

Community Recreation Services Plan



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Prepared by the City of Prince George

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Executive Summary

1. In this report there are several findings that form a series of inter-related themes, setting the context for recreation service delivery, including:
 - i. With increasing types of structured and unstructured¹ recreation activities and changing trends, there has been a growing diversity and number of facilities and venues provided in Prince George.
 - ii. The City is involved in a variety of ways in delivering or supporting an extensive range of recreation opportunities, where most participants are satisfied.
 - iii. The network of recreation facilities and venues are widely distributed, particularly for outdoor recreation, following past practices that aimed at providing recreation throughout neighbourhoods so they were in close proximity to where people lived.
 - iv. A significant portion of community recreation opportunities are delivered by volunteers through sport clubs and organizations such as Community Associations, and that this is a cost-effective approach for the City.
 - v. User Agreement holders (sports clubs and recreation organizations) are quite protective of their exclusive use facilities. There is a general culture in sport clubs and community organizations to operate at a level of independence that could be excluding or missing opportunities for cooperation and collaboration that would result in efficiencies and other benefits.
 - vi. City resources are at capacity for maintaining and supporting the current delivery of community recreation services.

Within this context, this report takes a cautious and prudent approach in guiding improvements to the delivery of recreation services. There are several themes that underpin the ways in which the City and community recreation groups can work collectively to ensure a durable and sustained service delivery model for community recreation. These guiding themes include:

- i. As opportunities arise over time, move away from a highly distributed model (outdoor recreation in particular) to a more consolidated model with a focus on supporting venues in strategic locations where multiple uses can be accommodated and the City can better manage its assets.
- ii. Through a consultative process, where service delivery for a particular sport or recreation is no longer warranted at a site, look to repurpose or decommission.
- iii. Facilitate discussions between related sports clubs to develop more strategic, cooperative and efficient use of facilities and venues in a way that benefits the sport overall.

¹ Unstructured refers to activities, such as walking, jogging, cycling, that do not necessarily need a specialized facility or venue but also do not have to fit within a programming schedule.

- iv. Continue to develop proactive approaches to building partnerships that create cost savings and maintain the quality of service delivery.
 - v. Improve support to the volunteer base by finding efficiencies that free up resources and capacity, in order to build long term durability of this cost-effective service delivery model.
 - vi. Careful consideration of options, full-cost accounting, demand assessment, collaboration and partnership opportunities are prudent steps in considering proposals for new recreation development, as well as considering current asset management encumbrances.
2. Administration conducted two separate community survey processes to better understand demands in recreation, and satisfaction levels. The Mustel Group was hired in March 2014 to conduct a random telephone survey in order to provide statistically valid data. The survey achieved 462 random interviews yielding data with a margin of error of +/- 4.6 percent 19 times out of 20. The overall results indicate that recreation interests are highly diversified and distributed across the population of Prince George. Approximately two-thirds of the recreation activities represented participation rates of less than 10 percent of the total responses.

Overall, of the most popular seven outdoor recreation activities with more than 10 percent participation rates, and where the City has a direct role, the most popular was walking/hiking and then cycling/mountain biking as the 5th most popular². The four most popular indoor recreation activities included swimming, fitness, gymnasium/court sports, and ice sports. There was overall satisfaction with indoor and outdoor facilities and venues. A key finding of the survey indicates that a significant proportion of the population has time constraints such as work, family or school commitments, which lead to less participation in recreation activity than they would prefer. This is particularly the case for the 35 to 54 age bracket, while health issues are a key barrier for older residents. Cost was also identified as a barrier for some.

3. There are several service delivery methods for community sport and recreation used by the City, including direct ownership and operating (arenas and swimming pools), a community development model supporting volunteer delivery, a Shared Use Agreement with School District 57 (SD57), and various lease and rental agreements. This variation in delivery models is a result of Administration's objective in meeting the needs of different user groups and their unique conditions. The Shared Use Agreement with SD57 is particularly unique and fosters low cost access of schools and City facilities and venues for community groups and clubs. Overall, there is a significant reliance on volunteers, sports clubs and community organizations. For most of the delivery of recreation programming, the City provides a supporting role to the network of volunteers and community groups. This is a cost-effective service delivery model for recreation. However, reliance on volunteers also has risk if there is a decline in the volunteer base and core leaders. Therefore, Administration will work with sport clubs and community associations to look for improvements in this delivery model in order to

2 The other most popular outdoor recreation activities included, skiing/snowboarding, boating/fishing, nordic skiing, outdoor swimming, and camping.

ensure a durable and quality system for the long term. For example, by looking for efficiencies through collaboration, resources and capacity may be found that could be reallocated to supporting the volunteers and the system.

4. Overall, the City's key indoor recreation facilities are relatively well used, are meeting current demands, and provide a range of community benefits. The four recreational facilities that are facing potential issues over and above normal maintenance and refurbishment include the Four Seasons Leisure Pool, the Coliseum, the Elksentre, and the Exhibition Sports Centre. Administration will be conducting a separate Aquatic Needs Assessment, involving both City pools, and through this, the issues with the Four Seasons Leisure Pool will be identified along with other issues affecting both pools, such as improving cost recovery and utilization rates. Further, Administration will be preparing a Condition Assessment for the Coliseum, reviewing potential roof repairs for the Elksentre, and reviewing the building envelope and mechanical system for the Exhibition Sports Centre. Administration will continue to work with the users of the Agriplex to look at options for addressing their long-term needs, including assessing future land use development scenarios in the general area and how those potential changes could affect their use. Administration is also recommending working with UNBC and the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre to review and better understand how this facility is being used by the community and their satisfaction levels.
5. There is a diverse range of facilities and venues supporting outdoor recreation, and the City has either a full role or a shared role in maintaining these. There are a few well developed, centralized, and multi-use sites that are well used. However, there are also many small recreation sites widely dispersed throughout the city, developed at a time when Prince George was in a growth phase. Rising maintenance and refurbishment costs of this widely dispersed system is creating challenges, and the City is currently at or near its capacity to maintain the current system. As such, a key focus will be looking for opportunities to consolidate use and reduce the number of small, under-used facilities such as certain neighbourhood playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts and ball diamonds. In a number of cases, safety or maintenance issues of a small facility will drive the priorities. Administration will use consultative processes in order to assess options for under-used sites, including repurposing or decommissioning. Moving away from maintaining a highly distributed system to a more aggregated system of multi-use sites will create efficiencies with more focused use, better resource allocation and a more durable system for the long term.

In terms of the highly distributed system of 66 neighbourhood playgrounds, Administration will be assessing their distribution, use, maintenance and refurbishment costs to determine priorities for repurposing or decommissioning. Two-thirds of the playgrounds do not meet current CSA safety standards. Therefore, in demonstrating the City's commitment to addressing this issue over time, while also addressing the cost implications, Administration will use a graduated response approach that is adaptable to the amount of annual budget funding.

6. In some cases, such as horse shoes and lawn bowling, use levels of a facility have declined significantly. Use levels over a few years are not necessarily indicative of a solid trend as changes within a club and its approach can sometimes improve use levels. Even where use levels are relatively low, the facility may be the only option for the sport and the cost to the City may be relatively minor. As such, Administration will take a cautious approach to these cases, monitoring use levels and consulting with the related clubs to determine options for the facility or site.

7. For certain sports such as baseball³ and soccer there are changing interests and trends within the sport that may affect the demand for facilities. Typically, clubs representing a sport advocate for their specialized needs, and often do so separately in exclusive use agreements for a facility. There have been, and will continue to be, situations where a sports club will be advocating for a new or improved facility to meet a certain need for their sport. Administration's approach will be to engage with related sports clubs to foster opportunities to work together and cooperate on long-term strategies on facility use that creates efficiencies and better supports the sport. The objective is better utilization of the City's current facilities, while looking for partnership opportunities before considering expansion of new facilities. One example of this approach is that Administration will continue to work with user groups and clubs to review options, costs and potential funding partnerships towards establishing an artificial turf sports field.

Overall, the City of Prince plays a variety of important roles in delivering, and supporting others in the delivery of, a diverse range of indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities. The delivery of recreation has evolved into a highly distributed approach with many independently operating community, sport or neighbourhood organizations. Administration is concerned that this operating model is not sustainable. This report provides strategic guidance for a renewed effort of Administration in moving towards a more consolidated system of facilities and a more collaborative approach for the delivery of recreation that ensures a continued cost-effective delivery system and sustainability over the long term.

3 Using this as a generic term for all the variations in the sport.

1.0 Introduction



A. Purpose of the Project

The City of Prince George has prepared this Community Recreation Services Plan (CRSP) to provide a comprehensive strategy and guiding framework for the recreation facilities, programs and services that are delivered or supported by the City. The CSRP was identified as a priority of Council for 2014 and is aligned with recommendations in the City of Prince George Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011. The CSRP provides background information and assessment of recreation services, identifies strategies to address key issues, and looks out to a ten year horizon.

B. Project Scope

The CSRP examines recreation facilities, services and programs that are delivered directly by the City or through partnerships and agreements. Facilities such as pools, arenas, gymnasiums, sports fields, parks and trails were reviewed along with recreation programs and services. Many of the City's recreation services are facilitated through partnerships with community groups or organizations to achieve efficiencies through the shared use of facilities and service delivery by volunteers. The delivery of recreation by other public or private organizations was also reviewed to confirm any gaps or duplication in community recreation. Recreation trends, community input and best practices were identified and assessed to determine priorities, develop recommendations and implementation strategies that will direct operational and capital planning for recreation services over the next ten years. Arts and cultural services were not included in the scope of the CSRP.

C. Methodology

The overall objective of this initiative is to create a better understanding of the City's various roles in delivering or supporting the recreation services, and to provide guidance to enhance or improve these roles. Key considerations of the assessment of the City's recreational services included:

- i. What should the City's primary and supporting roles be in delivering recreation services and programs to sports clubs and residents?
- ii. Where are the growing or declining demands for specific recreation services and what should be done to address demand or capacity issues?
- iii. Which City facilities or venues have issues that need to be addressed (over and above normal operational issues)?
- iv. Where can service delivery improvements be made that lead to cost savings and efficiencies?

The methodology and steps utilized in the review of community recreation services are described in the following sections of this report. While the methodology is shown as steps, the actual process was more iterative than a series of discrete and separate steps. For example, the assessment of issues and development of strategies in later steps required a review of the data/information gathered earlier in the project.

1. Determining the Supply and Demand for Recreation

The initial stage of the project involved identifying what recreation services are being delivered, what facilities or venues are being provided by whom, and what the demand is across the community as a whole. It was important for Administration to take a broad view of the scope of services to better understand the context for the City's role in providing for recreation. As such, the scope included all recreation activities where the City has at least a partial role. This assessment included:

- i. Conducting public and stakeholder consultation including a statistically valid telephone survey, public and user group feedback surveys, and other direct engagement methods.
- ii. Consulting with City staff, community groups and recreation clubs to acquire expert information.
- iii. Describing the various recreation facilities (buildings and structures) and venues (sites or settings), their types, levels of use and condition.
- iv. For each facility or venue, identifying where and how the City is involved, and the associated costs.
- v. Describing trends in the various recreation activities to assess declining or growing demand.
- vi. Conducting an initial high level scan of issues.

2. Evaluate the City's Roles in Recreation

This stage evaluated the range of recreation activities the City is involved in and assessed this information against the current context of rising costs and budgets, trends in recreation use and demands, condition of facilities and venues, and potential emerging opportunities. The actions involved in this stage included:

- i. Describing the City's various service delivery models and functions with respect to recreation including, as owner/operator, partner, renter, coordinator and facilitator.
- ii. Reviewing recreation service delivery from other similar communities.
- iii. Comparing recreation service delivery with other comparable communities (benchmarking), including Chilliwack, Kamloops, Lethbridge and Red Deer. These communities were considered to be similar to Prince George in their similar population size, surrounding rural context and winter conditions.
- iv. Developing, through consultations, the principles and criteria that describe and guide what should be the primary and secondary roles of the City in providing and supporting recreation to its residents and clubs.

3. Assessing Recreation Service Delivery

Using information gathered from the previous two stages, Administration assessed each of the key recreation service delivery models in order to identify areas that are working well (no major issues) and areas that have issues. This stage was iterative as it relied not only on existing information sources, but also identified additional information required to drill down into assessing issues, concerns or opportunities.

To be practical and useful, this assessment was not intended to identify and address every issue but rather to focus on issues that are beyond the normal expected operational issues or challenges or are more strategic in nature. As issues or challenges were identified, Administration developed potential options and strategies and assessed if they are realistic, cost effective, timely, and have a likelihood of being addressed.



4. Providing Guidance on Priorities

It is important for Administration to provide guidance that informs prioritizing within operational planning and budget setting. The assessment of priorities is dynamic and constantly evolving with new information, changes in the scope of an issue, recreation trends, service delivery methods, potential partnerships, funding opportunities, and direction of Council. Assessing priorities for recreation service delivery would consider the following criteria:

- i. Is there a significant cost implication that is time sensitive?
- ii. Does the strategy involve a facility or venue that needs significant work?
- iii. Is there a significant shift in demand?
- iv. Is there a significant and time-dependent opportunity?
- v. Is there a significant community driver?
- vi. Are there reasonable options for a solution?

D. Community Engagement

CSRP Community engagement was pursued through a telephone survey, other stakeholder surveys, workshops, consultations, and interviews that connected with over 1,830 individuals. A summary of the consultations is outlined in the following table. The high level of engagement provided important information to help Administration review and assess the current role the City has in providing

recreation to its residents. The detailed results of the engagement are set out in the background document for the CRSP. The following discussion is a summary of the key findings and analysis of the results. Discussions on the survey and consultation are also provided throughout the document where it relates and informs the assessment of the specific recreation facilities provided in Section 5.0.

Community Engagement Participation

Engagement Event/Tool	Dates (2014)	Participants
Telephone Survey	March 24 th – April 4 th	462
Public Stakeholder survey	Feb. 17 th – March 21 st	501
Seniors Survey	Feb. 17 th – March 21 st	154
Youth Survey	Feb. 17 th – April 11 th	97
Stakeholder Group Surveys	Feb. 17 th – March 21 st	55
Rental Agreement Interviews	Feb. 13 th – April 16 th	20
Informant Interviews	Feb. 13 th – April 11 th	110
Focus Group Discussions	Feb. 25 th – April 22 nd	65
Community Workshop	March 4 th	62
'Have Your Say' Survey	March 1 st – April 3 rd	50
Active Living Market	March 1 st & 2 nd	200
Staff Stakeholder survey & Workshop	March 21 st – June 18 th	54
	Total	1,830

Notes:

- Stakeholder surveys were provided to the public online through the City's website and in hard copy format at civic facilities such as City Hall, PG Civic Centre, pools and arenas.
- Over 350 community organizations were provided with an invitation to complete the surveys and attend the community workshop.
- Supportive agencies provided links to the CSMP website along with hard copies of surveys and business cards at their institutions. These agencies included the PG Public Library, Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre, School District 57, Northern Health, YMCA of Northern BC and the PG Youth Soccer Association.

Telephone Survey

The City of Prince George hired the Mustel Group to conduct a random telephone survey of Prince George residents' recreation activities over the last 12 months. The survey was conducted over a period of two weeks between March 24th and April 6th, 2014. A total of 1,611 telephone and cell phone numbers were randomly dialed in order to achieve a total of 462 completed interviews. The results of the survey are statistically relevant with a margin of error of +/- 4.6 percent, 19 times out of 20. The results were weighted to ensure that the survey sample represented Prince George's gender and age demographics documented by Statistics Canada data. The key results of the survey are included in this Section, while the detailed results can be found in background document for the CRSP.

The telephone survey provided Administration with an important tool to help understand the level of recreation activity by Prince George residents, their range of recreation interests and satisfaction levels and how the City's recreation services fit within the overall range of recreation. The survey did not distinguish if the respondent's recreation activities are conducted within Prince George⁴. For example, a respondent may have indicated hiking as a recreation activity although that person may hike in areas inside or outside of Prince George⁵.

The overall results indicate that recreation interests are highly diversified and distributed across the population of Prince George. In general, the survey identified 27 different outdoor recreation categories and 14 indoor recreation activities. Approximately two-thirds of the recreation activities represented participation rates of less than 10 percent of the total responses. A number of other recreation activities were well below one percent of the responses and were grouped into the "other" category that comprised 10 percent of the total responses. The City is directly involved in providing facilities for a segment of the recreational activities while community groups, recreation businesses, clubs and not-for-profit organizations play a role in providing specific recreation activities.

Overall, of the most popular seven outdoor recreation activities with more than 10 percent participation rates, and where the City has a direct role, the most popular was walking/hiking and then cycling/mountain biking as the 5th most popular⁶. The City is also directly involved in providing facilities for soccer, baseball and tennis which were selected by less than 10 percent of the respondents. The four most popular indoor recreation activities included swimming (the most popular indoor pursuit), fitness, gymnasium/court sports and ice sports, which are provided directly by the City or through its partnerships with other organizations (e.g. UNBC Northern Sport Centre, School District #57).

Twenty-eight (28) percent of the respondents indicated that they did not participate in any indoor recreation activities in the last 12 months, which is more than double the 12 percent that indicated they did not participate in any outdoor recreation activities. These responses suggest that there are more barriers to recreation participation (e.g. costs, mobility issues, weather) during winter months when there is more dependency on indoor pursuits for some segments of the population. For example, we see respondents over the age of 55 generally showing less interest in indoor recreation pursuits than those who are younger than age 55. The higher incidences of "no activity" responses for indoor recreation may also suggest that some respondents have outdoor specific interests such as camping, fishing or skiing and these same respondents are not as interested in indoor recreation, such as swimming or court sports.

4 The survey did not limit responses on recreation activity by geographic or administrative boundaries.

5 Caution needs to be exercised when interpreting the data as the survey responses may indicate recreation activities that are conducted outside of Prince George. This is likely more of a consideration of the range of outdoor recreation activities available as opposed to the indoor recreation activities.

6 The other most popular outdoor recreation activities included, skiing/snowboarding, boating/fishing, nordic skiing, outdoor swimming, and camping.

The table below identifies the top five (5) indoor and outdoor recreation activities by age groups within the survey that the City supports directly or by partnership through the provision or operation of a facility or venue⁷.

Telephone Survey - Top 5 Recreation Activities in Prince George⁸

Indoor Recreation	
Adults (18-54 yrs.)	Seniors (55+ yrs.)
1. Swimming (36%)	1. Swimming (19%)
2. Gym/Court sports (19%)	2. Fitness/strength training (13%)
3. Fitness/strength training (18%)	3. Walking/hiking (10%)
4. Hockey/skating/curling (15%)	4. Gym/Court sports (8%)
5. Soccer (7%)	5. Hockey/skating/curling (6%)
Outdoor Recreation	
Adults (18-54 yrs.)	Seniors (55+ yrs.)
1. Walking/hiking (52%)	1. Walking/hiking (49%)
2. Cycling/mountain biking (20%)	2. Golf (13%)
3. Hockey/skating/curling (12%)	3. Cycling/mountain biking (11%)
4. Running/jogging (10%)	4. Running/jogging (3%)
5. Soccer (10%)	5. Hockey/skating/curling (3%)
Indoor & Outdoor Recreation	
Youth (<12 yrs.)	Youth (12-17 yrs.)
1. Swimming (68%)	1. Swimming (36%)
2. Hockey/skating/curling (37%)	2. Gym/Court sports (30%)
3. Walking/hiking (29%)	3. Cycling/mountain biking (27%)
4. Soccer (27%)	4. Soccer (25%)
5. Gym/Court sports (20%)	5. Hockey/skating/curling (24%)

The most commonly used indoor recreation facility is the PG Aquatic Centre with 37 percent indicating they used the facility at least once per month. In contrast, 18 percent of respondents said they use the Four Seasons Pool at least once per month. Ice arenas and school gymnasiums are the next most popular indoor recreation facilities with about 15 percent using those facilities at least once per month⁹.

Seventy-seven (77) percent of the respondents were satisfied with the indoor recreation facilities provided by the City. Five (5) percent of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied, in particular siting improvements to the Four Seasons Pool and ice arenas (hockey, curling, skating). Sixty-two (62) percent of respondents indicated that there is no need for improvements to indoor recreation facilities.

7 The survey sample base for each age group included 295 adults (18-54), 166 seniors (55+), 107 younger youth (<11 yrs) and 66 older youth (12-17).

8 The table lists the top recreation activities indicated in the telephone survey where the City is directly involved in providing facilities or venues.

9 The detailed data in the Mustel Report shows small percentages (<3 percent) using the facilities daily or weekly and larger percentages using the facilities a few times a year.

Overall, respondents were at least “somewhat satisfied” with the outdoor recreation facilities provided by the City, with parks having the highest level of satisfaction at 81 percent. Forty-two (42) percent of respondents indicated they were satisfied with ball diamonds while only five (5) percent indicated they were dissatisfied. A number of respondents indicated a neutral or unknown response. The level of dissatisfaction generally ranges between five (5) and seven (7) percent for all categories, with the most notable suggestions for more or improved parks and sport-fields, as well as improved bike/trail connections. Fifty-four (54) percent indicated that there is no need for improvements to outdoor recreation facilities.

The data for youth under the age of 17 indicated that pools and gymnasiums are the most popular indoor recreation facilities followed by ice arenas. The youth data on outdoor recreation activity suggests that the soccer fields are the most popular outdoor recreation facility provided by the City.

A key finding of the survey indicates that a significant proportion of the population have time constraints such as work, family or school commitments, that lead to less participation in recreation activity than they would prefer. This is particularly the case for the 35 to 54 age bracket, while health issues are a key barrier for older residents. Cost was also identified as a barrier for some.

Online sources combined with newspaper, word-of-mouth and radio, were the most popular means that respondents used to get information about recreation activities. The 18 to 34 year age group is particularly more inclined to use social media and non-City websites. The 35 to 54 year age group will tend to use the City website for information and the over 54 age group tends to use traditional media sources for information. Overall, 75 percent were at least “somewhat satisfied” with the information provided by the City and 22 percent were not satisfied.

Stakeholder surveys and Other Consultations

Community engagement for the CSRP also included stakeholder surveys and consultations through focus group discussions, City staff input, workshops and interviews with key groups and users. Residents primarily provided their feedback by completing questionnaire surveys online or by filling out a paper survey. The stakeholder surveys were provided for the general public (501 completed surveys), for those greater than 55 years of age (154 completed surveys), youth less than 18 years of age (97 completed surveys) and stakeholders/user groups (55 completed surveys). The information from the stakeholder surveys and other forms of consultations is not statistically valid and cannot be used to draw community-wide inferences on recreation interests, priorities and other feedback¹⁰. However the stakeholder surveys supplement the telephone survey by providing opportunities for residents to

¹⁰ Unlike the statistically valid telephone survey, the results from handout or online surveys cannot be used with a degree of confidence to estimate the interest in a particular recreation activity across the whole community. There are inherent biases that can correspond with the distribution of surveys and invitation for residents to complete these surveys. The stakeholder survey is also not representative of Prince George demographics. For example, twice as many females completed the surveys as males. The information provided through these surveys is, however, useful for Administration and were reviewed and considered as part of the overall review and assessment.

provide their feedback and opinions. The key results of the stakeholder surveys are included in this section while the detailed results can be found in background document for the CRSP.

The common recreation pursuits and satisfaction levels that were indicated in the stakeholder surveys and telephone survey show some similarities apart from different percentage values¹¹. For example, the results of the stakeholder surveys indicated that the more popular outdoor activities included walking/hiking, cycling/mountain biking, Nordic skiing/snowshoeing, fishing, jogging, skating/hockey, golf and soccer.

The stakeholder surveys also suggested that playgrounds, community events, nature and bird-watching, watching live sporting events, and the off-leash dog parks are relatively popular. These activities were not identified by the respondents in the telephone survey, likely because these categories were not prompted as a suggestion.

The results of both the stakeholder surveys and telephone survey have a similar order of popularity for the top two indoor recreation activities with swimming as the most popular pursuit, followed by fitness training. Activities such as indoor jogging, yoga, and children's programs showed more popularity in the stakeholder survey and might be attributed to the high proportion of females responding to the stakeholder surveys.

The suggested improvements for outdoor recreation facilities indicated the need for infrastructure updates in parks, more riverfront parks and trails, better maintenance of park washrooms, better trail maintenance and trail connectivity between neighborhoods. The responses ranged with over 20 different suggestions for improvements or improved maintenance. However, most respondents indicated that they were at least "somewhat satisfied" with the outdoor facilities and venues, except for public washrooms in parks (related to the cleanliness). Overall there is a general level of satisfaction with some considerations for facility improvements that are discussed in the outdoor recreation facility assessment Section 5.2.

In terms of levels of satisfaction for indoor recreation facilities, the stakeholder surveys indicated that most people were at least "somewhat satisfied" and few respondents indicated that they were "dissatisfied". The one facility that did garner a higher level of dissatisfaction was the Four Seasons Pool.

In comparison to the telephone survey, the stakeholder surveys asked additional questions in order to provide further insights into behaviours and perceptions, although the responses are not statistically representative of the population. For example, 44 percent of the respondents participated in organized sports programs and 40 percent participated in City of Prince George recreation programming. The

¹¹ For example, in the statistically valid telephone survey, 51% of respondents walked or hiked in the last 12 months versus the 91% result from the stakeholder surveys (hand-outs and online). This may be due to the telephone survey not prompting suggestions and some respondents may not have thought of "walking" as a type of recreation the survey was considering. The stakeholder survey did provided walking as an activity to be checked and further bias may have been introduced with more female respondents than male which may have skewed the results.

responses also illustrated the reliance on for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in delivering recreation programming, represented by over one-third of responses.

The stakeholder survey results indicate that over half of respondents suggest that the City's primary role in recreation should also be to provide recreation facilities (not necessarily operating) and supporting others who provide recreation. Over a third suggested the City can strengthen its role of informing residents of recreation activities and programs.

2.0 Trends



Administration reviewed several national, provincial and local trends (where data was available) that may have a role in the changing context around recreation. Trends in recreation and sports participation, population age, socio-economic characteristics, and recreation facilities and programming were reviewed.

Population Age

With the “baby-boomer” effect, the proportion of the population in the seniors category (>65 years) is increasing throughout North America. According to Stats Canada 2011 data, the proportion of seniors in Prince George is 11.6 percent and this has increased by 51 percent from 2001. The growing demographic of seniors in Prince George is expected to continue, and may surpass the proportion of youth (<19 years). Seniors have been identified as a group that tends to be less active, but there is interest in walking, swimming, nature study and other low-impact leisure pursuits.

Prince George’s under 19 years youth population in 2011 represents about 18 percent, and this proportion of youth has declined since 2001, mirroring national trends. However, Prince George continues to have a larger youth population than the BC average of 15.4 percent. Youth populations less than five (5) years old have also been stable in Prince George but are increasing in proportion nationally. National trends indicated that only seven (7) percent of five (5) to 11 year olds in Canada, and four (4) percent of 12 to 17 year olds meet the Canadian Physical Activity guidelines for Children and Youth, which recommend at least 60 minutes daily. National trends show that fewer children are developing the basic skills they need to participate in sport and recreational activities and this is contributing to their withdrawal from sport. In Prince George, youth participation in a number of traditional sports such as hockey or baseball is stable or declining while soccer, football and basketball are experiencing growth.

Multi-Cultural

In Prince George, from 2001 to 2011, the aboriginal population has grown 27 percent and represents 13 percent of the City’s overall population in 2011. During this same time period, the population of visible minorities has grown at 18 percent and represents seven (7) percent of the City’s overall population. Anecdotal information, through consultations, suggests that the growing cultural diversity of Prince George may affect long-term trends in what sports and recreation programs are offered.

Socio-Economic

The socio-economic profile of Prince George is characterized by a diverse population. The community has higher median incomes versus the BC average and is seeing a growing population of educated workers. Statistics Canada correlates higher incomes and education levels with higher participation rates in sport and recreation. As such, this could indicate an increasing potential demand for recreation in Prince George. However, a segment of the Prince George population receives income assistance and costs associated with access to recreation and sport has been identified as one potential barrier.

Women, low income adults and seniors are the most likely to be less active. There tends to be a gap in knowledge and practice relating to the psychological and social factors influencing women and girls as participants in sport¹². Seniors tend to require leadership or guidance when starting a new activity for safety and comfort.

Participation in Sports & Recreation

In February 2013 Heritage Canada published a research paper that assessed national sport participation trends using 2010 Statistics Canada data. The highlights include:

- That national participation rates in organized sports of those 15 years and older have declined by 17 percent since 1992.
- The participation rate is declining faster in youth than for older Canadians.
- Higher education and income levels correlate with higher sports participation.
- Canadians are active in many different sports but most participate in only a select few on a regular basis including golf, ice hockey and soccer.
- Soccer is most popular sport amongst youth between 5 and 14, followed by swimming and ice hockey.
- Relaxation and fun were ranked by 97 percent as being the most important reason for sports participation, followed by health and fitness.
- Lack of time and interest are the two main reasons for not participating in sports.

National trends across the general population indicate a more sedentary and solitary lifestyle at work, school and through leisure time than in preceding generations. Reduced physical activity levels are commonly attributed to a lack of time, opportunities, money, basic physical activity skills, inaccessibility, and the availability of unstructured activities and program leaders.

Participation rates in informal and non-traditional activities such as walking, gardening, bicycling, skateboarding and swimming are growing.

Nationally and locally, a number of recreational activities are experiencing changes in participation rates. Administration, through review of usage data and through consultations with clubs and organizations, has estimated local trends in a number of sport and recreation activities that are provided by or supported by the City. The following table provides an indication of the general recreation activity trends. Where possible, Administration uses local usage numbers (e.g. from clubs or registration data). However, where these are not available, other sources such as national sports organizations or Statistics Canada are used. The following is the explanation of the colour coding.

12 Actively Engaging Women and Girls (2012, Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS)).

Colour Coding Key:

	Indicates stable use levels or a growing use trend
	Indicates a possible trend of declining use (i.e. recent declining use that may or may not indicate a longer-term trend)
	Indicates a trend of declining use

Recreation Participation – Estimated Trends

Recreation Activity	Estimated Trend
Swimming / pools	
Hockey - minor	
Hockey – adult & girls	
Power Skating	unknown
Speed Skating	
Figure Skating	
Box Lacrosse	
Roller Hockey	
Ringette	
Curling	
Gymnastics	unknown
Group/Individual Fitness	
Gymnasium Sports	
Soccer	
Baseball	
Softball/Fastball	
Slo-Pitch	
Football	
Ultimate Frisbee	
Disc Golf	unknown
Lawn Bowling	
Horseshoes	
Skateboarding	
Cycling / Mtn. biking	
Golf	
Walking	
Park and Trail Use	
Off Leash	
Basketball	unknown
Tennis	

Facilities and Service Delivery

Provincial and National reports show that a significant percentage of recreation facilities are aging. The 2005 British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association Community Infrastructure Report – Phase 1 identified that almost 75 percent of ice arenas in BC are 25 years or older, along with 82 percent of curling rinks and 91 percent of outdoor pools. Just over half of BC's indoor pools were 25 years of age or more in 2004.

Across Canada and BC, there are increasing examples of a movement towards partnerships in capital projects and expanding multi-purpose centres rather than stand-alone recreation facilities. For example, several cities¹³ have partnered with YM-YWCAs in developing new pools attached to their recreation centres. Moving towards using new technologies and techniques to operate more energy efficient and green facilities is also a key trend. Municipalities are also looking to create better connections between their recreation facilities and parks and trails, and residential areas, schools and work, in order to improve accessibility and convenience.

The key trend in service delivery is the balancing of rising costs with increasing fees, and a more extensive reliance on partnerships and volunteering to ensure recreation programs are affordable and accessible. While fees have been increasing to cover a portion of the rising costs, partnerships with organizations and clubs in service delivery is becoming increasingly relied upon to manage costs, and ensure continued service. As such, volunteerism within Prince George is important to the clubs and organizations that provide specific sport and recreation programs.

¹³ Examples include City of Langford, Medicine Hat, Niagara, and Winnipeg.

3.0 Planning Framework



Through the three orders of government (Federal, Provincial, Municipal), there are programs, policies and plans that provide a supporting framework to municipal recreation service delivery. These are highlighted below.

Federal Government

National Framework for Recreation in Canada

The development of a National Framework for Recreation in Canada (NFRC) that identifies a vision and priorities for the effective implementation of recreation policies and practices across Canada is underway. The NFRC is being formulated by a working group of representatives from provincial and territorial governments in addition to the provincial and national parks and recreation associations. The NFRC builds upon a number of interrelated national and provincial policies or frameworks such as 'Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Chance Agenda for Canada (2012)', Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Wellbeing of our Citizens (2014)', and the 'Canadian Sport Policy (2012)'. The vision focuses on the wellbeing of individuals and communities along with their natural and built environments. The framework identifies priority actions that aim to achieve five (5) key goals:

- Fostering active, healthy living through recreation.
- Increasing inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.
- Helping people connect to nature through recreation.
- Ensuring the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.
- Ensuring the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

Canadian Sport for Life

The Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) operates on a framework of recreation and sport working together to improving the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada throughout a participant's life cycle. The CS4L highlights the role Local Governments' play in contributing to the quality of life in a community. Local Governments are encouraged to work together with local organizations to help advance physical activity for people of all ages. Guidelines are provided by the CS4L for consideration by Local Governments, including:

- Promoting year-round recreation programming that offers a variety of sports opportunities combined with physical literacy learning.
- Considering the developmental age of youth versus only chronological age.

- Assessing recreation programming regularly to ensure their delivery is accessible to all groups, affordable, informative and guided by trained staff.
- Developing allocation policies that are transparent, considerate of user group requirements, flexible and reflective of community support for subsidies or user fees.

Provincial Government

Local Governments in British Columbia provide parks and recreation services through the provisions of the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter*. A number of recreation services must also conform to the regulations of the Provincial Health Authority.

Let's Talk about Healthy Aging and Seniors' Wellness (2013)

The Northern Health Authority (NHA) recently consulted with seniors in a number of communities in northern British Columbia to understand how a healthy approach to aging and wellness can be best supported. Seniors identified that wellness is directly related to the balance of “physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of health in one’s own life” (NHA, 2013) and that much of this is achieved through social connectedness, community involvement and a variety of physical activities. Northern BC winters were identified as a barrier for seniors, and many seniors identified the need to make facilities and transportation networks more accessible to encourage physical activity. Consultation with Prince George seniors specifically identified the following:

- Many seniors are challenged financially and need support (i.e. reduced fees) to access recreation.
- The Seniors Centres and other organizations support recreation, social connectedness and community involvement.
- Accessible transportation is important in Prince George to help get seniors to their activities.
- It is vital to build a community that respects the aging population and intergenerational activities can help to foster connectedness.
- Information on seniors’ services is limited and help is needed to source this information.

Municipal Government - City of Prince George

myPG Sustainability Plan

The myPG integrated community sustainability plan (myPG) was adopted in 2010 and developed by the community and provides a long-term, visionary sustainability plan that outlines social, environmental,

and economic goals for all stakeholders and partners in the community. Specific myPG goal areas related to recreation include “health and wellness”, “supportive and engaged community with strong neighbourhoods”, “equity and inclusion”, and a “safe environment”. More information on myPG can be found on the City of Prince George website.

Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework for a Sustainable Prince George guides the integration of the myPG Sustainability Plan into the City’s operations. In addition to utilizing the myPG environmental, social and economic goals, the City has incorporated City Government goals, including:

- Sustainable infrastructure
- Sustainable fiscal management
- Organizational excellence
- Healthy workplace
- Effective governance

Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw 8383, 2011

The OCP represents the overall policy framework for planning and land use within the City of Prince George. The implementation section of the OCP includes policy direction for the development of this CSRP. A number of OCP objectives provide a foundation for the delivery of recreation services as follows:

- **Cultural richness** – Support and encourage the development and stewardship of public spaces.
- **Equity and Inclusion** – Support affordable and equitable opportunities for all members of the community.
- **Health and Wellness** – Support active living and healthy initiatives to foster individual growth and build the community.
- **Heritage, Identity, and Pride** – Protect the natural and built environment and encourage civic pride initiatives.
- **Safe Community** – Foster initiatives that support a safe community with social cohesion.
- **Supportive Community with Strong Neighbourhoods** – Support community associations and initiatives that build community within neighbourhoods.
- **Community Facilities** – Support community facilities that meet a wider variety of community needs, achieve efficiencies, and fit within the linear context.

- **Parks and Open Spaces** – Support parks and open spaces and advance quality of life initiatives through a variety of parks and natural areas that provide beautiful and comfortable destinations for refuge or social interaction.
- **Transportation** – Advance active transportation initiatives to provide a healthy built environment.
- **Land** – Support the acquisition, disbursement, and development of public land.
- **Integration of plans, studies, policies, and bylaws** – Identify plans, studies, policies, and bylaws that should be amended or developed to support community services.

Proposed Off-leash Strategies Report (2011)

The report outlines the proposed Off-leash Strategies that have been developed by the Off-leash Advisory Committee of Council. The recommendations in this report are formulated with the goal of supporting desirable and achievable off-leash use that is balanced with other park uses, regulations and safe practices. Council approved the recommendations from the strategies report for the development of an Off-leash Program for Prince George.

Centennial Trails Project (2008)

The Centennial Trails Project recommended a trail implementation plan that would pursue an expansion of the Heritage River Trail System, new trail corridors and community links. The project was developed by the Council Committee of the Trails Task Force which was comprised of various trail interest groups. The project details include financial strategies, partnerships, annual funding programs, revised trail hierarchy and implementation strategies.

Prince George Active Communities Strategic Plan (2007)

The Prince George Active Communities Strategic Plan (PGACSP) identifies steps to increase physical activity and healthy eating within the community. The PGACSP was developed through a partnership with various agencies to address the provincial ActNow BC goals to increase physical activity and healthy eating by 20 percent by 2010. The plan developed visions and goals to support active community initiatives such as marketing, active transportation, nutritional health, affordable recreation, volunteer programs, walking programs and collaborations with health and educational agencies. A number of initiatives were pursued such as a partnership with the Sustainable Childhood Obesity Prevention through the Community Engagement Project.

Carrie Jane Gray Park Master Plan (2006)

This plan guides the long-term planning, development and maintenance of this 36 ha City Athletic Park that contains various recreation facilities such as ball diamonds, BMX, horseshoe pits, skate park, tennis courts and lacrosse court amongst other amenities. Short and long term implementation strategies range from new or upgraded recreational facilities, support facilities and transportation networks.

Exhibition Park Master Plan (2005)

The Exhibition Park Master Plan sets a framework for this 60 ha Special Purpose area. Exhibition Park has varied facilities and amenities that include the CN Centre, Kin Arenas, Aquatic Centre, agricultural facilities and soccer facilities. The plan formulates design criteria, phased development and management policies. Objectives aim to address a lack of park character, the need for new athletic and recreational facilities, pedestrian/vehicular circular and other user park amenities.

Recreation Place Relocation Plan (2001)

The Recreation Place Relocation Plan was prepared to guide the relocation of recreation facilities from this former City Athletic Park. The relocation was prompted from the sale of Recreation Place for potential development. The plan revealed the recreation uses at the site and identified potential relocation options within existing city parks. The implementation of the plan resulted in the relocation of many recreational uses to Carrie Jane Gray Park and to the new Nechako ball diamond complex.

City of Prince George Community Recreation, Sport and Culture Needs Study (1997)

This needs study was developed with the goal of recommending improvements in the delivery of publicly supported leisure services. The objectives of the plan were based on two primary goals that related to fostering a sense of community as well as the growth and development of individuals. The study outlined a number of recommendations for enhanced recreation opportunities for families, youth, groups and people with lower incomes. Other recommendations were developed from the need to increase capacities for trails, communications and support for community associations.

Other Plans and Bylaws

The City completed an “Active Transportation Plan” (ATP) in 2011, a “Prince George Parks and Open Space Master Plan” (POSMP) in 2008, and a “City Wide Trail System Master Plan” (CWTSMP) in 1998. These are discussed in Section 5.2 of this report.

The **Nature and Outdoor Recreation Alliance (NORA)**, an alliance of organizations involved in recreation, education, environmental stewardship and nature interpretation, prepared the **Nature**

Interpretation and Outdoor Learning Network Concept Plan (2014) describing concepts for the development of a nature interpretation and outdoor learning network in Prince George.

The **Duchess Park Plan** (2011) provides recommendations for the phased development of this District Park. A number of **Neighbourhood Plans** have also been adopted and provide recommendations for community services such as parks and trails.

Community Services are regulated through a number of Council adopted bylaws, policies and procedures. Various user fees and charges for community services are outlined by the **Comprehensive Fees and Charges Bylaw**, 7557 (2004). Park and trail use, development, advertising and protection are regulated through the **Parks and Open Space Bylaw** (2002), **Sign Bylaw**, 7202 (2001), and **Tree Protection Bylaw**, 6343 (1995). The regulation of alcohol refreshments, and food are facilitated by the **Municipal Alcohol Services** (2014) and the **Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Recreation Facilities** (2011). The maintenance of transportation corridor in winter is regulated through the **Snow and Ice Control Procedure** (2013).

4.0 Service Delivery Models



The City uses several operating models to deliver community sport and recreation, including direct ownership and operating (arenas and swimming pools), a community development model supporting volunteer delivery, a Shared Use Agreement with School District #57 (SD57), and various lease and rental agreements. These different operating models have arisen from an identified need to meet different user group requirements. The Shared Use Agreement with SD57 is particularly unique and fosters low cost access of school and City facilities and venues for community groups and clubs. Overall, there is a significant reliance on volunteers, sports clubs and community organizations. For a large proportion of recreational service delivery, the City provides a supporting role to the network of volunteers and community groups, resulting in a cost-effective service delivery for recreation¹⁴.

Overall, when Administration is assessing issues related to the delivery of recreation (e.g. a capital replacement budget is needed for a particular facility), there are a number of factors that are considered, in addition to Council's strategic direction, other plans (e.g. *myPG* and the OCP) and City priorities, including, but not limited to:

- Full cost accounting including capital, maintenance, operations and life-cycle costs.
- Addressing standards and safety issues.
- Ensuring Administration understands how the project fits within the supply and demand trends for the recreation or sport activity.
- Consistent with long-term growth strategies for the City.
- Improving the efficiency of the delivery system.
- Taking advantage of partnership opportunities where available.
- Considering other strategic objectives (e.g. healthy active lifestyle, inclusivity).

The following table identifies the various roles of the City and the community in the delivery of recreation activities in Prince George. The remainder of this section describes the City's various roles in in further detail.

14 The City's Core Services Review compared services between Kamloops and Prince George and showed the Prince George delivery of recreation services was \$2.8m annually less than Kamloops, largely through the approach of supporting a volunteer base for a portion of the delivery.

City's Role in Recreation Service Delivery

Recreation Activity	City Primary Role ¹⁵	City Partnership Role ¹⁶	Not-For-Profit Organization ¹⁷	Provided by Business	School District 57 ¹⁸
INDOOR					
Swimming and water sports					
Fitness and weight-training					
Indoor walking and jogging					
Yoga					
Children and youth programs					
Gymnasium sports e.g. basketball					
Court sports e.g. squash					
Ice sports e.g. hockey, skating					
Curling					
Horseback riding					
Martial arts					
Seniors programming					
Lacrosse					
OUTDOOR					
Walking and hiking					
Running and jogging					
Cycling and mountain biking					
Playgrounds					
Off leash areas					
Snowshoeing and nordic skiing					
Fishing and boating					
Hockey and skating					
Lacrosse					
Golf					
Soccer					
Football and rugby					
Ultimate Frisbee					
Disc golf					
Baseball, softball and slo-pitch					
Tennis					
Basketball					
Skateboarding					
BMX					
Lawn bowling					
Horseshoes					
Community gardening					

15 The City plays a lead role in providing and operating a facility/venue.

16 The City has a role in the shared use, financial contribution, oversight or operations of a facility/venue.

17 A not-for-profit organization plays a lead role in the delivery of recreation service, with or without their own facility.

18 The School District 57 plays a lead role in the recreation activity through the provision of a facility/venue.

Direct Delivery (Owner/Operator)

The City of Prince George, as in most municipalities, has a number of direct roles in providing recreation (i.e. owner / operator) in situations where there are significant capital and maintenance costs, low cost recoveries (i.e. the net revenues do not cover expenses), and benefits to a broad range of residents. For example, Administration is directly providing, operating and maintaining recreation facilities or venues and delivering programs for swimming pools, arenas, and parks and trail systems.

Since 2007, the City has been in a partnership arrangement with the University of Northern BC in operating the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre. This recognizes the link between sport, education, and the community. Through an initial capital investment, as well as on-going operational oversight¹⁹ and an annual \$300,000 grant, this is an example of the City playing a role in delivering recreation services through a partnership.

Community Development Model

In addition to the major recreation facilities owned and operated by the City, there are numerous other facilities or venues owned by the City which are used or operated by community recreation clubs and organizations through various agreements. The community development model supports a wide range of recreational programming within the community.

The City of Prince George has been reducing direct delivery of recreation services and programs and increasingly moving to a role of supporting community organizations and clubs in their delivery of recreation. This is referred to as the “community development model”, and relies significantly on volunteers who are part of recreation clubs and organizations. City Administration plays a supportive role to these volunteer groups through facilitation, coordination, communications, and assistance with addressing issues, maintenance and, in some cases, with operations. The community development model approach works well in situations where there is a strong volunteer and user base, sufficient expertise and resources amongst the clubs or organizations, and maintenance costs are manageable.

The seven independently operated Community Associations have a key role in coordinating the delivery of low cost recreation programs. Through City support, primarily a liaising and advisory role, the Community Associations plan and deliver recreation programs through a cost-recovery approach, usually using facilities at schools or parks. The interest in neighbourhood programming is primarily driven by people wanting the convenience of activities close to home at a low cost. The City provides free access to facilities, produces the annual Active Living Guide that promotes the various programs offered by the Community Associations, and provides on-line registration for a number of the Community Associations. In addition, the City provides a total of \$5,500 divided between the Community Associations to assist with the ice rink supplies for volunteers. The level of programming

¹⁹ The City has two (2) seats on the Northern Sport Centre Limited board.

varies between Associations because of their different success rates in maintaining and recruiting volunteer leaders and coordinators.

City of Prince George – School District #57 Shared Use Agreement

The City of Prince George and School District #57 (SD57) have had a long standing partnership that optimizes the use of facilities through a Shared Use Agreement. This Agreement accommodates community use of school facilities and the SD57 use of City facilities. The Agreement was established in the 1990s and is reviewed on a regular basis to determine efficiencies and consider enhancements. The City contributes \$200,000 annually to help cover the base costs²⁰ associated with community use of SD57 facilities, which is estimated at 15,000 hours annually. This funding also helps SD57 with building costs by optimizing the use of facilities during non-school hours.

The Shared Use Agreement outlines the terms and conditions of the development, maintenance and use of both City and SD57 facilities such as tennis courts, ball diamonds, sports fields, basketball courts and numerous indoor facilities and gymnasiums. Administration plays a role in coordinating the bookings and scheduling for the City and SD57 facilities.

There are a few community clubs or organizations that hold Letters of Understanding allowing for a three-way agreement between the club, the City and the SD57 for use of a specified facility or venue. An example includes baseball clubs' use of the ball diamonds at College Heights Secondary School.

All community youth related programs are free of charge during weekdays while user fees apply to adult not-for-profit and commercial recreational bookings. Revenues from fees remain with the City. Rental rates are not charged to the SD57 for the use of City facilities given this typically occurs in non-prime time hours at City facilities. However, the City does have the ability to charge for services over and above normal use requirements.

There are a number of community benefits arising from the Shared Use Agreement, including:

- i. Providing schools spaces in neighborhoods for low cost public recreational use during non-school hours.
- ii. Creating efficiencies by spreading demands across both City and SD57 facilities.
- iii. Providing City facilities for SD57 curricular and extra-curricular programs that enhance educational, social and physical well-being of our community's youth.
- iv. Reducing cost barriers by providing Community Associations and not-for-profit organizations with school spaces and sports fields at no charge.

²⁰ In some cases, community use of SD57 facilities may result in extra custodial costs that are paid for through the rental fees collected by the City.

- v. Avoiding potential costs to the City by having SD57 sports fields available for adult recreation programs²¹.

In recent years the Shared Use Agreement has expanded to support the use of City arenas for SD57 curriculum programs²². Through the add-on agreement the City provides up to 175 hours of recreational skating and 875 hours of ice time for the hockey program on a cost recovery basis from additional fees from the SD57.

City Lease Agreements

The City currently maintains 25 lease agreements with not-for-profit organizations at 25 year terms to community clubs and organizations that are providing recreation services. Through the Core Services Review process, the lease fees were increased from \$1.00 per year to \$1,000 per year. Not-for-profit organizations have the opportunity to apply for a permissive tax exemption for all or part of their basic lease through the City's Permissive Tax Exemption Policy. The intent of the exemption is to support the provision of facilities that provide community services through social and leisure opportunities.

Examples of not-for-profit organizations who maintain lease agreements for community services are:

- Blackburn Hall and Heritage House
- British Columbia Northern Exhibition (former PGX)
- Caledonia Nordic Ski Club (Otway Ski Centre)
- Cranbrook Hill Greenway Society
- Elder Citizen Recreation Association (Senior's Centre)
- Fraser-Fort George Museum Society (Steam Train at Fort George Park)
- L.C. Gunn Trail
- Nechako Karate Club Advisory
- PG Gymnastics Society
- PG & District Senior Citizens Activity Centre Society
- PG Horse Society (Exhibition Park)
- Royal Canadian Legion (Connaught Youth Centre)
- YMCA of Northern BC

21 On average, 350 hours/yr. of SD57 sports fields are booked for adult sports programs, and since the SD57 maintains these fields, this results in a potential cost avoidance for the City of approximately \$150,000/yr.

22 This use was established in 2013 through an annual agreement that is subject to renewal.

City Rental Agreements

The City currently maintains 15 rental agreements with recreation, leisure and sport clubs or organizations who deliver programs through volunteers. These groups receive low cost rentals and exclusive use of specific ball diamonds, playing fields or other facility for renewable five year terms. Through the rental agreements there are shared responsibilities for maintenance²³ and this provides cost savings and efficiencies for the City. Through the City's Core Services Review process, annual rental fees have increased from \$10 to \$1,000/yr. The following groups hold rental agreements with the City:

- 6 & 4 Slo Pitch League Society (Nechako Ball Diamonds)
- Community Gardens PG Society (Milburn Avenue)
- North Cariboo Senior Soccer League (Exhibition Park)
- PG Horseshoe Club (Carrie Jane Gray Park)
- PG Ladies Fastball (Freeman Park)
- PG Master Lacrosse (Carrie Jane Gray Park)
- PG Minor Girls Softball (fields at Carrie Jane Gray Park and Freeman Park)
- PG Tennis Club (PG Golf and Curling Club)
- PG Women's Soccer Association (Exhibition Park)
- PG Youth Baseball Association (fields at Carrie Jane Gray Park, Harry Loder Park, Joe Martin and Volunteer PG)
- PG Youth Soccer Association (Rotary fields at Exhibition Park)
- Senior Men's Baseball (Citizen Field at Carrie Jane Gray Park)
- Spruce City Men's Fastball Association (Carrie Jane Gray Park)
- Spruce City Minor Boys Softball Association (Carrie Jane Gray Park)
- Supertrak BMX (Carrie Jane Gray Park)

Assessment

The delivery of community programming through the seven Community Associations is a cost-effective method for the City, given that Administration's primary role is to support a significant volunteer base that delivers the actual programming and activities. Administration provides this support role with an

²³ The City is typically responsible for maintenance of the turf, underground irrigation, bleachers and waste collection while providing the groups with waste receptacles, paint and spring start-up/winter close-out services. The City also provides an enhanced level of service for a fee in the form of fertilization and iron applications amongst other services. The user groups typically maintain above ground irrigation, hydro costs, waste pick-up, grounds maintenance, fences and indoor facilities. User groups typically fund capital improvements upon approval from the City.

equivalent of a quarter to a half of a full-time staff position. Since the “Community Development Model” is so reliant on volunteers, it is also an area of risk within this strategy.

Service delivery systems that are built upon volunteers need periodic assessment to look for emerging issues, opportunities for improvements and other methods to support the system. The current system was established almost 40 years ago and has evolved over time from a network of 23 Community Associations that were linked to school areas, to the current seven Community Associations that are linked to broad neighbourhood areas. Meanwhile, each Community Association continues to operate independently under their own Society.

There are some indications that Community Associations have a number of potential issues or concerns. For example, several of the Community Associations are struggling with overall capacity which is affecting board membership, volunteers and recruitment of activity leaders. On average, about a third of the PG Active Living Guide advertised program activities are cancelled largely due to a lack of volunteer activity leaders²⁴. There is a lack of training sessions and materials for new activity leaders, and for some Community Associations, a lack of capacity for volunteer recruitment. One or two Community Associations are particularly successful, mainly due to the experience and commitment of individual members that take on a leadership role with a high level of dedication. Succession planning will be needed for the future replacement of these key individuals to ensure the success of these Community Associations.

These potential issues or concerns indicate that it is time for Administration to conduct a consultative process with Community Associations to address emerging issues and trends, and to adopt improvements that better sustain the system for the long-term. In general, Administration is looking to improve the network of Community Associations by providing support to volunteers, developing strategies for volunteer leader succession, and increasing cooperation in order to sustain the operating model. The overall goal is to reduce the administrative burden for volunteers so they can focus on their core activities and ensure that they have the tools to be effective, while also feeling rewarded with an enjoyable volunteer experience.

The focus on potential improvements and efficiencies provides some assurances for the long-term viability of the Community Association network, which in turn supports this cost-effective service delivery model. Administration will conduct a consultative process with Community Associations to examine potential solutions that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consider ways that the network of seven Community Associations could work more collaboratively in order to reduce administrative work load, while still maintaining independence in program delivery.
- Explore ways to improve cross-learning between the Community Associations, increase the profile of the community work these groups do and create a more formal connection to the

²⁴ Community Associations within the Bowl area in particular have higher program cancellation rates versus those within outlying areas of the City.

City in order to facilitate better feedback, advice and recognition. Ultimately this could also improve the efficiency of the liaising and coordinating role played by Administration as well as improve the recruitment and succession of new volunteer leaders.

- Pursue opportunities to improve program registration by building off the successful approaches of Community Associations²⁵ and looking at collaborative approaches that could improve efficiencies.
- Through increased efficiencies (see above bullets) and an adjustment to staff work priorities, Administration can move towards improved support for Community Associations such as:
 - Better utilization of the City website to improve service and available materials and linkages.
 - Assist Community Associations in the provision of training materials and periodic training sessions for activity leaders.
 - Assist Community Associations with early notices of planned activities, soliciting interested activity leaders and gauging interest in other programming elements as a new preliminary step prior to creating the PG Active Living Guide.
 - Assist with the development of volunteer recruitment and succession planning of key leaders.
 - Create improved linkages and cooperation between Community Associations and other relevant organizations such as School District 57, Volunteer PG, Enhance PG, CNC and UNBC and the various Parent Advisory Committees.

25 For example, online registration may be more convenient for participants, although other Community Associations that use in-person registration have shown that the latter approach better facilitates recruitment of volunteers and activity leaders. In person registration has also been shown to be delivered relatively smoothly and efficiently.

5.0 Recreation Services



This section describes the various specific facilities or venues that are owned, operated, maintained, or shared by the City of Prince George. The key characteristics, condition and use of the facilities are provided as well as information on service delivery at that facility. Key challenges that are over and above normal operational issues are also described. Indoor recreation facilities are covered first, then outdoor facilities and venues.

5.1 Indoor Recreation Facilities

Indoor recreation facilities such as pools, arenas and gymnasiums provide a range of recreational activities within a controlled climate, which is especially important during winter months. In Prince George, many of the indoor recreation facilities were constructed in previous decades and, in some cases, do not meet current trends and demands for use, service delivery and facility management. Overall, the use of indoor recreation facilities continues to grow.

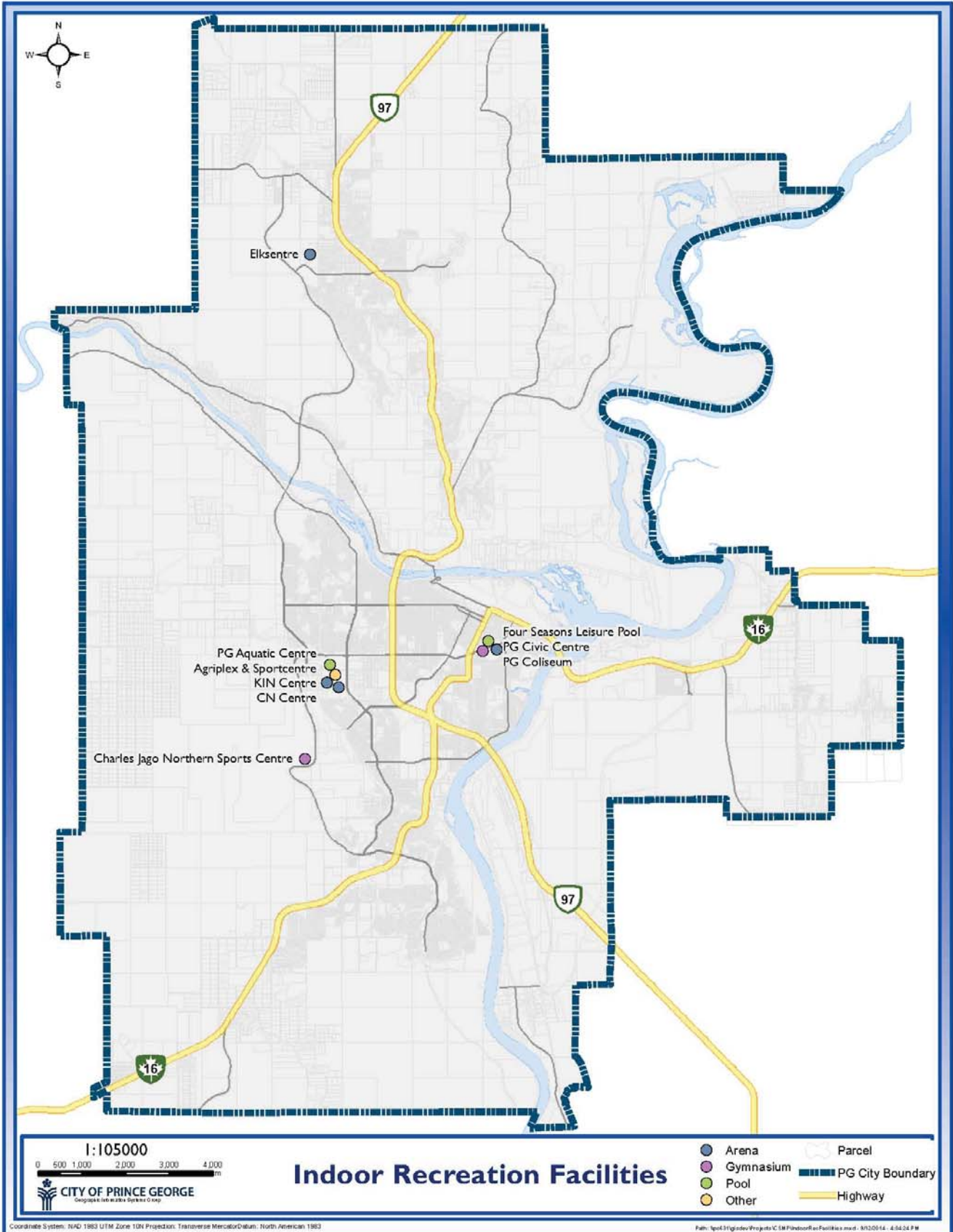
As part of the City’s Asset Management Planning, Administration has compiled data on the Estimated Service Life (ESL) of facilities, the current age and the estimated remaining service life for each facility. The data on the recreation facilities is provided in the following table.

Estimated Service Life of City of Prince George Indoor Recreation Facilities

Facility	Current Age	Average ESL ²⁶	% ESL Remaining
Four Seasons Leisure Pool	44	46	4%
PG Aquatic Centre	15	44	66%
CN Centre	18	47	62%
PG Coliseum	50	46	0%
Kin I (with major renovation)	1	49	96%
Kin II	14	46	70%
Kin III	30	44	32%
Elksentre	37	46	20%
PG Civic Centre (gymnasium)	20	42	52%
Exhibition Sports Centre	74	39	0%
Agriplex (Livestock Arenas)	34	48	29%

The location of the City’s various indoor recreation facilities are illustrated in the map on the following page.

26 This is the estimated years of expected operation, based on statistical studies on overall life expectancies of similar facilities.



A. Aquatics

The City of Prince George has two aquatic facilities²⁷: the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and the Prince George Aquatic Centre. The City's two aquatic facilities are operated through a combined budget of \$2.3 million in net operating expenses in 2013 with an average cost recovery rate of 40 percent²⁸.

Since 2011 the total revenues for both facilities have increased by nine (9) percent while expenses have increased by five (5) percent. The increased revenues are attributed to increases in swim fees, annual use, dual facility access passes, and grant funding²⁹. Increased facility expenses are attributed to increases in labour rates along with newer requirements for life guard staffing³⁰. About 70–75 percent of the expenses of the pools are related to staffing costs. An estimated total of 40-45 percent of the revenues is through the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and 60-65 percent of the revenues are from the Prince George Aquatic Centre. Aquatic fees are scheduled to increase by five (5) percent annually between 2014 and 2016³¹.

Aquatic programs and services are provided at both aquatic facilities through an "open swim" operating model³² that includes drop-in use, event bookings, subsidized swims³³, swim lessons³⁴, pool space rentals³⁵ and leadership programs.

The following provides a detailed description of the Four Seasons Leisure Pool and the Prince George Aquatic Centre.

Four Seasons Leisure Pool

The Four Seasons Leisure Pool (FSLP) opened in 1970 and was enhanced in 1983 with an additional aquatic leisure pool. The facility is located in the downtown adjacent to the Prince George Civic Centre, Public Library and Two Rivers Art Gallery. The FSLP has three different pools which feature the following amenities:

27 A number of local hotels also have pools within their facilities although community access and use are limited.

28 The 2013 operating expenses for the aquatic facilities was \$3.8 million total with \$1.5 million in revenue. The net operating recovery for both facilities is 40.39 percent.

29 The Swim to Survive program provided Grade 3 students from SD57 in Prince George with an opportunity for water safety instruction through a grant provided by the Lifesaving Society of BC.

30 Additional expenses are anticipated in 2014 and beyond due to increasing utility rates, carbon tax and inflation of materials and supplies.

31 The aquatic fees are increasing as part of the Core Services Review decisions of Council.

32 The other operating model is where pool times are blocked and scheduled for specific uses and public swimming is set for specific periods.

33 The Adapted Swim is free for anyone with a disability and their immediate family at FSLP. The Best For Less public swim is sponsored by Save-On Foods and Canadian Tire. Discounted swims are also provided to the SD57 through the Shared Use Agreement.

34 Over 1,090 swim lessons are provided annually for six (6) month old children to adults with an additional 815 private swimming lessons.

35 Pool space rentals amount to over 2,000 hours annually.

- **Main Pool** – 6 lane - 25 m lap pool with a 3.4 m deep dive tank, 1 m and 3 m springboards and rope swing.
- **Leisure Pool** – 65 m long water slide, large spray fountain and wheelchair ramp.
- **Tots Pool** – warm, shallow pool suited to babies and young children.

The FSLP also offers a whirlpool, dry sauna, multipurpose room (formally a fitness room) and two family change rooms. The pools in the facility allow a maximum capacity of 474 total bathers with 299 in the main pool, 150 in the leisure pool and 25 in the hot tub.

The FSLP is in declining condition as it is nearing the end of its life cycle at 44 years of age. The facility requires a minimum investment of over \$4 million for immediate repair to its roof and building envelope.

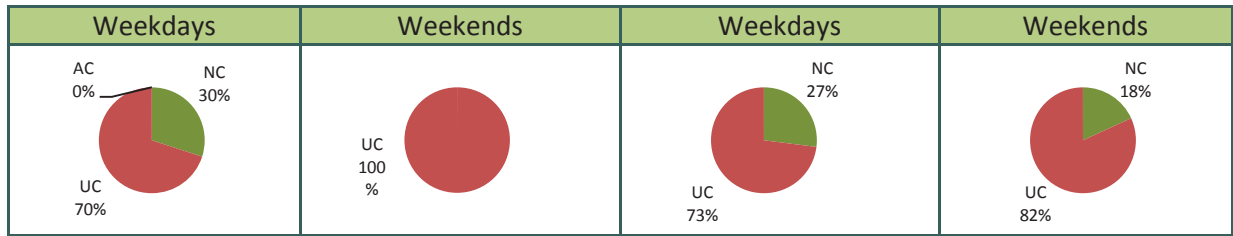
Use & Services

A key role for the Four Seasons Pool is that it is better suited for swimming lessons than the Aquatic Centre. The FSLP offers 65 percent of the City’s swimming lessons for the public, school and private groups or individuals, in addition to providing aquafit classes and training opportunities for the BC Special Olympics. The FSLP provides aquatic amenities tailored to families and seniors with shallow water, easy entry ladders, and gradual sloped entry into the leisure pool, tot’s pool, waterslide and calm waters. The FSLP does not have adequate wheelchair accesses or family change rooms.

Cautionary notes for interpreting the pool use capacity charts:

When Administration examined usage of the pools, the “maximum regulated capacity” (highest allowable use level based on pool size and design) was not used. Pools in Canada are rarely managed to their regulated capacity because this would significantly diminish the experience for users, and would lead to a decline in usage. Instead, Administration used a “reasonable use level” which is less than the regulated capacity but is considered the highest usage where bather satisfaction is maintained. The actual usage was measured against this “reasonable use level” for different periods. This provides a rough estimate on when the pool is at capacity, near capacity, or below capacity (see chart below). Caution is needed in the interpretation because of the different functions played by the pool. For example, when a swim class or club has the pool booked, the usage numbers may be well under the pool’s capacity but the pool is being fully utilized for its purpose at that time. Therefore the data over-represents periods with lower utilization (below capacity); however, the information can be used as a comparison between the two pools.

Prime Season Use – Four Seasons Leisure Pool	
Main Pool	Leisure Pool



AC=At Capacity >90% use **NC**=Near Capacity 70-90% use **UC**=Under Capacity <70% use

With the caveats above, the data shows that the Four Seasons Pool operates under capacity for 81 percent of the prime season between October to June. The more popular periods of use occur during weekday mornings and weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. During the summer months the FSLP is near capacity on weekday mornings and evenings with no periods of use at capacity. The main pool is at capacity in September during weekday evenings when the PGAC is closed for maintenance.

Prince George Aquatic Centre

The Prince George Aquatic Centre (PGAC) is a national standard facility which opened in December 1998. The PGAC is located within Exhibition Park adjacent to the Rotary soccer complex. The facility was built to house competitive aquatic sports and to provide state of the art water amenities such as a wave pool, lazy river and dive towers. The design of the facility allows flexibility to host several different types of events including short and long course swimming events. The primary amenities at the PGAC include the following:

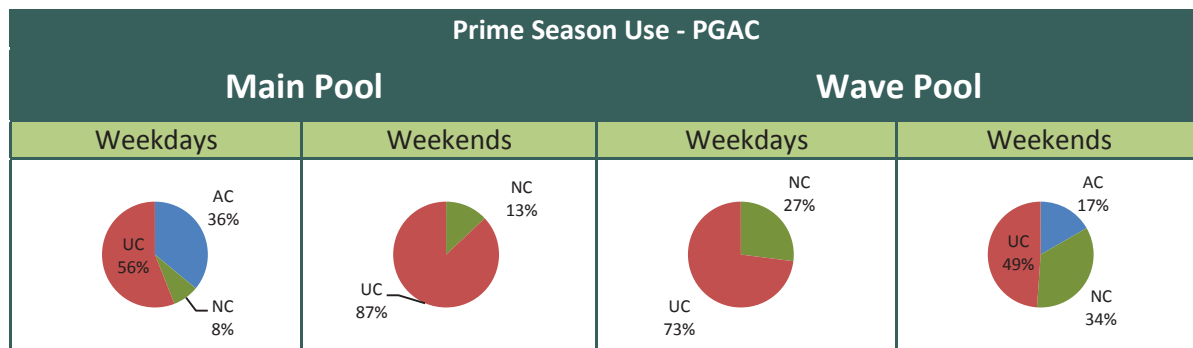
- **Main Pool** – 8 lane - 52 m lap pool with 2 movable bulkheads and movable pool floor.
- **Dive Tank** – 2 - 1m and 2 - 3m spring boards, diving towers at 5 m, 7.5 m and 10 m as well as a sparger and surface rippler in the dive tank.
- **Wave Pool** – bubbles, lazy river and overhead sprayers.
- **Fitness Centre** – 140 m² area with strength and cardiovascular machines.

The pools at the PGAC are complemented by other amenities including a whirl pool, steam room, dry sauna, six (6) private change rooms that include family change rooms, on-deck spectator seating capacity for 300, meeting room, concession, lobby, timing room and unlimited parking. The facility is wheelchair accessible with a disabled chair lift in the main pool. The pools in the facility allow a maximum capacity of 800 total bathers with 392 in the main pool/dive tank, and 383 in the wave pool. The PGAC has been designed and built to accommodate a potential future expansion in the southeast corner of the facility and a spectator viewing area overlooking the 50 m pool in the northeast. The PGAC requires upgrades and repairs that are consistent with the 15 year age of the facility.

Use & Services

The PGAC is home to the Barracuda and Pisces Swim Clubs as well as other swim groups such as synchronized swimming and water polo. The PGAC has hosted a number of regional and provincial swim meets including the Seniors Games, Special Olympics, provincial championships and the local PG Iceman. This facility will serve as the synchronized swimming venue for the 2015 Canada Winter Games. The PGAC is also used by the community for aquafit classes, swimming lessons and leadership courses for lifesaving and instruction, and for recreational swimming or water play by families, groups or individuals. Public use of the facility is limited on weekdays, during late afternoons and evenings and also on Sunday mornings.

As explained for the Four Seasons Leisure Pool, caution is applied when reviewing use data provided here for the PGAC³⁶. On average, during the prime season between October to June, the PGAC is under capacity for 65 percent of the prime season between October to June with an average of 12 percent of the use at capacity. The pool and wave pool are used most on weekday and week-end mornings and weekday evenings. During the summer months the PGAC does not reach capacity use, but is near capacity in the wave pool during weekday mornings and evenings, as well as during some weekend afternoons.



AC=At Capacity >90% use **NC=Near Capacity 70-90% use** **UC=Under Capacity <70% use**

Trends

The use of aquatic facilities is increasing nation-wide primarily for health and wellness but also for recreation, swimming and competitive training³⁷. Swimming in Canada is the 2nd most popular recreation activity for youth and the 3rd most popular activity for female adults³⁸. The CSRP Telephone Survey identified that swimming is the most popular indoor recreation activity in Prince George for all age groups. Based on a national average, municipal pools receive up to 4 - 5 annual swims per resident.

36 Caution is needed in the interpretation because of the different functions played by the pool the pool may be fully utilized for its purpose at that time with swim classes or other uses. Pools in Canada are rarely managed to their regulated capacity because this would significantly diminish the experience for users, which would lead to a decline in use.

37 Source: Echo Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study, 2011, City of Port Alberni.

38 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

Currently, Prince George has an average of five (5) visits per resident with a total of 390,000 estimated swims.

Prince George’s two pools provide a comparable level of service to the municipalities of Chilliwack and Kamloops, each supplying two aquatic facilities. Lethbridge has three aquatic facilities and Red Deer has four.

Supply of City Owned and Partnership Pools

Prince George Indoor Facility	Supply of Pools				Supply Ratio (Pop. 71,974)
	City	City Partner	School	Total	
Pools	2	0	0	2	1 : 35,987
City	Population			Pools	Supply Ratio
Chilliwack	77,936			2	1 : 38,968
Kamloops	85,678			2	1 : 42,839
Red Deer	90,564			4	1 : 22,641
Lethbridge	83,517			3	1 : 27,839
Comparable Community Averages				2.8	1 : 33,072

The CSRP Telephone Survey identified that swimming is the most popular indoor recreation activity for youth, adults and seniors. Additional findings of the survey confirmed that the two aquatic facilities are the most well-used indoor recreation facilities in Prince George with the Aquatic Centre used by 61 percent of the community more than once per year and 43 percent using the Four Seasons Pool more than once per year³⁹. The use rates for Prince George youth are higher with 93 percent of youth using the Aquatic Centre more than once a year and 70 percent of youth using the Four Seasons Pool more than once a year⁴⁰.

National trends are seeing aquatic facilities evolving their programming services and facilities to accommodate an aging society, individuals with mobility challenges, and the growing demand for youth programming. There is an increasing focus on programming that is tailored to health, wellness and therapeutic benefits for all ages and ability levels. Since drowning is the second leading cause of preventable death in children under 10 years of age⁴¹, swimming skill development for youth is a key focus⁴².

39 The survey also identified that the PGAC is used by 37% of the community more than once per month and the FSLP by 18% of the community within the same frequency.
 40 The survey also identified that the PGAC is used by 49% of local youth in the community more than once per month and the FSLP by 29% of local youth within the same frequency.
 41 Drowning is also increasing amongst the aging population and therefore swimming skill development for seniors is also a focus of programming.
 42 Source: Lifesaving BC, 2014.

Aquatic facilities are also facing rising operational costs with changes to a number of provincial regulations and standards, resulting in a requirement for pool safety plans and additional lifeguards.

Assessment

The Four Seasons Leisure Pool is nearing its Estimated Service Life (ESL) of 46 years and significant capital investment is needed to address immediate requirements with the roof and building envelope. There is a specific need to assess the medium to long-term options for this pool facility and to undertake a full condition assessment with estimates on repairs and replacements. As such, Administration is preparing a separate comprehensive Aquatic Needs Assessment report that will evaluate both the PG Aquatic Centre and the Four Seasons Leisure Pool for City of Prince George Council for early 2015.

In general, the use levels of the PG Aquatic Centre and Four Seasons Leisure Pool are comparable to other similar communities and are within the national average with five annual pool visits per capita. As a continuous management practice, Administration has offered different programming elements to provide improved service and to increase use. Feedback from the public and users indicate general satisfaction with programming offered at the two pools and the wide range of opportunities they provide for residents and aquatic clubs.

However, new aquatic facilities in other communities are increasing use of pools by providing amenities such as newly designed (more exciting) water-slides. While there are no plans at this time for a new water slide at the PG Aquatic Centre, the re-installation of the wave-generator at the PG Aquatic Centre is expected to increase use. In the medium to long-term, the City should assess its pool amenities to determine if additional features are required to address the changing trends in user expectations.

Anecdotal information suggests that a 40 percent cost recovery rate for the two pools is within the lower end of cost recovery rates for other pools operated by similar sized municipalities. Staffing costs are in the range of 70-75 percent of the operating costs and City lifeguards are at the high end of the salary range for lifeguards in Canada. Prior to the new Ministry of Health regulations, there was a requirement for one (1) lifeguard for every 100 swimmers. Currently there is a requirement for two (2) lifeguards for between 41 and 80 swimmers, adding to the cost of swimming pool operations. The two pools are open for use and staffed between 11 – 16 hours each day, with use spread out over this extended time period.

More comprehensive analysis of the cost recovery rates, operating models, pool condition assessments, current pool designs and amenities, and use patterns will be included in Administration's Aquatic Needs Assessment report to Council.

B. Arenas

The City of Prince George owns and operates six ice arenas, comprising the only indoor ice facilities within the community. The arenas are maintained by the City, and in 2012 the community arenas (not including CN Centre) had average annual gross revenue of \$240,000 per ice sheet with gross annual operating expenses averaging \$380,000 per ice sheet⁴³ showing an average cost recovery 63 percent. This results in net operating expenses of over \$727,000 in 2012⁴⁴ for the five community arenas, not including the CN Centre⁴⁵.

Between 2011 and 2012, the total revenues for the arenas increased by 1.9 percent while expenses decreased by close to 1.7 percent⁴⁶. The increased revenues are mainly attributed to an increase in rental fees of 3.75 percent annually since 2009⁴⁷. Operational expenditures have decreased from energy cost savings due to retrofitting of energy efficient boilers, furnaces and lighting⁴⁸. Arena fees are scheduled to increase by five (5) percent annually between 2014 and 2016⁴⁹.

The arenas are used during the ice season for hockey, figure skating, speed skating, ringette, and during the dry floor season for roller hockey and lacrosse. Other ice arena users include Community Associations who operate skating and hockey programs, and also the School District 57 who provide a hockey program as part of their school curriculum⁵⁰. The use of arenas is scheduled using guidelines where youth receive priority on weekends and after school on weekdays, and where adults are scheduled into the remaining available time slots. Special events at the CN Centre take priority over scheduled recreational use.

The City's ice arenas are at capacity⁵¹ an average of 76 percent of the operating hours, while they are under capacity⁵² an average of 20 percent. The ice arena use has been consistent over the past five (5) years. The operating hours for ice arenas is from 6am to 12pm with primetime use occurring weekdays between 5pm and 10pm and all hours on weekends. The ice seasons vary between the arenas, with the

43 The PG Coliseum had higher gross annual operating costs in 2012 at close to \$600,000.

44 The 2012 total operating expenses for the six (6) arenas was \$1.92 million total with \$1.19 million in revenue. 2012 operating budgets were used for this analysis as the Kin Centre was only in operation for part of 2013 due to major upgrades at this facility.

45 The CN Centre operating expenses for recreational use are included within the total operating budget of \$1.2 million in 2012 for CN Centre.

46 The revenues and expenditures from 2013 were not used given that Kin 1 was under construction and only operated for part of that year.

47 The 2013 arena rental fees were reviewed as part of the Core Services Review and were determined to be one of the lowest rates of the comparable communities.

48 Other operational expenses such as materials, supplies and contractors have increased.

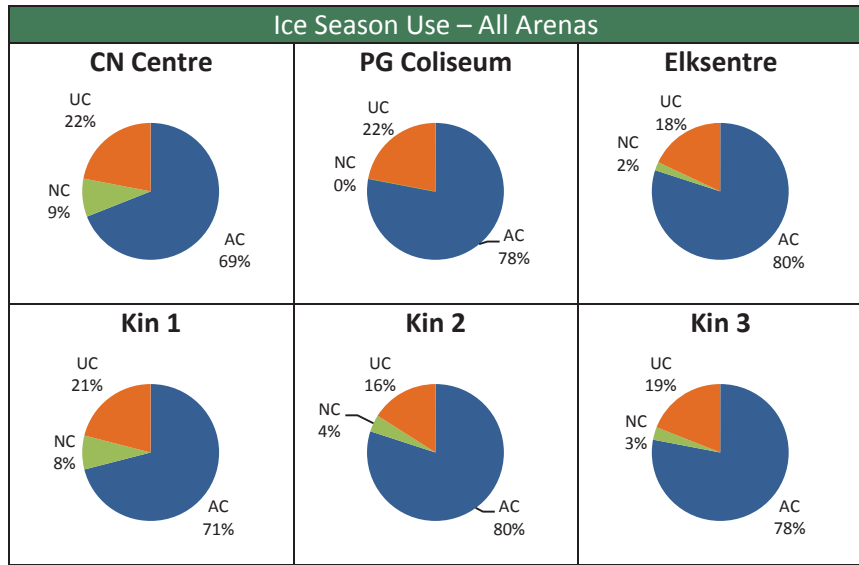
49 The 2014 hourly fees for all six (6) arenas range during the regular season from \$72.00 to \$268.25 for ice rentals and \$49.75 to \$149.00 for dry floor rentals.

50 The School District 57 ice arena use was established in 2013 and has been accommodated through the Shared Use Agreement.

51 At capacity is considered >90% usage.

52 Under capacity is consider <70% usage.

Elksentre having the longest season at 10 and a half months and the Kin 3 arena having the shortest season at seven (7) months. The recreational use during the dry floor season is focused at the Kin Centre arenas with limited provisions at the PG Coliseum⁵³.



AC=At Capacity >90% use **NC**=Near Capacity 70-90% use
UC=Under Capacity <70% use

The following table provides a summary of the ice arenas and is followed by a detailed description of each facility and their associated use.

53 The PG Coliseum is used from the end of April to mid-May when dry floor space is unavailable at the Kin Centre.

Inventory of City of Prince George Arenas

Ice Arena Facility	Location	Sheet Size	Ice Season	Dry Floor Recreation Use	City Net Operating Expenses (2012)	Community Group Participants	Est. Age of Arena	Regular Season Use At Capacity
CN Centre	Exhibition Park	Min. 26m x 61m Max. 30.5m x 61m	Mid-August to March	No	n/a*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor Hockey • Adult Hockey • Figure Skating • Ringette • Speed Skating 	19	69%
Elksentre	Heather Road Park (Hart)	26m x 61m	July to mid-May	No	\$101,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor Hockey • Figure Skating 	38	80%
Kin 1	Exhibition Park	Min. 26m x 61m Max. 30.5m x 61m	Sept. to mid-April	Mid-May to mid-July	\$279,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor Hockey • Adult Hockey • Figure Skating • Ringette • Speed Skating • School District 57 • Lacrosse • Roller Hockey 	1**	71%
Kin 2	Exhibition Park	26m x 61m	Sept. to mid-April	Mid-May to mid-July			40	80%
Kin 3	Exhibition Park	26m x 61m	Sept. to March	Mid-May to June			40	78%
PG Coliseum	Downtown	26m x 60m	July to March	End of April to mid-May	\$347,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor Hockey • Adult Hockey • Figure Skating • Ringette • Speed Skating 	56	78%
Averages							39	76%

* The CN Centre operating expenses for recreational use are included within the total operating budget of \$1.2 million in 2012 for CN Centre.

** Kin 1 was significantly upgraded in 2013.

CN Centre

The CN Centre is the City's premiere multi-sport arena that offers amenities suitable for major exhibitions, concerts, and conventions in addition to hockey and ice sports. The facility was established in 1995 and features a single ice surface that is expandable to an Olympic size. The CN Centre is located at Exhibition Park and is connected to the Kin Centre arenas. The combined facilities of the CN Centre and Kin Centre provide the only arena in BC that currently features two Olympic to National Hockey League (NHL) size convertible rinks. The CN Centre facility features the following amenities:

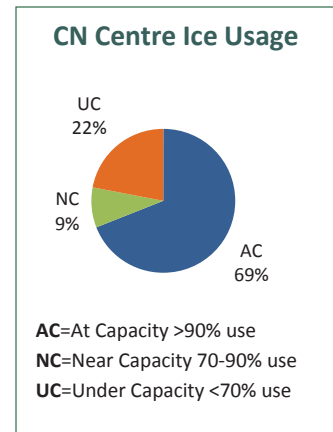
- Hockey seating capacity is 5,967, which includes 24 wheelchair and 170 standing room.
- Concert seating capacity up to 7,000.
- 14 private suites, hospitality rooms and in-house banquet rooms.
- 5 dressing rooms, official's rooms, office space, storage and staff rooms.
- Full range of audio, visual, electrical and internet connections.
- Kitchen with food service, 4 concessions, 8 food kiosks and several beverage outlets.
- Concrete concourse (indoor walking program in the winter).

- Designated tour and transport bus accessibility.
- Lit parking with a capacity for 3,000 (shared parking at Exhibition Park).

The CN Centre is close to 20 years old and a number of scheduled capital upgrades have been identified that are consistent with the age of the facility. An arena condenser and DDC HVAC computer are currently being upgraded in 2014 while a new arena board system has been planned for 2015. Additional facility upgrades are also being investigated, including roof replacement, score clock upgrade, sound system upgrade, building exterior improvements and the replacement of various equipment and facilities in the interior.

The CN Centre is used for a wide range of ice and dry floor events. The ice surface has hosted National, Provincial championships in hockey, curling, speed skating, ringette and other sport training purposes. During the 2015 Canada Winter Games (CWG) the venue will be used for both men’s and women’s hockey, as well as for the Opening Ceremonies. The Prince George Cougars are the tenant team of the facility and represent the City in the Western Hockey League. The ice surface is also used by minor hockey, figure skating, ringette, speed skating and adult recreational hockey. The dry floor space of the CN Centre is used for special events such as concerts, rodeos, trade shows and conventions. The concourse is used by the public through the People in Motion Walking Program which accommodates weekday walking from late fall to early spring.

The CN Centre is at capacity 69 percent of the time during the ice season from mid-August to March. The periods of high use occurs weekdays after 5pm and on weekends with recreational use subject to availability from special event bookings and PG Cougar games. The facility is under capacity on weekdays during mid-mornings and in the early afternoon. The facility is near capacity on weekday nights after 10pm.



Kin Centre Ice Arenas

The Kin Centre is a versatile facility that accommodates community use and special events. The Kin Centre was established in the 1970’s through the support of the Kinsmen Club of Prince George. The facility features three ice surfaces that are housed within a 4,650 m² venue located directly adjacent to the CN Centre in Exhibition Park. The amenities at the Kin Centre include:

- **Kin 1 Arena** - One ice surface at 26 m x 61 m convertible for Olympic size ice to 30.5 m to 61 m, seating capacity for 750 and 5 full size dressing rooms.
- **Kin 2 Arena** - One ice surface at 26 m x 61 m, bleacher and balcony seating capacity for 300 plus portable bleachers for additional seating of 400 along the north end of the building, with 5 full size dressing rooms.
- **Kin 3 Arena** - One ice surface at 26 m x 61 m, bleacher seating capacity for 250 and 4 full size dressing rooms.

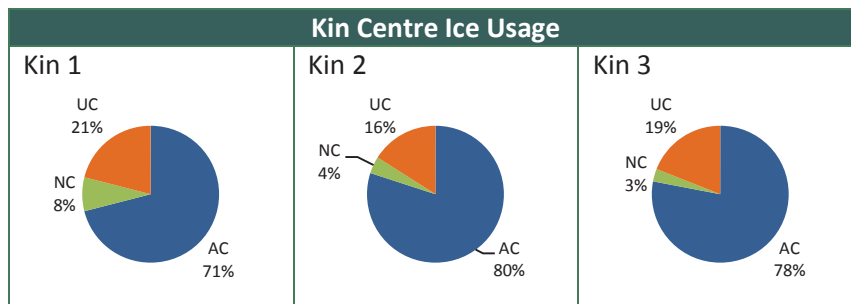
- 462 m² shared lounge area, concession and upper viewing area that can view Kin 1 and Kin 2 surfaces.
- Official's rooms, office space, storage and two meeting rooms.
- Lit parking with a capacity for 3,000 (shared parking at Exhibition Park).

In early 2013, as part of the \$16.5 million Kin Enhancement Project, Kin 1 received significant upgrades including an expandable and enlarged ice surface that can accommodate a higher level of speed skating training and competition. Additional Kin 1 arena enhancements included an arena board system suitable for sledge hockey, improved accessibility through the Kin Arenas and a central lounge and food services area. The Kin 2 arena was also upgraded with five (5) new dressing rooms, expanded seating by of the lounge area and a warm up area in the north end that can also be used for portable seating.

Additional Kin 2 and Kin 3 upgrades are being investigated and could occur over the next decade. These include replacement of roofs, score clocks for Kin 2 and Kin 3, and replacement of flooring in Kin 3.

The Kin Centre is used during the ice season for minor hockey, adult hockey, ringette, figure skating, speed skating and School District 57 hockey programs. The ice surfaces have been used to host national and provincial championships for hockey, speed skating, figure skating, lacrosse and ringette. During the 2015 CWG the venue will be for speed skating and figure skating in Kin 1 and men's and women's hockey in Kin 2. The dry floor space of the Kin Centre is used by groups such as lacrosse and roller hockey, and also for special events ranging from home shows to the British Columbia Northern Exhibition.

The Kin Centre arenas are at capacity an average of 80 percent of the time during the ice season. The Kin Centre arenas have varying ice seasons that range from September to mid-April (7.5 months) at Kin 1 and Kin 2 and September to March (7 months) at Kin 3. The facility is under capacity on weekdays during mid-mornings and again in the early afternoon. The facility is near capacity on weekday nights after 10pm.



AC=At Capacity >90% use **NC=Near Capacity 70-90% use**
UC=Under Capacity <70% use

Consultation with ice arena user groups suggested that groups are satisfied with the Kin Centre improvements such as the Olympic ice surface with dividable ice, the supportive staff and change rooms⁵⁴. The user groups suggested additional improvements to the Kin Centre including better logistics, affordable food and beverage services, increased storage, privacy curtains for the off-ice training area and additional paved parking areas.

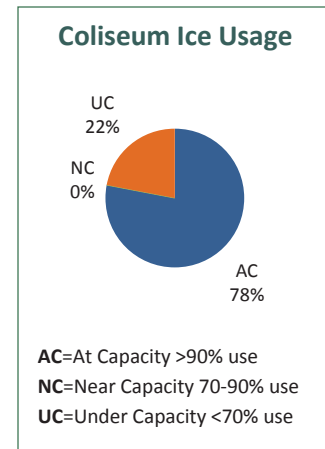
Prince George Coliseum

The Prince George Coliseum is the community’s oldest arena and is centrally located within the Downtown. The PG Coliseum was developed by the City in 1958 and features the following amenities:

- One ice surface at 26 m x 60 m.
- Stadium seating capacity for 1,750 and standing room for 340.
- 6 dressing rooms, 145 m² multi-purpose room, referee’s room, meeting room, office and storage rooms.
- Wooden concourse (indoor walking program in the winter).
- Limited parking; shared with City Hall.

Capital upgrades and repairs are being investigated for the Coliseum including a replacement of the roof, flooring refrigerator plant, dehumidifier and sound system.

The ice surface is used for minor hockey, adult hockey, ringette, figure skating and speed skating. The Prince George Spruce Kings are the tenant team of the Prince George Coliseum and represent the City in the British Columbia Hockey League. The City provides public skating at the Coliseum with a two hour skate on Saturdays. The ice surface has been used for national and provincial championships for hockey, speed skating and ringette. During the 2015 CWG the venue will be utilized for ringette. The dry floor space of the Coliseum is used for special events ranging from the exhibitions to rodeos. The wooden concourse is also used by the public through the People in Motion Walking Program which accommodates weekday walking from late fall to early spring.



The PG Coliseum is at capacity 78 percent of the time during the ice season from July to March. The facility is under capacity on some weekday mornings and afternoons.

Consultation with the ice arena user groups suggested that the Coliseum has larger dressing rooms, although the older facility does not have an off-ice training area and its location can present some security challenges.

⁵⁴ The CSMP community engagement included a focus group discussion with ice users. Representatives from recreational hockey, speed skating and figure skating attended and provided their input.

Elksentre

The Elksentre was developed by the City in the Hart community area in 1976 through the support of the Elks Club. The facility features the following amenities:

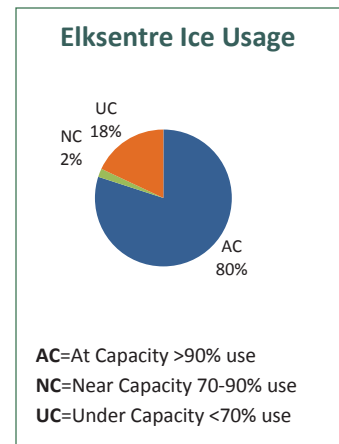
- One ice surface at 26 m x 61 m with refrigeration plant capacity to add a twin surface.
- Bleacher seating capacity for 300.
- 5 dressing rooms, referee's room and storage space.
- Parking capacity for 250.

Capital repairs and upgrades are being investigated for the Elksentre including the replacement of the roof, flooring and parking lot among other upgrades.

The Elksentre is primarily used for recreational hockey and for figure skating. The City also provides public skating sessions at the Elksentre with a one and half hour family skate on Sundays and a teen skate on Fridays also for one and half hours.

The Elksentre is at capacity 80 percent of the time during the ice season from July to mid-May. The facility is under-utilized throughout various times during much of the weekdays.

Consultation with the ice arena user groups suggested that the Elksentre has limited space to accommodate potential off-ice training and that spectator seating areas could be enhanced with additional heating.



Trends

Hockey is Canada's 2nd most popular recreation activity for adult males and the 3rd most popular activity for youth⁵⁵. Nationally, there has been a slight decline in youth hockey participation, likely attributed to costs and parent perceptions around fun, safety and time commitments. Hockey Canada is working on strategies to address the potential barriers and increase participation. Girls hockey participation rates grew across the nation by close to three times between 1998 and 2005⁵⁶ while women's hockey increased by 3.3 percent between 2000 and 2006⁵⁷.

The CSR Telephone Survey indicated that of the top five (5) indoor recreation activities that the City has a direct role in, ice sports such as hockey or skating are the 4th most popular indoor recreation activities in Prince George for adults, the 5th most popular indoor activity for youth between 12 and 17 years old, and the 2nd most popular indoor activity for youth less than 12 years old. While youth hockey

55 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

56 Source: Sport Participation in Canada, 2005, Ifedi.

57 Source: Hockey Canada.

is still popular in Prince George, there has been a recent decrease in youth hockey enrolment, but it is not known if this reflects a longer-term trend.

Other ice arena sports are experiencing varying participation levels. In Canada, participation rates in lacrosse are increasing for youth between 5 to 18 year olds⁵⁸. National youth participation rates for figure skating have remained stable between 1998 and 2010 while floor hockey grew by one (1) percent between 2005 and 2010⁵⁹. Ringette has grown nationally and was currently at its highest membership rates in Canada in 2013 and 2014⁶⁰.

The CSRP Telephone Survey identified that ice arenas are the 2nd most well-used indoor recreation facilities in Prince George with use by 36 percent of the community more than once a year and use by more than 19 percent once a month. Fifty-seven (57) percent of youth in Prince George use the ice arenas at least once a year and 27 percent of youth use them monthly. Most users are satisfied with the arena facilities, although nine (9) percent of residents indicated dissatisfaction primarily from those wanting more ice time.

There are a number of growing trends in the delivery of ice arenas. Arenas, such as the Kin 1 arena, are being developed or upgraded to include energy efficient systems due to rising utility costs. Some of the modern designs for ice arenas feature two or four ice sheets, as well as leisure ice surfaces for free form skating. Facilities may also feature accommodations for multiple user groups through removable turf mechanisms. There is also a growing trend to include ice arenas within multi-purpose centres, many of which are pursued through partnerships, such as with Kelowna's Capital News Centre.

Supply

The supply of six (6) ice arenas in Prince George is better than the average supply provided by comparable communities. The communities of Kamloops, Lethbridge and Red Deer have six (6) ice arenas while Chilliwack has four ice arenas.

58 Source: Canadian Lacrosse Association.

59 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

60 Source: Ringette Canada, June 2014.

Supply of City owned and Partnership Arenas

Prince George Indoor Facility	Supply of Arenas				Supply Ratio (Pop. 71,974)
	City	City Partner	School	Total	
Arenas	6	0	0	6	1 : 11,996
City	Population			Arenas	Supply Ratio
Chilliwack	77,936			4	1 : 19,484
Kamloops	85,678			6	1 : 14,280
Red Deer	90,564			6	1 : 15,094
Lethbridge	83,517			6	1 : 13,920
Comparable Community Averages				5.5	1 : 15,694

Assessment

Overall the supply of community arenas in Prince George is meeting the current demand. While use of the arenas extends to 10:30pm for league play, in other communities these rental periods for ice can extend well beyond this time where demand warrants it. The arena facilities are well-used and both users and clubs are satisfied, particularly with the recent improvements such as the new Kin 1 renovation. The use trends and costs for arenas will continue to be monitored.

Capital repairs and upgrades are being investigated by Administration for the Elksentre, including the replacement of the roof, flooring and parking lot among other upgrades.

Recent facility life cycle assessments conducted by Administration indicate that the PG Coliseum has zero percent remaining on its Estimated Service Life. As such, Administration is conducting a Condition Assessment of the PG Coliseum beginning in late 2014. The Condition Assessment will be undertaken by engineering specialists under contract and will provide a list of needed repairs and refurbishments in order to extend the service life of the facility. The results of the condition assessment, along with potential options, will be brought to Council in 2015.

C. Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre

The Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre (NSC) at UNBC offers a variety of recreation amenities to support fitness and sport development for both the university and the community. The facility was developed in 2007 at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and features an indoor field house, gymnasium, three lane – 280 m elevated running track, two international sized squash courts, fitness studio, weight room, multi-purpose room, reception, concession, offices, change rooms, storage facilities, washrooms and on-site support services.

The NSC is managed through a partnership between the City, UNBC and the Northern Sport Centre Limited (NSCL) through a three way agreement where the NSCL is responsible for the operation, and the

City and UNBC each provide \$300,000/yr. funding and Board-level oversight. The 2007 agreement is for a 30 year term.

The NSC is used by groups such as UNBC athletics, various community sports organizations, School District 57 and PacificSport Northern BC. The community use groups mainly include adult soccer, youth baseball and youth football. The memberships for the NSC totaled 3,884 in 2013/2014 which has increased by 90 percent over the past five (5) years⁶¹. The NSC estimates that usage generally includes one-third community use, one-third UNBC, and one-third NSC members⁶². The NSCL has indicated that their facility is at capacity and that they will be reviewing options to meet the future demand for use⁶³.

NSC Indoor Field House

The NSC features an indoor field house that includes two indoor soccer fields⁶⁴ with FIFA approved artificial turf on an earthen base. The field spaces are divided by a movable curtain that can be retracted to create one square field space. The field house is not an official full-sized field required for competitive adult field sports⁶⁵. The field use is supported by a batting cage amongst various support facilities at the NSC. The field house turf conditions are showing some signs of deterioration due to heavy use.

The NSC field house recreation rates are discounted for community not-for-profit groups at 50 percent for youth and 20 percent for adults. The prime time⁶⁶ recreation rates are \$60.49/hour for youth, \$90.74/hour for adults and \$120.98/hour at the standard rate⁶⁷.

The NSC field house is estimated to have one third use by the community, one third by UNBC and one third by NSC members⁶⁸. UNBC use is mainly by varsity and intramural groups while community groups include youth and adult soccer, baseball, football, rugby and field hockey. Many of these groups use the facility for indoor training during the winter when outdoor sports fields are not available. The use of the NSC facility and field house is currently at capacity⁶⁹.

In terms of the comparison communities, only the communities of Lethbridge and Kamloops provide indoor field houses, with Lethbridge having two (2) indoor field houses in their inventory.

61 Source: Northern Sport Centre Limited.

62 NSC Manager, Aaron LeBlanc - per. comm.

63 Source: NSCL presentation to Council (June 2014).

64 The fields are a dimension of 27 m x 58 m each and a total 55 m span.

65 A FIFA regulation size field is 45m x 90m while a CFL regulation size field is 59m x 137m including end zones.

66 Prime time rates apply after 3pm weekdays and on weekends between September and May.

67 The 2014 recreation rates are currently at \$36.00/hour for youth, \$58.00/hour for adults and \$72.50/hour at the standard rate.

68 NSC Manager, Aaron LeBlanc - per. comm.

69 Northern Sport Centre Limited – June 2014, Presentation to Council.

The Prince George Youth Soccer Association (PGYSA) also has an indoor field house with two smaller fields near Duchess Park Secondary School. The City is not a partner in this facility and the use of the facility is limited by the PGYSA to their members or other groups at their discretion.

NSC Gymnasium

The NSC features a large 2,045 m² gymnasium, with moveable walls that can accommodate three full sized basketball courts, four volleyball courts, eight badminton courts and spectator seating amongst other gymnasium uses. The NSC gymnasium is used one third of the time by community groups, one third by UNBC and one third by the NSC members⁷⁰. The use of the NSC facility and gymnasium is currently at capacity⁷¹.

The NSC gymnasium recreation rates are discounted for community not-for-profit groups at 50 percent for youth and by 20 percent for adults. The prime time⁷² recreation rates are \$41.39/hour for youth, \$62.00/hour for adults and \$82.77/hour at the standard rate⁷³.

Trends

Growing national trends for multi-purpose centres indicate that there is an increasing demand for these facilities due to operational efficiencies, the ability to accommodate individuals and families with diverse recreation and sport interests (i.e. efficient for users) and the ability to provide a wider range of supporting services. This trend for multi-purpose centres is also leading to a growing number of partnerships between municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and commercial enterprises.

The demand for indoor field houses is increasing for local groups such as youth baseball and youth soccer⁷⁴. This demand is supported by stable participation rates in soccer as well as the growth of football (see Section 5.2.C.). A number of these sports now train year-round and require indoor fields during the winter months. The Northern Sport Centre field house accommodates many of these user groups and demand is high so this can present scheduling limitations.

Assessment

The Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre (NSC) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) is functioning as both a well-managed and well-used facility that meets the overall service objectives while providing a significant community benefit. Aside from regular expected operating and maintenance issues, there are no strategic level issues that need to be addressed through this plan.

70 NSC Manager, Aaron LeBlanc - per. comm.

71 Northern Sport Centre Limited – June 2014, Presentation to Council.

72 Prime time rates apply after 3pm weekdays and on weekends between September and May.

73 The 2014 recreation rates are currently at \$36.00/hour for youth, \$58.00/hour for adults and \$72.50/hour at the standard rate.

74 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

Given that the NSC has been in operation for seven (7) years and that the City has a long-term commitment to contribute \$300,000 annually towards this facility, Administration is interested in gaining a better understanding of the benefits and satisfaction levels for NSC community users.

In general, the success of the NSC and the YMCA of Northern BC as multi-use centres suggests that the City will look to future opportunities for partnerships using this model as a way of increasing efficiencies, addressing costs, and improving services.

D. Gymnasiums

The City owns and operates one gymnasium space at the Prince George Civic Centre that primarily serves as a multi-functional auditorium for conventions, events and community recreation. Another 33 gymnasiums are located in School District #57 (SD57) schools and are available to the community through the Shared Use Agreement between the City and SD57. The community is also provided with access to the gymnasium at the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre (NSC) through a partnership with the University of Northern British Columbia (see Section 5.1.C.). Additional gymnasium space, with limited public access, is also available at the College of New Caledonia and at various private schools.

Prince George Civic Centre (PGCC) Auditorium

The PGCC was developed in 1994 and functions as the City's premiere convention centre the facility features a 1,670 m² auditorium that is primarily used for special events with accommodations for community recreational use. The auditorium space features a maple wood-sprung floor that is lined for basketball, volleyball and badminton. The auditorium can be divided into three separate gymnasium spaces through moveable partitions and can accommodate recreational sports with six (6) mobile basketball hoops, three volleyball courts, nine badminton courts and an electronic score clock. The PGCC auditorium is equipped with telescopic seating for 585 people. The auditorium space has been utilized to host several provincial events for martial arts and gymnastics. Recreational use of the auditorium is mainly from adult women's basketball, private schools and for commercial recreational operators. The PGCC auditorium flooring and equipment are near the end of their expected life span and are showing signs of significant wear.

In 2013 there were 13 recreational bookings compared to 56 in 2006. The decline in use is attributed to the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre (NSC) opening in 2007 which features a gymnasium that is available for community use. Another factor in lower recreational use of the PGCC auditorium is that it is difficult to book regularly scheduled recreation programs when other major events are also booked periodically in the auditorium. Over the past five (5) years the use of the PGCC auditorium has averaged 12 to 18 bookings per year.

The PGCC auditorium recreation rates are discounted for community not-for-profit groups at 50 percent for youth and 20 percent for adults. The recreation rates are set to increase by 10 percent between 2014 and 2016 as part of the Core Services Review, which will result in 2016 fees of \$44.00/hour for youth, \$70.50/hour for adults and \$88.00/hour at the standard rate⁷⁵.

School District #57 Gymnasiums

The 33 school gymnasiums are located within secondary and elementary schools that were predominantly constructed during the 1970s. The gymnasiums vary in size and are dispersed throughout the community. The six (6) larger gymnasiums are in secondary schools and feature hardwood flooring with floor spaces and ceiling heights suitable for most gymnasium sports⁷⁶. The 23 elementary school gymnasiums are smaller⁷⁷ and primarily feature hardwood flooring with some gymnasiums that include linoleum flooring or sustainable fiber flooring.

The school gymnasiums are booked by school and community users through the City as part of the Shared Use Agreement. The school gymnasiums are available during the school year from September to June⁷⁸ and available weekdays from 5pm to 10pm. Both high school and elementary school gymnasiums are also available on weekends between 8am and 10pm pending availability. The John McGinnis Centre is available year-round within the same hours of availability as elementary school gymnasiums. The school staff provides nets and other equipment through special arrangements.

The gymnasium rates, established through the Shared Use Agreement provide free rental to Community Associations and not-for-profit youth groups. Fifty (50) percent discount rates are provided for adult not-for-profit groups, while standard rates apply to all other user groups. All community user groups are required to carry \$3 million liability insurance. The gymnasium rates are scheduled to increase by 10 percent between 2014 and 2016⁷⁹.

The school gymnasiums are used by a variety of community groups, including community youth recreation groups, Community Associations, girl guides and boy scouts and the ski club. The most popular gymnasiums include those at the John McGinnis Centre, Duchess Park Secondary⁸⁰, Ecole Lac

75 The 2014 recreation rates are currently at \$36.00/hour for youth, \$58.00/hour for adults and \$72.50/hour at the standard rate.

76 The high school gymnasiums are an average size of 930 m² (31 m x 31 m)⁷⁶ with ceiling heights between 6.1 and 7.6 m. The largest gymnasium is 1,658 m² and is located within Duchess Park Secondary School.

77 The elementary school gymnasiums are an average size of 370 m² with ceiling heights typically around 5 m.

78 Schools are not available for community use on all school holidays unless otherwise approved by the School District 57. Gymnasiums are also available on statutory holidays but are charge custodial overtime rates.

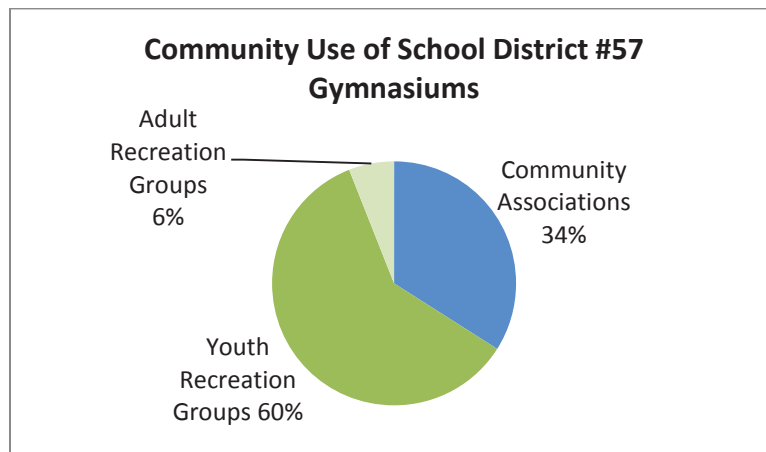
79 The 2014 rates for not-for-profit adult group rates is \$33.50/hour fee for secondary school gyms and \$31.25/hour fee for elementary school gymnasiums, and a standard rate of \$67.00/hour fee for secondary school gyms and \$62.50/hour fee for elementary school gymnasiums.

80 The Duchess Park Secondary School gymnasium is the biggest high school gym in Prince George at 1,658 m² (52 m x 32 m).

des Bois, Southridge Elementary and Prince George Secondary due to their larger size and ceiling heights that can accommodate adult recreation activities⁸¹.

User data shows that the school gymnasiums receive significant use by the community. During the 2013/2014 school season, the gymnasiums received over 3,000 community bookings which resulted in 6,400 hours, which is 69 percent of the total booked use of gymnasiums⁸². However, over the previous five (5) year period, the bookings for community use averaged 79 percent of the overall gymnasium use.

Within the total community bookings, youth and adult community groups represented 66 percent of the community use while Community Associations bookings encompassed 34 percent of the use.



Of the comparable municipalities, only Lethbridge has access to school gymnasiums, similar to the arrangement between the City of Prince George and the SD57. As such, in comparison, Prince George has the most gymnasiums per capita that have community access.

Trends

Gymnasium use continues to be stable with recreational sports and various unstructured fitness programs. Gymnasium sports that include badminton, basketball and volleyball continue to be within the top 10 participation sports across Canada since 1992⁸³. The CSRP Telephone Survey indicated that of the top five (5) indoor recreation activities that the City has a direct role in, gymnasium sports are the 2nd most popular indoor recreation activity for adults and youth between 12 and 17 years old, the 5th most popular indoor activity for youth under 12 years old and the 4th most popular indoor activity for seniors. The survey also indicated that school gymnasiums receive the highest percentage of daily use at 57 percent for 12 to 17 year olds⁸⁴.

81 The John McGinnis Centre gymnasium is the only school facility that is available year-round and also features a larger gym size and ceiling height.

82 The total gymnasium use for 2013/2014 was a total of 9,300 hours including school bookings.

83 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

84 Use of gymnasiums by 12 to 17 year olds is 83 % at least monthly and 89% at least yearly.

Newer gymnasiums are increasingly being provided as part of multi-purpose centre developments. The NSC is a local example of this trend with recreational amenities such as an indoor field house, running track and fitness facilities, in addition to a gymnasium.

Assessment

The City plays a key role in the use of School District #57 (SD57) gymnasiums through a dedicated staff position that, amongst other duties, provides the booking, scheduling, coordinating and facilitating of SD57 gyms by community groups and SD57 schools. This role is one of the requirements identified in the Shared Use Agreement between the City and the SD57. As part of the overall shared use of facilities, the City provides \$200,000 annually to the SD57 to cover the added costs for maintenance and cleaning. On average there are about 3,000 bookings per year for gymnasiums from clubs and community groups, indicating significant community interest for this service and a system that appears to be working well.

The PG Civic Centre has experienced a decline in sport bookings in the auditorium since the opening of the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre. Given the consideration to improving the aesthetics of the ballroom-gymnasium for convention use, Administration has examined whether or not the court lines should be applied as part of the scheduled maintenance. Previous direction from Council has been to maintain the court lines within the auditorium, which Administration has continued to follow. Administration will continue to monitor use and look for options that accommodate sport use while also improving the aesthetic quality of the auditorium for convention use.

E. Other Indoor Recreation Facilities

The City has a number of partnerships with user groups and organizations that operate various indoor recreation facilities.

Prince George Golf and Curling Club

The Prince George Golf and Curling Club (PGGCC) is operated under a society as a public 18 hole golf course with curling facilities. The PGGCC is the only curling centre in Prince George and is delivered in part through an agreement with the City, which came about through the relocation of the Prince George Tennis Club (see Section 5.2.E.) to the PGGCC. There are no operational costs to the City with respect to the PGGCC.

The PGGCC curling facility features eight (8) sheets of curling ice complete with spectator seating, on-site food services, licensed lounge and change room facilities. The Curling Club has hosted national level tournaments including the Scotts Tournament of Hearts in 2000. If the PGGCC has any planned changes that would affect the delivery of curling at their facility, they have agreed to seek City Council's input. The facility also supports other recreational amenities such as a full service climbing gym and fitness centre.

Agriplex

The Agriplex facility features an indoor riding arena that is managed by the PG Horse Society through a lease agreement with the City⁸⁵. The Agriplex facility was established at a time when the area was more rural. It features a 30m x 60m indoor ring that is well-used for equine events. Events are held year-round with seating for 400 and additional support facilities such as a sound system. The Agriplex facility is the only public indoor riding venue in Prince George and is open daily from 6am to 11pm daily. The City provides general building systems maintenance with annual operating expenses estimated at \$2,000 in 2013.

The facility provides for stabling, recreational riding, lessons, clinics and shows, and is currently at capacity. The high use of the facility has presented limitations for groups such as the therapeutic riding group who cannot meet the increasing community demands for their recreational activity⁸⁶.

The PG Horse Society is looking to expand their capacity by pursuing an additional indoor riding arena at 45m x 80m for an estimated cost of over \$4 million⁸⁷. In August 2011, the PG Horse Society's proposed site plan, which included a westward expansion of their facility in Exhibition Park, was presented to Council. Council directed staff to work with the Society to explore options, and these discussions are continuing, including exploring land acquisition and development options.

Exhibition Sport Centre (Prince George Gymnastics Club)

The Sport Centre is located at Exhibition Park and features a 1,490 m² training facility for gymnastics with expansive ceilings and a full range of apparatus. The PG Gymnastics club has operated out of the sport centre since 1994 through a lease agreement with the City. The use of the facility is primarily for gymnastics. The facility also houses the main office of the BC Northern Exhibition.

According to Administration's facility life cycle assessment work, the age of Exhibition Sport Centre building is beyond its estimated service life. With its age and type of building envelope, it is expensive to heat in the winter and its mechanical and plumbing systems are in need of upgrading. There has been work with the PG Gymnastics Club to look for an alternative facility; however, due to the specific space requirements for this activity, no appropriate solution has been found. As part of Administration's asset management work, a capital project to improve the building envelope is being reviewed. Administration will continue to work with the PG Gymnastics club to look for options and opportunities for future relocation.

85 The PG Horse Society lease includes the agricultural grounds at Exhibition Park in addition to the Agriplex.

86 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

87 Source: PG Horse Society Site Plan, 2011.

Other Multi-purpose Centres

A number of other multi-purpose centres are delivered by not-for-profit groups who maintain lease agreements for City land. The **YMCA of Northern BC** provides fitness, sport and community building with a variety of fitness and weight equipment, gymnasium and fitness studios and a total membership of up to 5,000 members. In recent years the YMCA added a Rec Room that features a climbing wall, indoor playground and various recreational activities and games. The **Connaught Youth Centre** features a gymnasium and classrooms that are used by local Cadet groups, martial arts and boxing groups. The **Elder Citizens Recreation Association** and **PG & District Seniors Citizens Activity Centre** within the downtown area provide recreation activities and social gathering spaces for local seniors.

Additional multi-purpose centres provide recreation for the community outside of the City's involvement. The **Roll-a-Dome** features an open space with rink boards and hardwood surfacing that is used by the PG Rollergirls and for community use such as roller skating, skateboarding, adult soccer, lacrosse, ball hockey and special events. The **South Fort George Family Resource Centre** and **Highland Family Development Centre** provide supportive community programs. The **Silvertip Archery Range** at the former Austin Road School supports 10 archery lanes with various target ranges. The **AimHi** organization operates a community facility within the Lakewood area which includes recreation programming within their gymnasium. The **Hart Pioneer Centre** provides recreation activities and a social centre for seniors in the Hart. A number of community halls such as the **Kinsmen Community Complex**, **Hart Community Centre** and the **Columbus Community Centre** are also used for various recreation programs and community events.

Assessment

The PG Horse Society is looking to expand their capacity at the Agriplex by pursuing an additional indoor riding arena at 45m x 80m for an estimated cost of over \$4 million⁸⁸. In August 2011, the PG Horse Society presented Council with a proposed site plan that included a westward expansion of the facility in Exhibition Park. Council directed Administration to work with the Society to explore options; these discussions are continuing, including exploring land acquisition and development options.

The Agriplex was established at a time when the site was more rural and over the decades the general area has increased in development with a variety of land uses. Most of the land to the west of the Agriplex is Crown land and will likely have future interest for development. As Administration continues its discussions with the society, it is important to consider and assess how the surrounding lands may be developed in the future and how this might affect the long-term needs for the horse society users.

In terms of the Exhibition Sports Centre's need for capital improvements, Administration will work through the asset management process, to assess a capital project improving the building envelope. Administration will continue to work with the PG Gymnastics club to look for options and opportunities for future relocation.

⁸⁸ Source: PG Horse Society Site Plan, 2011.

5.2 Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Prince George has a wide range of outdoor recreation facilities that accommodate year-round recreation and sport opportunities. During the 1970s and early 1980s, many outdoor recreation facilities such as playgrounds, hard surface courts and ball diamonds were developed within City parks and in School District #57 school grounds. In the past couple of decades, a number of facilities were developed to accommodate growth in recreation activities such as soccer and skateboarding. Playgrounds and ball diamonds were also upgraded during this time to meet updated standards or regulations. Much of this recent development has been pursued through partnerships with local community groups or organizations.

About 24 percent, or \$728,000, of the City of Prince George's Parks Division's budget is dedicated to maintaining sites that support recreation facilities, such as ball diamonds, sports fields, playgrounds, off leash areas, lawn bowling, and hard surface courts. The specific breakdown is provided in the discussion under each outdoor recreation or sport facility below. The remaining 76 percent of parks and trails budget is focused on operations and maintenance of other related recreation facilities and part of the system of parks and trails which provide opportunities for a variety of unstructured recreation and sports activities, such as walking, jogging, cycling and mountain biking and snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

A. Parks and Trails

Many of the outdoor recreation facilities are provided in City parks. The City's parks, trails and active transportation network provide a framework supporting recreation opportunities, access to recreation facilities or venues and an active lifestyle. Trails provide linear connections through parks and are part of the active transportation network that includes bike lanes, sidewalks and other infrastructure that facilitates human powered modes of transportation.

The City completed an "Active Transportation Plan" (ATP) in 2011, a "Prince George Parks and Open Space Master Plan" (POSMP) in 2008, and a "City Wide Trail System Master Plan" (CWTSMP) in 1998. These reports provide related details, and can be found on the City of Prince George website.

This report does not explicitly recommend changes to park land or the active transportation network as this is addressed through the implementation of the above noted plans. However, this report, through the following sections, addresses potential changes to the recreation services and facilities provided in City parks. Therefore, when there are changes to recreation facilities (e.g. decommissioning of a ball diamond, tennis court or playgrounds) this may trigger an administrative review of the options for the affected park land.

The 2008 Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan defined a hierarchy of parks from major destination City Parks (Fort George Park) to localized Neighbourhood Parks. In the middle of this hierarchy are District

Parks which serve multiple neighbourhoods, such as Duchess Park. Open Spaces are other public lands that are not designated as “park land” and may include such uses as greenbelts, school yards, trails and special use areas (e.g. Exhibition Park).

The city wide trail system is intended to provide a network of city-wide and neighbourhood trail loops that connect the community to destinations and areas of interest. The trail system is based on a hierarchy of Multi-Use Trails like the Heritage River Trail System or UNBC Connector Trail System, Boulevard Trails such as the Highway 16 trail north of Ferry Avenue and Minor Trails like the Cranbrook Hill Greenway. In 2008, the Centennial Trails Project (CTP) recommended priorities for trail projects such as an extension of the Heritage River Trail to Otway and College Heights along the rivers, connecting UNBC to the Fraser River at Fort George Park, and establishing a link from the Hart and Blackburn to the Bowl area.

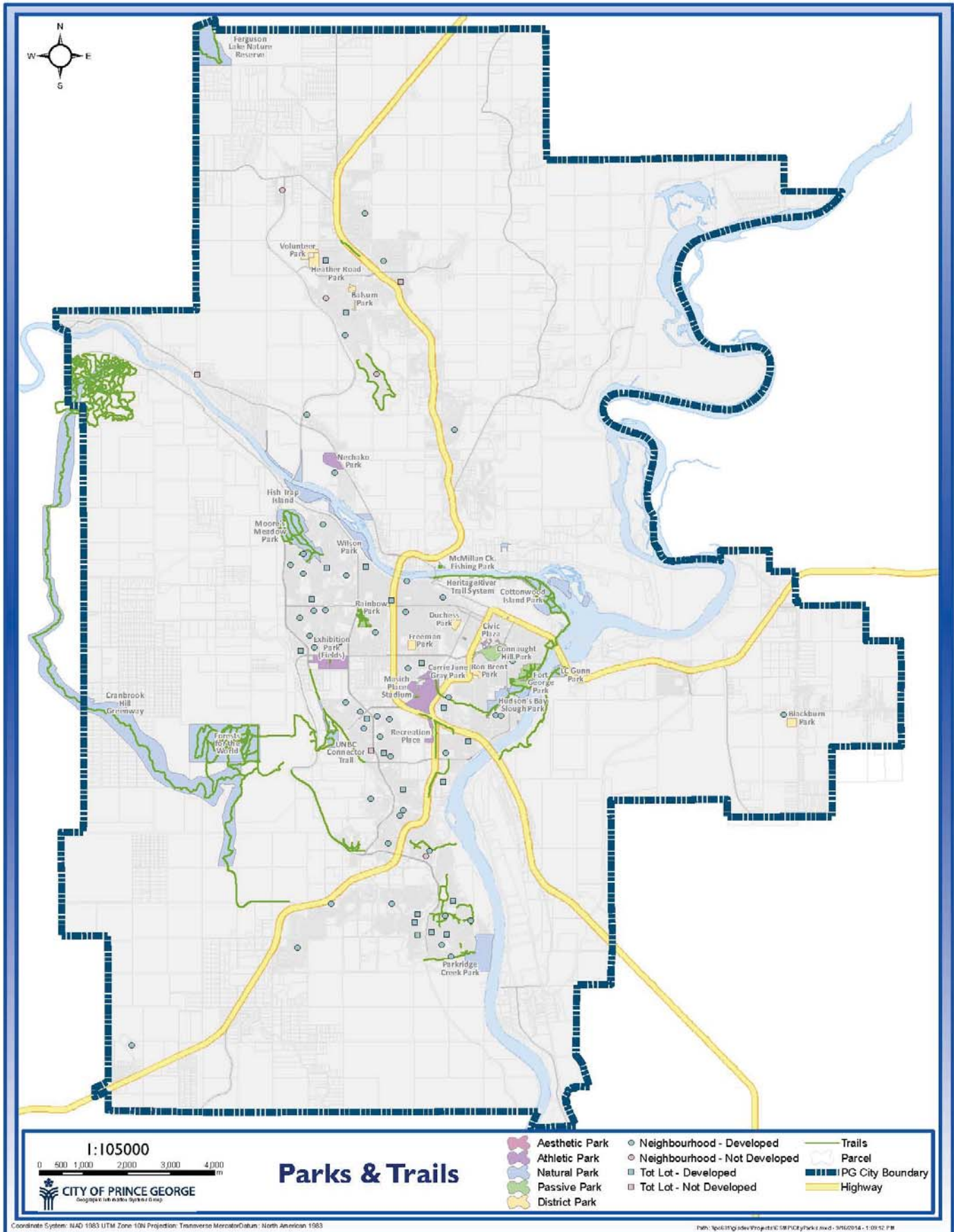
Active transportation includes all human-powered forms of travel, such as walking, cycling skating and using mobility aids, and can also be combined with other transportation modes such as public transit. The active transportation system is planned and designed for multiple user groups and to be contiguous within and between modes. The active transportation network includes various pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure such as trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, and walkways.

City parks provide two key roles. First, they provide the land where facilities and supportive tools are provided for formalized recreation. This role is extensively reviewed in the following sections specifically discussing structured recreation, where it involves facilities, and use or rental agreements with community organizations. Second, parks, along with trails and open spaces, provide land for unstructured and informal recreation.

Unstructured or informal recreation activities includes those that do not necessarily need access to facilities, are not scheduled, are not membership driven, are not exclusive uses, and do not need an agreement with the City. Such activities include walking, biking, birding, snow shoeing and skiing. National trends, as well as the telephone survey results, indicate that walking and biking are two of the more popular activities. Generally, surveys are indicating that unstructured recreation is gaining popularity. The cooperation between the PG Naturalist Club, The Exploration Place and the City in the planned development for the nature trails as the Hudson Bay Wetland is a recent example.

For much of this use in parks and trails, the main role for the City is regular maintenance through operational budgets. While satisfaction levels were high with parks and trails, as reported by the telephone survey results, about 12 percent of the respondents suggested improvements to park maintenance and to address safety concerns and aesthetics. Much of the park and trail infrastructure (e.g. benches, washrooms, signs) was developed in the 1970's and is being reviewed by Administration as part of the asset management process.

The following map illustrates the various City parks and trails that are located throughout Prince George.



B. Masich Place Stadium

Masich Place Stadium is the City's premiere facility for outdoor participant and spectator sports. The facility was built in 1990 for the BC Summer Games to meet the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) regulations. The facility is located near Carrie Jane Gray Park (see image in Ball Diamonds Section 5.2.D.) and is the primary venue for the Prince George Track and Field Club. The stadium was renamed in 2005 to honour Tom Masich who has contributed significantly to track and field in Prince George⁸⁹. The stadium is maintained by the City with annual operating expenses totaling over \$30,000 in 2013. Masich Place Stadium features the following facilities:

- **Sports Field** - one lit field at 69 m x 91 m natural turf field
- **Running Track** – an 8 lane - 400 m synthetic track surface surrounded by a landscaped berm on the southern and eastern sides.
- **Stadium** – covered seating for 1,800 spectators, 2 washrooms, 4 change rooms with showers, sound system official's room, offices, concession, first aid room and high speed internet capability.
- **Track and Field Facilities** – photo finish timing equipment, score clock, high jump, pole vault and landing pits, starting blocks, javelins, shot put and toe board, discus, high jump pits, hammer, hurdles, steeple hurdles and water jump steeple hurdle.

The running track consists of polyurethane surface over an asphalt base. The running track is surrounded on two sides with an earthen, landscaped berm that provides a wind barrier and screen. The track was resurfaced in 2001 and is beyond the 10 year life expectancy. Resurfacing of the track is estimated to cost \$450,000⁹⁰. Additional stadium enhancements would include cosmetic upgrades and an improved pedestrian entrance at the southeastern corner over the berm area.

The sports field is 69 m x 91 m and is supported by field lighting along with additional stadium amenities that are maintained by the City. The field size meets the minimum FIFA soccer field dimensions of 45m x 90m⁹¹ although it falls short of the 137m length that is required for a full-sized CFL field (59m x 137m) including 37m of end zones⁹².

The sports field at Masich Place Stadium is a multi-functional venue that is used by the community for sports and special events. The sports field is used for track and field events, community and high school football and community relays such as the Canadian Cancer Relay for Life. The field has also been a venue for international and professional soccer games, as well as both national and provincial level dog agility, soccer, rugby and track and field championships. Community and high school football rely on the

89 The facility was originally named Massey Stadium.

90 A separate report to Council is being prepared to address the options around resurfacing the track.

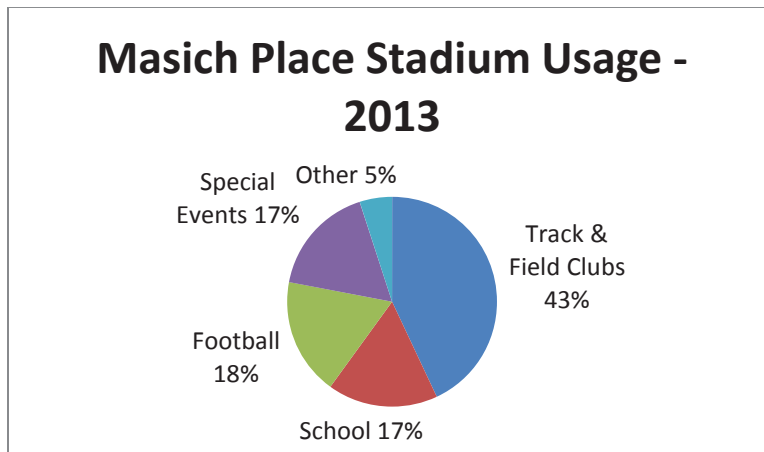
91 <http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/footballdevelopment/technicalsupport/refereeing/laws-of-the-game/law/newsid=1285960.html>

92 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_football

use of Masich Place Stadium due to the larger field size, field lighting, change rooms and spectator seating.

The sports field is currently exhibiting signs of deterioration and the City is assessing options. The field received new sod in 2006; however, more than half of the turf has been infested by a Poa annua weed grass that has a weak root system and is susceptible to heavy sport use. The underground irrigation bladder has been damaged over time, possibly through the use of tent pegs during special events⁹³. A complete replacement of the infield with a new irrigation system is estimated at over \$250,000.

The overall use of Masich Place Stadium has been steady during the past five (5) years. In 2013 the stadium was booked for a total of 879 hours with 842 booked hours in 2009⁹⁴. The breakdown of booked use in 2013 at Masich Place Stadium is shown in the chart below. Each of the comparable communities of Kamloops, Chilliwack, Red Deer and Lethbridge has a single outdoor track.



The Masich Place Stadium rental fees are being increased by five (5) percent annually between 2014 and 2016 as part of the Core Services Review, which determined that local stadium rates are lower than the comparison communities⁹⁵. The Masich Place Stadium rental fees provide access to the full facility which includes the track, field and stadium. The 2016 Masich Place Stadium rental fees are scheduled for youth at \$38.25/hour and \$156.50/daily, while adult fees are \$75.75/hour for adults and \$309.25/daily⁹⁶.

93 Comments from Parks Operations Staff.

94 The Masich Place Stadium rental includes the whole facility with the stadium, track and sports field.

95 The comparison communities include Kelowna and Kamloops.

96 The 2014 Masich Place Stadium rental rates are currently at \$34.75/hour and \$141.75/daily, while adult fees are \$68.25/hour for adults and \$280.50/daily⁹⁶. The 5 percent increase also applies to the Prince George Track and Field Club who pay an annual practice rate that was \$607 in 2013 and will be increased to \$771.75 in 2016

Trends

Running tracks provide a range of uses including walking, which the CSRP Telephone Survey identified as the top outdoor recreation activity for both adults and seniors. The track also accommodates jogging, which is identified in the survey as the 4th most popular outdoor recreation activity for adults in Prince George.

Assessment

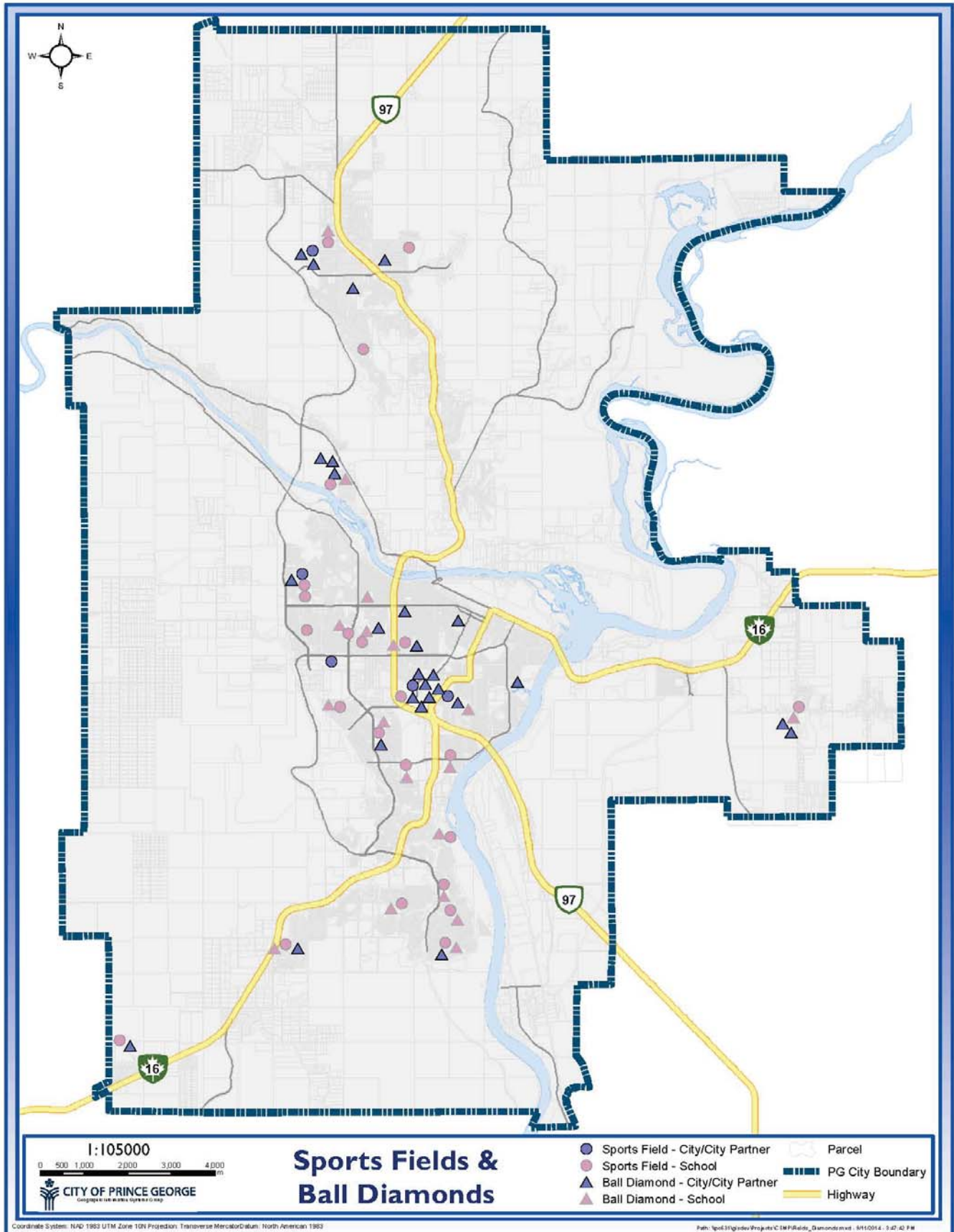
Two key capital upgrades for Masich Place Stadium are being assessed by Administration: resurfacing the top layer of the track and replacement of the infield turf. In the short term, Administration is continuing to use natural turf at Masich Place Stadium. However, various groups involved in soccer and football have indicated an interest in an artificial turf field in Prince George. While artificial turf is expensive to install, this surface allows for longer playing seasons. Administration is studying options for an artificial turf field and the potential to develop potential funding partnerships.

C. Sports Fields

In addition to the sports field at Masich Place Stadium, Prince George has 47 other outdoor sports fields that are operated mainly through partnerships including 28 school fields through School District #57 (SD57) and 13 user group fields through rental agreements with the City. The City's premiere sports field facilities include Masich Place Stadium (see above) and the Exhibition Park sports fields that are managed by local soccer leagues through rental agreements with the City. All of the 48 sports fields have been developed as natural turf fields and there are no outdoor artificial turf fields within the community⁹⁷.

The following map illustrates the various locations of City and SD57 sports fields in Prince George.

97 Section 5.1.C. provides information on the indoor artificial turf fields in Prince George.



Exhibition Park – Rotary, North Cariboo and Women’s Soccer Fields

Exhibition Park is home to a total of 13 full-size equivalent sports fields⁹⁸ that are managed exclusively by three local soccer leagues through rental agreements with the City. Each user group maintains their sports fields within separately fenced compounds that are adjacent to one another (see image on the following page). All of the soccer leagues share parking facilities at Exhibition Park, which provides over 2,000 parking spaces. The fields have hosted both international and professional soccer games, as well as both national and provincial soccer championships. The soccer leagues have collaborated by sharing the use of their sports fields during larger tournaments.

Each facility is jointly maintained by the soccer leagues and City operations. The City is responsible for mowing, aeration, top dressing, thatching and fertilization of turf; maintenance of underground irrigation; winterizing of facilities and the provision of garbage containers. The user groups are responsible for above ground irrigation, ongoing clean-up, fences and indoor structures. The City’s operating expenses for the 13 sports fields are approximately \$70,000 for 2013.

The following provides detailed information on each soccer facility.



98 The PGYSA has some full-sized fields that were converted into smaller fields for younger participants.

Rotary Soccer Fields – Prince George Youth Soccer Association (PGYSA)

The Rotary soccer fields were developed in 1996 by the PGYSA⁹⁹ with support from local Rotary Clubs. The facility features an equivalent of eight (8) full-sized fields although four of these fields are converted into 15 smaller fields for youth soccer programs. Field lighting has been accommodated at five (5) of the full-sized equivalent fields. Additional on-site amenities include washrooms, a clubhouse, change rooms with showers, concession and room for over 2,000 spectators throughout the facility. The City's operating expenses for the PGYSA is estimated at \$40,000 in 2013 and includes additional levels of service for fertilizing and iron applications. The PGYSA has expressed interest in the future development of a granular loop walking trail within their fenced compound area to accommodate a training and walking loop.

The PGYSA league had 2,600 participants in 2013 compared to 3,049 participants in 2007¹⁰⁰. During the past three years, the leagues participation rates have been stable at around 2,500 to 2,600 players. On average there have been about 137 active PGYSA participants per field using the Rotary Soccer Fields, indicating satisfactory use levels.

Men's North Cariboo Senior Soccer League (NCSL) Fields

The NCSL fields were established by the league in 1996 and features a total of three regulation sized fields that include lighting on one field. The sports fields are supported by a two story, 445 m² clubhouse that features a wrap-around deck, licensed lounge/meeting space, food services, washrooms, change rooms, officials' rooms, a concession and storage. The NCSL facility has bleacher seating and room on-site for more than 1,000 spectators. The City's operating expenses for the NCSL fields is estimated at \$18,000 for 2013. The NCSL has expressed interest in lighting for their second field.

The NCSL has experienced growth during the last decade with rates stabilizing over the past two years. In 2013 the NCSL had 430 participants compared to 500 participants in 2010. On average there have been about 143 active NCSL participants per field using their soccer fields, indicating satisfactory use levels.

Women's Soccer Fields - PGWSA

The Prince George Women's Soccer Association (PGWSA) developed two regulation sized fields in 2005. The PGWSA sports fields are separated from the NCSL facility by fencing although the NCSL provides the PGWSA with access to their clubhouse facility. The PGWSA facility has a spectator capacity of 500. The City's operating expenses for the PGWSA fields is estimated at \$12,000 for 2013. The PGWSA has expressed interest in future field lighting with underground conduit as well as space for a future washroom and storage facility.

99 The PGYSA also operate an indoor field house (See Section 5.1.C.).

100 Administration provided annual participation rates for years that were available, and as such, sections in this report will show different comparison years.

The PGWSA participation rates have stabilized after growth of the women's soccer in previous years. In 2012 the PGWSA had 400 participants compared to 500 participants in 2008. On average there have been about 200 active PGWSA participants per field using their fields, indicating satisfactory use levels.

City and School Sports Fields

There are a total of 35 sports fields that are available for community use including seven (7) city fields and 28 school fields. Through the Shared Use Agreement between the City and the School District #57 (SD57), the City schedules and books the school fields for both community and school use. The fields range in size and quality and are dispersed throughout the community within neighbourhood parks and at elementary or high school grounds. The City and SD57 sports fields are mainly used by organized community sports such as youth soccer, football, ultimate Frisbee and rugby. These user groups, with the exception of youth soccer, rely on the use of the City and SD57 sports fields as they do not have other fields that are dedicated for their exclusive use.

In 2012, the sports fields were booked for a total of 3,400 hours which represents an average amount of annual use and generally meets the current community demand¹⁰¹. The sports fields at Prince George Secondary School, Van Bien Elementary School, John McGinnis and Spruceland Elementary School receive the largest amount of bookings due to their location, quality and accommodations for their sport¹⁰². Some of these sports fields have deteriorated, mainly due to the heavy use and late fall season play by groups such as community and high school football.

The Shared Use Agreement includes provisions for local community youth organizations and Community Associations to book the fields at no charge while adult community groups are provided with a 50 percent discounted rate¹⁰³. All community user groups are required to carry \$3 million liability insurance. The sports field rental fees are scheduled to increase by 10 percent between 2014 and 2016¹⁰⁴.

The Prince George Minor Football Association (PGMFA) has grown to approximately 650 participants, and currently shares the fields at Prince George Secondary School (PGSS) and Masich Place Stadium with organized high school football. Prior to 2013, minor football used elementary school yards. The new agreement with SD57 to use PGSS is a positive step, allowing the association to have onsite storage and sharing of equipment.

101 Source: City of Prince George- Community Partnerships Division.

102 Ecole Lac des Bois has also been well-used by the PG Minor Football Association who are currently using the PGSS fields in 2014.

103 The current 2014 field rate for adult community groups is \$12.45 per hour although this rate will increase to \$14.75 in 2016 as part of the Core Services Review.

104 In 2016 not-for-profit adult group rates at \$40.50/hour for secondary school fields, \$38.00/hour for elementary school fields, and standard rates of \$81.00/hour for secondary school fields and \$76.00/hour for elementary school fields.

The City and SD57 sports fields have some limitations that can affect their use. School District 57 maintains school fields, and depending on periodic conditions and maintenance schedules, there can be challenges with booking and actual use. The City and SD57 sports fields do not provide storage space or lighting which can be challenging for some users¹⁰⁵.

Trends

Soccer has consistently been one of the top 10 participation sports across Canada since 1992 and has demonstrated a growth of 1.7 percent during that period¹⁰⁶. In 2010, soccer was the most popular recreation activity in Canada for youths with 42 percentage participation while men's soccer was the third most popular recreation activity at 14 percent. The CSRP Telephone Survey indicated that of the top five (5) outdoor recreation activities that the City is a direct role in, soccer is the 4th most popular overall recreation activity for youth up to 17 years of age in Prince George and the 5th most popular activity for adults. The growth of the sport may be attributed to its international appeal, high exercise impact and low equipment costs¹⁰⁷.

The CSRP Telephone Survey indicated that football is the 6th most popular overall recreation activity for 12 to 17 year olds in Prince George¹⁰⁸. Locally, participation in football has grown in the past five (5) years particularly within the 12 to 17 year age range¹⁰⁹.

Municipalities are providing more multi-use sports fields to extend playing seasons and achieve efficiencies from higher use. These multi-use sports fields are typically developed with artificial turf as this standard can accommodate heavy use particularly during early and late season months when sports fields are most susceptible to damage. In terms of our comparable municipalities, Chilliwack, Kamloops and Lethbridge each have one artificial turf multi-use sport field. Local user groups have indicated an interest in an artificial turf facility for university soccer and for both community and high school football, which require an artificial turf field to host provincial games¹¹⁰. It is common for these facilities to be developed through partnerships with local universities (e.g. Kamloops, Lethbridge) or with local sports organizations such as soccer leagues (e.g. Red Deer¹¹¹).

Assessment

The Prince George Minor Football Association (PGMFA) has requested a dedicated sport field location for their use to meet growing requirements. The PGMFA is interested in a location within the Bowl to

105 In addition to football, user groups such as cricket and rugby have previously expressed some concern with a lack of dedicated space.

106 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

107 Source: Canadian Youth Sports Report, June 2014, Solutions Research Group.

108 Source: CSMP Telephone Survey.

109 Source: PGMFA, President Don Williams.

110 Both the BC Community Football Association and BC High School Football require municipalities to provide an artificial turf field in order to host provincial championship games.

111 Red Deer is looking to develop an artificial turf field for community use with a local soccer league.

accommodate a longer playing season in early spring and late fall¹¹². The requested location would include a minimum of one game field, one practice field and the ability to add field lighting and other amenities. Administration has been involved in discussions with the PGMFA and School District #57 (SD57) to review potential locations. Currently, there are limited opportunities within City owned sport fields to accommodate the interests of the PGMFA.

D. Ball Diamonds

There are 56 ball diamonds in Prince George, delivered through rental agreements or partnerships as follows:

- Seven user groups operate 18 ball diamonds through rental agreements with the City, where the City maintains fields, structures and utility systems at an average estimated cost of \$160,000 annually.
- Ten ball diamonds are located on City parkland and are maintained and scheduled for community use by the City.
- Twenty-eight ball diamonds are located on School District #57 (SD57) school grounds and are managed through the Shared Use Agreement, where the City schedules and books these facilities for school and community use but is not responsible for maintenance.
- Four of the SD57 ball diamonds are operated by a local community association and the City provides a portion of the maintenance.
- Details of the 56 ball diamonds are provided below.

A map of the various City and SD57 ball diamond locations is located in the preceding Sports Fields Section 5.2.C.

Baseball Clubs' Rental Agreement Ball Diamonds

The City has 18 ball diamonds that are maintained through rental agreements with seven (7) user groups. The majority of the ball diamonds were developed by the user groups decades ago, with the exception of Citizen Field and Nechako Park that were developed in 2006¹¹³.

Through the rental agreements, the City undertakes a portion of the maintenance, including mowing, aerating, fertilizing and thatching, rototilling infields, maintaining underground utilities, winterizing facilities, providing waste receptacles and waste removal, and providing paint for facilities. The user

¹¹² Fall tackle season ends in late October with provincial play-offs in early November.

¹¹³ Recreation Place park was sold for commercial development in the early 2000s and the relocation of user groups was facilitated through the 2001 Recreation Place Relocation Plan.

groups are responsible for above ground irrigation, ongoing clean-up, fences and indoor structures. Most of the ball diamond facilities are facing increasing maintenance given deterioration from age and use. The annual operating expenses have been estimated at \$160,000 with an average of \$8,000 per older ball diamond.

The following table provides a summary of the rental agreement user groups along with their capacities and participation rates. A detailed description of each user group and their associated facilities follows the summary table, along with an image of Carrie Jane Gray Park which contains seven of the rental agreement ball diamonds.

Inventory of Ball Diamonds delivered through Rental Agreements

User Group	Ball Diamond Facility	Location	Fence-line	Additional Amenities	Est. City Operating Expenses (2013)	Est. Age	Number of Participants (2013)	Participant Trend (past decade)	Diamond / Participant Ratio
PG Senior Men's Baseball	Citizen Field	Carrie Jane Gray Park	119m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadium & Clubhouse Field Lights 	\$21,000	13	100	20% increase	1 : 100
PG Youth Baseball Association	Rotary Field	Carrie Jane Gray Park	100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Lights 	\$20,000	40	367	70% decline	1 : 46
	Volunteer (4)	Volunteer Park	61m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse 	\$32,000	33			
	Gyro Park	Fort George Park	61m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse Batting Cage 	\$8,000	50			
	Joe Martin	Balsum Park	61m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse 	\$8,000	40			
	Harry Loder	Harry Loder Park	61m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	\$8,000	45			
Spruce City Men's Fastball	Spruce City Stadium	Carrie Jane Gray Park	75m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadium & Clubhouse Field Lights 	\$8,000	40	40	60% decline	1 : 40
Spruce City Minor Boys Softball	Ron Wiley	Carrie Jane Gray Park	69m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse 	\$8,000	40	75	50% decline	1 : 38
	Home Field	Carrie Jane Gray Park	76m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	\$8,000	40			
PG Ladies Fastball	Chuck Cawdell	Freeman Park	61m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse Field Lights 	\$8,000	50	30-40	30% decline	1 : 30
PG Minor Girls Softball	Freeman #1	Freeman Park	67m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse 	\$8,000	40	220	45% decline	1 : 73
	Freeman #2	Freeman Park	60m		\$8,000	40			
	Home Field	Carrie Jane Gray Park	66m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	\$8,000	40			
PG Nechako Mixed Slo-Pitch	Nechako Diamonds (2)	Nechako Park	90m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse Field Lights 	\$9,500	13	416	Stable	1 : 208
Averages						37	180 participants /user group	34% decline	1 : 76



Carrie Jane Gray Park & Masich Place Stadium

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 - Citizen Field | 2 - Ron Wiley Field | 3 - Minor Boys Field | 4 - BMX Track |
| 5 - Rotary Field | 6 - Minor Girls Field | 7 - Horseshoe Pitch | 8 - Carrie Jane Gray Field |
| 9 - Spruce City Mens | 10 - Rotary Skate Park | 11 - Basketball Court | 12 - Tennis Courts |
| 13 - Lacrosse Box | | | |

Prince George Citizen Field – Prince George Senior Men’s Baseball (PGSMB)

The Prince George Citizen Field is the City’s premiere baseball stadium. The facility was built by the City in 2006 and is located within Carrie Jane Gray Park. The PGSMB league manages the facility for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. The City’s operating expenses for Citizen Field are estimated at \$21,000 annually. Amenities at the site include:

- One lit ball diamond with a 119 m fence line with a shortened left field featuring a 5 m ‘Green Monster’ wall similar to Boston’s Fenway Park.

- Covered grandstand seating for 500, 4 washrooms, 2 dressing rooms, official's room with shower, concession and score keeper's booth.
- In-ground dugouts.
- Beer garden area.
- Electronic score clock and public address system.
- Wheelchair accessibility.
- Ample parking.

The facility was renamed in 2005 through a sponsorship from the local 'Prince George Citizen' newspaper. The renaming was facilitated through a 10 year agreement where the league receives \$10,000 annually to allocate towards capital improvements of the facility in exchange for naming rights.

The PG Citizen Field was used to host the 2009, 2011 and 2013 World Baseball Challenge and has also been used for a number of national and provincial youth and adult baseball championships. The PGSMB league is proposing facility improvements that would include covered batting cages, backstop padding and an expansion of the dugouts¹¹⁴.

The PGSMB league has been stable over the past few years at around 100 participants in 2013. The league experienced an increase from 75 participants in 2000 with 120 participants in 2011.

Nechako Park – Prince George Nechako Mixed Slo-Pitch (PGNMS)

The Nechako Park facility provides two ball diamonds that were developed by the City in 2006 in the North Nechako community area. The PGNMS league manages the facility for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. The park has space that could accommodate an expansion of one additional ball diamond. The City's annual operating expenses for Nechako Park are estimated at \$9,500 and include additional responsibilities for the maintenance of structures, fences, above ground irrigation, utility costs (except field lights) and security monitoring. Amenities at the site include:

- Two lit ball diamonds with a 90 m fence line and shale infields.
- Concrete Dugouts.
- Aluminum bleacher seating for 200 with additional seating along the berms.
- Clubhouse with concession, washrooms and storage rooms.
- Wheelchair accessibility with paved multi-use trails.
- Parking for 200 vehicles plus space for overflow and RV campers.

114 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

The PGNMS league has identified an interest in adding a third diamond to accommodate regular season play and host large tournaments¹¹⁵. They are experiencing growth in the number of teams and they are looking to attract 12 to 18 year old participants. Although the Nechako Park facility has been used for national and provincial fastball and softball games, the facility cannot accommodate a round robin and playoff format without a minimum of a third diamond¹¹⁶.

The PGNMS has also identified concerns with rising hydro costs for their field lights, which could limit their nighttime use of the ball diamonds.

The PGNMS league had 416 participants in 2012 compared to 461 participants in 2010¹¹⁷.

Spruce City Stadium – Spruce City Men’s Fastball (SCMF)

The Spruce City Stadium was developed by a user group over 40 years ago and is managed by the SCMF league for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. The lit ball diamond has a 75 m fence line and shale infield. A covered grand stand was developed by the SCMF over 30 years ago and features stadium seating, clubhouse, concession, ticket booth, washrooms and storage room. The facility also has five (5) bleachers, an electronic score clock and public address system. The Spruce City Stadium has hosted provincial tournaments. The City’s annual operating expenses for the Spruce City Stadium are estimated at \$8,000 for 2013.

The SCMF league has experienced a decline in participation during the past decade. The SCMF league had 40 participants in 2013 compared to 75 participants in 2010.

Prince George Youth Baseball (PGYBA) Diamonds

There are a total of eight (8) baseball diamonds that were developed by the PGYBA and are managed by the league through a rental agreement with the City. The PGYBA facilities are located throughout the Bowl and in the Hart area. The centralized facilities within the Bowl area are preferred by the PGYBA given a two to four week earlier spring season¹¹⁸. The PGYBA is looking to grow their sport through the School District 57 curriculum. The City’s annual operating expenses for the eight (8) ball diamonds is estimated at \$76,000.

The PGYBA league has experienced a significant decline in participation over the past 15 years. In the late 1990s, youth baseball participation rates were 1,105, but by 2012 the numbers had reduced to 930

115 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

116 A new ball diamond at Nechako Park would be in the order of \$700,000 (2014 estimate).

117 Additional community slo-pitch league participants that use City and SD57 fields are not included within this total although their inclusion would result in a higher participation rate.

118 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

participants and in 2013 there 367 participants. In 2012 the PGYBA stopped using three ball diamonds at Heather Road Park due to low use and the City has stopped maintaining these.

The following provides a detailed description of the eight (8) PGYBA ball diamonds.

Rotary Field (1)

Rotary field is located within Carrie Jane Gray Park near the Prince George Citizen Field and was developed over 40 years ago. The facility features one lit ball diamond with a 100 m fence line, bleachers, dugouts, storage room and unlimited parking at Carrie Jane Gray Park. In 2011, the City upgraded the facility with a new sand base, turf, infield and bases at an approximate cost of \$275,000. The ball diamond is used by PGYBA participants between 13 and 18 years old.

Volunteer Park (4-Plex)

The Volunteer Park 4-plex is located in the Hart and was developed over 30 years ago. The facility features four ball diamonds with 61 m fence lines. The central clubhouse serves as the PGYBA main office and also features a kitchen, concession, washrooms and storage room. The facility has bleachers and ample parking. One of the fields is exhibiting deteriorating field conditions due to decreased maintenance and low use by the PGYBA. The ball diamonds are used by PGYBA participants that are less than 12 years old.

Gyro Park (1)

The Gyro Park ball diamond is located in Fort George Park and was developed over 50 years ago. The facility features one ball diamond with a 61 m fence line and a shale infield, batting cage and dug outs. The clubhouse features a concession, washrooms and storage room. The facility has bleachers and parking at Fort George Park. The ball diamond is used by PGYBA participants that are 10 to 12 years old.

Joe Martin Field (1)

The Joe Martin ball diamond is located within Balsum Park in the Hart and was developed over 40 years ago. The facility features one ball diamond with a 61 m fence line and dug outs. The clubhouse features a concession, office, washrooms and storage room. The facility has bleachers and ample parking. The ball diamond is used by PGYBA participants that are 10 to 12 years old.

Harry Loder Park (1)

The Harry Loder Park ball diamond is located within Harry Loder Park in the Spruceland neighbourhood and was developed with the park over 45 years ago. The facility features one ball diamond with a 61 m fence line and dug outs. The facility is supported by a storage facility, bleacher seating and limited on-street parking. The ball diamond is used by PGYBA participants that are less than 10 years old.

Chuck Cawdell Field – Prince George Ladies Fastball (PGLF)

The Chuck Cawdell ball diamond is located within Freeman Park in the East Bowl and was developed over 50 years ago. The PGLF league manages the facility for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. The facility features one lit ball diamond with a 61 m fence line, dug outs and an electronic score clock. The field is adjacent to two softball diamonds within the park that are operated by the minor girls softball league. The clubhouse features a kitchen, concession, washrooms and storage room. The facility has bleachers and shared parking. The City's annual operating expenses for the Chuck Cawdell field is estimated at \$8,000 in 2013. The PGLF league has identified that their declining membership is creating challenges with meeting their facility maintenance obligations¹¹⁹.

Participation rates for the PGLF league over the last decade are not available although 60 participants were recorded in 2000. The PGLF league is estimated to have between 30 and 40 (3 teams) participants in 2013.

Prince George Minor Girls Softball (PGMGS) Diamonds

The PGMGS league manages three ball diamonds for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. Two of the ball diamonds are located at Freeman Park with one ball diamond at Carrie Jane Gray Park. The City's annual operating expenses for the PGMGS fields are estimated at \$24,000 in 2013. The PGMGS league has identified that their limited membership is creating challenges with meeting facility maintenance obligations¹²⁰.

The PGMGS league had 220 participants in 2013 with 275 participants in 2010 compared to 403 participants in 1997.

The following provides an overview of the PGMGS league ball diamonds.

Freeman Park Diamonds (2)

Freeman Park features two ball diamonds with fence lines at 60 m and 67 m that were developed over 40 years ago. The PGMGS utilize the Prince George Ladies Fastball clubhouse that offers a kitchen, concession, washrooms and storage room. The facility has bleachers and shared parking at Freeman Park.

Carrie Jane Gray Park Thunderbirds – Home Field (1)

This facility features one ball diamond with a 66 m fence line that was developed over 40 years ago. The facility has bleachers and shared parking for at Carrie Jane Gray Park.

119 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

120 Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

Spruce City Minor Boys Softball (SCMBS) Diamonds

The SCMBS league manages two ball diamonds for exclusive use at Carrie Jane Gray Park through a rental agreement with the City. The City's annual operating expenses for the SCMBS fields are estimated at \$16,000 in 2013. The SCMBS league has indicated that they are experiencing challenges associated with declining volunteers and groundwater conditions affecting their septic system¹²¹. The SCMBS league would like to include lighting at Ron Wiley diamond.

Participation rates for the SCMBS league have been relatively stable during past five (5) years despite a decline in the past decade. The SCMBS league had 75 participants in 2012 compared to 67 players in 2008, and as many as 175 participants in 2005.

The following provides an overview of the SCMBS ball diamonds.

Ron Wiley Field (1)

The Ron Wiley ball diamond was established over 40 years ago and features a 69 m fence line and dugouts. The clubhouse features a concession, washrooms and storage room. The facility has bleachers and unlimited parking at Carrie Jane Gray Park.

Spruce City Minor Boys – Home Field (1)

The Home Field ball diamond was established over 40 years ago and features a 76 m fence line, dugouts, bleachers and unlimited parking at Carrie Jane Gray Park.

College Heights Community Association Ball Diamonds

The College Heights Community Association (CHCA) developed a 4-plex facility adjacent to College Heights Secondary School over 20 years ago through a partnership with the City and School District 57. The four fields are supported by a clubhouse and adjacent school ground facilities that include a paved loop trail along the perimeter. Two of the fields have shortened fence line dimensions due to a sloped incline in the outfields.

Under the Shared Use Agreement, the City covers the cost of lighting and maintains the infield diamonds, buildings, waste receptacles and insurance for the facility. The School District 57 is responsible for the maintenance of turf, backstops, irrigation and trails. The CHCA manages field bookings and infield maintenance. The City's annual operating expenses for the College Heights ball diamonds are included in the overall sports field maintenance budget.

¹²¹ Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

Community Use Ball Diamonds

Prince George has 10 City ball diamonds and 24 School District 57 ball diamonds that are available for general community use. Under the Shared Use Agreement with the SD57, the City plays the role of booking these ball diamonds for both school and community use. The ball diamonds are dispersed throughout the community at both high schools and elementary schools, and also at City athletic parks (e.g. Carrie Jane Gray Park and Blackburn Park) and at neighbourhood parks.

The ball diamonds are typically used by community slo-pitch leagues at both Van Bien and Edgewood Elementary Schools, as well as at Strathcona Park. These and other ball diamonds often present limitations associated with shortened field dimensions, poor surfacing standards, impediments on the field (e.g. long jump facility) or field locations close to major roadways (e.g. Van Bien).

The ball diamond rental fees are established through the Shared Use Agreement. Community Associations and not-for-profit youth groups are not charged a rental fee for sports field use. Discounted rates are provided for adult not-for-profit groups at 50 percent while standard rates apply to all other user groups. The ball diamond rental fees are scheduled to increase by 10 percent between 2014 and 2016, which will result in 2016 not-for-profit adult group rates at \$40.50/hour for secondary school ball diamonds, \$38.00/hour for elementary school ball diamonds, and standard rates of \$81.00/hour for secondary school ball diamonds and \$76.00/hour for elementary school ball diamonds.

Trends

The national and local trends for ball diamond activities indicate a period of declining participation with what appears to be a leveling out. Baseball has been one of the top 10 participation sports across Canada since 1992 although participation has declined during that period by 3.5% and stabilized between 2005 and 2010¹²². The CSRP Telephone Survey identified that baseball is the 8th most popular outdoor recreation activity for adults between the ages of 18 and 34 years in Prince George¹²³. Youth baseball participation in Prince George is estimated to have declined significantly by 70 percent in the last decade while local adult and youth softball/fastball have also declined between 30 and 60 percent within the same period¹²⁴. Adult baseball has experienced some growth in Prince George during the last decade with an estimated 20 percent increase in participation. While overall declining levels of participation may have leveled out in recent years, it will be important to monitor trends to determine if further declines are experienced.

In general, when new ball diamonds are being developed, municipalities tend to favour developing new facilities as larger 4-plex ball diamond complexes to accommodate multiple use and tournaments and with amenities such as flexible baselines, ample parking, seating, and lighting for tournament play.

122 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

123 The reference to Baseball in the survey is assumed to include all ball diamonds activities such as softball, fastball and slo-pitch.

124 User groups that maintain Rental Agreements in Prince George supply annual participation statistics although it has not always been supplied on a regular basis.

Locally, 4-plex facilities have been developed at Volunteer Park although use is limited to younger age groups in this location. Consultation with local ball diamond user groups has confirmed a desire for a central facility 4-plex facility in the Bowl area to accommodate tournaments¹²⁵.

In comparable communities where school ball diamonds are included in the supply, such as Chilliwack and Red Deer, the supply ratio ranges from 1:1,018 to 1:1,392 with Prince George falling within this range at 1,285.

Assessment

The supply of ball diamonds has been largely driven by user groups that have experienced steadily growing participation rates in previous decades, with many of the City's ball diamonds now having an average estimated age of 37 years. During the past decade these user groups have had a decline in participation that is estimated at 30 percent.

The various baseball clubs have exclusive use of specific City ball diamonds through rental agreements. As such, community groups without rental agreements rely on other City or SD57 ball diamonds to accommodate their recreation activity.

Many of the rental agreement ball diamonds are geographically dispersed throughout the community. The PG Youth Baseball Association, for example, has five (5) ball diamonds that are located in the Hart although the group desires centralized facilities within the Bowl to extend their playing season¹²⁶. Local slo-pitch and softball/fastball user groups also desire three to four ball diamonds in one central location to host larger tournaments. Only Carrie Jane Gray Park and Freeman Park have existing ball diamond facilities that could accommodate central tournaments; however, their rental agreements preclude the use of their facility by other community groups.

The rental agreement user groups are also facing operational challenges associated with increasing costs, volunteer decline and generally lower participation rates¹²⁷. Rising costs are attributed to the annual rental agreement fee that increased from \$10 to \$1,000 per user group as part of the Core Services Review. Additional expenses also relate to increasing hydro rates as well as the rising cost of supplies and materials. Many user groups are also further constrained by declining volunteer rates.

Given these considerations and trends, Administration has determined that this is an opportune time to engage the seven ball field rental agreement holders in discussions to explore options for increased shared use of ball diamonds in a way that results in a higher utilization of the more popular ball field sites. Potential options for shared use of ball diamonds could result in efficiencies and have benefits for clubs that are facing lower volunteer rates, declining participation and increasing costs. Administration will pursue a facilitated process to ensure that a full vetting of options is explored.

¹²⁵ Source: CSMP Stakeholder Survey & Rental Agreement Interviews.

¹²⁶ Source: CSMP Stakeholder Surveys and Rental Agreement interviews.

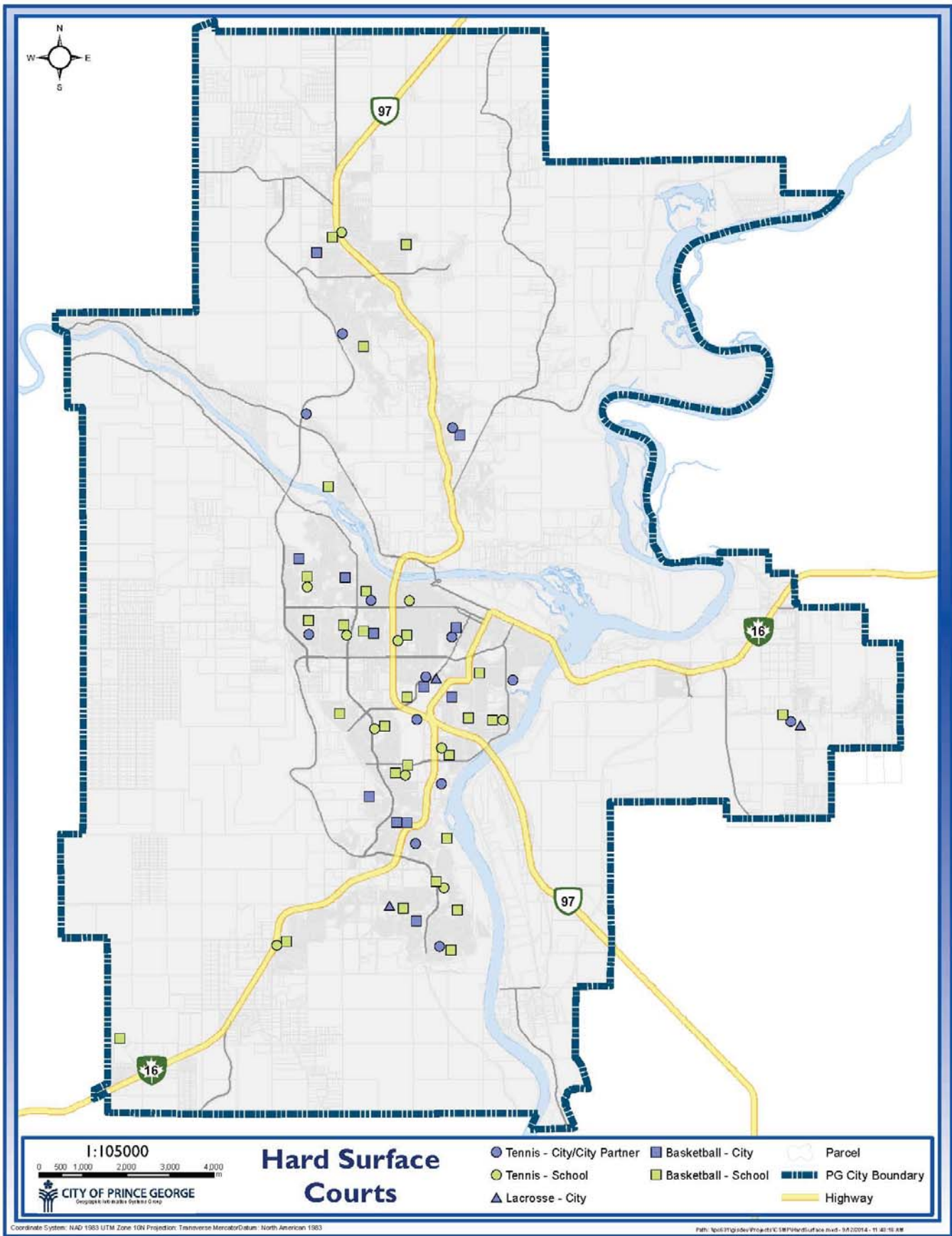
¹²⁷ Source: CSMP Stakeholder Surveys and Rental Agreement interviews.

In addition, Administration will move to decommission or repurpose ball diamonds that are not well-used and where there would be a measureable savings to the City for maintenance or capital costs. Administration will consult with both the SD57 (Shared Use Agreement) and related Community Associations in this process. The overall goal is to enable the City to improve its resource allocation to maintain the well-used ball diamonds.

E. Hard Surface Courts

Prince George has a total of 42 tennis courts and 38 basketball courts throughout various City parks and on School District #57 (SD57) school grounds.

The map on the following page illustrates the various City and SD57 hard surface courts located in Prince George.



Tennis Courts

The 42 total tennis courts in Prince George include 14 courts within City parks, 20 courts on SD57 school grounds and eight (8) courts at the PG Tennis Club. The combined 34 courts located on City and SD57 land are maintained by the City as part of the Shared Use Agreement. In 2013, Administration concluded a comprehensive review of tennis courts that included community consultation, assessment and monitoring to determine the use and condition of City and SD57 tennis courts. The review determined declining use and condition levels for several tennis courts and resulted in a reduction in the maintenance of 29 tennis courts on City parks and SD57 land to the current level of 34 courts¹²⁸.

Of the 34 tennis courts that are presently being maintained by the City, 25 require a combined estimate of \$120,000 in upgrades, primarily in the form of crack sealing, fencing and lighting, along with a major rehabilitation of the courts at Carrie Jane Gray Park¹²⁹. The annual maintenance expenses for tennis courts were approximately \$30,000 in 2013.

Prince George Tennis Club

The Prince George Tennis Club (PGTC) facility was relocated to the Prince George Golf & Curling Club (PGGCC) in 2013 through a three way partnership with the City. The City entered into a 25 year lease Agreement with both organizations to facilitate the relocation of the PGTC due to the sale of land from their former site. A portion of funding from the sale of the land was used by the PGTC to develop their eight (8) new tennis courts at the PGGCC. The new tennis courts feature court lighting as well as tennis and pickleball¹³⁰ court lines. The PGTC continues to manage these courts for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. The use of the PGTC tennis courts is by Club members and accommodates drop-in use through a non-member fee. The 2014, PGTC membership rates range from \$60 to \$300 per year and are free for people who are restricted to the use of a wheelchair. PGTC members are provided with use of the PGGCC clubhouse amenities such as tennis club equipment, washrooms, change rooms, showers, lockers, restaurant, lounge and parking.

The PGTC membership rates have been stable in the past decade with 220 members in 2012 and up to 250 members in 2008. The PGTC has expressed interest in the year-round provision of tennis through an indoor facility.

Basketball Courts

Prince George has a total of 38 basketball courts that include 10 courts within City parks and 28 courts on SD57 school land. Most of the SD57 basketball courts were developed in the 1970s during the

128 This does not include the eight (8) courts at the PG Tennis Club.

129 A total of 25 tennis courts require upgrades including the Carrie Jane Gray court rehabilitation that is estimated at over \$100,000.

130 Pickleball is similar to tennis as it uses the same court net although it differs with the use of solid paddles and a polymer ball, along with a court size that is 6.1m x 13.4m.

construction of many local schools. Multi-courts have recently been developed by the City through partnerships, such as the Zimmaro Park court with funding from a local Community Association, and Duchess Park through funding from the Province of BC. The City maintains the 10 basketball courts on City land while the 28 basketball courts on school grounds are maintained by the SD57. The annual operating expenses for City basketball courts are included within the overall parks maintenance budget.

Lacrosse Courts

The Prince George Masters Lacrosse league manages an outdoor lacrosse court for exclusive use through a rental agreement with the City. The facility was developed by the City in the late 1980s at Carrie Jane Gray Park. The facility features a large, concrete court with concrete hip walls, high chain link fencing and court light standards. The lacrosse court is supported by change rooms and a storage space, shared washrooms and parking.

The PG Masters lacrosse court is used only as a practice facility. The league games are scheduled in local arenas as the concrete walls of the lacrosse court can increase the risk of injury¹³¹. The lacrosse league has permitted groups such as minor lacrosse, baseball and roller hockey to utilize the lacrosse court for practices particularly during the pre-season.

Consultation with the PG Masters Lacrosse league has suggested that the buildings and court lighting are prone to vandalism and that the change rooms are also limited in size. The league has expressed interest in a future roof over their facility.

Trends

Tennis Canada identified that participation in tennis grew by 32 percent between 2012 and 2013 by those who play at least four times per year, with some of the highest participation rates identified in British Columbia¹³². Pickleball¹³³ is growing in popularity particularly for the aging population, and is also beginning to draw in younger players given the smaller court dimensions and slower ball speed. The newer tennis courts at the PG Tennis Club include pickleball lines to accommodate the racquet sport. Basketball has been one of the top 10 participation sports across Canada since 1992 with a decline in participation by one (1) percent between 1992 and 2010¹³⁴.

Municipalities are increasingly developing multi-courts that can accommodate basketball, tennis or ball hockey. A multi-court facility was developed in 2012 at Duchess Park for \$120,000 and features two (2) tennis courts, basketball hoops and line painting, as well as court lighting.

131 Source: PG Masters Lacrosse league.

132 Source: www.tenniscanada.com

133 Pickleball is similar to tennis as it uses the same court net although it differs with the use of solid paddles and a polymer ball, along with a court size that is 6.1m x 13.4m.

134 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

The supply of the 42 tennis courts in Prince George is better than the average supply of the comparable communities. The community of Lethbridge, like Prince George, has a community supply of basketball courts on school grounds through a joint use agreement.

Supply of City owned and Partnership Tennis Courts

Prince George Outdoor Facility	Supply of Tennis Courts				Supply Ratio (Pop. 71,974)
	City	City Partner	School	Total	
Tennis Courts	14	8	20	42	1 : 1,714
City	Population			Tennis Courts	Supply Ratio
Chilliwack	77,936			33	1 : 2,362
Kamloops	85,678			26	1 : 3,295
Red Deer	90,564			52	1 : 1,742
Lethbridge	83,517			24	1 : 3,480
Comparable Community Averages				33.8	1 : 2,720

Supply of City owned and Partnership Basketball Courts

Prince George Outdoor Facility	Supply of Basketball Courts				Supply Ratio (Pop. 71,974)
	City	City Partner	School	Total	
Basketball Courts	10	0	28	38	1 : 1,894
City	Population			Basketball Courts	Supply Ratio
Chilliwack	77,936			20	1 : 3,897
Kamloops	85,678			6	1 : 14,280
Red Deer	90,564			22	1 : 4,117
Lethbridge	83,517			38	1 : 2,198
Comparable Community Averages				21.5	1 : 6,123

Assessment

Through the Shared Use Agreement with School District #57 (SD57), the City maintains the tennis courts on City and SD57 land. Over the summer of 2013, Administration assessed the usage of the City's tennis courts. As a result of that review, the City reduced maintenance of 29 underutilized courts. As a follow up, Administration will gauge the use of the remaining 34 courts on City and SD57 land that continue to be maintained, to determine if further reductions of tennis courts should be considered.

Administration's previous tennis court review and assessment process did not address any long term strategies for the unmaintained courts. Of the 29 tennis courts that are no longer maintained by the City, 12 are on City land and 17 are on SD57 land. At the request of Community Associations, any

unmaintained tennis courts will continue to be available for neighborhood ice rinks during the winter. As a general approach, Administration moves to decommission unmaintained tennis courts if:

- There is low demand for the court.
- The court is on City land.
- Consultations with Community Associations confirm that the court is not used for ice rinks.
- There is no reasonable option or demand for a repurposed use.

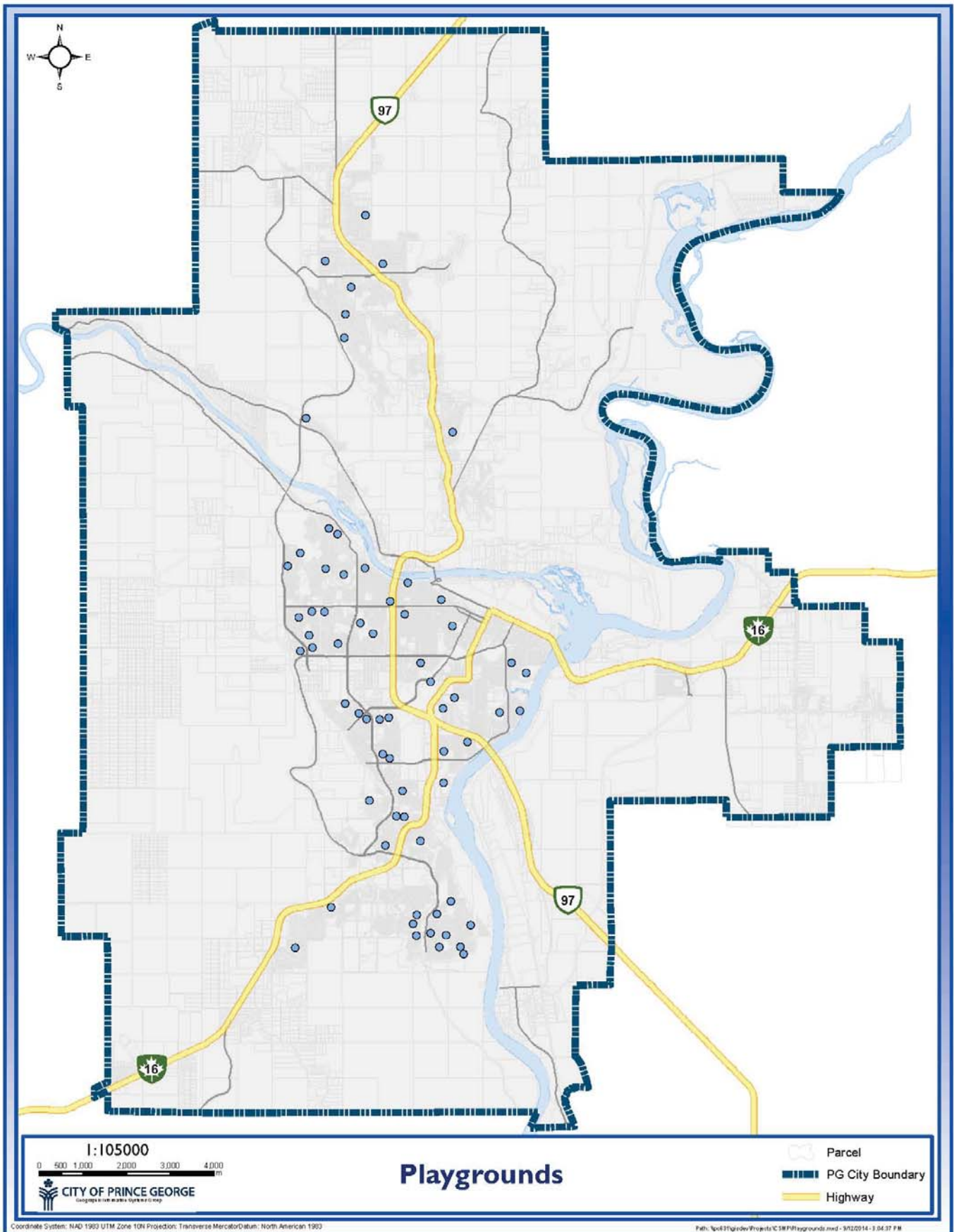
Over 80 percent of the City's \$120,000 capital maintenance upgrades for tennis courts are focused on the tennis courts at Carrie Jane Gray Park near the Rotary Skate Park, which is one of the most well-used tennis courts outside of the PG Tennis Club facilities.

As part of the Shared Use Agreement with SD57, the City maintains a number of City basketball courts and SD57 basketball courts at Heather Park Elementary. Similar to tennis court strategies, Administration will focus on the maintenance and refurbishment of basketball courts at multi-sites that are well-used and look to repurpose or decommission courts that have low demand and are in need of capital funding for refurbishment.

F. Playgrounds

Prince George has a dispersed network of 66 playgrounds within City parks, with additional playgrounds offered at School District #57 (SD57) elementary school sites. Most of the City's playgrounds are located within smaller neighbourhood parks, arising from the development of neighbourhoods in the 1970's. It was common at that time to develop neighbourhood parks and playgrounds within close proximity (within a five to ten minute walk). Other larger City playgrounds, providing a wider array of recreation, are located at major parks such as Fort George and Duchess Parks. About a third of the City playgrounds were replaced by the City during the last decade. The playgrounds are maintained by the City and the annual operating expenses were approximately \$300,000 in 2013.

The following map illustrates the locations of the City's playgrounds.



In 2001 the City of Prince George conducted an audit of all City playgrounds to assess their compliance with the current Canadian Standards Associations (CSA) playground standards. The audit confirmed that many of the City's playgrounds did not meet CSA playground standards, mainly due to inadequate protective ground surfacing and older playground designs. In 2002, the City responded with a Playground Refurbishment Program to remove, repair or replace non-compliant playground equipment. Since 2002, the City has replaced approximately two to five playgrounds annually using City and local Community Association funding¹³⁵, completing a total of 22 playgrounds. The program funding was discontinued in 2010 with 40 playgrounds not yet addressed.

Since 2000, a number of playgrounds were developed by the City through various partnerships and funding programs as follows:

- **Playground Refurbishment Program** – A total of 22 playgrounds were replaced by the City in neighbourhood parks through funding from the City and Community Associations.
- **Rotary Playground** - In 2000, the playground at Fort George Park was replaced by the City through funding from the Rotary Club of Prince George. The facility features multiple playground structures including ground level play elements that are accessible through compacted wood fiber surfacing.
- **Duchess Park Accessible Playground** - In 2011, the City developed a new accessible playground at Duchess Park at total value of \$315,000. The playground was developed through a partnership with funding from the Prince George Advisory Committee on Accessibility and the Province of BC. The playground features play amenities that are accessible to children and their care givers including ramps, accessible artificial turf surfacing, multi-use trails and sensory gardens.

Trends

Municipalities typically provide playgrounds throughout parks for pre-school and school age children. These playgrounds provide physical activity along with free play and basic motor skill development. The CSRP public stakeholder survey suggested that over 55 percent of respondents have visited a playground in the past year. A total of 38 percent of people indicated that they are satisfied with local playgrounds.

Newer playground facilities, such as the Duchess Park Accessible Playground, are accommodating a wider range of play opportunities with more inclusiveness and natural play elements. These barrier-free playgrounds are supported by accessible rubberized or synthetic turf surfacing along with playground ramps and structures. Natural play elements are also being incorporated into playgrounds with features such as logs and boulders, such as in Garden City Park in Richmond¹³⁶.

135 Much of the Community Association funding originated through the Southwest Sector Fund that was distributed for recreation development in community areas that were amalgamated into the City boundary in previous decades.

136 <http://www.play-scapes.com/play-design/natural-playgrounds/garden-city-park-richmond-canada-space2place-2008/>

Assessment

Between 2002 and 2009, Administration worked toward the replacement of playgrounds that either do not conform to the CSA standards or are worn out. The following guidance provides considerations for a playground network that is focused on a more consolidated supply, increases safety, manages costs, and focuses on service delivery in areas with high demand.

Playground Supply:

Overall there are 66 playgrounds that are currently maintained by the City. As part of the 2008 Parks and Open Space Master Plan, Administration conducted an assessment of playground supply and identified eight (8) neighbourhoods that do not have City or SD57 playgrounds within 400m¹³⁷. In some cases there was a lack of suitable park land and in other cases the neighborhood park had not been developed. The assessment also indicated that between two (2) and four (4) neighbourhoods may have more than one (1) City playground within a 400m range, and in some cases these neighbourhoods also had access to SD57 playgrounds. If a range of 800m is used to assess the playground supply, there would be additional neighbourhoods with close access to more than one (1) City playground.

Considering the current context of capital funding pressures, rising maintenance costs, and replacement costs of non-conforming (CSA standard) or worn-out playgrounds, the past development of a highly dispersed network of playgrounds is presenting challenges for Administration. There is a need to ensure that operational and capital funds¹³⁸ are used efficiently so that playgrounds can continue to provide safe, quality play experiences at the sites that are in higher demand. To that end, Administration is moving to ensure:

- That as a target goal, playgrounds are generally supplied with a range of 800m within neighbourhoods with a focus on more consolidated use¹³⁹. This affects the playground target network in two ways. First, there may be more neighbourhoods with a potential oversupply of playgrounds. Secondly, this may reduce the number of neighbourhoods that were identified in 2008 as having an under-supply of playgrounds.
- That in neighborhoods with more than one (1) City playground within an 800m range, and where a playground is in need of replacement, an assessment and consultation with neighbourhoods would be conducted to assess demand levels and help determine where reinvestment in playgrounds should occur, or where complete removals are preferred (see Playground Replacement discussion).
- An overall playground network assessment will be undertaken to determine which neighbourhoods still may not have a reasonably accessible playground under the revised

137 The National Recreation and Park Association recommends a range of 400m – 800m as an acceptable range of distance to a playground, and these ranges are commonly used by municipalities in their park planning.

138 The estimated cost to develop a neighbourhood park in 2013 is over \$250,000, which includes the cost of a new playground at over \$65,000.

139 Other criteria in playground supply are considered, such as if access to the playground in range requires crossing a major roadway or other physical barriers.

target range of 800m. As a general practice, Administration would develop options, through consultation, in order to address the potential need for a new playground, including looking at alternative options, partnership funding, and other potential improvements at major parks¹⁴⁰.

- While this report is not intended to address long-term strategies for City parks, the possible decommissioning of a number of small playgrounds will affect specific parks. As such, Administration is providing additional guidance to those potential situations through this report. Where the primary purpose of a small neighbourhood park is to provide a site for a playground and the playground is determined to be appropriate for removal, then Administration will assess options for repurposing the park or where appropriate, seeking Council's direction on selling the park land. Generally small parcels of park land may be suitable for disbursement if it has low use, it's sale is allowable under the terms of the park's establishment, there is sufficient other park land in the general area, there are maintenance or capital cost savings to the City, it is not suitable for repurposing, and the direction is consistent with other City strategies and plans.

Playground Replacement:

Through the City's playground audit process, Administration acknowledged that it is advisable for municipalities to demonstrate an on-going commitment to bring playgrounds up to a CSA standard. Since the 2001 audit was conducted on City playgrounds, 22 non-conforming playgrounds were addressed, leaving about 40 playgrounds in need of various levels of refurbishment. In general, Administration follows a graduated response approach in addressing this area of risk because of the high capital replacement costs and the public demand for playgrounds. There is not enough capital funding to replace all the playgrounds at one time and the removal of all the non-conforming (CSA standard) playgrounds is not a reasonable option.

The City's graduated response, related to the remaining 40 non-conforming playgrounds, involves:

- Identifying the playgrounds using the new target range of 800m within neighbourhoods (see discussion above) and prioritizing the playgrounds that provide the highest level of use and are in highest need of full replacement.
- Regular inspection of playground equipment or protective ground cover¹⁴¹.
- Remove the most problematic items (parts of playground equipment) in each playground.
- Address the highest priority specific issues within playgrounds (e.g. add protective ground cover) if minor capital funding is available.
- Completely remove and replace playground equipment to a CSA standard when higher levels of capital or third party funding are available.
- Document equipment removals or playground upgrades.

140 For example, one scenario could result in deciding not to develop a new playground that is close by (i.e. within 800 m) in favour of using the capital or partnership funding towards improving a destination playground (that may be further away) with a broader range of recreation activities (e.g. Duchess Park).

141 Appropriate material that reduces injury from falling.

G. Skate Parks

The Rotary Skate Park was developed in 2002 by the City through a partnership with the Boards, Bikes and Blades Committee, who secured funding from the Downtown Rotary Club for a quarter of the \$250,000 funding needed to build the facility. The Rotary Skate Park is located at Carrie Jane Gray Park, and is the only skate park within the Prince George (see map in Section 5.2.K. for location). The facility features over 1,500 m² of skateable concrete surface with various skate boxes, rails, ramps and jumps. The skate park was designed to accommodate a future expansion. The facility, across the street from the YM-YWCA, is adjacent to tennis and basketball courts and is supported by a shared parking lot and washrooms. The facility is maintained (graffiti removal, waste removal) by the City with annual operating expenses estimated at \$5,000.

Observed use of the facility indicates significant use, particularly outside of school hours between spring and fall months¹⁴². The facility is primarily used by skate boarders although other wheeled user groups such as BMX/trick riders have been observed at the facility. Facility use guidelines set out the required use of helmets and skate park conduct or etiquette.

Skateboarding is still observed at urban plazas and hard landscaped areas, where the use is typically discouraged, and may indicate a lack of localized skate park facilities in other areas of the community. The CSRP public stakeholder survey indicated that 36 percent of respondents desire additional skate park facilities, particularly in destination parks within the Hart and College Heights.

Skateboarders in the Hart area are currently working with local Rotary Clubs and the Hart Community Association to pursue the development of a local skate park. The group has secured some in-kind donations and is forming a committee to advance this initiative.

Trends

Since the 1980s, skateboarding has become an increasingly more mainstream activity with skate parks delivered by municipalities¹⁴³. The appeal of skateboarding is attributed to its unstructured format, low cost, social environment and draw of a certain element of risk. Despite the perceived risk, skateboarding has fewer injuries per participant than football and biking¹⁴⁴.

Municipalities have typically responded to skateboarding needs with large facilities that cater to a range of ability levels. Larger destination skate parks like Rotary Skate Park now cost over \$400,000 to construct given the rising cost of concrete and materials. Smaller, skateable venues are emerging such as a “skate-dot” or “skate-spot”¹⁴⁵ which provide skateboarding opportunities in destination parks and enable beginner to intermediate users with an opportunity to ride without feeling intimidated by

142 Source: City of Prince George

143 Source: Skaters for Public Skateparks

144 Source: US Consumer product Safety Commission

145 Source: Skaters for Public Skateparks

advanced users at the larger skate park facilities. These smaller skate park facilities are estimated at over \$50,000 to \$75,000 and are typically located alongside multi-use trails and pathways.

Longboarding is growing in popularity as a newer recreational activity. Longboards are used like skate boards only riders often seek downhill riding on streets or trails with a long decline. This unmanaged use of transportation routes presents a number of risks for riders, motorists and trail users.

Municipalities such as North Vancouver are now regulating the use of longboards on streets within the parameters of their bylaws¹⁴⁶. Currently, this is not a level of activity in Prince George which warrants specific tools such as bylaws. However, the City will continue to monitor this activity to determine increased participation in this sport in Prince George.

The supply of one skate park in Prince George is below the average supply of other comparable communities for Kamloops and Red Deer who have two (2) skate parks and Chilliwack which has three (3) skate parks. The current population estimate of 10 to 19 year old youths in Prince George is 11,444, 12,411 in Kamloops, 11,115 in Red Deer and 11,471 in Chilliwack¹⁴⁷.

Assessment

The current skate park is well-used, centrally located and has relatively low maintenance costs for the City. A new skate park is being pursued by the Hart Community Association and local Rotary Clubs, with a preferred location at the Cpl. Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Park. Administration will continue to engage in discussions with the community parties involved in this initiative.

At this time, Administration is not pursuing additional skate parks in the city. However, if partnership and funding opportunities arise, Administration will consider these potential opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

H. Bike Parks

Prince George has two bike parks on City land. A small pump track facility was developed by the City at Duchess Park, and the City also has a partnership with a community group for a BMX facility at Carrie Jane Gray Park (see map in Section 5.2.K. for general locations). The Prince George Cycling Club (PGCC) has developed a large destination mountain bike park on Crown land at the Pidherny Recreation Site.

146 Source: <http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?a=5153>

147 Source: Statistics Canada

Duchess Park Pump Track

The Duchess Park Pump Track offers beginner to intermediate cycling within a central location at Duchess Park. The track was developed by the City at a total cost of \$80,000 as part of the City's construction of Duchess Park in 2012. The Prince George Cycling Club was involved in the concept and planning, and features a dirt track with rolling hills and wooden trick structures. The track is suitable for riders of all ages, although it is predominantly used by younger, novice riders.

Supertrak BMX

The Supertrak BMX facility is located in Carrie Jane Gray Park and was developed by the local Supertrak BMX society. This not-for-profit society maintains the facility exclusively for their user groups through a rental agreement with the City. The facility is approximately 30 years old and features an extensive dirt track with a concession, motto shed, office, storage and washroom. IN 2005, the BMC club added a new washroom and expanded their track to meet the North American BMX track standard¹⁴⁸.

The Supertrak BMX membership has grown to 175 members in 2013, up from 142 members in 2007. The club provides free trials for non-members and radio controller users have also been provided with the occasional use of the track. Consultation with the Supertrak BMX Club has indicated that the club is considering an enhancement to the track in the form of a taller, longer start area to meet emerging needs for BMX tracks¹⁴⁹.

Prince George Cycling Club (PGCC)

The Pidherny Recreation Site, off North Nechako Road, was formally established as a mountain bike park in 2010 through an agreement between the Prince George Cycling Club (PGCC), the Province of BC and the City of Prince George. The PGCC develops and maintains the area for use by the public and there are no operating or maintenance costs to the City. Seasonal trail use of the downhill trails is moderate to high for mountain bikers and the moderately graded trails are frequented by other trail user groups, particularly during the winter months for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The PGCC runs bi-weekly trail maintenance nights and uses the area for race events throughout the summer, along with club programs such as the annual PG SprockKids Learn to Ride Program in spring and the Prince George Tricycle Race.

The facility features a total of 25 mountain bike trails that include 12 cross country trails and 13 downhill trails. Approximately half of the trails are geared towards expert rides while the remainder is largely designed for intermediate riders, with some beginner trails. In 2012, the PGCC invested \$78,000 in grant

148 Source: Supertrak BMX society

149 Source: CSMP Rental Agreement Interview

funds to develop two new trails and has also worked with the Provincial Government to construct a parking lot at the top of Foothills Boulevard.

The PGCC has a proposal to develop and maintain additional areas to accommodate mountain biking in Prince George. The goal of the PGCC is to accommodate safe and enjoyable riding on trails that are developed and maintained to industry standards, within locations on City land that are central and accessible by public transit. The bike trails would feature a beginner to intermediate downhill trail from UNBC to Ginters as well as a series of bike trails at Lakewood and Brigade Park.

Other Mountain Biking Use

Mountain biking occurs throughout many natural parks and trails in Prince George. The Otway Ski Centre features 55km of beginner to intermediate cross country trails that are used in the off-season by mountain bikers. The Otway trails are connected to the 25 km Cranbrook Hill Greenway that extends to UNBC and College Heights. The LC Gunn Trail is a four (4) km trail on the east side of the Fraser River that is used mainly by intermediate to expert mountain bikers in addition to other trail users.

Mountain biking use has also been observed in City parks or green spaces that were not necessarily designed or formalized for this use. The activity may present concerns associated with unmanaged risks and the degradation of environmentally sensitive areas and will need to be monitored.

Trends

The CSRP Telephone Survey indicated that of the top five (5) outdoor recreation activities that the City has a direct role in, cycling and mountain biking are the 2nd most popular outdoor recreation activities for adults and the 3rd most popular for seniors and youth between 12 and 17 years old. The sport of mountain biking is evolving with various sectors that are defined by Tourism BC¹⁵⁰ as follows:

- **Cross-Country** riding features single track trails through long, backcountry continuous systems - e.g. Otway and Cranbrook Hill Greenway
- **Downhill** riding is facilitated through short trails providing fast speeds, berms and jumps, while requiring a vehicle shuttle or chair lift to begin the descent - e.g. Pidherny Recreation Site
- **Freeriding** is accommodated through technical trail features such as bridges and drops - e.g. Pidherny Recreation Site
- **Dirt Jump** riding occurs on tracks with bumps, jumps and berms - e.g. Duchess Pump Track

Mountain biking has a demonstrated presence in northern British Columbia. Municipalities such as Burns Lake and Smithers have established large destination mountain bike facilities that provide tourism opportunities and recreation activities within their communities.

150 http://www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/mbtguide08_web.pdf

Mountain biking facilities, such as the Pidherny Recreation Site, are increasingly being developed and maintained to the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) design and development standards. The IMBA standards balance rider safety and enjoyment with environmental concerns and ongoing maintenance.

Prince George has a supply of two bike parks which is higher than the one bike park supplied in the other comparable communities. With one BMX track supplied in Prince George, this is comparable to the other communities.

Assessment

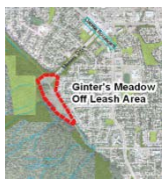
In general, Administration supports the promotion of additional safe mountain biking opportunities that reflect the growing demands in different riding styles, accommodates different age groups and compliments established recreational use patterns. While the development of additional mountain biking trails is not being pursued at this time, Administration will consider how best to support these potential opportunities on a case by case basis if partnership and funding opportunities arise.

Mountain bike development options of most interest to the City would favour those that replace unsanctioned and unsafe trails, assist with opportunities for younger children and beginner skill levels, are conveniently located and would have a low cost to the City.

I. Off-Leash Dog Sites

The City of Prince George has three off-leash areas that include two locations that were introduced as pilot projects over a decade ago, along with one fenced dog park (see map in Section 5.2.K. for general locations). Ginter's Meadow and Moore's Meadow Park were officially designated as off-leash areas in 2013. In 2011, the City developed the Duchess Fenced Dog Park as part of the park's construction. Off-leash areas are regulated through City bylaws and through use guidelines established through the People Pets and Parks Program. Each of the off-leash areas include etiquette and regulation signage, waste receptacles and dog waste bags available through on-site dispensers. The City's annual operating expenses for off-leash areas are estimated at \$10,000 for 2013.

Ginter's Meadow



Ginter's Meadow is situated within an under-developed road right of way and includes a 12 ha. off-leash area. The off-leash area is situated within a large meadow with informal trails and the granular Foothills Boulevard trail that runs through the middle of the meadow from the northwest to southeast. The main access and parking for the off-leash area is off of Massey Drive, with additional accesses off of Ferry Avenue and the Foothills Boulevard Trail.

The use of the off-leash area is shared with multiple users including pedestrians, joggers, equestrians and cyclists who mainly use the Foothills Boulevard Trail that bisects the off-leash area. This shared use can cause conflicts when dogs are occasionally not controlled properly by their owners.

Moore's Meadow Park



Moore's Meadow Park is a 59 ha. natural park that contains an eight (8) ha. off-leash area within the lower meadow. The lower meadow is surrounded by a forested valley with a number of natural trails leading in and around the meadow. The main access and parking is off of Foothills Boulevard. The use of the Moore's Meadow off-leash area is primarily by off-leash users, although the perimeter trail is shared with joggers, walkers and cyclists within the park.

Duchess Fenced Dog Park

The Duchess Fenced Dog Park contains a fully fenced 0.31 ha. area. The facility features a large and small dog compound area that are divided by fencing. Each compound area is surrounded by a granular walking path with a dog water fountain in the larger dog compound. Parking is available on-street and at the adjacent Duchess Park Secondary School. The observed use of the Duchess fenced Dog Park indicates that it is well received given its central location and associated multiple park uses¹⁵¹.

Trends

Off-leash areas are growing in popularity as a form of outdoor recreation¹⁵². The interest in off-leash areas is assumed to be attributed to active living initiatives, increased pet ownership and the social interaction they offer to pets and their owners¹⁵³. The off-leash areas in Prince George also accommodate walking, which the CSRP Telephone Survey identifies is the most popular recreation activity for adults and seniors. The CSRP public stakeholder surveys suggest that 41 percent of people using off-leash areas in Prince George with up to 25 percent of all seniors visiting them more than once a year.

Communities such as Kamloops are offering diverse off-leash experiences such as smaller fenced dog parks, larger destination areas and off-leash waterfront access¹⁵⁴. Some communities require new off-leash areas to be supported by community groups, often through partnership agreements¹⁵⁵.

151 Source: City of Prince George

152 Dog Parks have grown in number by 34 percent in the last five years (source: USA Today).

153 Source: American Pet Products Association 2013/2014 National Pet Survey.

154 <http://www.kamloops.ca/parks/dogparks.shtml>

155 Source: Calgary Off Leash Area Management Plan, 2010 – City of Calgary

The supply of the three off-leash areas in Prince George is similar the average supply in the comparable communities, except for Kamloops which has 19 designated off-leash areas.

Assessment

Overall, the supply of off-leash parks is satisfactory in most areas of the city. There are some community areas, such as College Heights and the Hart, that do not have designated off-leash areas. The 2011 Proposed Off-Leash Strategies report, as developed by the Off Leash Advisory Committee of Council¹⁵⁶, provides recommendations for future off-leash areas. Administration, through its normal park planning functions and Council reporting, will look for opportunities to develop off-leash areas in College Heights and the Hart with consideration of the 2011 Proposed Off-Leash Strategies report.

J. Golf

The City of Prince George owns one Par 3 golf course facility located at Pine Valley (see map in Section 5.2.K. for location), which is operated through a service contractor, while the City covers capital costs for course improvements and major repairs. The 16 hectare Pine Valley Golf Course is centrally located near Highway 16 and is supported by a clubhouse, cookhouse and maintenance shop.

The Pine Valley green fees are on par with the only other Par 3 golf course in Prince George, except that seniors have slightly higher green fees at Pine Valley. In 2013, the total rounds¹⁵⁷ of golf were 14,000, and by September 2014 the number was 11,807¹⁵⁸. In previous decades the total annual rounds of golf were as high as 27,860. A decline in participation rates at Pine Valley may be attributed to the loss of the driving range in 2003 and the loss of the courses' predominant pine tree species from the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic. In recent years, the course has been replanted with thousands of new trees to help re-establish the urban forest canopy and to increase the course beautification and use.

A number of users of the Pine Valley Golf Course organized the "Friends of Pine Valley" group to help with reforestation of the golf course. The group meets annually with City Administration and the course operator to offer customer input and provide volunteer hours towards the reforestation efforts.

Trends

Stats Canada identifies that golf was the most popular sport between 1998 and 2010 amongst participants over 15 years old¹⁵⁹. In 2010, the participation rate for men was 23 percent while the participation rate was 15 percent for women, down from 19 percent in 2005. The CSRP Telephone

156 The Off Leash Advisory Committee was a limited duration committee of Council and was comprised of citizens who provided Council with recommendations for off leash use and management.

157 This includes both 9 hole and 18 hole rounds of golf.

158 The lower number of 2014 may be in part due to the high summer temperatures, smoky conditions and the school strike which reduced school tournaments.

159 Source: 2010 General Social Survey, Stats Canada.

Survey indicated that of the top five (5) outdoor recreation activities that the City is a direct role in, golf is the 2nd most popular for seniors. Recent national studies are indicating a decline in golf participation and as such, these trends need to be monitored locally.

The supply of the one municipal golf course in Prince George is similar to what Kamloops and Red Deer supply. However, Chilliwack and Lethbridge do not provide municipal golf courses.

Assessment

National trends indicate a decline in golf participation, and the Pine Valley Golf Course is also showing a decline in usage, which may be attributed to the loss of the driving range in 2003. While the course has been replanted in recent years, declining usage may also be attributed to the loss of pine trees from the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic.

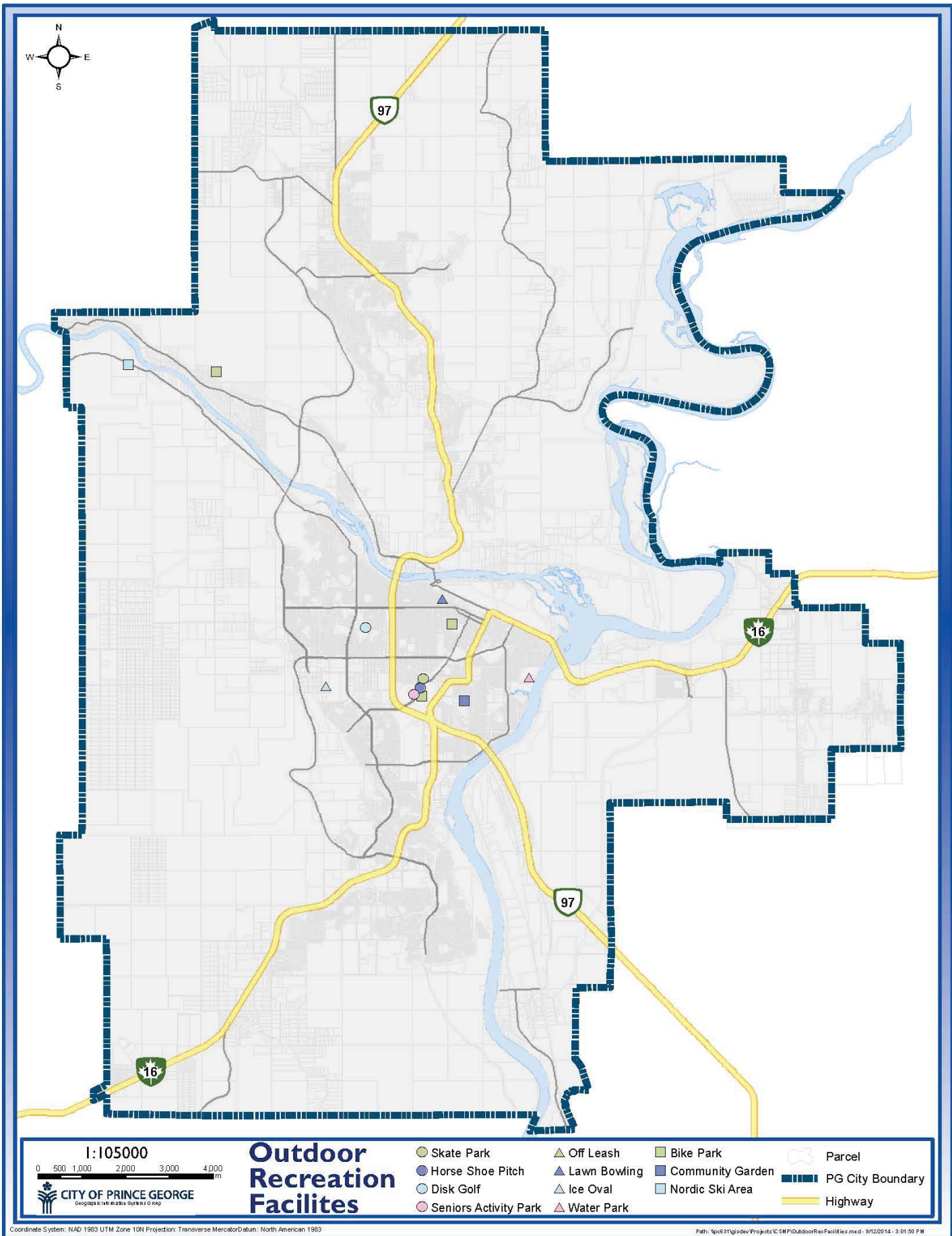
The City has been intermittently allocating capital funding for repairs and minor improvements. In 2012 Administration worked with the operator to assess potential improvements to Pine Valley Golf Course, including a new irrigation system, additional golf netting, clubhouse upgrades, driving range, and a redesign for two holes. These improvements were estimated to cost between \$830,000 and \$1.2m in 2012 dollars, but are not currently part of Administration's capital plan. As part of managing the City's assets, Administration will continue to monitor the conditions of the Pine Valley Golf Course.

While the Pine Valley Golf Course provides recreation benefits, the Core Review process evaluated the option of having the land redeveloped for other uses. Council's decision was to maintain the golf course.

K. Other Outdoor Recreation Facilities

There are a variety of outdoor recreation facilities that are used seasonally and provide a range of recreation activities.

The map on the following page illustrates the location of these facilities along with a number of recreation facilities referred to in previous sections.



Facilities Used During Spring to Fall Seasons:

Rotaract Water Park

The Rotaract Water Park is the City's only outdoor water park facility. The Rotaract Water Park was established in 2001 at Fort George Park and is maintained by the City. The water park was developed by the City through a partnership with the Prince George Rotaract Club, who provided fundraising towards the development. The Rotaract Water Park is observed to be well-used during hot summer months by preschool and school-aged children. The City's annual operating expenses are included within the parks operating budget.

Disc Golf

A Disc Golf course¹⁶⁰ was developed by the City through a partnership with the Prince George Rotary Club who funded the development, and the Prince George Ultimate Frisbee Club who helped design the course development. The golf course was developed in 2007 at Rainbow Park and features a nine (9) basket course that was designed to take advantage of the rolling topography within the park. The course is used by people of all ages although it is more popular with adults and families. The City's annual operating expenses are included within the parks operating budget.

Lawn Bowling (Watrous Park)

The City developed a lawn bowling green in 1996 at Watrous Park, through a partnership with the Prince George Lawn Bowling Club. The facility features one fenced green and a small storage facility. A gazebo was developed by the club in 2003 through funding from a local Rotary Club. The Lawn Bowling club has hosted events including the 2002 and 2008 BC Senior Games. The club previously held a rental agreement, and currently only book the facility on an hourly basis. The club currently continues to operate as a not-for-profit organization with 30 members in 2013 and actively recruits up to 30% of their new members each year. The City continues to maintain the facility for public use with annual operating expenses estimated at \$9,500 in 2013.

Prince George Horseshoe Club

In 2001 the City developed horseshoe pitches at Carrie Jane Gray Park through the Recreation Place Relocation Plan¹⁶¹. The Horseshoe Club maintains the facility for exclusive use by their members through a rental agreement with the City. The facility is fully accessible and features 30 regulation

¹⁶⁰ Disc Golf involves throwing a golf disc into a steel basket target.

¹⁶¹ Recreation Place park was sold for commercial development in the early 2000s and the relocation of user groups was facilitated through the 2001 Recreation Place Relocation Plan.

pitches including 12 that are lit, a clubhouse with a common room, washrooms, kitchen and storage facilities, outside covered patio area, bleacher seating and paved parking. The location is adjacent to the YMCA of Northern BC, which provides the club with access to washrooms as well as shower facilities during horseshoe tournaments. The City provides maintenance to the property, structures, utilities and winterizing of buildings with annual operating expenses estimated at \$5,000 in 2013. The club has previously held tournaments although membership has declined from over 50 members in 2001 to 15 members in 2013.

Seniors Activity Park

The ActNow BC Senior's Community Park was developed by the City through a partnership with the provincial Act Now Program, that provided funding for the facility. The City developed the facility in 2011 at Masich Place Stadium along Massey Drive. It features fitness stations that are designed for seniors with equipment that emphasizes flexibility and strength-building using isometric exercises. The circuit is designed for beginner to intermediate users and includes guided instructions at each fitness station. The facility is supported by the recreational opportunities at the Masich Place Stadium along with accessible pathways and parking facilities. The City's annual operating expenses are included within the parks operating budget.

Prince George Community Gardens

The Prince George Community Gardens are located on Milburn Avenue and offers the community with access to organic gardening opportunities. The facility was developed by the Prince George Community Gardens in 1997 and is maintained by the group through a rental agreement with the City. The gardens feature raised plots that produce organic food for up to 40 members. Around 50 volunteers help to maintain the facility and demonstrate sustainable gardening techniques. Various educational events are held at the facility and plants feature signage to help educate users about various plant species.

Consultation with the community gardens organization indicated that they encourage the expansion of further community garden development and edible landscaping, particularly within neighbourhoods and compact residential developments¹⁶². The organization indicates that further community garden development would benefit from supportive land use policies and access to water and electricity.

Assessment

Lawn bowling (Watrous Park) and the horse shoe club development at Carrie Jane Gray Park are in need of review and monitoring. In both of these facilities, use levels and their club memberships are down significantly. The lawn bowling club moved away from the rental agreement because of the low membership level, and now schedules the Watrous Park facility on an as needed basis. The horse shoe

162 Source: CSMP Rental Agreement Interview

club currently maintains their rental agreement with the City. The City has been continuing the maintenance of these two facilities at an annual combined cost of \$15,000.

It is unclear if the current decline in use is trending towards a complete loss of members or if this is a temporary decline. The lawn bowling club is actively recruiting members every year to grow their sport. Administration will continue to monitor use and consult with the clubs and determine if changes will be needed.

Periodically, other community groups may have interests in developing additional recreation facilities. Given that Administration's resources and budgets are currently stretched, there is a need for a cautious approach to supporting new development. If partnership and funding opportunities arise that are consistent with demands and trends, Administration will consider how to best support these potential opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

Facilities Used During the Winter Season:

Ice Rinks

Outdoor ice rinks are delivered by the City annually through the Ice Rink Program which includes a partnership with the School District #57 (SD57) and local Community Associations. Residents who are interested in maintaining an ice rink participate through Community Associations with the City and SD57 confirming the suitability of the chosen location. The Ice Rink Program primarily utilizes tennis courts, and has facilitated between 15 to 25 ice rinks annually in the past decade. Currently, there is a growing trend towards more community ice rinks provided through Community Associations. The number and distribution of ice rinks is heavily dependent upon volunteers who request locations and maintain these facilities.

The City's role is to install, take down and maintain the ice rink boards, and to provide training to volunteers on using the fire hydrants and stand pipes for ice rink flooding. The City also covers the costs of lighting. Further, the City provides a total \$5,500 annually divided between the Community Associations to help cover a portion of the volunteer's costs for hoses, shovels, nets, etc.

The PG Civic Centre also has a plaza that is maintained by the City as an ice surface during the winter months. The 354 m² rink is supported by seating areas and lighting. The rink is maintained through the use of an ice plant and Zamboni with annual operating expenses included within the PG Civic Centre operational budget.

Prince George Outdoor Ice Oval

The Prince George Outdoor Ice Oval facility was developed by the Outdoor Ice Oval Society of Prince George (OIOS), through a partnership with the City. The Ice Oval Society maintains the facility through a service agreement with the City. The ice oval is located at Exhibition Park near the Kin Centres and features a lit 400 m long track speed skating venue with natural ice that is susceptible to weather conditions.

The ice is maintained by the society with their Zamboni. The facility is supported by shared parking facilities at Exhibition Park. The oval was constructed within a natural earth berm which helps to protect users from winter elements. The ice oval receives an average of 8,000 visits in a season and is used annually for the Prince George Iceman competition. Open skate times are generally accommodated daily during the winter although skate rentals are not available.

The facility will serve as the long track speed skating venue for the 2015 Canada Winter Games. In preparation for the 2015 Games use, the base material of the oval is being upgraded to improve ice retention and a storage building is being built with improvements for water access for flooding.

Otway Nordic Ski Centre

The Otway Nordic Ski Centre is Prince George's premier cross-country ski facility, developed, operated and maintained by the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club. The City's only role is in maintaining a long-term lease agreement with the Province of BC for the Crown land, which the City then sub-leases to the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club.

The club currently maintains one of the largest Nordic ski centre memberships in Canada at around 1,870 members¹⁶³. The facility features a 55 km groomed trail system that include five (5) km of lit trails for night skiing, dog-friendly trails and numerous snowshoe trails. Additional facilities include a biathlon range, large day lodge with heated washrooms, wax room, kitchen, small concession, ski school and both snowshoe and ski rentals. The club recently developed a new 30 lane biathlon shooting range with the capacity for a large spectator area. The facility has hosted a number of provincial and western Canadian championships and will be a 2015 Canada Winter Games venue.

In the off season, the Otway trails are used extensively by the community for running, mountain biking and hiking¹⁶⁴. The facility also provides a trailhead for the 25km Cranbrook Hill Greenway that extends to destinations such as the University of Northern British Columbia or College Heights.

163 Source: Caledonia Nordic Ski Club

164 The trails are not maintained for public use.

Tobogganing Hills

There are a number of tobogganing opportunities throughout the community within City parks and on School District 57 school grounds. The natural sloped topography of Carney Hill in Carrie Jane Gray Park, Rainbow Park, Harry Loder Park and College Heights Secondary School provide some of the popular destinations for tobogganing. The various locations are generally supported by on-street parking, lighting and waste receptacles.

Winter Park Trails

A number of City park trails are used by the community for winter recreation activities. Various destination parks and trails provide venues for winter trail walking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. The City provides some snow removal along trails such as the Heritage River Trail System along the rivers, Gladstone Trails in College Heights, Hart trail near Kelly Road Secondary School, UNBC Connector Trail along Tyner Boulevard and along the Highway 16 Trail north of Ferry Avenue.

Assessment

The City's role in assisting Community Association ice rink volunteers can be maintained at current operational levels. However, Administration will continue to work with rink volunteers to monitor the annual upkeep of their assigned rinks in order to focus City resources (e.g. putting up and taking down ice rink boards) to those rinks that demonstrate a satisfactory level of maintenance. If there is interest in additional ice rinks, Administration may need to prioritize rinks based on use and volunteer commitment and also establish an upper limit for the number of community ice rinks. In the longer term, Administration may also consider the consolidation of ice rinks in order to move away from a highly distributed system of smaller rinks to more centralized multi-use locations with larger capacities. This may increase the maintenance efficiency while still providing good opportunities for users and volunteers. In looking for improvements, Administration will continue to engage and review annual use and delivery with volunteers and Community Associations.

In 2014, the PG Ice Oval Society and the City entered into a 25 year use agreement for the ice oval. The society has a seven year strategic plan, in which they have identified an interest in developing a warming hut, and a less permeable base surface for the track to better maintain ice conditions.

6.0 Summary of Assessment



Overall this report illustrates Administration's role in maintaining a diverse range of recreation activities in Prince George through a variety of methods: relying on City resources and budgets, use agreements with community clubs, partnerships, volunteers and community organizations. Over the past three decades, the different types of recreational activities have become more diverse and there is a trend towards an increased interest in unstructured recreation. This has resulted in a situation where the participants in recreation are distributed across more types of activities with the result that some sites have become underutilized. In addition, the population of Prince George has changed, there are fewer youth and an increasing number of seniors. These factors may be contributing to a decline in participation rates for some recreation activities, despite the overall growing demand for recreation. Prince George also has a number of the outdoor recreation facilities and venues that are widely distributed throughout the city and are built upon past practices to locate venues such as ball diamonds, tennis courts, playgrounds, and basketball courts in close proximity to where people live. Finally, there is a general culture in sport clubs and community organizations to work independently, which may lead to missed opportunities for collaboration and potentially better support for their sport in the long term.

Each of these contextual pieces above suggest a network or system of outdoor recreation facilities and venues that have added costs to maintain and operate, given that they are so dispersed. Within the range of current resources, Administration is at its capacity in meeting the current level of use and demand. While the reliance on volunteers and community organizations is a cost-effective approach to delivering recreation, this is also an area of risk. As such, this report is suggesting an approach that limits expectations for growth in recreation service delivery (maintaining current level), better supports volunteers in delivering recreation, looks for efficiencies through aggregating (being less dispersed), and in some cases scaling back to manage costs and maintain quality service delivery.

The overall theme of this report is for the City to work with community groups, sports clubs and partners to move toward a more aggregated system, with an increased focus on maintaining key locations that functions as recreation nodes for multi-use sport facilities. While there will still be recreation facilities dispersed throughout areas of the city, the quantity of small, underutilized sites will be fewer in number. Administration will also increase its focus on supporting the volunteer base and, where appropriate, work with community groups and sports clubs to explore options for a more cooperative and strategic approach in using the various facilities. Overall this will increase the durability of the volunteer-based delivery system and increase the efficient use of city resources by maintaining multi-use sites with higher levels of use.

Service Delivery – Community Associations

The delivery of community programming through the seven Community Associations is a cost-effective method for the City, given that Administration's primary role is to support a significant volunteer base that delivers the actual programming and activities. Administration provides this support role with an equivalent of a quarter to a half of a full-time staff position. Since the "Community Development Model" is so reliant on volunteers, it is also an area of risk within this strategy.

Service delivery systems that are built upon volunteers need periodic assessment to look for emerging issues, opportunities for improvements and other methods to support the system. The current system was established almost 40 years ago and has evolved over time from a network of 23 Community Associations that were linked to school areas, to the current seven Community Associations that are linked to broad neighbourhood areas. Meanwhile, each Community Association continues to operate independently under their own Society.

There are some indications that Community Associations have a number of potential issues or concerns. For example, several of the Community Associations are struggling with overall capacity which is affecting board membership, volunteers and recruitment of activity leaders. On average, about a third of the PG Active Living Guide advertised program activities are cancelled largely due to a lack of volunteer activity leaders¹⁶⁵. There is a lack of training sessions and materials for new activity leaders, and for some Community Associations, a lack of capacity for volunteer recruitment. One or two Community Associations are particularly successful, mainly due to the experience and commitment of individual members that take on a leadership role with a high level of dedication. Succession planning will be needed for the future replacement of these key individuals to ensure the ongoing success of the Community Associations.

The potential issues outlined above indicate that it is time for Administration to conduct a consultative process with Community Associations to address emerging issues and trends, and to adopt improvements that better sustain the system for the long-term. In general, Administration is looking to improve the network of Community Associations by providing support to volunteers, developing strategies for volunteer leader succession, and increasing cooperation in order to sustain the operating model. The overall goal is to reduce the administrative burden for volunteers so they can focus on their core activities and ensure that they have the tools to be effective, while also feeling rewarded with an enjoyable volunteer experience.

The focus on potential improvements and efficiencies provides some assurances for the long-term viability of the Community Association network, which in turn supports this cost-effective service delivery model. Administration will conduct a consultative process with Community Associations to examine potential solutions that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consider ways that the network of seven Community Associations could work more collaboratively in order to reduce administrative work load, while still maintaining independence in program delivery.
- Explore ways to improve cross-learning between the Community Associations, increase the profile of the community work these groups do and create a more formal connection to the City in order to facilitate better feedback, advice and recognition. Ultimately this could also

¹⁶⁵ Community Associations within the Bowl area in particular have higher program cancellation rates versus those within outlying areas of the City.

- improve the efficiency of the liaising and coordinating role played by Administration as well as improve the recruitment and succession of new volunteer leaders.
- Pursue opportunities to improve program registration by building off the successful approaches of Community Associations¹⁶⁶ and looking at collaborative approaches that could improve efficiencies.
 - Through increased efficiencies (see above bullets) and an adjustment to staff work priorities, Administration can move towards improved support for Community Associations such as:
 - Better utilization of the City website to improve service and available materials and linkages.
 - Assist Community Associations in the provision of training materials and periodic training sessions for activity leaders.
 - Assist Community Associations with early notices of planned activities, soliciting interested activity leaders and gauging interest in other programming elements as a new preliminary step prior to creating the PG Active Living Guide.
 - Assist with the development of volunteer recruitment and succession planning of key leaders.
 - Create improved linkages and cooperation between Community Associations and other relevant organizations such as School District 57, Volunteer PG, Enhance PG, CNC and UNBC and the various Parent Advisory Committees.

Recommendation:

Pursue a consultative process to assess options and improve the effectiveness and efficiencies of the Community Development Model (Community Associations) in order to ensure a durable cost-effective service delivery system.

Aquatics

The Four Seasons Leisure Pool is nearing its Estimated Service Life (ESL) of 46 years and significant capital investment is needed to address immediate requirements with the roof and building envelope. There is a specific need to assess the medium to long-term options for this pool facility and to undertake a full condition assessment with estimates on repairs and replacements. As such, Administration is preparing a separate comprehensive Aquatic Needs Assessment report that will evaluate both the PG Aquatic Centre and the Four Seasons Leisure Pool for City of Prince George Council for early 2015.

¹⁶⁶ For example, online registration may be more convenient for participants, although other Community Associations that use in-person registration have shown that the latter approach better facilitates recruitment of volunteers and activity leaders. In person registration has also been shown to be delivered relatively smoothly and efficiently.

In general, the use levels of the PG Aquatic Centre and Four Seasons Leisure Pool are comparable to other similar communities and are within the national average with five annual pool visits per capita. As a continuous management practice, Administration has offered different programming elements to provide improved service and to increase use. Feedback from the public and users indicate general satisfaction with programming offered at the two pools and the wide range of opportunities they provide for residents and aquatic clubs.

However, new aquatic facilities in other communities are increasing use of pools by providing amenities such as newly designed (more exciting) water-slides. While there are no plans at this time for a new water slide at the PG Aquatic Centre, the re-installation of the wave-generator at the PG Aquatic Centre is expected to increase use. In the medium to long-term, the City should assess its pool amenities to determine if additional features are required to address the changing trends in user expectations.

Anecdotal information suggests that a 40 percent cost recovery rate for the two pools is within the lower end of cost recovery rates for other pools operated by similar sized municipalities. Staffing costs are in the range of 70-75 percent of the operating costs and City lifeguards are at the high end of the salary range for lifeguards in Canada. Prior to the new Ministry of Health regulations, there was a requirement for one (1) lifeguard for every 100 swimmers. Currently there is a requirement for two (2) lifeguards for between 41 and 80 swimmers, adding to the cost of swimming pool operations. The two pools are open for use and staffed between 11 – 16 hours each day, with use spread out over this extended time period.

More comprehensive analysis of the cost recovery rates, operating models, pool condition assessments, current pool designs and amenities, and use patterns will be included in Administration's Aquatic Needs Assessment report to Council.

Arenas

Overall the supply of community arenas in Prince George is meeting the current demand. While use of the arenas extends to 10:30pm for league play, in other communities these rental periods for ice can extend well beyond this time where demand warrants it. The arena facilities are well-used and both users and clubs are satisfied, particularly with the recent improvements such as the new Kin 1 renovation. The use trends and costs for arenas will continue to be monitored.

Capital repairs and upgrades are being investigated by Administration for the Elksentre, including the replacement of the roof, flooring and parking lot among other upgrades.

Recent facility life cycle assessments conducted by Administration indicate that the PG Coliseum has zero percent remaining on its Estimated Service Life. As such, Administration is conducting a Condition Assessment of the PG Coliseum beginning in late 2014. The Condition Assessment will be undertaken by engineering specialists under contract and will provide a list of needed repairs and refurbishments in

order to extend the service life of the facility. The results of the condition assessment, along with potential options, will be brought to Council in 2015.

Recommendation:

Administration will continue to conduct condition assessments for facilities that are near or at the end of their Estimated Service Life.

Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre (UNBC)

The Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre (NSC) at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) is functioning as both a well-managed and well-used facility that meets the overall service objectives while providing a significant community benefit. Aside from regular expected operating and maintenance issues, there are no strategic level issues that need to be addressed through this plan.

Given that the NSC has been in operation for seven (7) years and that the City has a long-term commitment to contribute \$300,000 annually towards this facility, Administration is interested in gaining a better understanding of the benefits and satisfaction levels for NSC community users.

In general, the success of the NSC and the YMCA of Northern BC as multi-use centres suggests that the City will look to future opportunities for partnerships using this model as a way of increasing efficiencies, addressing costs, and improving services.

Recommendation:

Administration will work with Northern Sport Centre Limited and the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre to gain a better understanding of community use and satisfaction levels with the associated facility.

Gymnasiums

The City plays a key role in the use of School District #57 (SD57) gymnasiums through a dedicated staff position that, amongst other duties, provides the booking, scheduling, coordinating and facilitating of SD57 gyms by community groups and SD57 schools. This role is one of the requirements identified in the Shared Use Agreement between the City and the SD57. As part of the overall shared use of facilities, the City provides \$200,000 annually to the SD57 to cover the added costs for maintenance and cleaning. On average there are about 3,000 bookings per year for gymnasiums from clubs and community groups, indicating significant community interest for this service and a system that appears to be working well.

The PG Civic Centre has experienced a decline in sport bookings in the auditorium since the opening of the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre. Given the consideration to improving the aesthetics of the ballroom-gymnasium for convention use, Administration has examined whether or not the court lines

should applied as part of the scheduled maintenance. Previous direction from Council has been to maintain the court lines within the auditorium, which Administration has continued to follow. Administration will continue to monitor use and look for options that accommodate sport use while also improving the aesthetic quality of the auditorium for convention use.

Other Indoor Recreation

The PG Horse Society is looking to expand their capacity at the Agriplex by pursuing an additional indoor riding arena at 45m x 80m for an estimated cost of over \$4 million¹⁶⁷. In August 2011, the PG Horse Society presented Council with a proposed site plan that included a westward expansion of the facility in Exhibition Park. Council directed Administration to work with the Society to explore options; these discussions are continuing, including exploring land acquisition and development options.

The Agriplex was established at a time when the site was more rural and over the decades the general area has increased in development with a variety of land uses. Most of the land to the west of the Agriplex is Crown land and will likely have future interest for development. As Administration continues its discussions with the society, it is important to consider and assess how the surrounding lands may be developed in the future and how this might affect the long-term needs for the horse society users.

In terms of the Exhibition Sports Centre's need for capital improvements, Administration will work through the asset management process, to assess a capital project improving the building envelope. Administration will continue to work with the PG Gymnastics club to look for options and opportunities for future relocation.

Masich Place Stadium

Two key capital upgrades for Masich Place Stadium are being assessed by Administration: resurfacing the top layer of the track and replacement of the infield turf. In the short term, Administration is continuing to use natural turf at Masich Place Stadium. However, various groups involved in soccer and football have indicated an interest in an artificial turf field in Prince George. While artificial turf is expensive to install, this surface allows for longer playing seasons. Administration is studying options for an artificial turf field and the potential to develop potential funding partnerships.

Recommendation:

Administration will continue to consult and assess business case options, costs, partnerships and potential funding opportunities for an artificial turf field.

¹⁶⁷ Source: PG Horse Society Site Plan, 2011.

Sport Fields

The Prince George Minor Football Association (PGMFA) has requested a dedicated sport field location for their use to meet growing requirements. The PGMFA is interested in a location within the Bowl to accommodate a longer playing season in early spring and late fall¹⁶⁸. The requested location would include a minimum of one game field, one practice field and the ability to add field lighting and other amenities. Administration has been involved in discussions with the PGMFA and School District #57 (SD57) to review potential locations. Currently, there are limited opportunities within City owned sport fields to accommodate the interests of the PGMFA.

Ball Diamonds

The supply of ball diamonds has been largely driven by user groups that have experienced steadily growing participation rates in previous decades, with many of the City's ball diamonds now having an average estimated age of 37 years. During the past decade these user groups have had a decline in participation that is estimated at 30 percent.

The various baseball clubs have exclusive use of specific City ball diamonds through rental agreements. As such, community groups without rental agreements rely on other City or SD57 ball diamonds to accommodate their recreation activity.

Many of the rental agreement ball diamonds are geographically dispersed throughout the community. The PG Youth Baseball Association, for example, has five (5) ball diamonds that are located in the Hart although the group desires centralized facilities within the Bowl to extend their playing season¹⁶⁹. Local slo-pitch and softball/fastball user groups also desire three to four ball diamonds in one central location to host larger tournaments. Only Carrie Jane Gray Park and Freeman Park have existing ball diamond facilities that could accommodate central tournaments; however, their rental agreements preclude the use of their facility by other community groups.

The rental agreement user groups are also facing operational challenges associated with increasing costs, volunteer decline and generally lower participation rates¹⁷⁰. Rising costs are attributed to the annual rental agreement fee that increased from \$10 to \$1,000 per user group as part of the Core Services Review. Additional expenses also relate to increasing hydro rates as well as the rising cost of supplies and materials. Many user groups are also further constrained by declining volunteer rates.

Given these considerations and trends, Administration has determined that this is an opportune time to engage the seven ball field rental agreement holders in discussions to explore options for increased shared use of ball diamonds in a way that results in a higher utilization of the more popular ball field

¹⁶⁸ Fall tackle season ends in late October with provincial play-offs in early November.

¹⁶⁹ Source: CSMP Stakeholder Surveys and Rental Agreement interviews.

¹⁷⁰ Source: CSMP Stakeholder Surveys and Rental Agreement interviews.

sites. Potential options for shared use of ball diamonds could result in efficiencies and have benefits for clubs that are facing lower volunteer rates, declining participation and increasing costs. Administration will pursue a facilitated process to ensure that a full vetting of options is explored.

In addition, Administration will move to decommission or repurpose ball diamonds that are not well-used and where there would be a measureable savings to the City for maintenance or capital costs. Administration will consult with both the SD57 (Shared Use Agreement) and related Community Associations in this process. The overall goal is to enable the City to improve its resource allocation to maintain the well-used ball diamonds.

Recommendation:

Administration will engage with ball diamond clubs to explore options for increased shared use, higher utilization, efficiencies, and benefits for clubs and the City, while also moving to decommission or repurpose underutilized ball diamonds.

Hard Surface Courts

Through the Shared Use Agreement with School District #57 (SD57), the City maintains the tennis courts on City and SD57 land. Over the summer of 2013, Administration assessed the usage of the City's tennis courts. As a result of that review, the City reduced maintenance of 29 underutilized courts. As a follow up, Administration will gauge the use of the remaining 34 courts on City and SD57 land that continue to be maintained, to determine if further reductions of tennis courts should be considered.

Administration's previous tennis court review and assessment process did not address any long term strategies for the unmaintained courts. Of the 29 tennis courts that are no longer maintained by the City, 12 are on City land and 17 are on SD57 land. At the request of Community Associations, any unmaintained tennis courts will continue to be available for neighborhood ice rinks during the winter. As a general approach, Administration moves to decommission unmaintained tennis courts if:

- There is low demand for the court.
- The court is on City land.
- Consultations with Community Associations confirm that the court is not used for ice rinks.
- There is no reasonable option or demand for a repurposed use.

Over 80 percent of the City's \$120,000 capital maintenance upgrades for tennis courts are focused on the tennis courts at Carrie Jane Gray Park near the Rotary Skate Park, which is one of the most well-used tennis courts outside of the PG Tennis Club facilities.

As part of the Shared Use Agreement with SD57, the City maintains a number of City basketball courts and SD57 basketball courts at Heather Park Elementary. Similar to tennis court strategies, Administration will focus on the maintenance and refurbishment of basketball courts at multi-sites that

are well-used and look to repurpose or decommission courts that have low demand and are in need of capital funding for refurbishment.

Recommendation:

Administration will move to decommission unmaintained and unused tennis courts and basketball courts on City land and will focus City resources on sites that are most popular and that are located in strategic locations, such as multi-use sites.

Playgrounds

Between 2002 and 2009, Administration worked toward the replacement of playgrounds that either do not conform to the CSA standards or are worn out. The following guidance provides considerations for a playground network that is focused on a more consolidated supply, increases safety, manages costs, and focuses on service delivery in areas with high demand.

Playground Supply:

Overall there are 66 playgrounds that are currently maintained by the City. As part of the 2008 Parks and Open Space Master Plan, Administration conducted an assessment of playground supply and identified eight (8) neighbourhoods that do not have City or SD57 playgrounds within 400m¹⁷¹. In some cases there was a lack of suitable park land and in other cases the neighborhood park had not been developed. The assessment also indicated that between two (2) and four (4) neighbourhoods may have more than one (1) City playground within a 400m range, and in some cases these neighbourhoods also had access to SD57 playgrounds. If a range of 800m is used to assess the playground supply, there would be additional neighbourhoods with close access to more than one (1) City playground.

Considering the current context of capital funding pressures, rising maintenance costs, and replacement costs of non-conforming (CSA standard) or worn-out playgrounds, the past development of a highly dispersed network of playgrounds is presenting challenges for Administration. There is a need to ensure that operational and capital funds¹⁷² are used efficiently so that playgrounds can continue to provide safe, quality play experiences at the sites that are in higher demand. To that end, Administration is moving to ensure:

171 The National Recreation and Park Association recommends a range of 400m – 800m as an acceptable range of distance to a playground, and these ranges are commonly used by municipalities in their park planning.

172 The estimated cost to develop a neighbourhood park in 2013 is over \$250,000, which includes the cost of a new playground at over \$65,000.

- That as a target goal, playgrounds are generally supplied with a range of 800m within neighbourhoods with a focus on more consolidated use¹⁷³. This affects the playground target network in two ways. First, there may be more neighbourhoods with a potential oversupply of playgrounds. Secondly, this may reduce the number of neighbourhoods that were identified in 2008 as having an under-supply of playgrounds.
- That in neighborhoods with more than one (1) City playground within an 800m range, and where a playground is in need of replacement, an assessment and consultation with neighbourhoods would be conducted to assess demand levels and help determine where reinvestment in playgrounds should occur, or where complete removals are preferred (see Playground Replacement discussion).
- An overall playground network assessment will be undertaken to determine which neighbourhoods still may not have a reasonably accessible playground under the revised target range of 800m. As a general practice, Administration would develop options, through consultation, in order to address the potential need for a new playground, including looking at alternative options, partnership funding, and other potential improvements at major parks¹⁷⁴.
- While this report is not intended to address long-term strategies for City parks, the possible decommissioning of a number of small playgrounds will affect specific parks. As such, Administration is providing additional guidance to those potential situations through this report. Where the primary purpose of a small neighbourhood park is to provide a site for a playground and the playground is determined to be appropriate for removal, then Administration will assess options for repurposing the park or where appropriate, seeking Council's direction on selling the park land. Generally small parcels of park land may be suitable for disbursement if it has low use, it's sale is allowable under the terms of the park's establishment, there is sufficient other park land in the general area, there are maintenance or capital cost savings to the City, it is not suitable for repurposing, and the direction is consistent with other City strategies and plans.

Playground Replacement:

Through the City's playground audit process, Administration acknowledged that it is advisable for municipalities to demonstrate an on-going commitment to bring playgrounds up to a CSA standard. Since the 2001 audit was conducted on City playgrounds, 22 non-conforming playgrounds were addressed, leaving about 40 playgrounds in need of various levels of refurbishment. In general, Administration follows a graduated response approach in addressing this area of risk because of the high capital replacement costs and the public demand for playgrounds. There is not enough capital funding

173 Other criteria in playground supply are considered, such as if access to the playground in range requires crossing a major roadway or other physical barriers.

174 For example, one scenario could result in deciding not to develop a new playground that is close by (i.e. within 800 m) in favour of using the capital or partnership funding towards improving a destination playground (that may be further away) with a broader range of recreation activities (e.g. Duchess Park).

to replace all the playgrounds at one time and the removal of all the non-conforming (CSA standard) playgrounds is not a reasonable option.

The City's graduated response, related to the remaining 40 non-conforming playgrounds, involves:

- Identifying the playgrounds using the new target range of 800m within neighbourhoods (see discussion above) and prioritizing the playgrounds that provide the highest level of use and are in highest need of full replacement.
- Regular inspection of playground equipment or protective ground cover¹⁷⁵.
- Remove the most problematic items (parts of playground equipment) in each playground.
- Address the highest priority specific issues within playgrounds (e.g. add protective ground cover) if minor capital funding is available.
- Completely remove and replace playground equipment to a CSA standard when higher levels of capital or third party funding are available.
- Document equipment removals or playground upgrades.

Recommendation:

As a long-term strategy to rationalize the supply, demand and costs of maintaining playgrounds, Administration will move to a target range of 800m for assessing neighbourhood supply and will undertake a neighbourhood playground assessment based on this new target range.

For playground replacement, Administration will use a graduated response that demonstrates an on-going commitment to bring the remaining playgrounds up to a CSA standard, and to earmark capital funding for refurbishment or replacement in a way that is adaptable to annual budget resources.

Skate Parks

The current skate park is well-used, centrally located and has relatively low maintenance costs for the City. A new skate park is being pursued by the Hart Community Association and local Rotary Clubs, with a preferred location at the Cpl. Darren Fitzpatrick Bravery Park. Administration will continue to engage in discussions with the community parties involved in this initiative.

At this time, Administration is not pursuing additional skate parks in the city. However, if partnership and funding opportunities arise, Administration will consider these potential opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

¹⁷⁵ Appropriate material that reduces injury from falling.

Bike Parks

In general, Administration supports the promotion of additional safe mountain biking opportunities that reflect the growing demands in different riding styles, accommodates different age groups and compliments established recreational use patterns. While the development of additional mountain biking trails is not being pursued at this time, Administration will consider how best to support these potential opportunities on a case by case basis if partnership and funding opportunities arise.

Mountain bike development options of most interest to the City would favour those that replace unsanctioned and unsafe trails, assist with opportunities for younger children and beginner skill levels, are conveniently located and would have a low cost to the City.

Off Leash Dog Sites

Overall, the supply of off-leash parks is satisfactory in most areas of the city. There are some community areas, such as College Heights and the Hart, that do not have designated off-leash areas. The 2011 Proposed Off-Leash Strategies report, as developed by the Off Leash Advisory Committee of Council¹⁷⁶, provides recommendations for future off-leash areas. Administration, through its normal park planning functions and Council reporting, will look for opportunities to develop off-leash areas in College Heights and the Hart with consideration of the 2011 Proposed Off-Leash Strategies report.

Golf

National trends indicate a decline in golf participation, and the Pine Valley Golf Course is also showing a decline in usage, which may be attributed to the loss of the driving range in 2003. While the course has been replanted in recent years, declining usage may also be attributed to the loss of pine trees from the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic.

The City has been intermittently allocating capital funding for repairs and minor improvements. In 2012 Administration worked with the operator to assess potential improvements to Pine Valley Golf Course, including a new irrigation system, additional golf netting, clubhouse upgrades, driving range, and a redesign for two holes. These improvements were estimated to cost between \$830,000 and \$1.2m in 2012 dollars, but are not currently part of Administration's capital plan. As part of managing the City's assets, Administration will continue to monitor the conditions of the Pine Valley Golf Course.

While the Pine Valley Golf Course provides recreation benefits, the Core Review process evaluated the option of having the land redeveloped for other uses. Council's decision was to maintain the golf course.

176 The Off Leash Advisory Committee was a limited duration committee of Council and was comprised of citizens who provided Council with recommendations for off leash use and management.

Other Outdoor Recreation

Lawn bowling (Watrous Park) and the horse shoe club development at Carrie Jane Gray Park are in need of review and monitoring. In both of these facilities, use levels and their club memberships are down significantly. The lawn bowling club moved away from the rental agreement because of the low membership level, and now schedules the Watrous Park facility on an as needed basis. The horse shoe club currently maintains their rental agreement with the City. The City has been continuing the maintenance of these two facilities at an annual combined cost of \$15,000.

It is unclear if the current decline in use is trending towards a complete loss of members or if this is a temporary decline. The lawn bowling club is actively recruiting members every year to grow their sport. Administration will continue to monitor use and consult with the clubs and determine if changes will be needed.

Periodically, other community groups may have interests in developing additional recreation facilities. Given that Administration's resources and budgets are currently stretched, there is a need for a cautious approach to supporting new development. If partnership and funding opportunities arise that are consistent with demands and trends, Administration will consider how to best support these potential opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

Winter Outdoor Recreation

The City's role in assisting Community Association ice rink volunteers can be maintained at current operational levels. However, Administration will continue to work with rink volunteers to monitor the annual upkeep of their assigned rinks in order to focus City resources (e.g. putting up and taking down ice rink boards) to those rinks that demonstrate a satisfactory level of maintenance. If there is interest in additional ice rinks, Administration may need to prioritize rinks based on use and volunteer commitment and also establish an upper limit for the number of community ice rinks. In the longer term, Administration may also consider the consolidation of ice rinks in order to move away from a highly distributed system of smaller rinks to more centralized multi-use locations with larger capacities. This may increase the maintenance efficiency while still providing good opportunities for users and volunteers. In looking for improvements, Administration will continue to engage and review annual use and delivery with volunteers and Community Associations.

In 2014, the PG Ice Oval Society and the City entered into a 25 year use agreement for the ice oval. The society has a seven year strategic plan, in which they have identified an interest in developing a warming hut, and a less permeable base surface for the track to better maintain ice conditions.

Summary of Facility / Venue Assessment

The review and assessment of the City's recreation facilities/venues is summarized in a table format in order to highlight those that require follow-up or strategy development. The following describes the criteria used below:

- i. Colour highlighting is used to create a visual highlight as follows:
 - Green highlighting** indicates facilities/venues that do not have significant issues, are relatively well-used and are expected to continue to be operated and maintained more or less *status quo*. Green coded facilities may have identified needs for operating, maintenance, equipment replacement/upgrades, or may have minor issues, however these would be addressed through normal City operational and capital planning procedures.
 - Yellow highlighting** indicates that there is a potential issue with the facility/venue, but a more detailed assessment, consultation and review of options is needed.
 - Red highlighting** indicates that the facility/venue has a definite issue related to its level of use, operations, maintenance, capital costs or partnership agreements that require actions or decisions beyond the normal day-to-day operating and capital planning procedures of the City.
- ii. The **level of use** combines information from user statistics, surveys, consultations, and analysis of trends. An issue is highlighted where facilities/venues are in declining use or are maintaining use levels well below its capacity, or where the demand may be beyond the facilities' capacity.
- iii. An issue is highlighted if a facility/venue has anticipated **capital costs** that are an order of magnitude greater than normal refurbishing (e.g. expected equipment replacement) and there are concerns about the overall condition of the facility/venue or its use or operation.
- iv. **Operations / Maintenance** issues relate to situations where there are increasing costs or operational problems, where the maintenance or staffing effort may not commensurate with the use of the facility/venue, or maintenance is dispersed over many small sites leading to inefficiencies.
- v. **Other issues** may be something specific to a facility/venue. Details on these would be provided in the assessment section of this report. The number in the chart refers to a brief summary of the issue at the bottom of the chart.
- vi. An issue with a **partnership agreement** may be identified if the club or organization is in decline and the agreement might not be sustainable. An issue might also be identified where there are increasing costs to the City or the club in maintaining the agreement.
- vii. The **overall assessment** is provided to highlight the facilities that require follow-up. Facilities/venues that are coded as either red or yellow will be reviewed further by Administration.

City of Prince George Recreation Facility/Venue Assessment Summary Chart

City Facilities / Venues ¹⁷⁷	Status of Identified Issues					Overall Assessment
	Level of Use	Capital Costs	Operations, Maintenance	Other Issues	Partnership Agreement	
INDOOR						
PG Aquatic Centre					n/a	
Four Seasons Leisure Pool				1	n/a	
CN Centre					n/a	
Kin Centre Arenas					n/a	
PG Coliseum						
Elksentre						
Civic Centre (Gymnasiums)					n/a	
Charles Jago Sports Centre (UNBC)						
• Indoor Field House						
• Track/Fitness						
• Gymnasium/Court Sports						
Agriplex (Indoor Riding Arena)						
Exhibition Sports Centre						
Curling – PG Golf & Curling Club						
OUTDOOR						
Parks and Trails					n/a	
Masich Place Stadium Track & Field						
Exhibition Park Soccer Fields						
• Youth (Rotary)						
• Men's						
• Women's						
City Fields (7)						
Men's Baseball - Citizen Field						
Youth Baseball (8)				2		
Ladies' Fastball Chuck Cawdell Field						
Girl's Softball (3)						
Men's Fastball – Spruce City						
Boy's Softball (2)						
Nechako Slo Pitch (2)				3		
College Heights Ball Diamonds (4)						
City Ball Diamonds (10)					n/a	
City Tennis Courts				4	n/a	
PG Tennis Club Courts (8)						
City Basketball Courts					n/a	
Carrie Jane Park Lacrosse Court				5		
City Playgrounds (66)					n/a	
Rotary Skate Park					n/a	
Duchess Park Pump Track					n/a	

177 Includes facilities or venues that are owned or operated by the City or through a partnership arrangement.

City Facilities / Venues ¹⁷⁷	Status of Identified Issues					
	Level of Use	Capital Costs	Operations, Maintenance	Other Issues	Partnership Agreement	Overall Assessment
Carrie Jane Park Supertrak BMX						
Off Leash Areas (3)					n/a	
Pine Valley Golf Course						
Rotaract Water Park					n/a	
Disc Golf-Rainbow Park					n/a	
Watrous Park Lawn Bowling					n/a	
Carrie Jane Park Horseshoe Pitch						
ActNow Senior's Park (Masich Place)					n/a	
PG Community Gardens						
Outdoor Community Ice Rinks						
PG Outdoor Ice Oval						

Explanation of "Other Issues":

1. There are several facility issues with the Four Seasons Leisure Pool such as poor access for mobility challenged individuals and inadequate family change rooms.
2. The ball diamonds used for youth baseball are dispersed throughout the community. Youth baseball community clubs are interested in more centralized multi-diamond baseball parks in the Bowl area in order to have an earlier start to the playing season. Also, a lower number of club volunteers is creating challenges with meeting the increasing costs of delivering the sport.
3. Nechako slo pitch is interested in having three ball diamonds in one central location.
4. There is a need to assess community ice rink use as the Administration reviews potential decommissioning of the 29 tennis courts that the City is currently not maintaining.
5. The facility is used only for practice.

