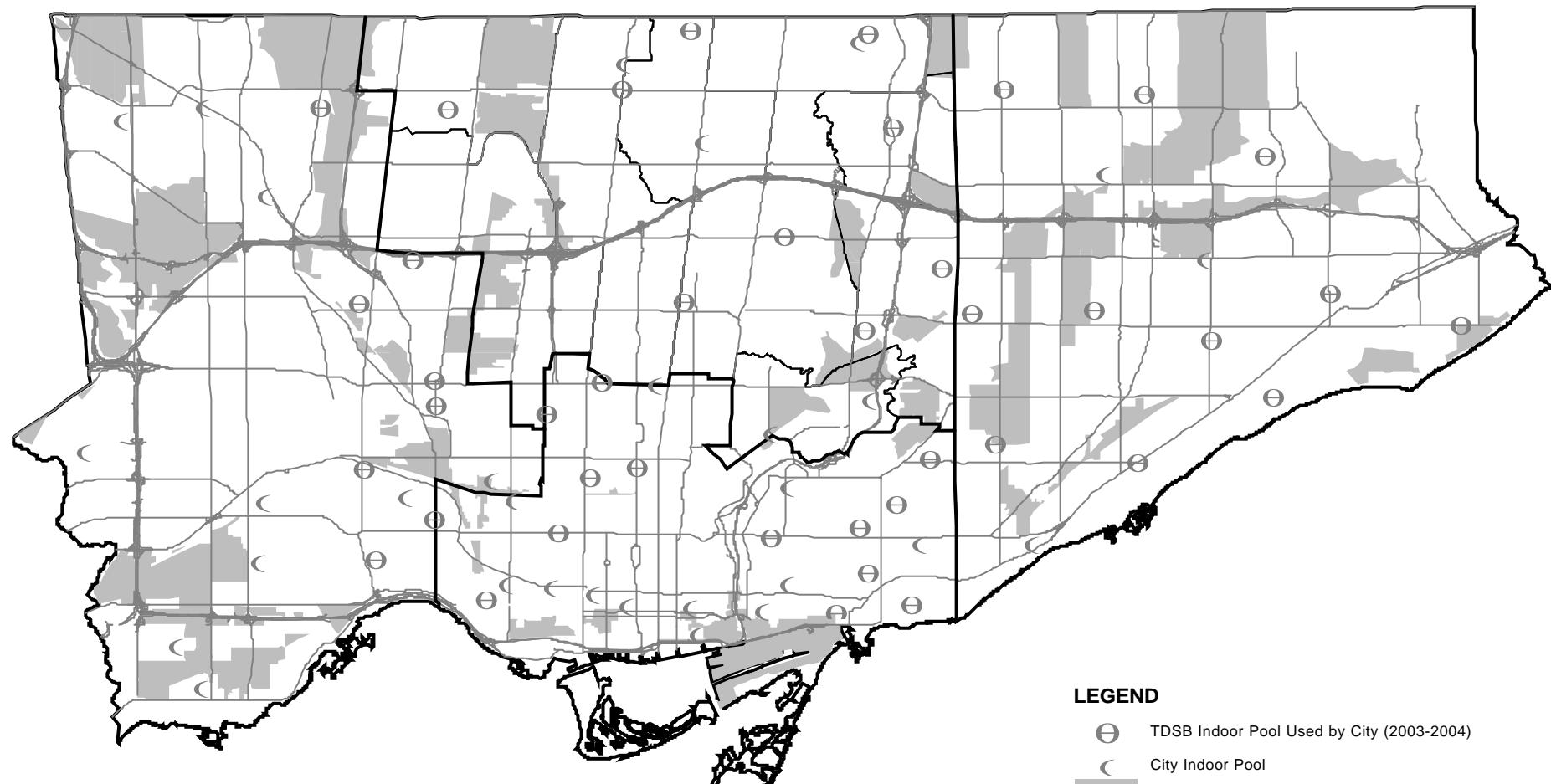


Table 3-2 Inventory of Indoor Pools and provision rate by former municipality

Former Municipalities	City Pools #	TDSB Pools Used by City #	Total Pools #
East York	2	2	4
Etobicoke	8	0	8
North York	4	10	14
Scarborough	3	11	14
Toronto	13	13	26
York	0	5	5
City	30	41	71

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
East York	57,593	57,593	28,796
Etobicoke	42,265	-	42,265
North York	152,072	60,829	43,449
Scarborough	197,766	53,936	42,378
Toronto	52,027	52,027	26,014
York	-	30,051	30,051
City	82,716	60,524	34,951

The City's pools are, for the most part, conventional 25 metre or 25 yard long pools (21 of the 30 City pools). The City has one competitive 50-metre pool at the Etobicoke Olympium. Six of the City's pools may be considered as leisure pools, which vary in configuration, but provide additional amenities such as free-form tanks, beach areas and water slides.

TDSB pools used by the City are predominantly 25 metre or 25 yard pools (36 of the 41 pools).

Toronto residents have very high proximity to indoor pools. There are only a few areas of existing residential development in the City that fall outside an assumed service radius of 2.5 kilometres for indoor pools namely: an area in central (former) Etobicoke east of Highway 427 and South of Highway 401; an area west of Bathurst, both north and south of Highway 401; and an area in the (former) north-east Scarborough

Other Factors Affecting Supply

The inventory of pools in this report does not include 4 pools owned by the City but provided to the public through Boys and Girls Clubs or community boards. Also, the inventory does not include another 43 TDSB pools that are not used by the City. These other school pools are used, to varying degrees by aquatic clubs and other user groups outside of school hours. The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) owns and operates an additional two indoor pools.

In addition to the facilities noted above, a number of agencies, organizations and institutions such as the YMCA, YWCA and universities, operate indoor swimming pools that offer public programs.

Trends

Swimming continues to be one of the most popular recreational activities for all ages. The 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, undertaken by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, found swimming to be the number one sport for children and youth aged 5-17 with an 89% participation rate in Ontario. Swimming was fourth in popularity for Ontario adults over 18 years of age with a 56% participation rate and was considered number one for facility-based participation (exceeded by walking, gardening and home exercise). Given the trend of active seniors and the fact of Toronto's ageing population, it is likely that swimming will continue to be an attractive choice as a low impact fitness activity.

Modern leisure pools tend to have a broader appeal than the more traditional rectangular pools. Multi-pool complexes and hybrid pools that combine leisure pool elements with areas for lane swimming are also popular and can provide greater opportunities to meet a wider range of aquatic recreational needs.

Discussion

Toronto has a high provision level of indoor pools based on the system of City and school board pools.

The cost to maintain and operate the system of pools has been a particular issue in recent years, particularly with respect to the funding of TDSB pools. There is currently an agreement in place between the City and the TDSB with respect to the use of TDSB pools by the City, including funding, which runs to 2006 and may be renewed.

To understand the future needs for indoor pool facilities, the City is developing a strategy for the provision of indoor pools, as directed by Council in May 2003. The strategy will provide a long-term plan for the provision of indoor pools by the City including an implementation plan.

Recommendations

- 1) The Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism report on an indoor pool provision strategy to Economic Development and Parks Committee by year end of 2004.

Recreation Facilities Report

Outdoor Pools

Inventory

The City currently has 59 outdoor pools. Outdoor pools are provided at 1:42,059 at the city-wide level in Toronto. Their locations are shown on *Map 4*.

**Table 3-3 Inventory of Outdoor Pools
and provision rate by district**

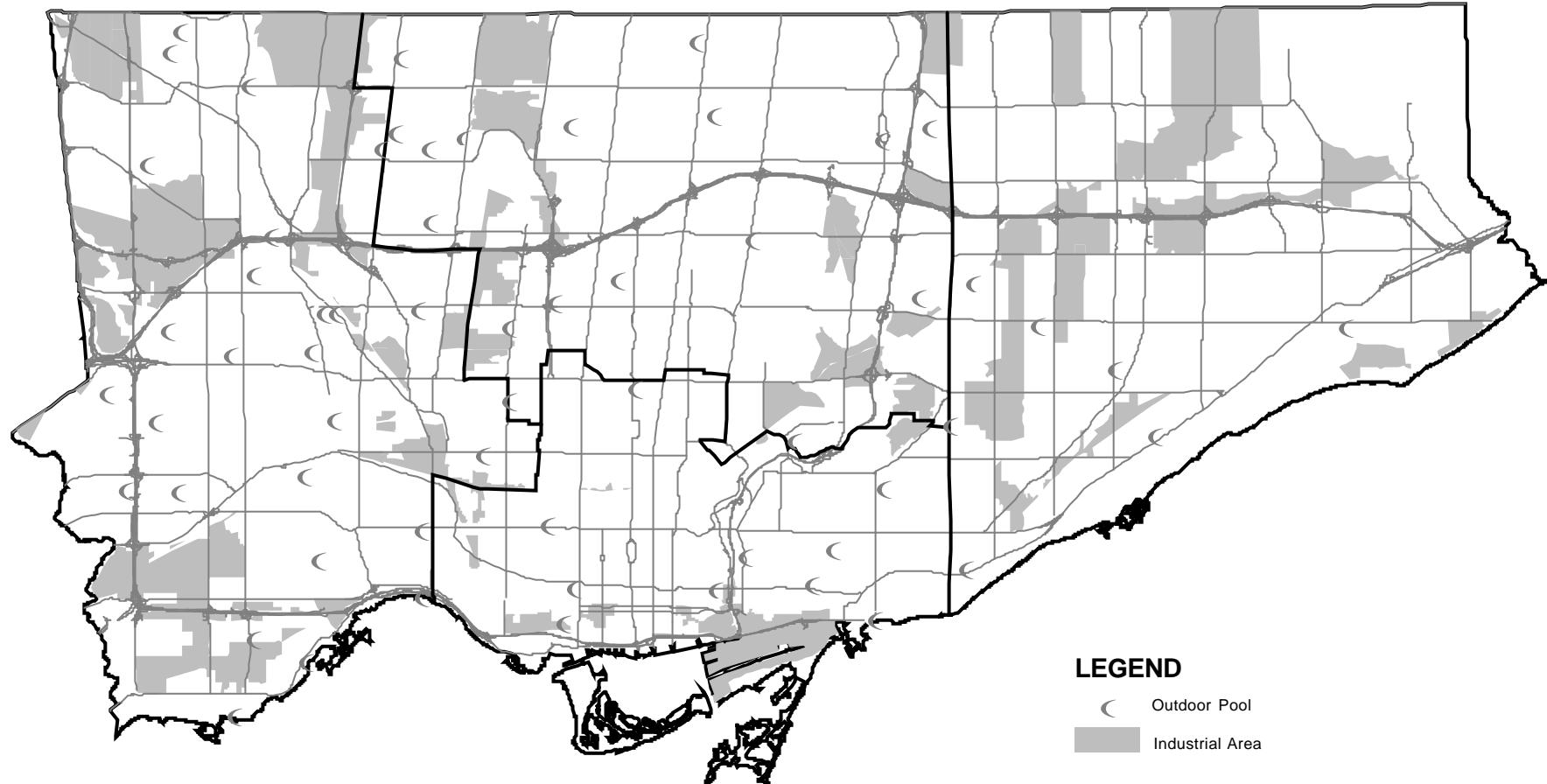
District	Total #
North	19
East	6
South	9
West	25
City	59

**Table 3-4 Inventory of Outdoor Pools
and provision rate by former municipality**

Former Municipalities	Total #
East York	2
Etobicoke	17
North York	19
Scarborough	6
Toronto	12
York	3
City	59

District	Provision Rate (1 per)
North 32,705	
East 98,883	
South 72,995	

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)
East York 57,593	
Etobicoke 19,889	
North York 32,015	
Scarborough 98,883	
Toronto 56,363	



According to provincial data, the provision level for municipal outdoor swimming pools in Ontario cities with a population over 250,000 is 1:41,213.

The West District has the highest provision levels for outdoor pools, while the East District has the lowest. There are residential areas in the City that fall outside an assumed service radius of 2.5 kilometres for outdoor pools. These are predominantly in the East District.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

Outdoor pools have often been included as part of private amenities within multi-unit residential developments.

There are two outdoor aquatics facilities provided at conservation areas run by the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority immediately adjacent to Toronto. These are a wave pool at Claireville Conservation Area bordering northwest Etobicoke and an "artificial" man-made lake with a concrete bottom at Petticoat Creek Conservation Area, east of Scarborough.

Trends

As discussed in the indoor pool facility section, swimming continues to be one of the most popular recreational activities for all ages. As with indoor pools, outdoor pools are being designed to include more leisure features such as slides, multiple tanks, shallow areas and integrated water play facilities. The unique recreational experience that outdoor pools offer has contributed to them remaining popular facilities.

Discussion

The variation in provision level and spatial pattern of outdoor pools indicates that these facilities were viewed differently by the former municipalities that now make up the City.

A number of factors, such as the short operating season and the reliance on weather conditions, are often raised as concerns

with respect to the provision of outdoor pools as an aquatic facility, especially in view of the cost to develop and maintain outdoor pools.

In their favour, outdoor pools provide opportunities for a popular activity. They also supplement opportunities for outdoor swimming and bathing at Toronto's beaches, as demonstrated by the fact that several outdoor pools are located close to the waterfront, including two of the City's more significant outdoor pools located at popular swimming beaches.

Recognizing the concern with the cost to develop and maintain outdoor swimming pools and overall facility provision levels, additional outdoor pools are not considered a priority. As existing outdoor pools approach the end of their service life, and before major investments are made to renew or replace them, these facilities should be reviewed with respect to community needs, options for replacement (e.g., with water play areas), and cost/benefit considerations.

Recommendations

- 2) The City should not provide additional outdoor pools.
- 3) The City should assess the need and viability of outdoor pools that require major investments to allow them to remain operational in light of pool requirements, including options for replacement with other facilities.

Community Centres

Inventory

In the City of Toronto, the term “community centre” applies to a wide variety of facilities that accommodate a range of recreational, cultural and community activities. Community centres can include amenities such as gyms, multi-purpose rooms, meeting rooms, swimming pools, arenas, and fitness studios.

Swimming pools and arenas are major facilities that are often, but not exclusively, associated with community centres. They are considered separately in this report.

The inventory of community centres in this report focuses mainly on centres that are owned and/or operated by the City, including those provided in association with board of education facilities (e.g., community schools). The inventory also includes some centres that are not operated directly by the City, but which do provide recreation facilities and services to the public. This includes facilities that are owned by the City but operated by boards of management or similar groups.

The size and facility make-up of Toronto’s community centres vary from major complexes (which may include several components such as a gym, multi-purpose space or swimming pool) to single-purpose community halls. Community centres may also include arenas, exercise facilities, space dedicated to seniors, or cultural activities. Community centres can be grouped by size and number of components as outlined below.

Major Centres are generally over 2,500 square metres in size and include three or more indoor facility components such as a gymnasium, pool, arena, multi-purpose space, or indoor bocce.

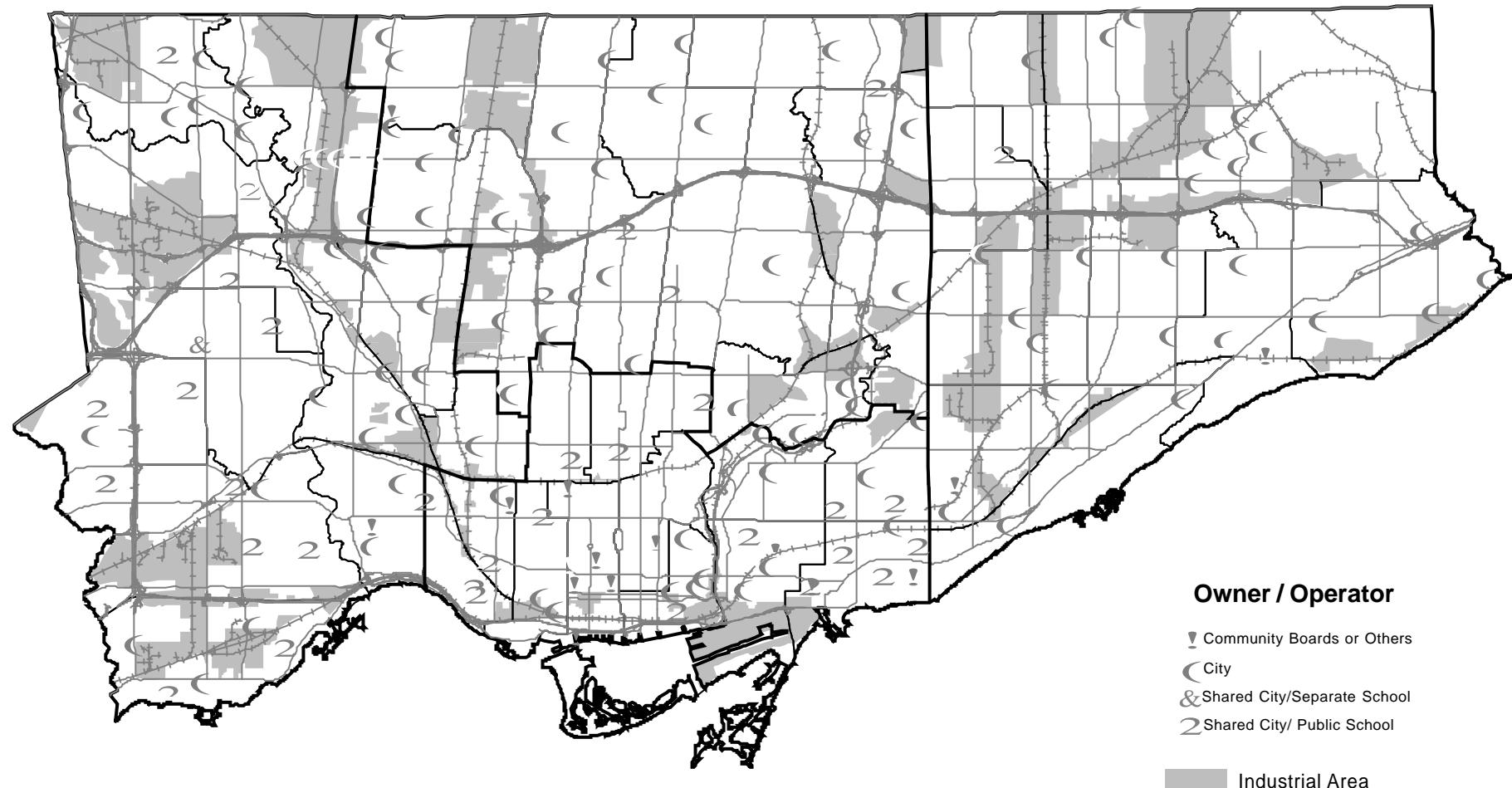
Mid-sized Centres are generally between 500 and 2,500 square metres in size and include at least one indoor facility component

such as a gymnasium, indoor pool, arena, or multi-purpose space.

Minor Centres are generally under 500 square metres in size and are predominantly single purpose facilities, such as a community room or hall.

In total, the City has 144 community centres, of which 94 are owned/operated by the City, 36 are provided through various arrangements with school boards, and 14 are operated by community boards or other groups.

Of the 144 centres, 34 are considered Major Centres, 90 are Mid-sized Centres and 20 are Minor Centres. Community Centre locations are shown on *Map 5*.



While the variability inherent in the term “community centre” makes detailed comparisons difficult, some broad comparisons can be useful. In terms of overall numbers, community centres in Toronto are provided at a level comparable to Ontario cities with populations over 250,000 – 1:20,606 -- according to a 1996 survey.

There are variations across the city in the per capita provision of centres in total and for the different levels of facility (i.e., Major, Mid-sized and Minor Centres). In terms of the current districts, West has the highest provision level for all centres, however, all districts are fairly close to the city-wide provision average.

Table 3-5 Inventory of Community Centres and provision rate by district

District	Major Centres #	Medium Centres #	Minor Centres #	Total #
North	10	22	3	35
East	5	18	6	
29				
West	7	26	8	41
City	34	90	20	144

District	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
North	62,140	28,245	207,132	17,754
East	118,659	32,961	98,883	20,459
South	54,746	27,373	218,984	16,845
West	87,121	23,456	76,231	
14,874				

Using the former municipal boundaries, the lowest overall provision of community centres is in the former City of York, which also does not have any Major Centres. The highest provision level for community centres is the former City of Etobicoke. The highest provision of Major Centres is in the former City of Toronto, followed by the former City of North York.

Table 3-6 Inventory of Community Centres and provision rate by former municipality

Former Municipalities	Major Centres #	Medium Centres #	Minor Centres #	Total #
East York	1	5	0	6
Etobicoke	3	18	3	24
North York	11	22	3	36
Scarborough	5	18	6	29
Toronto	14	25	5	44
York	0	2	3	5
City	34	90	20	144

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
East York	115,185	23,037	-	19,198
Etobicoke	112,706	18,784	112,706	14,088
North York	55,299	27,649	202,763	16,897
Scarborough	118,659	32,961	98,883	20,459
Toronto	48,311	27,054	135,270	15,372
York	-	75,128	50,085	
30,051				

Other Factors Affecting Supply

Other publicly owned community facilities have historically met some municipal and community needs for space for various uses and programs. Chief among these are schools, although libraries, cultural and historic facilities and other civic buildings are also important resources.

Institutional and private facilities, such as churches and ethnicity-based community centres, are also used by many public and community groups for programs and events.

The City itself uses a variety of spaces in addition to community centres to deliver programs and services. While use of these other resources is expected to continue, there are concerns including cost and consistency of access.

Trends

The dominant trend in the provision of municipal community centres is toward larger, higher quality and more diversified facilities. These larger facilities offer a range of programming opportunities, including physical recreation and along with other community services such as libraries and day care. Facilities that allow varied and flexible programming are generally more appealing than single-purpose facilities as people have the opportunity to meet several personal or family needs in one location.

Community centre facilities continue to be influenced by the "Active Living" concept of physical exercise in which an emphasis is placed on programs such as aerobics, yoga, walking and dancing. Space and facilities suitable for these types of activities are expected to grow in importance as part of community centres.

In terms of facility components within community centres, there is growing interest in gymnasium space for sports like basketball, volleyball and badminton, particularly among youth

and young adults. Gymnasium space provides the ability to host a variety of team sports and group activities. Gyms can also accommodate indoor versions of a variety of outdoor team sports.

Some communities are developing sports complexes to provide preferred combinations and levels of sports and recreation facilities. These facilities tend to concentrate sports facilities (such as multi-pad arenas, indoor and outdoor playing fields, conditioning and training facilities, etc.), in contrast to more distributed provision of facilities through a system of general purpose community centres. Sports complexes are also often developed on an "enterprise" basis to maximize revenue potential, often in partnership with private and/or community groups.

Discussion

Community centres tend to be varied in the types and levels of facilities and spaces they offer. Furthermore, the term "community centre" has evolved over time and often implies a range of community and cultural services, not just recreation. While it is somewhat difficult to treat them as facility type *per se*, there is some benefit in viewing them as groups of facilities that provide a diversity of activities and opportunities with a common purpose (such as individual and team sports or fitness pursuits). In grouping facilities, community centres can be more attractive or convenient for use by the community, as well as potential for efficiencies in facility development and operation.

Decisions about the provision of community centres in Toronto are driven by many factors, including the extension of recreation services and facilities to new residential areas, the need to provide facilities to under-served communities, and the desire to improve the quality of recreation services and keep up with trends in facility design.

Decision-making can also be driven by actions of other providers of community space. Reductions in school board budgets in recent years have had impacts on the accessibility and cost of space in schools for programs and community uses. School closures and changes in permit fees for use have put more pressure on municipal facilities, as the City has reduced its own reliance on board properties for the delivery of parks and recreation programs. Community groups that use school board and municipal facilities have likewise been affected by changes in the availability and cost of facilities.

Outlook on Community Centre Requirements

In 1999, Council adopted a report from the Commissioner of EDCT on a recreational needs assessment and feasibility study for community centres for five areas in Toronto. The five areas were considered to be historically under-served areas at the time of amalgamation. A listing of these five projects and their status is outlined below:

Wellesley Community Centre (St. James Town): The project is close to completion and will open in late 2004.

South Etobicoke Community Centre: The capital program includes funding for a community centre component to be developed in conjunction with a new secondary school, expected to proceed over 2005-2006.

Western North York Community Centre: A former privately owned secondary school has been leased and operates as the Humber-Sheppard Centre. The lease runs to 2008 and the facility has undergone renovations.

York Community Centre: A more detailed analysis of identified sites and construction estimates was completed in 2001 but the preferred site, on provincially-owned lands at the southeast corner of Eglinton Avenue West and Black Creek Drive, has not been secured.

Parkdale Community Centre (40 Wabash): A feasibility study was completed in 2003, including construction estimates for three potential development scenarios of the site. Site remediation work is underway in 2004. EDCT is developing an EOI for partnership opportunities under Section 110 of the Municipal Act, 2001, expected for release in the fall of 2004.

Subsequent to the 1999 study, planning work has identified a number of other areas of the city where additional community centres should be considered in the next five to ten years. This was done by studying the areas of projected growth and intensification as well as reviewing community centre provision across the city using existing/projected per capita provision levels and spatial coverage.

In addition to the 3 community centre projects remaining from the 5 areas studied in 1999, a number of other areas have been identified for potential community centre projects. This includes new centres, replacement centres and significant expansions to existing centres.

These projects are at varying stages of the planning process used to develop community centres. This process involves a number of steps including identifying community needs and establishing project feasibility. Several of the identified projects are based on anticipated need in areas of future population growth. This means that some of these community centres may

only be needed towards the end of the coming decade, but should be kept in view.

In addition to the 3 areas from the 1999 study for which no permanent community centre facility has been secured (i.e., York, Western North York and Parkdale), the following 11 areas are the strongest candidates for new, replacement or significantly expanded facilities over the next 5 to 10 years:

Thorcliffe
Edithvale/North York Centre
Victoria Village/Parkview-O'Connor
North-east Scarborough
Scarborough City Centre
Sheppard Corridor, Bayview-Don Mills
Etobicoke City Centre
Sheppard Corridor, Don Mills-McCowan
Railway Lands
North Rexdale
Central Waterfront

Several of the above areas have needs analysis and feasibility studies completed or underway. Several of the above areas are indicated as longer-term requirements, based on anticipated needs arising from growth and development.

Depending on the circumstances, the response to these facility needs could take a number of forms (e.g., a new centre, an addition to an existing facility, or a partnership with another service provider such as a school). As such, the scope and cost of facility projects would likely vary from area to area depending on actual requirements.

The following sets out a brief description and status of the additional 11 areas :

Thorcliffe: proposed expansion of an existing community centre to serve a high-needs community; feasibility study completed in 2002.

Edithvale/North York City Centre: proposed expansion/replacement of an existing community centre in a surplus elementary school leased from TDSB; area served includes North York City Centre; needs and feasibility study completed in 2001.

Victoria Village/Parkview-O'Connor: proposed expansion of existing facility; area of low provision, includes existing priority centre and high-needs areas; needs and feasibility study complete in 2004.

North-east Scarborough: proposed community centre or joint-use facility with school boards to meet needs of extensive new communities and some under-served areas; detailed needs assessment planned for 2005.

Scarborough City Centre: proposed expansion of existing facility adjacent to City Centre to serve growth in the area; partnership opportunities have been identified; feasibility study underway in 2004.

Sheppard Corridor, Bayview-Don Mills: proposed joint-use facility with school boards, library and other services to serve high-growth area; feasibility study underway in 2004.

Etobicoke City Centre: identified facility needs to serve anticipated growth and existing community.

Sheppard Corridor, Don Mills-McCowan: identified facility needs to serve growth in this section of Sheppard corridor; preliminary needs review in 2004.

Railway Lands: potential joint-use facility with school boards to serve growth.

North Rexdale: potential need for community centre as part of multi-service community facility.

Central Waterfront: projected need for several community centres or joint-use facilities to meet extensive new communities.

As indicated, several of the areas outlined above have been the subject of needs and feasibility studies conducted at the community level and based on secured or identified project sites.

In terms of setting priorities, the 14 areas (3 projects remaining from the 5 areas studied in 1999 and 11 additional identified areas) may be reviewed with respect to:

- timeframe for facility requirements over the next 5 and 10 years; and
- relative priority based on review of facility provision levels, demographics and other data for the areas of the city associated with each proposed or potential project.

The following areas have been identified as projects to consider within the 2005-2009 timeframe, in order of priority:

York
Thorncliffe
North-east Scarborough
Edithvale/North York Centre
Western North York
Victoria Village/O'Connor-Parkview
Parkdale

Other factors such as availability of site, funding, and partnership opportunities would be relevant considerations in structuring the capital plan to include these projects.

The remaining 7 areas are more appropriate to consider for the 2010-2014 period, and the approximate order of priority is as follows:

Scarborough City Centre
Sheppard Corridor, Bayview to Don Mills
Sheppard Corridor, Don Mills to McCowan
North Rexdale
Etobicoke City Centre
Railway Lands
Central Waterfront

Again, the above-noted areas represent proposed or potential community centre projects with strong indications of service need, either to address areas of concern with respect to existing provision as well as growth and development. Investment in other community centre projects (e.g., facility renovations, upgrades, and expansions) will also be required in other areas of the city over the coming decade to meet service needs.

Recommendations

- 4) The City include the following areas as community centre projects in its capital plan for 2005-2009 in order of priority:

York
Thorncliffe
North-east Scarborough
Edithvale/North York Centre
Western North York
Victoria Village/O'Connor-Parkview
Parkdale

- 5) The City include the following areas as community centre projects in its capital plan for 2010-2014 in the approximate order of priority:

Scarborough City Centre
Sheppard Corridor, Bayview to Don Mills
Sheppard Corridor, Don Mills to McCowan
North Rexdale
Etobicoke City Centre
Railway Lands
Central Waterfront

- 6) The City should confirm and secure sites for proposed community centre facilities.
- 7) The City should identify partnership opportunities for the development of community centre facilities, including joint-use facilities.

Ice Facilities

Ice surfaces provide a range of recreational opportunities for residents of Toronto in a variety of facility types across the City, ranging from indoor arenas to outdoor artificial and natural ice rinks. Recreational activities associated with these facilities include organized hockey and figure skating, more informal shinny and pleasure skating.

At present, the City is developing a strategy for the provision of indoor artificial ice arenas that will identify long-term facility requirements.

Indoor Ice Facilities

Inventory

The City currently has 63 indoor ice pads in 52 facilities, 11 of which are double pad facilities and 41 are single pad facilities. Arena locations are shown on *Map 6*. This total includes two outdoor artificial ice rinks that have been enclosed with temporary structures to provide indoor ice surfaces, one in the West District and one in the South District.

Indoor ice facilities vary with respect to a variety of factors, including the number and of pads, the availability of change rooms, and seating capacity. Other amenities, such as the presence of meeting rooms, can influence the way a facility is used (e.g., for competitions, tournaments, or training).

Table 3-7 Inventory of Indoor Ice Facilities and provision rate by district

District	Single Pads #	Twin Pads #	Total Pads #
North	17	1	19
East 18	2	8	
South	6	1	8
West	16	1	18

District	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
North	36,553	621,395	32,705
East	296,649	74,162	32,961
South	109,492	656,952	82,119
West	38,116	609,850	33,881
City	60,524	225,590	39,389

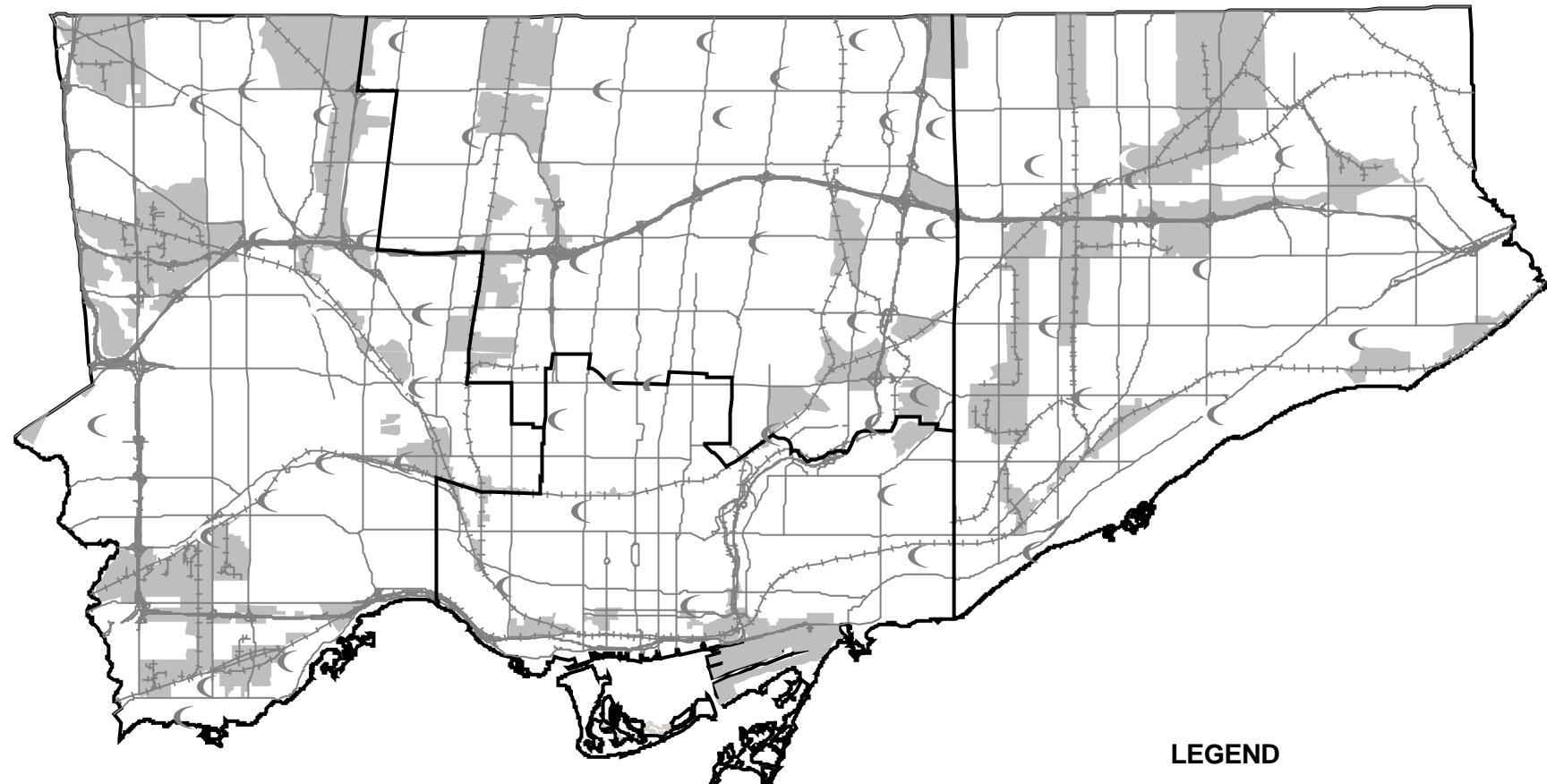


Table 3-8 Inventory of Indoor Ice Facilities and provision rate by former municipality

Former Municipalities	Single Pads #	Twin Pads #	Total Pads #
East York	2	0	2
Etobicoke	7	1	9
North York	20	0	20
Scarborough	2	8	18
Toronto	6	2	10
York	4	0	4
City	41	11	63

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
East York	57,593	-	57,593
Etobicoke	48,302	338,117	37,569
North York	30,414	-	30,414
Scarborough	296,649	74,162	32,961
Toronto	112,725	338,176	67,635
York	37,564	-	37,564
City	60,524	225,590	39,389

On a city-wide basis, indoor ice pads in Toronto are provided at a per capita level of approximately 1:39,389 persons. This is slightly lower than the average provision level of 1:30,445 persons for municipally owned/operated indoor ice pads in Ontario cities with populations over 250,000.

The level of facility provision varies widely among the City's former municipalities. The highest provision levels of pads is in the North and East Districts followed closely by the West. Presently, the highest per capita provision of twin pad facilities is in the East District. When comparing District provision levels for indoor ice across the city, the South area is well below the city average.

There are no substantial areas of existing residential development in the City that fall outside of an assumed service radius of 4 kilometres.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

Toronto also has a number of non-municipal (private) arenas located within its boundaries, many of which are oriented to public use. Public ice rentals, league play, and hockey schools occur at these facilities in varying degrees.

There are eight commercial arenas with a total of 25 ice pads that can be considered part of the supply of publicly available ice in Toronto. While these facilities have not been included in the per capita provision numbers for indoor ice in this report, their availability to the public means provision levels are effectively higher.

Within Toronto there are also five single pad arenas associated with major institutions, such as schools and universities. Although these facilities provide some service to the community, they are primarily available to the population associated with the particular institution and offer more restrictive ice time to the public. They are, therefore, less suitable to be considered with respect to overall provision levels in the city.

Toronto residents also use other indoor ice facilities outside of Toronto. Leagues such as the Greater Toronto Hockey League currently use arenas both in Toronto and throughout the GTA.

Trends

Indoor ice facilities are predominantly used for ice hockey and figure skating. Arenas that do not keep the ice surface year-round are also used for other activities including ball hockey and lacrosse as well as special events. Lacrosse is considered to be a growth sport.

The 1998 Sport Participation In Canada study, undertaken by Statistics Canada, found that hockey had the second highest overall participation rate, with 6.2% participation rate for those aged 15 and older (equating to approximately 121,519 players in Toronto). Over 18% of the active⁹ Canadian population aged 15 and older participated in hockey in 2000; this equates to 27.9% of active males and 2.1% of active females.

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute found an active participation rate of 12% for Canadians aged 18 and older in both their 1995 and 2000 Physical Activity Monitor studies. This study also included children aged 5-17 and found an active participation rate of 24% in 1995. The 1998 Canadian Sporting Goods Association (CSGA) Sports Participation Study found that 17.6% of men aged 15+ and 2.9% of women aged 15+ played hockey in Ontario.

In the last ten years, there has been a dramatic increase in female participation in hockey. According to the Ontario Women's Hockey Association, the number of female players registered with the OWHA increased by about 420% between 1992 and 2002 (from 6,333 in 92/93 to 26,539 in 2001/2).

This popularity is reflected in participation levels in City-run programs. For example, girls and women registered in 118 of the 156 hockey and hockey related power skating courses in the

2001/2002 season. Of the total 2,835 registrants, 327 or 11.5% were female.

The most active participants in indoor hockey are generally those aged 6-20. Toronto witnessed a growth rate in this age cohort of nearly 20% (twice the rate of the City as a whole) in the last decade, likely a factor in higher demands for ice time.

One of the most dominant trends in the provision of indoor ice facilities is the development of multi-pad facilities to achieve more economical operations and to improve opportunities for league and tournament play. The interest in twinned or multiple facilities should not be overlooked when developing provision strategies in the future for the City. Indoor ice surfaces can also be configured to go beyond conventional hockey rink shapes and sizes to provide more diverse opportunities for pleasure skating.

To extend the ice skating season, "bubbling", or covering outdoor facilities during the winter months, has been undertaken or proposed for some outdoor ice facilities. This has been done at two outdoor artificial ice facilities in Toronto. Bubbling extended the operating season to approximately 6 months from the usual 10-12 weeks.

Discussion

Arenas are relatively evenly distributed across the City, and no spatial "gaps" in service provision appear to exist. Provision levels are lowest in South District.

The City's Ice Allocation Policy, approved by Council in 2001, affects the supply of ice time by controlling who has access to ice time, and for how long. Developed in consultation with user groups, the Policy is intended to give a harmonized and equitable approach to the allocation of prime time ice in Toronto for ice that is permitted by the Parks & Recreation Division.

⁹ Active population is calculated as the population participating in at least one sport in the previous year.

As discussed in the following section, outdoor artificial ice facilities are concentrated in some areas of the City, particularly in the South District. Outdoor artificial ice facilities tend to be programmed more for informal and spontaneous uses such as leisure skating and shinny hockey and therefore serve a different purpose than indoor arenas. The role of outdoor artificial ice facilities in meeting the needs of Toronto residents for ice facilities needs to be better understood, particularly given the interest in converting outdoor ice to indoor facilities through the use of temporary or seasonal enclosures.

There have been several proposals across the city to replace or expand existing City-owned or City-operated single pad arenas with twin-pad or multi-pad facilities. These proposals have included some analysis of facility needs, but with limited understanding of long-term requirements across the city. There are also some existing city arenas and artificial ice facilities that will require major investment in the next several years to remain operational. Decision-making in these situations requires a much better understanding of ice needs over the next 30 years and the development of a strategy to guide the City's decision-making with respect to its own facilities or participation in partnerships.

Recommendations

- 8) The City should develop a long-term strategy for the City's provision of indoor ice, to be initiated in 2004 and completed in early 2005.

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks

Inventory

The City provides outdoor artificial ice rinks (AIR) at 50 locations. A number of these locations provide two pads, resulting in a total of 63 pads. The city-wide per capita provision for artificial outdoor ice pads in Toronto is 1:39,389. City outdoor artificial ice rinks are shown on *Map 7*.

Table 3-9 Inventory of Outdoor Artificial Ice Facilities and provision rate by district

District	AIR Locations #	Hockey Pads #	Pleasure Pads #	Total Pads #
North	7	5	3	8
East	1	0	1	1
South	24	20	13	33
West	18	9	12	21
City	50	34	29	63

District	Locations (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
North	88,771	124,279	207,132	77,674
East	593,297	-	593,297	593,297
South 19,908	27,373	32,848	50,535	
West 29,040	33,881	67,761	50,821	

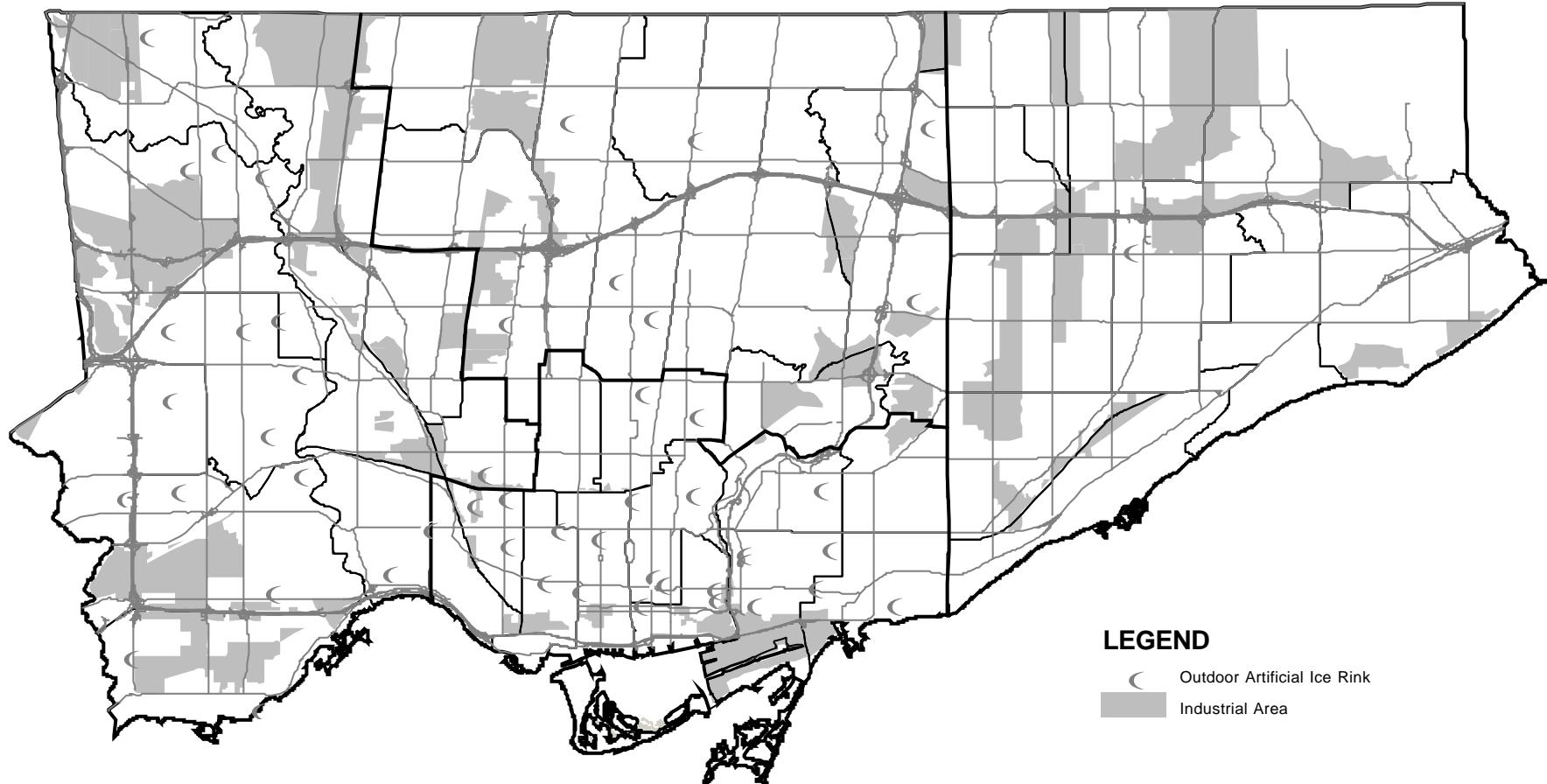
Table 3-10 Inventory of Outdoor Artificial Ice Facilities and provision rate by former municipality

Former Municipalities	AIR Locations #	Hockey Pads #	Pleasure Pads #	Total Pads #
East York	1	0	2	2
Etobicoke	16	7	10	17
North York	6	4	2	6
Scarborough	1	0	1	1
Toronto	26	23	14	37
York	0	0	0	0
City	50	34	29	63

Former Municipalities	Locations (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
East York	115,185	-	57,593	57,593
Etobicoke	21,132	48,302	33,812	19,889
North York	101,381	152,072	304,144	101,381
Scarborough	593,297	-	593,297	593,297
Toronto	26,014	29,407	48,311	18,280
York	-	-	-	-



Map 7 - City Outdoor Artificial Ice Rinks



The greatest concentration of outdoor artificial ice rinks is the South District, followed by the West.

Of the 63 outdoor artificial ice pads, 34 are equipped with hockey boards. Another 29 are ice pads that are more oriented to pleasure skating. Eleven of the 34 outdoor rink locations provide both a pad with boards and a pleasure pad on the same ice surface, providing a facility that can serve two uses at the same time.

The majority of the outdoor rink facilities tend to be smaller surfaces than regulation hockey size. The pleasure pads are typically smaller rectangular surfaces, although there are some larger surfaces like City Hall and alternate layouts, such as the oval at College Park or the skating loop at Rennie Park.

Provincial data for outdoor ice surfaces includes both artificial and natural surfaces and is, therefore, not directly compatible with this category of facility.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

In addition to the City-operated facilities, Harbourfront operates a large outdoor artificial ice rink that is used primarily for pleasure skating.

Natural ice rinks represent another major supply for outdoor ice. The City currently facilitates volunteer efforts by community and neighbourhood groups to provide natural skating rinks in parks. The number of these varies from year to year. The City also manages a small number of ponds in parks and is responsible for monitoring them and posting ice conditions.

For the past several years, Parc Downsview Park has provided a large natural ice rink.

Trends

Activities supported by outdoor artificial ice rinks remain popular with a wide range of people of all ages and skating abilities.

A number of municipalities In Canada and the GTA have introduced creative components in the provision of outdoor skating facilities. Free-form designs and skating loops and paths designed specifically for pleasure skating are a distinct evolution beyond the traditional rink format.

The trend in facility design responds to a greater desire for more unstructured, drop-in types of opportunities, particularly during the winter months.

Discussion

Outdoor artificial ice rinks are a distinctive feature of many Toronto parks and civic centres. They provide a unique winter time opportunity for outdoor activities, and are popular with a wide range of people of all ages and abilities.

The provision of outdoor artificial ice facilities is greatest in the South and West and North Districts, largely a reflection of the facility provision choices made by pre-amalgamation municipalities with respect to artificial ice facilities. To some degree, the variation in provision levels of outdoor ice may be viewed within the context of the provision of indoor ice facilities. However, the inherent differences between outdoor ice and indoor ice facilities (e.g., in terms of facility dimensions as well as programming and public use) limit the comparison.

As a seasonal facility, outdoor artificial ice facilities are often identified as a concern with respect to the cost of facility operation and maintenance in light of the relatively short period of time in which these facilities provide ice.

The wide range of existing provision levels for outdoor artificial ice facilities, the relationship with provision levels of indoor ice, and the costs associated with operation and maintenance of

outdoor ice facilities as a limited seasonal use are three areas which suggest the need for a better definition of the role for outdoor ice facilities in the City's system.

In support of that, user research was undertaken in 2004. As well, as part of the work underway on long range requirements for indoor ice facilities, the supply of outdoor ice facilities will be considered with respect to defining service overlaps and differences in between the two types of artificial ice facilities. This work will provide a better basis for defining the future role and needs for outdoor artificial ice facilities.

Recommendations

- 9) The City should continue research into the use and role of outdoor artificial ice rinks as part of the City's supply of artificial ice facilities.
- 10) The City should assess the need for and viability of outdoor artificial ice rinks where major investment is required to remain operational.
- 11) For any additional or replacement outdoor artificial ice facilities, the City should consider low provision areas a priority and any such facilities should focus on designs that emphasize pleasure skating.

Skateboarding

Inventory

There currently are seven municipally operated skateboard parks in the City of Toronto.

Table 3-11 Inventory of municipally-owned Skateboard Parks in Toronto by district

District	Location	Size and Type	
North	Cummer Park	1,450 m ²	Permanent
East	Port Union Community Centre	640 m ²	Permanent
South	Leonard Linton Park	650 m ²	Permanent
South	John Innes Community Centre	450 m ²	Portable
South	Greenwood Park	750 m ²	Portable
West	Weston Lions Park	700 m ²	Portable
West	Smithfield Park	535 m ²	Portable

Skateboarding facilities (existing and in-progress) are shown on Map 8.

Three additional small facilities are scheduled to be added to the inventory in 2004. All are planned to incorporate portable elements and are being funded through the Ontario Works program.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

Facilities in nearby municipalities (Pickering, Vaughan, Markham, Mississauga and Oakville) can attract skateboarders from Toronto. However, these facilities are not of sufficient size

(capacity) nor are they readily accessible to most skateboarders in Toronto to contribute significantly to the supply of facilities at this time.

There is the potential to add to the supply of skateboard facilities through the development of private facilities and for partnerships between the City and private interests. One small privately run indoor facility ("Shred Central") currently operates in the Yonge/Wellesley area of downtown Toronto.

Trends

Akin to freestyle inline skating, BMX cycling and snowboarding, skateboarding is a popular, challenging, youth-oriented "action sport" that is part of a trend away from organized team sports and towards more personal, unstructured activities.

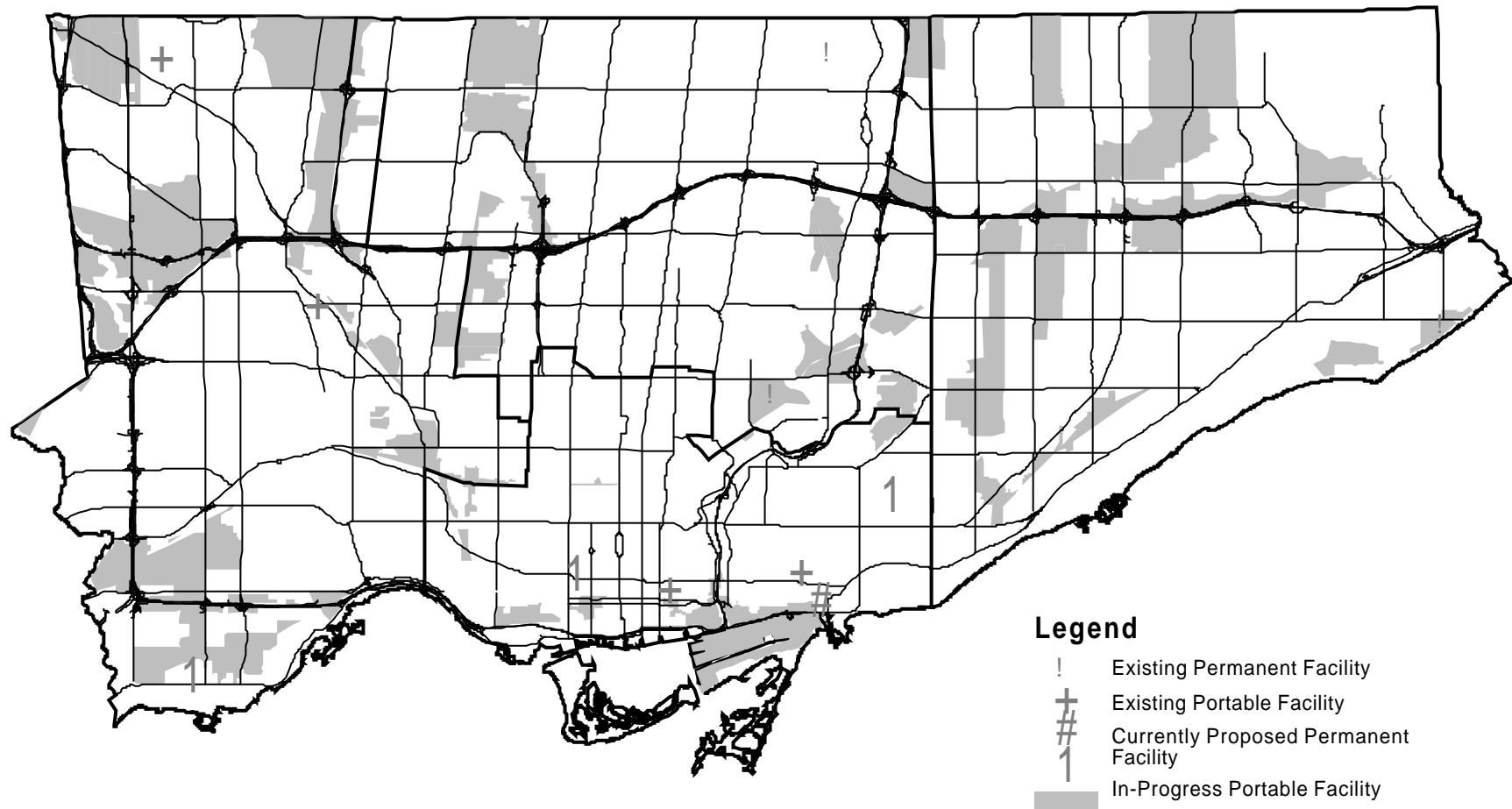
ECDT conducted a user survey for two existing City facilities (Port Union and Cummer) in 2003. The survey indicated that 83% of skateboarders surveyed were between the ages of 10 and 18, with 44% between the ages of 13 and 15. Female participation in this activity was found to be very low, at only 5% of total participants.

While local roads, public squares, parking lots, steps and other paved surfaces are often used for this activity, established skateboard parks offer a more challenging, organized configuration of bowls, ramps, platforms and rails and can attract users to develop their skills. Permanent facilities, typically constructed in concrete to create a terrain of properly surfaced bowls, ramps, ledges, steps and rails, offer a variety of skateboarding experiences and are generally preferred by most skateboarders.

Portable pre-fabricated elements of wood, metal and plastic can be installed on a new or existing flat, paved surface to provide more affordable and versatile arrangements.

Outdoor Artificial Ice Rink Locations

2000/2001



Facility types range from a few basic elements placed in a neighbourhood park to larger district and city-wide facilities, with each facility type playing a distinct role in the overall facility provision across a municipality. Smaller facilities can be sited appropriately and designed to allow expansion as demand increases and resources allow. While skateparks are more typically developed as outdoor facilities, indoor skateparks can be used year-round, generate revenue at the gate and lend themselves to better supervision and enforcement of rules.

The 2003 EDCT Survey found that 73% of those surveyed spend more than two hours at the skatepark and 51% spent more than three hours at the park.

As a general guide, a 1,300m² skatepark can reasonably accommodate approximately 50 skaters at any given time (approximately one for each 25 square meters).

Smaller skateparks, without separate areas to accommodate different levels of ability and different user groups (skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMX cyclists) can often suffer from conflicts among the various participants, resulting primarily from user volume. Proper facility design, on-site supervision and clear understanding of rules and etiquette are important elements that can help to minimize any such conflicts.

The overall popularity of skateparks is generally related to their accessibility to the skateboarding community, good layout and design, and the setting in which they are located. Considerations for locating facilities should include the following:

New facilities should be sited in areas with significant populations of youth and child.

Facilities should be sited close to other youth recreation facilities to provide a range of recreational opportunities, and to share common site amenities

such as washrooms, phone, and access to staff. Locating skateparks adjacent to community centres would be desirable.

Facilities should be convenient to transit routes, trail corridors and bikeways.

Site selection should consider factors that minimize noise intrusion to adjacent neighbours.

Site selection and facility design should consider and, where possible, allow for potential future facility expansion.

Sites should be easily visible to the surrounding area, in an effort to maximize user awareness, safety and spectator enjoyment.

Discussion

One of the three key goals of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, *Our Common Grounds*, is to "promote and enhance the social and physical development of our children and particularly our youth". Skateboarding offers opportunities for positive social interaction, skills development and physical fitness.

To date, skateparks in Toronto have been developed primarily on a case-by-case basis in response to specific community requests. Most existing skateparks are generally small in size and designed to serve the local communities or neighbourhoods in which they are located. A more proactive approach should be adopted to implement additional facilities to meet demand, especially at a district and city-wide scale.

Larger skateparks should be promoted as they accommodate greater numbers of users including a wider age group, provide more challenging elements and terrain for more skilled users and are able to host competitions and events. The allocation of larger facilities at reasonable intervals across the city would ensure that local skateparks would not be burdened with use in

excess of their capacity and from beyond their intended service area. The 2003 EDCT Survey showed that significant numbers of users were coming from beyond the local neighbourhoods in which the skateparks were located.

Local facilities should continue to be developed based on interest and support from the local community, as satellite facilities to the larger skateparks, and in recognition of the location of any district or city-wide facilities. As well, a selection of basic elements, on small site footprints, can be considered for local parks, as a simple solution to give skateboarders the opportunity to practice skills in locations other than the local roads, parking lots and plazas.

The recommended approach to the provision of facilities for skateboarding is a tiered system across the city, based on the following scales of facility:

City-Wide:

Create up to two major facilities, catering to all levels, from beginner to expert, strategically located to serve users from across the City. These would have a size range of 3,000 to 6,000 square metres. Approximate cost would be between \$1.0 million to \$2.0 million. Development could possibly take place in conjunction with private organizations, sponsors, donors, etc. With such facilities, the City can anticipate tourism and economic development potential from special events and users/spectators from outside the City.

District:

Create one to two facilities in each District, depending on existing skateparks in the area and size of area to serve. This would provide a level of service to all skateboarders within the city, i.e., a large facility within reasonable travelling time to accommodate beginner to advanced users. Size range would be 1,500 to 3,000 square metres. Approximate cost would be between \$0.5 million to \$1.0 million.

Local:

Evaluate requests to develop small skateparks, as satellite facilities to the district and city-wide facilities. Local parks would range in size from 500 to 1,500 square metres. Approximate cost would be between \$0.150 million to \$0.5 million.

Micro:

Incorporate individual elements (e.g., rails, steps, ledges, etc.) within parks and adjacent to community centres and recreation facilities as areas where skateboarders can practice safely away from streets, parking lots and plaza's where conflicts can occur. Size range would be under 500 square metres. Approximate cost would range up to \$0.150 million.

Over the next several years, the City should focus on the provision of City-wide and District scale facilities as these are the least supplied at present and which provide a broader range of experiences and challenges for users.

Opportunities to develop partnerships and agreements with private organizations and sponsors for the development and operation of skateparks should be explored. These, along with fundraising initiatives undertaken by community groups, including donations of materials and services by local businesses, can help to ease the City's budget commitment.

Recommendations

- 12) The City should continue to monitor current trends, popularity of skateboarding, user profiles and satisfaction levels for Toronto's existing skateparks.
- 13) The City should engage the skateboarding community through workshops, open houses, website or other venues to determine needs, quantify the extent of support and identify focus areas in the City for facilities.

- 14) The City should focus on development of skateparks at the district and city-wide level to provide a limited number of higher quality facilities in the 2005-2009 timeframe, based on:
 - a) 1 city-wide facility (e.g., proposed facility on Ashbridge's Bay treatment plant lands); and
 - b) minimum of 3 additional district level facilities (locations to be determined with respect to other facilities, potential locations currently identified include South Etobicoke and Exhibition Place).
- 15) The City should consider other smaller skateboard facilities as opportunities arise (e.g., new park at Wychwood car barns site).
- 16) The City should monitor the use of skateboard facilities and demand over time to adjust the program of facility provision.

Specialized Sports

The inclusion of “specialized sports” in this report is intended to provide insight into some kinds of recreation facilities that presently exist but are provided on a more limited basis than some of the more traditional sport facilities. Despite their numbers, these facilities often play an important role for the users that they primarily serve and offer recreational opportunities to many City residents.

Bocce

Inventory

Bocce is a unique combination of recreation and social activity. The sport is quite popular and competitive in specific communities. Toronto has a total of 208 bocce courts, comprised of 35 indoor and 173 outdoor courts. City Bocce Facilities are shown on *Map 9*.

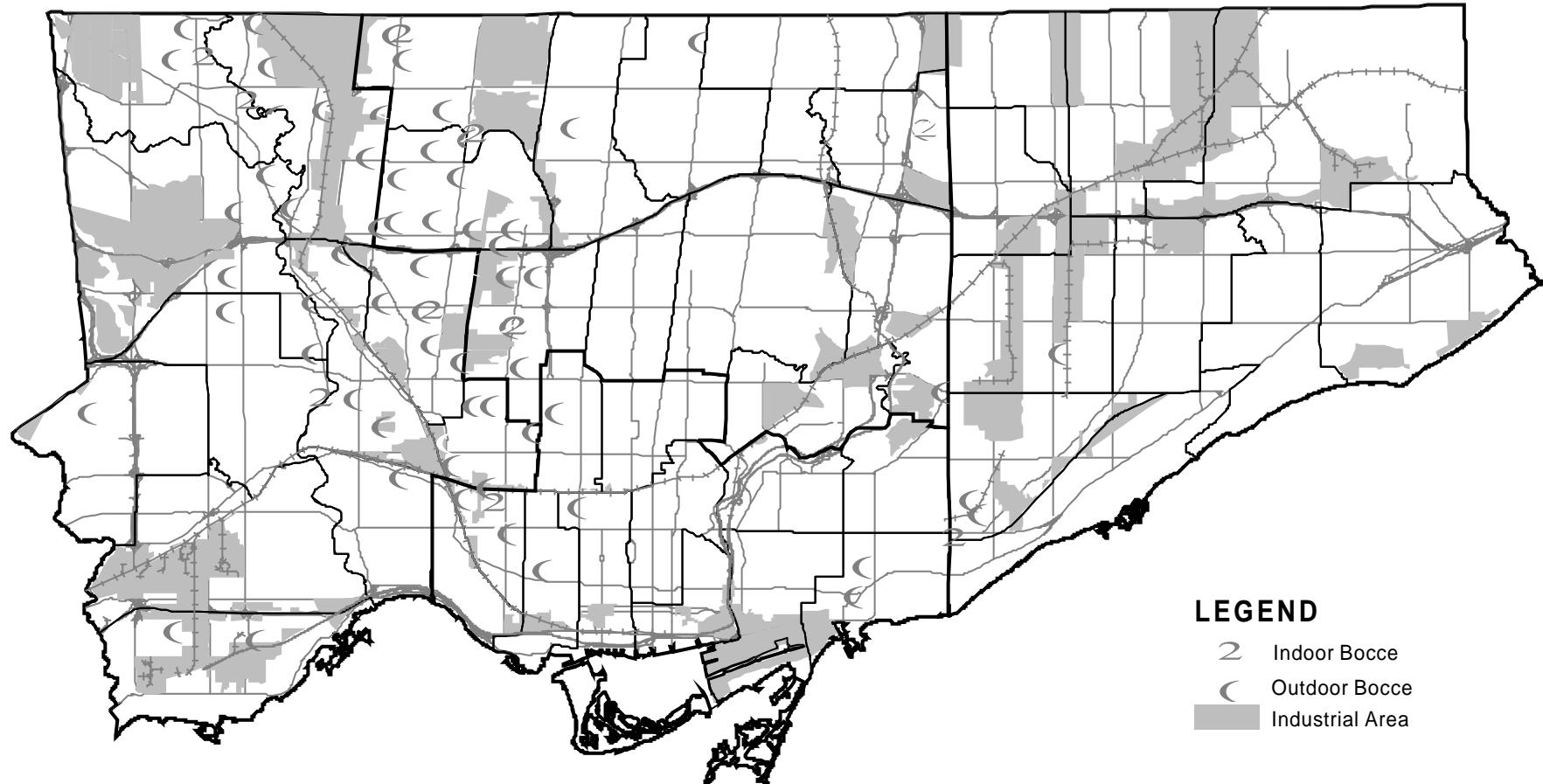
The city-wide provision of all courts is 1:11,930. Data for Ontario cities with populations of more than 250,000 indicates provision of bocce courts at 1:17,693.

The provision of bocce varies widely across the city, with West District having the highest provision level followed by the North District.

Table 3-12 Inventory of Bocce Courts by district

District	Indoor Courts #	Outdoor Courts #	Total #
North	12	57	69
East	2	9	11
South	3	19	22
West	18	88	106
City	35	173	208

District	Provision Rate (1 per) 9,006	Provision Rate (1 per) 5,753	Total (1 per) 29,861
North	51,783	10,902	
South	218,984	34,576	
West	33,881	6,930	



**Table 3-13 Inventory of Bocce Courts
by former municipality**

Former Municipalities	Indoor Courts #	Outdoor Courts #	Total #
East York	0	0	0
Etobicoke	6	24	30
North York	20	99	119
Scarborough	2	9	11
Toronto	4	25	29
York	3	16	19
City	35	173	208

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
East York	-	-	
Etobicoke	56,353	14,088	
North York	30,414	6,144	
Scarborough	296,649	65,922	53,936
Toronto	169,088	27,054	23,322

Trends

Bocce tends to be played predominantly by older adult men of Italian origin. Women do participate, but represent a small proportion of users. Local clubs have often been instrumental in securing the provision of bocce facilities. In some parts of Toronto, users have expressed preference for indoor rather than outdoor courts.

Bocce is one of the Special Olympics' newest sports, having been introduced at the World Games level for the first time in 1991.

Discussion

In May 1999, the City of Toronto undertook a Bocce Needs Assessment that studied areas of the City where demand for bocce was considered most likely. The study analysed trends, satisfaction with existing facilities, community input and the provision of bocce in other municipalities.

The study identified needs for additional facility in areas of former Etobicoke and Scarborough. The study also recommended that 15 to 20 % of bocce courts be provided as indoor facilities to enhance access and opportunities for this activity. At present, approximately 17% of City courts are indoor.

Since the completion of the study, six additional outdoor and four additional indoor courts have been established in Etobicoke, including the conversion of two former outdoor courts. In addition, existing outdoor courts in Ourland Park were enclosed in the fall of 2002, providing opportunity for year-round play.

Opportunities to improve bocce opportunities in Scarborough have also been identified and are being pursued.

There does not appear to be a need to provide additional bocce facilities in Toronto at this time.

Recommendations

- 17) The City monitor participation in bocce and potential facility requirements.

Golf Courses

Inventory

City of Toronto residents have access to five municipal golf courses across the City.

In addition to the above municipal courses, residents also have access to a number of courses in the city that allow the public to play golf.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

There are many publicly accessible golf courses across the GTA that are available to Toronto golfers.

Trends

The Royal Canadian Golf Association's 1999 golf participation survey found that 30% of males 12 and over and 11% of females play golf, with a total participation rate of 20.5% of Canadians. This represents an increase in the 1990 participation rate of 18.4%¹⁰.

According to the survey, female participation in golf, between 1990 and 1998, increased slightly more (27%) than men (25%) or youth (24%). "Core golfers" (those over 18 who played golf eight or more rounds of golf in the previous year) play an average of 28 rounds of golf annually, while "occasional golfers" play an average of three rounds per year. The percentage of "core golfers" increased by approximately 5% between 1990 and 1998, while the number of "occasional golfers" decreased by nearly the same amount.

In the 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute listed findings similar to the RCGA, but found that the Ontario golf participation rate was 30% of the

population, which is 10% higher than the RCGA identified rate for all Canadians.

Discussion

The development of golf courses requires large amounts of land; the average size of the City-owned and operated courses is over 40 hectares. Given this significant land requirement, there are limited opportunities to develop additional courses within the City's parks and open space system.

Toronto has a number of golf courses that are part of the city's open space system. In the past, the City has acquired private golf courses to protect greenspace as well as to provide additional public golf opportunities. The acquisition of private golf courses, if and when available, should remain a consideration as it provides the potential to meet demands for public golf within the city.

Recommendations

- 18) The City consider acquisition of existing golf courses for additional public golf or greenspace purposes if they become available for acquisition.
- 19) The City consider opportunities for land acquisition for public golf in north-east Scarborough.

¹⁰Royal Canadian Golf Association. 1999 Golf Participation Survey.

Skiing and Snowboarding

Inventory

The City currently operates two ski facilities, Centennial Park Ski Hill (Ward 3) and North York Ski Centre in Earl Bales Park (Ward 10). Both offer day and night skiing and a variety of private and public skiing and snowboarding lessons.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

There are several facilities located within reasonable distance of Toronto that also offer opportunities to participate in these sports

Trends

A survey conducted in 2000 in the U.S. indicated that snowboarding in that country grew by over 55% between 1995 and 2000, and experienced the greatest increase (over 31%) of all sports for all ages between 1990 and 2000. When just considering the participation of youth (7-17 years olds), snowboarding grew by nearly 200% between 1990 and 2000¹¹.

In a recent survey undertaken for Tourism Toronto and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, interest in downhill skiing and snowboarding was found to be highest among young singles and young couples. Except for affluent mature and seniors couples, the survey showed a declining level of interest in downhill skiing and snowboarding as age increases. Interest was found to be somewhat higher among those with university or college degrees, and to generally increase as household income increased.

Discussion

Skiing and snowboarding are popular winter sports, particularly among the younger component of the population. The two ski hill facilities that presently exist in the City provide opportunities for many individuals to learn the sport, get into condition or simply enjoy a winter recreation experience in the City.

Toronto's topography and climate do not lend themselves to the development of a wide variety of skiing or snowboarding facility opportunities.

Recommendations

- 20) The City pursue phased facility improvements at Centennial Park and Earl Bales Park ski facilities to improve service and attract users.

¹¹ National Sporting Goods Association, *Sports Participation 2000*, NSGA online [home page on-line] available from <http://www.nsga.org>; Internet.

Sports Fields -- Overview

Toronto provides a variety of sports fields across the city in City parks and on school board lands permitted by the City. These fields are used for a wide variety of sports including soccer, softball, baseball, cricket, rugby, lacrosse, field hockey and Ultimate (disc football).

The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, *Our Common Grounds*, emphasizes the need to increase both the quantity and quality of sports fields in Toronto. Recommendation #26 of the Strategic Plan is to "place priority on sports field development.. [and]...increase the number of sports fields by 10 per cent, including artificial turf surfaces."

In 2003, the City developed a Sports Field Strategy, which included a high-level needs assessment of outdoor sports field requirements for Toronto over the next 20 years. The Strategy looked at soccer, softball, baseball, football, cricket, rugby, lacrosse, field hockey, and ultimate (disc football). The Strategy found that action will be required in several areas to meet the city's sports field requirements.

Supply can be expanded through the more efficient use of existing parks and though the acquisition of new land. For example, less popular or underused types of sports fields can be converted to provide those in more demand. Arrangements with partner groups, such as school boards, can improve community access to non-municipal lands.

Design and development improvements can increase the capacity of sports fields through the provision of lighting to extend hours of use or the use of artificial turf to improve field capacity.

Planning and policy changes can improve the efficiency of field use by gaining a better understanding of demand and ensuring that fields are allocated appropriately, by instituting the principle of highest and best use.

The major findings of the Sports Field Strategy with respect to sports field provision in Toronto over the coming decades include¹²:

A total of 230 sports fields will be needed in Toronto to meet the needs to 2021, and 126 of these are needed now.

Most of these are soccer fields, but cricket, field hockey, rugby and ultimate fields will also be needed.

Ball diamonds are at a surplus across the city, but some may be required in areas of growth and new development. Projects in the capital program will reduce field requirements to 219 sports fields.

Converting underused ball diamonds to soccer and multi-purpose fields, and lighting existing soccer fields, could provide a total of 91 fields, leaving a shortfall of 128 fields.

Meeting the need for 128 new fields will depend on ability to secure additional access to lands (e.g., through partnerships with school boards) and pursuing new design/development approaches, including artificial turf, to improve field capacity.

Depending on the ability to secure land through partnerships, several hundred acres of land may be needed to develop new sports fields.

Costs are estimated at approximately \$49 million for the construction of 128 fields, lighting of existing soccer fields, and the conversion of underused ball diamonds. This does not include land costs.

These findings are explored further in the next sections.

¹² dmA Planning and Management Services, *City of Toronto Outdoor Sports Field Strategy* (Toronto, July 2003)

Recommendations

Before turning to individual sports field types, the following general principles are recommended to guide the City in pursuing additional sports fields:

- 21) The City should monitor sports field use to improve understanding of current and future demands and ensure efficient allocation of sports fields.
- 22) The City should pursue conversion of underused sports fields to accommodate facilities that are in greater demand.
- 23) The City should employ a range of design and development options that can increase sports field capacity, including lighting and artificial turf.
- 24) The City should pursue partnership opportunities for provision of more sports fields.

Soccer

Inventory

The City has 249 city owned soccer pitches, of which 45 are lit. In addition, the City issues permits for 189 School Board facilities, for a total of 438 soccer fields. This equates to a city-wide provision level of 1:5,666. With the exception of South District, all other areas have a per capita provision level better than the city-wide level. City soccer facilities are shown on *Map 10*.

Table 3-14 Inventory of Soccer Fields by district

District	City Fields #	Board of Ed Fields Permitted by City #	Total #
North	61	58	119
East	93	65	158
South	27	11	41
West	68	55	120
City	249	189	438

District	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
North 5,222	10,187	10,714	
East 3,755	6,380	9,128	
South 16,023	24,332	59,723	

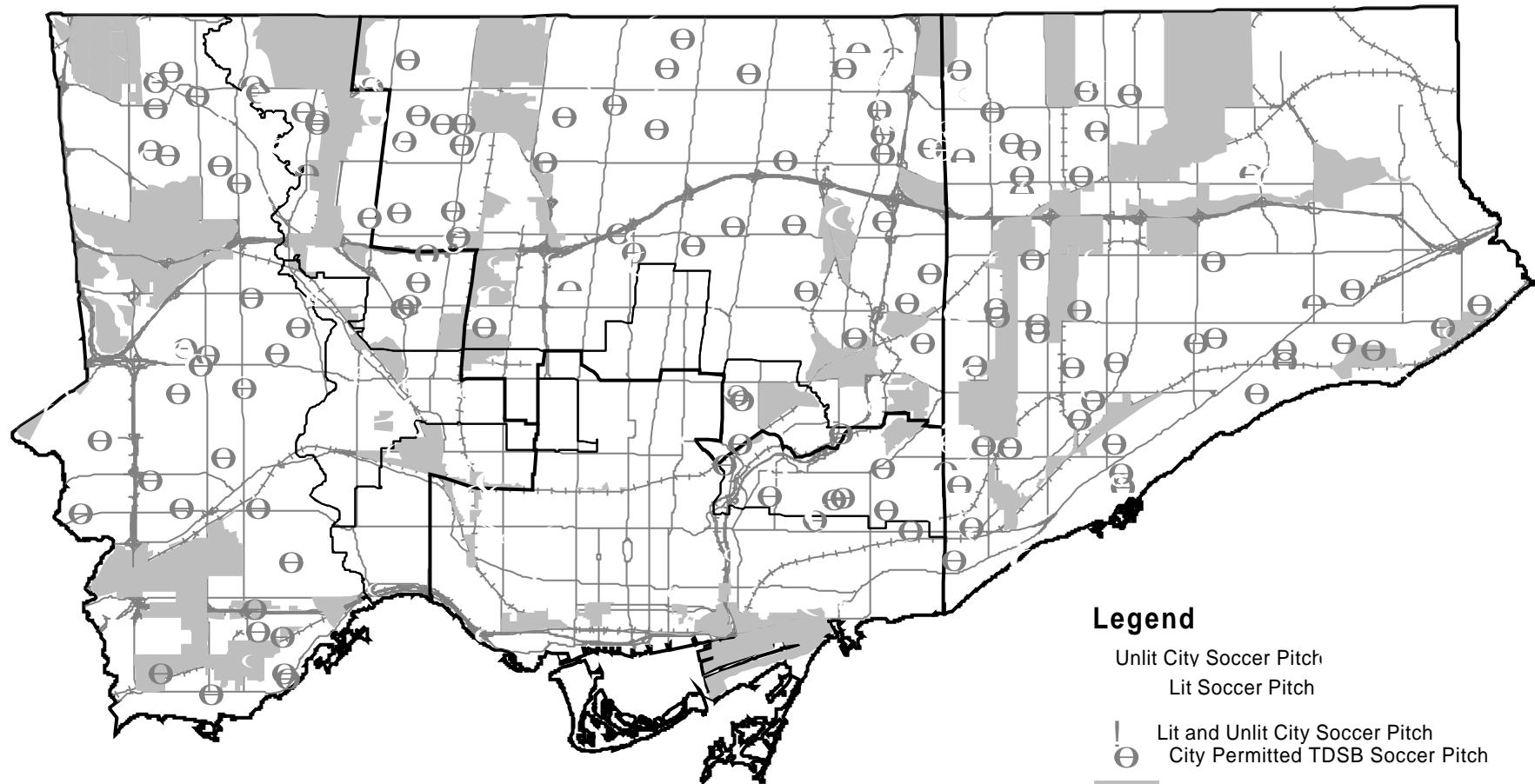
Table 3-15 Inventory of Soccer Fields by former municipality

Former Municipalities	City Fields #	Board of Ed Fields Permitted by City #	Total #
East York	5	16	21
Etobicoke	36	40	76
North York	70	68	138
Scarborough	93	65	158
Toronto	34	0	34
York	11	0	11
City	249	189	438

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)	Total (1 per)
East York 5,485	23,037	2,880	
Etobicoke 4,449	9,392	4,972	
Scarborough	6,380	9,128	3,755
Toronto	19,893	-	
York 13,660	13,660	-	



Map 10 - City and City Permitted TDSB Soccer Pitches



Legend

- Unlit City Soccer Pitch
- Lit Soccer Pitch
- Lit and Unlit City Soccer Pitch
City Permitted TDSB Soccer Pitch
- Industrial Area



Other Factors Affecting Supply

Access to school fields has historically reduced the shortage of soccer facilities in the City. Maintaining and enhancing the use of school fields will continue to be important in meeting Toronto's sports field requirements.

There are several facilities in Toronto with indoor sports fields that cater to soccer. These include the Scarborough Soccer Centre, Soccer City in Etobicoke and The Hangar at Parc Downsview Park.

Trends

In terms of numbers, the dominant age group participating in soccer programs is children between the ages of 5-9, while active participation continues to the age of 19. According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, 53% of children and youth aged 5-17 had participated in soccer in 2000. The Canadian Soccer Association estimates that well over one million Canadians are active soccer players, surpassing the number of registered hockey players.

Toronto's recent increase in demand for soccer field bookings over the last decade is largely due to a nearly 20% increase in the number of children and youth between the ages of 6 and 20 from 1991 to 2001. This is nearly double that of other age groups in the City during the same years. Another factor in the growing popularity of the sport is the relatively inexpensive equipment costs for participants.

It is expected that participation in soccer will continue to grow, due in a large part to the popularity amongst diverse ethnic groups, increasing participation by females, and the existence of adult leagues.

Adult soccer is expected to experience some growth over the next few years as the youth that are presently active in the sport age. Although many youths will maintain an interest in playing

soccer into their twenties, additional pressures on their free time and issues associated with organizing team sports may have an affect on their ability to participate with any regularity. Although adult participation rates are not expected to equal those of youth, it is generally expected that there will be needs relating to both youth and adult soccer over the next several years.

Canada has been successful in its bid to host the 2007 World under-20 soccer Championships. The World Youth Championship is second only in size and history to the World Cup. This event will likely contribute to the popularity of soccer in Toronto and Canada.

The under-20 tournament will be held in six cities across Canada. Federal and Provincial funding will go towards building a new Varsity Stadium which will be used for this event.

Several Canadian municipalities are beginning to include artificial turf sports fields for soccer and other sports. Artificial turf can accommodate higher utilization rates than natural turf. One artificial turf field can accommodate several times as much play as turf field due to its durability and availability during different weather and seasons.

Discussion

The Sports Field Strategy developed by the City in 2003 identified the need for an additional 166 soccer fields for Toronto by 2021. Approximately 89 are required now. The strategy recommended increasing the provision level of soccer in Toronto from its current level of 1:5,666 to 1:4,500.

To meet this recommended provision level, additional soccer field needs have been identified for a number of areas of the city over the coming decades taking into account the current field supply and projected population growth.

Needed now: Approximately 89 fields, primarily in the South and North District. Some field requirements in the West District.

Needed by 2006: Approximately 31 fields, primarily in the South and North Districts, although some identified for East Districts.

Needed by 2011: Approximately 28 additional fields, primarily in the North and South Districts, some required in the East and West Districts.

Needed by 2021: Approximately 18 additional fields, primarily needed in the East and South Districts, some in the North and West Districts.

The number of soccer fields needed now and in the future is significant and presents a challenge. As indicated in the section

on sports fields, providing these facilities can be done in many ways, including partnerships, redevelopment of park lands to achieve more efficient use of land for soccer fields and investment in higher standards of design and development.

In recent years, a number of new soccer fields have been added to the City inventory, through conventional means in new parks in subdivisions as well as through creative partnerships. For example, in 2004, in collaboration with the Wexford Soccer Club in Scarborough, an existing soccer field on hydro corridor lands was converted and expanded to provide four new mini-soccer fields. In North York, community access has been secured to vacant private lands in an industrial area, allowing the development of two mini-soccer and one junior soccer field.

Recommendations

- 25) The City should increase provision of soccer fields across the city, especially in areas where current provision is low and population growth is expected.
- 26) The identified needs for soccer fields, estimated at 89 fields at present and an additional 77 by 2021, be addressed through a variety of means, including partnerships with school boards and other agencies (e.g., Hydro).

Ball Diamonds

Inventory

The City has 363 ball diamonds, of which 57 cater to baseball and 306 to softball. There are also a number of scrub diamonds that are used mostly for casual and junior play. The overall provision of ball diamonds across the city (not including scrub diamonds) is 1:6,836. In addition, there are a number of school diamonds that the City currently permits for use. City Ball Facilities are shown on *Map 11*.

Table 3-16 Inventory of Ball Diamonds by district

District	City Softball Diamonds #	City Hardball Diamonds #	Total Diamonds #
North	75	10	85
East	97	9	106
South	47	17	66
West	87	21	106
City	306	57	363

District	Provision (1 per)	Provision (1 per)	Provision (1 per)
North 7,311	8,285	62,140	
East 5,597	6,116	65,922	
South 9,954	13,978	38,644	

Table 3-17 Inventory of Ball Diamonds by former municipality

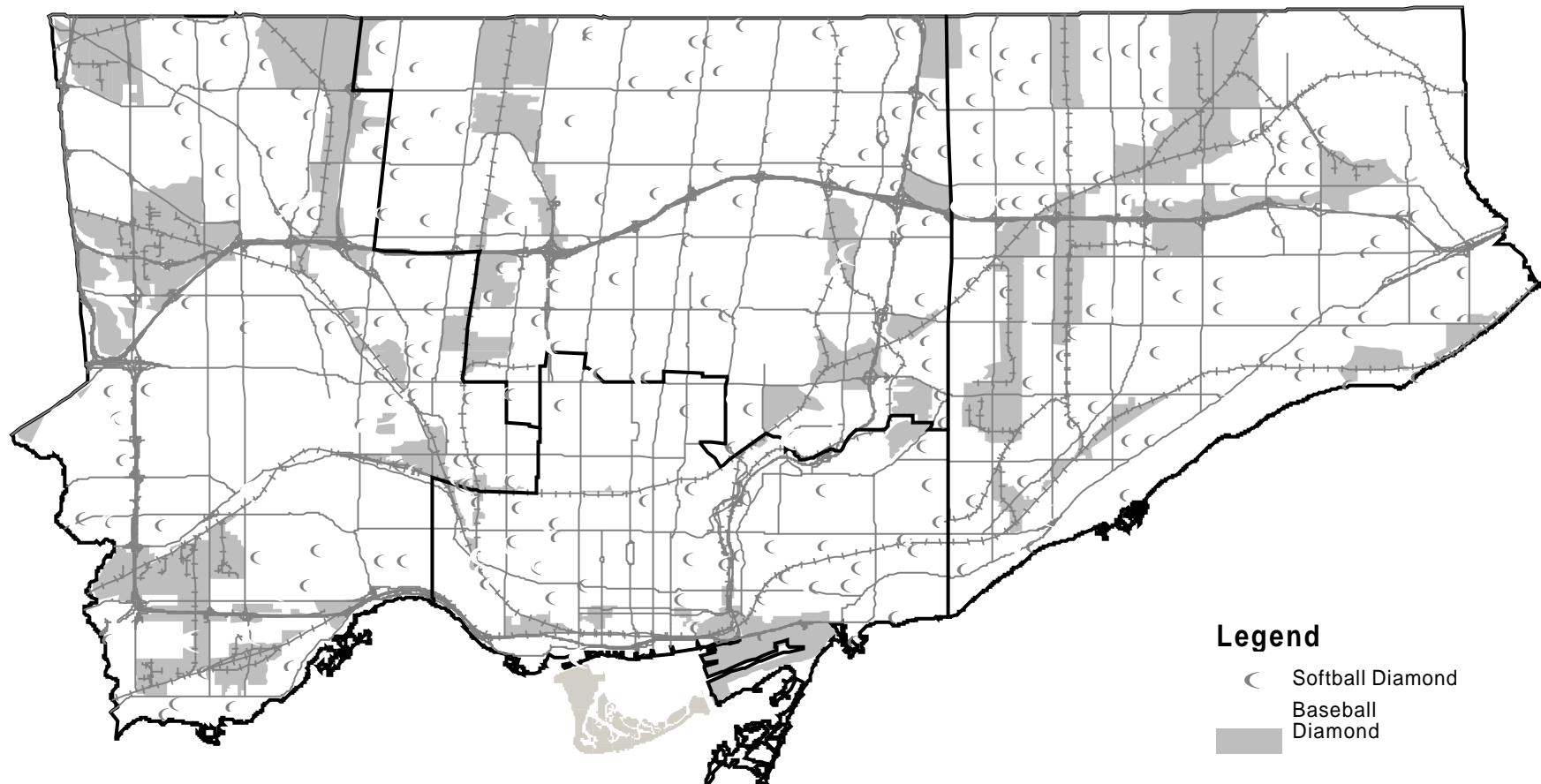
Former Municipality	City Softball Diamonds #	City Hardball Diamonds #	Total Diamonds
Etobicoke	39	13	52
North York	83	5	88
Scarborough	97	9	106
Toronto	57	16	73
York	21	3	24
City	306	57	363

Former Municipalities	Provision (1 per)	Provision (1 per)	Provision (1 per)
East York	12,798	10,471	
Etobicoke 6,502	8,670	26,009	
North York	7,329	121,658	6,912
Scarborough 5,597	6,116	65,922	
Toronto	11,866	42,272	9,265
York	7,155	50,085	

Based on the overall number and distribution of ball diamonds, together with the trends in this sport, there does not appear to be a concern with current provision.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

School board lands in Toronto contain ball diamonds in addition to those in City parks or those board diamonds already permitted by the City. However, the quality of these facilities is often a concern for community use.



Trends

The Sports Field Strategy found demand for hardball and softball diamonds is stable to declining, with some offset expected due to increased softball participation among females.

Discussion

The Sports Field Strategy identified a surplus of ball diamonds across the city.

The overall number of ball players is expected to decline by 2011 and, the provision of additional ball diamonds is not considered a priority.

According to City staff familiar with the sport and who participated in the study, the South District of Toronto is one area where unmet demand was reported.

A limited number of diamonds may be required in areas of new development and this should be assessed in planning work for such areas.

While new players to this sport will be limited, the City should anticipate continued demand from adults. There may be a need, for diamonds to accommodate adult and older youth players and growing numbers of females. Field upgrades may therefore, be required to provide appropriate capacity.

A major concern for ball players is the maintenance and quality of the fields, including their overall dimensions. The majority of school board diamonds are not suitable for senior level play and it is unlikely that many of them can be upgraded to accommodate it.

As indicated earlier, underused sports fields provide a potential resource for conversion to other field types which are in greater demand. Given the overall provision levels and indications that a number of ball diamonds are surplus to current and future

needs, existing ball diamonds should be considered for conversion to other uses, such as soccer. The potential for conversion would be based on a review of several factors, including:

current level of programmed or permitted use;
location with respect to areas of the city most under-served with sports fields; and
input from user and community groups.

Recommendations

- 27) The provision of additional ball diamonds should be considered primarily in areas of new development to offer basic access to these facilities.
- 28) The City should evaluate existing ball diamonds for potential conversion to other field types that are experiencing greater demand.

Multi-Purpose Fields

Inventory

The current City inventory of sports fields does not include the category of "multi-purpose" field, although there are a number of existing fields that are and have traditionally been used for multiple sport purposes (e.g., soccer fields used for rugby or football).

Trends

As noted in the Sports Field Strategy, "multi-purpose fields are the preferred way to expand the supply of sports fields while minimizing the need for land to accommodate new facility development. In Toronto, both the availability and cost of sufficient land to accommodate new sports fields is, and will continue to be, a constraint. To whatever extent individual fields can accommodate multiple and extended uses, new field requirements will be reduced."

Artificial surfaced fields now comprise part of the supply of community playing fields in a number of cities in British Columbia. This alternative is considered to be an efficient way to meet increasing demand for playing fields, particularly in built-up urban areas. In some cases it will be the quickest way to increase a community's inventory of playing fields.

Discussion

Typically, multi-purpose fields can accommodate a variety of activities, including soccer, football, field hockey, rugby and ultimate disc sports. The Sports Field Strategy recommended a designation for "multi-purpose" fields in the City inventory of sports fields to promote them as a way of increasing the capacity of fields and maximizing their use for a variety of sports.

The Sports Field Strategy concluded that there will be a need for 35 new "multi-purpose" sports fields by 2021, with most of

these (31) being required now. This assumes a provision level of 1:80,000 across the city.

The need for the 31 multi-purpose sports fields that are required now is generally evenly distributed in each of the four Districts. Three of the additional four identified for the time period of 2006 through 2021 will be needed in the South District and one will be needed in the North.

Many of the above mentioned 35 multi-purpose fields could potentially be accommodated on existing or upgraded high school fields. This should be pursued by the City with the appropriate school boards.

There are potential concerns related to multi-purpose fields. These include overuse and wear of the turf. These concerns can, to a certain extent, be addressed by scheduling that allows for "rest periods" for the fields. As noted above, natural surfaces are less able to accommodate more intensified use than artificial surfaces. In certain situations, the City should consider the use of artificial turf surfaces as an alternative to natural turf. Several types of artificial turf are available, each with different costs, advantages and disadvantages.

Fields with artificial surfaces have considerably more playing capacity than those with natural turf. Research undertaken in conjunction with the Sports Field Strategy suggests that one artificial turf surface can accommodate between five and eight times the amount of play of a natural field, while retaining a comparable level of quality.

The Sports Field Strategy suggests that, "all other things being equal - the most significant advantage to providing artificial turf fields over natural fields for community use in Toronto would be the reduction in total space requirements and land acquisition costs...The ability to optimize the use of these fields, and operational efficiency, will also contribute significantly to lowering the costs of provision."

Recommendations

- 29) The City establish a network of “multi-purpose” sports fields, to accommodate uses such as soccer, rugby, field hockey, football, Ultimate (disc football) as part of the City’s sports field inventory.
- 30) The City pursue the designation or development of 31 “multi-purpose” sports fields as part of sports field planning and implementation on City lands or in conjunction with school boards or other partners.
- 31) The City should consider the introduction of artificial turf surfaces as part of the network of “multi-purpose” sports fields to promote land use efficiency and operational savings.

Cricket Pitches

Inventory

The City has 47 cricket pitches, including a number of practice pitches, located at 38 locations. Their location is shown on *Map 12*.

The existing city-wide per capita provision of cricket pitches is approximately 1:52,798, higher than the average provision level for large cities in Ontario (1:135,177).

Cricket pitches are not evenly distributed across the City. The highest provision levels are found in the North.

Table 3-18 Inventory of Cricket Fields by district

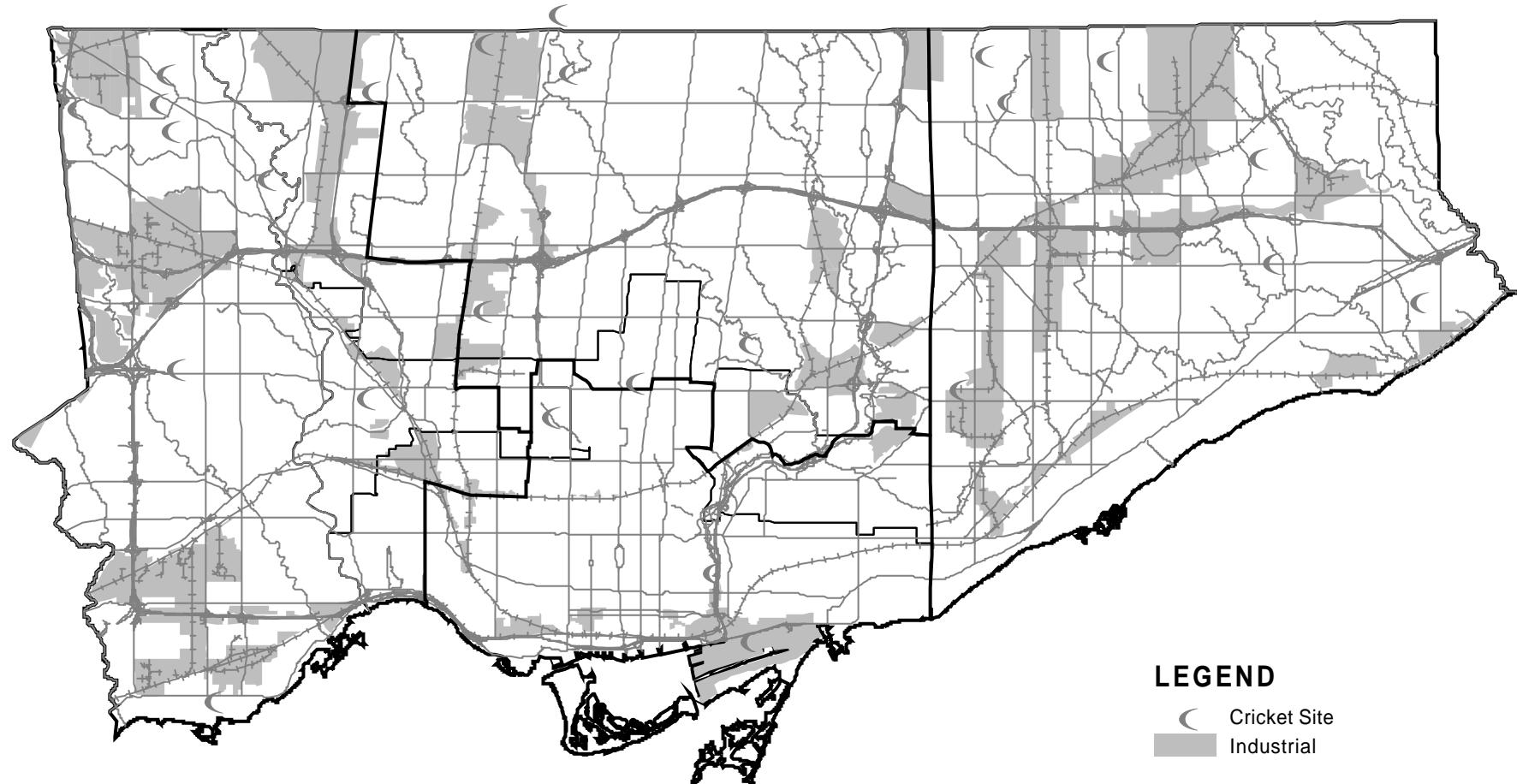
District	Location #	Total Pitches #
North	13	21
East	13	
South	3	3
West	9	9

District	Locations Provision Rate (1 per)	Total Pitches Rate (1 per)
North	47,800	
East	45,638	
South	218,984	218,984
West	67.761	

Table 3-19 Inventory of Cricket Fields by former municipality

Former Municipalities	Location #	Total Pitches #
East York	0	0
Etobicoke	7	7
North York	12	20
Scarborough	13	14
Toronto	3	3
York	3	3
City	38	

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)
East York	-	-
Etobicoke	48,302	48,302
North York	50,691	30,414
Scarborough	45,638	42,378
Toronto	225.451	225.451



The Sports Field Strategy suggests that by 2021 there could be the need for 10 additional cricket pitches based on its recommended facility provision level of 1:65,000. This does not count practice facilities.

A review of permits issued for cricket pitches in 2002 revealed that additional permit opportunities exist throughout the City. However, this should be verified through additional analysis and monitoring of field use.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

Several educational institutions and private clubs in Toronto have cricket pitches.

In general, the large land requirements for a full cricket pitch tend to limit the opportunities for stand-alone pitches. A number of non-standard pitches exist in city parks, usually overlapping other playing fields.

Trends

Cricket is growing in popularity in Canada, particularly in the more urban areas like Toronto and Vancouver. The introduction of cricket at the "minor" level of play could have a potential affect on the demand for additional cricket pitches in the future and should be monitored over time.

The supply of existing cricket facilities is driven primarily by adult players in Toronto (83% of users at the present time are adults according to the Sports Field Strategy) and the demand for cricket pitches is anticipated to increase over time, due, mainly to the cultural diversity of Toronto. Cricket is very popular in the many countries from which Toronto has received residents over the years. As new immigrants become settled in Toronto, the City may see an increase in cricket participation, resulting in additional demand.

Given the duration of a typical cricket match and the number of spectators during competitive tournaments, along with the

increasing popularity and participation in Toronto, there may be a need for a more formal competitive facility. There are, however, only very limited areas across the City (e.g., Downsview Park) that may appropriate for such a facility.

Discussion

Overall provision levels for cricket are generally good, although the provision of additional pitches would, no doubt, benefit the user groups requesting such facilities. Over time there will likely continue to be pressure placed on the City to provide additional cricket pitches.

The Sports Field Strategy concluded that Toronto's multicultural population will increase the demand for cricket in a manner not experienced by most other Ontario municipalities.

Existing facilities in the City may be able to accommodate more "minor" levels of play (e.g., practice pitches). Until minor levels of play become better established, it would appear to focus the, the supply of on adult use. Minor levels of play should continue to be assessed on a city-wide basis, however before additional pitches are developed.

The inventory of existing fields should be reviewed to assess how they would best meet the actual demand for this sport, particularly with respect to access to available facilities and suitability for the potential interest in the development aspects of the sport.

Recommendations

- 32) The City should support the establishment of a competitive cricket facility at Parc Downsview Park.
- 33) The City should work with existing cricket groups/leagues to ensure efficient allocation of existing facilities and identify opportunities for additional facilities over time as confirmed demand supports.

Other Field Types

Several other field sports -- rugby, field hockey, football, Ultimate (disc football) and lacrosse -- were reviewed as part of the Sports Field Strategy.

Inventory

There are five rugby, six field hockey, four football and no lacrosse or Ultimate fields in the City's sports field inventory.

Other sports fields, particularly soccer, are regularly used to accommodate these sports.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

School board fields are used for football and other activities. A number of institutions in Toronto also have sports fields that are suitable for rugby, field hockey, football, Ultimate (also known as disc football) and lacrosse.

Trends

Rugby, field hockey and football were reported in the Sports Field Strategy as having relatively stable demand. Participation in rugby and field hockey was predicted to be stable with a potential for some limited overall growth. Participation in football was reported to be stable and perhaps declining. The Strategy did note that there was a potential for growing youth involvement in both rugby and field hockey.

As noted above, there was no reported demand for field lacrosse in Toronto. Trends indicate limited overall growth in participation in field lacrosse, with most demand and anticipated growth expected to be for indoor facilities.

There is growth in participation in Ultimate (disc football), which will result in a growing demand for appropriate fields for this sport over time.

Ultimate is played in over 50 countries and is considered by many as an expansion or growth sport. Regular competition takes place at a local, national and international level. Ultimate was included as a Medal Sport in the 2001 World Games in Japan.

Discussion

The Sports Field Strategy concluded that the current demand for rugby and field hockey is being met on the available City fields, while football appears to also be accommodated on the available fields (three of which are on school property).

Ultimate and lacrosse currently compete with soccer, football and cricket for well-maintained field space. Current high or over-capacity use of cricket and soccer fields offers little potential to expand the use of existing fields to accommodate other activities.

Some existing soccer fields across the city are used minimally for field lacrosse.

Only Ultimate is experiencing significant growth in popularity at this time. Ultimate can be played on most sports fields, as it does not require traditional goal posts.

Recommendations

See section on Multi-Purpose Fields.

Tennis Courts

Inventory

The City has 725 tennis courts at 206 locations. The majority (539) of the courts are lit. The locations of the City's outdoor tennis facilities are shown on *Map 13*.

Table 3-20 Inventory of Tennis Courts by district

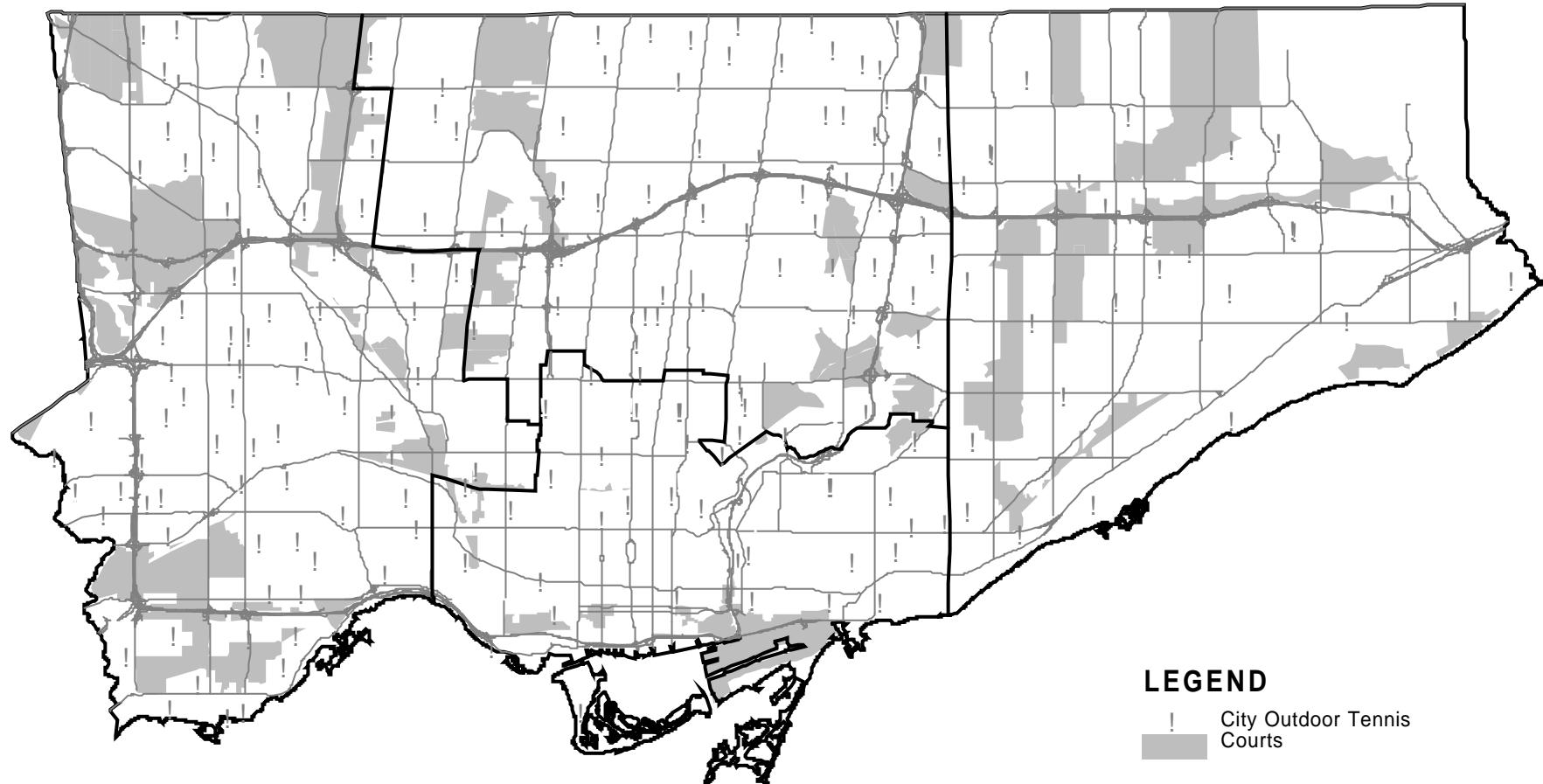
District	Locations #	Total Courts #
North	68	238
East	27	100
South	34	144
West	77	
City	206	725

District	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)
North 2,611	9,138	
East 5,933	21,974	
South 4,500	19,322	

Table 3-21 Inventory of Tennis Courts by former municipality

Former Municipalities	Locations #	Total Courts #
East York	11	35
Etobicoke	57	164
North York	66	229
Scarborough	27	100
Toronto	39	170
York	6	27
City	206	725

Former Municipalities	Provision Rate (1 per)	Provision Rate (1 per)
East York 3,291	10,471	
North York 2,656	9,216	
Toronto 3,970	17,342	
York 5,565	25,043	



The city-wide provision of tennis courts per capita is 1:3,423. This corresponds with the provincial provision rate for tennis courts (combined indoor and outdoor) in Ontario cities with populations over 250,000, which is 1:3,584.

Tennis courts are generally well distributed across the city, with the North and West Districts having higher provision levels than the South and East Districts.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

A number of school properties include tennis courts, some of which are available to the public through shared-use agreements or informally.

The new Rexall Centre for tennis, on the grounds of York University, is home to national and international tournaments. The centre includes a 12,500 seat stadium court and 17 "show" courts. Eight of the 17 courts are located indoors, in the year-round Centre of Excellence facility. The indoor courts are available for local school and community programs, provincial team training, coaching certification courses and national/provincial high-performance programs.

Trends

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute's 2000 Physical Activity Monitor ranked tennis as the 20th most popular physical activity for Canadians.

Participation in tennis has declined in popularity since the 1980's, as the large group of users has aged. Accordingly, tennis is no longer considered a growth sport. The U.S. based National Sporting Goods Association reports a decline in tennis participation of 45% between 1990 and 2000. The sport is not expected to re-gain in popularity in the near future, as today's youth appear to be choosing other sports.

Given the reduced interest in tennis, coupled with the deterioration of existing courts over time, many municipalities are experimenting with replacing existing courts with multi-purpose sports pads that can accommodate specific growth sports, such as in-line skating and basketball.

Over the last few years Toronto has modified approximately to 20 tennis courts to accommodate alternate uses, including bocce, basketball, ball hockey and beach volleyball.

Discussion

Generally, the City appears adequately supplied with outdoor tennis facilities.

Recommendations

- 34) The City should pursue conversion of under-used and deteriorated tennis facilities to other uses (e.g., multi-purpose sports pads).
- 35) The City should consider the provision of additional tennis courts in areas of development where tennis courts do not exist to provide basic access to these facilities.

Trails

Trails play an important role in many communities. Whether for pedestrians or cyclists, for recreational or utilitarian purposes, trails provide an opportunity for physical activity and an alternate means of transportation contributing to a healthier environment and life style. The popularity of trail activities, along with the wide variety of benefits, make trails an important category of facility investment, especially as they are relatively inexpensive to develop and operate in comparison to other recreational facilities.

Inventory

There are approximately 150 km of major off-road, multi-use trails in Toronto, the majority of which are paved. Many of these off-road trails, together with bicycle lanes and shared roadways, make up the overall City bikeway network.

Major off-road trails include pathways through parks (EDCT coordinated), along the boulevards of major arterial roads (WES coordinated) and within hydro or rail corridors (joint coordination). These paths are shared by cyclists, in-line skaters and pedestrians.

In addition to multi-use trails, there are many more minor paths, walkways and informal trails located within Toronto's parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for pedestrian-oriented activity and access to the city's greenspaces.

Multi-use trails are shown on *Map 14*.

Other Factors Affecting Supply

Trails are part of the City's larger circulation system. Improvements to other parts of the system, such as on-road cycling lanes, may affect the use of, and/or demand for off-road trails.

The public enjoys the use of a number of roadway and trail networks within several of the cemeteries in the city. These do not, however, constitute a formal part of the city's trail system.

Trends

Walking and cycling continue to be popular leisure activities in Ontario and are expected to increase in popularity as baby-boomers age.

The 1999 Physical Activity Monitor of Canadians reported that more than two in five adults strongly agree that if their community maintained a well-linked network of trails and paths, it would help them become more active.¹³

The City of Toronto has a high bicycle ownership and usage rate, as revealed during a 1999 Cycling Survey conducted for the City by Decima Research. Approximately 62 percent of households in Toronto own a bicycle, and there are over 939,999 adult cyclists within the City.

¹³ Craig, C.L., Cameron, C., Russell, S.J., & Beaulieu, A. *Increasing Physical Activity: Building A Supportive Recreation and Sport System*. (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2001).

Map 14 - City Parkland Multi-Use Trails



Discussion

The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan identifies the need for "Lifelong Active Living" and suggests, as part of its Action Plan, that the number of physically active Torontonians should increase 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2020. The Strategic Plan also recommends the initiation of a Trailblazers Program to improve and expand the trail system in the city.

In recent years, the City has been active in a number of initiatives aimed at creating more trails and has made funding for the detailed planning and design of trails a priority.

In 2001, Council adopted the Toronto Bike Plan, which identifies 250 km of existing and proposed multi-use off-road trails as part of the proposed city-wide bike network. The Bike Plan identified in 2001, the need for a \$13 million commitment towards upgrading existing trails and developing new trails within parkland. A further \$41 million was identified as being required for upgrading existing trails and developing new trails within rail and hydro corridors and road rights-of-way.

The City recently completed an inventory and assessment of trail opportunities in rail and hydro corridors in Toronto. This examined the feasibility of implementing multi-use trails within, and adjacent to, a number of rail and hydro corridors in the City of Toronto. The report identifies 30 potential projects and estimates the cost of basic trail construction. Many of the proposed routes will connect to existing parkland trails and on-road routes.

Since amalgamation, the City has acquired three abandoned railway lines: a section of the former Beltline in York, the Leaside Spur in North York, and the CP PS Lead to the west of downtown Toronto. Trail development has occurred on the Beltline section in York, and design studies are underway for the other two rail corridors. These abandoned rail lines are links in Toronto's trail system and form part of the City's Bike Plan.

They also provide new greenways through sections of the city which tend to have limited park lands.

In 1998, the City, as part of the Rouge Park Alliance, completed the Rouge Park Trail Development and Management Plan. The plan, which will guide the long-term development of the trail system in the largest park and open space area in the City, identified a \$5 million program for trail management and development of new trails.

Other trail efforts and initiatives include the registration of 26 km of existing City trail as part of the Trans-Canada Trail in 2000. Discussions are also underway with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust regarding trail-related opportunities along the waterfront. This include proposed projects in the Etobicoke and Scarborough sectors. When implemented, these projects will expand the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail & Greenway.

Recommendations

- 36) The City should improve and expand its trail system through the following key areas:
 - a) identify and address gaps in trail systems along the waterfront and in river valleys;
 - b) identify existing and potential municipal interests in Hydro and rail corridors with respect to trail uses;
 - c) coordinate trail planning, land acquisition and trail development activities with other agencies and neighbouring municipalities;
 - d) develop and implement trail signage program in parks, including the provision of reference markers for emergency services; and
 - e) address issues related to the environmental impact of hiking and mountain biking on informal trails and in natural areas.
- 37) The City should upgrade the existing trail network to address state-of-good-repair and to achieve current standards such as those identified in the Toronto Bike Plan.

- 38) The City should develop the CP-PS Lead and the CN Leaside Spur properties for trail purposes as priorities within the 2005-2009 timeframe.
- 39) The City should develop an implementation program for the Rouge Park Trail Development and Management Plan in consultation with Rouge Park partner groups.

Chapter Four: Moving Ahead

The City of Toronto's recreation facilities are an integral part of the Parks and Recreation system and a significant contributor to quality of life in the city. Previous sections of this report examined the trends affecting recreation, identified corporate directions and priorities, discussed the challenges of providing recreation facilities, inventoried the current facilities that exist in Toronto, and projected future needs. Taken together, these provide direction on how to proceed with the provision of recreation facilities in the City of Toronto.

The Planning Process

Two levels of planning

Effective planning for recreation facilities needs to take place at two levels. Strategic direction and overall planning needs to be done at the city-wide level to address city-wide imperatives such as desired provision levels, policies and priorities. Under the umbrella of city-wide planning, recreation facility planning should take place at the community level, to reflect community needs. Parks and Recreation should:

Plan for recreation facilities at the community level, guided by strategic direction from the city-wide level.

Monitoring and review

Effect recreation facility planning includes periodic monitoring to examine how well the system is meeting the needs of recreational users. Such monitoring would identify changing recreation trends and emerging community preferences and allows adjustments to be made in facility use. Parks and Recreation should:

Conduct a city-wide review of recreation facilities at regular intervals to monitor use of facilities and changes in recreation trends and community preferences.

Existing Facilities

Protect our investment

The City has a huge investment in its recreation facilities – over \$6 billion. Unfortunately, maintenance of these facilities has lagged and audits on only part of the City's facilities indicate that it will take \$190 million over the next ten years to bring them into a state of good repair. To protect its investment in recreation facilities, the City should:

Provide adequate funding for facility renewal and preventive maintenance.

Maximize use of existing facilities

Populations change over time and so do people's preferences for recreation and their needs. Flexibility is the key to responding to these changes. To maximize the use of existing facilities, Parks and Recreation should:

Consider converting underused facilities (such as tennis courts and ball diamonds) into desired facilities such as multi-use sports pads.

Continue to adjust facility use from team sports to individual activities in facilities where interest in team sports is declining.

Continue to explore ways to increase the capacity of facilities through design improvements such as the installation of lighting and artificial turf on sports fields.

Increase use of facilities

The broad goal of *Our Common Grounds* is to increase recreational participation by Toronto residents in all age groups. To help achieve this, Parks and Recreation should:

Explore strategies to ensure access to facilities, especially for groups such as seniors and children.

Continue to improve access for females to facilities for hockey, rugby and other sports that have traditionally been dominated by males.

Planning for Future Facilities

Use corporate priorities to guide planning

Parks and Recreation's planning for future recreation facilities should be guided by the following three priorities:

Meet the recreation needs in areas of the City that are currently underserved.

Meet the future recreation needs in areas of the City that will experience significant growth or redevelopment.

Follow the recommendations contained in *Our Common Grounds* (e.g., the emphasis on trail building and sports fields).

Meet key needs for facilities

There is a good understanding of current and future needs for many (but not all) types of recreation facilities. There is currently an adequate provision of municipal facilities for bocce, baseball and softball, tennis. There are, however, strong demands for additional facilities of some types. As detailed in Chapter Three of this report, the key needs for facilities include:

14 new or significantly expanded community centres over the next 10 years;

skateboard facilities including 1-2 facilities at the city-wide scale, 4-8 at the district scale, plus potential for additional facilities at the local and micro scales;

89 soccer pitches needed now, with an additional 77 by 2021;

31 multi-purpose sports fields needed now and an additional 4 by 2021;

a major competitive cricket facility; and

additional off-road trails for cyclists, in-line skaters and pedestrians.

Conduct research in key areas

There are still many important questions that need to be answered with respect to some types of recreation facilities. To address these, Parks and Recreation should:

Develop a long-term strategy for arenas to guide the provision of artificial ice facilities (targeted completion date is early 2005).

Complete the strategy for indoor pools (target completion is fall 2004).

Examine the benefits and cost-effectiveness of seasonal facilities (especially outdoor pools and outdoor artificial ice rinks).

Maximize the use of existing facilities

There may be opportunities to meet future facility needs within existing facilities, either through reallocation of space, re-design, conversion or expansion. There are opportunities, for example, to meet the needs for additional soccer pitches by converting existing ball diamonds that are not needed. Parks and Recreation should:

Examine the potential to meet the needs for new facilities through re-using, converting or expanding existing facilities.

Explore further partnership approaches

The City plays a variety of roles in terms of ensuring that Toronto residents have access to a wide range of parks and recreation services. It can be both a direct provider of parks and recreation services and a partner that supplies land, money, buildings, or in-kind services. Current partners include the TDSB, the TCDSB and community boards but there may well be other potential partners for new recreation facilities. Partnering in the provision of recreation facilities results in shared costs and shared benefits to both partners. Parks and Recreation should:

Continue to explore conventional and innovative ways to deliver recreation facilities through partnering with other agencies, community boards, service organizations, sports clubs and the private sector.

Ensure that partnership facility projects:

- are consistent with corporate and department service and facility directions;

- are based on needs analysis and feasibility studies appropriate to the nature and scale of the project; and
- advance through the capital program with regard to identified facility requirements and priorities, although recognition of special circumstances or opportunities may be a basis for acceleration.

Potential clustering of municipal facilities

Clustering of municipal facilities can make good sense, especially in areas of the city where new development is taking place. In facilities such as Humberwood Community Centre, citizens can go “one stop shopping” to meet day care, school, library and recreation needs. Clustering of municipal facilities can also provide economies by sharing the costs of energy, parking and maintenance. Parks and Recreation should:

Continue to explore ways to cluster or bundle recreation facilities with other appropriate municipal facilities such as schools, libraries and daycares.

Emphasize multi-functionality

There is an important trend in recreation facility design towards multi-use facilities that can serve multiple purposes. In such facilities, with proper design, one field may be used by many sports and one gymnasium may be used for an almost infinite variety of sport, leisure, cultural and community activities. Parks and Recreation should:

Continue to encourage the creation of multi-use recreation facilities where appropriate rather than single-use facilities.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The City of Toronto is fortunate to possess a wealth of high quality recreation facilities including arenas, community centres, sports fields, pools, golf courses, ski hills, skateboard parks, tennis courts and multi-use trails. The need for recreational facilities is both constant and changing, as demographics, user preferences and recreation trends change over time.

This report has examined the many factors that influence the provision of recreation facilities, including demographics, trends in recreation and corporate directions and priorities. The City of Toronto faces a number of significant challenges with providing recreation facilities for its residents. These include the challenges of maintaining existing facilities, responding to future growth and increased numbers of youth and seniors, harmonization and rationalization. The report provides an inventory of the City's existing recreation facilities and identifies both current and future needs. It reveals that there are real needs, right now, for some types of sports facilities in some parts of the City, and anticipated needs that lie just ahead.

Meeting the recreation needs of current and future residents of Toronto will be a great challenge, with an additional half a million people expected to settle in Toronto over the next 30 years. There are three keys to meeting these needs. One, is effective recreation facility planning – planning that is guided by robust city-wide policies, backed by good information and implemented with sensitivity at the community level. A second key is to plan “smarter” – to realize opportunities to maximize the use of existing facilities, share facilities with partners, and build multi-use facilities that can serve a wide range of purposes. The final piece in the puzzle is the provision of adequate resources to plan, build, maintain and monitor Toronto’s recreation facilities.

Appendix A: Summary of Recommendations on Facility Provision

The following recommendations are taken from Chapter Three of this report which addressed various categories of recreation facilities. The sub-headings in **bold** identify the section of the report from the recommendations are taken.

The recommendations should be viewed within the context of the overall facilities report, including the emphasis on maintaining facilities in good repair, the importance of partnerships in expanding and augmenting facility supply, and ongoing work on implementation of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, *Our Common Grounds*, adopted by City Council in July, 2004.

Aquatics

- 1) The Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism report on an indoor pool provision strategy to Economic Development and Parks Committee by year end of 2004.
- 2) The City should not provide additional outdoor pools.
- 3) The City should assess the need and viability of outdoor pools that require major investments to allow them to remain operational in light of pool requirements, including options for replacement with other facilities.

Community Centres

- 4) The City include the following areas as community centre projects in its capital plan for 2005-2009 in order of priority:
York
Thorncliffe

North-east Scarborough
Edithvale/North York Centre
Western North York
Victoria Village/O'Connor-Parkview
Parkdale

- 5) The City include the following areas as community centre projects in its capital plan for 2010-2014 in the approximate order of priority:
Scarborough City Centre
Sheppard Corridor, Bayview to Don Mills
Sheppard Corridor, Don Mills to McCowan
Etobicoke City Centre
North Rexdale
Railway Lands
Central Waterfront
- 6) The City should confirm and secure sites for proposed community centre facilities.
- 7) The City should identify partnership opportunities for the development of community centre facilities, including joint-use facilities.

Ice Facilities

- 8) The City should develop a long-term strategy for the City's provision of indoor ice, to be initiated in 2004 and completed in early 2005.
- 9) The City should continue research into the use and role of outdoor artificial ice rinks as part of the City's supply of artificial ice facilities.
- 10) The City should assess the need for and viability of outdoor artificial ice rinks where major investment is required to remain operational.

- 11) For any additional or replacement outdoor artificial ice facilities, the City should consider low provision areas a priority and any such facilities should focus on designs that emphasize pleasure skating.

Skateboarding

- 12) The City should continue to monitor current trends, popularity of skateboarding, user profiles and satisfaction levels for Toronto's existing skateparks.
- 13) The City should engage the skateboarding community through workshops, open houses, website or other venues to determine needs, quantify the extent of support and identify focus areas in the City for facilities.
- 14) The City should focus on development of skateparks at the district and city-wide level to provide a limited number of higher quality facilities in the 2005-2009 timeframe, based on:
- a) 1 city-wide facility (e.g., proposed facility on Ashbridge's Bay treatment plant lands); and
 - b) minimum of 3 additional district level facilities (locations to be determined with respect to other facilities, potential locations currently identified include South Etobicoke and Exhibition Place).
- 15) The City should consider other smaller skateboard facilities as opportunities arise (e.g., new park at Wychwood car barns site).
- 16) The City should monitor the use of skateboard facilities and demand over time to adjust the program of facility provision.

Specialized Sports - Bocce

- 17) The City monitor participation in bocce and potential facility requirements.

Specialized Sports – Golf

- 18) The City consider acquisition of existing golf courses for additional public golf or greenspace purposes if they become available for acquisition.
- 19) The City consider opportunities for land acquisition for public golf in north-east Scarborough.

Specialized Sports – Skiing and Snowboarding

- 20) The City pursue phased facility improvements at Centennial Park and Earl Bales Park ski facilities to improve service and attract users.

Sportsfield- Overview

- 21) The City should monitor sports field use to improve understanding of current and future demands and ensure efficient allocation of sports fields.
- 22) The City should pursue conversion of underused sports fields to accommodate facilities that are in greater demand.
- 23) The City should employ a range of design and development options that can increase sports field capacity, including lighting and artificial turf.
- 24) The City should pursue partnership opportunities for provision of more sports fields.

Soccer

- 25) The City should increase provision of soccer fields across the city, especially in areas where current provision is low and population growth is expected.

26) The identified needs for soccer fields, estimated at 89 fields at present and an additional 77 by 2021, be addressed through a variety of means, including partnerships with school boards and other agencies (e.g., Hydro).

Ball Diamonds

27) The provision of additional ball diamonds should be considered primarily in areas of new development to offer basic access to these facilities.

28) The City should evaluate existing ball diamonds for potential conversion to other field types that are experiencing greater demand.

Multi-Purpose Fields

29) The City establish a network of "multi-purpose" sports fields, to accommodate uses such as soccer, rugby, field hockey, football, Ultimate (disc football) as part of the City's sports field inventory.

30) The City pursue the designation or development of 31 "multi-purpose" sports fields as part of sports field planning and implementation on City lands or in conjunction with school boards or other partners.

31) The City should consider the introduction of artificial turf surfaces as part of the network of "multi-purpose" sports fields to promote land use efficiency and operational savings.

Cricket

32) The City should support the establishment of a competitive cricket facility at Parc Downsview Park.

33) The City should work with existing cricket groups/leagues to ensure efficient allocation of existing facilities and identify opportunities for additional facilities over time as confirmed demand supports.

Tennis

34) The City should pursue conversion of under-used and deteriorated tennis facilities to other uses (e.g., multi-purpose sports pads).

35) The City should consider the provision of additional tennis courts in areas of development where tennis courts do not exist to provide basic access to these facilities.

Trails

36) The City should improve and expand its trail system through the following key areas:

- a) identify and address gaps in trail systems along the waterfront and in river valleys;
- b) identify existing and potential municipal interests in Hydro and rail corridors with respect to trail uses;
- c) coordinate trail planning, land acquisition and trail development activities with other agencies and neighbouring municipalities;
- d) develop and implement trail signage program in parks, including the provision of reference markers for emergency services; and
- e) address issues related to the environmental impact of hiking and mountain biking on informal trails and in natural areas.

37) The City should upgrade the existing trail network to address state-of-good-repair and to achieve current standards such as those identified in the Toronto Bike Plan.

- 38) The City should develop the CP-PS Lead and the CN Leaside Spur properties for trail purposes as priorities within the 2005-2009 timeframe.
- 39) The City should develop an implementation program for the Rouge Park Trail Development and Management Plan in consultation with Rouge Park partner groups.