



Parks & Recreation MASTER PLAN

City of Fort St. John

Endorsed by Council on January 23, 2017



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this project was to prepare a 15 to 20 year Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) that will provide a framework for decisions related to parks and recreation land, facilities, resources, programs, infrastructure and investment for the City of Fort St. John. Multiple engagement methods were used to obtain input from over 700 residents, including participants from the Peace River Regional District and District of Taylor.

Parks and recreation offer many benefits that are environmental, social, economic and personal. This Master Plan will help the City achieve its goals of being a place for nature, business and families. Once community input on the draft Master Plan is received, a full implementation plan with costing and phasing will be prepared.

Vision of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The vision of the PRMP is as follows:

Fort St. John will be a community where nature lives, recreation opportunities abound, and families are active and flourish





Fort St. John has 42 municipally owned parks covering over 160 hectares



The City has 15 kilometres (km) of paved pathways and a total of 29 km of mapped paths

Master Plan Overview

Fort St. John has a wide range of community and neighbourhood parks, trails, outdoor recreation amenities, indoor recreation facilities and recreation programs and services. The main focus of this Master Plan is on improving these assets, and planning for more to support population growth. The following are the key findings and recommendations:

Parkland Supply

The overall supply of parkland in relation to Fort St. John's population is adequate, though some key acquisitions could help to improve access to parks for some neighbourhoods, and more parkland will be needed to support the population in new developments.

- Consider acquisition of parkland in existing developed areas to meet specific needs as opportunities arise.
- Obtain a park space downtown similar in size to the 100 Street by 100 Avenue site.
- Establish stated guidelines for acquiring active parkland in new developments.
- Work with developers to obtain natural areas as parkland in addition to the 5% parkland dedication.
- Rezone de facto parks to Park zoning.

Trails

Fort St. John has some highly valued trails that are well used and maintained, but the trail system has poor connectivity between trail segments. Additional trails and associated infrastructure are needed for pedestrians, cyclists, dog-walkers, and winter activities.

- Plan for new trail connections and apply stated trail planning and design principles.
- Establish stated guidelines for the planning of trails in new developments.
- Work with other City departments to coordinate the implementation of bike lanes with off-road trails.
- Coordinate with the PRRD and the Province to connect City trails with regional trails to destinations such as Charlie Lake, Beatton River and Peace River.
- Build new trails and provide additional trail amenities.
- Continue and expand trail snow plowing.
- Support community groups in grooming cross-country ski trails.

Park Design and Development

The quality of many of the City's parks is a major challenge related to parks, as many need upgrading to meet typical standards. Continued improvements in the design, planning and maintenance of parks are needed, as well as new amenities to bring more green space and natural areas into active use.

- Conduct Park Master Plans for specific parks that have the greatest opportunities.
- Upgrade existing parks.
- Design and upgrade parks using the stated planning process and design guidelines that include improved accessibility.
- Establish a process for involving City staff with expertise in parks and recreation planning in the review of developer-designed parks.
- Establish new protocols for park fencing.
- Improve park signage with clear, simple signs.
- Encourage School District 60 to invite City input into the design of school sites.
- Establish a process for reviewing new activities or park amenities according to stated criteria.
- Identify potential green spaces that could be improved to be active parks in neighbourhoods lacking active parks.
- Explore partnerships with the owners of land designated as Natural Areas in the OCP for establishment of trails.
- Support community volunteer programs that can assist with the citizen-led beautification of the City.

Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds

Fort St. John has many ball diamonds and some sports fields that are well used. Additional higher quality and well-maintained sports fields will be needed to accommodate population growth and new kinds of sports.

- Encourage ball players to extend hours of practice to include weekends.
- Partner with School District 60 on upgrading school sports fields that are large enough and appropriately sited to accommodate community use.
- Develop new sports fields and ball diamonds as needed to support population growth in the City and surrounding areas.
- Contribute to a higher level of maintenance on school sports fields that are upgraded.



Priority parks for Master Plans are Centennial Park, Kin Park, Surerus Park and Toboggan Hill Park



Fort St. John residents play more baseball/softball and less soccer than comparable communities



Winter Use

Winter activities are popular in Fort St. John, and many amenities exist to support them. More and better amenities might encourage greater participation.

- Explore opportunities to expand the all-season trail network in the City.
- Explore opportunities to allow for expansion of the cross-country ski trails as part of the proposed municipal boundary expansion.
- In the boundary expansion areas, explore potential locations for another tobogganing hill that could be located within a park.
- Continue plowing all-season trails as the network expands over time.
- Continue to flood outdoor ice rinks, increasing outdoor ice opportunities over time.
- Continue to maintain outdoor ice surfaces in municipal parks and explore the option of providing this service at school sites.
- Encourage and support community groups in expanding the cross-country ski trails and connecting them to trails outside the City.
- Continue to support volunteer groups in the maintenance of outdoor ice rinks.



Other Park Amenities

Fort St. John has 18 public playgrounds. Community parks in Fort St. John are large and have a capacity for multiple activities, so use could be increased by providing new amenities in association with overall park upgrading. Addressing deficiencies, such as dog off-leash areas and washrooms, and providing additional amenities will be needed to serve the growing population.

- Plan for stated amenities as part of upgrading and building new parks.

Parks Operations and Maintenance

Multiple parks operations and maintenance tasks are undertaken and appreciated by the community, though in some cases maintenance has not kept up with increasing use and needs.

- Increase operations resources and budgets as the population and pressure on park resources increase.
- Explore the possibility of increasing maintenance of paths and trails, including snow plowing.
- Invite community participation in the clean-up and care of parks by organizing special events for volunteers and through “adopt a park” or “adopt a trail” programs.

34% of households in and near the City go tobogganing or sledding in parks

51% of households in and near Fort St. John have dogs

- Work with police and social service organizations to increase monitoring of parks and to address the needs of the homeless population or those otherwise conducting vandalism in parks, considering park closures in certain locations at night.
- Implement CPTED principles in park maintenance.
- Establish a no-littering bylaw and install no-littering signage.
- Conduct an urban forestry plan to support the need for more trees on City land and to encourage proper planting and maintenance of trees in the City.
- Increase the enforcement of animal control bylaws.

Indoor Recreation

Fort St. John has some outstanding indoor recreation facilities that support a range of activities, though improvements to existing facilities are needed. New facilities are also required to meet new demands and expectations.

- Plan for and develop a new gymnastics facility as part of a multiplex.
- Plan for and develop a multiplex as stated, phased as resources become available.
- Refer to the Community Recreation Facility Construction Policy when planning, designing, and developing recreation facilities.

Life Cycle Budgeting

Fort St. John reinvests in recreation facilities through a five-year rolling capital plan, and some facilities need significant investment or replacement.

- Develop a life cycle renewal policy and process for recreation and parks infrastructure as stated.

Programs and Events

Fort St. John offers a variety of inclusive program and event opportunities. Additional services need to be offered and promoted with municipal, non-profit, private-sector and school district support.

- Maintain the City's current approach to the delivery of programs and events through a combination of direct and indirect delivery, working to fill gaps in non-profit and private sector service provision.
- Formalize and facilitate an ongoing program and event needs identification process.
- Increase programs and events, and use the focus areas (e.g., demographic, topic, season) identified via trends scanning and community input to guide efforts.
- Encourage and support additional events in the City, especially in the winter.

Fort St. John has significantly more indoor ice rinks in relation to the population than comparable cities



There are at least 19 annual special events in and near the City



- Establish a consolidated events schedule for all City and community-organized events and improve the communication and promotion of events.
- Continue to market and promote opportunities and increase the focus of public messaging to include information about financial assistance programs.
- Bolster support to financial assistance programs to ensure that low-income residents can afford to participate in recreation where possible.

Allocation, Fees and Charges

Fort St. John currently has a robust recreation allocation policy and reasonable fees. Standards of play have not yet been determined with user groups.

- Retain the current allocation system or policy and explore alignment of the system with broader strategic directions and the development of standards of play as facility capacity pressures heighten.
- Undertake a detailed unit costing analysis consistent with the one conducted in 2011/2012.
- When the bylaw is updated to include the new unit costs, include the commitment that “no one will be turned away from accessing a public leisure service due to inability to pay”.



Summary of Recommendations and Next Steps

This section provides a summary of all of the PRMP recommendations, and identifies the priorities, phasing and order-of-magnitude costs. These will need to be updated annually.

Financing sources for planning, capital development, operations and maintenance, and service delivery are identified. The City will need to rely on partnerships and collaboration to implement the PRMP, as no one jurisdiction can succeed alone.

The next steps in implementation include updating bylaws, ongoing collaboration, and tracking and pursuing grants. Certain changes could trigger a need to revisit the plan sooner than 15 years. The critical factor is to remain committed to the vision, goals and objectives.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The City of Fort St. John (Fort St. John or City) is located along the Peace River in northeastern British Columbia, and is a member municipality of the Peace River Regional District. Located where the prairies meet the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and surrounded by the boreal forest and wilderness of the Peace region, the City has experienced considerable growth since the 1950s. This growth has largely been attributed to an expanding energy sector, as well as forestry and agriculture.

The City's 2011 Official Community Plan contains a community vision statement that captures the energy of Fort St. John, while referring to its desire to be a place for active families:

"Fort St. John will be a community where nature lives, businesses prosper, and families are active and flourish".

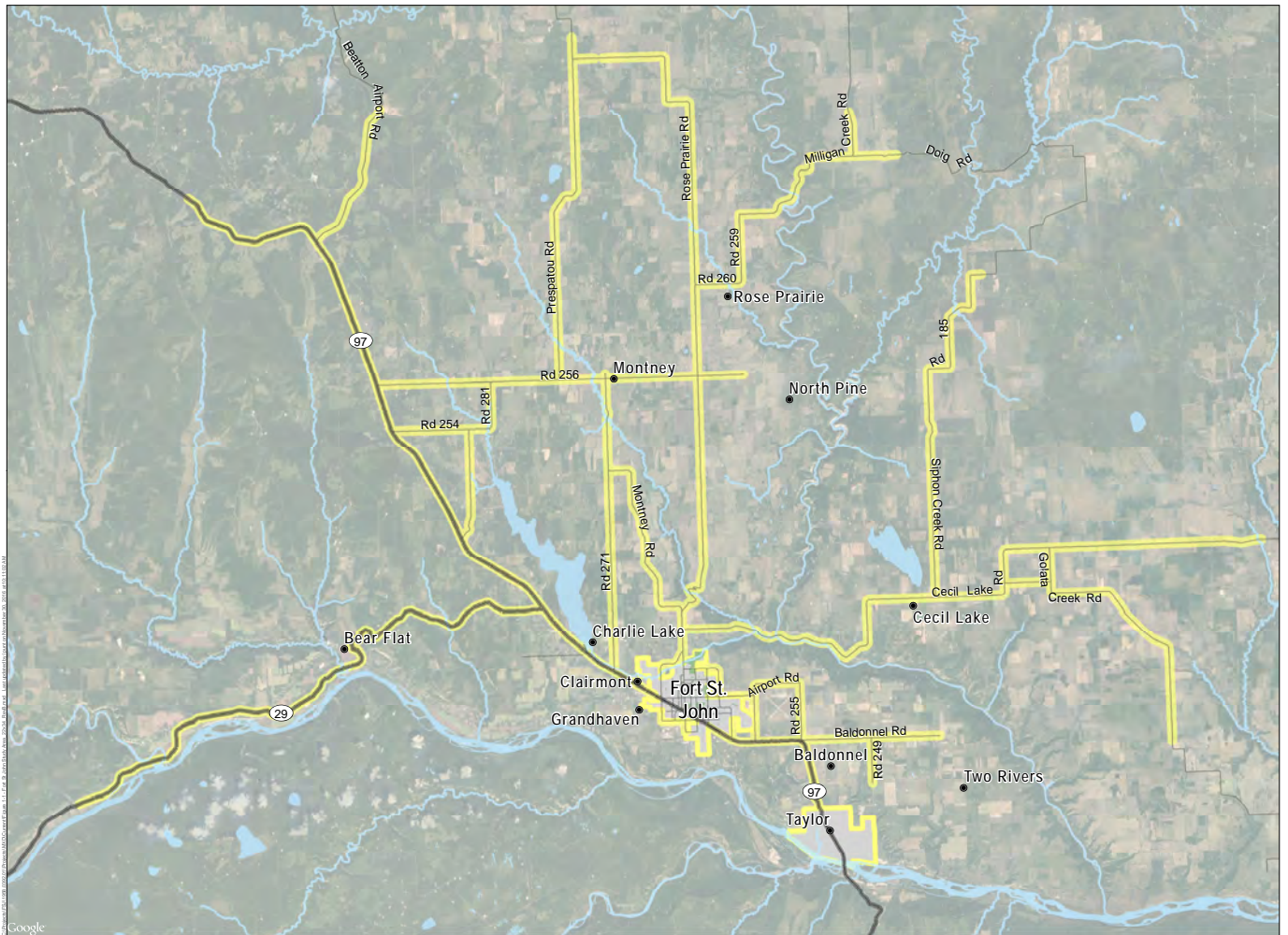
The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) serves as one source of direction and guidance for the City to achieve this vision.

1.2 Project Purpose and Process

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to prepare a 15 to 20 year PRMP that will provide a framework for decisions related to parks and recreation land, facilities, resources, programs, infrastructure and investment for the City of Fort St. John. Given that the City's parks and amenities are also used by residents of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD), District of Taylor (Taylor), and neighbouring First Nations communities, staff from the PRRD and Taylor participated in the project and community input was sought for all residents within a 50-kilometre distance by road from Fort St. John (refer to **Figure 1.1** on the following page).





LEGEND

Study Area



Figure 1.1 – Community Engagement Study Area

Planning Process and Methods

This PR Master Plan is based on the values and interests of the public, stakeholders, staff and elected officials of the City and surrounding communities.

The planning process involved extensive engagement with a wide range of residents, as well as professional analysis and research (see **Figure 1.2**). Opportunities were provided for participation online, at meetings and at locations where people were congregated. The communication and consultation process involved the following components:

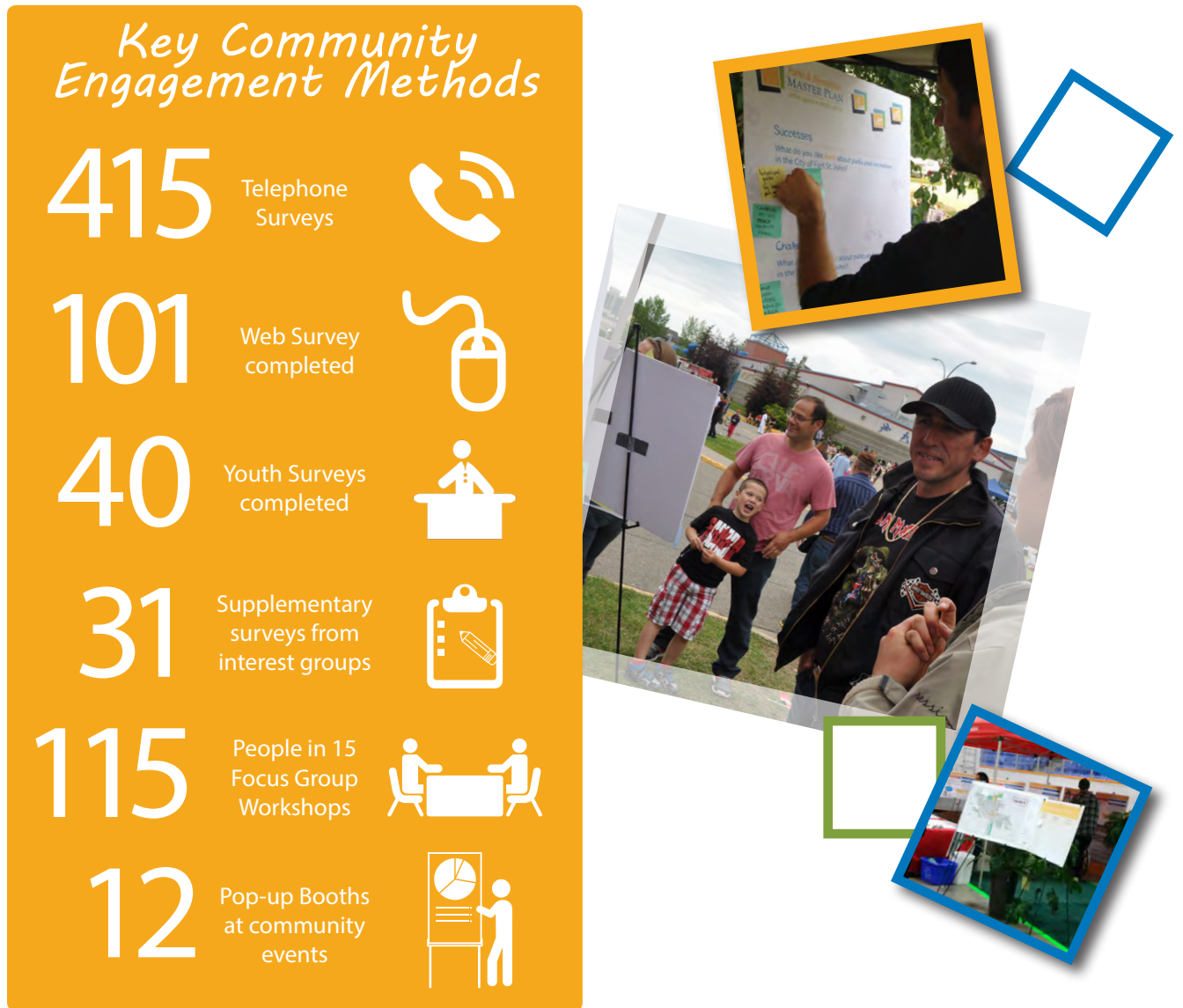


Figure 1.2 – Engagement Process diagram

- **Telephone Survey** – A statistically valid phone survey was conducted from June to August of 2016. Participants were invited to share their perspectives on outdoor participation, park amenities, indoor recreation facilities and programs, satisfaction and priorities, and suggested improvements (see section 2 and Appendix A). In total, 415 surveys were conducted. The full report is available from the City.
- **Web Survey** – An online community survey was conducted in June and July 2016. The survey sought input on parks and recreation strengths, challenges, vision, and suggestions for improvements (see section 2). In total, 101 community members completed the community survey. A full report on the survey is available from the City.
- **Youth Survey** – An online youth survey was conducted in June 2016 by students in grades 7 to 12. The survey sought input on favourite indoor and outdoor activities, interest in staying in Fort St. John, and suggestions for improvements. In total, 40 youth completed the survey. Appendix B contains a summary of the results and the full report is available from the City.
- **Supplementary Surveys** – Online supplementary surveys were distributed to eight different sports and interest groups. The survey sought to learn more about the characteristics of each group, their challenges and suggestions for improvements. In total, 31 responses were received.
- **Focus Group Workshops** – Fifteen focus group workshops were held with different stakeholder groups in June, 2016. The purpose of these workshops was to inform participants about the project, collect perceptions about strengths and challenges of parks and recreation, and gather input to help generate a vision, objectives and recommendations for the Master Plan (see section 2). In total, 115 people participated in the workshops. The results are available from the City.
- **Pop-up Booths** – Twelve pop-up booths were held from May through September 2016. The purpose of these pop-up booths was similar to that of the focus group workshops, with the intent of reaching out to diverse groups of people would not attend community meetings or participate in online surveys. The results are available from the City.

1.3 Relevant City Documents and Initiatives

There are numerous City documents that provide the context for the PRMP. Some provide background information on parks and recreation, and others are the City’s leading policy documents from which all other planning documents and Annual Reports stem. The most relevant ones are described in this section, and others are summarized in Appendix C.

Peace River Regional District Parks and Trails Master Plan

This document is the equivalent of the City’s Parks Master Plan at the regional level. Fort St. John is a member municipality of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD). The PRRD Parks and Trails Master Plan (2014) contains guidelines to assist the PRRD in making decisions regarding five regional parks that it operates. Montney Regional Park is the closest to Fort St. John, on the eastern shores of Charlie Lake. Although the PRRD does not control or maintain any trails, numerous trails exist throughout the region, mostly on Crown land.

Regional parks bridge the gap between smaller municipal parks and larger, more protection-oriented provincial and national parks. Regional parks typically have a larger role in environmental

protection than municipal parks and provide amenities for camping and other activities not available in municipalities.

A priority identified during the regional Master Plan's consultation process was to improve safety, security and accessibility. The need to expand and improve trails was also an important request. Survey responses indicated that walking, camping and picnicking were the three most frequently enjoyed activities in regional parks. Lack of information, directions and trail markers were identified as the biggest barriers to regional park and trail use. Washrooms, shelters and garbage cans were the three most frequently identified regional park amenities needing improvement.

Fort St. John Official Community Plan

An Official Community Plan (OCP) represents a community's vision for the future and provides a framework to guide growth and decisions about the use and management of land resources in the municipality. The OCP is an umbrella document for planning, and other Master Plans such as the PRMP and Transportation Master Plan fall under and are consistent with the OCP. The City's updated OCP, prepared concurrently with the PRMP process, is based on the following vision and guiding principles:

OCP Vision

"Fort St. John will be a community where nature lives, recreation opportunities abound, and families are active and flourish".

OCP Guiding Principles

- Economic prosperity
- Environmental sustainability
- Social inclusion
- Cultural vitality

The OCP's land use strategy is based on making infill a priority to increase density downtown and in existing neighbourhoods, and boundary extension areas are identified to support future growth and development. The plan also stresses the importance of neighbourhoods; encouraging the use of vacant, underutilized and brownfield lands; embracing an active year-round lifestyle; and activating the downtown.

Affordable housing, an accessible community and age-friendly design are identified as ways of welcoming all generations to Fort St. John. Arts, culture and heritage policies promote community vitality. Transportation planning identifies the importance of pedestrian and bicycle networks. Environmental stewardship includes the management of water, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, solid waste management, energy and adaptation to climate change. Urban agriculture and community food security are also addressed as a specific topic area.

There is a strong relationship between the PRMP and the OCP, and as such, the OCP integrates the relevant recommendations from the PRMP as objectives and policies.

Fort St. John Transportation Master Plan

Fort St. John's Transportation Master Plan (2015) provides context on the existing active transportation networks, proposed pedestrian and bicycle routes, and a vision for the City's long-term transportation needs. The pedestrian plan highlights walking as a fundamental mode of transportation within the City. It guides the expansion of attractive, safe pedestrian facilities, active streets, sidewalks, corridors and crossings to reduce barriers to walking and enhance the sense of community. The bicycle and trails plan identifies existing and proposed bicycle and trail facilities to improve accessibility and utilization across the City. Additional and/or improved bicycle parking is recommended specifically for Fish Creek Community Forest, Surerus Park and Toboggan Hill Park.

In 2011, 15% of Fort St. John's work trips were through modes of active transportation and required 15 to 29 minutes of travel time. In a survey conducted for this Master Plan, about a quarter of respondents identified more, safer and wider sidewalks, trails and bike lanes as needed to address gaps in the active transportation network and improve how they move around. Four categories of cyclist and pedestrian amenities are included in the hierarchy of active transportation infrastructure, and design standards are provided for each:

- Multi-Use trails (3m width)
- Dedicated bicycle lanes (1.5m width with 0.5m buffer with roadway)
- Shared travel lanes (4.3m width)
- Sidewalks (width by road type)

50 Year Growth Study

The 50 Year Growth Study (2015) identified Fort St. John's growth rate at 2.4% in recent years, the sixth highest in British Columbia. The study reviewed several population projections completed from 2011 to 2014 that assumed growth rates ranging from 1 to 4%. The Growth Study generated three new scenarios for 2036, and decided on a growth rate of 2.2%, which was accepted by City staff and Council.

The study also converted population projections into land use projections and assumed that 15% of Fort St. John's future land use will be Institutional/Recreational. This will require 440 hectares of Institutional/Recreational lands over the next 50 years, only 10 hectares of which would be within the current City boundary. The Growth Study projected needs for outdoor recreation amenities based on existing patterns of use.

Fort St. John Zoning Bylaw

The City's Zoning Bylaw (2014) contains regulations for all zones in the municipality and some general regulations applicable to greenspace such as floodplain restrictions and landscape plans and procedures. These regulations are consistent with the OCP in their requirements for open space accessibility, universal design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Although the Institutional zone permits parks, recreation and open space, the primary zone for these land uses, as well as gardens, cemeteries, conservation areas, playfields, playgrounds and related infrastructure is the Parks and Natural Areas zone.

The Zoning Bylaw also provides definitions for park and open space, as follows:

- Park means an area permanently devoted to recreational uses and generally characterized by its natural, historic or landscaped features, and used for both passive and active forms of recreation.
- Open Space means the open, unobstructed space on a parcel, including the open, unobstructed space accessible to all occupants of any residential or commercial building or structure on the parcel, which is suitable and used for the growth and maintenance of grass, flowers, bushes and other landscaping and may include any surface pedestrian walk, patio, pool or similar area, but does not include any driveway, ramp or parking area.





		SHOTS ON GOAL	12:34	SHOTS ON GOAL	
TALISMAN ENERGY		PERIOD		CANADIAN NATURAL	
PLAYER	PENALTY			PLAYER	PENALTY
FORT ST. JOHN The Energetic City					



2 COMMUNITY PROFILE AND TRENDS

2.1 Community Overview

Existing Population, Age and Household Sizes

The City of Fort St. John has experienced significant population growth over the past five years, placing it among the fastest-growing municipalities in British Columbia over that time frame (**Figure 2.1**). From 2013 to 2014, BC Stats data shows that the City of Fort St. John was the fastest growing community in the PRRD and had the second-largest percentage increase out of any BC municipality. Recently this growth has slowed, and the 2015 population estimate for the City of Fort St. John is 20,778 (BC Stats). This 2015 population is lower than what was forecasted in the City's OCP (2011) and 50-year Growth Strategy (2015).

The statistics in this section are all for the City of Fort St. John unless stated otherwise. The service area for this Master Plan also includes portions of the PRRD and District of Taylor. In 2011, the population of the District of Taylor was 1,373. In 2006 the population of the PRRD was 58,264.

The 2011 census (household survey) showed the following demographic characteristics for Fort St. John:

- A median age of 30.6 years, placing Fort St. John as one of the youngest communities in the province (41.9) and country (40.6)
- 21% of Fort St. John's population is under the age of 14 years old, as compared to 15% in BC
- The 65 and over population of Fort St. John grew by 12% from 2006 to 2011



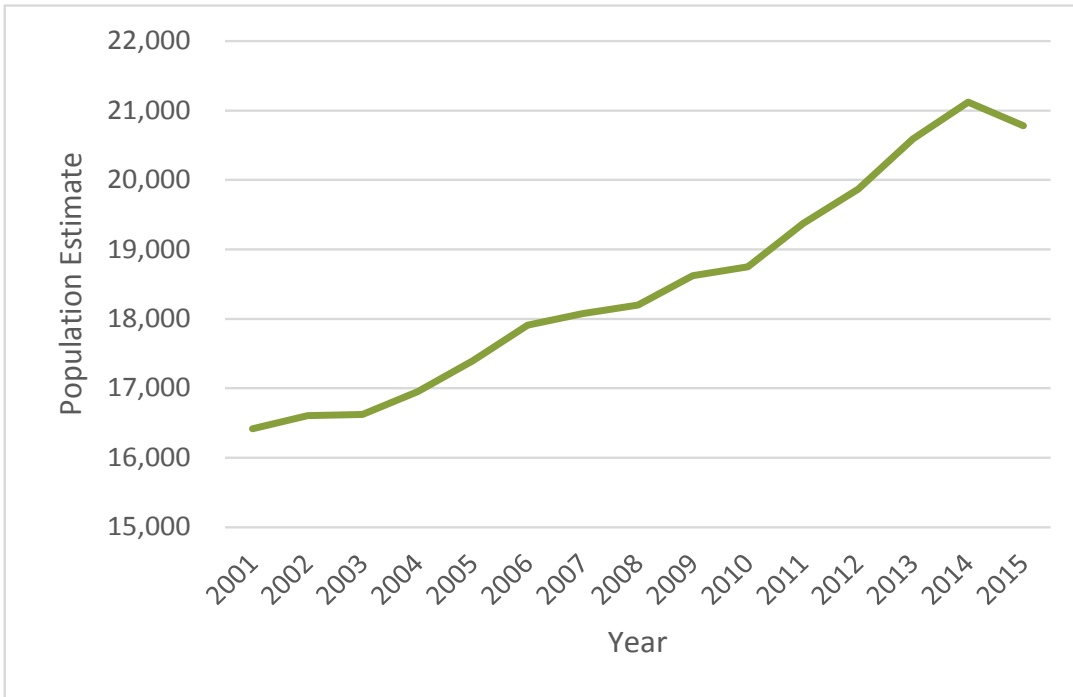


Figure 2.1 – City Population 2001 to 2015
 Source: BC Stats, 2015

Fort St. John is one of the youngest communities in British Columbia (Figure 2.2). The 2011 Census recorded the median age of Fort St. John residents to be 30.6 years, compared to the provincial median age of 41.9. There were fewer adults over the age of 45 in Fort St. John than the provincial average, but more residents from ages 0 to 4 and 20 to 40.

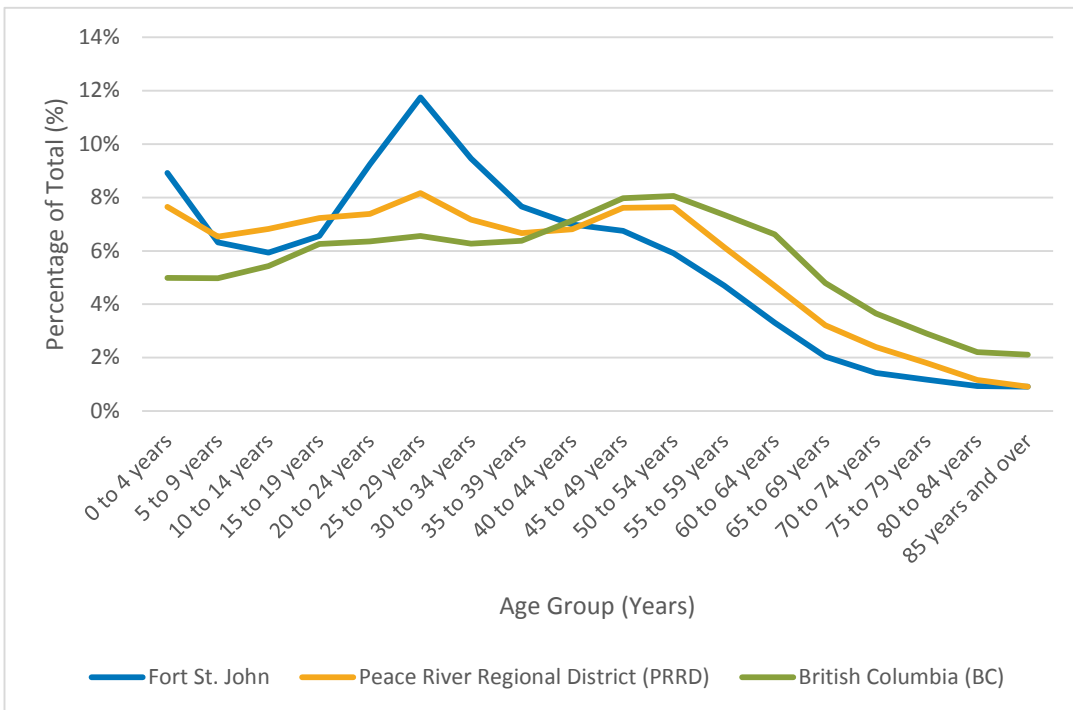


Figure 2.2 – Age Comparisons 2011
 Source: Statistics Canada, 2011, based on Fort St. John census subdivision data

Fort St. John’s demographics are changing, with variations among each age group (Figure 2.3). From 2001 to 2011, the only age group that experienced a decline in population was age 5 to 19 (-7.5%). The most dramatic increases in population occurred for seniors aged 85 and older (62%), adults aged 55 to 64 (61%) and children aged 0 to 4 (32%). This growth in adults and seniors is reflected in the median age of residents, which increased from 29.6 in 2001 to 30.6 in 2011 despite the increase in numbers of young children.

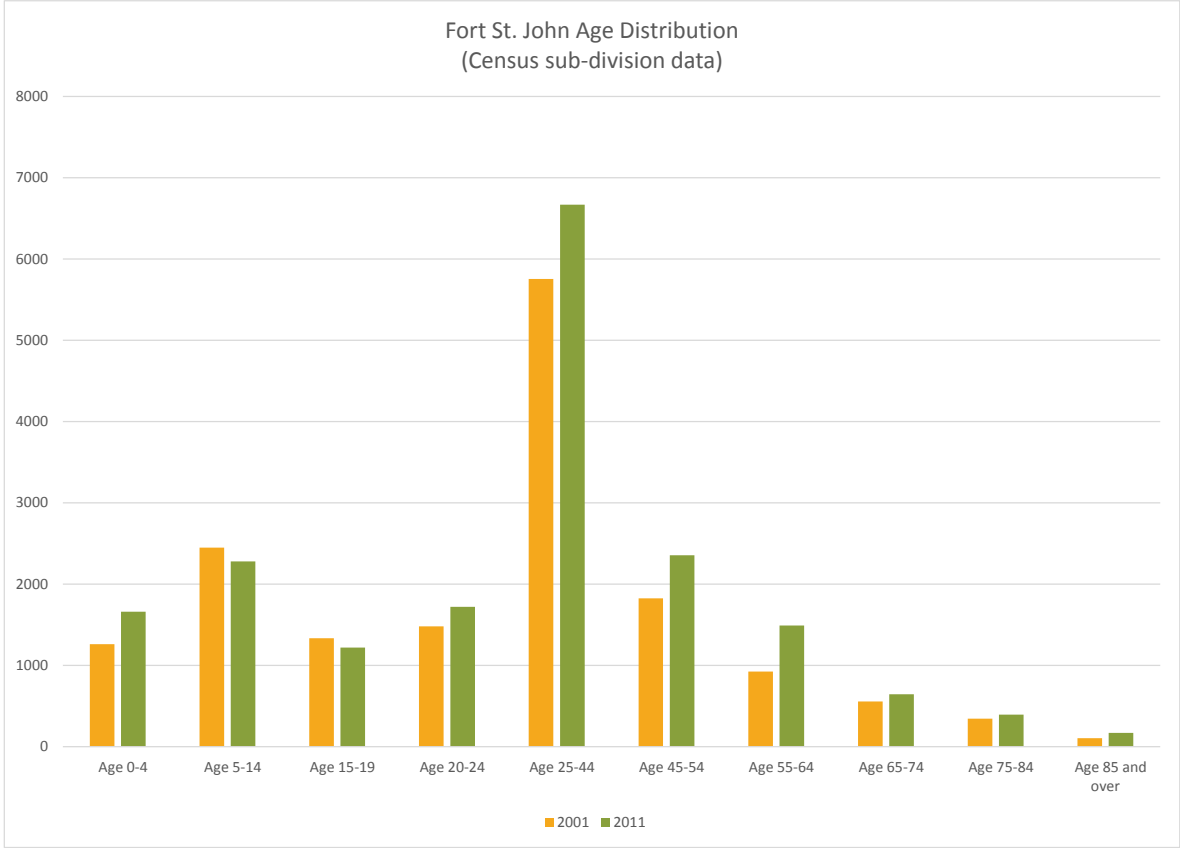
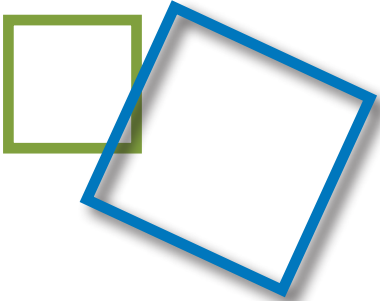


Figure 2.3 – Age Change 2001 to 2011
 Source: Statistics Canada, 2011, based on Fort St. John census subdivision data



The average persons per household in 2011 was 2.5, showing no change from 2006 (Figure 2.4).

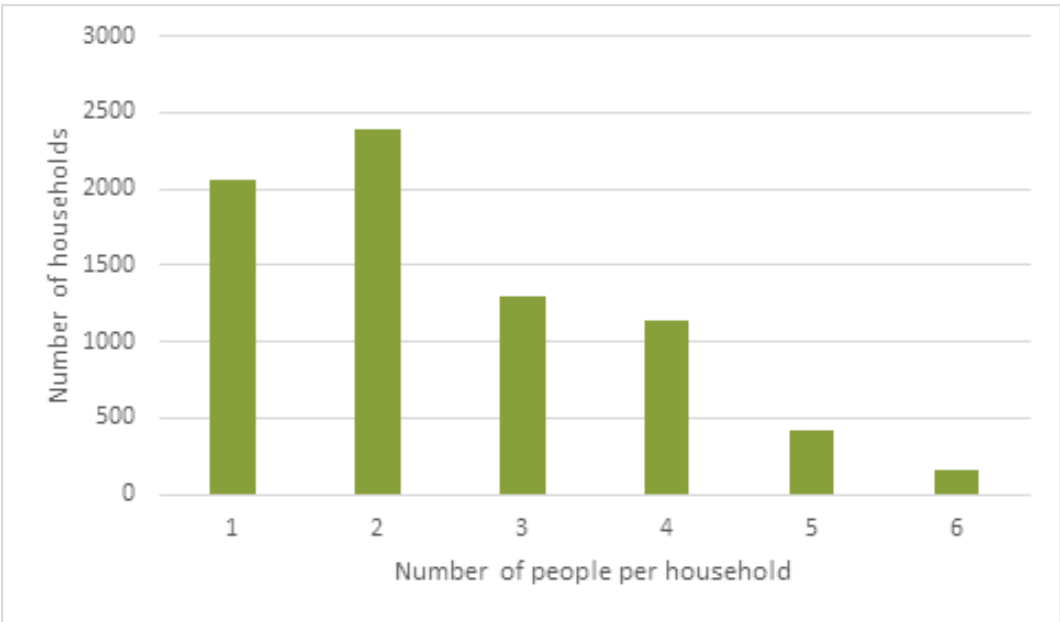


Figure 2.4 – Household Size 2011
Source: Data from Statistics Canada, based on Fort St. John census subdivision data

Population Trends

Population projections are based on past population trends and current population characteristics. Though not an exact science, population projections are an essential tool to guide decision-making about the future needs of a community. The growth of Fort St. John’s population will continue to create demands for developable land, City services and other amenities. Long-term population projections are required to ensure that the City is prepared to provide these new demands.

The City of Fort St. John recently completed a 50 Year Growth Study that provides population projections for the City up to the year 2065. After considering several scenarios, City staff and Council accepted an annual growth rate of 2.2% up to the year 2036 as a working projection.

The population projections have been updated to reflect the 2015 BC Stats population estimate of 20,778 for Fort St. John. Applying the 2.2% growth rate from 2015 to 2036 will result in estimated populations of 21,235 for 2016, 26,397 for 2026 and 32,815 in 2036. This estimated 2036 population is an increase of 12,037 from the 2015 BC Stats estimate of 20,778.

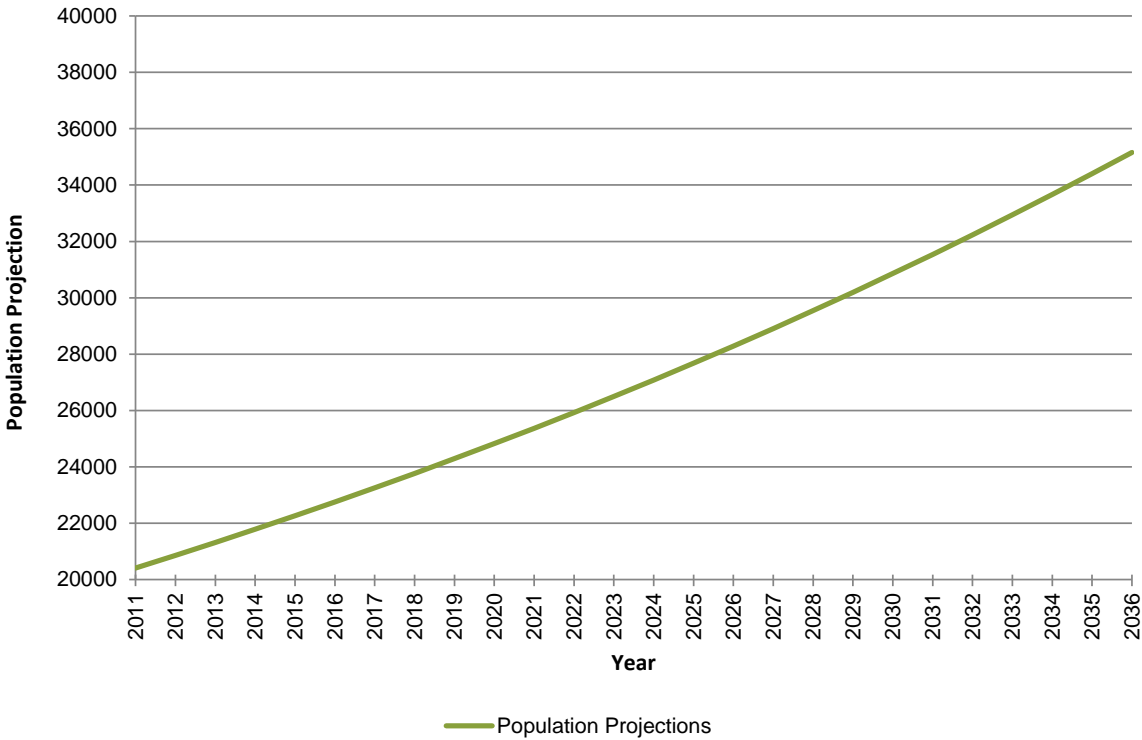


Figure 2.5 – Population Projection 2015 to 2036
 Source: Data from BC Stats for 2015 projected by Urban Systems

Employment and Income

Fort St. John’s economy is based on the energy sector, specifically oil and gas extraction, which makes up almost 14% (over 1,500 jobs) of Fort St. John’s total labour force (**Figure 2.6**). In 2011, the construction, retail trade, professional, scientific and technical services, and accommodation and food services sectors provided over 4,300 jobs, many of these being indirectly linked to income generated from the oil and gas sector (Statistics Canada, 2011). Forestry and agriculture also contributed to the local economy. This distribution was fairly consistent between 2006 and 2011.

In 2010, the reported median household income for Fort St. John was over \$83,000, which was \$15,000 more than the typical household income in BC (Statistics Canada, 2011). There were 14,515 people aged 15 years and over in the labour force and 3,100 not in the labour force.

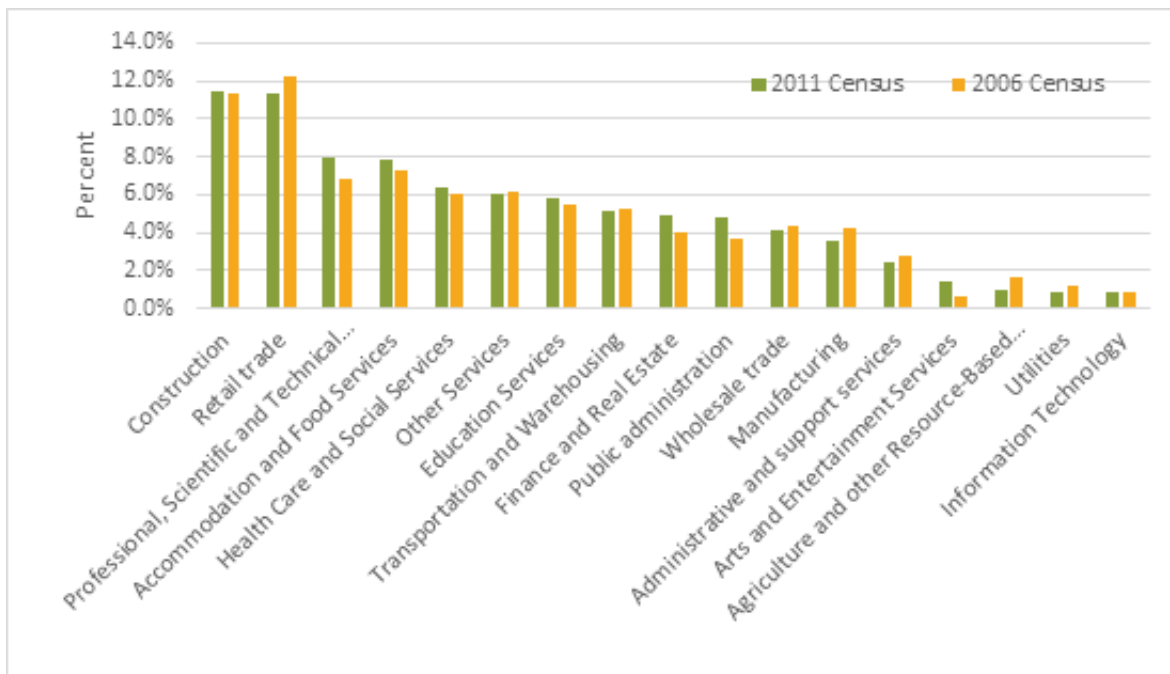


Figure 2.6 – Labour Force by Industry 2006 and 2011
 Source: Data from BC Stats for 2015 projected by Urban Systems

Ethnic Diversity

Fort St. John is home to increasing cultural diversity and immigration. In 2011, there were 1,340 first generation residents, 2,545 second-generation, 14,565 third generation, and 2,120 aboriginal people. There were 995 immigrants (4.8% of the population) in the City in 2011. Of these immigrants, 94.5% describe themselves as a visible minority and 3.6% are not Canadian citizens. The largest 10-year influx of immigrants to the City occurred from 2001 to 2011 and most were aged 25 to 44. The most frequent region of origin for immigrants in Fort St. John was Asia (360, with 145 from the Philippines), followed by Europe (210), the Americas (225, including 190 from the United States), and Africa (85).

2.2 Parks and Recreation Trends

This is a high level overview of major trends related to park and recreation, based on outside sources combined with benchmarking, community input, and local knowledge. For more details, see Appendix D.

Participation

- Physical activity levels remain concerning
- Participation levels are higher in BC than other provinces
- Walking, swimming and bicycling are popular among adults and youth
- Unstructured spontaneous activities and disc golf are increasing in popularity
- Flexibility and adaptability is a focus
- Financial barriers limit participation

Service Delivery

- Partnerships optimize opportunities
- Social inclusion concerns are being addressed
- Recreation fosters community development
- Municipalities are aligning with provincial and national strategic initiatives

Volunteerism

- Without volunteers, recreation opportunities would be limited
- British Columbians of all ages volunteer
- Volunteer trends are shifting

Infrastructure

- Aging infrastructure is a concern
- Multi-use spaces provide more benefits
- Integrating indoor and outdoor environments
- More focus is placed on ensuring accessibility
- Achieving financial sustainability through revenue generating spaces
- Social amenities enhance user experience

Urban Parks

- Quality parks and outdoor spaces are highly valued by residents
- Planning active transportation routes and pathways
- Parks are used to preserve and promote heritage and culture
- Urban agriculture improves community well-being
- Dog walking needs to be accommodated
- Homelessness can be addressed in park planning

2.3 Community Input

An important part of the planning process was to understand the interests and preferences of residents. This was accomplished through multiple forms of community engagement of residents of Fort St. John and the North Peace area during the preparation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Community Telephone Survey

A statistically valid telephone survey was conducted to understand the interests and preferences of Fort St. John and North Peace area residents. The survey invited participants to share their opinions about outdoor parks and recreation activities, as well as indoor recreation facilities and programs. The following is a summary of the findings:



Participation in Outdoor Recreation Programs and Activities

- The top outdoor activities were walking/hiking/jogging for exercise or recreation (79% of respondents indicated participation by someone in their household within the past year¹) and visiting a park for casual activities or to relax (53%). Fewer than half of respondents participated in any activities three times per week or more on average in the applicable season. Based on other similar surveys conducted by the consultants, Fort St. John residents are not as active in outdoor recreation as comparable communities.
- In total, 50% of overall respondents indicated participation in walking/hiking/jogging three times per week or more on average in the applicable season by someone in their household. All other activities had less than 40% frequent participation overall. Respondents from the District of Taylor indicated significantly higher frequent participation rates, with 90% walking/hiking/jogging and 46% dog walking (as compared to 25% overall) three times per week or more².

Satisfaction with Programs and Activities in Outdoor Facilities

- Overall, the survey results showed moderate satisfaction for outdoor recreation opportunities. Highest satisfaction scores for activities with significant numbers of participants were for festivals or special events (150 of 199 participants, or 75% reported being satisfied), maintenance of trails (272 of 383 users, or 71%), and long trails or loop trails for long walks or rides (193 of 288 users, or 67%).
- Satisfaction with outdoor recreation was low for public outdoor washrooms (272 of 313 users, or 84% did not express satisfaction³) and off-leash dog parks (76 of 100 users, or 76%).

Priorities for Outdoor Recreation

- Respondents were asked what improvements were needed to outdoor recreation items that they rated low for satisfaction. Most comments (169) related to a lack of public outdoor washrooms at parks and trails in Fort St. John and to the maintenance of public outdoor washrooms.
- Respondents were asked to suggest their first choice improvement for parks or trails in Fort St. John. In total, 64% of respondents offered an improvement, most of which related to general maintenance of parks and trails (43 comments). Following this, 31 comments suggested increasing connections between trails and parks.

1 Read all responses this way (i.e., 'respondent' refers to respondents themselves, or any other member(s) of their households), unless indicated otherwise.

2 Due to the low sample size to represent the population of Taylor, results for that community are not statistically valid.

3 'Did not express satisfaction' refers to ratings of 1, 2, or 3 on a scale from 1 being not at all satisfied, to 5 being very satisfied. Read all responses this way unless indicated otherwise.

Use of Indoor Recreation Programs and Activities

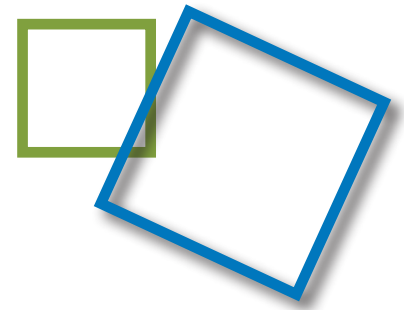
- The most used indoor recreation facilities were the Pomeroy Sports Centre (81% of respondents indicated attendance by someone in their household within the past year⁴) and the North Peace Leisure Pool (63%). There were 9% of respondents who reported not having attended any facilities in the past 12 months.

Satisfaction with Indoor Facilities

- The highest indoor recreation facility satisfaction rating was for Taylor Arena; 54 respondents expressed satisfaction (83%). Pomeroy Centre also had a high satisfaction rating, with 275 users expressing satisfaction (82%).
- The lowest rates of satisfaction were reported for aquatic facilities in Fort St. John; of the 233 attending the North Peace Leisure Pool, 98 expressed satisfaction with the facility (42%). Only 5 of the 16 who attended Taylor Pool expressed satisfaction with the facility (29%).

Priorities for Indoor Recreation Facilities and Programs

- Respondents were asked for suggested improvements to indoor recreation facilities rated low for satisfaction⁵. Out of 81 comments received, most suggested improvements were for the North Peace Leisure Pool (43 comments), related to general updating and maintenance, making the facility larger, and improving the locker rooms.
- About 69% of respondents expressed a need for new and/or enhanced indoor recreation facilities or spaces in the area. When prompted to suggest what facilities or spaces could be developed and/or enhanced to meet their household's recreational needs, the most common response was indoor playgrounds (32% of respondents). Gymnasium spaces were suggested by 26% of respondents, while indoor lap swimming pools and leisure aquatic amenities (e.g., lap pool, lazy river, slides) were suggested by 25% and 24%, respectively.
- A smaller proportion (43%) of respondents expressed a need for more or better recreation or sports programs. In total, 40% of residents responded that there is no need. When prompted to suggest what indoor recreation programs should be developed and/or enhanced in the area to satisfy their household's recreational needs, 59% of respondents said 'none'. Indoor gymnasium or dryland sports programs (e.g., basketball, lacrosse, volleyball) were the most preferred programs to be developed and/or enhanced (23% of respondents).



4 Read all responses this way (i.e., 'respondent' refers to respondents themselves, or any other member(s) of their households), unless indicated otherwise.

5 Ratings of 1 or 2 on a scale from 1 being not at all satisfied, to 5 being very satisfied. Read all responses this way unless indicated otherwise.

- Respondents were asked whether there are any age groups for which recreation or sport programs are insufficient or lacking in the Fort St. John area. Most respondents said ‘no’ or ‘not sure’ (64%), while 36% of respondents said ‘yes’. Of those who said yes (150 respondents), 54% said for children aged 1 to 5 years old.
- The final survey question asked participants to share general suggestions about parks and recreation in Fort St. John and generated 129 comments in total. The most common response was that Fort St. John needs more recreation options for children and families (29 comments), followed by the need for more multi-purpose indoor spaces (24 comments).

Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Survey participants were presented with a series of statements related to the benefits of recreation, parks, and leisure in the community and asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with each. Overall, rates of agreement were high for all statements. Residents most strongly agreed that the local governments (Fort St. John, Taylor, and the Peace River Regional District) in the area should work together to provide recreation, parks, and leisure opportunities for residents.

Barriers that Limit or Prevent Participation

- Respondents were asked about factors preventing them or someone in their household⁶ from participating in recreation, parks, and leisure opportunities. The largest proportion (43%) of respondents indicated that nothing is preventing them from participating. Hours of operation (i.e., schedule of programs, facilities) were the most commonly experienced barrier, as indicated by 20% of respondents.
- Approximately half (48%) of Fort St. John area residents are aware of programs in the area that provide financial assistance to access recreation programs and services.

Online Community Survey

A community online survey requested input from residents on four broad questions about their perspectives on parks and recreation and their ideas for the Master Plan. In total, 101 community members participated in the survey, with 73 completing the entire survey and 28 partially completing it. The following is a summary of the input provided. Where possible, responses were grouped into themes, with the most common themes listed in order for each topic below.

Outdoor Recreation Strengths

When asked what they liked most about parks and recreation in Fort St. John, 96 responses were provided about outdoor recreation:

⁶ Read all responses this way (i.e., ‘respondent’ refers to respondents themselves, or any other member(s) of their households), unless indicated otherwise.

- Accessible trails (32 mentions) and parks (26 mentions)
- Trees and greenspace (16 mentions), and their maintenance and upkeep (12 mentions)
- Playgrounds, including school grounds (5 mentions)
- Park/trail amenities such as garbage bins, benches and doggie bags (3 mentions)
- Safe and inviting parks and recreation (3 mentions)

Outdoor Recreation Challenges

When asked what they liked least about parks and recreation in the City, 94 responses were provided about outdoor recreation:

- Poor/lack of maintenance (18 mentions)
- Number of trails (15 mentions)
- Not enough / poorly designed parks (11 mentions)
- Lack of winter activities and park washrooms (9 mentions)
- Lack of spaces for dogs (8 mentions)
- Poor playground condition (6 mentions)

Indoor Recreation Strengths

When asked what they liked most about parks and recreation in Fort St. John, the following responses were provided about indoor recreation:

- A variety of programs and facilities year-round (19 mentions)
- Good for families (10 mentions)
- Indoor/outdoor walking track (10 mentions)
- Leisure pool and skating oval (5 mentions each)
- Curling rink and indoor soccer field (3 mentions each)

Indoor Recreation Challenges

When asked what they liked least about parks and recreation in Fort St. John, the following responses were provided about indoor recreation:

- Condition of the pool (15 mentions)
- Lack of gym space (11 mentions), particularly for gymnastics
- Lack of activities for families/children and indoor/outdoor winter activities (9 mentions each)
- Not enough variety (8 mentions)
- Variety of activities (8 mentions)
- Underutilized activities, lack of fairness among different user groups, poor hours of operation and scheduling and condition/lack of courts and field (6 mentions each)

Vision and Values

When asked what vision and values should guide the Master Plan, 85 responses were provided:

- Inclusivity, accessibility and affordability (18, 11 and 10 mentions respectively)
- Consider families, variety of indoor and outdoor opportunities and youth (15, 12 and 4 mentions respectively)
- Encourage healthy living, year-round access, a connection to nature and connected facilities (12, 11, 7 and 4 mentions respectively)
- Expand network of parks and trails and keep pace with population growth (11 and 9 mentions respectively)
- Protect greenspace and the environment, and well-designed and maintained parks (10 and 7 mentions respectively)

Objectives and Recommendations

When asked what objectives and recommendations should be included in the Master Plan, 80 responses were provided:

- More functional, updated and maintained indoor facilities, improved park maintenance and more parks with improved design and function (18, 8 and 7 mentions respectively)
- Variety of recreation activities, expand trail network, address community needs, year-round use, more opportunities for children and families (16, 11, 10, 10 and 8 mentions respectively)
- Encourage healthy living, bring the community together (9 and 5 mentions respectively)
- Accessible, affordable, regional cost sharing (5, 6 and 3 mentions respectively)
- Improve the beauty of Fort St. John, attractive to new residents (5 and 4 mentions respectively)

Youth Survey

An online survey was distributed to students in grades 7 to 12 to obtain their perspectives on parks and recreation preferences. In total, 40 responses were provided.

Outdoor Recreation

Participants were asked to indicate their favourite outdoor recreation activities from a list of 22 activities. The top 10 activities were:

- Walking/hiking/jogging (24 respondents)
- Enjoying nature (21 respondents)
- Hanging out in a park (14 respondents)

A top objective for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was to have more functional, updated, and maintained indoor facilities

- Festivals or events in parks (14 respondents)
- Beach volleyball (12 respondents)
- Walking a dog (12 respondents)
- Baseball, slopitch, softball (11 respondents)
- Basketball (11 respondents)
- Tobogganing (10 respondents)
- Fitness park (10 respondents)

Indoor Recreation

Participants were asked to indicate their favourite indoor recreation activities from a list of 11 activities. The top five activities were:

- Working out in the gym (19 respondents)
- Swimming (16 respondents)
- Indoor basketball or volleyball (15 respondents)
- Skating (12 respondents)
- Programs such as yoga, dance (10 respondents)

The youth in Fort St. John would like to see a trampoline park in the future.

Priorities for Parks and Recreation

The youth were asked how likely they were to live in Fort St. John after completing school. The responses are listed below:

- I have no idea (41%)
- Quite likely (27%)
- Quite unlikely (19%)
- Extremely unlikely (11%)
- Extremely likely (3%)

The youth were asked what the City could do in parks and recreation to make that age group happier and more likely to want to live in Fort St. John. The top six initiatives are listed below:

- Trampoline or jump park (12 mentions)
- Indoor basketball courts (5 mentions)
- Access to ice rinks year-round (3 mentions)
- More activities / places geared for youth (3 mentions)
- BMX, dirt bike, motocross, go cart track (2 mentions)
- More trails for biking and hiking (2 mentions)

Focus Groups

Focus groups provide qualitative input that allows for in-depth insights, complementing the results of surveys. The focus group input was used in the formation of the vision, goals and objectives of the Master Plan. The following is a synthesis of the key perspectives on strengths and challenges of those who participated in the focus groups. A full summary is available from the City.

Parks

Strengths of Parks

Existing trails, and their year-round use for multiple activities such as walking, cycling, running, cross-country skiing, was a frequently listed strength

Trails being cleared in the winter

The wide variety and types of parks, including neighbourhood, nature / community forest, spray / water, and skate parks, outdoor fitness equipment

Parks that support a variety of uses and user groups, including children and families

Attractive and well-maintained amenities help the aesthetic for the City and are a source of community pride

Challenges of Parks

The trail system needs to be expanded, including more looped trails that don't dead-end, cross-country ski trails and walking trails within town, bike paths, sidewalks, and a connection to Charlie Lake

Need for more washrooms

Not enough trees

Garbage clean-up, maintenance, homeless in parks and trail etiquette

Not enough green spaces downtown or in new developments

Quality of some parks – outdated, unattractive

Existing trails, and their year-round use for activities, was a frequently listed strength of parks.

While the existing trails are appreciated, the trail system needs to be expanded.

Outdoor Recreation

Strengths of Outdoor Recreation

Different kinds of outdoor fields, including soccer and baseball, and tennis courts

Special events and festivals for families and children, such as High On Ice, baseball tournaments, winter festival, photo scavenger / Easter egg hunt, summer / spring break, Amazing Race.

The new skate park is well-used

Outdoor skating rinks

There is a growing mountain bike community in the City

Challenges of Outdoor Recreation

Stormwater ponds dominating parks where play structures are preferred

There is no disc golf course or cricket field, nor support of other “non-conventional” sports like rock climbing, mini golf and paintball

Not enough activities for kids

Inaccessible playgrounds

Not enough dog parks, event spaces, soccer fields ice rinks

Indoor Recreation

Strengths of Indoor Recreation

Affordable and free amenities such as public skate and walking track, the track is particularly valued in the winter

Sports campus

Programs for children, seniors, pool programs

Low-/no-cost facility sharing – e.g., school gyms

Community programs such as babysitting / home alone courses; active programs such as tumble time; special events and events for children

Field House and pool

The oval and hockey arenas, with lots of ice availability

Club activities, hockey programs, volunteers

The new skate park is well used.

Stormwater ponds are dominating new parks where play structures are preferred.

Challenges of Indoor Recreation

Activities have outgrown venues such as the pool and there are other capacity limitations which can limit newcomers, including a lack of dry floor time during ice season

Facilities are aging and upgrades are needed– e.g., pool (including the accessible lift), soccer pitch, indoor track, more ice availability needed (particularly during prime time)

Need more facilities, including an indoor play centre / playground for kids and a gymnastics centre. Also, some facilities need more amenities, such as a change room at the oval.

Rates for use of fields and indoor facilities are increasing

There isn't a lot of programming for 12 – 19 year olds, and more activities for kids are needed

There is a lack of program awareness / communication

Pop-up Booths

The purpose of pop-up booths was to appear at events that community members were already attending, to inform citizens about the project, and to request their perceptions about the strengths and challenges, and potential objectives and recommendations for the Master Plan. Participants provided many of same responses strengths and challenges as were provided during focus group workshops, with the following additional input. A full summary is available from the City.

Parks

Strengths of Parks

Treed areas that can be walked through

Playgrounds with diverse equipment

Proximity to parks

Challenges of Parks

Safety concerns, such as it being very dark at night

Poor quality parks

Proximity to parks in downtown area

Insufficient dog parks and off-leash areas

Aesthetic issues such as chain link fences around parks

The walking track is particularly valued in the winter

Residents like to walk on trails through trees

Outdoor Recreation

Strengths of Outdoor Recreation

Lacrosse program

Challenges of Outdoor Recreation

Graffiti in baseball dugouts

No bike lanes

Improvements to sidewalk system needed

Upgrades needed to facilities like beach volleyball courts

Indoor Recreation

Strengths of Indoor Recreation

Pomeroy Sports Centre

Challenges of Indoor Recreation

North Peace Leisure Pool condition

It was noted that improvements are needed to the sidewalk system

2.4 Benefits of Parks and Recreation

Numerous national, provincial and municipal organizations have been engaged in research regarding the benefits of parks and recreation. The “benefits” approach is a highly effective framework for planning and promoting services because it emphasizes that there are both direct and indirect benefits to the community from investing in parks, recreation and cultural facilities, programs, activities and special events.

The direct benefits accrue to those who participate in terms of healthy and active lifestyles, social and family connections, positive behaviours, a sense of competence, and disease prevention, among others. There are indirect benefits to the community as a whole, even for those who do not participate. This stems from the enhanced vibrancy of the community, strengthened social fabric, healthier business community, more employment opportunities, more local goods to be purchased, and enhanced tourism assets.

Active people lead healthier lives and have stronger connections to their communities. A powerful case exists that investment in recreation infrastructure is a preventative approach to health and social well-being that offsets spending on reactive infrastructure such as hospitals and correctional institutions.

At the national level, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) has an online resource that collects data to support the following eight benefits of parks and recreation (www.benefitshub.ca). The Leisure Information Network updates the benefits information on behalf of CPRA. This resource identifies that the work and services provided through parks and recreation:

1. Are essential to personal health and well-being
2. Provide the key to balanced human development
3. Provide a foundation for quality of life
4. Reduce self-destructive and anti-social behaviour
5. Build strong families and healthy communities
6. Reduce health care, social service and police/justice costs
7. Are a significant economic generator
8. Provide green spaces that are essential to environmental and ecological well-being, for the survival of natural species, the environmental responsibility and stewardship by humans and creating a sense of place

The benefits of parks and recreation also fit within the framework of sustainability. The following are some examples of this:

Environmental Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Protection of habitat, biodiversity and ecological integrity in parks and green space
- Opportunities for human connections with nature, environmental education and stewardship
- Pollution abatement and cooling of air and water, mostly from trees and soil
- Rainwater management
- Climate change adaptation, including mitigation of extreme weather events
- Carbon sinks

Social Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Contribution to community pride and identity
- Stronger social networks and community connectedness
- Physical, psychological and spiritual health and well-being
- Support for play as a critical element in learning and child development
- Connecting people with nature, which has proven health benefits
- Development of community leaders

There are indirect benefits to the community as a whole, even for those who do not participate in parks and recreation.

Economic Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Increased property values
- Increased viability of adjacent commercial areas
- Attraction of residents and businesses to the community
- Contribution to tourism opportunities
- Reduced costs in criminal justice and health care systems
- Recreation, fitness, sport, arts, culture, parks, and green spaces are significant employment generators

Personal Benefits of Parks and Recreation

- Helps extend life expectancy (active living, sport, fitness)
- Contributes to mental health and well-being
- Reduces obesity, resulting in many health benefits
- Enhances overall physical and emotional health and improves quality of life
- Combats diabetes and osteoporosis and helps reduce risk of coronary heart disease
- Contributes to academic success and provides exceptional opportunities for lifelong learning

The benefits of parks and recreation fit within the framework of sustainability.





3 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

3.1 Vision of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

A vision statement is important in planning as it provides clarity about the desired future and a unifying direction for parks and recreation in the community. This vision was generated from community input received at focus group workshops, the online community survey, and pop-up booths and in an effort to align with existing City strategic planning. The vision has also been developed to align with the the City's vision in the OCP:

Fort St. John will be a community where nature lives, recreation opportunities abound, and families are active and flourish

3.2 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives provide guidance on directions that will be taken to meet community needs. They are based on the objectives and recommendations provided in the focus group workshops, the online community survey, and pop-up booths. The goals are organized within themes, and objectives follow each goal.

Connectivity and Accessibility

Goal - Provide a multi-use, connected trail system that links parks and other key destinations

- Expand the trail system to better connect destinations such as downtown and City parks, and to integrate City trails with routes that extend to natural areas beyond the City
- Improve accessibility to and within parks and recreation facilities through the application of universal design principles
- Design well-connected, multi-purpose trails for walking, running, hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and off-leash dog walking
- Enhance year-round use of trails by snow-clearing and grooming for cross-country skiing
- Expand amenities such as places to sit, rest and picnic along trails
- Connect City neighbourhoods to Fish Creek Community Forest, Charlie Lake, Peace Lookout, airport and Taylor
- Improve signage and maps for parks and trails

Environment and Aesthetics

Goal - Protect and enhance the natural environment and aesthetics of the City's parks

- Protect existing natural areas at the edge of the City and within parks
- Naturalize areas within parks
- Increase the number of trees in parks and along streets in the City
- Design parks and trails so they will be a source of civic pride
- Keep parks and trails well-maintained and clean, and promote stewardship of them

Social Connections and Community Engagement

Goal - Provide opportunities for social gatherings and connections within parks and recreation facilities

- Distribute a range of parkland types across all neighbourhoods in the City
- Provide spaces within parks and recreation facilities for large and small gatherings
- Encourage and support more festivals and events
- Provide outdoor spaces for various types of events
- Include community engagement in planning, design and programming activities
- Encourage and support volunteerism and community groups through marketing, assistance and incentives

Year-round Healthy and Active Living

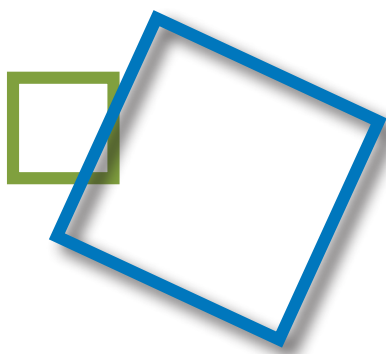
Goal - Encourage as many people as possible to participate in activities throughout the year

- Focus on the user's experience when designing parks and facilities
- Increase recreation opportunities within parks for all seasons
- Encourage and promote cycling and walking as recreation activities and as viable modes of transportation
- Improve marketing of events and programs

Meeting Needs through Flexibility

Goal - Plan for adaptable, re-usable and multi-functional spaces

- Consider adaptive re-use of existing facilities to address deficiencies and to meet changing needs
- Expand multi-use opportunities in buildings, parks, trails and public spaces
- Expand programs and services to include people with varying schedules, considering daily, weekly and seasonal use patterns



Inclusive Community Facilities and Services

Goal - Provide services that reflect the diversity of Fort St. John's population

- Provide programs for all age groups and families to address the City's changing demographics
- Design programs to be inclusive of diverse ethnic and social groups, and those with a wide range of interests and skill levels
- Modify programs over time to address demographic changes, trends and evolving interests
- Ensure that programs are affordable and accessible for all residents
- Design and manage parks and trails to improve safety and security

Economic Viability and Partnerships

Goal - Provide services and amenities in a financially responsible manner

- Pursue opportunities for private investment in recreation facilities through public/private partnerships, and partnerships with First Nations and other levels of government, for development and maintenance of infrastructure
- Collaborate with School District 60, Northern Lights College and University of Northern British Columbia for shared use of facilities, and with colleges, surrounding jurisdictions, and private industry to provide complementary services
- Develop cost-sharing and cost-recovery strategies for new and existing facilities
- Provide capacity-building workshops for community groups

3.3 Guide to the Recommendations

The next sections include a goal, description, analysis, summary of strengths and challenges, and recommendations for parkland, and outdoor and indoor recreation. The recommendations, in yellow boxes, are divided into the following subheadings where applicable; not all subheadings apply to each section:

- Land Acquisition
- Planning and Design
- Capital Development
- Operations and Management





4 PARKLAND

4.1 Parkland Supply

Goal

Protect and acquire sufficient parkland to provide Fort St. John residents with good access to a range of park types that meet outdoor recreation needs.



Description

Classification of parks and green spaces can help to provide an understanding of the various roles of parkland, which can be a useful planning and management tool. The following is the proposed classification system for public parkland in the City of Fort St. John (**Map 1**). Some parks are difficult to classify because they comply with more than one definition. In those cases, the most appropriate category is selected based on park use.

Classification System

- Community Parks – community parks serve several neighbourhoods, sometimes the entire City and beyond, and include a range of recreational amenities, such as sports fields, courts, play areas, walkways or trails, and parking lots. Community parks draw people who specifically travel to spend time “in the park”, for activities as diverse as picnics, special events, sports and recreation. They help to form the visual, physical and social focus of the community. Current average size 13.58 ha, and minimum size 4.12 ha. Examples: Centennial Park, Kin Park, Surerus Park, Toboggan Hill Park, Matthews Park.
- Neighbourhood Parks – neighbourhood parks generally serve the catchment area of or similar to that of an elementary school. Neighbourhood parks typically include play equipment, pathways, open grass, and seating. They may also include other recreation or athletic facilities. These parks are meant to form the visual, physical and social focus of the neighbourhood. Access is usually by walking so neighbourhood parks don’t require parking lots. Current average size 0.81 ha, and minimum size 0.08 ha. Examples: Panorama Ridge Park, Concorde Park, WI Centennial Park, Triangle Park, Garrison Park, Sunset Ridge Park, Pickell Park, Heritage Park, Estates Park, Kearny Park, Duncan Cran Park, Energy Park, Station Park, Park Lane Park, Tot Lot Park, Carrier Park.
- Natural Parks – these parks are dominated by natural features such as forests and watercourses. The recreation use of natural areas is usually limited to trail uses and nature appreciation. Facilities such as parking lots, signs, trails, gathering areas, and washrooms support public access and use. Examples: Fish Creek Community Forest.
- Green Space – this is additional publicly-owned parkland that is undeveloped or that does not support a significant amount of use. It may include small grassed and/or treed properties or boulevards that do not have significant trails or recreation amenities. Green space contributes to the visual character of the community. Examples: Chiulli Triangle, 111 Avenue triangle near Peace River Road, 86 Street south of 99 Avenue, 96 Avenue near 86A Street, Tahltan Rd at 112 Street, Cadet Park.

- School Sites – this includes the green space portion of public school sites (school buildings and parking lots are excluded). These sites are under the jurisdiction of School District 60 rather than the City. They have parklike values because many school sites are used as de facto parks outside of school hours.

Parkland Supply

Fort St. John has 42 municipally owned parks covering over 160 hectares (ha) (**Figure 4.1**). With the addition of existing school sites (excluding the buildings and parking lots), there are almost 200 hectares of green space available for public access and use in Fort St. John. Within the City, there are another three proposed school sites occupying 9.3 ha, some of which will be buildings and parking lots.

Park Type	Count	Area (ha)
Community Parks	5	67.9
Neighbourhood Parks	18	14.6
Natural Parks	1	68.5
Green Space	18	15.5
Total (Municipally owned)	42	166.5
School Sites	11	27.1
Total	53	193.55

Figure 4.1 – Parkland Supply

Analysis

Parkland Supply Analysis

In this section, the parkland supply is analyzed using three different methods. Many municipalities use population-based standards to calculate and plan their supply of parkland. The additional analyses of area-based supply and spatial distribution can increase the understanding of parkland supply and needs for future parks.

Standards are controversial, with some believing that the quantitative approach detracts from a qualitative consideration of parks and recognition that conditions are unique in every municipality. In BC, even where standards are not embraced for their inherent value, they are often used to assist in the calculation of park development cost charges (DCCs).

Even in jurisdictions where parkland supply standards exist, they are usually used as a guideline, rather than a definitive requirement. Park supply standards can be applied in a flexible manner to ensure that a full range of park types is available to all residents. They also enable a community to measure their supply over time, and to compare themselves with other communities.

Population-based Analysis

Population-based parkland supply is typically calculated on the more active types of parkland such as community and neighbourhood parks, and does not include natural parks and green space. **Figure 4.2** illustrates the existing supply of active parkland in relation to population. The current supply of active parkland, not including school grounds, is 3.7 ha/1,000 population¹. If the City were not to acquire any additional parkland despite annual population increases of 2.2%, the active parkland supply would drop to about 2.98 ha/1,000 population by 2026 and 2.4 ha/1,000 population by 2036. Including school sites, the current supply of active parks is about 5.14 ha/1,000 population.

Park Type	Count	Area (ha)	Active Parkland Supply (ha / 1,000 population)		
			2016 Population 21,235.12	2026 Population 26,397.55	2036 Population 32,815.01
Community	5	67.9	3.20	2.57	2.07
Neighbourhood	18	14.61	0.69	0.55	0.45
Total (Municipally owned)	23	78.6	3.89	3.12	2.52
School Sites*	11	27.1	1.28	1.03	0.83
Future Schools	3	6		0.23	0.18
Total	35	109.2	5.16	4.38	3.52

Figure 4.2 – Population-Based Parkland Supply

*(assume 2 ha open space for each school site starting in 2026)

Of the 22 communities reviewed as part of the benchmarking analysis, the average active parkland supply was 2.51 ha/1,000 population, but it is difficult to make comparisons since the size, context and quality of parkland differs greatly among those communities (**Figure 4.3**). Of those with parkland supply standards, the standard for total active parkland ranged from 1.2 ha/1,000 to 4.0 ha/1,000 population.

For many years, the Canadian standard for supply of active parkland was 4 ha/1,000 population. With trends towards increasing density, especially within downtown cores, population-based standards of supply have been decreasing. Municipalities with smaller land areas, which are mostly built out, cannot meet the traditional supply standards due to the high land values and lack of available undeveloped land. Fort St. John's active parkland supply was a reasonable total, with 4.44 ha/1,000 population in 2011 (used as the benchmarking comparison year). Based on the City's 2016 population, this active parkland supply is 3.89 ha/1,000 population. City residents also benefit from having access to Fish Creek Community Forest and parks outside City limits.

¹ Benchmarking work showed the City's active parkland supply at 4.2 ha/1000 population because it was based on 2011 census data, as it was for all other benchmarking communities

Classification	Fort St. John (2011)	Langford	North Vancouver	Pitt Meadows	Port Coquitlam	Port Moody	Squamish	Vernon	Average of benchmarking communities	Provincial Average
Destination / City-Wide (ha)	X	0.02	0.73	9.55	0.56	1.23	3.41	X	0.99	1.04
Community (ha)	3.65	0.52	0.46	7.45	X	1.07	2.10	0.66	1.73	0.8
Neighbourhood (ha)	0.79	0.1	0.24	5.19	0.59	0.25	0.69	0.55	0.35	0.67
Total active parkland supply (ha/1000 people)	4.44	0.65	1.44	22.19	1.15	2.56	6.2	1.21	3.06	2.51

Figure 4.3 – Population-Based Parkland Supply Comparisons (all units are ha/1,000 population for the 2011 population)

Area-based Parkland Supply

Another way of measuring parkland supply is in relation to land area. Some municipalities have targets of 12% or so of their total land area occupied by protected areas, consistent with provincial standards. This measure typically includes green space, natural areas, and parks managed by other municipal, provincial and federal governments. **Figure 4.4** illustrates the parkland supply by area. Fort St. John, with 9.3% of its land base in parks and protected areas, this is a fairly low amount of parkland according to this measure.

Park Type	Area (ha)	% of City
Community	67.92	2.6
Neighbourhood	14.61	0.6
Natural	68.49	2.6
Green Space	15.45	0.6
OCP Natural Areas	42.89	1.6
Total	209.36	7.9
School Grounds	27.08	1.03
Future School Sites	9.25	0.35
FSJ Municipal Area	2,639.00	9.3

Figure 4.4 – Area-Based Parkland Supply

Parkland Distribution Analysis

The third way to analyze parkland supply is by spatial distribution, or the distance people have to walk to access a park. This analysis is conducted to determine a resident's ability to walk to a park that meets local needs. **Map 2** illustrates the approximate walking distances to parks in Fort St. John. These are approximate measurements because the distances are measured in straight lines, whereas walking routes typically follow sidewalks and roads. Walking routes may also encounter slopes or other barriers that affect walking speeds or times.

Ideally, every resident would have 5 minute walking access (400 m) to a neighbourhood park and/or 10 minute walking access (800 m) to a community park. Parks under 0.2 hectares are shown with a reduced service area (100 m) since such parks only service residents within the immediate vicinity.

Walking distances to parks in many parts of the City are within the preferred distances; however, some neighbourhoods are not within walking distance of an active park, as follows:

- 100 Street from 103 Avenue to 110 Avenue
- Some residential neighbourhoods along 79 Street near 100 Avenue and 101 Avenue at 112 Street

Some of the City's green spaces that are not currently active parkland could help to meet this need if they were developed as parks, e.g., 100 Street by 100 Avenue site, Triangle Park, Chiulli Triangle, Cadet Park.

The 100 Street by 100 Avenue site is zoned for a downtown commercial use (C2) and is only being used as an green space as a temporary measure. Even though it only has grass, a path and a couple of benches, this site has become a highly valued and popular downtown "park". This reflects the current lack of usable green space downtown and the community interest in that. Redevelopment of the site will require inclusion of a public plaza.

Large portions of the industrial area on the south side of the Alaska Highway also lack park access. The City has no requirement for the provision of parkland in industrial areas. A need for parkland in this location was not identified as a concern by the community but priorities could change in the future.

Some very small portions of parks (less than 10 m²) are not zoned as Park. For example, a two-hectare area of Toboggan Hill Park is zoned as INST (institutional) and 50 m² of Station Park is zoned as R2 (Residential). Cadet Park is not zoned.

The distribution of community and neighbourhood parks, and school sites, is variable for different parts of the City (**Map 2**). The pattern of distribution is as follows:

- Community Parks – Fort St. John's five community parks are well distributed from north to south across the City, but there are none within the west and east portions of the City. As a result, these parks must provide amenities for residents across the entire City, beyond their 800 metre catchment area, as well as providing amenities for residents elsewhere in the region.
- Neighbourhood Parks – There are 17 neighbourhood parks that are clustered in areas of the City that have limited access to community parks.

- School Sites – There are 13 school sites well distributed throughout residential neighbourhoods in the City; these sites tend to be in close proximity to neighbourhood parks. There are no school sites in the downtown core.

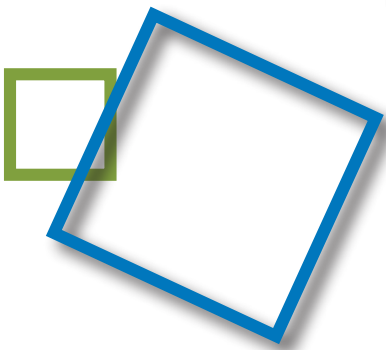
Community input showed that residents highly value and would like more accessible park space. When asked what they liked most about outdoor recreation during the community phone survey, out of 96 responses, accessible trails was mentioned 32 times and accessible parks was mentioned 26 times. When asked what vision and values should guide the Master Plan, 11 participants mentioned accessibility out of 85 responses.

Parkland Supply Gaps and Opportunities

The following are some of the key gaps and opportunities in relation to parkland supply:

- The southeast of the City, east of 86 Street and between the Alaska Highway and south of 100 Avenue has access to neighbourhood parks with no community parks or school sites
- The mid-southeast around 86 Street south of 100 Avenue has access to school parks and community parks but no neighbourhood parks
- There areas north of 105 Avenue and northwest of 100 Street and 100 Avenue both have access to neighbourhood parks and school sites
- The downtown area, and central parts of the City between 100 Street and 86 Street and from the Alaska Highway to 105 Avenue, have no access to neighbourhood parks or school sites, but do have access to community parks
- The industrial area south of the Alaska Highway has no access to community or neighbourhood parks or school sites

Fort St. John is in the process of a boundary expansion in the northeast and southeast areas of the City. There is potential to establish parks in these areas that are connected to the existing parks and green space network in the City. In the southeast, green spaces to consider for this purpose, in addition to the designated “North 72nd Street” Park (temporary reference as park is not yet named), are several small unnamed ponds and an unnamed watercourse. In the northeast, these include a large parcel of land adjacent to the Fish Creek Community Forest, which includes a segment of Fish Creek and could connect to existing trail networks.



Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Overall parkland supply in relation to population is reasonable

Walking distances to parks are mostly acceptable

Significant Natural Areas owned by others add to the green space and enhance the City

Most of the City's parkland is zoned as P (park)

Challenges

Some neighbourhoods lack good walking distances to active parks

Some neighbourhoods have less parkland than others

Some small portions of parkland are not zoned accordingly

Recommendations

Land Acquisition

- 4.1.1 Pursue acquisition of community or neighbourhood parkland in the existing developed area to improve walking access to parks, as opportunities may arise for property acquisition or as part of redevelopment.
 - Work to acquire land as needed to connect the trail system within existing neighbourhoods (see section 5.1 Trails)
 - Acquire parkland in locations without good walking distances to parks where possible (Map 2)
- 4.1.2 Obtain a park space downtown similar in size to the 100 Street by 100 Avenue site (0.3 Ha).
 - Explore options for obtaining publicly accessible park spaces as part of the negotiation for large new development projects in the downtown area
 - Consider purchasing parkland downtown, potentially through the use of DCCs

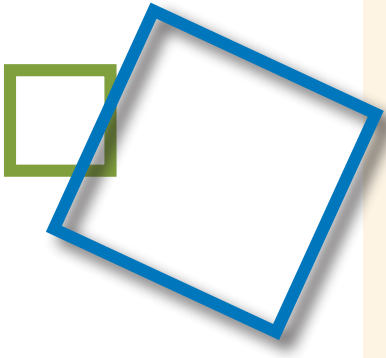
Planning and Design

4.1.3 Establish the following guidelines for acquiring community and neighbourhood parks in new developments:

- Site community and neighbourhood parks so that one type or the other will be within 400 metres of most residents, with community parks ideally located within 800 metres of most residents
- Use the minimum sizes of 11 ha for community parks and 0.4 ha for neighbourhood parks
- Locate community and neighbourhood parks next to schools where possible, and where this occurs, plan the sites together
- Lay out community and neighbourhood parks to include trails that provide continuous connections through the development (off-street if possible using rights-of-way between dead-end roads, cul-de-sacs, etc.), with links to external trails to parks, schools and other destinations
- For trail routes that are for pedestrian use only, acquire a minimum width of 6 metres where possible to allow for some green space adjacent to the trail
- For major trail routes that have the potential to be all-season trails, acquire a minimum width of 10 metres to allow for some green space and a cross-country ski or snowshoe track adjacent to the trail
- Locate community and neighbourhood parks with pedestrian access from all four sides if possible
- Locate community and neighbourhood parks with significant street frontage to a local or collector road on at least one side

4.1.4 Negotiate with developers to acquire the following locations as natural areas in addition to the 5% parkland dedication, the latter of which is for active parkland, i.e., community and neighbourhood parks:

- The forested riparian area along Fish Creek to connect to Fish Creek Community Forest in the northwest proposed extension area (identified as a new natural area in the 2016 OCP)
- An unnamed creek and an unnamed pond near “Ex-Pond” Park in the southeast proposed extension area as part of a protected corridor that connects to nearby existing all-season trails
- OCP natural area in south end of the City



- Any other watercourses or environmentally sensitive areas within proposed developments
- The water supply reservoir and tower located on 79 Street, as this will be fully within the proposed municipal boundary expansion area and this is the only site in the City providing views of the Rocky Mountains

4.1.5 Rezone de facto parks to Park zoning, including Cadet Park and parts of Toboggan Hill Park and Station Park.





5 OUTDOOR RECREATION



5.1 Trails

Goal

Build new trails and improve existing trails as needed to achieve connectivity and support year-round use.

Description

The City has 15 kilometres (km) of paved pathways and a total of 29 km of mapped paths that include paved, gravel, dirt and grass surfaces (**Map 1**); 5 km of these are in Fish Creek Community Forest. Fish Creek Community Forest also has short wheelchair-accessible paths and interpretive silviculture trails.

There are 27 km of all-season trails in the City that are plowed to support year-round use (recommendation on plowing is in section 5.4 Winter Uses). There are also 1.3 km of summer-only trails and 162 metres of winter access trails. Trails in the Fort St. John Links Golf Course, near Fish Creek Community Forest, are groomed by a volunteer group for cross-country skiing (see also section 5.4).

Surrounding jurisdictions also have trails that support community use. The District of Taylor has 4 km of trails in the Taylor Participation Trail. There are 15 km of groomed cross-country ski trails in Beatton Provincial Park. The PRRD Parks and Trails Master Plan outlines the Regional District's priorities in expanding and improving the regional trail system; the plan includes 34 existing trails and two proposed trails that could connect to the City trail system. These latter two are the Chetwynd Snowmobile Trail System and Martin Falls. The Cactus Trails network has also been proposed for the PRRD to pursue. The Cactus Trails are across the Beatton River on Cecil Lake Road. Cecil Lake Road connects to the City via Rose Prairie Road, which connects to the City's trail network at 100 Street and 119 Avenue.

Many of the City's trails are clustered in the following parts of the City:

- Fish Creek Community Forest
- 119 Avenue ("bypass trail") and parallel to the rail corridor running west out of the City
- Extending north and east from Surerus Park
- Between Toboggan Hill Park and Centennial Park
- Along 79 and 72 Streets, connected by 93 Avenue

In addition to these, there are several multi-use trails that are not formally recognized in the City's trail network map, such as an ATV / snowmobile trail that links the path along 100 Street to Rose Prairie Road, and trails along the Alaska Highway (the use of unlicensed vehicles in the road right-of-way is not condoned by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure). The northwest area of the City has very few trails.

Fort St. John has a well-connected street grid, even in newer suburban neighbourhoods. This improves the ease of walking and cycling. The City's Transportation Master Plan (2015) has road cross sections that accommodate bike lanes for different road types and a proposed network of bicycle trails throughout the city north of the Alaska Highway.

The Trans Canada Trail is the world's longest network of trails that crosses Canada. To be completed by summer 2017, the section in northeast BC is already built and runs through Fort St. John along the Alaska Highway. A preferred route has been identified that would bypass the Alaska Highway by passing through the City via 72 Street, 93 Avenue, 79 Street, 119 Avenue, the all-season trail running parallel to the rail line west of 119 Avenue, and West bypass road. Council has passed a resolution to incorporate part of the East By-Pass Trail into the Trans Canada Trail. An alternative route would see the Trans Canada Trail connect to Charlie Lake. Either route would bring the Trans Canada Trail to Fish Creek Community Forest.

Analysis

Considerable input was received about the trails in Fort St. John during community engagement. According to the community phone survey, 79% of households had someone who went for a walk, hike or jog in the last year, and 50% did so three times per week or more. In the last year 48% of households had someone cycling on a path, trail or road, and 20% did so at least three times per week. Walking / hiking / jogging was the top-ranked outdoor activity among youth in Fort St. John, with 60% of respondents selecting it as their favourite. When participants of the online community survey were asked what they like most about parks and recreation in Fort St. John, accessible trails was the most frequent response with 32 mentions out of 96 responses.

Participants highly value the availability of well-maintained multi-use trails that support activities year-round. In the community telephone survey, 67% of survey respondents were satisfied with long / looped trails and 71% were satisfied with their maintenance. Satisfaction levels for having accessible paths and trails for walking close to home was 65%. The most cherished trail system in the City is in Fish Creek Community Forest; some residents have requested trails on the north side of Fish Creek where there is better sun exposure in the winter and shoulder seasons.

Many of the high-ranking and satisfactory outdoor recreation amenities were related to trails, yet so were many of the challenges, objectives and recommendations for the Master Plan. Trails for walking, running, cycling, skiing and snowshoeing were commonly listed as a strength during focus group workshops, and a need for their expansion was commonly listed as a recommendation for the Master Plan. This high value that residents place on trails and equally high desire for continued improvement was evident when community telephone survey participants were asked for their first choice in improvement for parks and trails in the City; general maintenance and were the frequently mentioned responses. Paths and trails close to home, and long / looped trails were often suggested by participants of the online, telephone and youth surveys.

Trails designated for off-leash dogs are becoming more popular as communities try to meet the needs of dog owners. These are most successful where there are alternative trails for those not wanting to encounter dogs off-leash and where there are not sensitive environmental resources, as vegetation near off-leash dog trails does get trampled, and dog interactions with wildlife are not desirable.

Motorized uses such as ATVs in summer and snowmobiles in winter are popular activities in Fort St. John, and there were comments requesting trails for these uses. Because of the City's size and the increasing use of trails, the City does not support motorized uses on municipal trails.

Trail Gaps and Opportunities

There is potential to connect multiple existing trails by adding some small connector trail segments ranging from one to four blocks in length. These links could help to achieve a continuous, all-season trail system connecting the north, northeast, southeast and south edges of the City. Fish Creek Community Forest, Kin Park, Surerus Park, Toboggan Hill Park, Centennial Park, Cadet Park, Mathews Park, the south OCP Natural Area as well as the two proposed municipal boundary expansion areas could be connected in the following manner (**Map 3**):

- Formalize the connections to Fish Creek Community Forest from 119 Avenue at 100 Street and 93 Street, and add trails north of Fish Creek
- Connect the gap in the 86 Street trail from Surerus Park to 98 Avenue
- Connect the 86 Street trail to Toboggan Hill Park via North Peace Secondary School
- Connect Toboggan Hill Park to Mathews Park, potentially along 91 Avenue and along the east side of the Walmart Supercentre
- Connect the gap in between 86 Street and 79 Street trails along 100 Avenue
- Connect Mathews Park to the south OCP Natural Area by extending the existing trail along Alaska Highway via 92a Street

To address the lack of an all-season trail network in the northwest, 108 Street could serve as a central spine linking Pickell Park to the all-season trail running parallel to the rail corridor west of 119 Avenue. This would also connect Sunset Ridge Park and C.M. Finch Elementary School to Fish Creek Community Forest. For safety, trails along roads such as 119 Avenue, 79 Street, 72 Street and 100 Street would benefit from some form of separation from vehicular traffic.

The cross-country ski trails that were previously maintained by Whiskey Jack Nordic Ski Club, and are now used informally without grooming, in the Fort St. John Links Golf Course would benefit from being connected to groomed trails along 119 Avenue ("bypass trail") and running parallel to the rail corridor that extends west out of the City. There may also be opportunities to provide space for ski trails, with possible grooming, alongside the all-season trails where there is sufficient space.

Trails designated for off-leash dogs are becoming more popular as communities try to meet the needs of dog owners

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Fort St. John has multiple trails that are highly valued, well used and well maintained

Fish Creek Community Park has a valued network of trails within a natural area

Challenges

There is poor connectivity between trail segments, and not enough trails overall

There are few bike lanes

No trails are designated for off-leash dogs

Amenities such as washrooms are lacking

Trail maintenance and safety should improve

Not enough trails for winter activities within the City, such as for cross-country skiing

Unauthorized motorized use of trails is causing erosion and conflicts with other users



There could be more trail for winter activities

Recommendations

Planning and Design

5.1.1 Plan for new trail connections to improve connectivity throughout the City per descriptions above and **Map 3**.

5.1.2 Establish the following guidelines for the planning of trails in new developments:

- Identify trail routes as the development is being laid out, with trails running through parks and green space, connecting to schools, recreation amenities and major destinations
- If a development has cul-de-sacs, provide trails connecting to the end of the cul-de-sac
- Where trails cross roads, align the trails on either side as close to each other as possible

- Provide short trails that cross through city blocks where this will reduce walking distances and improve overall neighbourhood walkability
- Establish trails through natural areas, minimizing potential impacts on sensitive habitat, and connect these trails with the neighbourhood trail network

5.1.3 Apply best practices of trail planning to all new trails:

- Use principles of universal design
- Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), balancing this with the need to protect natural vegetation

Universal Design involves designing spaces so that they can be used by the widest range of people possible. Universal Design evolved from Accessible Design, a design process that addresses the needs of people with disabilities. Universal Design goes further by recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of human abilities. Everyone, even the most able-bodied person, passes through childhood, periods of temporary illness, injury and old age. By designing for this human diversity, we can create things that will be easier for all people to use. Universal Design makes places safer, easier and more convenient for everyone.

5.1.4 Coordinate the implementation of bike lanes with off-road trails among the appropriate City departments.

5.1.5 Coordinate with the PRRD and the Province (MOTI and FLRNO) to connect City trails with regional trails to destinations such as Charlie Lake, Beatton River (Cactus Trails) and Peace River.

Capital Development

5.1.6 Build new trail connections with a project each year.

5.1.7 Provide additional trail amenities such as benches, picnic areas and washrooms based on use and public interests, considering new washroom designs that are secure and easy to maintain.

- In the longer term or based on public interest, explore more dynamic uses along trails, e.g., bike repair stations, exercise/stretching equipment, dog off-leash areas, winter warming huts, gathering places.

5.2 Park Design and Development

Goal

Provide diverse parks that are attractive places with a range of recreation amenities to support year-round healthy and active living.

Description

This section addresses the overall design of existing parks and the development of new parks. Amenities within parks are reviewed in sections 5.3 through 5.6. The following is a summary of the design of Fort St. John's parks by type:

- **Community Parks** – Fort St. John's five community parks are fairly well used and they provide a diverse range of amenities, but none of them have been the subject of park master planning processes. Most of these parks have excellent opportunities to be more attractive and more usable for outdoor recreation activities.
- **Neighbourhood Parks** – The City's 17 neighbourhood parks are extremely varied, but in general they are substandard in their design compared to similar parks in other municipalities. They lack trees, other vegetation, good accessibility, paths, varied play areas and gathering spaces. Some of the new neighbourhood parks are focused on stormwater management and have fairly low recreation value.
- **Natural Parks** – Fish Creek Community Forest is among the most cherished park amenities in Fort St. John. Needs in the park include minor enhancements, maintaining the condition of infrastructure, and management of potentially conflicting uses.
- **Green Space** – There are 18 small green spaces that do not support a significant amount of active use, and three cemeteries. The character and condition of the green spaces are highly variable. Some of these spaces could contribute to the supply of neighbourhood parks if they were improved and connected to the sidewalk network and trail system. Other green spaces could be treed to enhance the visual character of their respective neighbourhoods.
- **School Sites** – School sites are also in variable conditions. Some school sites function as the park space within neighbourhoods, but School District 60 has limited funding for site improvements and maintenance. Facilities are typically better where PACs have become involved in fund-raising for new amenities. A number of schools make use of adjacent or nearby parks for physical education programs.

Analysis

Residents of Fort St. John use their parks less than in other communities surveyed by the consultants. According to telephone survey, half of all households had someone who visited a park, playground or a spray park over the past year, and over a third went dog walking. When participants of the telephone survey were asked about their satisfaction with outdoor amenities, the lowest satisfaction rate was with outdoor washrooms, with only 16% satisfied. Maintenance was the most frequently suggested improvement to parks and trails.

Park Design Gaps and Opportunities

Many of Fort St. John’s parks were developed many years ago and the infrastructure is aging. This, combined with limited parks operations staff and little attention to park improvements over the past decade or so, has led to a sense of neglect in many of the City’s parks. **Figure 5.1** provides a high-level summary of the strengths, challenges, opportunities, proposed strategies for the City’s key parks.

Park	Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities	Proposed Strategy
Community Parks				
Centennial Park	Facilities draw people; some good amenities – formal garden, new spray park, play areas; associated indoor facilities; campus setting; major City event space; central location	Infrastructure needs renewal; some facilities have low or no use; amenity areas not well connected; parking dominates “park”; could be designed for more/better events	Upgrade infrastructure (incl. electrical), new amenities, better event amenities, connected spaces, loop pathways, more trees and shade	Park Master Plan
Kin Park	Some good amenities – ball diamonds, outdoor fitness, bike skills park	Infrastructure needs renewal – tennis courts, play area, washrooms; no connection between east and west sides	Upgrade infrastructure, connected spaces, loop pathways, more trees and shade on west side; gathering spaces	Park Master Plan
Mathews Park	Attractive park, well treed, loop path, good amenities	Need to renew amenities at the end of their lifespan	Upgrade amenities as needed – new playground, upgrade washrooms soon	Infrastructure renewal Possible new amenities
Surerus Park	Good ball diamonds, horseshoe clubhouse with washrooms, other washrooms, tennis courts, sports fields are being upgraded	Few trees, lack of attractive gathering spaces, only one small play area, horseshoes not used much and building is not to code, no loop paths, washroom security challenges	Upgrade infrastructure, add event and gathering spaces, more trees, new play area for all ages, loop and perimeter paths, washroom security	Park Master Plan New features and upgrades as listed Work with user groups to maximize efficiencies

Figure 5.1 – Analysis of Key Parks – continued on next page

Park	Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities	Proposed Strategy
Toboggan Hill Park	Interesting terrain, good overall layout, synergies with school and track, great winter use, rare viewpoint in the City, natural vegetation	Undersized and unattractive dog off-leash area, limited visibility in some brushy areas (CPTED concern), paths do not all connect, small disc golf course	Connect paths, clear some brush, larger/better dog off-leash area possibly including a trail; larger disc golf course; new amenities at the top, e.g., viewpoint, benches, bandstand	Park Master Plan New features and upgrades as listed More paths Vegetation brushing
Charlie Lake Park	Very popular park, has a boat launch, playground, washrooms, parking	Park is outside City limits, owned by City and PRRD (not in inventory)	Boat launch needs upgrading, more seating, picnic tables, and garbage cans	Boat launch is scheduled for improvement in 2017
Natural Park				
Fish Creek Community Forest	City's most natural park, well loved and used	Infrastructure needs renewal and expansion to support level of use; dogs off-leash are a challenge	More/better washrooms, more seating and picnic amenities; land management to address unstable banks, erosion, hazard trees; trails on north side of river for more sun exposure	Infrastructure renewal New trails Land management New amenities Links to potential expansion through City boundary extension More engagement with stewardship groups

Figure 5.1 - continued

Neighbourhood Parks

There was little mention of specific neighbourhood parks in focus group workshops or surveys, but needs for amenities such as recreation, play and gathering spaces were often cited. The following are some gaps and opportunities in relation to neighbourhood parks:

- Lack of playgrounds, e.g., Park Lane Park, Energy Park, Station Park, Sunset Ridge Park, Triangle Park, Garrison Park
- Lack of gathering spaces and/or seating – most neighbourhood parks
- Forest stands that would benefit from looped trails through the trees, e.g., W.I. Centennial Park, Estates Park
- Potential dog off-leash areas because they are long, fenced and/or buffered from roads or residences, e.g., Estates Park, Energy Park, Duncan Cran Park, Garrison Park

- Parks that lack almost all amenities needed in neighbourhood parks such as trees and places to gather and play, e.g., Duncan Cran Park, Cadet Park, Kearney Park, Energy Park
- Parks with little or no street frontage, which decreases access and visibility (CPTED concern), e.g., Princess Crescent Park, Kearney Park, Duncan Cran Park
- Too few trees, unhealthy trees and/or signs of poor landscape maintenance, e.g., Concorde Park
- Removal of natural features in parks, e.g., “North 72nd Street Park” is an unofficial name used for reference because a natural pond was filled in at this site

Green Space

- Cadet Park and the adjacent space across 93 Ave could serve as forested gateways into the community; the trees on both of these sites are in very poor health
- Chiulli Triangle and the green space at Tahltan Road at 112 Street could be refurbished and treed to provide gathering and eating spaces in an industrial area with very little active parkland
- The 111th Ave Triangle near Peace River Road is small but surrounded by quiet residential streets and could function as a neighbourhood park
- The green space at 96 Ave and 96 Street could be used to connect the trail along 86th Street to the North Peace Secondary School
- The recently acquired St. Martin’s Anglican Church Cemetery is near the downtown core where park space is severely lacking. The adjacent site is being redeveloped and all trees in the cemetery have been removed. There is an opportunity to replant trees and to provide an attractive seating area in this small historic cemetery.
- Fort St. John Cemetery has the opportunity to support walking, seating and cultural/historic interpretation and appreciation in the centre of the City.
- Woodlawn Cemetery has the potential to support walking, seating and cultural interpretation as well as access to surrounding trails and the golf course cross-country ski trails in the winter.

Land designated as Natural Areas in the OCP would be ideal locations for trails

OCP Natural Areas

- As surrounding areas are developed, land designated as Natural Areas in the OCP, which are considerable in size and relatively natural, would be ideal locations for trails.

Design Standards

Park design and development have occurred through multiple processes over the years and this has led to some gaps that need attention, as follows:

- Most parks are fully fenced, allegedly to prevent ATVs and trucks from entering. This is not standard practice for municipal parks in BC and it detracts from the visual and physical accessibility of park space. Fences are needed between parks and adjacent single detached residences. Two types of fences have been used; chainlink, which is unattractive, and a “garrison” style of solid wood fencing, which is a major barrier and a potential CPTED concern.
- There are no consistent sign standards, resulting in a variety of signs of different types. Street addresses, which are desired for fire and security services, are not included on park signs.
- School sites are not designed with any input from the City, even though many school sites function as de facto neighbourhood parks.
- There is no replacement cycle for playgrounds, nor any guidance on what should replace playground equipment that is removed. Most communities have a replacement cycle that is based on climate, e.g., in the moist Lower Mainland it can be as low as 10 years whereas in the interior of BC it is often 20 years.
- There is no process for reviewing new activities or amenities requested by user groups, e.g., disc golf.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The community parks offer diverse amenities

Some of the neighbourhood parks support appropriate uses

Challenges

Many of the parks need upgrading

New parks are not meeting acceptable standards for neighbourhood parks

A lack of washrooms is of particular concern to the community

There are no design standards nor guidance for park design

Recommendations

Planning and Design

5.2.1 Conduct park Master Plans for the following parks per the general process outlined in **Figure 5.2**:

- Centennial Park
- Kin Park

- Toboggan Hill Park
- Surerus Park

1. Inform all City residents of the process with special efforts to inform surrounding neighbourhoods and park users and stakeholders.
2. Conduct a thorough site inventory and analysis.
3. Review the demographics of the City and the community surrounding the park and identify design implications based on this.
4. Obtain input from park users and stakeholders on their patterns of use, interests, and needs.
5. Conduct focus group sessions with the public and stakeholders to discuss park strengths, challenges, vision, objectives, and potential recommendations.
6. Prepare a park vision, objectives and program of amenities and activities (could include options).
7. Prepare optional park concept plans.
8. Obtain community input on the park concept plan options.
9. Prepare a preferred plan.
10. Prepare a draft Park Master Plan and obtain input.
11. Prepare final Park Master Plan with phasing and a cost estimate for each phase of development.
12. Prior to park development, prepare detailed design documents.

Figure 5.2 – Park Master Planning Process

5.2.2 Conduct processes to plan upgrades to neighbourhood parks per the general process outlined in **Figure 5.3**:

1. Notify surrounding residents about a planning process for their park, e.g., “This is your Park” posters and flyers.
2. Review the park site.
3. Review the demographics of the neighbourhood surrounding the park and identify design implications based on this.

Figure 5.3 – Neighbourhood Park Planning Process - continued on next page

4. Meet with neighbours to determine their patterns of use, interests, and needs.
5. Prepare park objectives and a program of amenities and activities (could include options).
6. Prepare optional park concept plan sketches.
7. Review the park concept plan options with neighbours.
8. Prepare a preferred plan..
9. Prepare a park development plan (phased if necessary) and a cost estimate.
10. Prior to park development, prepare detailed design documents.

Figure 5.3 – Neighbourhood Park Planning Process - continued

5.2.3 Apply the following guidelines (**Figure 5.4**) to the design of new and upgraded parks.

1. Use universal design principles to welcome all park visitors, including some pathway loops that are fully accessible in destination parks, and other parks where possible. Park spaces should be open and visible to the street to maximize their accessibility and community awareness.
2. Encourage parks to include gathering places, with seating and spaces appropriate for picnics and group activities according to the type and size of the park.
3. For parks that include parking areas, design the parking efficiently, minimize the amount of hard (or gravel) surface, and keep the parking as close to the perimeter of the park as possible.
4. For large parking lots, include trees, planting and rain gardens during upgrading projects or new construction.
5. Plant trees in parks to the degree possible for shade and as a contribution to the urban forest.
6. Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, balancing these with the need to protect and enhance habitats.
7. Provide seating in all parks and along multi-use trails.
8. Design parks with the goal of increasing creativity and interest, e.g., more interactive play environments and equipment, allow children to experience more nature in parks, provide more options for young children.

Figure 5.4 – Park Design Guidelines - continued on next page

9. Consider the following amenities in parks as they offer wide-ranging benefits: creative nature-based playgrounds, sport courts, urban agriculture, and dog off-leash areas.
10. When planning new parks, consider life cycle cost analysis and water and energy consumption.
11. Design parks with consideration for protection and enhancement of environmental resources and include rainwater/stormwater infiltration where possible.
12. Celebrate local artists in parks, with more public art such as murals, mosaics, and sculptures.

Figure 5.4 – Park Design Guidelines - continued

- 5.2.4 Establish a process for involving City staff with expertise in parks and recreation planning in the review of developer-designed parks, with a mechanism for ensuring that recommendations are appropriately integrated.
- 5.2.5 Establish protocols for park fencing, with the following considerations, and amend City bylaws to include these guidelines.
 - Identify the minimum amount (length and height) of fencing required to protect park assets, e.g., a low rail fence along street frontages. Establish standard fences, and bollards if needed, that are durable, see-through and attractive.
- 5.2.6 Encourage School District 60, potentially through the joint use agreement, to invite City input into the design of school sites.
- 5.2.7 Establish a process for reviewing new activities or amenities requested by user groups within parks, according to the criteria in **Figure 5.5**.



Physical Criteria				
	Add or Enhance	Reduce or Detract	Neutral/ No Effect	Comment
How will it affect environmental resources?				
How will it affect aesthetics and park character/ atmosphere?				
How will it affect safety and security, and address risks?				
How will it affect existing park users?				
How will it affect opportunities for healthy activity/recreation?				
How will it affect future park options?				
How will it affect the number of people served?				
How will it affect accessibility?				
How will it affect the sustainability of site services (e.g., rainwater management, water use)?				
Administrative Criteria				
	Yes	No	Neither/ Not Sure	Comment
Is there a high capital cost?				
Will capital money from the City be required?				
Will there be operations costs for the City?				
Does it require other investment (e.g., transportation, utilities)?				
Is there community support?				
Will it help to build partnerships?				

Figure 5.5 – Park Use Evaluation Criteria

- 5.2.8 Identify potential green spaces that could be improved to be active parks in neighbourhoods lacking active parks.
- 5.2.9 Explore partnerships with the owners of land designated as Natural Areas in the OCP for activities such as trail uses.
- 5.2.10 Support community volunteer programs such as the Community Planting Bee and the Tree Planting Rebate program that can assist with the citizen-led beautification of the City.

Capital Development

5.2.11 Upgrade community and natural parks, considering the options described above and resulting from park master planning processes.

5.2.12 Upgrade neighbourhood parks, considering the options described above and resulting from park planning processes.

5.2.13 Improve signage related to parks.

- Prepare a clear, simple signage system for identification (park signs), regulatory information, wayfinding, and interpretive information, based on the City's branding, with the street address on park signs, and install these throughout the park and trail system.

5.3 Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds

Goal

Provide access to the number, distribution and quality of sports fields and ball diamonds needed to meet sports participation.

Description

The City has 17 baseball diamonds and two grass sports fields. School District 60 has eight fields and three outdoor tracks (**Figure 5.6**).

Outdoor Amenity	City of Fort St. John	District of Taylor	Peace River Regional District	Total
Ball Diamonds	17	4	2	23
Sports Fields	10	0	0	10

Sports Fields and Facilities	Location	Year Built	Main Components
College Park Ball Diamonds	Fort St. John	1970s	3 ball diamonds
Kin Park Sports Fields	Fort St. John	1970s	6 ball diamonds; playground; tennis courts
Surerus Sports Fields	Fort St. John	1990s	8 ball diamonds; 2 fields; tennis courts
Taylor Sports Fields Cherry Ave.	District of Taylor	1990s	4 ball diamonds

Figure 5.6 – Sports Field and Ball Diamond Inventory - continued on next page

Urban Schools	Location	Year Built	Recreation Components
Alwin Holland Elementary School	Fort St. John	1958-1976	Gymnasium (<300); playground; fields
Bert Ambrose Elementary School	Fort St. John	1962/1981	Gymnasium (<300); playground; fields
Bert Bowes Junior Secondary School	Fort St. John	1964/1980	Gymnasium (500); fields
C.M. Finch Elementary School	Fort St. John	1972/1988	Gymnasium (300); fields
Dr. Kearney Junior Secondary School	Fort St. John	1972/1974	Gymnasium (500); fields; track; tennis courts
Duncan Cran Elementary School	Fort St. John	1980-2005	Gymnasium (300); playground; fields
Ecole Central Elementary School	Fort St. John	1960s	Gymnasium (300); playground; fields
Margaret 'Ma' Murray Community School	Fort St. John	Under construction	Gymnasium (300); playground; fields
North Peace Senior Secondary School	Fort St. John	1989/2001	2 gymnasiums (1,000 & 500); fields
Robert Ogilvie Elementary School	Fort St. John	1958-1981	Gymnasium (300)
Taylor Elementary School	District of Taylor	1954-1981	Gymnasium (300); playground; field

Figure 5.6 – Sports Field and Ball Diamond Inventory

Analysis

Participation and Field Utilization

Ball diamonds in Fort St. John are booked fairly solidly on Monday through Thursday evenings, and some of the fields have bookings on Saturdays with the occasional Sunday use. The soccer fields at Dr. Kearney are heavily booked all evenings and weekends; Bert Bowes is typically booked on weekends only, and a typical week at Surerus has field use all weeknights and Sunday afternoon. The low ball diamond use on Friday nights and weekends has been attributed to many people taking excursions outside the City on summer weekends. According to the City, sports participation and trends are as described below.

Ball is the big game in town and it is played by all age groups. The numbers for slopitch are unclear. It has been reported that there are significantly fewer teams than there were a few years back, but this may have increased in 2016 and there are also indications that the demand for ball diamonds by slopitch teams exceeds supply and warrants the creation of a fall league in addition to the summer league. The slopitch league uses the eight fields at Surerus Park, as well as two fields in Kin Park after

7pm. The City's Little League uses the diamonds in Kin Park and College Park. There are five baseball tournaments that occur on weekends throughout the summer. A minor softball league that used to exist in the community has folded.

Soccer currently uses much of the available time on seven school fields, but only 1/3 of the available time at Surerus Park, likely due to the condition of the fields combined with bad weather. The condition of municipal and school district sports fields is poor; the City will be continuing upgrades to the two soccer fields at Surerus Park.

The remaining ten school fields and two balls diamonds are unused for community sports due to their condition, size and/or availability. Indoor soccer is addressed in section 6.0.

There was consideration at one time in reconfiguring Surerus Park to have overlapping sports fields and ball diamonds to accommodate more play. Most communities find that overlapping fields compromise the quality of play for all sports, and the short season in Fort St. John does not allow for distributing the available time among different sports on one field.

Benchmarking

Fort St. John's number of baseball diamonds per 10,000 people (9.14) is almost double the average of the 22 communities included in the benchmarking analysis (4.69). The City has slightly lower numbers of grass sports fields per 10,000 people (5.37) than the average (6.06), but no outdoor artificial turf sports fields per 10,000 people whereas the average is 0.51. Due to the climate, artificial fields offer higher cost/benefits located indoors.

Community Engagement

According to the community telephone survey, 22% of households have someone who plays ball sports on a diamond like baseball, softball or slopitch, and 27% of households have someone who plays sports on outdoor fields like soccer or rugby. This is below typical compared to other communities surveyed by the consultants, where this type of activity is usually in the 30% range. The numbers are not consistent with reported participation in ball vs. soccer.

Gaps and Opportunities

The following are some of the gaps and opportunities related to sports fields:

- To maintain existing levels of supply and to support the projected population, there will need to be approximately four new ball diamonds and two additional sports fields by 2026 and another five diamonds and three fields by 2036.
- There has been an emphasis on ball diamonds with less focus on other outdoor sports amenities.
- The City would benefit from at least four more rectangular fields to accommodate current soccer participation. This number is expected to rise and additional fields could serve other purposes such as cricket
- There are a significant number of fields on school sites that are in poor condition
- There is a cricket group in the City that would like access to fields suitable as cricket pitches

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Fort St. John has a range of sports fields, including many ball diamonds

The better quality fields are well used

Surerus Park sports fields are being upgraded

Challenges

Sports fields on school sites are poorly constructed and maintained, and are in poor condition

Population growth will stress existing sports fields

Cricket has challenges finding adequate space

Recommendations

Planning and Design

- 5.3.1 Encourage ball players to extend hours of practice to include weekends.
- 5.3.2 Partner with School District 60 on upgrading school sports fields that are large enough and appropriately sited to accommodate community use.

Capital Development

- 5.3.3 Develop new sports fields and ball diamonds as needed to support population growth in the City and surrounding areas.
 - Use an overall guideline of 9 baseball diamonds per 10,000 people and 5.5 grass sports fields per 10,000 people based on current use patterns, reviewing this every three years to capture and changes in trends.
 - Develop two new soccer fields side by side to accommodate tournaments and use for cricket.

Operations and Management

- 5.3.4 Contribute to a higher level of maintenance on school sports fields that are upgraded.



5.4 Winter Uses

Goal

Provide a range of activities and opportunities that capture the spirit of winter in Fort St. John and encourage people to be outdoors.

Description

Municipal parks, outdoor recreation and trail amenities can be designed to celebrate and foster the culture of a winter city. Like many northern communities, Fort St. John benefits from cold winters with plentiful snow and suitable conditions for natural ice.

The City has a network of trails that are plowed for pedestrians and cyclists. There are cross-country ski trails in the Fort St. John Links Golf Course, previously groomed by the Whiskey Jack Nordic Ski club, and accessible via the Woodlawn Cemetery. Toboggan Hill Park provides hills for tobogganing and sledding. The City typically floods three outdoor ice rinks depending on the season. In 2016, the outdoor rinks included Kin Park rink, Centennial Park, and Mathews Park basketball court. An additional rink at CM Finch is the responsibility of the FSJ Rotary Club. The City is exploring opportunities to install loop trails for skating.

The High on Ice Winter Festival is an excellent example of celebrating winter, and relies heavily on local volunteers and sponsors. Participation in 2015 and 2016 was excellent despite extremely cold and melting temperatures, respectively.

City residents also benefit from winter recreation opportunities in the region. A community group grooms 15 km of cross-country ski trails in Beaton Provincial Park. This park and Big Bam Ski Hill are both about a half-hour drive from Fort St. John.

Analysis

Year-round use of parks and trails, and winter activities, were frequently mentioned during community engagement. According to the community telephone survey, 34% of households go tobogganing and sledding in parks, 26% participate in outdoor skating, and 6% engage in cross-country skiing.

In the youth survey, 40 participants were asked to indicate their favourite outdoor activities. Ten chose sledding/tobogganing, seven chose outdoor skating / hockey, and five chose cross-country skiing. When asked what the City could do to make youth happier and more likely to live in Fort St. John, three mentioned access to ice rinks year-round.

In the telephone survey, 67% of participants were satisfied with cross-country skiing opportunities. During focus group workshops, many participants mentioned these trails as a strength, but also mentioned the lack of cross-country ski and snowshoeing trails near and within the City as a challenge. Improved snow removal for pedestrians was also requested by numerous participants in the telephone survey.

When online community survey participants were asked what they like least about parks and recreation in Fort St. John, one of the 15 most common responses was the lack of activities during the winter (9 mentions). Year-round usability of parks was the fifth most suggested objective or recommendation by

participants (10 mentions). Suggestions included better quality outdoor ice rinks, more and better places for tobogganing. During focus group workshops, numerous participants recommended more indoor and outdoor winter activities. Many residents also mentioned that they appreciate the outdoor walking track in warm weather, and switch to the indoor track in winter.

The winter cities movement has led to more development of winter amenities and events. Ice skating trails in other cities such as Edmonton (Victoria Park Freezeway pilot project) and Ottawa (Rideau Canal) are very popular. Ice skating loops are currently being planned in Centennial Park. To be successful, winter amenities need to be accompanied by warm-up spaces, lighting and accessible washrooms.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Tobogganing, outdoor skating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are popular, and Fort St. John has a range of amenities to support these activities

Community organizations support winter activities such as cross-country skiing

Challenges

More and better amenities for winter use might encourage more participation

Recommendations

Planning and Design

- 5.4.1 Explore opportunities to expand the all-season trail network in the City.
- 5.4.2 Explore opportunities to allow for expansion of the cross-country ski trails as part of the proposed municipal boundary expansion adjacent to the Fort St. John Links Golf Club.
- 5.4.3 Explore opportunities to provide groomed cross-country and snowshoe trails alongside all-season trails.
- 5.4.4 In the boundary expansion areas, explore potential locations for another tobogganing hill that could be located within a park.

Tobogganing, outdoor skating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are popular

Operations and Management

5.4.5 Continue plowing all-season trails as the network expands over time.

5.4.6 Continue to flood and maintain outdoor ice rinks, increasing outdoor ice opportunities over time.

- Consider a partnership with School District 60 to flood a school track in the future.
- Continue to maintain outdoor ice surfaces in municipal parks, exploring the option of providing this service at school sites as well.
- Continue to support volunteer groups in the maintenance of outdoor ice rinks.

5.4.7 Encourage and support community groups in expanding the grooming of cross-country ski trails and connecting them to trails outside the City.

- Explore the opportunity for the City to become involved in grooming cross-country trails in the future.



5.5 Other Park Amenities

Goal

Provide the number, distribution and quality of accessible amenities needed to support year-round recreation activities in parks.

Description

Many park amenities are discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.4. The following is a summary of some additional amenities that were important to community members during engagement and require more detailed consideration.

Analysis

Dog Off-leash Areas

Dog ownership is increasing and it is particularly high in Fort St. John where, according to the telephone survey, 51% of households own at least one dog. Owning dogs provides many social and health benefits to people; it is also a challenge to manage dogs within parks. With the growing populations of humans and dogs, demands for dog-related amenities and conflicts among users also increase.

Off-leash dog parks received one of the lowest levels of satisfaction (24%) during the community telephone survey. Some respondents were not aware of there being any off-leash areas, although this is a small dog off-leash area in Toboggan Hill Park and dogs are allowed off-leash in Fish Creek Community Forest. Other respondents reported problems with dog owners not keeping their dog on-leash where required.

There is a trend towards providing different types of dog off-leash areas within communities and providing these within walking distance of as many residents as possible. The types of dog amenities can include destination dog parks, off-leash trails, water access for dogs, open unfenced grass areas, smaller fenced parks or exercise areas, and small dog relief areas near multi-unit buildings. Providing adequate opportunities for dog owners and a clear and communicated dog management strategy can help to reduce the conflicts associated with dogs in parks.

Dogs in Fish Creek Community Forest have become challenging for those who prefer not to encounter dogs; dogs are causing impacts on vegetation and dog droppings are deterring pedestrian use. There is research showing that dogs can have significant effects on vegetation within several metres of paths through natural areas. Some communities that allow dogs off-leash on trails provide alternate trails where dogs must be on-leash.

Playgrounds, Spray Parks and Outdoor Fitness Areas

Fort St. John has 10 playgrounds. Playgrounds received a similar number of mentions when asked what people like most and least about parks and recreation in Fort St. John in the online community survey. Comments received included the need for improved maintenance, and quality and accessibility for all skill levels and ages.

It is convenient for families to locate picnic tables and shade trees near play structures. Trends in playgrounds are to incorporate more creative play elements and nature. These are sometimes called “natural” playgrounds, and there is increasing literature on the importance of higher risk play environments to help children understand challenges, build self-esteem, and develop ways of cooperating with each other.

The City currently has one spray park at Centennial Park and this is being upgraded and expanded in 2016. There is one set outdoor fitness equipment in Kin Park and another in Taylor. This kind of equipment typically works best when located where there is high public use or close to a recreation centre where activity programmers can bring classes out to use the equipment. Another trend is to incorporate fitness equipment within or near playground to offer multi-generational opportunities.

Community Gardens

There is currently one community garden in the City adjacent to the Fort St. John Cemetery, and there were some requests for more during community engagement. The short growing season is a limiting factor in the City. Temporary garden plots using portable containers that could be moved indoors in winter were once piloted by the City on donated land. Some edible plants are grown around City Hall and Pomeroy Sports Centre.

Community gardens enhance the food security and resilience of a city, with important social, environmental and economic roles. They also provide important social spaces where community members can gather outside, interact and stay active. Community gardens are one component of urban agriculture that can also include community-based food production and community kitchen programs, where community groups work together to produce food on public land. Another option is a program where individual residents register to develop and maintain their own garden plot.

Underused urban green space can be ideal for community gardens, including traffic circles, boulevards, road bulges, or planting areas in parks or around civic buildings. Alternatively, shared harvesting can take place on private lands and residential backyard gardens. Some infrastructure is required for gardening, such as garden boxes, raised planters, tool sheds, and access to running water. Additional amenities that can enhance gardening spaces include benches, shade trees and picnic shelters. In most municipalities, community gardening and other forms of urban agriculture are organized and promoted by volunteer groups.

Washrooms

Public outdoor washrooms received the lowest level of satisfaction (16%) during the community telephone survey. Many comments suggested increasing the number of public washrooms, and there were also a significant number of comments requesting that maintenance and cleanliness of existing facilities be improved. The washrooms at Surerus Park were mentioned as needing upgrades, and there were requests for washrooms at Kin Park, Mathews Park and Fish Creek Community Forest.

Washrooms in parks have become challenging to manage as they are often targets of vandalism and inappropriate uses, a trend also seen in Fort St. John. Various security systems and styles of washrooms have been developed to address these challenges.

Shelters and Benches

Places to sit and picnic along the City's trail system was the top suggested recommendation for the Master Plan by the tourism focus group, and the need for more of these amenities was mentioned by numerous other participants during engagement. In the community telephone survey, 17% of households had attended an organized picnic or private event in the last year. Picnicking is an accessible, low-cost activity that can bring people together for high quality social and recreation experiences. Benches improve the accessibility and enjoyment of existing parks and trails, especially when placed in attractive locations, near playground and other amenities, and under shade trees.

Skate Parks

Fort St. John has two skate parks, the Rotary Skateboard Park in Toboggan Hill Park, and the Fort St. John Skateboard Park in Centennial Park. These are excellent, central locations and are very popular, with a 67% satisfaction rate in the community telephone survey. Skate parks were often mentioned as a strength of parks and recreation in the City during community engagement, and new outdoor and indoor skate parks were recommended.

Bike Skills Parks

An informal bike skills park is located in Kin Park. This is an inexpensive amenity that can add value to the community. Some municipalities are developing youth-oriented parks that combine multiple amenities such as skateparks, bike skills, basketball, loop paths and meeting places all at one location.

Courts

The City has two decommissioned tennis courts at Kin Park and three usable courts at Surerus Park. There are no outdoor pickleball courts, though pickleball players are allowed to paint court lines on tennis courts. Three tennis / pickleball courts are maintained by School District 60 at Dr. Kearney Middle School. This is a slightly lower number of tennis courts per 10,000 people (2.15) than the average (2.51), but community engagement comments focussed on the quality of the courts and lack of nets rather than the quantity. At current rates of use, one additional tennis court will be needed by 2026, and another by 2036.

Most of the basketball courts are located on school sites. There were multiple requests in the community engagement for more of these.

Disc Golf

The City has a small disc golf course at Toboggan Hill Park, and "pop-up" disc golf is also played at Kin Park. A larger and more permanent disc golf course would provide more access to this low-cost, inclusive activity.

Track and Field

The City has three tracks that are all on school sites. This is more than typical in a community this size; however, none of the tracks meet modern standards.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

There is a wide variety of amenities throughout the City

Community parks are large and have capacity for multiple activities and amenities

Challenges

The distribution of amenities is not well-balanced, with some areas of the City having relatively few compared to others

The location and condition of some amenities results in underuse

There is a deficiency of some amenities at this time, e.g., dog off-leash areas, washrooms

For other amenities, more will be needed to serve the growing population

Recommendations

Capital Development

5.5.1 Include the following amenities as part of upgrading parks and building new parks:

Dog off-leash Areas

- Increase the size and reconsider the location of the dog off-leash area in Toboggan Hill Park.
- Provide four additional dog off-leash areas of different sizes and types within parks in the City so that most residents can walk to a dog off-leash area within 800 metres. Locations to consider include Garrison Park, parallel to rail corridor that connects to 119 Ave west of 100 Street, Estates Park, Energy Park, Duncan Cran Park, Centennial Park.
- In newly developing areas, plan for a dog off-leash area within a 10-minute walk of most residences.



Playgrounds

- Replace playgrounds per an appropriate replacement cycle as part of community and neighbourhood park renewal, designing creative, accessible and natural elements within playgrounds.
- Include playgrounds in all future community and neighbourhood parks being developed.

Spray Parks

- Review the use of spray parks after the new one in Centennial Park is installed to determine if resident needs for spray parks are met as a result of this project that was not built when the community input was gathered.

Outdoor Fitness Equipment

- Consider installing outdoor fitness equipment in community parks, potentially integrated within or close to playgrounds.

Community Gardens

- Consider installing community gardens in response to the initiative of volunteer groups. Locations to consider include Surerus Park western edge or southwest corner, 111th Ave Triangle near Peace River Road.
- Explore partnerships with local organizations such as the Farmers' Market, the Northern Environmental Action Team (NEAT) and other community groups to support the development of urban agriculture in Fort St. John.

Washrooms

- Ensure that all community parks and natural parks have publicly accessible washrooms
- Upgrade the washrooms Surerus Park.
- Provide washrooms at Kin Park, Mathews Park and Fish Creek Community Forest.
- Conduct additional consultation with the community to identify where they would like to see additional washrooms.

Benches and Picnic Tables

- Provide more benches at key areas along the City's trail system, in Fish Creek Community Forest and at all playgrounds and amenities in parks.
- Provide picnic tables in all community parks near active spaces.

Shelters

- Provide a shelter that can accommodate informal picnic use and performances as part of the event space in Centennial Park.
- Consider picnic shelters in other high-visibility popular picnic locations.

Skate Parks and Bike Skills Parks

- Consider developing a youth park with multiple amenities, potentially in association with one of the existing skate parks.

Courts

- Consider building multi-purpose all-season sport courts that can support pickleball and basketball among other activities.
- Provide additional tennis courts as the population grows, assuming that existing tennis courts are used to a reasonable capacity.

Track and Field

- Consider partnering with School District 60 to upgrade one of the tracks to modern standards.

Disc Golf

- Consider a larger permanent disc golf course, potentially in Toboggan Hill Park.

Horseshoe Pits

- Remove the horseshoe pits at Surerus Park as these are overgrown.



5.6 Parks Operations and Management

Goal

Maintain and operate parks and trails in a safe, efficient and cost effective manner that meets or exceeds the needs of residents

Description

Parks and Recreation in Fort St. John is within the Department of Community Services. That department is responsible for all parks operations, including maintaining and repairing all of the City's parks, trails, horticulture, and street trees, and garbage and snow removal.

Analysis

The maintenance of parks and trails is highly appreciated in Fort St. John, but during engagement, community members saw room for improvement. In the community telephone survey, satisfaction levels for maintenance of trails and parks was high (71% and 64% respectively), yet maintenance of parks, playgrounds, sports fields, rinks and trails were also mentioned as priorities for improvement. If only one improvement could be made to parks or trails, respondents chose maintenance most frequently (43 comments received), including overall cleanliness, landscaping and upkeep. Cleanliness and maintenance of public washrooms received the third most comments for the same question.

In the online community survey, maintenance was one of the top five items respondents liked most about parks and recreation amenities. In the same survey, it also received the most mentions for aspects respondents liked least about Fort St. John parks.

During focus group workshops, maintenance was frequently mentioned as both a strength and a challenge. Specific comments included lack of maintenance on sports fields, school fields, trails, play equipment, insufficient garbage cans, and lack of garbage clean-up. Clearly, residents find both strengths and challenges among these depending on how they use parks and recreation amenities.

There are main other aspects of park use that are part of management. These relate to addressing safety and security, establishing and communicating regulations to park users, and monitoring and enforcement. Most of the community's input on this subject was related to the management of dogs. There were also some concerns raised about vandalism in parks.

Trees can provide significant benefits to parks, adding shade and character, and supporting birds and small animals. There were multiple comments from the public about wanting more trees in parks. Input was also received on the need to properly manage park and boulevard trees to support the safety of



park users from danger trees or branches and also to provide appropriate visibility.

Unlike most municipalities, Fort St. John does not have a bylaw that prevents littering. This makes it particularly difficult to enforce activities such as dumping in parks.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

A wide range of maintenance tasks are conducted and appreciated by the community

Snow removal is particularly appreciated

Challenges

The maintenance of amenities has not kept up with increasing use

Vandalism in parks is a concern

Dog management is a challenge and the public feels it is not adequately addressed

The City does not have adequate resources to plant or maintain trees to the desired degree

Recommendations

Operations and Management

- 5.6.1 Increase operations resources and budgets as the population increases and there is more pressure on park resources.
- 5.6.2 Explore the possibility of increasing maintenance of paths and trails, including snow plowing.
- 5.6.3 Invite community participation in the clean-up and care of parks by organizing special events for volunteers.
- 5.6.4 Work with police and social service organizations to address the needs of the homeless population or those otherwise conducting vandalism in parks.
- 5.6.5 Work with police and bylaw officers to increase monitoring of parks.
- 5.6.6 Implement CPTED principles in park maintenance.

Dog management is a challenge in park spaces



- 5.6.7 Consider “adopt a park” or “adopt a trail” programs.
- 5.6.8 Establish a no-littering bylaw and install no-littering signage.
- 5.6.9 Conduct an urban forestry plan to support the need for more trees on City land and to encourage proper planting and maintenance of trees in the City.
- 5.6.10 Consider implementing and enforcing park closures in certain locations at night to improve security.
- 5.6.11 Increase the enforcement of animal control bylaws.



6 INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES



6.1 Facilities

Goal

Sustain and enhance the provision and effective operation of indoor recreation spaces that are accessible to residents and visitors.

Description

Fort St. John currently owns and/or operates a number of indoor recreation facilities. In addition to publicly-owned facilities, the private sector and other regional municipalities also own and operate spaces in the City and surrounding jurisdictions. Much of the City's investment in indoor recreation facilities is at one site, gaining some operational economies of scale, e.g. parking, site maintenance, staffing.

As residents visit other communities and are exposed to new and exciting recreation amenities, demands for new and different indoor recreation facilities emerge. City residents and stakeholders have expressed demand for a new multiplex facility with varying amenities. An overview of existing and potential indoor recreation facilities in Fort St. John is provided below.

The City has a policy outlining process requirements when considering the development of community recreation facilities (Policy No. 65/00: Community Recreation Facility Construction Policy). This policy must be referred to when planning, designing, and developing recreation facilities.

Indoor Ice Facilities

The City of Fort St. John owns and operates three indoor ice surfaces; two in the Pomeroy Sports Centre (built in 2007) and one in the North Peace Arena (built in 1972). In the entire region, there are an additional three sheets of indoor ice plus one leisure ice pad for a total provision of six indoor ice arenas.

The City also owns the Fort St. John curling facility which is operated by the Fort St. John Curling Club. The curling facility was built in 1976.

The Pomeroy Sports Centre also includes an indoor speed skating oval. The oval is a unique facility, one of only a few throughout Canada.

Compared to the average of the benchmarking communities, Fort St. John provides more ice arena sheets (1.61 ice sheets per 10,000 residents versus 0.93). Only one benchmarking municipality has a spectator arena with more seating capacity than the North Peace Arena.

Indoor Aquatics Facilities

The North Peace Leisure Pool was built in 1996; it is owned by the PRRD and operated by the City of Fort St. John. The pool includes program (6 lane, 25 metres) and leisure spaces (zero depth entry tank, waterslides, sauna, steam room, tot pool).

During the summer months, the District of Taylor constructs an indoor program pool (4 lane, 25 metres) in its curling rink.

Fort St. John provides 0.54 indoor aquatics facilities per 10,000 residents, which is slightly higher than the benchmarking communities (0.46).

Indoor Fields and Gymnasium Spaces

The Kids Arena Field House was built in 1974 as an indoor ice arena and was later repurposed to house boarded, turfed indoor field activities. It is the only facility of its kind in the region and is smaller than a regulation-size indoor field facility.

The City does not currently own or operate indoor gymnasium facilities. Residents and visitors have some access to gymnasiums in schools, but community use is not facilitated through a joint use agreement as is typically the case in BC and Alberta communities. The City is investing in increasing the size of the gymnasium in a new school being developed in Sunset Ridge and will obtain community use through the investment per the terms of a site-specific agreement.

The benchmarking municipalities provide 0.46 community gymnasiums per 10,000 residents compared to none in Fort St. John. Fort St. John provides 0.54 indoor fields per 10,000 residents, which is higher than the average of the benchmarking communities (0.29). All nine of the Alberta benchmarking communities have indoor fields while none of the BC benchmarking municipalities have indoor fields.

Fitness and Wellness Spaces

The City of Fort St. John does not own any indoor fitness spaces. There is a fitness area within the North Peace Leisure Centre and there was one in the Pomeroy Sports Centre that was operated by PacificSport Northern BC (PacSport). Plans are underway to create fitness space in the Pomeroy Sports Centre in the space formerly occupied by PacSport. The new fitness centre will be operated by the City, with some equipment donated by School District 60, and it is expected that it will address both school and community demand for fitness amenities.

Within the City there are currently four private sector fitness operators providing residents with considerable access to fitness amenities. There is also a private fitness centre in the District of Taylor.

Of the 22 benchmarking municipalities, 20 provide municipally operated fitness facilities.

Indoor Specialty Areas

Until the recent loss (fire) of the gymnastics facility at the North Peace Arena, the City provided lease space to the North Peace Gymnastics Association. There is currently no gymnastics facility in the City.

The City does not currently own or operate an indoor child playground space.

Facility Operations

The Facilities and Grounds Division of the Community Services Department is responsible for day-to-day operation and maintenance of the City's indoor recreation facilities including the Pomeroy Sports Centre, Kids Arena Field House, North Peace Leisure Pool, and the North Peace Arena. The Fort St. John Curling Club is operated by the Club.

City staff ensure that the buildings are clean and safe and that they are operating appropriately to support recreation activities. The staff are responsible for all aspects of the buildings' performance including ice making and maintenance, pool maintenance and testing, set up/take down for special events and meetings, environmental conditions, and user and spectator comfort. They are also responsible for ongoing maintenance and operation of the major building systems including mechanical, electrical, refrigeration equipment, and pool equipment.

Analysis

Planning for future indoor recreation facilities involves a number of steps and must consider a variety of considerations. Although strategic planning (like this Master Plan) can indicate when and how potential projects should be considered, it is during tactical planning (feasibility or business planning) that actual decisions are made to move forward (or not) with a major public investment (**Figure 6.1**, following page).

At a Master Plan stage, high-level indicators can help a municipality understand when more detailed feasibility or business planning for a specific project should occur. A common approach to identifying future projects is to consider per capita provision ratios. Although this method is only appropriate for providing strategic guidance, it can help decision-makers understand generally when new or expanded indoor recreation facility infrastructure may be required. **Figure 6.2** (following page) outlines target provision ratios for major indoor recreation facility infrastructure for the City of Fort St. John.





Figure 6.1 – Facility Planning Spectrum

Facility / Amenity Type	Target Service Level	Future Needs Based on Current Service Levels
Indoor ice arenas	1 : 7,500 – 8,500	Development of a fourth sheet to occur when the population reaches 28,000 - 34,000 residents
Indoor field spaces	1 : 12,500 - 15,000	Development of a second indoor field facility to occur when population reaches 25,000 – 30,000 residents (dependent on size, type and availability of partnerships, e.g., school facility assets)
Gymnasium type spaces	1 : 12,500 - 15,000	Development of additional municipally supported gymnasium space to occur when population reaches 25,000 – 30,000 residents (dependent upon size, type and availability of partnerships, e.g.. school facility assets)
Indoor Aquatics	1 : 30,000 – 35,000	Development of an additional indoor aquatics venue to occur when the population reaches 60,000 – 70,000 residents

Figure 6.2 – Indoor Facility Provision Ratios

Per capita provision ratios provide a high-level indication as to when potential projects may be contemplated by the City. A number of other factors, beyond population growth, influence the sustained provision of existing indoor recreation facilities and planning / developing new and expanded indoor recreation amenities. **Figure 6.3** summarizes these factors for each of the indoor recreation facilities either offered or requested in the City.

LEGEND

Trend Indicator
 Trending Up  Trending Insignificant
 Trending Down

Bench Marking
 Higher Provision  Lower Provision
 Similar











Indoor amenity type	Current supply ratio	Past planning indicators	Trend indicator	Bench marking	Life cycle	Utilization	Demand indicators
Indoor ice arenas	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (replacement of existing, no additional until at least 2030) 50yrGS (+5-6 by 2065; projects in 2025 and 2045) MFMP (spectator ice sheet included in multiplex; planning in 2026) 			North Peace Arena: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-2 (\$5.4M) 2-5 (\$0.8M) 5-10 (\$1.4M) 10+ (\$1.4M) Pomeroy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	Pomeroy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81% household visitation North Peace Arena: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46% household visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% of households indicated as a priority (#11) Focus group priority #4 youth activity
Indoor speed skating oval	1	n/a			Pomeroy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	Pomeroy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81% household visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% of households indicated as a priority (#7) *pleasure skating #4 youth activity
Indoor walking track	1	n/a			Pomeroy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3% of households indicated as a priority (#13)
Indoor curling spaces	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (replacement by 2030) 50yr GS (+1 by 2035) MFMP (included in multiplex; planning in 2026) 			FSJ Curling Club: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-2 (\$6.3M) 2-5 (\$1.7M) 5-10 (\$0.7M) 10+ (\$0.3M) 	FSJ Curling Club: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21% household visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1% of households indicated as a priority (#17)
Indoor leisure aquatics	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (<15 years) 50yr GS (+1 by 2065) MFMP (included in multiplex; planning in 2026) 			North Peace Leisure Pool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	North Peace Leisure Pool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 64% household visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24% of households indicated as a priority (#4) Focus group priority #2 youth activity

Figure 6.3 – Indoor Recreation Facility Analysis Factors

Indoor amenity type	Current supply ratio	Past planning indicators	Trend indicator	Bench marking	Life cycle	Utilization	Demand indicators
Indoor program aquatics	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (planning for replacement by 2025) 	↑	/	North Peace Leisure Pool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	North Peace Leisure Pool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 64% household visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of households indicated as a priority (#3) Focus group priority #2 youth activity
Indoor field spaces	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (planning for twin by 2020) 50yrGS (+2 by 203) MFMP (included in multiplex; planning in 2026) 	↑	—	Kids Arena Field House: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-2 (\$1.3M) 2-5 (\$0.4M) 5-10 (\$0.8M) 10+ (\$0.9M) 	Kids Arena Field House: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38% household visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8% of households indicated as a priority (#8) Focus group priority
Indoor gymnasium spaces	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (with schools) MFMP (included in multiplex; planning in 2026) 	↑	—	n/a		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26% of households indicated as a priority (#2) #3 youth activity
Fitness and wellness spaces	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (program rooms) 	↑	—	North Peace Swimming Pool: n/a		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8% of households indicated as a priority (#8) #1 youth activity
Gymnastics spaces	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (added to next project) 	↑	—			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21% of households indicated as a priority (#5) Focus group priority
Indoor playgrounds	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFIA (added to next project) 	—	/			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33% of households indicated as a priority (#1) Focus group priority
Indoor climbing walls	0	n/a					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% of households indicated as a priority (#6)
Indoor skate park	0	n/a	↑	/			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2% of households indicated as a priority (#15) Focus group priority
Indoor racquet court spaces	0	n/a	↓	/			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group priority

Figure 6.3 – Indoor Recreation Facility Analysis Factors – continued

Two community groups have presented independent planning studies to the City regarding indoor recreation facility development:

- The Fort St. John Soccer Club and the Fort St. John Womens' Soccer League prepared a Business Plan for an indoor soccer facility in 2014. The proposed facility would house three 5 on 5 or 7 on 7 pitches, and was estimated to cost \$5 million to build and an additional \$322,000 to operate annually. The City was asked to support the project by providing \$1 million in capital and \$250,000 in annual operating costs.
- The North Peace Gymnastics Association presented a Business Plan for a gymnastics facility to the City in 2014. The proposed facility is between 900 and 1,200 square metres and was estimated to cost \$1.439 million to build and an additional \$70,000 to operate annually. The City was asked to support the project by providing \$500,000 in capital and \$70,000 in annual operating costs.

There is an appetite for new indoor recreation facility development among residents and stakeholders. On the community telephone survey, 69% of respondents indicated a need for new and/or enhanced indoor recreation facilities in the City. Throughout the focus groups, a key theme was a demand for increased investment in maintaining or enhancing existing indoor recreational facilities.

As new development of indoor recreation facilities is being contemplated, the concept of creating a multiplex facility, including a variety of amenities under one roof, would enable the City to further capitalize on operational economies of scale as well as increase participation and utilization levels. Gathering more users at one site can also enhance the attractiveness of private sponsorship, retail sales, and commercial lease opportunities at facilities, hence improving revenue streams.

The development of multiple facilities at one site or in one building envelope can also be more cost effective during the design and construction process. Cost savings could include professional services and site costs, such as parking and servicing (some of which are already achieved at the current campus of facilities).

Recreation amenity clustering using the multiplex approach is appropriate for both operational economies of scale and complementary uses. Examples of appropriate clustering for Fort St. John could include the following:

- Indoor ice arenas and leisure ice amenities
- Fitness and wellness spaces with scheduled use facility spaces (e.g. arenas, field houses)
- Fitness and wellness spaces with child minding facilities
- Fitness and wellness spaces with indoor aquatics venues
- Outdoor playgrounds and picnic areas
- Fitness and wellness spaces and indoor walking track facilities
- Ice facilities with indoor aquatics venues (energy sharing)

Project Prioritization

There is a demand for new and/or enhanced indoor recreation facilities, and there are also pressures to sustain existing and aging facilities. Since the City and its partners have limited resources, prioritization of potential projects needs to occur.

A project ranking framework has been developed based on community input; it is intended to provide a municipal decision-maker lens to project prioritization. Since recreation preferences are subjective, this approach enables ranking to occur from a holistic perspective. Although the process results in a ranked list of projects, ongoing life-cycle replenishment needs to occur to sustain existing service levels prior to developing new service areas.

The criteria include the considerations that affect decision-making around investment in indoor recreation facilities (**Figure 6.3**). The metrics and weighting provide a means to score different projects relative to each other.



Criteria	Metrics				Weight
Market appeal	3 — the project is fully accessible to the general public and includes spaces for all ages, abilities, and skill levels	2 — the project is fully accessible to the general public but only includes spaces for certain ages, abilities, and skill levels	1 — the project is not accessible to the general public but includes spaces for all ages, abilities, and skill levels	0 — the project is not accessible to the general public and is only accessible for certain ages, abilities, and skill levels	5
Sustainability of existing facilities	3 - the project leads to the sustainability of existing service levels and leverages existing investment in recreation infrastructure	2 - the project leads to the sustainability of existing service levels	1 - the project leverages existing investment in infrastructure but does not sustain existing service levels	0 - the project does not enhance the sustainability of existing service levels	5
Market demand	3 — the project ranks in the top 2 of the household survey priorities and is mentioned by groups	2 — the project ranks in the top 2 of the household survey priorities, not mentioned by groups	1 — the project ranks third or fourth in the household survey priorities and is mentioned by groups	0 — the project does not rank in the top 4 of the household survey priorities	3
Current provision in North Peace Region	3 — the project would add completely new activity to recreation in the North Peace Region	2 — the project would add completely new activity to recreation in Fort St. John	1 — the project would significantly improve provision of existing recreation activity in the North Peace Region	0 — the project is regarding an amenity that is already adequately provided in Fort St. John and broader North Peace Region	3
Cost savings through partnerships or grants	3 — partnership and/or grant opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to 50% or more of the overall amenity cost	2 — partnership and/or grant opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to 25%–49% or more of the overall amenity cost	1 — partnership and/or grant opportunities exist in development and/or operating that equate to 10%–24% or more of the overall amenity cost	0 — no potential partnership or grant opportunities exist at this point in time	3
Economic sustainability	3 — the project has a low overall cost impact	2 — the project has a moderate overall cost impact	1 — the project has a high overall cost impact	0 — the project is not likely to be feasible	3
Economic impact	3 — the project will draw significant non-local spending into the City and catalyze provincial, national and/or international exposure	2 — the amenity will draw significant non-local spending into the City	1 — the amenity will draw moderate non-local spending into the City	0 — the amenity will not draw any significant non-local spending into the City	2

Figure 6.3 – Project Prioritization Criteria

Figure 6.4 lists the projects that were identified through community input and research, with their scores and ranks based on the criteria presented. The detailed scoring table can be found in **Figure 6.5**.

Project	Score	Rank
New gymnastics facility (replacement of decommissioned)	46	1
Additional indoor fields	38	2
Leisure pool replacement	36	3
Program pool replacement	36	3
New gymnasium	35	4
New indoor playground	34	5
New climbing wall	25	6
New indoor skate park	25	6
New racquet court spaces	25	6
Enhanced or new walking track	24	7
New leisure ice	23	8
Additional fitness / wellness spaces	21	9
Enhanced or new skating oval	20	10
Additional ice arena	15	11

Figure 6.4 – Project Prioritization Scores and Ranks



Project (indoor)	Market Appeal	Sustainability of Existing Facilities	Market Demand	Current Provision in North Peace Region	Cost Savings Through Partnerships or Grants	Economic Sustainability	Economic Impact	Score	Rank
Additional Ice Arena	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	15	14
New Leisure Ice	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	23	11
Enhanced or New Skating Oval	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	20	13
Enhanced or New Walking Track	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	24	10
Leisure Pool Replacement	3	2	1	1	0	1	1	36	3
Program Pool Replacement	3	2	1	1	0	1	1	36	3
Additional Indoor Fields	3	0	0	1	3	3	1	38	2
New Gymnasium	3	0	3	1	0	2	1	35	5
Additional Fitness / Wellness Spaces	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	21	12
New Gymnastics Facility (Replacement of Decommissioned)	2	2	0	2	3	3	1	46	1
New Indoor Playground	2	0	3	2	0	3	0	34	6
New Climbing Wall	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	25	7
New Indoor Skate Park	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	25	7
New Racquet Court Spaces	2	0	0	3	0	2	0	25	7

Figure 6.5 – Amenity Scoring Details

Based on these rankings, the next major project the City should consider is the development of a gymnastics facility. Given the merits of the multiplex approach and as outlined in past planning documentation¹, the development of a phased multiplex facility is likely in the best interests of the City. It could include indoor field spaces, aquatics, gymnasium space, and indoor playground facilities.

On the community telephone survey, respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with the Pomeroy Sports Centre, Kids Arena Field House and Curling Club (82%, 73%, and 70% satisfaction respectively), and less satisfaction with the North Peace Leisure Pool and the North Peace Arena (42% and 58% respectively). Residents commented that the North Peace Leisure Pool is too small, it needs upgrading, and its maintenance and water quality should be improved.

Indoor Facility Gaps and Opportunities

The following are some of the indoor recreation facility gaps and opportunities based on the community input and the analysis:

- Lack of an indoor gymnastics facility
- Lack of an indoor children’s playground
- Lack of suitable or sufficient indoor field spaces
- Lack of accessible gymnasium space (multi-purpose)²
- Need to improve the quality of the leisure pool

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Indoor recreation facility campus

3 indoor ice arenas

Indoor speed skating oval

Ample private sector fitness opportunities

Indoor recreation benefits from the recreation facility campus, 3 indoor ice arenas, and the indoor speed skating oval

1 PRRD, City of Fort St. John, District of Taylor and School District 60 North Peace Sub-Regional – Recreation Facility Inventory and Assessment, 2015; City of Fort St. John Municipal Facilities Master Plan, 2014

2 The introduction of the new gymnasium at the Sunset Ridge school and the creation of a joint use agreement may alleviate demand pressures for gymnasium spaces

Challenges

- Sustaining existing facilities (pool, arenas, curling club)
- Replacing the gymnastics facility
- Meeting new amenity demands (indoor playground, gymnasium space)
- Meeting modern market expectations

Recommendations

Planning and Design

- 6.1.1 Refer to the Community Recreation Facility Construction Policy when planning, designing, and developing recreation facilities.

Capital Development

- 6.1.2 Plan for and develop a new gymnastics facility, in partnership with the North Peace Gymnastics Association, as the initial phase of a multiplex.
 - Consider construction and operational cost efficiencies related to development of indoor playground amenities in a gymnastics facility
 - Other amenity clustering to consider includes complementary fitness/wellness spaces and meeting/program rooms
- 6.1.3 Plan for and develop subsequent portions of the multiplex, phased as resources become available, in the following order:
 - Indoor fields (in partnership with the Fort St. John Soccer Club and the Fort St. John Women's Soccer League)
 - Indoor pool (in partnership with the Peace River Regional District)
 - Gymnasium (once further demand is proven after a joint use agreement and the new school gymnasium are introduced into the marketplace)
 - Indoor playground (if not already developed)

6.2 Life Cycle Budgeting

Goal

Plan for appropriate life cycle renewal of existing recreation facilities and spaces.

Description

The City currently reinvests in existing recreation facilities and spaces through a five-year rolling capital plan. Required life cycle investment is identified on both an occurrence (reactive) and planned (proactive) basis with a periodic facility condition audit process. This work is conducted within the overall context of asset management of all of the City's infrastructure and facilities.

Life cycle budgeting estimates the revenues and expenses (including maintenance and repair) of a facility over its entire life cycle beginning with research and development, proceeding through the introduction and growth stages, into the maturity stage, and finally into the decline stage.

Asset Management is an integrated process, bringing together skills, expertise, and activities of people; with information about a community's physical assets; and finances; so that informed decisions that support sustainable service delivery can be made.

Analysis

The current state of repair of recreation facilities and parks throughout Canada is alarming. The recent infrastructure report produced by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities explained that recreation facilities are in the worst state of repair of all municipal infrastructure and require significant investment.

As outlined in the Recreation Facility Inventory and Assessment (2015) and the Fort St. John Municipal Facilities Master Plan (2014), a number of Fort St. John recreation facilities are at the stage where they require significant investment and others need to be replaced immediately. In order to lessen the burden of the significant capital investment required to sustain service levels in any given year or time period, many municipalities in Alberta and BC have instituted life cycle renewal policies and/or programs. Allocating a portion of annual operating budgets, sometimes expressed as a percentage of operating budget or of capital replacement costs, to future renewal normalizes capital renewal budgets and allocates depreciation expenses to current use.

A number of Fort St. John recreation facilities are at the stage where they require significant investment

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The City currently reinvests in existing recreation facilities and spaces through a five-year rolling capital plan

Challenges

Some of the City’s recreation facilities require significant investment or replacement

Recommendations

Operations and Management

- 6.2.1 Develop a life cycle renewal policy and process for recreation and parks infrastructure that ensures the sustainability of appropriate service levels and includes both indoor facilities and outdoor parks and amenities.





7 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



7.1 Recreation Programs

Goal

Animate public recreation and parks spaces by providing opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in structured and unstructured recreation activities.

Description

Over the past number of years, the City has enhanced the amount of direct programming it offers to residents and visitors. Programs are delivered at most City facilities and include activities for all ages and abilities. **Figure 7.1** identifies the programs offered by the City in 2016.

Ice Programs	Community Programs
■ Boots to Blades	■ Community Awards
■ Parent & Tot	■ Yoga Fitness
■ Ice Penguins	■ Alaska Highway Video Launch for Tourism
■ Private Lessons	■ Christmas Tree Pickup
■ Sledge Hockey	■ Tree Rebate Program
■ 3-on-3 Hockey Tournament	■ Country Dance Lessons
■ Public Skating	■ Fall & Spring Community One Stop Registration
■ Drop-in Hockey	■ Mosaic 150
■ Free Skate	■ NEAT Art Installation
Dry Floor Programs	■ Poker Run
■ Adult Multisport	■ Senior Social
■ Tennis	■ Speaker Series
■ Basketball	■ Energetic Amazing Race
■ Badminton	■ Communities in Bloom
■ Pickleball	■ “Fly Over” Pilots Flying Group
■ Boots, Scoots & Boards	■ Live It Active / Walking Challenge
■ Parent & Tot Bikes & Trikes	■ YAC Meetings & Events (e.g., Youth Dodgeball, Magic Night)
■ Ball Hockey	■ Photo Contests & Scavenger Hunts
■ Little LaXers Lacrosse Program	Kids Programs
■ Adult Drop-in Lacrosse	■ Tumble Time
■ Wheelchair Programs	■ Play in the Park
	■ Camps (Pro-D, Summer, Spring, Christmas)
	■ MEND Program

Figure 7.1: Programs offered by the City in 2016

The City also offers activities and events through the operations of the North Peace Leisure Pool in partnership with the Peace River Regional District (**Figure 7.2**).

General	Aquafit Classes
■ Preschool Swim	■ Cardio Blast – Shallow
■ Tween/Teen Nights	■ Cardio Blast – Deep
■ Theme Nights	■ Strength & Stretch
■ Movie Nights	■ Watercise Low
■ Senior Potlucks	■ Hydro Rider
■ National Lifejacket Day	Courses
■ 20th Anniversary Celebrations	■ Standard First Aid
■ National Drowning Prevention Week	■ Home Alone
■ CPR Month & Free 15 Minute CPR Classes	■ Babysitter Course
■ Red Cross Swim Lessons	■ Recertification Courses
■ Water polo	Lifeguard Courses
■ Scuba courses	■ Bronze Star
■ Private & Adult Swim Lessons	■ Bronze Cross
	■ Bronze Medallion
	■ National Lifeguard
	■ Water Safety Instructor

Figure 7.2 – City/PRRD Aquatic Programs 2016

Other programs and opportunities throughout the City are delivered through a combination of City staff and contractors (direct) and non-profit and private sector groups.

Analysis

The current program and event delivery model employed by the City, including both City staff and contractors, is common among BC and Alberta municipalities. It enables flexibility and gives the City the ability to respond to community demands and to fill in gaps as they are identified. Current resident satisfaction, as demonstrated through the community telephone survey, suggests that 43% of households feel “the City should have more or better indoor recreation or sport programs” while 40% feel the City is doing a good job.

Program and event needs and demands can be identified in a number of ways. The City currently responds to community demand that is identified through ad hoc resident and user input, tradition, and informal trends scanning.

Until the preparation of this Master Plan, there had been limited public engagement related to program and opportunity needs. When residents were asked on the telephone survey which types of programs and events should be developed or enhanced, 59% suggested that no programs needed to be developed or enhanced to better meet their needs. Of those who responded, the most common responses were the following (Appendix A):

1. Indoor gymnasium/dryland activities, e.g., basketball, lacrosse, volleyball (23%)
2. Creative arts, e.g., visual and performing (11%)
3. Group exercise, e.g., boot camp, aerobics (10%)
4. Gymnastics (7%)
5. Fitness, e.g., cardio, weights (7%)
6. Dance (5%)

Respondents were also asked if there were any age groups for whom programs were lacking, and 36% of households indicated that programming specific to certain age groups was lacking. The most commonly mentioned age group requiring more attention was children aged 1 to 5 (54% of households indicating that programming was insufficient or lacking), followed by youth aged 13 to 18 (44%) and children aged 6 to 12 (40% or 58 respondents).

Indoor gymnasium activities currently take place at local schools. In order for these activities to occur on a more regular basis or to be enhanced, a more formal joint use agreement with School District 60 is warranted. Expanded gymnasium capacity will be added in the marketplace upon the completion of the expanded gymnasium facility (through municipal contribution) at the new Sunset Ridge school site.

Group exercise and fitness activities currently occur at four private-sector fitness operators. Each operator appears to target certain segments of the market and there is an array of quality and pricing options available to residents. Although many of the comparable municipalities offer fitness opportunities in public facilities, the City of Fort St. John does not currently offer a competitive fitness product. In many cases, municipalities choose to offer fitness because it meets a gap in community provision; that gap does not seem to exist in Fort St. John. Municipalities also offer fitness to complement existing facilities and services.

54% of households indicated that programming specific to children aged 1-5 was lacking

The inclusion of fitness spaces in new and evolving facilities may help to generate user fees

Including fitness spaces in new and evolving facilities may make sense from a complementary service perspective; the inclusion of fitness spaces may also help to generate user fees. If the City decides to offer enhanced fitness spaces in new and/or evolving indoor recreation facilities, (such as the forthcoming fitness amenity development at the Pomeroy Sports Centre), it should focus on filling gaps that exist in the current fitness market and not duplicating amenities currently offered by the private sector. This can be achieved through facility location (e.g., as part of a multiplex thereby attracting participation through convenience), equipment choice, hours of operation, and the types of programs offered.

The provision of gymnastics will require the development of new (replacement) facilities.

Further to the demands for programs and events identified through the community telephone survey, trends and market conditions can also help to generate program and event options.

The following list portrays potential focus areas for programs and events based on trends and the 2016 market. Data sources consulted in the preparation of this list include, but are not limited to, the Leisure Information Network, Canada Sport For Life, the BCRPA, and the National Benefits Hub.

- Providing opportunities for all ages and abilities to participate in physical activity — getting more people, more active, more often
- Providing opportunities that focus on healthy competition recognizing that at a certain point competition detracts from the physical and mental benefits associated with participation
- Providing opportunities for (and increasing awareness of the importance of) unstructured play in provoking both mental (cognitive) and physical (physical literacy) development at all ages
- Providing opportunities and reducing barriers to spontaneous outdoor play
- Providing opportunities that enable spontaneous, drop-in recreation and parks activity
- Providing opportunities for residents to embrace winter and participate in outdoor winter activities
- Providing opportunities for children and youth to participate in unstructured play
- Enabling all community members to take part in nature interpretation
- Programs that focus on using recreation and parks to facilitate social inclusion— a sense of connectedness and belonging (including Aboriginal peoples and newcomers)
- Developing broader public programs focused on nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices
- Integrating into existing and new programs, where possible, pertinent stages of the Canadian Sport for Life Strategy and principle of physical literacy



- Programs that promote and ensure positive aging
- Programs offered to school-age children during the critical after-school period (3pm – 6pm)

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The City offers a variety of program and event opportunities for all ages and abilities

The City offers a variety of community events and opportunities for residents and visitors

Private fitness operators in Fort St. John provide a variety of fitness opportunities for residents

Challenges

43% of household survey respondents feel “the City should have more or better indoor recreation or sport programs”

The most desired program type is “indoor gymnasium/dryland activities” (24%); currently there is not a formal joint use agreement in place between the City and school district

If the City identifies a need for a municipally operated fitness facility, there may be overlap with private fitness opportunities

The opportunity to participate in gymnastics programs is currently non-existent due to the facility’s fire damage

Recommendations

Operations and Management

- 7.1.1 Maintain the City’s current approach to the delivery of programs and events through a combination of direct and indirect delivery, working to fill gaps in non-profit and private sector service provision.
- 7.1.2 Formalize and facilitate an ongoing program and event needs identification process, potentially including surveys, other community engagement efforts, and/or formal trends scanning.
- 7.1.3 Increase programs and events, and use the focus areas (e.g., demographic, topic, season) identified via trends scanning and community input to guide efforts.

7.2 Special Events

Goal

Encourage and support special events that enhance the quality of life in the community.

Description

The City supports many annual and special events, which are located in the City's parks or facilities (**Figure 7.3**). Some of these events are offered directly by the City while others are provided by external groups and hosted at City facilities and/or spaces.

Special Events	
Taste of the Town	Mayor's Caucus
High on Ice Winter Festival	Plan your BC Vacation
National Health & Fitness Day	Motorcycle Poker Run
International Airshow	World U17 Hockey Challenge
Community Planting Day	Special Event Skates (e.g., Glow, Christmas, Halloween)
Pitch-in Week	
Canada Day Festivities (Parade, Vendors, Fireworks, Park Activities & Entertainment)	Santa Claus Festivities (Parade, Park Activities & Entertainment, Tree Light Up)

Figure 7.3 – Special Events

The City has a permitting system through which event organizers can apply for and obtain the City's assistance in coordinating their events. Most of the events are initiated and coordinated by volunteers.

There are also many smaller events that enliven parks and bring people out. Community organizations organize these but they are necessarily communicated broadly.

Analysis

With regard to special events, the focus groups and survey results suggested continued support for community events should be a priority. The majority of respondents (91%) believed that "recreation brings the community together; special events are a key contributor to community cohesion and pride". Half of respondents said someone in their household attended a festival or special event in a park in the previous year, the third highest activity in terms of household participation. Existing events are attracting residents and the hosting of new or enhanced activities could help extend social good related to

recreation investment and help to contribute to other strategic goals such as the City's intent on becoming more of a winter city.

The priorities above provide direction for the City in enhancing the current programs and events it offers. Many of these require the development of new facilities or improved access to existing facilities and spaces, which are addressed elsewhere.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The City has a broad range of events that are appreciated by residents

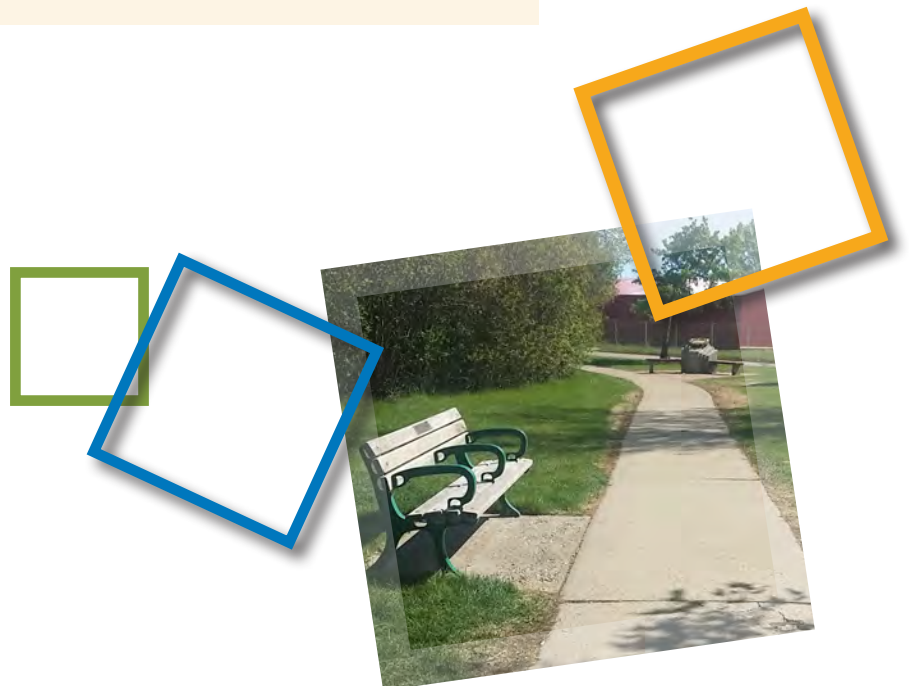
Challenges

Events are not consolidated on one schedule or marketed broadly

Recommendations

Operations and Management

- 7.2.1 Encourage and support additional events in the City, especially in the winter.
- 7.2.2 Establish a consolidated events schedule for all City and community-organized events and improve the communication and promotion of events.



7.3 Reducing Barriers to Participation

Goal

Increase awareness of, and participation in, public recreation opportunities.

Description

The City currently uses a combination of promotions and marketing tactics to inform residents about City-sponsored recreation programs and events. Radio, newspaper, flyers, posters, and social media are all employed on a consistent and extensive basis throughout the year.

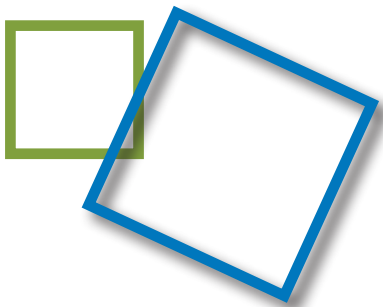
Physical accessibility to existing facilities and spaces exists for some, but not all, public recreation areas.

Analysis

There are a number of organizations that provide financial assistance for attending recreation facilities and programs; some of these are targeted towards children and youth. Considerable efforts are already underway with regard to creating awareness and these appear to be working as only 5% of households indicated that a barrier to participation was that they were “unaware of opportunities”.

More frequently mentioned barriers to participation included inappropriate hours of operations, poor / inadequate facilities, fees, and overcrowded facilities. Current hours of operation at facilities are, for the most part, typical. Financial assistance programs are available to residents. That being said, only 48% of residents were aware of available financial assistance programs. The current and future state of recreation facilities is discussed in other sections of this Master Plan.

Physical accessibility is an important consideration in developing new and enhancing existing public recreation spaces. Reducing physical barriers will likely increase overall participation and enable equitable access for residents of all abilities.



Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

Multiple communication methods are employed to promote opportunities including radio, newspapers, flyers, posters, and social media

Only 5% of households indicated that a barrier to participation was that they were “unaware of opportunities”

Challenges

Inappropriate hours of operations, poor/inadequate facilities, fees, and overcrowded facilities were mentioned as barriers

Only 48% of residents were aware of available financial assistance programs

Recommendations

Operations and Management

- 7.3.1 Continue to market and promote opportunities and increase the focus of public messaging to include information about financial assistance programs.
- 7.3.2 Bolster support to financial assistance programs to ensure that low-income residents of all ages can afford to participate in recreation where possible.
- 7.3.3 Enhance physical accessibility in existing and new facilities and spaces.





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8 ALLOCATION, FEES AND CHARGES

8.1 Allocation

Goal

Allocate time in recreation facilities and spaces to maximize community benefit.

Description

The City currently has a recreation facility allocation policy that provides guidelines for allocation of spaces to potential community non-profit and private groups. The policy is robust and extensive, similar to the most effective policies in comparable municipalities.

Analysis

When the City next refines its allocation policy, the current best practices approach is to base allocation on “standards of play”. Standards of play involve allocating space to each age group and level of player based on their specific needs. This approach leads to more well-balanced, physically-literate residents, and it also helps to ensure that available time in facilities and spaces is allocated optimally.

Standards of play are best developed by the municipality in partnership with local groups, based on information from provincial or national sport organizations. A good starting point in developing appropriate standards of play is the Canada Sport For Life movement Long Term Athlete Development Model. It suggests appropriate train:compete ratios for certain age demographics and outlines recommended daily activity time for some age groups (**Figure 8.1**).

Canadian Sport For Life/Long Term Athlete Development ¹			
Stage of Development	Ages	Train: Compete ratio	Overall activity
Active start	Males and Females 0-6	n/a: Focus on plan and physical literacy	Organized physical activity at least 30 minutes a day for toddlers and at least 60 minutes a day for preschoolers; Unstructured physical activity (active play) for at least 60 minutes per day and up to several hours per day
Fundamentals	Males 6-9 and Females 6-8	Fun-based with some structured competition	n/a
Learn to train	Males 9-12 and Females 8-11	70:30	n/a
Train to train	Males 12-16 and Females 11-15	60:40	n/a

Canadian Sport For Life/Long Term Athlete Development ¹			
Stage of Development	Ages	Train: Compete ratio	Overall activity
Train to compete	Males 16-23 +/- and Females 15-21+/-	40:60	n/a
Train to win	Males 19+/- and Females 18+/-	25:75	n/a
Active for life (sub stages: competitive for life, fit for life, and sport and physical activity leaders)		Based on preference	60 minutes of moderate daily activity or 30 minutes of intense activity for adults; multisport

Figure 8.1 – Canadian Sport For Life Longterm Athlete Development Model

Once healthy train:compete and overall activity levels are agreed to, information specific to the sport or activity in question should either be referenced and agreed to by the City and groups (in the event it exists) or developed by the City and groups. **Figure 8.2** outlines Hockey Canada’s ideal standards of play for different age groups. Not all national or provincial sport organizations have established standard of play declarations.

Hockey Canada ²		
Stage of Development	Ages	Overall activity
Discovery	Male and Female 0-4 Community	1-2 sessions per week; 28-32 weeks per season (Initiation)
Fundamentals 1	Male and Female 5-6 Community/local	1-2 sessions per week; 28-32 weeks per season (Initiation)
Fundamentals 2	Male and Female 7-8 Local	2-3 sessions per week; 28-32 weeks per season (Novice)
Learn to Play	Males 9-10 and Females 8-9 Local/Provincial	3-4 sessions per week; 34-38 weeks per season (Atom)
Learn to Train	Males 11-12 and Females 10-11 Local/Provincial	3-4 sessions per week; 34-38 weeks per season (Peewee)
Train to Train	Males 12-16 and Females 11-15 Provincial	4-5 sessions per week; 28-34 weeks per season (Bantam)
Train to Compete	Males 16-17 and Females 16-18 National	4-5 sessions per week; 28-32 weeks per season (Midget)
Train to Win	Males 18-20 and Females 18-22 International	
Excel	Males 21+ and Females 22+ International	
Active for Life		

Figure 8.2 – Hockey Canada Standards of Play

1 Long-Term Athlete Development 2.0, Canada Sport For Life

2 Hockey Canada Long Term Player Development Plan: Hockey For Life, Hockey for Excellence (2013)

As this type of information is developed and agreed to by local stakeholders, the City’s allocation policy can be adjusted to promote and support appropriate, healthy activity levels for residents of all ages.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The City currently has a robust recreation facility allocation policy that provides guidelines for allocation of spaces to community non-profit, private and non-local groups

Challenges

The City has not determined standards of play suitable for, and agreed upon, with user groups

Recommendation

- 8.1.1 Retain the current allocation system or policy.
 - Explore alignment of the allocation system with broader strategic directions and the development of standards of play as facility capacity pressures heighten

8.2 Fees and Charges

Goal
Collect user fees from residents and visitors based on a proportion of the benefit they receive to offset the costs of service provision and lever public investment in recreation and parks.

Description

In 2011 to 2012, the City undertook a fairly comprehensive process to review its approach to setting fees and charges. After some public consultation about the findings and recommendations, the City incorporated the recommendations into a Community Services Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 2137 in 2014. Calculations for unit costing were used to set fees for the subsequent five-year period.

Analysis

The current bylaw is reasonably current, works well for the City, and is at least as good as other fees and charges approaches and bylaws in comparable communities. There is no evidence that any changes to the bylaw are required, and it should endure for several years into the future.

The City's current approach to setting fees is based on a philosophy of garnering varying cost recoveries from different types of users. The fees are not set in relation to those of other municipalities or external influences. The PRMP review of fees in other jurisdictions showed that fees are generally significantly higher in the Alberta comparable communities than in comparable BC communities (**Figure 8.3**).

Item	Fort St. John Fee	Average of All Benchmark Communities	Average of BC Benchmark Communities	Average of Alberta Benchmark Communities
Small Meeting Room	3.25 (NPLP)	24.75	18.50	33.08
Large Meeting Room	27.25 (PSC)	42.31	34.63	45.65
Adult Soccer Field	11.50	27.08	12.57	49.88
Youth Soccer Field	5.50	16.20	5.34	36.11
Adult Ball Diamond	11.50	17.21	12.89	24.42
Premium Adult Ball Diamond	N/A	29.64	21.84	45.24
Child Swim (10 years old)	3.00	3.37	2.83	4.14
Adult Swim	6.00	6.46	5.44	7.92
Family Swim	15.00	14.15	11.36	17.56

*Meeting Room and Sports Field Rentals are per hour
Swim Rates are per admission*

Figure 8.3 – Fees and Charges Comparison

Fort St. John's fees are higher than comparable BC communities and a little lower than comparable Alberta communities, so on average the current fees are close to the averages of all comparable communities. Within that context, however, there is some potential to increase fees in a few areas. These examples include room rental rates for small meeting rooms and rates for use of sports fields, both of which are lower than in comparable communities.

There may be room to increase the recovery rates over time in the bylaw, particularly for adults. The current recovery rates in the bylaw will endure until the end of the term of the bylaw in 2019, but at that point it will be worth considering increasing the recovery rates for adults from 50% to 60%, which would reduce subsidy levels from 50% to 40%. Other rates of

subsidy should likely remain the same. The fact that the 2014 bylaw lays out significant increases in fees over its five-year period is appropriate.

There is no evidence in any of the public consultation that current fees represent a significant barrier for local residents to access community services in Fort St. John. The 10% of telephone survey respondents who indicated that fees might be a barrier is at a level less than expected in community surveys and lower than the consultants typically find in community survey results.

The current approach to fees and charges, and the corresponding bylaw that embeds it, is appropriate. It was well conceived, is relatively recent, and has worked well for the City for the past two years. Resultant fees are consistent with comparable communities and do not appear to represent a barrier to a significant portion of the public. While some fine tuning could occur in the short term, and some work done to continue to implement it in the longer term, the general approach and application is sound.

One element of the current fees and charges system that was in the original 2012 report, but is not in the bylaw, is the commitment that “no one will be turned away from accessing a public leisure service due to inability to pay”. This commitment is appropriate, and while the details about how to implement this commitment do not need to be in the bylaw, having the general commitment in the bylaw can be helpful in the long term.

Another potential enhancement of the existing policy is the classification of ice time. Currently there are categories for prime time commercial, private, adult, minor, and non-prime. Reclassifying ice time to adult prime time, adult non-prime time, minor prime time, and minor non-prime time might make booking more straightforward and transparent.



Summary Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

The City recently reviewed its approach to setting fees and developed a bylaw in 2014

Only 10% of survey respondents view “fees” as a barrier to participation

City fees are comparable to Fort St. John’s benchmark municipalities

Challenges

Reducing subsidy levels (by increasing fees) could increase “fees” as a barrier to participation

Recommendations

Operations and Management

- 8.2.1 Undertake a detailed unit costing analysis consistent with the one conducted in 2011/2012 to update unit costs for each of the City's services prior to the bylaw's expiry in 2019.
- 8.2.2 When the bylaw is updated to include the new unit costs, include the commitment that "no one will be turned away from accessing a public leisure service due to inability to pay", and adjust classification of ice time to streamline the booking process and enhance transparency.



9 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

9.1 Phasing and Costs

This section provides a summary of the recommendations in the PRMP, and identifies the potential priorities, phasing and order-of-magnitude costs. The priorities are based on community input, balanced with the anticipated availability of funds and resources, which can change at any time.

Figure 9.1 lists an abbreviated version of the recommendations within the Master Plan. The priorities, phasing and costs are a starting point for consideration that will need to be amended annually based on City priorities, updated cost estimates, funding sources, rate of population growth, existing and potential budgets, and other factors.

The column entitled Relative Cost or Cost/Year provides an order-of-magnitude indication of relative capital costs. For one-time costs, such as construction of an amenity, the total cost category is indicated. For ongoing costs, such as trail construction, the cost refers to an amount that would be spent annually.

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
4.0 PARKLAND					
4.1 Parkland Supply					
Land Acquisition					
4.1.1	Pursue acquisition of community or neighbourhood parkland in the existing developed area to connect trails and improve access to parks	2	ongoing	?	Medium
4.1.2	Obtain a park space downtown similar in size to the 100 Street by 100 Avenue site (0.3 Ha).	1	Short (up to 5 years)	?	Medium
Planning and Design					
4.1.3	Establish guidelines for acquiring community and neighbourhood parks in new developments	1	ongoing	N/A	
4.1.4	Negotiate with developers to acquire identified locations as natural areas in addition to the 5% parkland dedication	1	ongoing	N/A	

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
4.1.5	Rezone de facto parks to Park zoning, including Cadet Park and parts of Toboggan Hill Park and Station Park	2	Short (up to 5 years)	N/A	
5.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION					
5.1 Trails					
Planning and Design					
5.1.1	Plan for new trail connections to improve connectivity throughout the City	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.1.2	Establish guidelines for the planning of trails in new developments	1	Short (up to 5 years)	N/A	
5.1.3	Apply best practices of trail planning to all new trails	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.1.4	Coordinate the implementation of bike lanes with off-road trails among the appropriate City departments	2	ongoing	N/A	
5.1.5	Coordinate with the PRRD to connect City trails with regional trails	1	ongoing	N/A	
Capital Development					
5.1.6	Build new trail connections with a project each year	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low (per year)
5.1.7	Provide additional trail amenities such as benches, picnic areas and washrooms	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low (per year)
5.2 Park Design and Development					
Planning and Design					
5.2.1	Conduct park Master Plans for four parks per the process in Figure 5.2	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	
5.2.2	Conduct processes to plan upgrades to neighbourhood parks (Figure 5.3)	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	
5.2.3	Apply guidelines (Figure 5.4) to the design of new and upgraded parks	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.2.4	Establish and implement a process for involving City staff with expertise in parks and recreation planning in the review of developer-designed parks	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.2.5	Establish protocols for park fencing, and amend City bylaws to include these guidelines	2	Short (up to 5 years)	N/A	

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
5.2.6	Encourage School District 60, potentially through the joint use agreement, to invite City input into the design of school sites	1	Short (up to 5 years)	N/A	
5.2.7	Establish a process for reviewing new activities or amenities requested by user groups within parks per the criteria in Figure 5.5	2	ongoing	N/A	
5.2.8	Identify potential green spaces that could be improved to be active parks in neighbourhoods lacking active parks	2	ongoing	N/A	
5.2.9	Explore partnerships with the owners of land designated as Natural Areas in the OCP for activities such as trail uses and potentially off-leash dog walking	3	ongoing	N/A	
5.2.10	Support community volunteer programs that can assist with citizen-led beautification	1	ongoing	N/A	
Capital Development					
5.2.11	Upgrade community and natural parks (one every two years)	1	ongoing	\$250,000 - \$1million	Medium
5.2.12	Upgrade neighbourhood parks (one every two years alternating with the above)	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
5.2.13	Improve signage related to parks	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
5.3 Sports and Ball Diamonds					
Planning and Design					
5.3.1	Encourage ball players to extend hours of practice to include weekends	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.3.2	Partner with School District 60 on upgrading school sports fields	2	ongoing	N/A	
Capital Development					
5.3.3	Develop new sports fields and ball diamonds as needed to support population growth	2	ongoing	\$250,000 - \$1million	Medium
Operations and Management					
5.3.4	Contribute to a higher level of maintenance on school sports fields that are upgraded	2	ongoing	under \$250,000	Medium

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
5.4 Winter Uses					
Planning and Design					
5.4.1	Explore opportunities to expand the all-season trail network in the City	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.4.2	Explore opportunities to allow for expansion of the cross-country ski trails as part of the proposed municipal boundary expansion	2	ongoing	N/A	
5.4.3	Explore opportunities to provide groomed cross-country and snowshoe trails alongside all-season trails	2	ongoing	N/A	
5.4.4	In the boundary expansion areas, explore potential locations for another tobogganing hill in a park	2	Medium (5-10 years)	N/A	
Operations and Management					
5.4.5	Continue plowing all-season trails as the network expands over time	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low (per year)
5.4.6	Continue to flood and maintain outdoor ice rinks, increasing outdoor ice opportunities over time	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low (per year)
5.4.7	Encourage and support community groups in expanding the grooming of cross-country ski trails	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
5.5 Other Park Amenities					
Capital Development					
5.5.1	Include the following amenities as part of upgrading parks and building new parks				
	Dog Off-Leash Areas	1	Short (up to 5 years)	under \$250,000	Low
	Playgrounds	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Medium
	Spray Parks	3	Long (over 10 years)	under \$250,000	Medium
	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	2	Medium (5-10 years)	under \$250,000	Medium

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
	Community Gardens	2	Short (up to 5 years)	under \$250,000	Low
	Washrooms	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Medium
	Benches and Picnic Tables	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
	Shelters	1	Short (up to 5 years)	under \$250,000	Low
	Skate Parks	3	Long (over 10 years)	\$250,000 - \$1million	Low
	Bike Skills Parks	2	Medium (5-10 years)	under \$250,000	Low
	Courts	2	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
	Track and Field	2	Medium (5-10 years)	\$250,000 - \$1million	Medium
	Disc Golf	1	Short (up to 5 years)	under \$250,000	Low
	Horseshoe Pits (removal)	1	Short (up to 5 years)	under \$250,000	

5.6 Parks Operations and Management

Operations and Management

5.6.1	Increase operations resources and budgets as the population increases and there is more pressure on park resources	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low (per year)
5.6.2	Explore the possibility of increasing maintenance of paths and trails, including snow plowing	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low (per year)
5.6.3	Invite community participation in the clean-up and care of parks by organizing special events for volunteers	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
5.6.4	Work with police and social service organizations to address the needs of the homeless population or those otherwise conducting vandalism in parks	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.6.5	Work with police and bylaw officers to increase monitoring of parks	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.6.6	Implement CPTED principles in park maintenance	1	ongoing	N/A	
5.6.7	Consider “adopt a park” or “adopt a trail” programs	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
5.6.8	Establish a no-littering bylaw and install no-littering signage	1	ongoing	N/A	Low
5.6.9	Conduct an urban forestry plan to support the need for more trees on City land	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	
5.6.10	Consider implementing and enforcing park closures in certain locations at night	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
5.6.11	Increase the enforcement of animal control bylaws	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	Low
6.0 OUTDOOR RECREATION					
6.1 Facilities					
Planning and Design					
6.1.1	Refer to the Community Recreation Facility Construction Policy when planning, designing, and developing recreation facilities	1	ongoing	N/A	
Capital Development					
6.1.2	Plan for and develop a new gymnastics facility in partnership with the North Peace Gymnastics Association as the initial phase of a multiplex	1	Short (up to 5 years)	\$1 - 5 million	High
6.1.3	Plan for and develop subsequent portions of the multiplex				
	Indoor Fields	1	Short (up to 5 years)	\$1 - 5 million	High
	Indoor Pool	2	Medium (5-10 years)	over \$5 million	High

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
	Gymnasium	2	ongoing	\$1 - 5 million	High
	Indoor Playground (if not part of a previous phase)	3	Short (up to 5 years)	\$250,000 - \$1million	High
6.2 Life Cycle Budgeting					
6.2.1	Develop a life cycle renewal policy and process for recreation and parks infrastructure	1	ongoing	N/A	
7.0 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS					
7.1 Recreation Programs					
Operations and Management					
7.1.1	Maintain the City's current approach to the delivery of programs and events through a combination of direct and indirect delivery	1	ongoing	N/A	
7.1.2	Formalize and facilitate an ongoing program and event needs identification process	1	ongoing	N/A	
7.1.3	Increase programs and events	1	ongoing	N/A	Low
7.2 Special Events					
Operations and Management					
7.2.1	Encourage and support additional events in the City, especially in the winter	2	Medium (5-10 years)	N/A	Low
7.2.2	Establish a consolidated events schedule for all City and community-organized events	1	ongoing	N/A	Low
7.3 Reducing Barriers to Participation					
Operations and Management					
7.3.1	Continue to market and promote opportunities and increase the focus of public messaging to include information about financial assistance programs	2	ongoing	N/A	
7.3.2	Bolster support to financial assistance programs	1	ongoing	under \$250,000	
7.3.3	Enhance physical accessibility in existing and new facilities and spaces	1	ongoing	N/A	

Key Recommendations (abbreviated)		Priority	Phasing	Relative Cost or Cost / Year	Increase in Operating Costs
8.0 ALLOCATION, FEES AND CHARGES					
8.1 Allocation					
Operations and Management					
8.1.1	Retain the current allocation system or policy	1	ongoing	N/A	
8.2 Fees and Charges					
Operations and Management					
8.2.1	Undertake a detailed unit costing analysis to update unit costs prior to the bylaw's expiry in 2019	2	Medium (5-10 years)	N/A	
8.2.2	When the bylaw is updated, add a new principle and adjust classification of ice time	2	Medium (5-10 years)	N/A	
9.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS					
9.1 Next Steps					
Operations and Management					
9.4.1	Update other City bylaws for consistency with the PRMP, including the OCP, Zoning Bylaw, DCC bylaw, and SDS Bylaw	1	ongoing	N/A	
9.4.2	Prepare an anti-littering bylaw	1	Short (up to 5 years)	N/A	
9.4.3	Explore opportunities for inter-municipal collaboration in the provision of recreation facilities and spaces	1	ongoing	N/A	
9.4.4	Establish a modern and effective Joint Use Agreement with School District 60	1	Short (up to 5 years)	N/A	
9.4.5	Continue to explore partnership opportunities with School District 60 when new or enhanced indoor or outdoor recreation spaces are developed	1	ongoing	N/A	
9.4.6	Assign a City staff member with the responsibility for tracking and pursuing potential grants	1	ongoing	N/A	
9.4.7	Explore opportunities to collaborate with Northern Lights College	1	ongoing	N/A	

Figure 9.1: Key Recommendations

9.2 Financing Sources

There are multiple sources of funding for parks and recreation planning, capital development, operations and maintenance, and service delivery. The following are some of the key sources:

- Taxes – used for all aspects of development and service delivery
- Development cost charges (DCCs) – used for parkland acquisition and components of park development to serve new populations
- Grants – available in various categories including infrastructure renewal, active transportation, environmental restoration/enhancement, and active healthy living
- Private donations or bequests – most often for land
- User fees and charges (discussed previously)
- Commercial revenues from sources such as private operations in parks or facilities, rentals, and filming
- Sponsorship opportunities, e.g., major events, brochures, maps, naming rights for amenities
- Advertising, e.g., signs on sports fields, QR codes

The City has benefited from all of these sources to varying degrees. There may be opportunities to track potential grants more effectively than has occurred in the past.

Partnerships and collaboration are essential to achieving parks and recreation goals because Fort St. John is a fairly small City surrounded by populations in other jurisdictions.

9.3 Partnerships and Collaboration

The City currently partners with the Peace River Regional District on the ownership and operation of the North Peace Leisure Pool. The City also partners with a variety of local non-profit groups by providing subsidized access to spaces.

Fort St. John collaborates with local school authorities in a variety of ways in the delivery of recreation. Investment in the new Sunset Ridge School to increase the size of the school’s gymnasium, will increase capacity for school use and enable enhanced community use of these heavily demanded dry land gymnasium spaces. The Energetic Learning Campus (ELC) at the Pomeroy Sport Centre was developed through an agreement between the City and School District 60 to “provide a premier educational facility in the Pomeroy Sport Centre that will focus on both career and skill development¹. The innovative project eliminated the need for 20 portables that were in

Partnerships and collaboration are essential to achieving parks and recreation goals



1 <http://www.fortstjohn.ca/energetic-learning-campus>

use throughout the area and created numerous opportunities for integrated learning for students throughout the facility (mechanical systems, ice making, etc.).

The development of recreation facilities and spaces and the delivery of programs and events are becoming more broad, demanding, and expensive. Collaboration with other agencies (public, private, and non-profit) enables municipal governments to leverage expertise and resources in the provision of recreation facilities and services. Many BC and Alberta municipalities are involved in partnerships such as regional cost-sharing arrangements, joint ownership of facilities and spaces, facility operating contracts and leases, and sponsorships.

A key theme in the stakeholder discussions facilitated during the preparation of the Master Plan was that, where possible, recreation services should be planned and delivered considering the entire region because no one jurisdiction can succeed alone. Past planning efforts have focused on the entire region (or sub-region), and the composition of the steering committee for this Master Plan demonstrates a willingness and necessity for local municipalities to work together to provide these valuable services. When residents were asked if local governments in the area should work together to provide recreation, parks, and leisure opportunities, 95% agreed.

While inter-municipal partnerships are becoming more common in BC and Alberta municipalities, partnerships between municipalities and school districts have been in place in most communities for many years. The premise of municipal-school partnerships is that school use of recreation amenities typically occurs in low/no use times in facilities while community use of high-demand dry-land gymnasium and classroom space occurs after typical school hours.

The City does not have an effective joint use agreement in place with School District 60. While there is informal collaboration and use of each other's facilities, the lack of a joint use agreement may limit potential opportunities for partnering in the development of facilities, programming and use of existing facilities, and maintenance and operations arrangements now or in the future. The City and School District 60 have demonstrated a willingness to work together to achieve common goals through initiatives such as the ELC and the enhanced gymnasium at the new school in Sunset Ridge.

Northern Lights College has a campus at the north end of the City close to Fish Creek Community Forest. There are no formal arrangements between the City and the college; however, college students use the City's recreation facilities, and City groups use the college for special events such as the Terry Fox Run, and college rooms are used extensively by community groups after school hours. There are some opportunities to enhance connections between the City and the college such as the following:

- Provide more accessible physical connections between the City and the college and between the college and Fish Creek Community Forest

Recreation services should be planned and delivered considering the entire region because no one jurisdiction can succeed alone

- Explore potential grants that may be available for collaboratively improving parks and recreation opportunities
- Consider joint events or City participation in college events
- Improve communications in order to share information with each other's populations

9.4 Next Steps

The following are some steps that will help Fort St. John achieve the vision, objectives and recommendations outlined in this Master Plan:

- Update other City bylaws for consistency with the PRMP, including the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, DCC bylaw, and Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.
- Prepare an anti-littering bylaw.
- Explore opportunities for inter-municipal collaboration in the provision of recreation facilities and spaces during the development of new facilities and the renewal of existing facilities.
- Establish a modern and effective Joint Use Agreement with School District 60 based on the premise of maximizing use of publicly funded facilities.
- In the Joint Use Agreement, identify the terms and responsibilities related to school use of City facilities and City use of school facilities, addressing land, capital development, hours of use, booking system and policies, fees, repair, maintenance and operations, recognizing that agreements need to be flexible.
- Continue to explore partnership opportunities with School District 60 when new or enhanced indoor or outdoor recreation spaces are contemplated.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with Northern Lights College.
- Assign a City staff member with the responsibility for tracking and pursuing potential grants to support parks and recreation.

This Master Plan is intended to cover a 15 to 20 year timeframe. Certain changes in the City could trigger a need to revisit the plan sooner than 15 years, e.g., population growth is different from expectations, use characteristics and trends are changing. The critical factor is to remain committed to the vision, goals and objectives in all aspects of parks and recreation planning and service delivery.

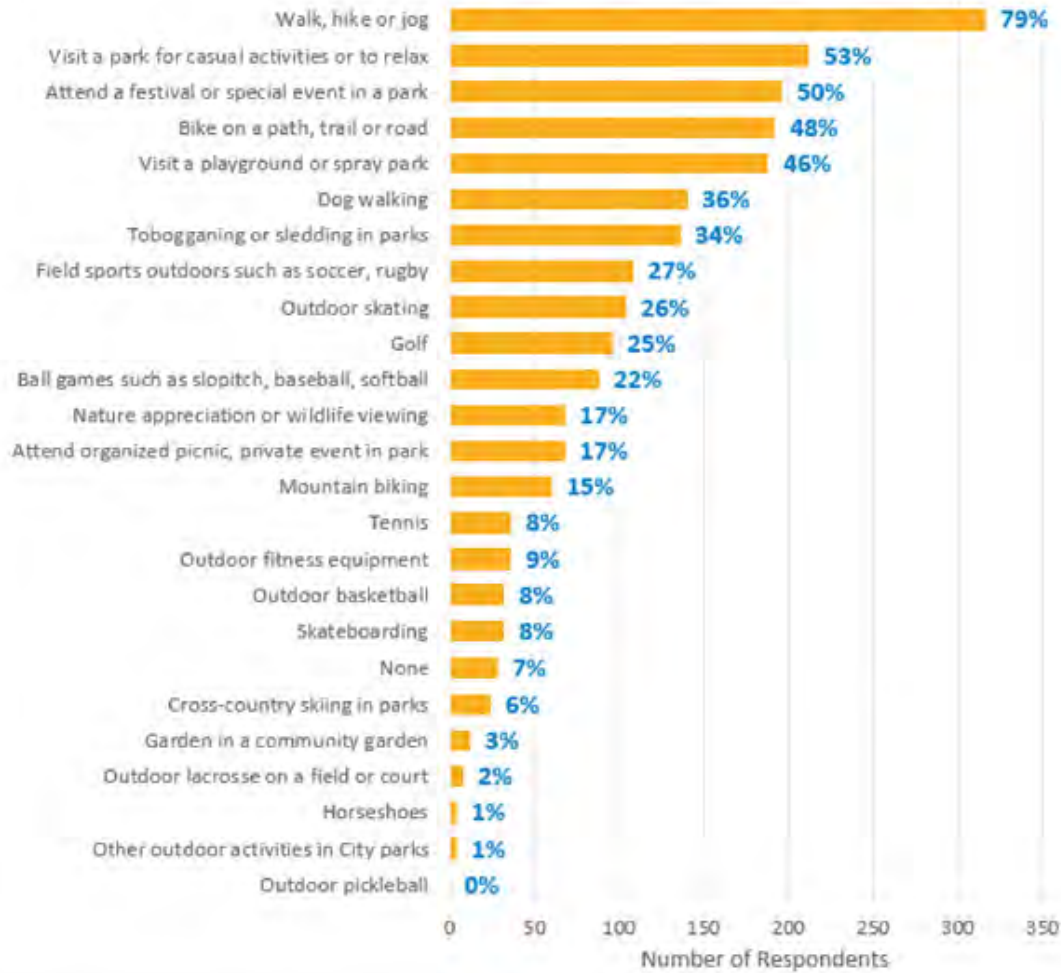
The critical factor is to remain committed to the vision, goals and objectives in all aspects of parks and recreation planning and service delivery





APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY TELEPHONE SURVEY SUMMARY

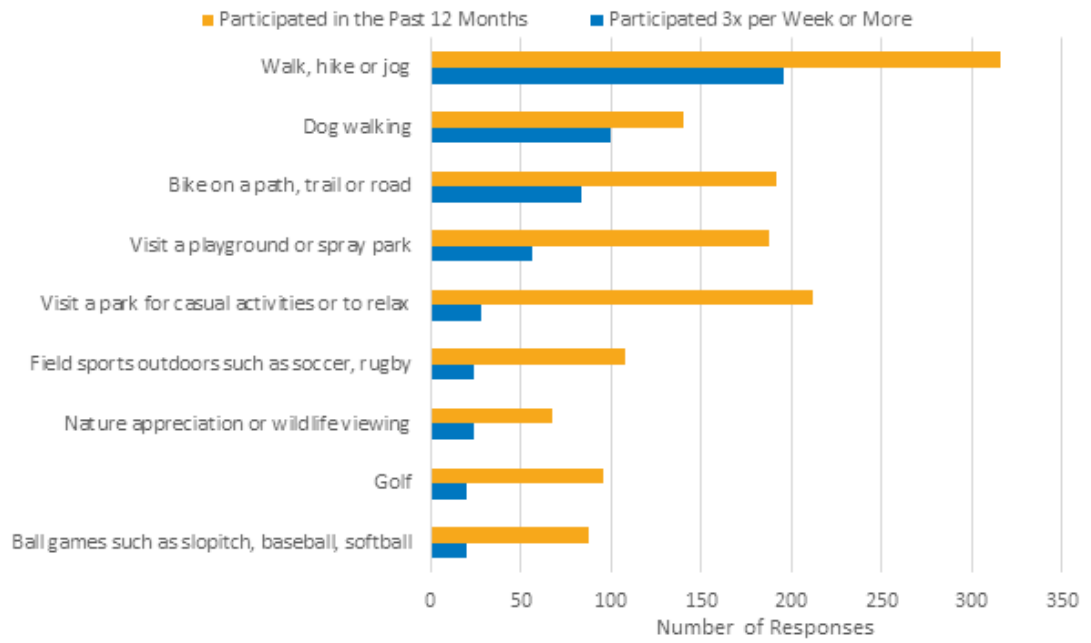
Participation in Outdoor Activities, Past 12 Months



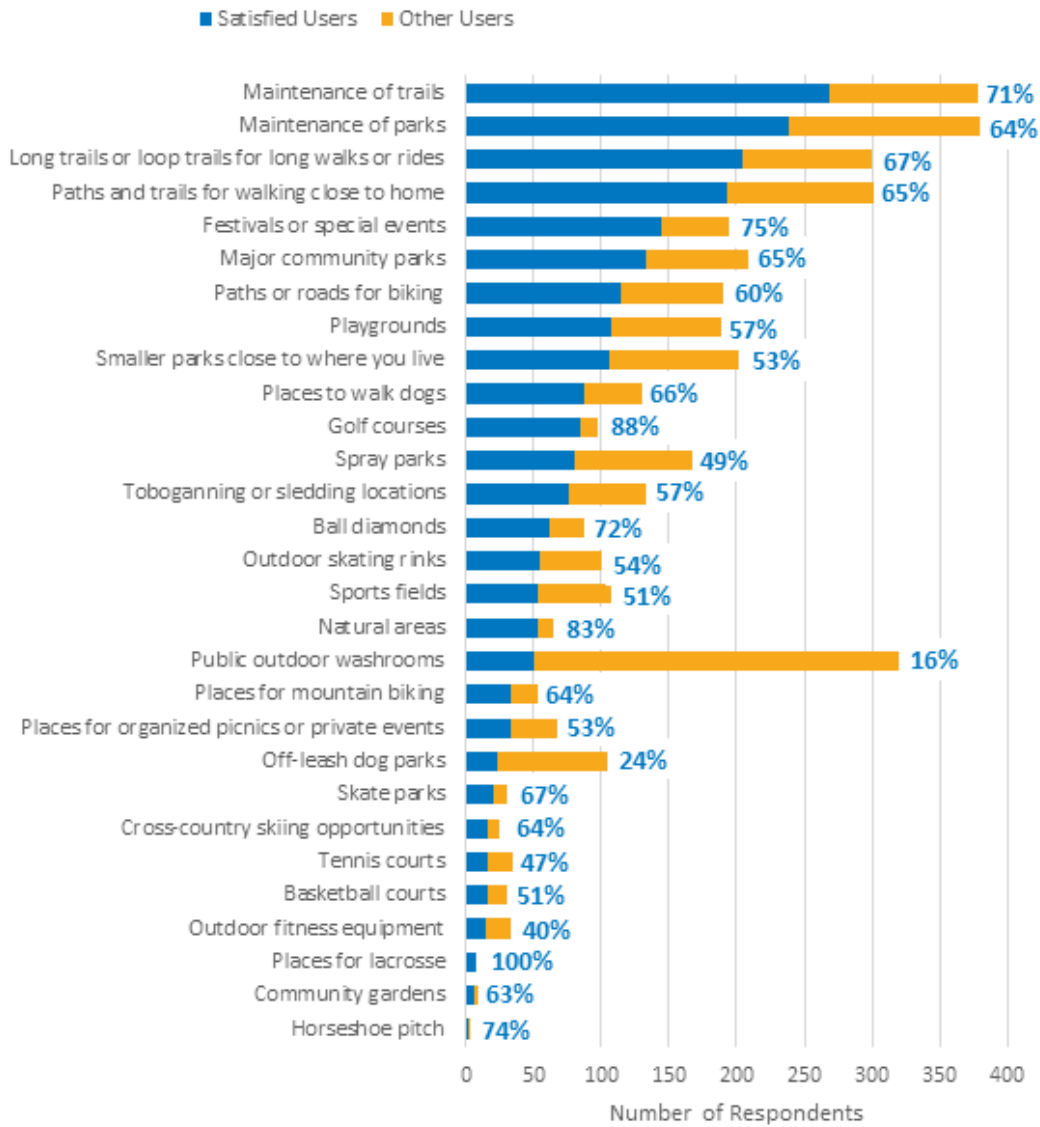
Activity	FSJ respondents	Taylor respondents	Area C respondents	Area B respondents
Walk, hike, or jog	85%	90%	73%	58%
Attend a festival or special event in a park	53%	58%	44%	38%
Bike on a path, trail, or road	57%	55%	37%	20%
Dog walking	40%	51%	28%	23%

Resident Participation Rate in Activities

Participation in Outdoor Activities, 3x per Week or More

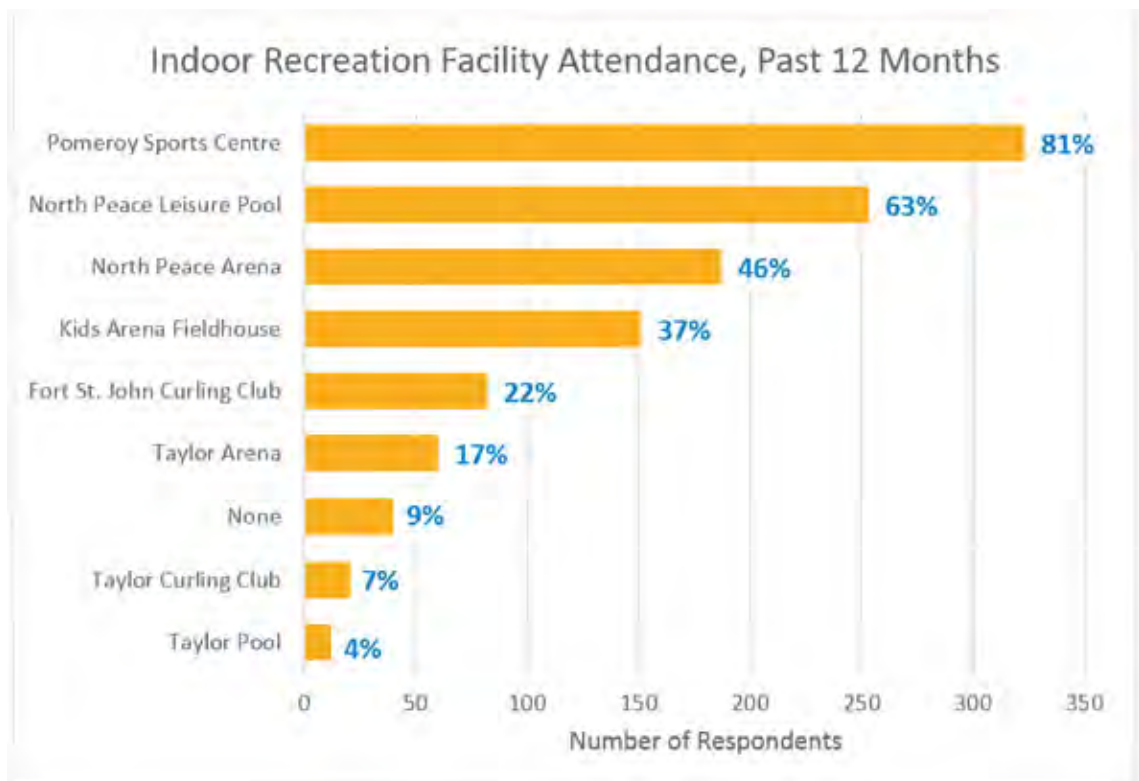
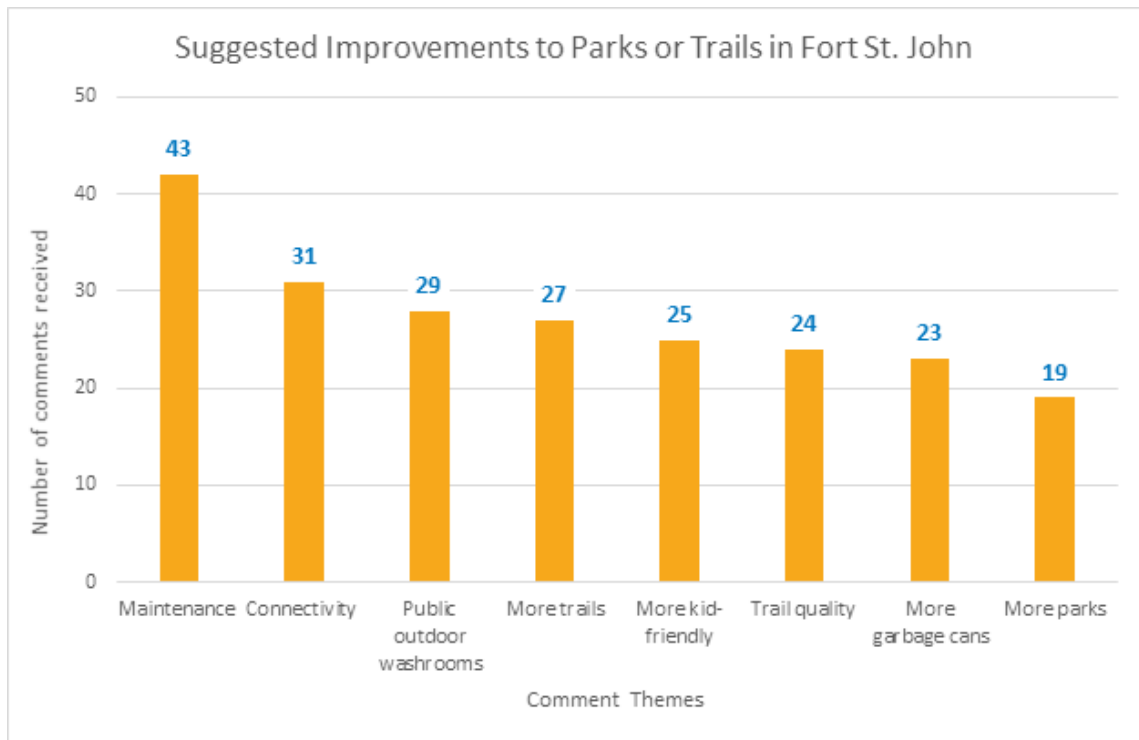


Satisfaction with Outdoor Recreation Amenities



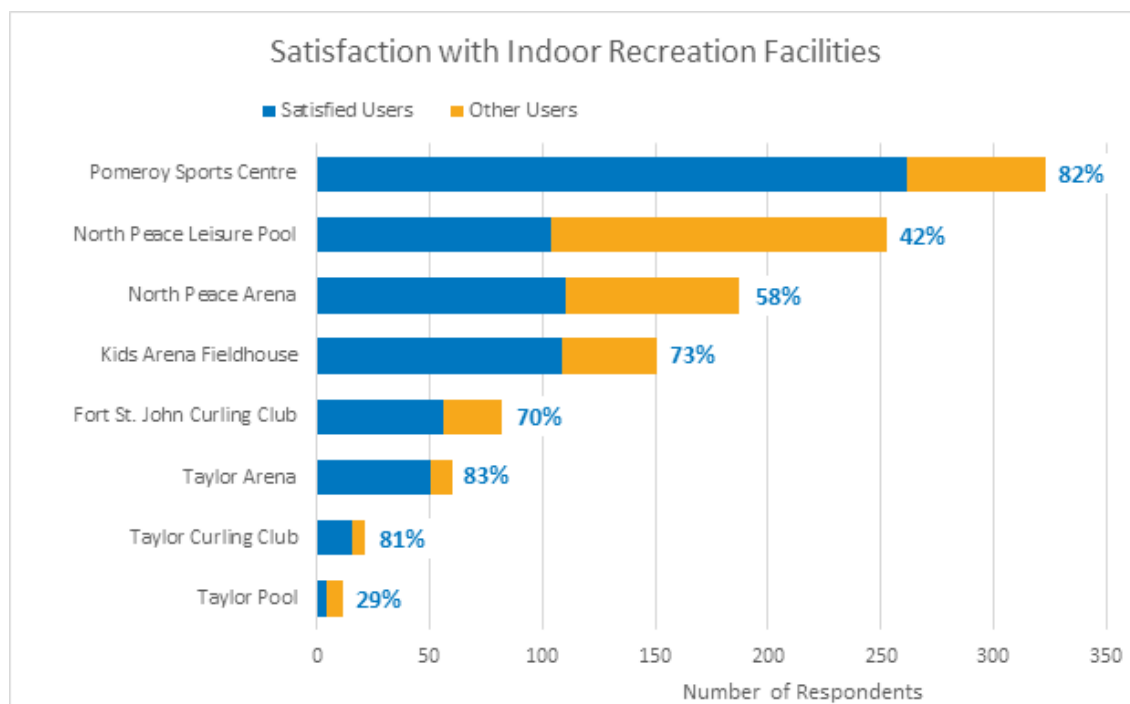
Amenity/Feature	Number of Responses	Number Not Satisfied	Percent Not Satisfied
Public outdoor washrooms	313	263	84%
Off-leash dog parks	100	76	76%

Levels of satisfaction were reported for public outdoor washrooms and off-leash dog parks

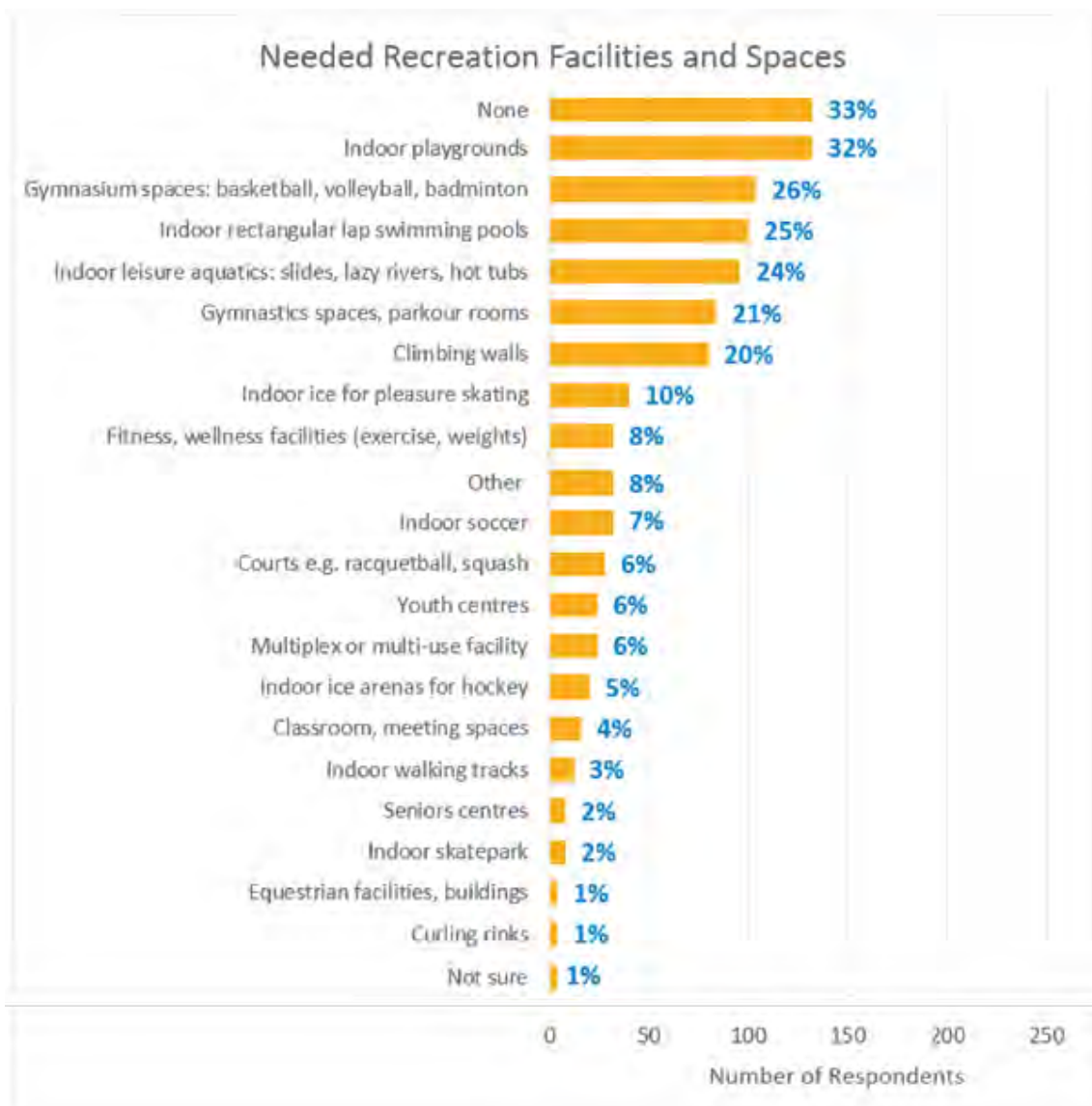
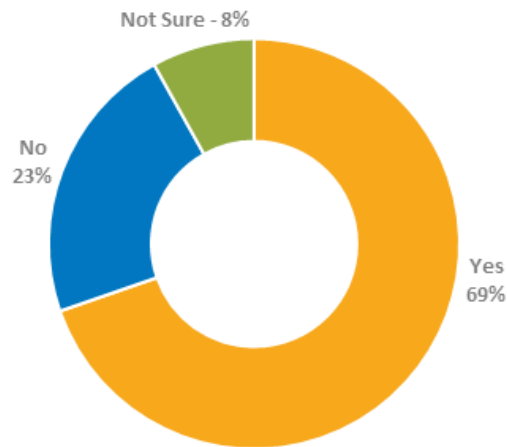


Facility	FSJ attendance	Taylor attendance	Area C attendance	Area B attendance
Pomeroy Sports Centre	85%	85%	78%	63%
North Peace Leisure Pool	66%	43%	67%	43%
North Peace Arena	47%	50%	51%	28%
Kids Arena Fieldhouse	38%	12%	48%	16%
Fort St. John Curling Club	22%	48%	20%	16%
Taylor Arena	12%	65%	27%	6%
Taylor Curling Club	7%	53%	3%	3%
Taylor Pool	4%	23%	1%	0%
None	6%	0%	9%	32%

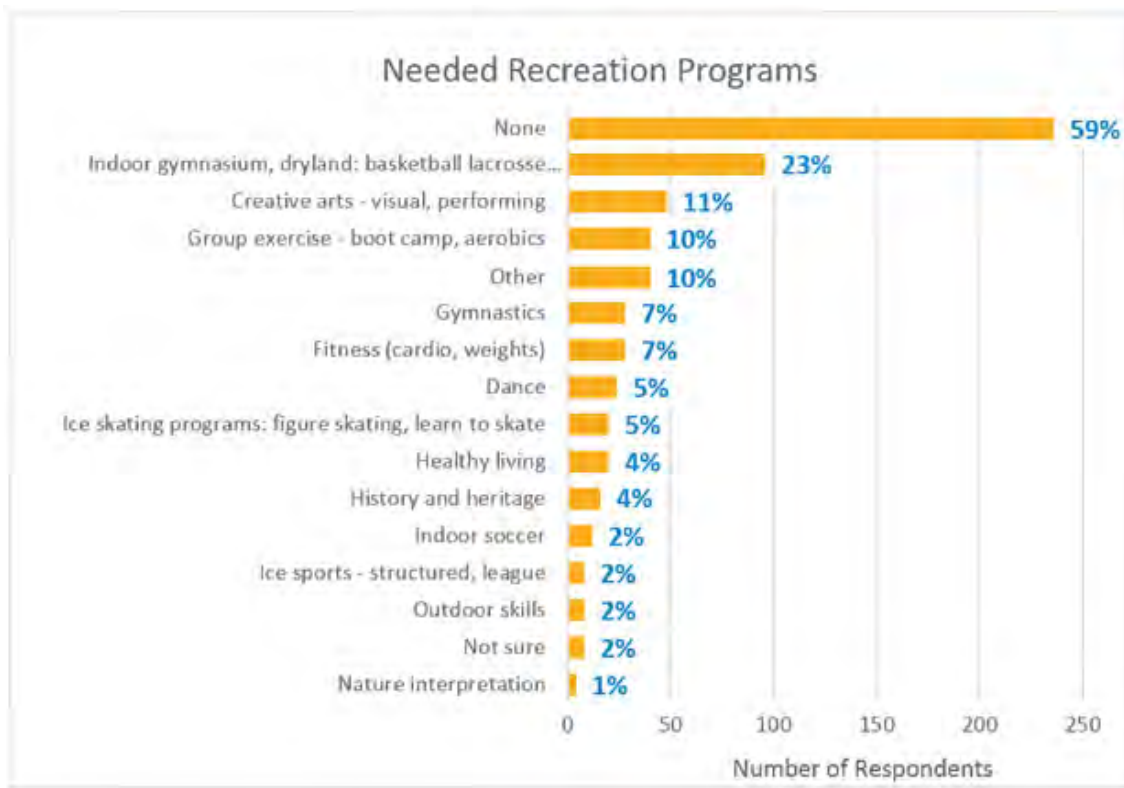
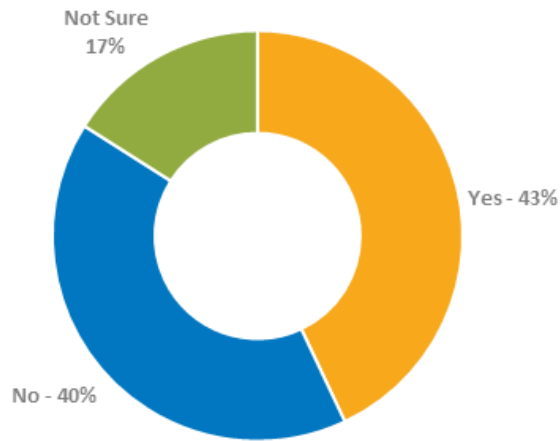
Resident Attendance Rates per Facility



Question 5: Do you think that there is a need for new and/or enhanced indoor recreation facilities or spaces in the Fort St. John area?



Question 6: Do you think the City should have more or better indoor recreation or sports programs

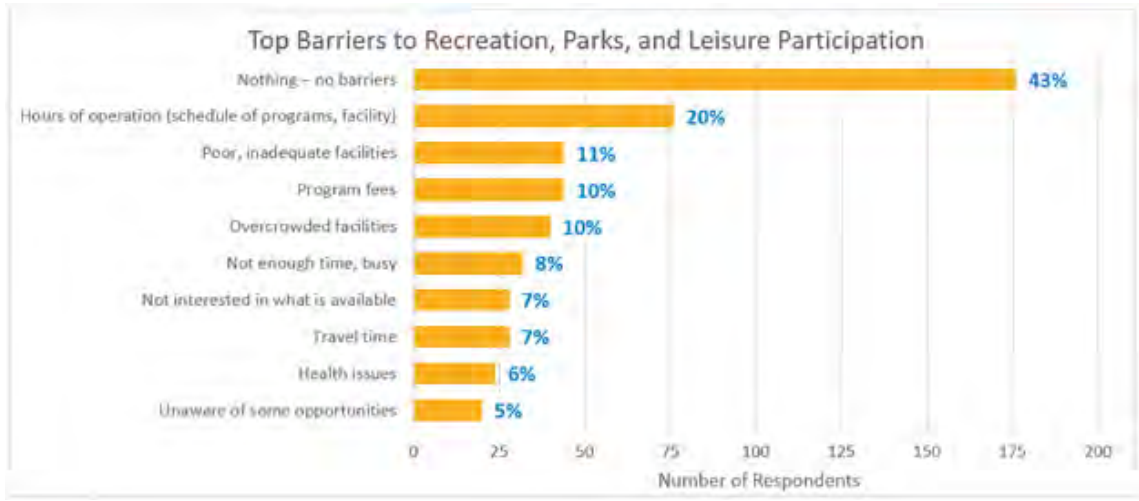


Recreation Program	Total Number of Respondents in Favour	Percent Aged 19-44	Percent with Children in the Household
Indoor gymnasium, dryland	96	81%	67%
Creative arts	46	90%	73%
Group exercise	42	100%	88%
None (no programs should be developed/enhanced)	245	57%	47%

Support for Developing / Enhancing Indoor Recreation Programs

Statement	Agree (Rated 4)	Strongly Agree (Rated 5)	Total Agreement
The local governments (Fort St. John, Taylor, and the Peace River Regional District) in the area should work together to provide recreation, parks, and leisure opportunities for residents.	20%	75%	95%
Recreation, parks, and leisure services bring the community together.	27%	64%	91%
Quality recreation, parks, and leisure programs and facilities can help attract and retain residents.	24%	65%	89%
Recreation, parks, and leisure are important to my quality of life.	18%	70%	88%
My local community as a whole benefits from recreation, parks, and leisure programs and services.	23%	65%	88%
Residents can benefit even if they do not use recreation, parks, and leisure services directly.	29%	47%	76%

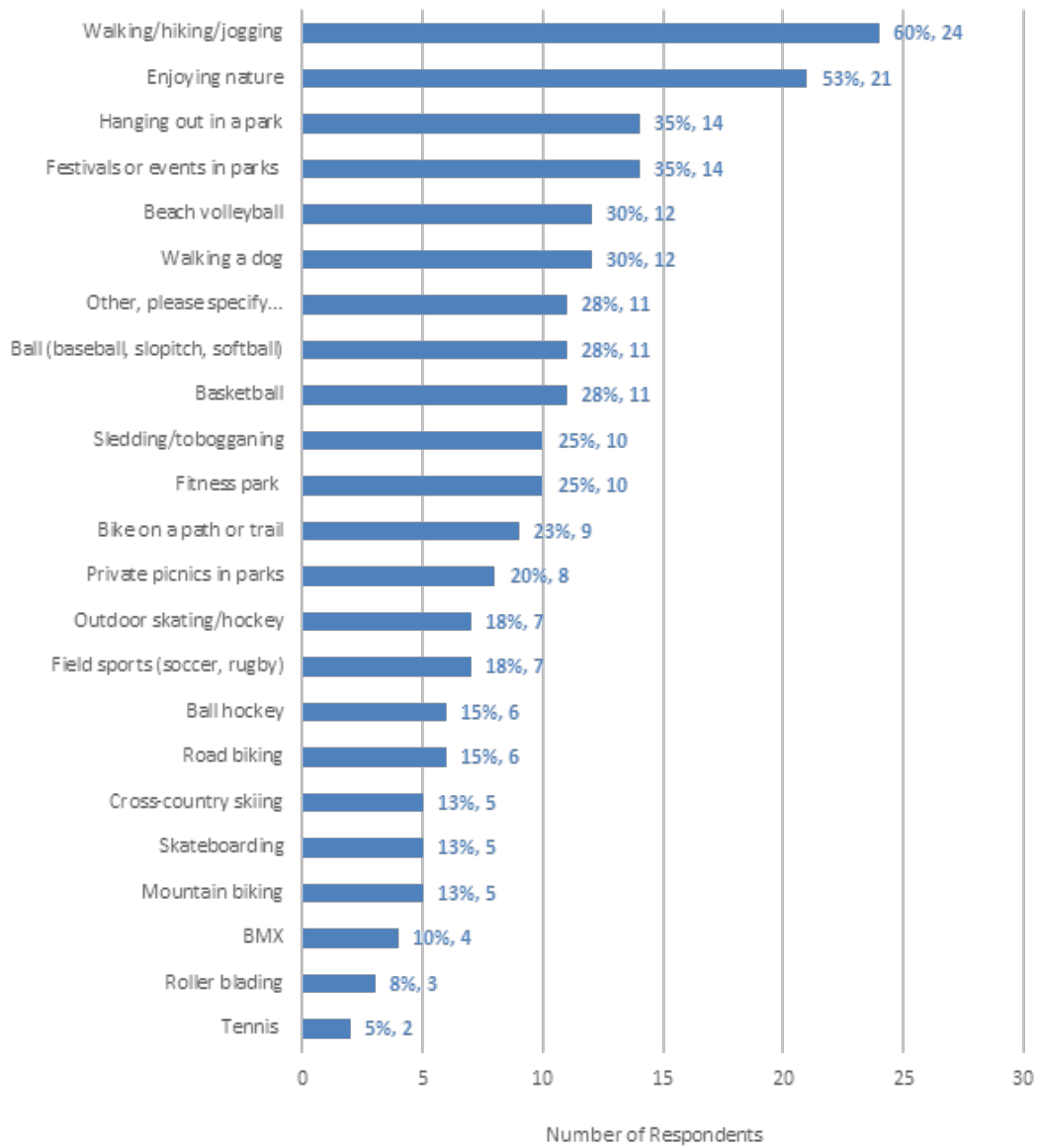
Rates of Agreement to Benefits of Recreation, Parks, and Leisure in the Community



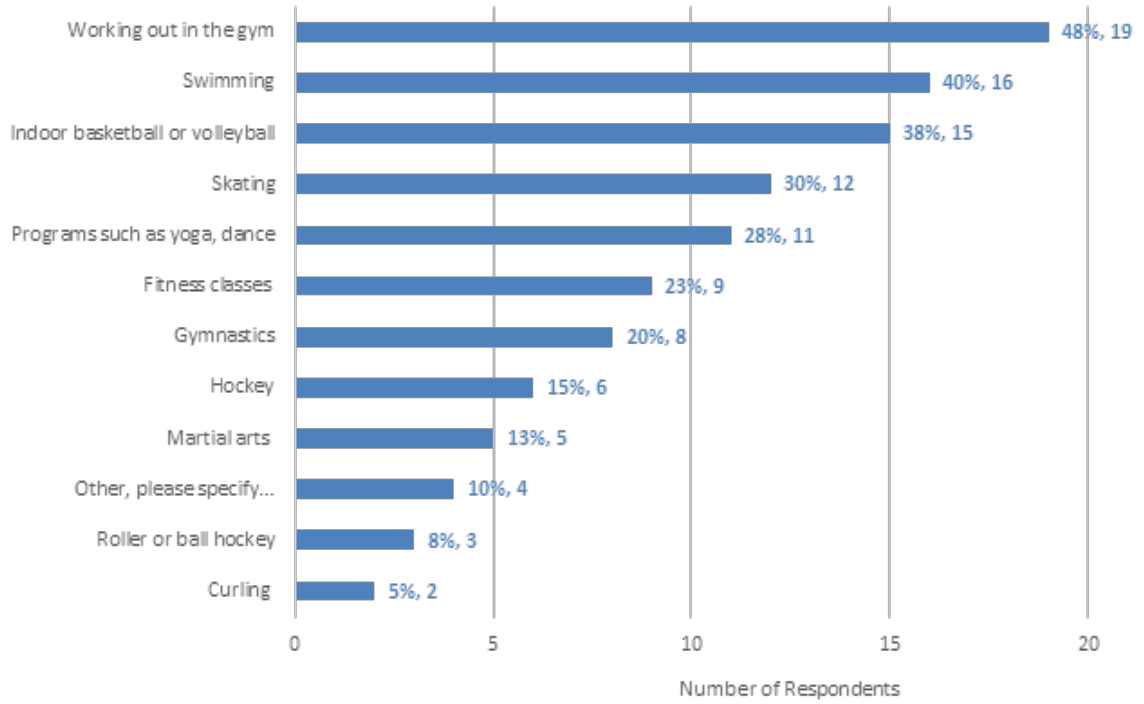


APPENDIX B: YOUTH SURVEY SUMMARY

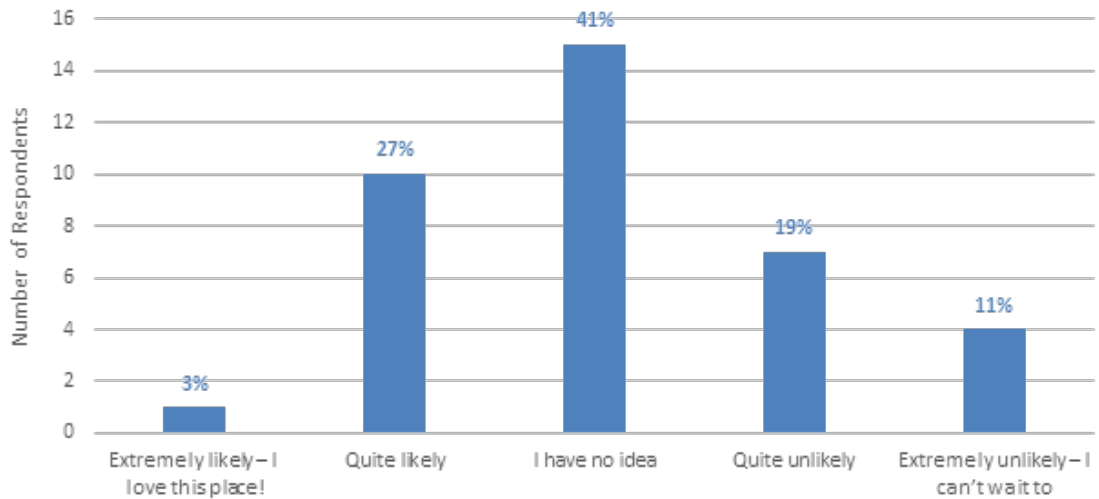
Favourite Outdoor Activities



Favourite Indoor Recreation



4. After You Complete Your High School and/or Post-Secondary Education, How Likely Are You to Live In Fort St. John?



5. Is There Anything the City Could Do In Parks And Recreation to Make People Your Age Happier Here and More Likely to Want to Live In Fort St. John?

Theme	# of Mentions
Trampoline or jump park	12
Indoor basketball courts	5
Access to ice rinks year-round	3
More activities/places geared for youth	3
BMX, dirt bike, motocross track	2
Go cart track	2
More trails for biking and hiking	2



APPENDIX C: REVIEW OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

REVIEW OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Recreational Facility Allocation Policy

This Policy ensures that the City of Fort St John can coordinate, schedule, and operate recreation facilities to ensure optimum usage and programming while being fiscally responsible. Methods of allocation are outlined for ice arena facilities, the speed skating oval, and other non-ice facilities including athletic fields. The following chart outlines the allocation priority level for each of the three facility types.

Priority	Ice Arenas	Oval	Athletic Fields and Non Ice Facilities
1	Public/Family Skating	Public/Family Skating	Minor Users
2	Minor Users	Club Skating	School Programs
3	School Programs	High Performance Skating	Major Special Events
4	Junior Games	Annual Special Event	Regional Team Game
5	Senior Competitive Games	Special Event	Adult Users
6	Annual Special Event	Adult Users	Regional Teams Practice
7	Special Event	Occasional and Commercial Users	Occasional and Commercial Users
8	Junior (Practice)		
9	Senior Competitive (Practice)		
10	Regional Team Game		
11	Adult Users		
12	Regional Teams Practice		
13	Occasional and Commercial Users		

Review of User Fees and Charges for Publicly Provided Leisure Services

In 2011, the City of Fort St. John undertook a review of its process for setting user fees and charges. Ultimately the purpose of the review was to update the process and to provide a rationale for setting consistent and justified user fees and charges. Tools in the document include an updated process for setting user fees and charges, a fee calculation sheet template, and an implementation plan.

Rationale For The Delivery Of Public Leisure Services

This Council Policy outlines the principles and goals for the delivery of municipal leisure services in Fort St. John. An overarching statement provides clarity for Council and Administration:

The City of Fort St John’s Council and staff works to responsibly manage its recreational spaces in an equitable manner to meet current and future demands for both organized and casual participants. In doing so, it is important to consider the needs of diverse populations, groups, and individuals while recognizing the tax-based contribution provided by residents toward the development and operation of community recreation assets.

Two goals are presented for public leisure services in the City:

Goal #1: To use the delivery of public leisure services to further the growth and development of the individual socially, emotionally, morally, academically and through physical growth of each member of the community.

Goal #2: To use the delivery of public leisure services to further the growth and development of the community by:

- establishing a broadly felt community identity – over time, people will begin to feel a part of the community in which they reside
- developing a widely held community spirit - people not only feel a part of the community, but they feel good about it
- recognition of the evolution of our community culture – becoming known for our unique characteristics and attributes

Community Services Fees and Charges Bylaw

This 2014 Bylaw presents the fees and charges for all City facility rental spaces including the annual fee increase schedule up to 2018-2019. Definitions are provided for all user types and modes of facility use; the calculation process in which future fees are set is explained. The model is based on cost recovery percentages as described in the accompanying charts.

Individuals	Drop-In Admissions	Programs
Pre-School (0-5 years)	0%	25%
Youth (6-18 years)	25%	25%
Adult (19-64 years)	50%	50%
Senior (65+ years)	25%	25%

Groups	Regular Activity Rentals	Special Events	Community Group Board Meetings	Commercial Use	Fundraising Event
Youth Non Profit	25%	25%	0%	n/a	100%
Adult Non Profit	50%	50%	0%	n/a	100%
Private	75%	75%	100%	n/a	100%
Commercial	100%	100%	n/a	125%	100%
School District	0%	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a

North Peace Sub-Regional Recreation Facility Inventory and Assessment

This 2014 facility inventory and assessment is a comprehensive evaluation of recreation facilities in the region. Determining each facility's current condition and lifespan led to capital intervention recommendations. As reflected in the chart below, each facility was assigned a rating based on its current condition (1-10 scale, 10 being the highest) and an estimated remaining lifespan. The Pomeroy Centre is the region's most modern facility while the Buick Creek and Golata Community Halls are the most concerning facilities.

This study concludes that outdoor and indoor soccer experienced significant growth in the past decade, while participation in baseball is declining. In Fort St. John, outdoor soccer currently uses two fields and Surerus Park and a number of unreliable school fields. Youth indoor soccer registrants use 100% of the Kids Arena Field House prime time, and adults use off-prime time. At least a doubling of outdoor and indoor facilities is needed. To facilitate this, recommendations include converting the Taylor Curling Rink to indoor turf, converting underutilized baseball diamonds to soccer pitches, and building four new soccer pitches by 2025.

Other key observations include a re-allocation of prime and non-prime ice times for adult and minor hockey players. The North Peace Leisure Centre aquatic facility will likely need replacement in the next 10 years, and the City needs at least two additional multi-purpose spring-floor fitness rooms.

Sorted Overall by rating (Desending Order)				Sorted Overall by Intervention Year			
Building Assets	Owner	Rating	Remaining	Building Assets	Owner	Rating	Earliest Year
			Life				Intervention
1 Pomeroy Centre	FSJ	8.5	35	1 Prairie Rose Curling Club	NFPS	2.5	2020
2 Clearview Elem. / Jr. Secondary School	SD60	8.5	30	2 Buick Creek Community Hall	PRRD	2.0	2020
3 North Peace Senior Secondary School	Sd60	8.5	30	3 Golata Community Hall	PRRD	2.0	2020
4 Taylor Community Hall	Taylor	8.0	25	4 New Elementary School FSJ Northwest	SD60	n/a	2020
5 Taylor Arena	Taylor	7.5	20	5 New Middle School FSJ North	SD60	n/a	2020
6 Lake Point Golf and Country Club	NFPS	7.5	20	6 Ecole Central Elementary School*	SD60	4.0	2025
7 Taylor Lone Wolf Golf Course	Taylor	7.5	20	7 Taylor Curling Club and Pool	Taylor	6.5	2025
8 Baldonnel Elementary School	SD60	7.0	25	8 Clearview Arena	PRRD	4.0	2025
9 Bert Ambrose Elementary School	SD60	7.0	25	9 Osborn Community Hall	PRRD	2.0	2025
10 Halfway Elementary School	SD60	7.0	20	10 North Peace Light Horse Gymkhana	NFPS	2.5	2025
11 Duncan Cran Elementary School	SD60	7.0	20	11 New Elementary School FSJ Northeast	SD60	n/a	2025
12 Buick Creek Arena	PRRD	6.5	25	12 Charlie Lake Elementary School*	SD60	5.5	2025
13 Charlie Lake Community Hall	PRRD	6.5	20	13 Taylor Elementary School	SD60	5.5	2025
14 Montney Community Hall	PRRD	6.5	20	14 Buick Creek Elementary School	SD60	5.0	2025
15 Taylor Curling Club and Pool	Taylor	6.5	10	15 Wonowon Horsemen's Community Hall	PRRD	6.0	2035
16 Prespetou Elementary School	SD60	6.5	20	16 Halfway Community Hall	PRRD	4.0	2035
17 Alwin Holland Elementary School	SD60	6.5	20	17 Charlie Lake Community Hall	PRRD	6.5	2035
18 Bert Bowes Junior Secondary School	SD60	6.5	20	18 Montney Community Hall	PRRD	6.5	2035
19 C.M. Finch Elementary School	SD60	6.5	20	19 Rotary Spray Park	FSJ	6.0	2035
20 Dr. Kearney Junior Secondary School	SD60	6.5	20	20 North Peace Leisure Centre	PRRD	5.0	2030
21 Upper Pine Elementary School	SD60	6.0	25	21 North Peace Gymnastics Centre	PRRD	4.5	2030
22 Wonowon Horsemen's Community Hall	PRRD	6.0	20	22 North Peace Arena	FSJ	4.0	2030
23 Rotary Spray Park	FSJ	6.0	20	23 Fort St. John Curling Club	NFPS	5.5	2030
24 Kids Arena Fieldhouse	FSJ	6.0	15	24 Kids Arena Fieldhouse	FSJ	6.0	2030
25 Fort St. John Curling Club	NFPS	5.5	15	25 Cecil Lake Community Hall	PRRD	5.0	2030
26 Charlie Lake Elementary School*	SD60	5.5	10	26 Upper Cache Community Hall	PRRD	4.0	2030
27 Taylor Elementary School	SD60	5.5	20	27 Big Bam Ski Club	NFPS	3.0	2030
28 North Peace Leisure Centre	PRRD	5.0	15	28 North Peace Fairgrounds	NFPS	4.5	2030
29 Cecil Lake Community Hall	PRRD	5.0	15	29 Wonowon Horse Club Gymkhana	NFPS	3.5	2030
30 Buick Creek Elementary School	SD60	5.0	20	30 Halfway Elementary School	SD60	7.0	2030
31 Robert Ogilvie Elementary School	SD60	5.0	15	31 Robert Ogilvie Elementary School	SD60	5.0	2030
32 North Peace Gymnastics Centre	PRRD	4.5	15	32 Taylor Arena	Taylor	7.5	2035
33 North Peace Fairgrounds	NFPS	4.5	15	33 Lake Point Golf and Country Club	NFPS	7.5	2035
34 Halfway Community Hall	PRRD	4.0	20	34 Taylor Lone Wolf Golf Course	Taylor	7.5	2035
35 Clearview Arena	PRRD	4.0	15	35 Prespetou Elementary School	SD60	6.5	2035
36 North Peace Arena	FSJ	4.0	15	36 Alwin Holland Elementary School	SD60	6.5	2035
37 Upper Cache Community Hall	PRRD	4.0	15	37 Bert Bowes Junior Secondary School	SD60	6.5	2035
38 Ecole Central Elementary School*	SD60	4.0	10	38 C.M. Finch Elementary School	SD60	6.5	2035
39 Wonowon Horse Club Gymkhana	NFPS	3.5	15	39 Dr. Kearney Junior Secondary School	SD60	6.5	2035
40 Big Bam Ski Club	NFPS	3.0	15	40 Upper Pine Elementary School	SD60	6.0	2035
41 North Peace Light Horse Gymkhana	NFPS	2.5	10	41 Duncan Cran Elementary School	SD60	7.0	2035
42 Prairie Rose Curling Club	NFPS	2.5	5	42 Taylor Community Hall	Taylor	8.0	2040
43 Osborn Community Hall	PRRD	2.0	10	43 Buick Creek Arena	PRRD	6.5	2040
44 Golata Community Hall	PRRD	2.0	5	44 Baldonnel Elementary School	SD60	7.0	2040
45 Buick Creek Community Hall	PRRD	2.0	5	45 Bert Ambrose Elementary School	SD60	7.0	2040
				46 Clearview Elem. / Jr. Secondary School	SD60	8.5	2045
				47 North Peace Senior Secondary School	Sd60	8.5	2045
				48 Pomeroy Centre	FSJ	8.5	2050

* School identified by SD60 for replacement

Nb: Schools except noted toned grey as interventions not part of this study

Facility Condition Audits

Four facilities in Fort St. John underwent detailed assessments in 2015. The number one purpose of the assessments is to maximize the life of the facilities. Recommended investment requirements are summarized in the accompanying charts; the total costs include a 15% contingency.

FSJ Curling Club

Expenditure Recommended	Total Cost
0 – 2 years including building the entire ice-plant with a separate room	\$2,628,325
0 – 2 years Option A: Connect Curling Club to Pomeroy Building central ice plant	\$3,730,025
0 – 2 years Option B: Connect Curling Club & North Peace Arena to Pomeroy Building central ice plant	\$3,176,300
2 – 5 years Option A: Replace all metal roofing	\$1,703,725
2 – 5 years Option B: Re-roof over the existing metal roof with a new 2-ply SBS roofing system	\$927,475
5 – 10 years	\$697,360
10 – 20 years	\$201,250
20+ years	\$138,000

Kids Arena Field House

Expenditure Recommended	Total Cost
0 – 2 years	\$638,250
0 – 2 years Optional: new sidewalk at south, north & east elevations	\$716,450
2 – 5 years	\$437,000
5 – 10 years	\$799,250
10 – 20 years	\$230,000
20+ years	\$678,500

North Peace Arena

Expenditure Recommended	Total Cost
0 – 2 years including connecting Curling Club & North Peace Arena to Pomeroy Building central ice plant. Refer to District Energy Revised Feasibility and Sensitivity Report by AME Group.	\$2,563,925
0 – 2 years Optional: cladding & insulating of exterior CMU walls in lieu of CMU repairs	\$2,880,175

Expenditure Recommended	Total Cost
2 – 5 years	\$871,700
5 – 10 years	\$1,403,000
10 – 20 years	\$600,300
20+ years Including the option to replace the entire ice-plant	\$851,000

North Peace Cultural Centre

Expenditure Recommended	Total Cost
0 – 2 years including Skylight canopies renewal and upgrade	\$424,350
0 – 2 years including Optional Full Glazing Canopy Replacement	\$492,775
2 – 5 years	\$716,450
5 – 10 years	\$396,750
10 – 20 years	\$2,175,800
20+ years	\$28,750



APPENDIX D: PARKS AND RECREATION TRENDS

PARKS AND RECREATION TRENDS

Trends and Leading Practices

A review of trends can help identify leading practices in the delivery of parks and recreation services as well as emerging or evolving interests that may be important to consider when developing programming and infrastructure. Summarized in the following section are selected trends related to participation, service delivery, volunteerism, infrastructure, and parks.

Key Findings

- Physical activity levels remain concerning and are a focus for many public sector organizations and levels of government.
- While structured programs remain important, there is an increasing demand for spontaneous recreation and physical activity opportunities.
- Although British Columbians have high of volunteerism, motivations and desired experiences are evolving and require many not for profit organizations to adjust recruitment and retainment tactics.
- Recreation has proven community development and social inclusion benefits. Many municipalities are increasingly recognizing the importance of investing in recreation and related services.
- Many municipal and public sector recreation facility providers are struggling with aging infrastructure.
- User expectations for recreation facilities and programs continue to increase, often requiring municipalities and other public sector providers to make an investment in higher quality spaces, social and convenience amenities, and revenue generating spaces that can offset costs.
- Multi-functional spaces, the development of recreation "hub" sites, and integration between indoor and outdoor amenities are prominent trends in recreation infrastructure.
- Research demonstrates that residents in most communities place a high value on quality outdoor parks and open spaces and that these spaces provide numerous and wide-ranging benefits which include increased physical activity levels, resident satisfaction, increased community pride, and higher property values.

Participation

Physical Activity Levels Remain Concerning

- The Canadian Health Measures Survey (Statistics Canada) concludes that the fitness levels of Canadian children and youth, as well as adults, have declined significantly between 1981 and 2009. Among youth aged 15 to 19, the percentage who were at an increased or high risk of health problems more than tripled; for adults aged 20 to 39 this percentage quadrupled.
- The cost of inactivity continues to be significant. A 2004 report prepared for the B.C. Ministry of Health Planning estimated that the cost of providing services to residents who did not meet minimum activity levels was at least \$573 million dollars. The report further estimated that the Province could save \$18 million dollars by increasing the physical activity rate by 10% through the promotion of simple activities such as walking, cycling, swimming, and gardening¹.
- The 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth found that only 9% of 5 to 17 year olds in Canada meet the recommended levels for moderate to vigorous physical activity.
 - Only 24% of 5 to 17 year olds use active transportation methods to or from school; 62% are driven.
 - Only 44% of Canadian youth aged 8 to 12 meet or exceed the minimum level recommended for the physical competence domain of physical literacy.
 - The recommended amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity is at least 60 minutes per day.
 - On average, high school kids in Canada spend 8 hours engaging in screen-based, sedentary behaviour each day.
- In light of these concerns, according to 2013 data from Statistics Canada, 64% of British Columbia residents are active or moderately active. This figure is second highest amongst all provinces and territories in Canada and the overall national average of 55%. Encouragingly, physical activity levels in the province have increased by 4% from the previous data set released in 2011. Even with this progress, more efforts need to be brought forward to encourage active living and physical activity.

Tracking Participation Preferences

- The Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institutes 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor Report² identified that British Columbians are more likely to participate in sport than other provinces.

1 British Columbia Ministry of Health, <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/prevention/activitycost.html>

2 Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institutes 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor: <http://www.cflri.ca/node/78>

- The 2013 Canadian Community Health Survey³ indicates that the top 5 most popular adult activities are walking, gardening, home exercise, swimming and bicycling.
 - The top 5 most popular youth activities were walking, bicycling, swimming, running/jogging, and basketball.
- A research paper entitled “Sport Participation 2010” published by Canadian Heritage⁴ also identified a number of trends pertaining to participation in specific sports.
 - Swimming (as a sport) has experienced the most significant decrease while soccer has had the highest rate of growth while golf and hockey remain the two most played sports in Canada.
- The Paper further identifies a number of broad participation trends related specifically to sport focused participation utilizing Statistics Canada data from the 2010 Federal Census and the General Social Survey.
 - Students (15 years and older) participate in sport in greater numbers than any labour force group.
 - Participation is highly concentrated in a few sports. Participants in golf, ice hockey, and soccer tend to prefer these three sports and have less diversity in their overall sporting pursuits than participants of other sports.
 - The most important benefit of sport participation is relaxation and fun. Relaxation and fun were ranked as being important by 97% of sport participants.
 - A lack of time and interest are the main reasons for not participating in sport.
- Although municipalities should continue to conduct their own resident surveys and collect local participation data, being aware of Canada-wide research can be a good starting point in identifying new trends and preferences.
- The Leisure Information Network (www.lin.ca) collects research and provides useful resources for parks, recreation, and active living practitioners. Similar online platforms include the National Benefits Hub (www.benefitshub.ca) and the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (www.bcrpa.bc.ca).

Unstructured Spontaneous Activities Are Increasing In Popularity

- The Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institutes 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor Report⁵ identifies that the highest proportion of Canadians prefer non-competitive sports or activities (44%).

3 Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140612/dq140612b-eng.htm>

4 Government of Canada: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/pc-ch/CH24-1-2012-eng.pdf

5 Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institutes 2011 – 2012 Sport Monitor: <http://www.cflri.ca/node/78>

- While many structured or organized activities remain important, there is an increasing demand for more flexibility in timing and activity choice.
- People are seeking individualized, informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. This does not however eliminate the need for structured activities and the stakeholder groups that provide them. Instead, this trend suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for traditional structured use environments.

Flexibility And Adaptability Is A Focus

- Parks and recreation consumers have a greater choice of activity options than at any time in history. As a result, service providers are being required to ensure that their approach to delivery is fluid and is able to quickly adapt to meet community demand.
- Many municipalities have also had to make hard decisions on which activities they are able to directly offer or support, versus those which are more appropriate to leave to the private sector to provide.
- Ensuring that programming staff and management are current on trends is important in the identification and planning of programming. Regular interaction and data collection (e.g. customer surveys) from members are other methods that service providers use to help identify programs that are popular and in demand.
- The development of multi-use spaces can also help ensure that municipalities have the flexibility to adapt to changing interests and activity preferences.

Financial Barriers Limit Participation

- Research and available data supports that many Canadians face barriers that impact their ability to reap the numerous physical, social, and mental benefits that are accrued from participation in recreation and leisure pursuits. Understanding these barriers can help service providers identify strategies to mitigate issues and encourage participation.
- The 2014 CIBC – KidSport Report reflects barriers to participation in sport for 3 to 17 year olds in Canada. The cost of enrolment, the cost of equipment, and a lack of interest were identified as the top 3 barriers.
- Education and income levels impacts impact sport participation. Canadians with a University education and those making more than \$80,000 annually have the highest rates of sport participation.⁶
- Financial barriers to participation in recreation, sport, and leisure activities continue to exist for many British Columbians. Understanding the potential benefits that can result from engaging citizens in a broad range of activities and programs, municipalities have undertaken a

⁶ Government of Canada: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/pc-ch/CH24-1-2012-eng.pdf

number of initiatives aimed at removing financial barriers. Current initiatives being led or supported by many municipalities include the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's 'Everybody Gets to Play' program, KidSport, and JumpStart.

Service Delivery

Partnerships Optimize Opportunities

- Partnerships in the provision of parks and recreation opportunities are becoming more prevalent. These partnerships can take a number of forms, and include government, not for profit organizations, schools, and the private sector.
- While the provision of parks and recreation services has historically relied on municipal levels of the government, many municipalities are increasingly looking to form partnerships that can enhance service levels and more efficiently lever public funds.
- Examples of partnerships include facility naming and sponsorship arrangements, lease/contract agreements, the contracted operation of spaces, entire facilities, or delivery of programs.
- According to one study⁷ over three-quarters (76%) of Canadian municipalities work with schools in their communities to encourage the participation of municipal residents in physical activities. Just under half of Canadian municipalities work with local non-profits (46%), health settings (40%), or workplaces (25%) to encourage participation in physical activities amongst their residents. Seventy-six percent (76%) of municipalities with a population of 1,000 to 9,999 to 80% of municipalities over 100,000 in population have formed agreements with school boards for shared use of facilities. In fact, since 2000, the proportion of municipalities that have reported working with schools, health settings, and local non-profit organizations has increased by 10% to 20%.

Social Inclusion Concerns Are Being Addressed

- Social inclusion is about making sure that all children and adults are able to participate as valued, respected, and contributing members of society. It involves the basic notions of belonging, acceptance, and recognition.
- The concept of social inclusion is becoming an issue communities are addressing. While always an important issue, its significance has risen as communities have become more diversified through immigration.
- For immigrants, social inclusion would be manifested in full and equal

⁷ "Municipal Opportunities for Physical Activity" Bulletin 6: Strategic partnerships. 2010, Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute.

participation in all facets of a community including economic, social, cultural, and political realms. It goes beyond including “outsiders” or “newcomers.” In fact, social inclusion is about the elimination of the boundaries or barriers between “us” and “them.”⁸

- There is a recognition that diversity has worth unto itself and is not something that must be overcome.⁹
- The recently adopted *Framework for Recreation in Canada*¹⁰ stresses the importance to increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation. This goal aims to achieve equitable participation for all regardless of socioeconomic status, age, culture, race, aboriginal status, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and geographic location.
- Social inclusion is being considered in facility design to create welcoming environments, promotion methods to ensure all demographics are being reached, and program planning to offer opportunities for all community members.
- Social media is being embraced as a modern communication tool useful for effectively sharing messages with younger, more technologically savvy audiences.

Recreation Fosters Community Development

- The combined factors of decreasing support from other levels of government, increasing demand for new and exciting recreation infrastructure and programs, and the changing nature of volunteerism has led many municipalities to adopt a community development focus in service delivery. This, in addition to the direct delivery of recreation facilities and programs, includes the facilitation of empowering local non-profit groups to operate facilities and/or offer programs to residents thereby leveraging public resources and providing more value for public investment.
- Community development is the process of creating change through a model of greater public participation; the engagement of the entire community from the individual up. The concept of community development has a broader reach than just the delivery of parks and recreation programs and facilities; it is commonly understood to be the broader involvement of the general public in decision making and delivery. Community development in recreation delivery encompasses supporting and guiding volunteer groups to ultimately become self-sufficient while providing facilities and programs.
- The benefits of recreation experiences contribute to community development. Socializing, volunteering, friendships, civic pride,

8 Omidvar, Ratna, Ted Richmand (2003). *Immigrant Settlement and Social Inclusion in Canada*. The Laidlaw Foundation.

9 Harvey, Louise (2002). *Social Inclusion Research in Canada: Children and Youth*. The Canadian Council on Social Development’s “Progress of Canada’s Children”.

10 *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*

preserving history, and appreciating one another's differences are just a few examples of the way recreation activities relay into community development. Participating in recreation creates leadership development opportunities that build strong communities, social capital, and social cohesion¹¹

- The development of children and youth is a large factor in community development. Access to public recreation facilities and parks is important for youth to engage in a variety of activities, especially at-risk youth and vulnerable populations.

Municipalities Are Aligning With Provincial and National Strategic Initiatives

- Municipal service providers are aligning their strategic planning and overall service provision with provincial and national level strategic planning conducted by higher levels of government or governing bodies. Strategically aligning service delivery can provide a number of benefits which include:
 - Increased access to grant funding
 - Ability to access and utilize research and other available resources
 - Consistency of messaging to local community groups and organizations
- Within the sport and recreational sphere, national initiatives such as the Long Term Athlete Development model and Canadian Sport for Life Policy have been implemented locally by many municipalities in their programming.
- Many municipalities are also requiring that local sport groups and associations align with these initiatives in order to receive funding and ongoing support.

Volunteerism

Without Volunteers, Recreation Opportunities Would Be Limited

- Volunteers continue to be vitally important to the planning and delivery of numerous events and programs.
- Municipalities support volunteers in a variety of ways. Methods of support include professional training, board governance training, appreciation events, promoting volunteer opportunities, and providing discounted recreation facility access.
- Without volunteers, municipalities would not be able to provide an equivalent level of service to its residents.

11 Alberta Parks and Recreation Association (2002). A Re-established Urban Parks Program.

British Columbians Of All Ages Volunteer

- The following findings are from the 2010 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (British Columbia data tables):¹²
 - British Columbians volunteer at a higher rate (49.8%) than the national average (47.0%).
 - The highest volunteer rate in British Columbia is among youth and young adults aged 15 to 24 (58.8%) followed by ages 35 to 44 (57.5%) and ages 25 to 34 (53.2%).
 - Although seniors (65 years and older) had the lowest volunteer rate (38.9%), they had the highest average of annual volunteer hours (301 hours on average per year).

Volunteer Trends Are Shifting

- Nine current trends in volunteerism are identified by Volunteer Canada.¹³
 - Much comes from the few. While 47% of Canadians volunteer, over one-third (34%) of all volunteer hours were contributed by 5% of total volunteers.
 - The new volunteer. Young people volunteer to gain work related skills (Canadians aged 15 – 24 volunteer more than any other age group). New Canadians also volunteer to develop work experience and to practice language skills. Persons with disabilities may volunteer as a way to more fully participate in community life.
 - Volunteer job design. Volunteer job design can be the best defence for changing demographics and fluctuations in funding.
 - Mandatory volunteering. There are mandatory volunteer programs through Workfare, Community Service Order and school mandated community work.
 - Volunteering by contract. The changing volunteer environment is redefining volunteer commitment as a negotiated and mutually beneficial arrangement rather than a one-way sacrifice of time by the volunteer.
 - Risk management. Considered part of the process of job design for volunteers, risk management ensures the organization can place the right volunteer in the appropriate activity.
 - Borrowing best practices. The voluntary sector has responded to the changing environment by adopting corporate and public sector management practices including standards, codes of conduct, accountability and transparency measures around program administration, demand for evaluation, and outcome measurement.
 - Professional volunteer management. Managers of volunteer resources are working toward establishing an equal footing with other

¹² Data compiled by Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-649-x/2011001/tbl/tbl211-eng.htm>

¹³ Alberta Heritage Community Foundation. <http://www.abheritage.ca/volunteer/index.html>

professionals in the voluntary sector.

- Board governance. Volunteer boards must respond to the challenge of acting as both supervisors and strategic planners.

Infrastructure

- Aging Infrastructure Is A Concern
- The recently released Canadian Infrastructure Report Card¹⁴ included an assessment and analysis of the state of sport and recreation facilities in Canada. The report revealed a number of concerns and issues that will impact the delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure over the next number of years. Key findings from the report:
 - Canada's infrastructure, including sport and recreation facilities, is at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is immediate investment.
 - The average annual reinvestment rate in sport and recreation facilities is currently 1.3% (of capital value) while the recommended target rate of reinvestment is 1.7% – 2.5%.
 - Almost 1 in 2 sport and recreation facilities are in 'very poor,' 'poor' or 'fair' condition and need repair or replacement.
 - In comparison to other municipal infrastructure assessed in the Report Card, sport and recreation facilities were in the worst state and require immediate attention.
 - The Report Card indicated that the extrapolated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition is \$9 billion while those in 'fair' condition require \$14 billion.

Multi-Use Spaces Provide More Benefits

- Recreation and leisure facilities are being designed to accommodate multiple activities and to encompass a variety of different components.
- The benefits of designing multi-use spaces include the opportunity to create operational efficiencies, attract a wide spectrum of users, and procure multiple sources of revenue.
- Providing the opportunity for all family members to take part in different opportunities simultaneously at the same location additionally increases convenience and satisfaction for residents.
- Creating spaces within a facility that are easily adaptable and re-configurable is another growing trend observed in many newer and retrofitted facilities. Gymnasium spaces and field house facilities are being designed with adjustable barriers, walls, bleachers, and other amenities that can be easily set-up or removed depending on the type of activity or event.

14 http://www.canadainfrastructure.ca/downloads/Canadian_Infrastructure_Report_2016.pdf

Integrating Indoor And Outdoor Environments

- A new concept in recreation infrastructure planning is to ensure that the indoor recreation environment interacts seamlessly with the outdoor recreation environment. This can include such ideas as indoor/outdoor walking trails, indoor/outdoor child play areas, and indoor/outdoor aquatics facilities.
- Although there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered when planning indoor/outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, controlled access) the concept of planning an indoor facility to complement the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader community parks and trail system is prudent and will ensure the optimization of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation infrastructures.
- Integrating indoor and outdoor environments is also achieved by ensuring interiors have good opportunities to view the outdoors.

More Focus Is Placed On Ensuring Accessibility

- Many current recreation facilities are putting significant focus on ensuring that user experiences are comfortable including meeting accessibility requirements and incorporating designs that can accommodate various body types. Programming is made as accessible as possible via “layering” to provide the broadest appeal possible to physical and intellectual preferences.
- Meeting the needs of various user groups is also an important aspect of accessibility. Incorporating mobile technologies, rest spaces, child-friendly spaces, crafts areas, and educational multi-purpose rooms for classes and performances is an emerging trend.
- Accessibility guidelines set by governments, as well as an increased understanding of the needs of different types of visitors, is fuelling this trend.

Achieving Financial Sustainability Through Revenue Generating Spaces

- Operators of community facilities are being required to find creative and innovative ways to generate the revenues needed to both sustain current operations and to fund future expansion or renovation projects. By generating sustainable revenues outside of regular government contributions, many facilities are able to demonstrate increased financial sustainability and expand service levels.
- Lease spaces provide one such opportunity. Many facilities are creating new spaces or redeveloping existing areas of their facility that can be leased to food and beverage providers and other retail businesses.
- Short term rental spaces are another major source of revenue for many facilities. Lobby areas, programs rooms, and event hosting spaces have the potential to be rented to the corporate sector for meetings, team building activities, holiday parties, and a host of other functions.
- Advertising spaces, sponsorships agreements, and naming rights are tactics used to generate revenue.

Social Amenities Enhance User Experience

- The inclusion of social amenities provides the opportunity for multi-purpose community facilities to maximize the overall experience for users as well as to potentially attract non-traditional patrons to the facility.
- Examples of social amenities include attractive lobby areas, common spaces, restaurants and cafeterias, spectator viewing areas, meeting facilities, and adjacent outdoor parks or green space.
- It is uncommon for new public facilities, especially in urban areas, to not be equipped with public wireless internet.
- Another significant benefit of equipping facilities with social amenities is the opportunity to increase usage and visitation to the facility during non-peak hours. Including spaces such as public cafeterias and open lobby spaces can result in local residents visiting the facility during non-event or non-program hours to meet friends or is simply a part of their daily routine. Many municipalities and non-profit organizations have encouraged this non-peak hour use in order to ensure that the broader populace perceives that the facility is accessible and available to all members of the community.

Urban Parks

Quality Parks And Outdoor Spaces Are Highly Valued By Residents

- Research supports that individuals continue to place a high value on the availability and quality of parks, trails, and outdoor spaces.
- A 2013 Canadian study commissioned by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation¹⁵ found that nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that local parks were “very important” to them and their family. Additionally, 68% of Canadians are concerned about the loss of green space in their community.
- A 2011 study¹⁶ of over 1,100 parents of 2 to 12 year olds in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom found that the more time a family spends together at a playground, the greater their overall sense of family wellbeing. Three-quarters also wished that their family had time to visit a playground more often.
- Parks and outdoor spaces also play a key role in helping to combat “nature deficit disorder” amongst children and youth. This phrase, first coined by Richard Louv in his bestselling book “Last Child in the Woods,” suggests that children are becoming estranged from nature and natural play, which results in a number of cognitive, physical, and developmental issues.

15 TD Friends of the Environment Foundation survey. Conducted by Ipsos Reid (2013).

16 Harris Interactive (2011). Playgrounds Increase Sense Of Family Well-Being. Washington, District of Columbia. Foresters.

- While all residents benefit from the availability of quality park spaces, a significant amount of research and attention has been given to the myriad of benefits that result from children and youth being able to play and interact in outdoor settings. Findings include:
 - Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and they are sick less often.¹⁷
 - Exposure to natural environments improves children’s cognitive development by improving their awareness, reasoning, and observational skills.¹⁸
 - Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other.¹⁹ Outdoor environments are important to children’s development of independence and autonomy.²⁰
 - Children with views of and contact with nature score higher on tests of concentration and self-discipline. The greener, the better the scores.²¹

Planning Active Transportation Routes and Pathways

- Active transportation refers to any form of human-powered transportation, such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, in-line skating, or skateboarding.²²
- In 2011 in Canada, 5.7% of commuters walked to work regularly while 1.3% cycled, accounting for over one million Canadians.²³
- A generational trend is that younger professionals are using active modes of transportation more now than ever. A number of factors are contributing to this such as people are becoming more environmentally conscious, financial limitations (active transportation is generally a cheaper mode of transportation), and a trend is occurring in which people are moving back from the suburbs into urban communities in which places of work are closer in proximity to place of residence.
- Urban parks encourage active traffic through its boundaries if they are adjacent to a roadway or can provide a shortcut through the community. Pathway systems that connect neighbourhoods across a municipality are becoming increasingly important to accommodate

17 Grahn, P., Martensson, F., Lindblad, B., Nilsson, P., & Ekman, A., (1997). UTE pa DAGIS, Stad & Land nr. 93/1991 Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, Alnarp.

18 Pyle, Robert (1993). *The thunder trees: Lessons from an urban wildland*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

19 Moore, Robin (1996). Compact Nature: The Role of Playing and Learning Gardens on Children’s Lives, *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture*, 8, 72-82

20 Bartlett, Sheridan (1996). Access to Outdoor Play and Its Implications for Healthy Attachments. Unpublished article, Putney, VT

21 Taylor, A.F., Kuo, F.E. & Sullivan, W.C. (2002). Views of Nature and Self-Discipline: Evidence from Inner City Children, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22, 49-63

22 Public Health Agency of Canada. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/at-ta-eng.php>

23 Statistics Canada. 2011. *Commuting to Work*. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-nm/2011/as-sa/99-012-x/99-012-x2011003_1-eng.cfm

alternative methods of transportation.

- Including multi-use pathway systems is becoming a given with park design as they not only serve a transportation function, but facilitate a wide range of recreational uses.
- Experienced active transportation commuters, especially cyclists, tend to favour more direct routes and will utilize roadways instead of paved pathways. Paved pathways that are planned to encourage active transportation commuters are wide and typically have separate lanes for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Relationships to analyse include the types of amenities on pathways and user numbers, lighting and its effects on night usage, and the surface material and the types of usage (e.g. bicycling, walking). An analysis of why certain pathways receive high usage can be applied to other corridors that do not attract as much active traffic volume.
- Gathering utilization data with trail trackers is a practice that municipalities are beginning to undertake on a regular basis.

Parks Are Used To Preserve And Promote Heritage And Culture

- Preserving and further developing the historical aspects of urban parks is a strategy municipalities apply to embed the importance of these spaces within the community and increase resident interest and utilization.
- Municipalities showcase the history of a community via its prominent community builders and significant events from the past by dedicating the name of a park, including interpretative information, and displaying art installations that contribute to a sense of place.
- Aspects of cultures are celebrated and persevered in parks. In Chinese gardens, for example, plants are carefully selected for their symbolic association and installed to dictate the arrangement of spaces. The idea that a garden should invite aesthetic appreciation and the enjoyment of nature is important to some park visitors, but is not limited to a single culture.
- Festival venues, art displays, amphitheatres, and garden features are examples of culture infrastructure in urban parks that can set a municipality apart. These amenities provide identity-defining features and establish iconic places.

Urban Agriculture Improves Community Well-being

As more people live in cities, there is significant interest in strengthening the connections between people and their food systems. Urban agriculture, urban farming and community gardening is the local participation in food production and distribution in an urban setting. Activities can include community gardens, community-based food production sites, community kitchen programs, food share programs and farmers' markets. In addition to growing vegetables and fruit, this can also include raising chickens and bee-keeping. Urban agriculture has gained interest since the 1990s as a response to concerns about the

rising costs of food and energy, water shortages, food safety and security. Community gardens can be installed in public parks, green roofs, underutilized private lots and municipal green space, and brownfield sites. Community gardens are continuing to be seen as amenities that contribute to healthy, active lifestyles.

Dog Walking Needs To Be Accomodated

Roughly one third of Canadian households have a dog²⁴, and this provides many social and health benefits to people and dog owners. This dog population requires on-leash and off-leash areas for exercise and socialization. In growing urban populations, there is increasing demand for dog walking space and need for parks to fulfil more functions such as separated off-leash areas. Off-leash areas can take the form of destination dog parks, off-leash trails, water access for dogs, open unfenced grass areas, smaller fenced parks or exercise areas and small dog relief areas near multi-unit buildings. Off-leash areas can help activate underutilized spaces within the city that might be attracting undesirable activity and reduce unsanctioned dog activity in environmentally sensitive areas, but can lead to noise and waste concerns.

Homelessness can Be Addressed In Park Planning

In a significant number of BC communities, economic and social factors have led to an increase in the use of parks by people who are homeless. This can affect perceptions around safety and pose challenges in maintaining parks to an acceptable standard. Recreation facilities can also be affected, but usually to a lesser degree. Tools for addressing this involve working with social service organizations to address the broader issues and needs, collaborating with others to promote awareness of services and to determine appropriate responses, and measures that can be achieved through involving homeless people, community projects, and using CPTED principles for park planning and design.

24 http://www.ipsos-na.com/dl/pdf/knowledge-ideas/public-affairs/ipsosPA_TS_CatsMeow.pdf



APPENDIX E: MAPS

Existing Parks and Trails

Legend

- Playgrounds
- All-Season Trail
- Summer Only Trail
- Winter Access Trail
- Community Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Open Space
- Natural Areas
- OCP Natural Area
- School - Grounds
- School - Buildings or Other
- Future School Site
- Fort St. John Municipal Boundary
- Potential Boundary Expansion Areas
- Parcel
- Watercourse
- Waterbody



The accuracy & completeness of information shown on this drawing is not guaranteed. It will be the responsibility of the user of the information shown on this drawing to locate & establish the precise location of all existing information whether shown or not.



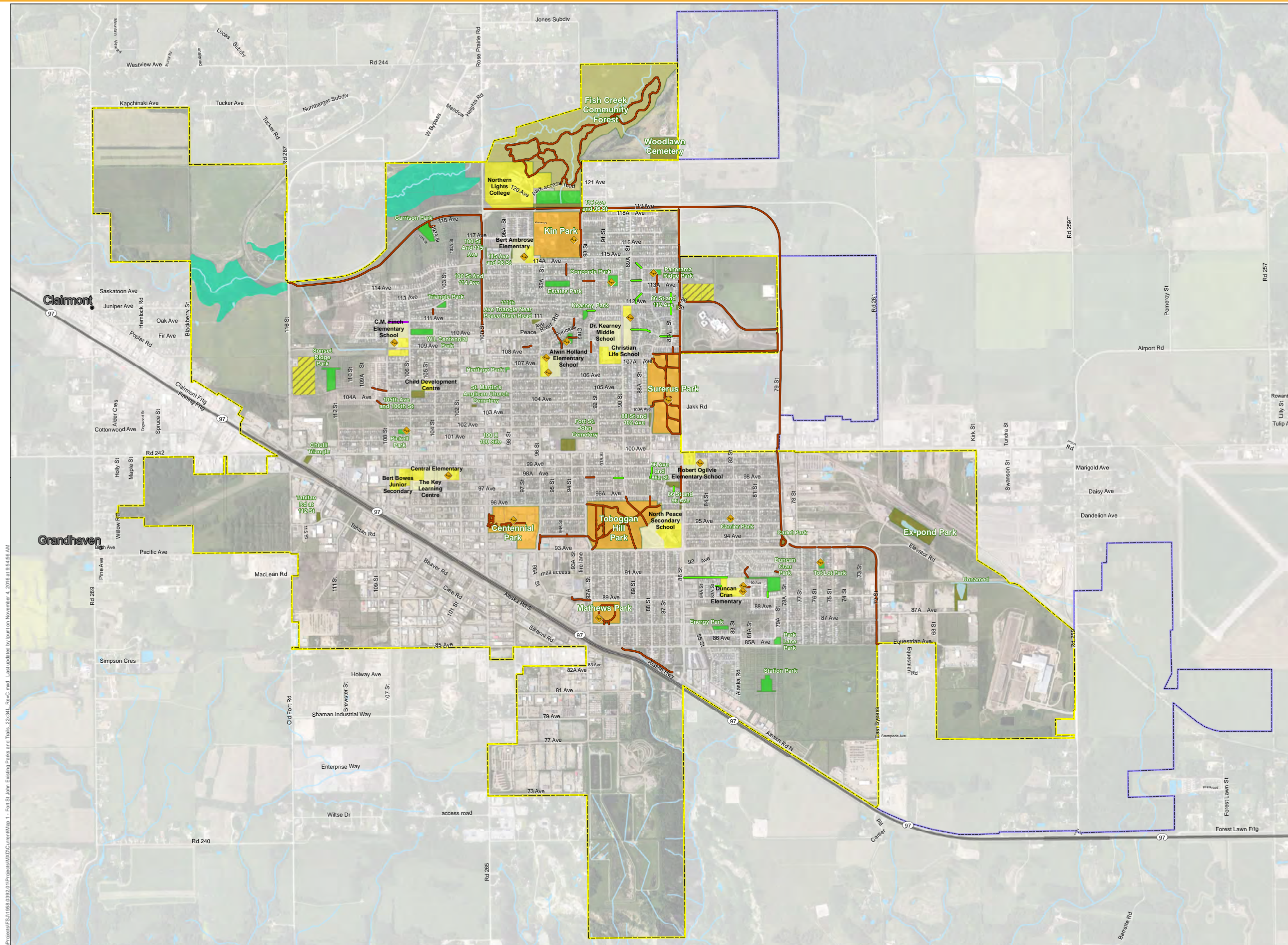
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Scale: 1:15,000

Data Sources: Data provided by The City of Fort St. John (2016), Data BC (2016) and Google (2016).

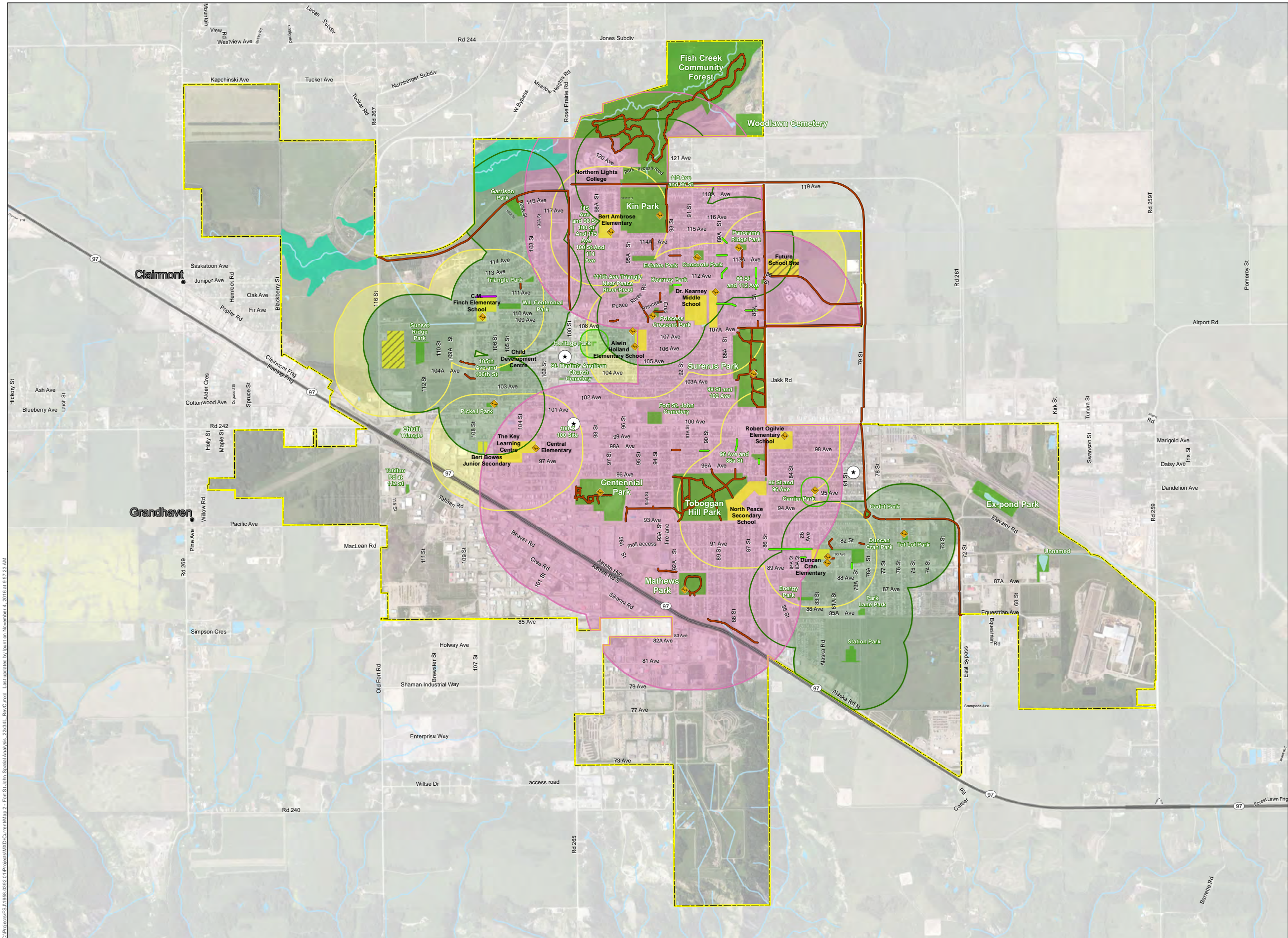
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Author: LP
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MAP 1

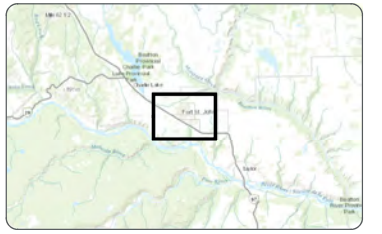


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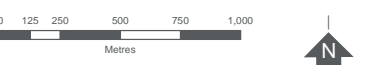


Fort St. John
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Spatial Analysis

- Legend**
- ★ Gaps in Neighbourhood Park Supply
 - Community Parks Catchment (800 m)
 - Large Neighbourhood Parks Catchment (400m)
 - Small Neighbourhood Parks Catchment (100 m)
 - School Grounds Catchment (400 m)
 - Playgrounds
 - All-Season Trail
 - Summer Only Trail
 - Winter Access Trail
- ClassCode**
- City Parks
 - OCN Natural Areas
 - School Grounds
 - Future School Sites
 - Fort St. John Municipal Boundary
 - Parcel
 - Watercourse
 - Waterbody



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Proposed Parks and Trails

Legend

- Gaps in Neighbourhood Park Supply
- Proposed Community Park
- Proposed Neighbourhood Park
- Parks Needed If Residential
- Proposed Trail
- Proposed Trail (Undeveloped Area)
- Proposed Bicycle Routes
- Playgrounds
- All-Season Trail
- Summer Only Trail
- Winter Access Trail
- Community Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Open Space
- Natural Areas
- OCP Natural Areas
- School - Grounds
- School - Buildings or Other
- Future School Sites
- Fort St. John Municipal Boundary
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MAP 3

