



Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

July 2019



Monteith • Brown
planning consultants

Connecting Creativity & Play



City of Welland

Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan

July 31, 2019

FINAL



Acknowledgements

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan is a product of the vision and dedication of City Council and the Master Plan Steering Committee. We also extend our thanks to the many residents, community groups and other City Staff who generously gave their time – the valuable insights and opinions collectively received through the planning process has helped the Master Plan reflect the needs of Welland.

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Regional Councillor Pat Chiocchio

Councillor Adam Moote, Ward 1

Councillor Mary Ann Grimaldi, Ward 1

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Councillor Lucas Spinosa, Ward 3

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Consultants

Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd.

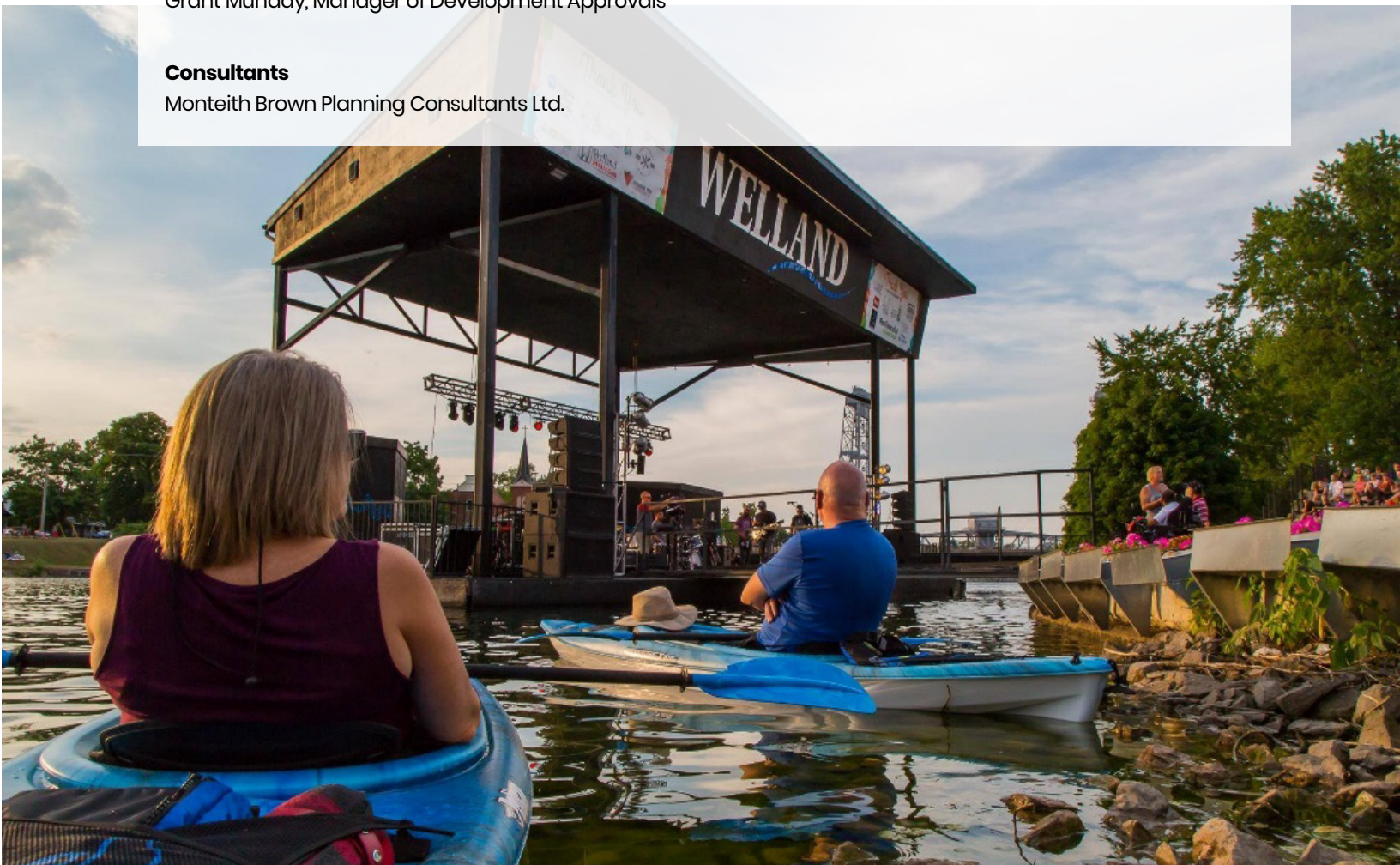


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Executive Summary

In February 2019, the City of Welland in conjunction with Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. initiated the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan (the “PRC Master Plan”). The last such plan was prepared in 2006 and the community is markedly different. New facilities have been built (e.g. the Welland International Flatwater Centre, expansion of the Welland Community Wellness Complex), new programs and services are available through the Recreation & Culture Division, the population has grown by 8%, and the socio-economic profile of residents has become more diverse.

The PRC Master Plan was developed with the input of Welland residents, City Council and Staff, and partners within the community. These consultations emphasized how much residents see Welland’s parks, recreation and cultural services/spaces as connecting the community through physical activity, social interaction and economic development. It is the input received from residents and partners that resulted in the following Vision to guide the PRC Master Plan:

“Connecting Creativity & Play”

The PRC Master Plan contains a total of 47 Recommendations to guide the City of Welland for the next 10 years, a number of which are proposed to be implemented within Departmental work plans over the next 5 years. The following Recommendations are the highest priorities arising out of the PRC Master Plan.

Coordinating Planning & Service Delivery within the Welland Recreational Corridor

Through research and consultations, it was exceedingly clear that the City’s past and present is closely intertwined with the Welland Recreational Corridor. Many residents view the Corridor as a place for gathering, passive enjoyment, cultural activity, recreation and sport, a connection to areas within and beyond Welland, and as an economic driver of growth and prosperity.

Although the Recreation & Culture Division has assumed a number of responsibilities held by the former Welland Recreational Canal Corporation, the latter’s vision of creating a distinctive place for arts, culture, and sports through a natural experience remains relevant. The PRC Master Plan makes the following recommendations for the Welland Recreational Corridor:

- Initiate the second Phase of the City’s ongoing improvement strategy for the Corridor that focuses on the creation of a “Leisure Zone” between Woodlawn Road and Ontario Road. This Zone centres upon areas for public swimming, paddling, shaded seating, and public art at a minimum (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #13**).
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a competitive rowing course (minimum of 2,000 metres) in conjunction with local, regional and provincial rowing organizations (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #14**).
- Invest in outdoor aquatics and fitness infrastructure within the Corridor such as outdoor fitness equipment, rejuvenation of the Floating Stage to include group fitness, and supported by unique land-based and open-water activities such as paddleboard yoga, triathlon training, and advanced aquatic leadership courses (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #15**).
- Support growth, coordination, delivery and development of programs and infrastructure within the Corridor with a dedicated staff person (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #16**).

Creating an Arts & Cultural Resource Centre in the Downtown

The City's creative sector is reliant upon space owned by the private sector or within home-based studios to hone their crafts. While the City has invested in purpose-built space for arts and culture (e.g. Civic Square, the Amphitheater & Floating Stage, the Wellness Complex theatre), the development of a resource centre for the arts and cultural community to meet and collaborate is encouraged. Such a hub could centralize arts and cultural programs offered by the City and its local partners, while serving as an incubator for creative individuals and entrepreneurs.

The City should begin exploring the feasibility of creating an arts and cultural resource centre by engaging local organizations and businesses, selecting a site (including through possible adaptive re-use of a historically significant building), and determining the governance and funding model that would be required. The City has a long history of supporting certain segments of the parks, recreation and culture sector with their own community hubs (e.g. sports fields at Youngs Sportsplex and Memorial Park, arenas in the downtown, etc.) which is consistent with the proposed facility model for the arts and cultural sector (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #39**).

Strengthening Departmental Promotion & Marketing Efforts

Improving the marketing and awareness of parks, recreation and culture activities was one of the prevailing themes heard throughout the PRC Master Plan consultations. There is a sense among many people that Welland offers excellent services and programs that people are not aware of. The City already does many good things to promote awareness such as publishing its Wellness Guide and use of social media, however, staff resources are stretched to keep pace with the "instant information" mindset in this day and age.

For this reason, a staff person dedicated to promotion and marketing of the City's parks, recreation and cultural services is required. This person would coordinate communications between the Recreation & Culture Division, the Parks Division, and the Communications & Marketing Department to ensure consistency (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #8**).



Positioning Parks & Trails for the Future

Welland residents strongly value the physical, economic and social benefits created through the City's parks and trails system, lending support for continued investment. The PRC Master Plan envisions future parkland needs being met through the acquisition of new parkland, major revitalization and renewal efforts of existing parks, and strengthening park experiences through investments in amenities. The following Recommendations are made in support of these endeavours:

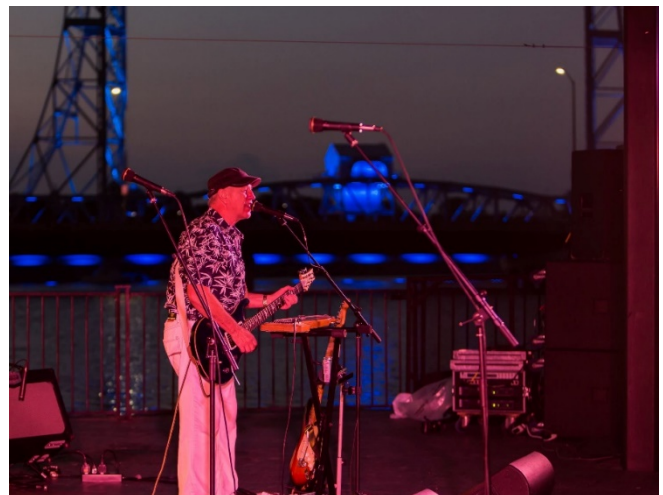
- Acquire parkland in future development areas by maximizing contributions allowable under the Ontario Planning Act (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #17**).
- Convert the Atlas Landfill to a City-wide Park typology upon its decommissioning and obtaining requisite approvals, designed with consideration of the Vista Park Concept Plan (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #18**).
- Prepare a Trails or Active Transportation Master Plan to confirm the feasibility of implementing the conceptual trails network illustrated in this Master Plan, while publishing a Welland Trails Map to clearly identify routes for residents and visitors (**PRC Master Plan Recommendations #24 and #25**).
- Integrate comfort elements as part of parks and trail development or redevelopment projects to encourage greater public use through the provision of shade, seating, lighting and/or washrooms as appropriate (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #19**).

Preparing a Comprehensive Festivals & Events Strategy

Like the Welland Recreational Corridor, festivals and events are an important part of the City's identity. Consultations held throughout the master planning process demonstrated that residents and decision-makers want to see more festivals and special events, while strengthening existing ones.

Welland's festivals and events provide an opportunity for residents to gather while serving as important platforms to celebrate local culture, heritage, talent, and achievements. The City of Welland has demonstrated its commitment to supporting local festivals and special events by providing indoor and outdoor venues, offering support through funding and logistical resources, and facilitating the planning and delivery of the events themselves.

Given the complexities of planning, coordinating, staffing and funding local festivals, the City should have a comprehensive Festivals & Events Strategy in place that defines the role and responsibilities of the City of Welland in delivering and facilitating events. The Strategy should articulate funding and staffing requirements, promotional and marketing strategies targeted to local residents and tourists across the region, and identify how existing and future physical infrastructure can be better leveraged to deliver quality experiences (**PRC Master Plan Recommendation #43**).



Our Vision

for Parks, Recreation & Culture

Connecting Creativity & Play



1.1 A Snapshot of Parks, Recreation and Culture in Welland

Located in the heart of Niagara Region, the City of Welland is surrounded by natural beauty, a vibrant arts and cultural community, and a long history of recreation and sport. Originally settled in the late 1700s and incorporated as a City in 1858, Welland grew around the canal and its subsequent by-pass. Both the Welland Canal and the Welland Recreational Corridor that followed have shaped many aspects of the City, notably the attraction of industry after the industrial revolution and post-war times. These waterways also influenced land development patterns of the City, with the establishment of the downtown core and its critical mass of historic buildings, Merritt Island, and ultimately suburban developments to the west and north. Today, the **Welland Recreational Corridor** and the Canal are places of community gathering, physical activity, personal relaxation and reflection, and artistic inspiration.

The City has many notable parks and facilities. **Chippawa Park** offers year-round spaces for many active and passive activities to take place with its recreation facilities, manicured horticultural beds, and the pond. The **Welland Sports Complex** and **Youngs Sportsplex** centralize sports field and other activities while the **Welland International Flatwater Centre** has become a renowned destination within the global paddle sport community. Additionally, the **Welland Community Wellness Complex** and the two arenas address a more localized need.

A distinct cultural neighborhood exists in the downtown core, characterized by the City's early architecture and anchored by a successful **Farmers' Market**, **Merritt Park** and its Floating Stage/Amphitheatre, and the **Welland Museum** that is located within a former Carnegie Library building. The **Welland Public Library** is another municipal service that is interwoven within the cultural fabric with three branches across the city.

Needs for parks, recreation and cultural services are changing in Welland. The City's population is estimated at 56,100 persons which is 4,000 more people than 10 years ago (8% growth); over the next 10 years, there will be an estimated 63,600 persons living in Welland (13% growth).¹ These 7,500 new residents will place additional pressures on the parks, recreation and cultural system while creating new demands based on demographic factors such as their age, income and cultural composition.



Park Snapshot

Chippawa Park is home to year-round activity through the community centre, pond/skating rink, ball diamond, splash pad, sand volleyball, lawn bowling greens, gardens, and areas for personal relaxation and reflection.

Where to Find Specific Topics in the Master Plan

- Consultations – Section 2
- Department Objectives – Section 3
- Parks – Section 4
- Recreation – Section 5
- Culture – Section 6

¹ City of Welland. DRAFT 2019 Development Charges Background Study.

1.2 A Vision for Parks, Recreation & Culture

The PRC Master Plan's vision defines the future state envisioned for parks, recreation and culture in Welland. In 10 years from now, the City will have focused its efforts on developing its parks, recreation and cultural sector by “**Connecting Creativity and Play.**” The Master Plan's vision originates out of the themes heard through consultations with the community. The key words of the vision are described as follows.

Connecting

The term “Connecting” refers to the residents viewing parks, recreation and culture services as being interconnected and complementary to each other. It also reflects the ability of the system to bring people together, regardless of their abilities, interests or backgrounds.

The term acknowledges the strong value placed upon the Welland Recreation Corridor (WRC) and Welland Canal by residents, community organizations, businesses and City Council. Many view the WRC as the “heart” of parks, recreation and culture in Welland – to many, it defines the City's identity, stimulates its vibrancy, strengthens the local economy and connects the community. But the connections goes beyond the WRC – it also reflects the opinions of those residents that want services extended into neighbourhoods, therein forming part of a broader network of infrastructure and activity as well as connecting the community physically (trails) and through programming (special events, promotional efforts).

Creativity

Welland is home to talented, motivated and creative individuals that collectively form a strong arts and cultural community. The envisioned future state for the arts and culture sector is to build relationships, continue to facilitate creativity, and bring the community together through a shared understanding and appreciation for one another. Having a strong arts and cultural system will be a critical part of attracting new residents to the City and retaining existing ones.

Play

The notion of play encompasses many activities and interests of residents participating in parks, recreation and culture. By engaging in individual and community-based leisure experiences throughout the year, it is hoped that residents will lead healthy lifestyles, an ability to interact with others, and strengthen the quality of life for residents.



1.3 The Benefits of Investing in Parks, Recreation & Culture

Welland's parks, recreation and culture system contributes to the well-being of every resident living in the community, and for the City as a whole. Recreation and culture facilities, parks and related programs provide Welland's residents with countless physical, health, psychological, economic and environmental benefits. Not only does participation in parks, recreation and cultural activities offer opportunities for a healthy lifestyle, it facilitates greater cognitive development and self-esteem among individuals, social interaction, economic spending, conservation of natural lands, and community vibrancy.



There is ample support for the benefits of parks, recreation and culture including through evidence-based national/provincial charters such as Parks for All, the Framework for Recreation in Canada, and The Ontario Culture Strategy.

The **Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan** (referred to as the "PRC Master Plan" or "the Master Plan") identifies the City of Welland's high level needs and priorities. Doing so will help the City and community partners to provide the needed mix of parks, recreation and cultural facilities, programs and services for Welland residents to engage in meaningful social and physical activities while positioning the City to attract visitors and tourists to the community.

1.5 Selected Trends Influencing Parks, Recreation & Culture

Lack of Free Time

A lack of time is often identified as the primary barrier to participating in parks, recreation and culture. This barrier is generally driven by busy lifestyles at home, work, and school, as well as competing social interests. To combat this trend, municipalities have employed strategies such as extending facility hours of operation and offering programs at different times of the day and week to accommodate the busy schedules of residents.

As personal schedules become more hectic or unpredictable, many people are unable to commit to regularly scheduled programs. As a result, there has been an increasing demand for spontaneous and unstructured programs that residents can participate in without registering in advance. Municipalities, including Welland, have responded to this trend through drop-in and self-scheduled programs. Welland's Wellness Guide identifies many drop-in programs, some of which take place outdoors including within parks and the Welland Recreation Corridor.



Physical Inactivity

The 2018 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for children and youth graded overall physical activity levels a “D+”, which is a marginal improvement compared to previous years. This result suggests that there has been limited progress in improving physical activity at the national level. The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (age 5 to 7) recommends a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity per day, however the report card found that only 35% of children and youth are meeting this requirement. The report card also found that 62% of children (age 3 to 4) are getting the recommended 180 minutes of physical activity under the same guideline.² This highlights the importance of communities offering a variety of recreational opportunities to their residents in order to engage as many as possible in some form of physical activity.

Aging Infrastructure

The 2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card rated Canada’s sports and recreation facilities as “Fair”, which was the lowest ranking out of all municipal assets that were evaluated.³ This suggests that municipal sports and recreation facilities require attention, show signs of deterioration, or have deteriorating components. Provincially, many municipal facilities were constructed between the 1950s and 1980s, with a number of them built in 1967 to celebrate Canada’s Centennial year. Since this period, infrastructure province-wide has been underfunded, although these pressures have been somewhat alleviated through various provincial and federal stimulus plans. More recently, the federal government demonstrated its commitment to renewing municipal infrastructure with over \$1.8 Billion in funding directed towards renewing parks and recreation assets, in addition to accessibility and trail improvements.⁴

Locally, the City has benefitted from upper-tier government stimulus plans. The City received nearly \$6 million in funding for the construction of the Welland Community Wellness Complex. With respect to recent facility improvements, the City’s 2018 Capital budget identified various projects related to enhancing parks and recreation assets including improvements to the canal trail and water access, funding for Youngs Sportsplex, and various park improvement projects.



² The ParticipACTION report card on physical activity for children and youth. 2018.

³ Canada Infrastructure. 2016 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card. Retrieved from <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca>

⁴ Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. CPRA applauds federal government commitment to parks and recreation opportunities for Canadians. Retrieved from <https://www.cpra.ca>

Multi-Use Recreation Facilities and Community Hubs

There is a growing expectation that facilities contain something for everyone, rather than being designed for singular uses. With a focus on user convenience and cost recovery, municipalities are centralizing multiple recreation facilities across fewer sites. This co-location of complementary facility components creates convenient, centralized activity centres and generates operating efficiencies.

The approach has evolved in recent years with some municipalities combining multi-use recreation facilities with other civic or community uses (with non-municipal organizations). This 'community hub' concept has gained traction by offering strong social benefits, strengthening community cohesion, and fostering enhanced quality of life in a central location to deliver multiple civic services. Not only can a community hub be a community or recreation centre (such as the Welland Community Wellness Complex), it can also integrate a school, library, or another type of public and private sector service (e.g. healthcare).



Local Tourism

A high-quality parks, recreation and culture system is an effective way to draw visitors through sports and tournaments, festivals, special events, and cultural heritage. In particular, these functions often generate "multiplier effects" from tourism spending, but also creates a sense of local pride and community spirit but can come at a cost to municipalities in terms of municipal staff support (organization, set-up, maintenance, etc.) and subsequently (e.g. clean-up).

While parks may not generate significant revenue or profit, they are often destinations for visitors. The Welland Recreation Corridor is a local example of a natural environment feature that attracts visitors and users from beyond the City's boundaries. Other examples of local events and opportunities include the Welland Farmers' Market, Welland SwimRun Challenge, Feast Street Niagara, Oktoberfest, and more.



Section 2 Input from Welland Residents



HAVE YOUR SAY!

2.1 Overview of Consultations & Common Themes

Consultation with residents, stakeholders, existing and prospective partners, and City representatives underlies much of PRC Master Plan. Consultations provided a point of departure to explore ideas along with community demographics and trends in the parks, recreation and culture system.

A variety of tools were used to promote the Master Plan and consult with residents and stakeholders so that they had many opportunities to provide input. These techniques were chosen based upon their ability to be effective, accessible, and efficient means of communication.

Methods of engaging the community included Your Channel Welland, Council input sessions, open houses, community survey, stakeholder focus groups, and more. The PRC Master Plan was promoted through mail-outs, handouts, posters, social media, news articles, and word of mouth.

Consultation and promotional efforts are shown in Figure 1. In total, the PRC Master Plan engaged over 1,100 participants, the majority of whom were engaged through the Your Channel Welland which attracted over 800 visitors to the project webpage.

Figure 2 summarizes the common themes expressed by residents and stakeholders throughout the PRC Master Plan consultation process (not listed in any particular order of importance or priority).

Figure 1: Summary of Community Consultation & Promotional Activities

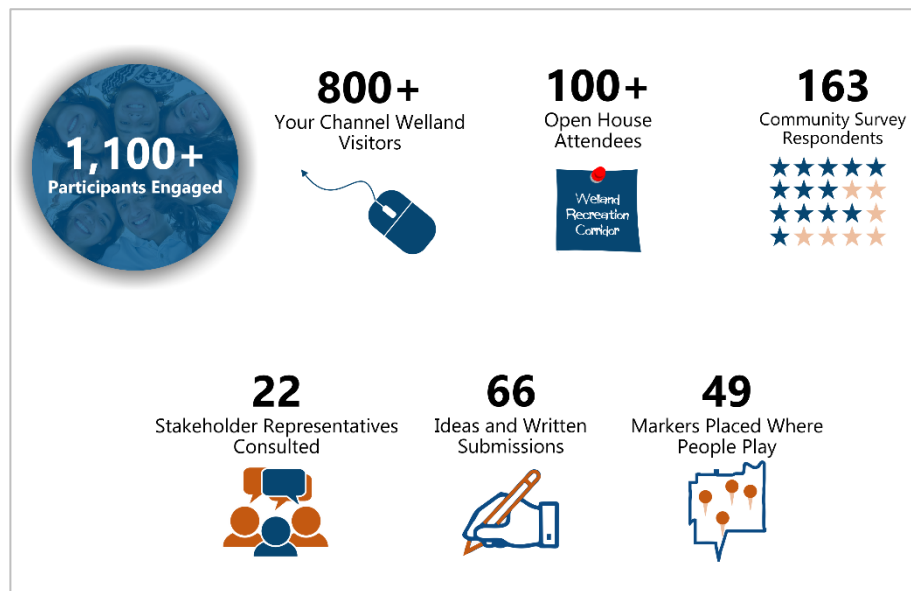
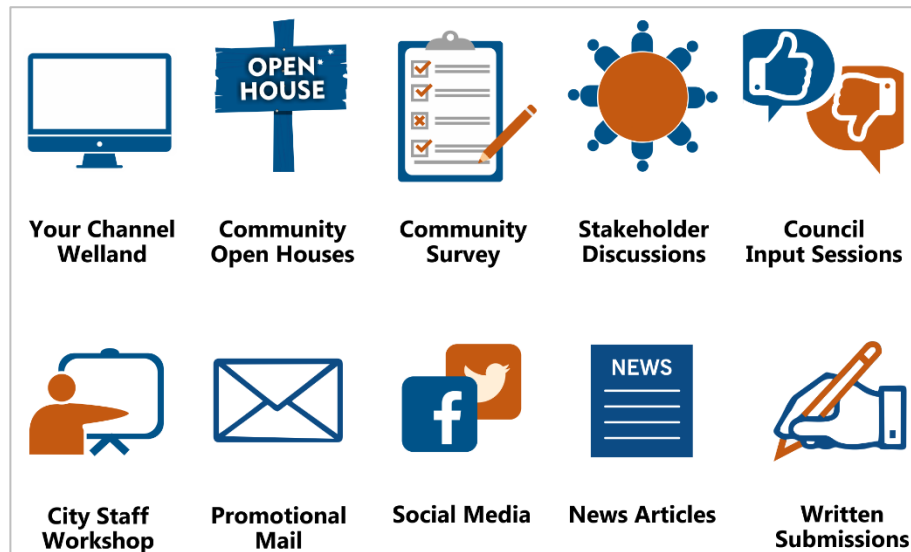


Figure 2: Common Themes Heard Throughout the Master Plan's Consultations



2.1 Your Channel Welland

A project portal established within the City's "Your Channel Welland" platform was used to:

- Communicate the purpose of the Master Plan and address Frequently Asked Questions;
- Advertise meetings and events;
- Allow residents to submit questions and written comments via a feedback form;
- Administer the Community Survey and Interactive Mapping Tool;
- Show project timelines and progress; and
- Provide public reports relating to the Master Plan.

Large poster boards were displayed at community centres, libraries, Civic Square and placed at various consultation events. Thousands of households were notified about the project and input opportunities using a direct mail-out that was included with monthly hydro bills.

YourChannel past projects Search Sign In Register

Home » Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan will guide the City over the next ten years. Through research and public input, the Master Plan will examine service levels in all communities across the city and establish priorities. The Plan will confirm program, service and facility needs and will identify strategies to assist with implementation.

The Master Plan will be an actionable, working document that can readily adapt to change in community values and address emerging trends. It will assist the City and local stakeholders in making strategic investments to ensure a healthy community, improve the quality of life of residents, and encourage a strong economy and sustainable environment.

Public and stakeholder engagement is critical to developing a plan that responds to the unique needs of Welland and its communities. We want to know how you use parks, facilities, and services; as-well-as how we can improve public space and services for other generations.

A Final Community Open House will be held on Thursday, May 23rd, 2019 at the Welland Community Wellness Complex. Come out anytime between **4pm to 7pm** to review the preliminary findings of the Draft Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan and to provide your input.

For questions about the Master Plan or to provide your feedback. Please see below or send an e-mail to adesai@mbpc.ca.

Public Consultation Completed!

- 1. Community Discussion #1 (Open House)** - The first open house was successfully held on April 2nd. Thank you to everyone who attended!
- 2. Community Discussion #2 (Open House)** - The second open house was successfully held on April 25th. Thank you to everyone who attended!
- 3. Public Survey** - The survey is now closed. Thank you to everyone who completed a survey!
- 4. Virtual Forum (Ideas)** - The Virtual Forum is now closed. Thank you to everyone who provided their ideas!
- 5. Interactive Mapping (Places)** - The Interactive Mapping is now closed. Thank you to everyone who provided their input!
- 6. Stakeholder Workshops (Invite Only)** - The Stakeholder Workshops are now complete. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Q & A

Please use this section to ask us any questions you may have about the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan.

Who's listening

Anand Desai
Associate Planner
Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd.
Email adesai@mbpc.ca

Timeline

- Phase 1 - Research & Engagement**
(Ends Mid to Late April - Date TBA)
- Phase 2 - Drafting of Master Plan**
(Ends Mid May - Date TBA)
- Phase 3 - Testing & Approval**
(Ends Late May - Date TBA)

Key Dates

Public Engagement on YourChannel
March → April 2019

Council Interview at General Committee - 6:00 pm
March 26 2019

Community Discussion Event #1 - 5:00-7:00 pm
April 02 2019

Stakeholder Round Tables
April 15 → April 16 2019

more..

FAQs

Why is it important to contribute to the Master Plan process?

What sorts of things do Parks and Recreation include?

How can I contribute at an open house?

How will the plan be developed?

2.2 Community Open Houses

Community Open Houses were held on April 2, 2019 at the Civic Square and on April 25, 2019 at the Welland Community Wellness Complex. Both Open Houses introduced the Master Plan to the public and encouraged residents to contribute their ideas related to parks, recreation and culture in Welland. Attendees also had an opportunity to provide input regarding the Welland Recreational Corridor, as well as ongoing projects such as the Memorial Park, Vista Park and Rotary Club of Welland Park developments.

Over 100 people attended the Open Houses. Some members of City Council and City staff were also in attendance to observe and interact with the public. Common themes heard from the Open Houses are summarized as follows.

Indoor Recreation

The majority of requests pertained to having more pickleball times be made available at the Welland Community Wellness Complex. The desire for a new twin-pad arena, possibly encircled by a walking track and supported by other community spaces (e.g., library), was also expressed as the desire for multi-use facilities emerged as a theme. Environmentally and age-friendly facility design features were advanced as being important considerations.



Parks, Trails, and Outdoor Recreation

The Welland Recreation Corridor is a highly valued community asset, provides numerous recreation opportunities such as swimming, walking, fishing, enjoyment of nature, and more. A range of outdoor recreation facilities were suggested including pickleball courts, splash pad, enhanced trail connections, community gardens, and boat/canoe rentals. The desire for a beach was also expressed. The installation of informative signage within the Corridor was requested for wayfinding and educational purposes.

Other passive greenspaces were requested in Welland, as well as for more treed areas and community gardens. Some residents would like to see improvements specifically at Manchester Park and Guerrilla Garden Park.

The City's trail system was also identified as an important contributor to the local quality of life. Attendees expressed the desire for more walking and cycling trails. Requests were made for greater connections throughout the City, particularly on the eastside of Welland (e.g., Welland Canal Bypass). Connections to the Great Trail (Trans Canada Trail) was put forward, as well as the need to ensure that the City's main trails (e.g., Welland Canal Parkway Trail) are suitable for non-motorized forms of transportation, including assisted mobility devices.

With respect to improving outdoor recreation facilities, requests were made for outdoor pickleball courts, as well as the need for more ball diamonds (or lit ball diamonds). Requests for basketball courts, skateboard parks, and playgrounds were also submitted.

Arts and Culture

The arts and cultural sector contains many highly valued assets with specific references to the Welland Public Library, Farmers' Market, and Museum. Attendees felt that there needs to be a greater opportunity to engage the arts and cultural community, something they felt could be achieved by improving the coordination of special events to ensure there are no overlaps. Greater investment in the arts and culture community was also suggested towards the museum, mural renewal, event marketing, and educational signage. Another common theme was a desire for more special events and festivals at Merritt Park.

"Do not lose sight of the natural beauty that our City has. Maintain and enhance what is here already and use it to its fullest."

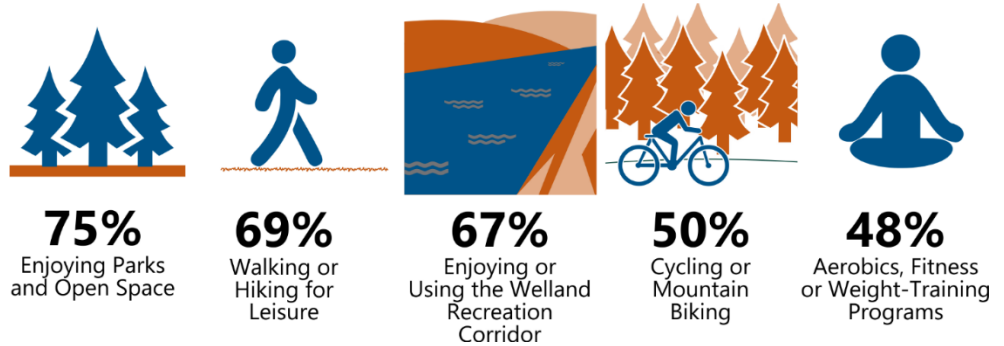
~ Open House Comment



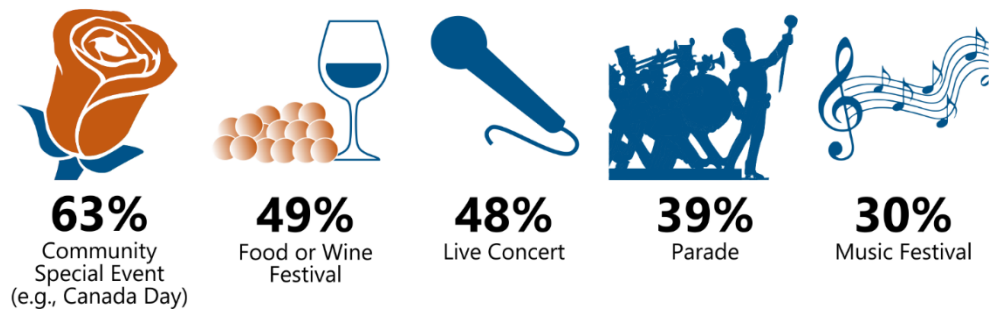
2.3 Community Survey

A Community Survey was prepared for members of the public to provide feedback regarding their participation, preferences and priorities to inform the PRC Master Plan. The Survey was active for the six week period between March 13 and April 28, 2019, and resulted in a total of 163 online and hard copy surveys being completed.

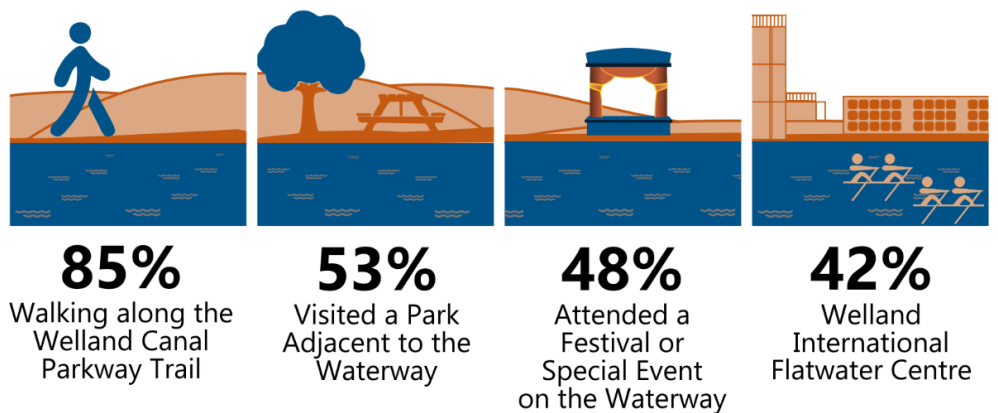
Top 5 Parks and Recreation Activities



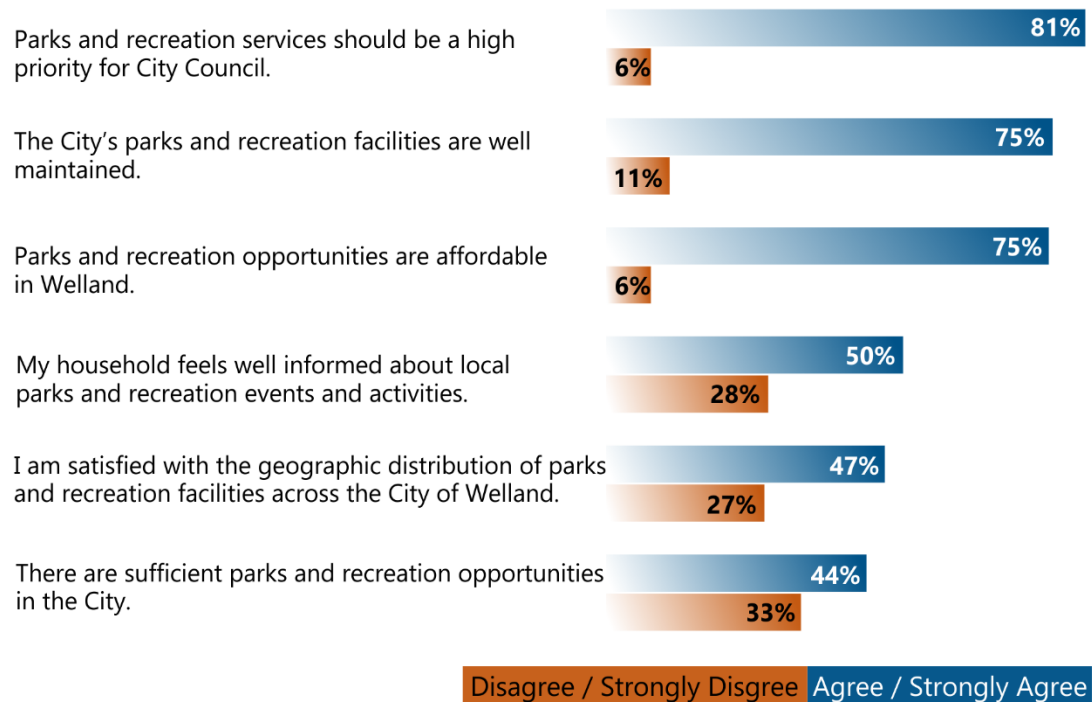
Top 5 Arts and Cultural Activities



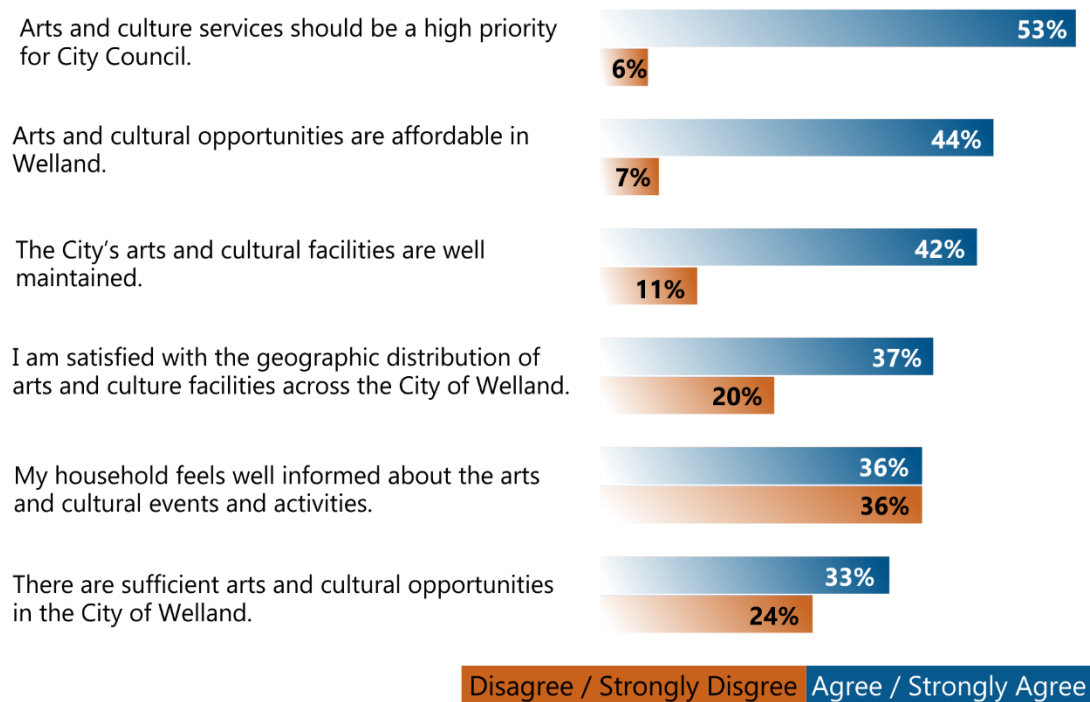
Most Popular Activities along the Welland Recreation Corridor



Agreement with Statements about Parks and Recreation in Welland



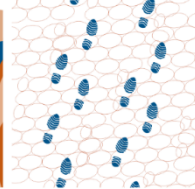
Agreement with Statements about Arts and Culture in Welland



Top 5 Parks and Recreation Priorities for Additional Public Spending



45%
Welland Recreation Corridor



34%
Nature Trails



23%
Acquisition of Parks and Open Space



21%
Paved Multi-Use Trails



20%
Ball Diamonds

Highest Priorities for the Welland Recreation Corridor



61%
Parks and Green Spaces



48%
Festivals or Special events



40%
Sports Facilities



27%
Food and Beverage Retail

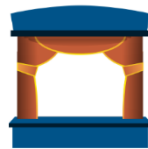


27%
Picnic Areas

Top 5 Arts and Cultural Priorities for Additional Public Spending



55%
Space for Festivals and Special Events



35%
Performing Arts Space (e.g., Theatre)



34%
Heritage Preservation Efforts



25%
Arts and Cultural Space for Youth Programs



23%
Museums

2.4 Interactive Place-Based Mapping Input

The public had an opportunity to spatially illustrate places throughout the City where they participate in parks, recreation and cultural activities. Using the Your Channel Welland platform, residents and visitors placed a total of 49 markers on a map of Welland and shared stories of what they did at each location. The majority of markers were placed within or near the Welland Recreational Corridor while other common locations included Memorial Park, Merritt Island Park, and Chippawa Park. The following is a summary of the input that was received.

- Many people “dropped a pin” at the Community Boat House within the Welland Recreational Corridor. Some members of the public also indicated that they enjoy swimming in the area. Other activities that the public engages in the Welland Recreation Corridor are walking and cycling, enjoying nature, and attending the special events that take place at the Amphitheatre.
- Memorial Park was a common location for users to play and relax. It was suggested that a viewing platform be installed at this location so visitors can enjoy the boats that pass along the canal. It was also suggested that more garbage cans are needed at this park.
- Merritt Island Park is a popular location to visit where users can play, relax, and ride a bicycle. Users mentioned that the park is enjoyable for reading, fishing, and launching small watercraft.
- Chippawa Park is another popular park where users can play and relax. One user mentioned that they visit this park to read. Another visitor felt that the park is underused and there should be more opportunities for families and special events such as movie nights and fireworks.
- Other places that were identified included the Brookfield Park playground, the Glenwood Park splash pad and playground, the Ricelawn Park open space, the Woodlawn Park skating rink, the Youngs Sportsplex indoor tennis and soccer facilities, Guerrilla Garden Park for socializing and gardening, and Stop 19 Pathway for walking.

2.5 Stakeholder Focus Groups

Three sessions were held on April 15 and 16, 2019 to discuss various aspects of Welland's parks, recreation and culture system with community stakeholders. Each session was segmented based on the type of organization, which were made up to community organizations and service clubs, recreation and sports stakeholders, and arts and culture groups. Focus Groups were attended by 23 participants representing 13 organizations, with the key themes from each Focus Group summarized as follows.

Community Organization and Service Club Focus Group

A lively discussion with service clubs, neighbourhood associations and other service providers demonstrated the strong capacity of community organizations to provide Welland residents with programs, services and facilities. Discussions largely revolved around finding ways to meet the needs of youth and older adults, attracting and retaining volunteers, and a need for community organizations to work better with each other and with the City.

Welland's youth were perceived to not have enough things to keep them interested, leading to negative behaviours and ultimately youth leaving the City after they graduate from high school. Similarly, the aging population is creating demands for facilities and programs but they do not always exist. Pickleball was noted as a popular activity from a recreational perspective and there is a need for health, disease-prevention, and programs for persons with disabilities.

The Rotary Club mentioned that it has been able to generate strong partnerships, most recently with the YMCA for a playground replacement project. Partnered projects can act as a catalyst for other organizations to become involved so that the financial burden of improving the community is shared, and making it more likely that a project will go ahead. The ability for community organizations to annually network with one another, potentially through a forum, was stated as a good practice to consider.

Most groups face challenges with sustaining volunteer levels, and suggested that volunteer opportunities could be better communicated and coordinated; the City was viewed as a logical entity to facilitate this given its holistic nature. Groups also discussed that it would be helpful to have the City assist with grant applications given that it is a unique skill set that some organizations do not have in-house.

Focus Group Participants

Community Organizations & Service Clubs

- Rotary Club of Welland
- Dain City Recreation
- Community Living Welland Pelham
- Welland Museum
- Niagara Centre YMCA

Arts & Culture Stakeholders

- Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
- Canalside Players
- Heritage Advisory Committee
- Welland Floatfest
- Welland Rose Festival
- Welland Recreation Projects Association

Recreation & Sport Stakeholders

- Welland District Slo-Pitch Association
- Welland Minor Baseball Association

Arts and Culture Focus Group

Focus groups emphasized Welland's creative talent and dedicated volunteers who contribute to a lively arts and cultural community. From independent artists to committed citizens involved in organizing special events and festivals, the City is fortunate that it is able to leverage community efforts. Groups mentioned that volunteerism has been declining due to perceived frustrations and a lack of recognition, which have compounded the challenge of finding new volunteers as existing ones retire from service.

Greater coordination with area municipalities and the Region of Niagara was advanced as a way for arts and culture to form part of a broader tourism and economic development strategy. The downtown core was specifically noted as a place containing many historically interesting assets, the linkage via the Welland Recreation Corridor, as well as the Farmers' Market and Museum all within walking distance. Public art was mentioned as a strength of the community, however, a number of the murals that form part of Welland's identity are deteriorating and there seems to be nothing that the City can do to oblige property owners to renew them apart from the current Community Improvement Plans.

The provision of a cultural space was also identified, potentially through adaptive re-use of an existing building. A former fire hall was specifically discussed with suggestions that contributions from volunteer tradespeople, reduced municipal red tape, and advice from other cultural organizations being ways to see such a project come to fruition.



Recreation and Sports Focus Group

Although a wide range of recreation and sports organizations were invited to attend, this focus group was attended by representatives from two local ball diamond users and thus largely centred upon the needs of baseball and slo-pitch. Both groups indicated that their strong programs are viewed positively across Niagara Region and beyond, but that a lack of lit diamonds is affecting their ability to grow. Much discussion revolved around the Memorial Park conceptual redevelopment plan, with groups stating that they see a different mix of ball diamonds included in order to respond to their participant profiles. In particular, they requested a hardball diamond along with the two proposed t-ball diamonds, which they believe would double their programmable capacity; they also emphasized that the proposed youth slo-pitch diamond is NOT something that their leagues would make use of. One group stated that they are booking a diamond in Pelham due to the lack of a similar diamond in Welland.

The two ball groups would like a multi-diamond complex that would function as the “home” of baseball and softball in Welland, much in the way that other sports have a centralized location for their activities; for example, the Youngs Sportsplex is the home for soccer while the two arenas are concentrated together. The groups mentioned that they have resources and materials that could be used to build a new diamond which they would be willing to provide to the City if a site can be secured; they are also willing to consider an increase in their rental fees if it fairly reflects the improvements they would benefit from, and that they would have a guaranteed amount of usage.

2.6 Staff Roundtable

On April 15, 2019, 12 City Staff and two members from the 2006 Master Plan steering committee shared their valuable expertise as part of the planning process. Staff in attendance represented a wide range of roles (including clerks, coordinators, supervisors/foremen, and managers) and disciplines (parks, recreation, culture). Key points from the discussions included:

- The fact that Welland has philosophically embraced the provision of low to no cost program options through free outdoor swims, a plethora of special events and festivals, and the Wellness For All financial assistance policy.
- Popular programs include therapeutic aquatic classes and Pop-Up in the Park while strong facilities are in place ranging from the arenas, Farmers’ Market, Merritt Island and the Welland Recreational Corridor.
- Pressing constraints include pool and gymnasium space, equipment storage, and lit sports fields.
- Community development and volunteer coordination are important if residents are to be provided with a full range of choices, and thus there could be a role for the City to better facilitate this through full-time staff position(s).
- Partnerships with community organizations, other institutions and businesses/BIA in order to fund developments, redevelopments, events and festivals.

2.7 Input from City Council

Two Input Sessions were held with City Council to provide project-specific information and updates, as well as to collect initial input for consideration in the Master Plan. The first session held on March 26, 2019 was followed by a second session on April 30, 2019. The following is a high level summary of the initial input received by Council from both sessions:

- There is a need to ensure that parks, recreation and culture opportunities in Welland are inclusive of residents and users representing different ages, incomes, cultural backgrounds, abilities and disabilities, and the LGBTQ+ community.
- Active transportation opportunities are important including linkages to key destinations in Welland (e.g., Welland Canal Parkway Trail) as well as amenities that promote and encourage their use.
- Welland has great parks and recreation assets, particularly the Welland Recreation Corridor. The use of these assets should be maximized.
- There are emerging recreation facilities and activities that should be considered as a part of the Master Plan including, but not limited to, pickleball, splash pads, outdoor fitness equipment, and spaces for casual social engagement (e.g., open green spaces).
- A strengthened arts and cultural sector should consider arts and cultural space, special events, festivals, and more. Welland has excellent resources but greater coordination between the City the community is needed to enhance the arts and cultural opportunities.



2.8 Phase 2 Community Open House

A Community Open House was held on May 23, 2019 at the Welland Community Wellness Complex to present the Draft PRC Master Plan. Residents and stakeholders reviewed findings from the Master Plan and provided comments for consideration prior to the Master Plan's finalization. Support for the Master Plan was expressed by all that attended with particular emphasis placed upon future investments in indoor/outdoor pickleball courts, an arts and cultural resource hub, and balanced developments within the Welland Recreational Corridor.

Section 3

Departmental Objectives for Parks, Recreation & Culture



3.1 The City's Role

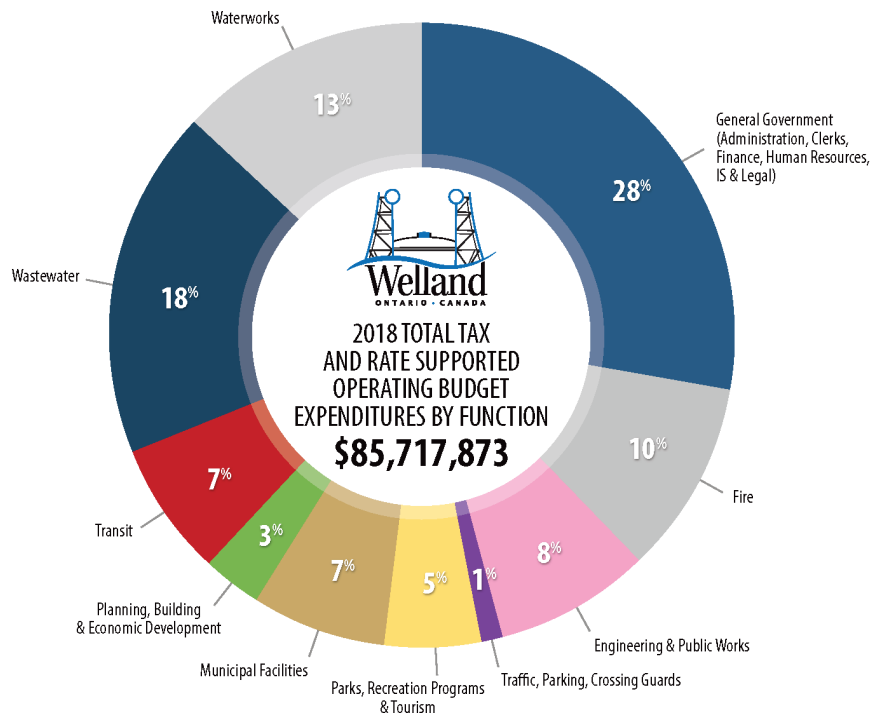
The City of Welland is a direct provider of parks, recreation and culture services with its array of facilities and programs that are delivered through the Recreation & Culture and the Parks Division. The 2018 Operating Budget allocates over \$4.6 million to City funded parks, recreation and culture facilities and programs, amounting to \$82 per capita; of the total, over \$1.3 million is assigned to recreation programs and services while another \$1.7 million is directed to parks and open space operations.

The City also indirectly supports the delivery of similar services and programs by community groups, volunteer organizations and the private sector who make use of City-owned properties as part of their respective mandates. The indirect service delivery practices of the City are supported by its adoption of a community development model. In this way, local organizations are empowered to deliver services using financial and other in-kind supports made available by the City of Welland.

The Recreation & Culture Division and the Parks Division are responsible for implementing many of the recommendations contained in this PRC Master Plan. Other municipal departments and divisions also have a role in matters such as finance, public works, and economic development.

While Sections 4 to 7 in the PRC Master Plan focus respectively on parks, recreation and cultural services, this Section provides broad guidance regarding goals and objectives that are common to all areas under the City's purview of such services.

Figure 3: 2018 Tax and Rate Supported Operating Budget Expenditures by Function



Source: City of Welland 2018 Operating Budget

3.2 City-Delivered Programs

The City provides programs that appeal to various age groups. Recreational programs generally span skating, aquatics, and fitness while arts activities span music, dance, and visual/creative arts. There are also general interest programs that span both the recreation and arts. Programs are segmented by children (age 14 and under), adults (age 19-49), and seniors (age 50+) although there are a selected number of intergenerational programs where age categories do not apply.

Registered and drop-in programs are available to respond to varied lifestyles and schedules of residents, summarized by age group in Table 1. The City's programming complement results in very few registered program gap areas, with the exception of dance and visual arts for a couple of age categories.

Table 1: Program Categories offered by the City of Welland by Age Group

REGISTERED Programs	Children	Youth	Adult	Seniors
Aquatics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health and Fitness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hobbies & Interest	✓	✓	✓	✓
Music	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dance	✓	-	-	✓
Visual/Creative Arts	✓	✓	-	✓

DROP-IN Programs	Children	Youth	Adult	Seniors
Public Swimming	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Skating	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sports	-	✓	✓	✓
Health and Fitness	-	✓	✓	✓
Hobbies & Interest	-	✓	✓	✓
Music	-	-	✓	✓
Visual/Creative Arts	-	✓	-	✓

Source: Welland Wellness Guides, 2018/2019

The PRC Master Plan contains recommendations regarding direct delivery of facilities and programs for the City to pursue. However, the City may be pressed for additional parks, recreation and cultural services that are not currently of sufficient demand to warrant a specific recommendation in the Master Plan or whose popularity becomes stronger at a future time. Therefore, the City must be prepared to appropriately respond to future requests.

Requests brought forward for non-traditional, emerging and/or non-core municipal services should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by considering (at a minimum):

- local/regional/provincial trends pertaining to usage and popularity of the activity/facility;
- examples of delivery models in other municipalities;
- local demand for the activity/program/facility;
- the ability of the City's existing parks, recreation and culture facilities to accommodate the new service;
- the feasibility for the City to reasonably provide the service / facility as a core service and in a cost-effective manner; and
- the willingness and ability of the requesting organization to provide the service / facility if provided with appropriate municipal supports.

City Programs: Recommendations

- #1.* Requests for facilities and services that are not part of the City's core mandate should be evaluated based on anticipated municipal role, quantifiable measures of demand and costs to the City, and other long-term implications prior to decision whether or not to partner in the public interest.

3.3 Building the Capacity of Local Volunteers

Recognizing the important contributions of its dedicated volunteer base, the City works with local volunteer organizations to ensure their efforts can be sustained over time. In January 2015, Statistics Canada published a Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey whose section focused on volunteering and charitable giving found that 12.7 million people in Canada volunteered nearly 2 billion hours in 2013. However, the research found that volunteers are aging and despite high reports of hours volunteered, the general volunteer rate was lower than recorded in previous surveys. This echoes what nearly all Welland-based stakeholder groups participating in the PRC Master Plan focus groups expressed.

Local volunteers help community groups deliver programs and services in Welland and are the backbone of critically important pieces of Welland's parks, recreation and culture service delivery system. Welland's volunteers are seeking reciprocity in their relationship with service provider organizations, including the City. To encourage participation and retention, volunteers should be provided with opportunities to assist with tasks that interest and excite them. It is important to match the needs and interests of volunteers with those that best suit the organization they are serving. Volunteers should not only assist with administrative tasks but also support program and service delivery. This will require substantial training and support to ensure success for both sides of the volunteer-organization relationship.

As many parks, recreation and culture service providers are volunteer-based or not-for-profit agencies, it can be difficult to find resources to support volunteer training and development. In response to this, there are examples of multiple service providers collectively pooling resources and sharing in training sessions that would be beneficial to all organizations (e.g., accessibility, harassment, or customer service training). One best-practice example of this is a partnered training opportunity provided to summer camp councillors in London, Ontario. In recent years, summer staff hired by the City of London, YMCA of Western Ontario and the Boys and Girls Club of London were invited to attend a large-scale training session called "all kids in camp" which provided training focused on inclusion for campers in each organization. Through this collaborative effort, staff and agencies were able to benefit from shared costs associated with facility rentals, trainers, and staff resources.

Ultimately, volunteers are more likely to continue participation if they feel comfortable, knowledgeable, and supported in their roles. Managers, Supervisors and Coordinators within the Recreation & Culture Division are committed to engaging with volunteers and promote a sense of belonging and appreciation; the desired outcome is to increase retention of valuable and well-trained participants in the groups that they volunteer with. The City and local service providers should recognize the value of volunteerism through participation in events such as National Volunteer Week (usually held annually in April – details provided by Volunteer Canada), host internal volunteer appreciation events, or provide small tokens of thanks as appropriate; bringing back previous City of Welland recognition efforts such as awards, the Ice Cream Social or new ideas should be considered.



During stakeholder focus groups, local organizations expressed interest in participating in an open house where volunteer and non-profit organizations could network with each other, showcase their offerings, minimize service duplication, and encourage each other to promote local businesses, programs, and events. Facilitating regular meetings among groups is best practice and is recommended given the highly integrated nature of service delivery in Welland; such forums could be combined with volunteer appreciation dinners already being put on by the City.

Building Volunteer Capacity: Recommendations

- #2. Continue to support Welland's volunteer sector through appropriate community development and capacity building initiatives.
- #3. Convene training opportunities for local volunteer organizations aimed at organizational effectiveness, capacity building, succession planning, etc. potentially hosted in collaboration with major agencies or organizations that also rely upon volunteers.
- #4. Organize annual forums for volunteer and community organizations delivering parks, recreation and culture services in Welland to allow information/idea sharing and networking opportunities to take place. Such forums could be tied in with new or existing volunteer recognition events.

3.4 Partnerships

The City proactively seeks out strategic partnerships that represent the interests of the public in order to ensure unique, cost-effective and quality services are available in Welland. Examples of partnerships include informal relationships with minor sport organizations, sponsorship agreements in place for local festivals, and more complex arrangements such as the Youngs Sportsplex.

PRC Master Plan consultations reinforced that key partners view themselves and others as integral parts of the local parks, recreation and culture system. There was a collective view that the facilities and services provided in a mid-sized city such as Welland would probably not exist if it were not for a willingness of organizations to work together. Examples of potential partners (and expansion/continuation of existing partnerships) in Welland include, but are not limited to:

- Upper tiers of government (e.g. Region of Niagara), adjacent municipalities and First Nations communities;
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and environmentally-focused organizations;
- District School Board of Niagara and the Niagara Catholic District School Board;
- Non-profit organizations such as the YMCA, local/regional Community Health Centres, United Way, etc.;
- Local stakeholders such as service clubs, minor sports and recreation providers, arts and cultural groups, community associations, and BIAs.; and/or
- The private sector (e.g. fitness providers, sporting groups, local artist studios, etc.) and local land owners.



There are a number of criteria that must be considered prior to establishing a relationship and a partnership with a third party wishing to introduce a new level of service with municipal assistance. First and foremost, any proposed partnership must be consistent with the municipal mandate and philosophies, and that the City would have a meaningful role to play in meeting a demonstrable community need. Due diligence relating to funding and operating responsibilities of each party, the organization/fiscal sustainability of the potential partner, and risk would also need to be determined prior to proceeding.

A standardized approach to evaluating partnerships that considers such criteria (and others) should be in place to allow for consistent and transparent decision-making. Through recent agreements such as that established for the Youngs Sportsplex, the City has established a foundation through which a partnership evaluation framework could be formalized and applied to future partnership requests. .

Partnerships: Recommendations

- #5.* Regularly meet with partners to discuss implementation of partnership agreements, and where necessary, revisit and/or strengthen agreements to maximize benefits to all parties and the general public.
- #6.* Proactively seek partnerships with parks, recreation and cultural service providers including, but not limited to, educational and healthcare institutions, non-profit agencies, sport organizations, and arts and cultural collectives, and entities interested in operating within the Welland Recreation Corridor or other City properties.
- #7.* Develop a standardized process or framework for evaluating and responding to requests for partnerships, with the view of maximizing public interests.

3.5 Strengthening Marketing & Communications Efforts

Residents often look to civic employees to inform them of opportunities to participate in parks, recreation and culture services. City staff from multiple Departments play an integral role in the dissemination of information and resources to both residents and visitors. Additionally, service providers and agencies within Welland appreciate being made aware of municipal events and opportunities, as well as using municipal channels to aid in their own awareness efforts.

Improving the marketing and awareness of parks, recreation and culture activities was one of the prevailing themes heard throughout the PRC Master Plan consultations. There is a sense among many people that Welland offers excellent services and programs that many people are not aware of.

The City publishes its Wellness Guide twice a year for Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer programs. This is the most comprehensive source for municipally-provided facilities, programs and services. It is available in hard copy format as well as found online under the City of Welland website's as a direct link from the home page's "Discover" tab as well as from the Recreation & Culture Page.

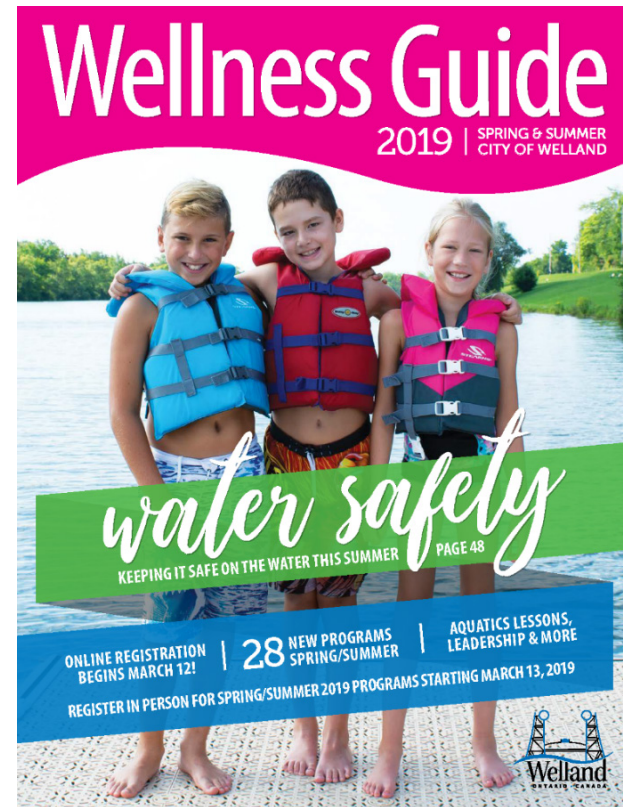
Providers of parks, recreation and culture services (public, private, and non-profit) educate the public and influence the degree of participation. As a result of this, mutual benefits can be obtained through a coordinated approach to service provision. Simple tasks such as allowing for display of brochures and posters within facilities and promotion of local events help to build strong, healthy, and engaged citizens.

Consistency in interdepartmental communications is key to effective information sharing and public awareness of opportunities. At present, City Staff in the Communications & Marketing Department and the Recreation & Culture Division are responsible for awareness activities; that said, not all Recreation & Culture Division staff have formal training in marketing and awareness, while the Communications & Marketing Department's responsibilities are stretched across all aspects of corporate services.

Having one key staff person in the Recreation & Culture Division is recommended in order to ensure clear and consistent messaging to the public, and to coordinate internal communications with other Divisions where necessary. For example, Recreation & Culture needs to be aware of road works scheduled in close proximity to a municipal park prior to scheduling a community event. Ongoing clear communication is required for seamless delivery of municipal services.

The City should create a staff position within the Recreation & Culture Division whose responsibility centres upon promotion and awareness, and who possesses the necessary marketing background to be able to effectively deliver communications plans and strategies. Working under the Manager of Recreation & Culture or the Community Development Coordinator (or other), the staff person would be responsible for utilizing existing City of Welland marketing materials and integrating information from a variety of sources.

The new staff person could initially focus upon the promotion of the Division's programming and festivals/events, the latter of which would address public consultation input that specifically noted a lack of awareness for local festivals and events. The staff person should also advance modern marketing tools (working closely with the City's Communications & Marketing Department in this regard) to



respond to growing demand for more information in a variety of digestible formats (particularly those targeted to youth). For example, the student could work with local volunteers or youth groups to create videos on the basics of sports, and highlight different parks, facilities or service providers. The role would also be responsible for and establish schedules for timely social media posts, newsletters, posters, and email blasts. Social-media based posts could use hashtags or weekly challenges to encourage community participation in summer-long or ongoing initiatives. Ultimately, this staff person's responsibilities could be expanded to include other projects and priorities for the City such as promotional work to drive sales, ice rentals, awareness of the Welland Recreational Corridor (in tandem with staff position articulated through Recommendation #16), etc. depending upon their capacity.

"Improve the marketing and promotion of current offerings. We have such great resources such as outdoor rinks, free public swimming, etc."

~ Your Channel Welland
Comment

Promotion and coordination is typically a full-time endeavour if maximizing the effectiveness of such activities. While 1.0 FTE staff would be preferred, funding new positions can be challenging. The City will need to determine whether this new staff position will be a full-time or part-time endeavour. There may also be an ability to supplement any new staff person with a summer student/co-op student between the spring and fall months to alleviate pressures during the peak festival/event season, including their attendance at the events (taking photos at facilities and events) and providing digital content for awareness and information sharing. Hiring a capable student could be made easier with the strong secondary and post-secondary institutions within Welland and in Niagara Region, and could potentially be funded through a regional, provincial or federal youth program (such as the Canada Summer Jobs Program which covers 50% of youth hiring costs, and was used for the Healthy Pioneer Eating program).

Marketing & Communications: Recommendations

- #8. Create a Staff Position (FTE to be determined) within the Recreation & Culture Division that is responsible for the coordination of marketing and awareness initiatives for programs, events, and sponsorship/rental opportunities. The new position could be supplemented during peak months with a student (paid, volunteer and/or co-op) to assist with certain tasks and could benefit from youth job creation grants from senior levels of government.

3.6 Providing Inclusive Choices

Most Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments across Canada recognize the importance of taking a multi-faceted approach to including all segments of the population, particularly those populations that face above-average levels of marginalization or vulnerability. Populations that commonly experience barriers to participation include persons from low income backgrounds, persons with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, the aboriginal community, and females.

Welland has been proactive in implementing ways to include residents from low income backgrounds, persons with disabilities and females. This is evident in policy and practice.

Low Income

Master Plan consultations consistently identified that affordable programs should be available, recognizing that there are households in Welland with limited financial means. Research bears this out with ample evidence that correlates a person's level of income with their frequency of participation; households with more income available to spend on parks, recreation and culture pursuits are more likely to be engaged than households where cost to participation is a barrier.

Welland's median after-tax income for all private households was approximately \$51,700 for 2015, which is below median incomes for Niagara Region and Ontario (\$58,200 and \$65,300, respectively). Welland also has a higher proportion of low-income residents as nearly 18% of residents live below the low-income measure (after-tax). By comparison, approximately 14% of residents in the Region and Province live below the low-income measure (after-tax).⁵

The City of Welland places considerable attention to minimize income-related barriers in its parks, recreation and culture system. Examples include the festivals and special events that have no admission charges, free swims at public outdoor pools in the summer, the no-cost "Pop-Up in the Park" program and a strong financial assistance policy known as "Wellness For All." Other financial assistance programs for parks, recreation and culture are available through agencies such as KidSport Niagara, the Region of Niagara's ProKids, and Canadian Tire Jumpstart.

⁵ Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Canada.

Persons With Disabilities

The 2017 Canadian Survey on Disability found that 6.2 million people reported living with some form of disability, most commonly identified as pain-related, flexibility, mobility and mental health-related. This amounts to 22% of the population, a substantial increase from the 13% of the population (3.8 million people) reporting living with a disability in the 2012 Survey on Disability.

Assuming that the national average of 22% is applied to Welland's population, there could be over 12,000 living in the City that have some form of disability (the number of people living with disabilities has yet to be released at the local, regional and provincial levels). The City offers a range of services to ensure that persons with disabilities can engage in parks, recreation and culture activities. Program examples include intergenerational chair yoga and therapeutic aquatics, while a number of parks and facilities have incorporated barrier-free upgrades.

The City of Welland Accessibility Advisory Committee oversees implementation of the municipal Annual Accessibility Plan (which includes implementation of the requirements and accessibility upgrades to recreation and parks facilities and amenities) and whose Staff Liaison is within the Recreation & Culture Division.



Persons from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds

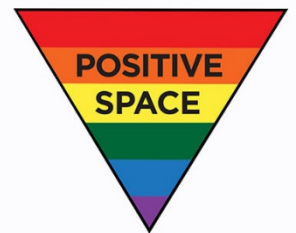
According to the 2016 Census, 11% of residents in Welland were born outside of Canada and most have been established in the country for well over a decade; only 2% of the population immigrated after 2006 which is much lower than the provincial rate. The largest cultural groups are European and are largely made up of persons of English, Irish, Scottish, French, German, and Italian descent. Visible minorities make up 5% of Welland's residents. Of note, Welland is home to one of Canada's largest Francophone communities outside of Quebec with many civic signs and communication materials being printed in English and French.

As Welland can be expected to diversify even further in the years to come based upon provincial and regional trends, its current efforts to embrace cultural diversity through programs and festivals will remain relevant. In communities that are experiencing, or have already experienced strong rates of ethno-cultural diversity, one of the most promising practices is to build relationships with diverse cultural individuals and groups that are active in the community. Initial discussions centre on understanding parks, recreation and arts/culture needs, how to provide access, and ways to navigate municipal government. Program related initiatives include the introduction of traditional Canadian sports and activities, and introducing all residents to diverse activities, sports and leisure pursuits.

LGBTQ+ Community

There is no data that quantifies how many persons belong to the LGBTQ+ community, though polls and studies conducted elsewhere estimate the percentage to be in the range of 3.5% to 5%. The LGBTQ+ community often faces barriers to participation in parks, recreation and cultural programs as a result of exclusion and bullying; however, their participation is critical as the LGBTQ+ advocacy groups often attribute exclusionary attitudes with mental health issues, homelessness, suicide and harmful practices in their communities.

The role of the City is to ensure that these residents are welcomed, included and free from harassment, hatred or bias within safe public spaces and welcoming public programs. The Positive Spaces Initiative is commonly used to denote public spaces that are safe for and welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community. Signage including the Pride flag in the graphic denotes that the space is positive for the LGBTQ+ population.



Females

Participation by girls and women often decline as females reach 10 years and older. With over 27,000 female residents in Welland, the need to keep them engaged throughout their lives is essential for physical health and social connection. The *Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS)* has a purpose to support and enable women in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, and to keep women actively engaged in building community capacity. CAAWS' Women 55 to 70+ program is a recent initiative aimed at increasing physical literacy among "young senior" females by keeping them engaged in sport and physical activity. A number of pilot projects are currently underway or have been completed to enhance opportunities in soccer, pickleball, Nordic pole walking, synchronized skating and many other active opportunities.

Inclusive Choices: Recommendations

- #9. Continually review participation in the Wellness For All program to determine its effectiveness in reaching low-income populations, while working with agency partners to raise awareness of all financial assistance programs available through the City, Region and other partners.
- #10. As growth in the number of persons with disabilities, diverse ethno-cultural groups, and LGBTQ+ communities continues in Welland, the City should engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives of such groups. The intent is to understand the parks, recreation and cultural needs of marginalized populations in terms of demands for traditional activities delivered by the City as well as new programs and services that result in these populations becoming active and connected.

3.7 Youth Needs

Youth were emphasized as a core area of focus for the City through the PRC Master Plan consultations. Engaging youth through safe and interesting opportunities is essential for their healthy development; recognizing this, the City operates the Youth Innovations drop-in centre at Seaway Mall, provides youth-focused facilities such as the Skateboard & BMX Park and offers certain recreation and cultural programs (albeit many of these programs are intergenerational and not appealing to all youth). The graffiti wall put forward through Recommendation #42 in Section 6.7 also has the potential to address some youth-specific needs.

Welland also has the distinction of being a “Youth-Friendly Community” which has become a well-respected designation across Ontario. The advancement of local youth opportunities is led by the Welland Youth Advisory Council that advises Council on matters affecting youth in the City; the group also assists with planning youth events and members frequently volunteer at various events held throughout the year.

Youth Innovations is operated for people between the ages of 13 and 18. Several different areas are provided to appeal to multiple interests in structured and drop-in formats including spaces for art, games (pool table, pop-a-shot basketball), lounge, computers and a multimedia centre.

Augmenting the number of youth-specific programming opportunities is the primary area of focus for serving this age group. The City should engage its local youth to develop programs spanning recreation, arts and culture; it will also be important to connect with youth-focused agencies and service providers as trends show that the most effective youth programs are also equipped to understand issues around youth social services to combat issues such as youth homelessness, mental health, and addiction. This is not to say Recreation & Culture Division Staff should be trained to provide social services but instead have the ability to work with other trained professionals or at the very least provide referral services when engaged in City programming.

Youth: Recommendations

- #11. Develop additional youth-specific drop-in and registered programs to be offered in parks, recreation and culture facilities, libraries, and the Youth Innovations drop-in centre. The Welland Youth Advisory Council, youth-serving agencies and providers - including those delivering social services - and a broader cross-section of youth ages 13 to 18 living in Welland should be engaged in the program development process.

3.8 Older Adult Needs

The City's ability to meet the needs of a growing population of older adults was also a common theme that was expressed throughout the PRC Master Plan process. The Recreation & Culture Division's definition of an older adult begins at age 50 based upon its program categorization. This is slightly earlier than observed in a number of other Ontario municipalities who instead commonly use 55+ as the minimum age. Notwithstanding the age definition, it is important that older adult programs recognize the different abilities within the cohort as some older adults are able to remain physically active to a greater extent than others; therefore, the City's Wellness Guide's programs also identifies the level of intensity required for 50+ programs.

Another prevailing trend in older adult service provision is the desire for soon-to-be older adults and "younger" generations – particularly Baby Boomers – to resist the label of being a "senior citizen." While some view the term as a source of pride, it would appear that many 50+ individuals want to participate in parks, recreation and cultural activities within intergenerational settings. As a result, fewer seniors' centres have been constructed in the province in the past decade compared to years prior. Instead, the trend has shifted to dedicating or assigning priority to rooms/spaces for older adult programming within multi-generational, multi-use community centres. In such multi-use settings, older adults have the ability to participate in both physically active programs (e.g. aquatics, fitness, and sport), arts and culture, as well as more socially-oriented activities.

Prior to 2010, what was formerly known as the Rose City Seniors Activity Centre offered a dedicated programming space for Welland's older adults and seniors. An expansion to this facility was completed in 2011, resulting in the centre being opened up to all age groups and rebranded as the Welland Community Wellness Complex.

The Wellness Complex continues to offer programs and activities oriented towards older adults but is now especially well positioned to respond to broader demands for multi-generational space. This is especially true with the addition of the therapeutic pool and hot tub, fitness space, and theatre, all of which will be highly desirable for the soon-to-be and younger generations of older adults. The physical activity and cognitive stimulation afforded by these types of facilities is also highly beneficial for the elderly of whom research shows strong benefit from having "healthy aging" opportunities in place to prevent chronic illness and pain.

Older Adults: Recommendations

- #12. Work with the Rose City Seniors Foundation and other older adult service partners to better understand how older adults are using the City of Welland's parks, recreation and culture services, and collectively find ways to increase participation rates in response to emerging trends and issues.

A paved path lined with large trees, with two cyclists riding away in the distance. The path is shaded by the trees, and the scene is bright and green.

Section 4 Parks in Welland

4.1 Welland’s Parks System

Parks are dynamic places. They are hubs for community gatherings, physical activity and to simply get fresh air. Well-designed parks system offers social, environmental, health, and economic benefits, and have the potential to bring people together.

As noted in a national charter entitled Parks For All, parks are defined as “any land and water that exists on the parks continuum” which could be located on public or privately held lands. As outdoor spaces, parks provide an important connection to nature which is required for our survival as well as personal, community and societal enrichment.⁶

The City of Welland’s parks system plays an important role locally as well as throughout Niagara Region. There are nearly 400 hectares (1,000 acres) of active and passive parkland that is owned by the City of Welland, over half of which is attributable to the Welland Recreational Corridor (approximately 242 hectares of land and the waterway). Welland’s parks serve recreational and cultural needs of individuals while forming an integral component of the broader Niagara Escarpment ecosystem and surrounding watersheds.

The City of Welland Official Plan classifies parkland into three categories based upon the function and catchment area that a park is intended to serve.

Regional Park	Serves needs of all residents in the City as well as visitors/tourists.
City Park	Serves the needs of multiple neighbourhoods in the City.
Neighbourhood Park	Serves the needs of residents living within walking distance of the park.

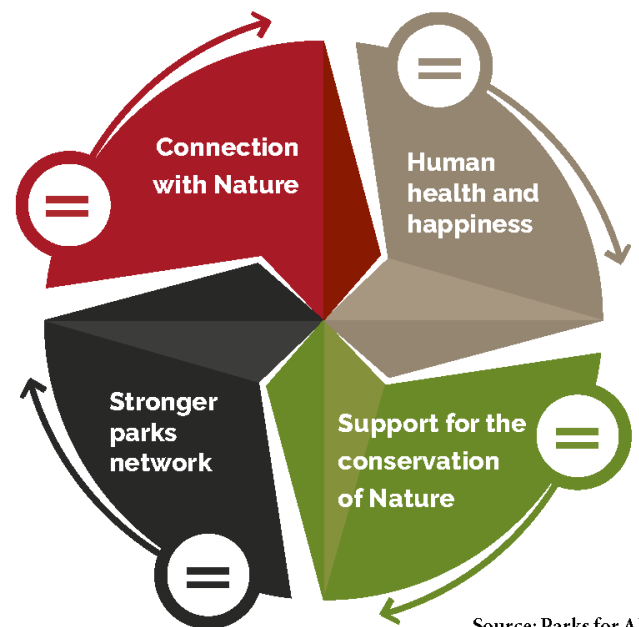
The City’s parks system is complemented by dozens of woodlots, natural heritage lands, and environmental protection areas throughout Welland.

A Vision for Canada’s Parks

Connected Canadian Park Lands and Waters that support healthy Nature and healthy people in harmony for generations to come, backed by an active, diverse parks community that cultivates shared goals, mutual respect, and collective action.

~ Parks for All. Parks Canada, 2017

THE BENEFITS OF NATURE



Source: Parks for All. Parks Canada Agency, 2017

⁶ Parks Canada Agency. 2017. Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada’s Parks Community. Prepared on behalf of the Canadian Parks Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

4.2 The Welland Recreational Corridor

Welland's history is tied to the water. The Welland Recreational Corridor is an old alignment of the Welland Canal that was abandoned after the construction of the Welland By-Pass in the 1970s. The old canal was subsequently turned over to the City in 1997 and renamed as the Welland Recreational Waterway.

In 2001, the Welland Recreational Canal Corporation was established to assume stewardship of the waterway, the aqueduct and adjacent lands. After 15+ years of managing the waterway, the Welland Recreational Canal Corporation was dissolved in 2017 and operations were reassumed by the City of Welland who oversees the waterway to this day.

Now referred to as the Welland Recreational Corridor, approximately 242 hectares consisting of the waterway and adjacent lands are under the responsibility of the City. Since taking over operations, the City has collected feedback on its "Go Quiet" By-law including exploring alternative uses of the waterway. In 2018, City Staff undertook additional research and consultations to prepare a report/action plan for expanded uses on the waterway, and implementation is ongoing for the following components:

- Extending the Lincoln Street docks and outfitting them with ladders to allow public swimming at Scuba Park;
- Placement of public amenities including picnic tables, benches, and bike racks; and
- Addition of shaded seating areas

Over the years, much consultation and study has been undertaken for the Welland Recreational Corridor. In the context of the PRC Master Plan, the Corridor presents tremendous potential given its ability to facilitate quality experiences and events, both on land and in the water. The PRC Master Plan supports the "Go Quiet" by-law and reinforces non-motorized watercraft activities within the waterway in order to preserve enjoyment for the widest range of marine uses.

In this respect, the Goal Statement of the 2008 Recreational Waterway Master Plan remains relevant today. The PRC Master Plan supports non-motorized recreational uses within the Welland Recreational Corridor in order to minimize potential conflicts between different terrestrial and marine uses, while accommodating as broad a range of interests as possible.

Walking, jogging, swimming, fishing and paddling already take place to a great extent within the Welland Recreational Corridor. The Welland International Flatwater Centre is the most recent major piece of infrastructure that has been added while improvements to the Lincoln Street docks is another example of recent and ongoing efforts to strengthening aquatic use within the Corridor.

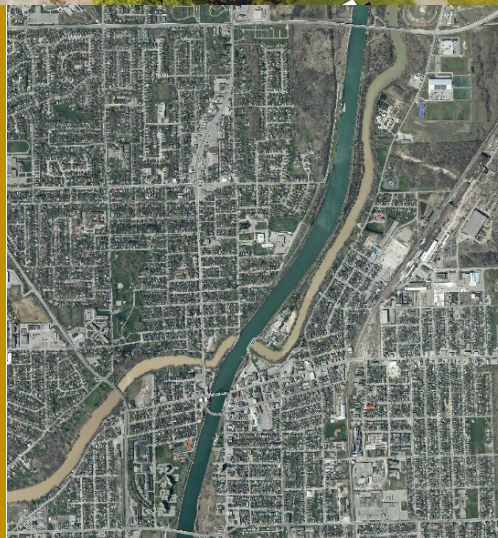
“To create an exciting, attractive, well used and self-sustaining Recreational Waterway that is fully integrated into the fabric and life of the City of Welland - a distinctive and memorable place where people want to be - a place where residents and visitors can participate in a wide variety of arts, culture, sports, leisure and recreation activities, and experience a unique natural and recreational environment within an urban area.”

Welland Recreational Waterway Master Plan, 2008



Key Facts

- 242 hectares / 600 acres
- 25 km of paved trails
- Assumed by the City in 1997



Notable Facilities

- Welland International Flatwater Centre
- Floating Stage & Amphitheatre
- Community Boathouse
- Lincoln Street Docks

The multi-dimensional nature of the physical activities occurring create an incredible potential for casual and competitive activities for physical health and personal enjoyment. The City should explore strategic investments in certain sections of the Welland Recreational Corridor including the following:

- Comfort elements such as seating, shade, trail markers and interpretive signage (also see below), and/or washrooms to encourage greater levels of use.
- Open-water programs such as advanced leadership (e.g. National Lifeguard, Distinction, Instructor/Examiner training, etc.) and unique aquatic activities (e.g. stand-up paddleboarding, paddleboard yoga, inner tube polo, etc.).
- Outdoor fitness equipment using a parcour-style format (e.g. fitness trail) which would also reinforce the popularity of duathlon/triathlon training that is growing in popularity within the corridor. The Floating Stage and/or open spaces within the corridor's unique setting could also be attractive for certain group fitness programs delivered by the City and third-parties.
- A splash pad to complement a potential public swimming area, providing a safer choice for children that are not trained to swim in open water. This would reinforce the Corridor as a family destination as well as potentially become a regional draw for outdoor aquatics.
- A 2,000 metre (minimum) competitive rowing course in the southern portion of the Corridor, potentially with supporting amenities required to host larger-scale events/races.

In addition to the recreational amenities identified above, further opportunities to showcase arts and culture within the Welland Recreational Corridor should be considered given how closely it is intertwined with the City's history and its proximity to the downtown's many cultural assets. At a minimum, this should include:

- Commemorative features such as monuments, plaques and interpretive signage that highlights key moments and accomplishments in Welland's past. The Corridor's importance as a tourist destination and a local gathering place would be reinforced by providing a "sense of place" and a "sense of identity" through such commemorative works to people partaking in activities there.
- Public art through paintings, sculptures, fountains, or other pieces that are discussed in Section 6.7 of this Master Plan.
- A graffiti wall (either within or in proximity to the Corridor) as discussed in Section 6.7.
- Rejuvenating the Floating Stage through planned lifecycle renewal activities but also exploring ways to enhance the stage to accommodate a broader range of recreation and cultural programs and events.



Facility Snapshot

The Welland International Flatwater Centre is located in the Welland Recreational Corridor. It is designed for competitive paddle sports, attracting athletes from around the world for training and competitions.

The extent of coordination, delivery of programming, and provision of infrastructure that is being proposed for the Welland Recreational Corridor is substantial. The works presented in the PRC Master Plan span multiple City Departments and Divisions, and will require the appropriate resourcing to implement the vision articulated herein along with any other Corporate-wide initiatives.

The creation of a full-time staff position (1.0 FTE) dedicated to the implementation of the PRC Master Plan Recommendations pertaining to the Welland Recreational Corridor is recommended. This new staff position should coordinate efforts of staff between applicable Departments in the joint planning, design and delivery of programs and spaces to ensure consistent and efficient use of internal resources. The new staff person should also be responsible for attracting and overseeing the delivery of events at the Welland International Flatwater Centre (duties could potentially be defined through the Festivals & Events Strategy advanced through Recommendation #43 in Section 6.8) and/or a new rowing course if ultimately pursued.

Welland Recreational Corridor: Recommendations

- #13.** Initiate a second phase study of expanded uses and action plans for the Welland Recreational Corridor that tests public opinion and the business case to create a “leisure zone” for non-motorized marine uses within the portion of the waterway corridor that exists between Woodlawn Road and Ontario Road. At a minimum, leisure uses to be explored should include areas for public swimming (such as a beach area) and a splash pad, additional shaded seating areas and permanent or portable washrooms along the Welland Canals Trail, vehicular parking, and interpretive/way-finding signage and public art.
- #14.** Investigate the feasibility of establishing a competitive rowing course within the southern portion of the Welland Recreational Corridor (i.e. south of Townline Tunnel Road). The ability to involve local, regional and/or provincial rowing organizations as funding or operating partners should be explored as part of this process.
- #15.** Invest in outdoor aquatics and fitness infrastructure within the Welland Recreational Corridor through outdoor fitness equipment, rejuvenation of the Floating Stage, open-water swimming amenities, and others as identified. In tandem with these investments, explore the delivery of unique programming related to land-based and open-water activities such as triathlon, paddleboard yoga, advanced aquatic leadership, and group fitness classes.
- #16.** Establish a Full-Time Staff position (1.0 FTE) to oversee and coordinate initiatives related to the growth, delivery and development of programs and infrastructure within the Welland Recreational Corridor and the Welland International Flatwater Centre.

4.3 Parkland Needs for the Next 10 Years

The strong value that residents place on parks, the physical and social benefits created through these spaces, and the economic spinoffs that are generated lend support for continued investment in parkland. Future parkland needs are met in three primary ways.

1. Acquisition of New Parkland
2. Major Revitalization & Renewal Efforts of Existing Parks
3. Strengthening Park Experiences through Investments in Amenities

1. Acquisition of New Parkland

The City is entitled to receive parkland through the land development process as prescribed by the Ontario Planning Act; up to 2% of developed industrial and commercial lands, 5% of all other developable lands, and/or 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units can be conveyed through parkland dedication. Cash-in-lieu of the physical parkland can be collected (though at a rate of 1 hectare per 500 dwelling units is applied to the density-based standard). However, proposed changes to the Planning Act and Development Charges Act may result in a different abilities of the City to collect parkland and fund recreation/cultural facilities (also see Section 7.1). The City can supplement parklands received through the land development process by purchasing additional lands, securing leases or access agreements, and other means to add parkland to the supply.

The City of Welland Official Plan establishes an overall target of providing parkland at a rate of 4.0 hectares per 1,000 residents.⁷ Based upon the current parkland supply of 396 hectares – less approximately 92 hectares of water surface area in the Welland Recreational Corridor – Welland is exceeding its parkland target by providing it at a rate of 5.4 hectares per 1,000 residents. By the year 2029, the current supply would result in a rate of 4.8 hectares per 1,000 population.

Notwithstanding the fact that the overall parkland provision rate will be achieved over the next 10 years, it is important to look at service levels for each classification of parkland. The City's Official Plan targets for Regional and Neighbourhood Parkland are being met (3.1 hectares and 1.3 hectares per 1,000, respectively), the former as a result of including the Corridor lands. Conversely, the City-wide parkland targeted rate is not being achieved at its present level of 1.0 hectares per 1,000.

Welland provides a strong level of service for parkland, amounting to **5.4 hectares per 1,000 residents** which presently exceeds the City's Official Plan target.

Existing Parkland Supplies

Regional Parks – 175 hectares
 City-Wide Parks – 53 hectares
Neighbourhood Parks – 76 hectares
TOTAL Parkland – 304 hectares
 WRC Water Surface Area – 92 hectares

Official Plan Targeted Rates (Hectares per 1,000 Residents)

Regional Parks – 0.4
 City-Wide Parks – 2.6
Neighbourhood Parks – 1.0
TOTAL Targeted Rate – 4.0

⁷ City of Welland Official Plan, 2010 (Revised 2017). pp. 120, Section 6.2.2.1E.

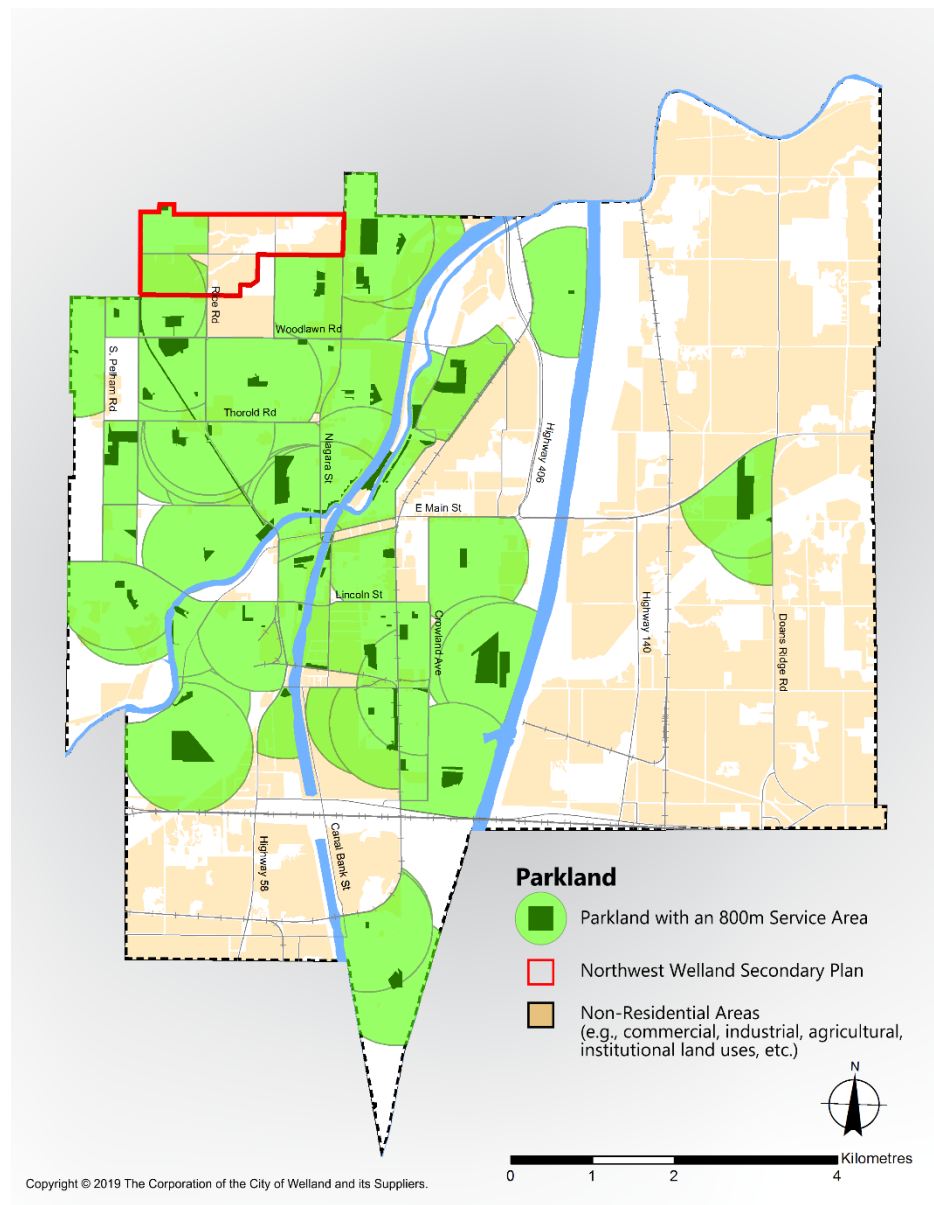
It is also important to identify where certain residential areas of the City do not have access to some form of parkland within walking distance. Figure 4 illustrates that the built-up areas of Welland are generally well serviced with most residential areas having access to parkland within a 10 minute walk without having to cross highways or major roads, waterways, or railways. However, parkland will need to be added within future residential areas such as north Welland as well as selected gaps located west of South Pelham Road (if/where possible based on the status of plans of subdivision)..

The North West Welland Secondary Plan process is scheduled for completion in 2019. Its community structure plans presented to date contemplate Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes (the latter represents a small-size park serving a sub-neighbourhood area, although is not identified within the City of Welland Official Plan).

Ideally, a City-wide Park would be provided in the Secondary Plan although this may not be possible given the advanced state of that land use planning process. A City-wide Park should also be contemplated by redeveloping the Atlas Landfill upon obtaining the approvals required for its decommissioning.

It also bears noting that a 2.5 hectare Neighbourhood Park is planned as part of the future Sparrow Meadows subdivision.

Figure 4: Geographic Distribution of Parkland in Welland



Vista Park Master Plan Concept (Atlas Landfill)

A master plan concept has been prepared for what would be known as Vista Park which, if implemented, would create a greenspace offering panoramic views of the Welland Canal, Welland River and Niagara Falls. Notable inclusions of the master plan concept are amphitheatre, multi-use trails, naturalized areas, open spaces for picnics and informal gatherings, and a playground.



Source: Vista Park Masterplan Concept. Prepared by Dillon Consulting, City of Welland, and Niagara College, 2017

Through the potential conversion of the Atlas Landfill to parks space, the City of Welland has an opportunity to add 14 hectares of parkland to the City-wide Park supply that presently falls short of the Official Plan target. The landfill has been remediated in compliance with provincial requirements and will be capped in 2019).

There are examples across Ontario where municipalities have reclaimed and redeveloped landfills for park purposes; McLennan Park in Kitchener is a recent example where that municipality has added BMX and skateboarding parks, sand volleyball courts, splash pad, off-leash area, toboggan hill and more.

2. Major Revitalization & Renewal Efforts of Existing Parks

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

Parkland revitalization is thus an important part of attracting continued use over time. Rejuvenation efforts can be major in scale, ranging from complete park redevelopments to renewal of major amenities or adding new facilities where space permits. Rejuvenation can also take more basic or minor forms as will be discussed in subsequent pages. Often, redevelopment of a park is initiated because of population growth pressures or an evolution that has occurred in demographics of surrounding areas (e.g. a greater proportion of older adults and fewer children), in response to volunteer initiatives (e.g. fundraising or service club contributions), or multiple park-based facilities approaching the end of their lifecycle. Examples of major redevelopment or revitalization efforts within the existing supply of parks include the following.

Lincoln Street Recreation Hub (Rotary Club of Welland Park)

The City is establishing a recreation hub within the Welland Recreational Corridor immediately south-west of the Lincoln Street bridge (across from the Welland Community Wellness Centre). Future efforts will build upon the Welland Skateboard & BMX Park along with recently added seating and picnic areas, dock extension, and aesthetic improvements. The City plans to centralize recreational on-water activities and relocate the canoe-kayak rental program by adding a storage facility for the latter (Figure 5).

Food and beverage vending opportunities along with accessible public washrooms, pickleball courts, a space for small concerts/events and public art are also envisioned. The Rotary Club of Welland has committed a portion of funding as part of their 100th anniversary legacy project.

Figure 5: Rotary Club of Welland Park Preliminary Concept



Source: City of Welland, 2018

Memorial Park Master Plan

The City undertook a master planning exercise for Memorial Park in 2017 given recent and expected residential developments in the area, along with a certain major park components approaching the end of useful life. Notable outcomes of the master plan (Figure 6) included:

- Ball Diamonds: new/upgraded ball lighting, the addition of a junior slo-pitch diamond, t-ball diamonds relocated to the west parcel.
- Outdoor Aquatics: new outdoor pool and change house, larger splash pad to replace the existing splash pad and wading pool.
- Other features: new picnic area, multi-use court, ice skating rink or path, multi-use trail connection, accessibility improvements, plantings and seating.⁸

The park master plan was prepared with input from stakeholders and the public. The PRC Master Plan consultation process revealed that the City’s two largest ball associations would not make use of the junior slo-pitch diamond and feel it would be better suited as another type of diamond. As recommended in Section 5.5 of the Recreation assessments, ball groups should be re-engaged prior to constructing new diamonds in order to identify what diamond is desirable based on their needs and whether this could fit with other conceptualized park components.

Figure 6: Memorial Park Concept Plan



Source: Memorial Park Concept Plan, 2017

Civic Square Revitalization

The City’s vision to revitalize Civic Square (City Hall) includes a gathering space for many of Welland’s special events such as movie nights, outdoor skating, Santa Claus Parade, and more. Revitalizing Civic Square can improve overall quality of life through “placemaking”, which is the concept of reimagining and reinventing public spaces as the heart of the community.⁹ The vision for revitalizing Civic Square centres on improving pedestrian environments including enhancing signage, seating, lighting, and shade.

⁸ City of Welland. June 2017. Memorial Park Master Plan, Final Draft. Prepared by OMC Landscape Architecture, Gradina Design and Aqua Plans Aquatic Consultants.

⁹ Project for Public Places. What is placemaking? Retrieved from www.pps.org

3. Strengthening Park Experiences with Amenities

The City can attract greater use of parks and further “animate” them through smaller-scale investments that are commonly focused on comfort, accessibility, and functionality. Through community consultations, desires were expressed for more shade, seating and washrooms within parks and along trails. Comfort features benefit everyone, but especially families with young children as well as older adults. There is a trend towards greater informal gatherings within parks such as picnics, gatherings among cultural groups, or simply meeting up with friends.

Welcoming, Comfortable Designs

Accessibility and inclusivity is an important part of park design. Parks are typically a place for all, thus facilitating access for persons with disabilities and special needs is something to strive towards. Not all parks or areas within them are appropriate for universally accessible infrastructure (e.g. ecologically sensitive or naturalized zones), however, community-focused spaces should consider the ability of all residents to access them.

The application of park and pathway lighting may be considered in areas where a high level of use is expected such as along main pathways where evening use is encouraged (e.g., Welland Canal Parkway Trail). Lighting may also be appropriate for security purposes in order to deter crime; however, the use of lighting can provide a false sense of safety and may be costly to provide and maintain. Thus, lighting should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The City can increase the likelihood of its residents regularly visiting Welland’s parks and trails by making them comfortable, welcoming and safe. As noted at the start of this section, the more connected that people become with the outdoors, the better the outcomes for individuals and the community.

Signage in Parks

Signage is an essential design feature that plays an important role in identifying publicly accessible outdoor spaces, as well as establishing a visual identity or brand for a municipality. Consultations revealed that some residents are not aware of whether they are on public or private property where signs do not exist or are not clearly marked. Signs have been installed at a number of parks (and recreation facilities) that feature the City’s new branding scheme. Continued installation to replace older signs that are still in some parks should take place, potentially phased in so that the City can more evenly distribute signage replacement funds as the signs deteriorate over time.

Interpretive signage and wayfinding signage should also be considered as a way to encourage greater use of parks by highlighting interesting and functional information to a park or trail user.

Multi-Generational, Multi-Seasonal Usage

The ability to attract the broadest range of people into a park throughout the year is central to many park design philosophies. Although not all parks can or should be everything to everybody, a good park makes sure there is at least something that a person can do regardless of their age. Whether it is a family activity such as use a playground or fly a kite, the ability for adults to congregate with friends around a checkerboard table for a coffee, or simply a place for somebody to sit on a shaded bench and relax, parks should be a destination within the catchment area they are intended to serve.

Future Parkland Needs: Recommendations

- #17.* Acquire new parkland in future development areas primarily through maximizing parkland dedication allowable under the Ontario Planning Act, and where necessary through municipal purchase or securing agreements with other landholders. In particular, focus acquisition on a minimum of one City-wide Park along with the requisite number of Neighbourhood Parks that will result in strong walkability within future residential areas.
- #18.* Upon completing the decommissioning of the Atlas Landfill and obtaining the requisite approvals to make it accessible for public use, convert the site into City-wide Park thereby improving the service level for that park typology. Implementation of the Vista Park Concept Plan should guide the development of this future park.
- #19.* Park and trail development/redevelopment projects should integrate comfort elements to encourage public use. At a minimum, elements may include shade, seating, lighting and/or washrooms where appropriate.
- #20.* Install consistent signage using the municipal brand for residents to easily identify that they are at a City of Welland park or trail. Interpretive and wayfinding signage should also be installed where appropriate so that park users can directly relate to their surroundings (including local historical or natural heritage features), learn about the benefits of physical activity, and identify connections to other community parks, recreation and culture activities and/or facilities.

4.4 Horticulture & Community Gardens

Gardening is one of the most popular forms of leisure activity in Canada and visits to public gardens and historic sites is expected to increase as the population ages and demands more passive types of outdoor activities. Furthermore, trends towards higher density forms of housing are resulting in more residents living with smaller (or no) yards thereby restricting their ability to plant and maintain their own gardens. The City's identity as the "Rose City" fits well with current and future horticultural efforts.

Community Allotment Gardens

Allotment gardens (e.g., community garden plots, "Plant a Row – Grow a Row" programs, etc.) are being embraced by municipalities seeking to beautify their communities and supplement a growing reliance on the public realm for personal use. Community allotment gardens involve community members directly maintaining their own individual plots. These gardens encourage social interaction, horticultural education and awareness of the benefits of healthy diets, while they can also enhance safety within parks due to the presence of gardeners during the early morning and evening hours. Community gardens fit well with the City's aging and diversifying cultural population, objectives surrounding food security, and its aging population as older residents may be more inclined to participate in such activities. Community gardens have become a place for interaction, socialization, intergenerational learning, and neighbourhood pride.

The Welland Downtown BIA is leading the community gardening movement with a new plot set to open in May 2019 at Hellems Avenue and Young Street. The garden will be focused on seniors and has received \$25,000 in federal funding; the BIA is partnering with the Niagara Catholic District School Board to leverage the assistance from two classes at Notre Dame College School where students will work with seniors to design and build the space. The BIA is partnering with a regional social food distribution enterprise to provide gardening and food-related expertise directly at the garden and through workshops.¹⁰

The BIA model represents best practice in terms of community development, empowerment, and partnerships. The City should encourage similar community-driven projects in other areas of Welland by lending support in areas such as mobilizing volunteers into garden-specific steering committees or oversight organizations, exploring partnerships, providing in-kind supports (e.g. expertise, space within parks, gardening classes or programs, etc.), and/or financial resources to help projects get off the ground.

¹⁰ The Welland Tribune, Kris Dubé. [Community Garden to sprout up in downtown Welland](#). May 12, 2019.

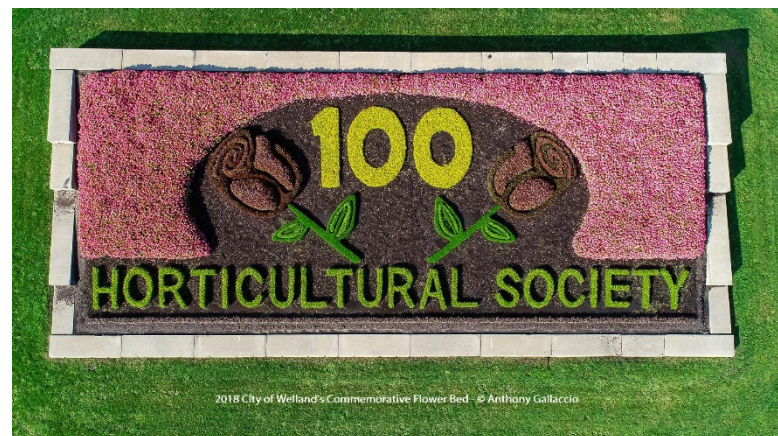
Horticultural Gardens

In addition to allotment gardens, progressive land use planning movements (such as New Urbanism and Creative Cities) centre residential and commercial areas upon focal points including horticultural gardens and landscaped parks. Chippewa Park and Merritt Park are two local examples that contain beautiful horticultural displays and gardens that are diligently maintained by skilled Parks Division Staff.

Such destinations draw people to utilize the public space, fostering vibrancy and sometimes economic prosperity through the foot traffic and positive ambiance that they create in community nodes. The City also provides floral beds and other plantings as part of its land development and placemaking initiatives through boulevard buffer strips, entrance gardens in parks, etc.; the City's commitment to beautification through plantings is admirable.

The City should continue its practice of providing horticultural displays at appropriate destinations including major parks, recreation and cultural facilities, library branches, high profile or high visibility intersections, etc. as part of its continued commitment to civic beautification. As the number of displays increases, however, the staffing and financial implications will need to be examined in greater detail given that ongoing maintenance is an important part of beautification efforts.

A particular area of opportunity is to engage local horticultural organizations in the design and upkeep of selected displays, but also to help the City develop and deliver gardening programs. By teaching younger generations the fundamentals of gardening, the likelihood of them remaining physically active and socially engaged increases into older adulthood.



Horticulture & Community Gardens: Recommendations

- #21. Formalize a volunteer-driven approach to establishing community allotment gardens through municipal provision of in-kind and/or financial supports whereby residents and businesses mobilize into self-governing entities responsible for oversight, operation and programming of their respective community gardens.
- #22. In keeping with the identity as the “Rose City” identity, engage local horticultural organizations to develop and deliver intergenerational gardening programs within municipal parks and/or facilities (the valuable expertise of Parks Division Staff should also be leveraged in program design and delivery).

4.5 Off-Leash Areas

The Welland Off-Leash Dog Park located off Prince Charles Drive has two separate areas for larger and smaller dogs. Discussions with off-leash park users during the time of site visits revealed a desire for more comfort amenities such as on-site water, shade, seating, and dog waste bins. The latter amenity is well justifiable as dog waste is presently disposed of in standard garbage collections that are small and uncovered which creates an unpleasant environment at times. The location of the off-leash area within the Welland Recreational Corridor is good for dog-walkers arriving by the Canal Parkway Trail. It is a small park (less than a hectare in size) which can result in a level of congestion during peak periods; as such, there is merit in exploring a second off-leash area north of the Main Street corridor.

Off-Leash Areas: Recommendations

- #23. Investigate potential sites for a second off-leash area in the northern half of Welland while integrating selected amenities at the Welland Off-Leash Dog Park, at a minimum which should include a closed-lid waste container and provision of shade (through plantings or a shade sail/structure).

4.6 Trails System

Three primary trail networks – the Welland Canal Parkway Trail, Merritt Island Trail, and Stop 19 Pathway (also known as the Steve Bauer Trail) – extend approximately 29 kilometers throughout the City of Welland. These scenic routes encourage recreational and utilitarian forms of active transportation, providing opportunities for people to be physically active, connected to the outdoors, while linking residents and visitors to key destinations throughout the City.

Welland also has 7.5 kilometres of internal park pathways, some of which can be used for short exercise loops within a park or as inter-neighbourhood linkages between nearly 326 kilometres of sidewalks that may form part of a longer journey.

At a conceptual level, the Master Plan investigated opportunities for new trail routes and linkages to supplement the existing network, with consideration given to connecting destinations and developing linkages through future residential areas.

The key to continued development of an effective and robust trail network will be to ensure that safe, accessible, and convenient linkages exist between users and key destinations (e.g., parks, recreation and community facilities, schools, etc.). The City is in an enviable position where it can build upon its existing north to south “spines” thereby extending networks further into communities and neighbourhoods. A conceptual trails network is illustrated in Figure 7, which is intended to be used as a guide to develop new route opportunities.

The conceptual network emphasize strengthened east-west linkages, largely in order to connect residents to the Welland Recreational Corridor. The City should explore ways to leverage parks and open spaces to increase east-west linkages within its established neighbourhoods. The City’s Municipal Standards document (Section 12.4.1) requires that “each park will contain a pedestrian system of walkways, trails, bridges and ramps to provide continuous direct access from the point of entry at the edge of the park or parking lot to the park facilities.” Site visits revealed that some parks do not have adequate trail circulation routes (either narrow walkways or no walkways). The ability to make use of utility corridors and the City’s own sidewalk/road system should also be considered where opportunities exist and where surrounding lands are not adversely impacted.

“The Welland Canal Trail is perfect for biking short trips or brief leisure trips [within Niagara Region]”

~ Resident Comment

Existing Trails in Welland

Canal Parkway Trail – 18 km

Merritt Island Trail – 6.7 km

Steve Bauer Trail – 4.3 km

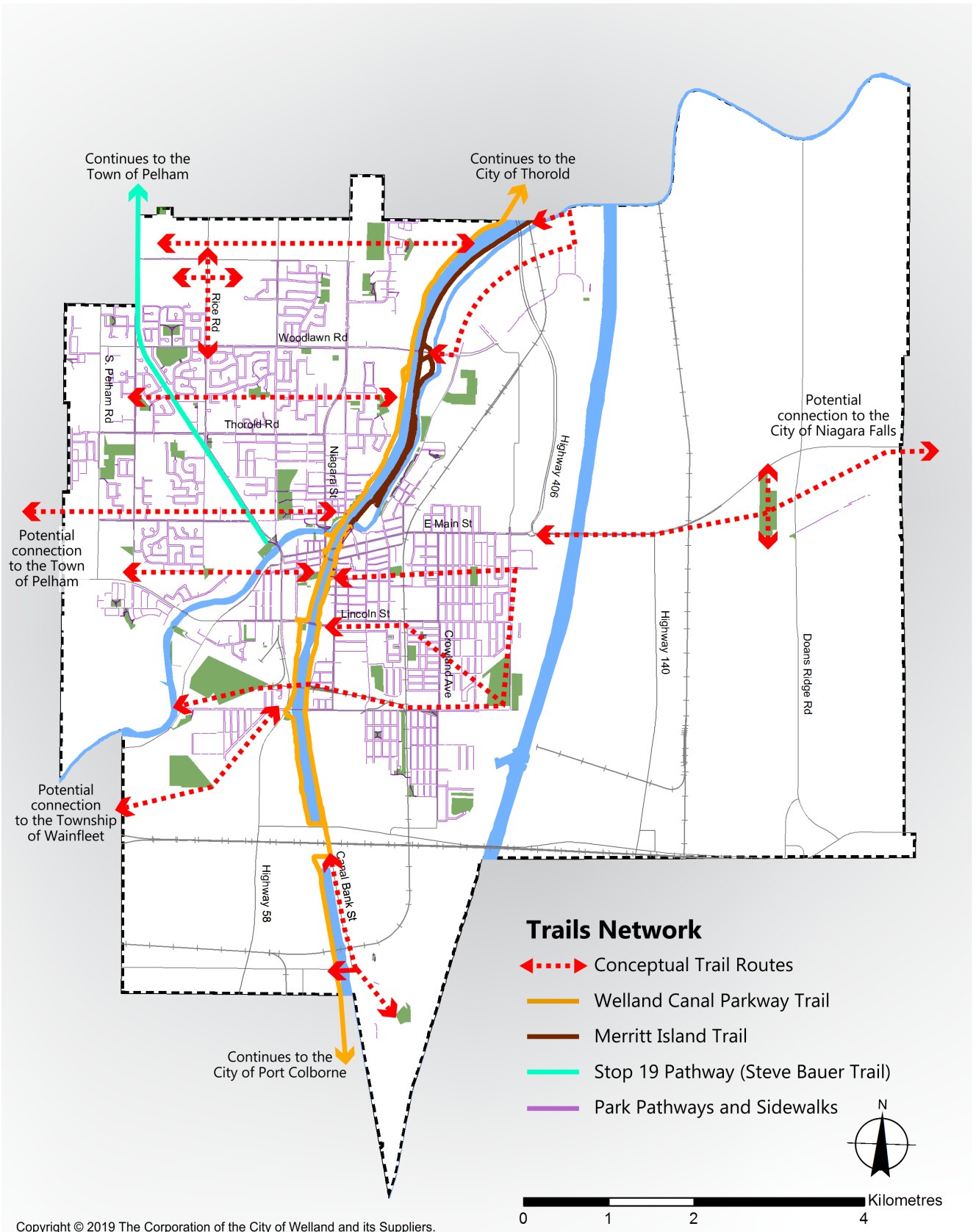
TOTAL Trail Length – 28.9 km

Other Park Pathways – 7.5 km

Sidewalks – 325.7 km



Figure 7: Conceptual Trail Network



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In addition to promoting connectivity within the City of Welland, the Master Plan's conceptualized trails system illustrates potential connections to adjacent municipalities. Regional on-road and off-road active transportation infrastructure presents an opportunity for Welland to capitalize on Niagara's tourism (e.g. agritourism, visitors to Niagara Falls, etc.). Establishing external connections would benefit the local economy while promoting active living among residents and tourists. For example, the illustrated connection to the City of Niagara Falls via Lyons Creek Road (or suitable alternative) attract potential trail users by passing the Battle of Cooks Mills National Historic Site along the way.

The trails concepts put forth by the PRC Master Plan should be viewed as a point of departure through which additional work should be initiated. For example, this Master Plan does not go into the level of detail regarding property ownership, engineering factors such as terrain and elevation, impacts on ecological systems, and compatibility with the broader transportation system. Furthermore, additional consultation with the community would be appropriate to refine potential routes, discuss potential amenities, etc. For these reasons, it is best practice among municipalities to have a separate Trails Master Plan or Active Transportation Master Plan in place, which are also better able to estimate costs of implementation.

Trail routes should be considered in future residential areas, particularly in the emerging northwest area of Welland. At the City's discretion, specific routing should be determined through the planning process in consultation with the land development industry and the public, with emphasis placed on connections to existing linkages, which is consistent with Official Plan policies (including Section 4.2.3.5).

"The City, wherever possible, shall develop a well-maintained open space system which links important destinations ...using trails, natural areas, bicycle paths and sidewalks."

~ City of Welland Official Plan
Section 6.2.2.1.D

Trails System: Recommendations

- #24. Prepare a Trails / Active Transportation Master Plan to confirm the feasibility, costs and potential to work with public and private landowners in order to implement the conceptual trails map contained in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan.
- #25. Publish a Welland Trails Map that clearly identifies current trail routes in relation to other major destinations in the City. This map should be designed in a reader-friendly format that can be used as part of communications and signage strategy for the trails system.

Section 5 Recreation in Welland



5.1 Welland's Recreation System

The City of Welland's recreation facilities allow residents to pursue a wide range of recreational activities that keep them active and connected with others in the community. Notable destinations for recreation in the City include:

- The **Welland Community Wellness Complex** that provides small gymnasium and aquatic centre, fitness centre and program studio, performance theatre, multipurpose program rooms and a billiards room, and a kitchen/concession area.
- The **Welland International Flatwater Centre** built around a 1,000 metre paddle course and containing an indoor paddle training tank, fitness centre, judging and media rooms, and meeting space.
- **Welland Main Arena** and **Jack Ballantyne Memorial Youth Arena**, each of which contain a single ice pad.
- **Youngs Sportsplex** containing one full-size indoor artificial turf field and two outdoor artificial turf fields, lit and unlit outdoor natural grass fields, four indoor tennis courts, and an outdoor ball hockey rink.
- The **Welland Sports Complex** with a hardball stadium and two lit softball diamonds.

There is a good distribution of major indoor recreation facilities between public and non-municipal providers (Figure 8). The distribution of parkland (see Figure 4 in the previous Section) also lends itself well to outdoor recreation facilities being dispersed across Welland. School properties also contribute open space and certain outdoor recreational amenities such as sports fields, courts and playgrounds.

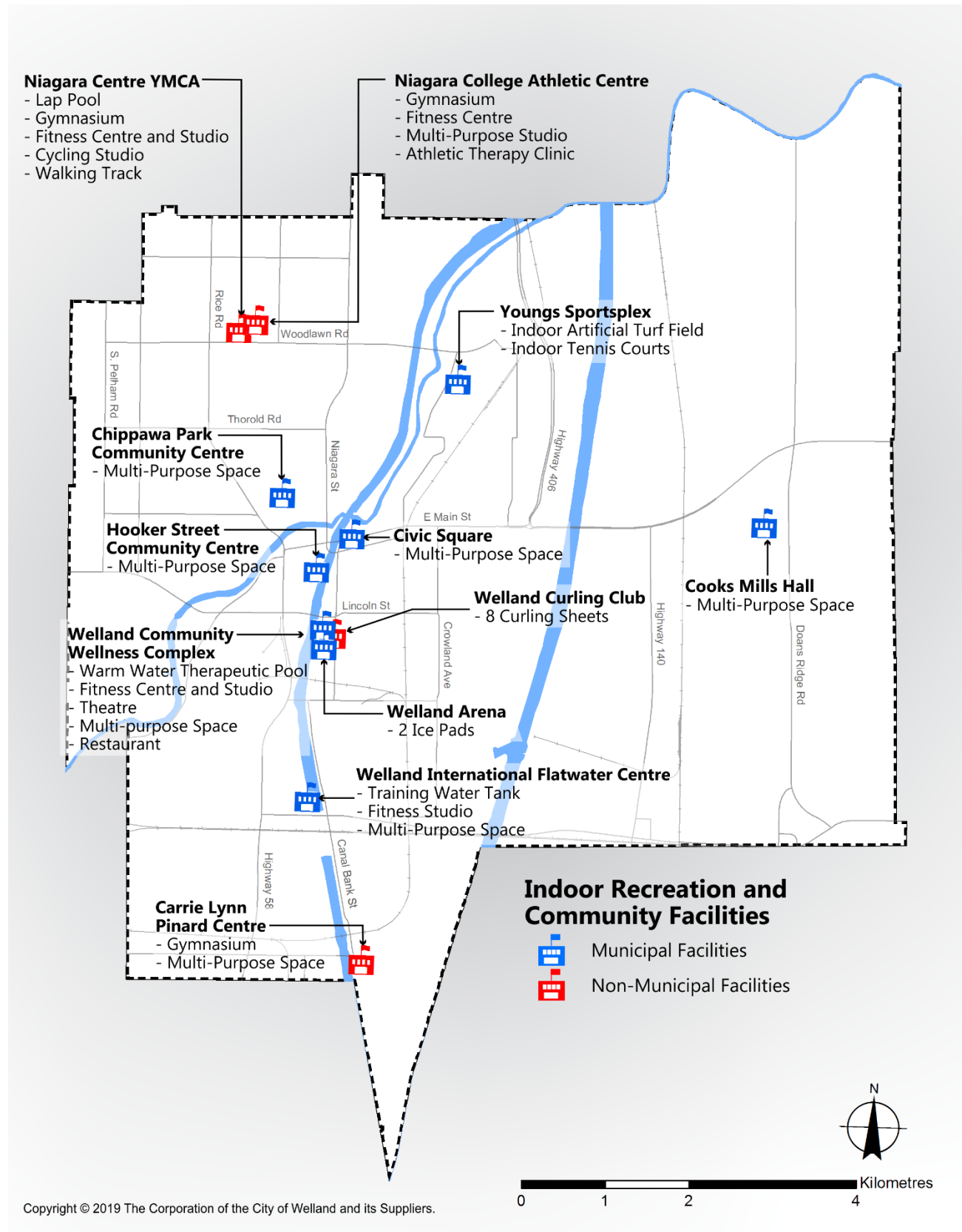
Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individuals and community wellbeing.

~ A Framework for Recreation
in Canada, 2015

Recreation System Highlights

2	Arenas
1	Outdoor Ball Hockey Pad
15	Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks
2	Fitness Centres
1	Gymnasium
1	Indoor Pool
3	Outdoor Pools
3	Splash Pads
1	Indoor Artificial Turf Field
2	Outdoor Artificial Turf Fields
19	Natural Grass Soccer Fields
22	Ball Diamonds
1	Cricket Pitch
4	Indoor Tennis Courts
9	Outdoor Tennis Courts
8	Basketball Courts
3	Sand Volleyball Courts
1	Skateboard Park
1	Off-Leash Park
38	Playgrounds

Figure 8: Major Indoor Recreation Facilities in Welland



5.2 Aquatics & Fitness

The Welland Community Wellness Complex offers a holistic fitness and therapeutic experience anchored by a small indoor aquatic area, equipment-based fitness centre, and group fitness studio. This combination of facilities in conjunction with the other program rooms has driven growth in the City's aquatics and fitness programs. The Welland International Flatwater Centre also has a fitness centre, though it is geared towards the athletes using the facility but can be rented by the public if desired.

The City's aquatics programs are facing considerable pressures primarily due to staffing challenges. Welland, like others in Ontario, face a shortage of lifeguards, particularly during daytime hours (the majority of City lifeguards are high school students). However, the small size of the indoor pool also limits the number of people that can participate in a program, as well as the types of programs that can be offered; for example, learn-to-swim programs are relegated to introductory levels (the pool is not large or deep enough for intermediate and advanced levels).

Fortunately, the three outdoor pools are well distributed across the City and are used to deliver lessons and lane swims, albeit these are limited to eight to ten weeks in the summer (and dependent on weather). The outdoor pools accommodated over 38,000 public swims and over 200 children registered in programs in 2018. The outdoor pools are vital community assets in the areas that they serve and should continue to be operated over the master planning period pending outcomes of the City's separate and ongoing Outdoor Pool Rationalization Study.

Additionally, the Niagara Centre YMCA branch in Welland is able to supplement the programming limitations of the Wellness Complex. Its 4-lane 25 metre pool and separate leisure pool are conducive to learn-to-swim and leadership at all levels, aquatic fitness, lane swimming and leisure swims. The YMCA lessons are at capacity and faces similar lifeguarding challenges as the City which diminishes its ability to fully meet community program needs. The YMCA also offers a large fitness centre and group fitness studio; although the YMCA is membership-based, non-members can pay drop-in rates to access the facility.

The fitness market in the City has become more competitive, particularly with the recent arrival of a major US-based fitness chain. Its arrival demonstrates that the private sector is aware of the growing demand for personal and group fitness opportunities in Welland, and re-affirms the City's decision to enter the fitness market when the Wellness Complex was expanded in 2011. There are approximately 2,600 Wellness Pass memberships spanning a wide range of age groups while participation in the City's fitness programs have almost doubled since 2016.

Over the next 10 years, there is reason to believe that demands for aquatics and fitness programs will continue to grow, particularly among the 55+ age cohort. The following strategies are proposed to address growth in the local aquatics and fitness market:

- **Find ways to overcome staffing challenges in the aquatics system.** The City should continue to engage other aquatic providers such as the YMCA and other municipalities to understand how others are meeting staffing shortfalls.

It would also be prudent to explore whether to convert the current part-time aquatics coordinator to a full-time position; the Recreation & Culture Department presently does not have a full-time staff person dedicated solely to administering, programming, and promoting the indoor and outdoor pools (aquatic responsibilities are presently shared between staff and other recreation program portfolios).

- **Increase aquatic programming capacity by leveraging the City's outdoor aquatic infrastructure.** Explore a greater range of aquatic fitness programs in the outdoor pools, recognizing that certain functional upgrades to the pools and their pool houses may be required (e.g. accessibility enhancements) if targeting populations such as older adults. The ability to deliver a broader range of unique aquatic leadership, sport and fitness programs should also be explored within the Welland Recreational Corridor (refer to Recommendation #15 in Section 4.2).
- As part of a potential **future conceptual planning process** (as discussed in the arena assessment for a long-term replacement strategy), investigate the ability to integrate an indoor aquatics centre beyond the 10 year master planning period in the event future needs justify such a facility and to position it as a multi-use facility. If the site cannot accommodate indoor aquatics, an alternative long-term strategy should be developed (potentially at the time of an update to the PRC Master Plan or separate process).



Welland Dog Paddle at Memorial Park Pool - © Anthony Gallaccio

Aquatics & Fitness: Recommendations

- #26. Engage the YMCA of Niagara to discuss ways to collaboratively address the broad range of aquatic programming needs and address aquatics staffing challenges common to itself and the City of Welland.
- #27. Dedicate a full-time staff person that possesses the requisite training in the aquatics sector to administer, program, and promote the City of Welland's indoor and outdoor pools. This should be implemented by converting the existing part-time Aquatics Coordinator to a full-time position (i.e. representing a 0.5 FTE increase in staffing).
- #28. Pilot an expanded range of aquatics programming within the three outdoor pools and the Welland Recreation Corridor, the latter potentially at Rotary Club of Welland Park and/or any designated outdoor swimming areas that may be developed in the future. Programs to be tested could span advanced leadership, aquatic sports, and aquatic fitness.
- #29. Review the recommendations that ultimately emerge out of the ongoing Outdoor Pool Rationalization Study with the aquatic implementation strategy articulated in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan (for pools and the Welland Recreation Corridor) in order to confirm the future course of action for the City of Welland's outdoor aquatic services.

5.3 Arenas & Ice Rinks

The Welland Main Arena and the Jack Ballantyne Memorial Youth Arena are separate single pad facilities that share a site, constructed in 1947 and 1967, respectively. As older arenas, they have fewer dressing rooms, smaller ice surfaces, and certain barrier-free accessibility challenges compared to modern design standards.

A review of the November 2018 arena schedule revealed a modest prime time usage rate of 72%, though 90% of weekday times between 5pm and 9pm were used; times are available during late weekday evenings as well as weekends for rentals and programs. The roughly 1,000 minor users in hockey and figure skating programs results in a service level of 1 ice pad per 500 minor registrants, on par with service level targets in a number of municipalities. Minor registrations are forecasted to reach 1,100 skaters by the year 2029, and the projection model results in both arenas as being needed over the master planning period.

There is case to continue operating both of Welland's arenas despite a lower than desired arena utilization rate, the population becoming proportionately older, and a new twin pad arena in Fonthill having opened within a 10 minute drive from most areas in northwest Welland. The City's arenas are reported to be in satisfactory structural and mechanical condition, Welland has thus far bucked the trend of declining ice sport participation seen across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and removing an ice pad could constrain the ability of minor users to book times in the 5pm to 9pm window.

Given the age of the arena infrastructure, the time will come within or shortly after the current master planning period for the City to conceptualize a potential replacement strategy for the two arenas. There are examples of arenas in Niagara Region that have been unexpectedly shuttered due to structural or mechanical lifecycle issues. Preparation of a conceptual plan to show how a twin pad arena could fit on the current site, along with its costs and funding plan would proactively position the City to replace its arenas when deemed to be at end of useful life or in the event of a catastrophic failure.

The 15 outdoor skating rinks also serve a valuable need while alleviating pressures on the arenas, largely through their attractiveness for neighbourhood-based public skates and shinny. Outdoor rinks are maintained by the Parks Division and volunteers, though this is becoming increasingly difficult with warming climatic conditions. The 15 rinks provide strong geographic distribution, particularly when anchored by rinks on the Chippawa Park Pond, Civic Square, and Woodlawn Bush that are the focus of more intensive maintenance. As such, the supply of outdoor rinks along with the shared operational model is sufficient over the next 10 years.

5.4 Gymnasiums & Program Rooms

The Welland Community Wellness Complex contains a gymnasium-type room that can be portioned into two separate spaces; the gym is able to accommodate some sports such as pickleball and badminton, however, does not have basketball hoops or the ceiling height required for certain other activities such as volleyball. It is also used for hall functions such as dinners and larger gatherings.

The City-owned Carrie Lynn Pinard Centre is a former school that contains a gymnasium; that facility is leased for the exclusive use of Dain City Recreation who deliver a number of community events and programs to the surrounding community. Gymnasiums are also operated by Niagara College, the Niagara Centre YMCA, and local school boards,

Local demand for gymnasium time appears to be strong based upon discussions with City Staff, non-municipal operators, and the public; pickleball programs were stated to be a large part of the reason, with the Wellness Complex program filling nearly 90% of available drop-in spots in an average year and nearly 20 hours per week being dedicated to pickleball programs.

The multi-generational and multi-purpose nature of gymnasiums are also contributing factors to their strong use. Municipal standards in other communities often target one gymnasium per 40,000 to 50,000 population which could explain

some of the pressures noted for gym time, though standards are also contingent upon access to school gymnasiums which can substantially alleviate pressures on municipal gyms and allow service level standards to be targeted at a lower rate.

The City also provides a number of multi-purpose program rooms and meeting rooms that are capable of accommodating certain activities and rentals. Multi-purpose rooms are located in many civic facilities such as community centres, arenas, libraries, Civic Square, etc. These rooms have differing levels of functionality depending upon their size, configuration, storage capabilities, availability of sinks, etc.

The City does not presently have reciprocal agreements with the local boards of education to gain access to gymnasiums or classrooms. While some of these spaces are noted to be in demand, it is no longer considered best practice to construct single purpose gymnasium or hall-type facilities. A gymnasium could be explored in tandem with a future arena replacement strategy but a more cost-effective scenario would be to work with the local school boards to gain access to one or more of their gymnasiums. Reciprocal agreements are commonly used across the province while there are many partnership examples of municipalities contributing capital towards gyms located in new or redeveloped schools. The provincial Community Hub model is also being contemplated to align municipal recreation with partners in health, education and social services.

Gymnasiums: Recommendations

- #30.* Gymnasium needs should be addressed by exploring joint or reciprocal use agreements with the District School Board of Niagara, the Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara College, the Niagara Centre YMCA, and other prospective community hub partners.

- #31.* Work with pickleball organizations operating in Welland to explore how the City can facilitate access to additional times at municipal and non-municipal gymnasiums/halls, potentially through partnerships and agreements per Recommendations #6 and #30 of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan.

5.5 Sports Fields & Fieldhouses

Within the City of Welland are 22 rectangular fields consisting of one indoor artificial turf field and two outdoor artificial turf fields at the Youngs Sportsplex, and 16 natural rectangular fields. There are also 22 ball diamonds – four of which are designed for hardball – and one cricket pitch in Cooks Mills.

Artificial Turf

The Youngs Complex indoor turf field provides Welland residents with a high quality facility for year-round field sport programs. The Welland Soccer Club's indoor program has approximately 1,350 players which is a level that would generate satisfactory weekly usage rates, but does not unduly constrain the supply; this allows other field sports such as lacrosse, football and baseball to secure times (indoor golf is also played). This is consistent with input provided by the third party management company that oversees the facility who state that additional times could be rented out, albeit primarily during the daytime.

The availability of the Youngs Sportsplex means that indoor field needs will be well served over the course of the master planning period, even when projecting indoor soccer registration growth over the next 10 years. Similarly, the supply of outdoor artificial turf fields positions the City of Welland above many comparable municipalities and allows a wide range of field sports (football, rugby, lacrosse, etc.) to deliver programs in the spring, summer and fall; Youngs Sportsplex's facility operator indicated plans to convert one of the existing grass fields to artificial turf, adding a third such field to the supply.

Rectangular Fields

In conjunction with the natural grass fields, the needs of rectangular field users should be sufficiently accommodated based on service level metrics. Considering that many communities count their outdoor artificial turf fields as the equivalent of 2 grass fields, Welland's effective supply of 24 unlit equivalents results in one rectangular field per 2,500 population or one field per 100 registered soccer players based on projections to the year 2029. Soccer field service levels are optimally targeted in the range of one per 80 to 90 registered players, meaning that two additional soccer fields should be constructed (after factoring in the planned conversion of an existing field to synthetic turf).

Sports Field Supply

Artificial Turf: Youngs Sportsplex (indoor and outdoor)

Natural Rectangular Fields: Hooker Street Park, Manchester Park, Plymouth Park and Youngs Sportsplex (2)

Mini Rectangular Fields: Youngs Sportsplex (14)

Lit Hardball Diamonds: Burgar Park, Memorial Park, and Welland Sports Complex

Unlit Hardball Diamond: Memorial Park

Lit Slo-Pitch Diamonds: Memorial Park, Plymouth Park, and Welland Sports Complex (2)

Unlit Slo-Pitch Diamonds: Bemus Park, Chippawa Park, Glenwood Park, Maple Park, Memorial Park, and Trelawn Park

T-Ball Diamonds: Bridlewood Park, Cooks Mills Park, Glen Wood Park, Manchester Park, Memorial Park (2), and St. George Park

Cricket Pitch: Cooks Mills Park

Ball Diamonds

The unlit equivalent supply is 25.5 ball diamonds when counting lit diamonds as 1.5 unlit equivalents (due to hours that can be used later into the evening). Use of the ball diamonds has grown by 40% over the last three years, with strongest use at Memorial Park and the Welland Sports Complex which is in line with regional trends (competitive baseball participation in Niagara Region has increased by 43% over the past decade). There are over 1,900 players registered with local ball groups meaning that the City is providing one diamond per 75 players, and one diamond per 2,200 population.

This level of service is favourable in terms of capacity, something that is confirmed by two major groups operating in Welland; those groups placed a greater priority on having the “right types” of diamonds rather than more diamonds, noting in particular the need for correct sizing and availability of diamond lighting systems. Therefore, no net additions to the diamond supply are being recommended as service levels are projected to be one diamond per 90 players (and one per 2,500 population) by 2029; however, ball diamond users should be re-engaged as part of the Memorial Park conceptual planning and implementation process to ensure any diamonds are provided are designed to meet the needs of local users.

Cricket Pitches

Cricket is growing in popularity across the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Welland is ahead of the curve as cricket pitches are commonly found in municipalities where the population exceeds 100,000 persons and/or has strong immigration from cricket playing nations (typically South Asian, Caribbean and some European countries). While the number of players in Welland is not known, the availability of the Cooks Mills cricket pitch is anticipated to meet needs over the next 10 years based upon a review of its utilization profile and anticipated growth in ethno-cultural populations.

Sports Fields: Recommendations

- #32. Construct two new natural grass rectangular fields, one or both of which should be located in the North West Welland Secondary Plan area.
- #33. Re-engage ball diamond user groups to reconfirm ball diamond plans proposed for Memorial Park, and investigate whether identified needs (for hardball and t-ball diamonds) can be accommodated within the 2017 Memorial Park Master Plan concept.

5.6 Sport Courts

The City provides sport courts for tennis, basketball, beach volleyball, pickleball, and ball hockey. In total there are 12 tennis courts (including four indoor courts), two pickleball courts, eight basketball courts, a multi-use court combining basketball and tennis, three sand courts, and a ball hockey court with rink boards. Purpose-built courts for tennis and basketball are also sometimes used for other activities such as ball hockey or unstructured play using the open court area.

Tennis Courts

Organized tennis play is strong in Welland with quality programs delivered through the Welland Tennis Club and the Welland Indoor Tennis Club using all of the City's tennis courts. While there are no tennis courts for drop-in/neighbourhood-based play, provincial trending indicates that most growth in tennis participation occurs at the club level. Therefore, the high quality courts at Hooker Street Park and Youngs Sportsplex position Welland very well to continue to accommodate growth in the sport over the master planning period. The two tennis clubs have a membership arrangement that discount fees for each other's members that is beneficial and avoids undue competition between them; while the number of members associated with the indoor tennis club is not known, the outdoor club reports 300 members. Based upon industry guidelines of the ratio of courts to club players, along with the fact that the clubs offer a diversity of all-season playing experiences (including clay and hard court play), the number of club-courts in Welland is appropriate for the next 10 years.

Pickleball Courts

Pickleball is played indoors at the Welland Community Wellness Complex (as well as the Niagara Centre YMCA) and has recently transitioned outdoors to Maple Park where players are making use of an underutilized tennis court as a temporary solution. While there are a handful of municipalities that have constructed dedicated pickleball courts, as a relative newcomer to the facility provision spectrum most municipalities are using a multi-use court design (see the following paragraphs) that overlay pickleball lines on top of a traditional tennis court template.

Hard Surface Court Supply

Indoor Tennis Courts:
Youngs Sportsplex

Outdoor Tennis Courts:
Hooker Street Park (4 clay, 4 asphalt for club play)

Outdoor Pickleball Courts:
Maple Park (2)

Outdoor Basketball Courts:
Almond Street Park, Gaiser Road Park, Glenwood Park, Jon Deere Park, Lancaster Park, Ricelawn Park, Sherwood Forest Park, Station Park

Multi-Use Courts:
Gaiser Road Park

Ball Hockey Courts:
Youngs Sportsplex (leased)

Sand Volleyball Courts:
Chippawa Park



Facility Snapshot

The multi-use court at Gaiser Road Park uses an interlocking plastic tile system that delineates playing boundaries for three-on-three basketball and tennis.

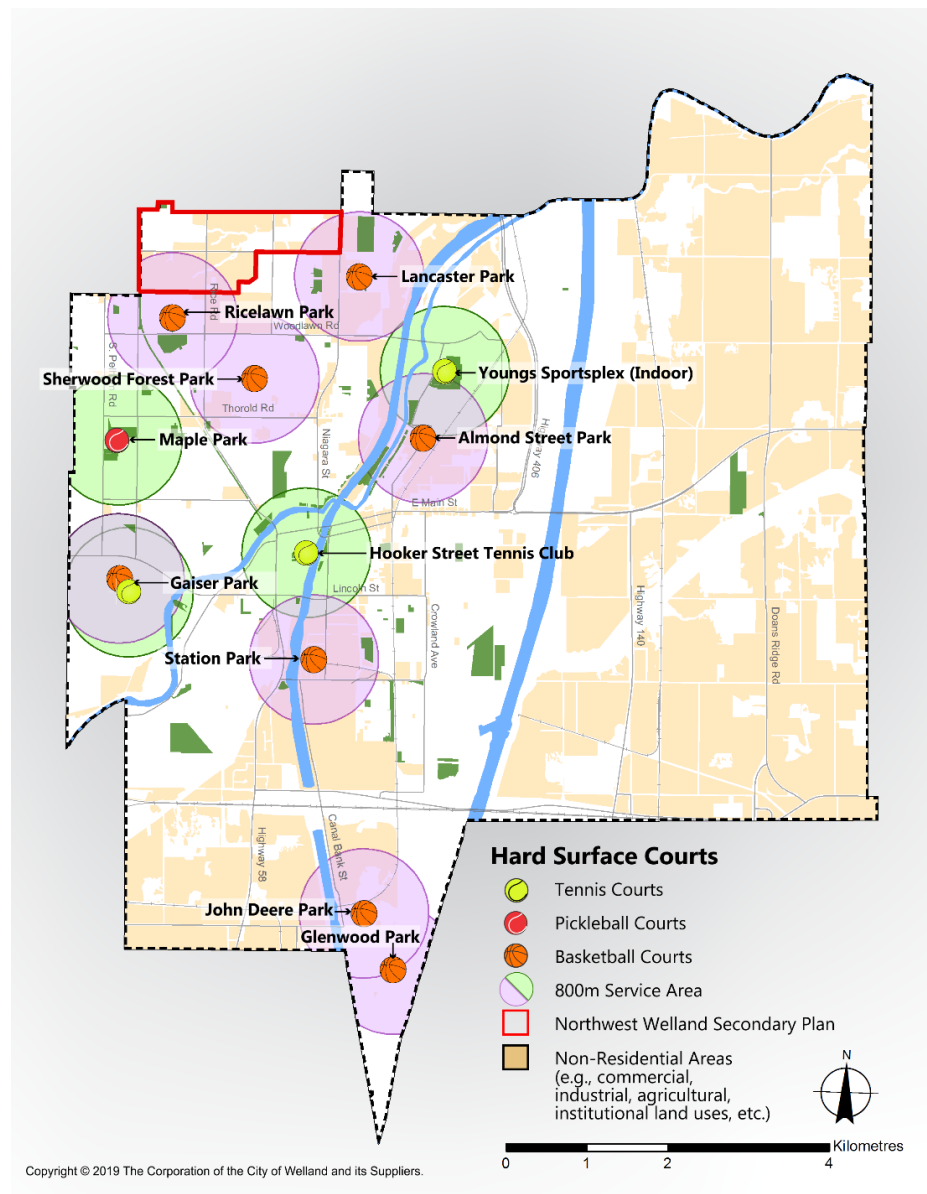
A strong demand for pickleball was expressed during master plan consultations and there is merit in establishing a permanent outdoor venue for play. The Lincoln Street Recreation Hub/Rotary Club of Welland Park conceptual plan (Figure 5 in the Parks section) illustrates pickleball courts, which the PRC Master Plan supports on the basis that there is a strong base of racquet sports in the immediate area between pickleball players using the Wellness Complex and the tennis club players nearby at Hooker Street Park.

Basketball Courts

With nine courts designed for basketball, Welland achieves a service level of one basketball court per 625 youth between the ages of 10 and 19; many municipalities target basketball courts at a rate of one per 800 youth, given this age group is the primary demographic.

There is a good distribution of basketball courts in established neighbourhoods, providing low cost choice to children and youth within walking distance. Gaps are noted in the residential areas surrounding Memorial Park and St. George Park, while an influx of housing in the North West Welland Secondary Plan could also create a need depending upon the housing mix.

Figure 9: Distribution of Hard Surface Courts



Multi-Use Courts

Gaiser Park's combination tennis-basketball court embodies leading edge design practices, particularly the surface type. To address noted gaps for basketball courts but also providing flexibility for multiple park users throughout the day, the City's multi-use court template should be replicated for future developments intended for neighbourhood drop-in play.

Sand Volleyball Courts

The three sand courts receive strong levels of use, collectively booking over 400 hours in 2018, and reflecting provincial trends pointing to growth through recreational/social leagues such as the Niagara Sport & Social Club that delivers programs through Chippawa Park (and other sand courts in Niagara Region). Like other play court sports, sand volleyball is an inexpensive activity and one that is popular among young adults.

Sand volleyball courts tend to be provided based on local needs rather than defined service level targets. No information was received that the present supply of sand courts was constraining organized play, however, it is also recognized that the strong usage at Chippawa Park may not leave much time for unorganized play or rentals by other groups. The City should investigate the feasibility of lighting the Chippawa Park sand courts provided that light and noise impacts on nearby residents can be mitigated.

As part of the ongoing development of recreation and cultural experiences within the Welland Recreational Corridor (see Section 4.2), provision of sand volleyball courts is a logical fit with the recreational experiences being recommended there. Alongside the PRC Master Plan Recommendation #15 to develop aquatic and fitness infrastructure and programs in the Corridor, the City or a partner could develop sand volleyball programs such as introductory lessons, summer camps, or even additional leagues.

Outdoor Sport Courts: Recommendations

- #34.* Construct a minimum of four outdoor pickleball courts as part of implementing the Rotary Club of Welland Park redevelopment project.
- #35.* Construct a total of three multi-use courts (basketball/tennis combination) to be located at a future park in the North West Welland Secondary Plan, Memorial Park and St. George Park.
- #36.* Engage the beach volleyball community to determine whether sand courts would be supported in the Welland Recreational Corridor, both in terms of rentals as well for beach volleyball programs, camps or leagues. The ability to install lighting at the Chippawa Park sand courts should also be explored to extend rentals after dusk.

5.7 Playgrounds

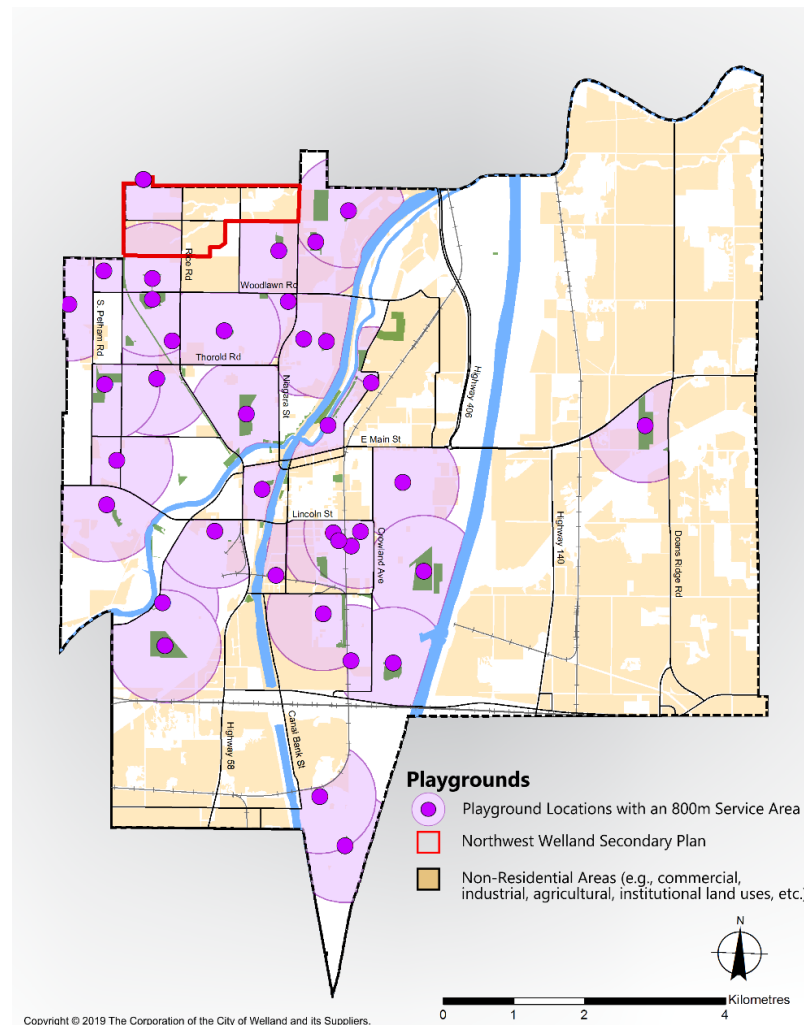
The City provides 38 playgrounds across Welland, and has been replacing older structures over time as funds permit. Playgrounds are also provided at elementary schools throughout the City. Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level amenities that benefit early childhood development, foster social skills and cognitive development, and encourage physical activity.

Playgrounds are typically provided within walking distance of major residential areas (5 to 10 minute walk), without having to cross major pedestrian barriers such as arterial roads, highways, railways, and waterbodies. Figure 10 shows that most residential areas in Welland have access to a playground in walking distance; new residential areas in the North West Welland Secondary Plan will require at least one playground to be provided.

Traditional playground equipment generally consists of swings, slides, and an array of climbing structures. More recently constructed playgrounds are designed to offer more creative and unique play experiences and often integrate accessible features.

As an alternative to the traditional and creative playground model, natural and adventure playgrounds are popular around the world. These playgrounds encourage the use of the existing landscape and materials such as wood, logs, ropes, stones, and boulders to allow users to create more daring opportunities. Still designed in compliance with CSA Z614 standard, natural/adventure playgrounds may appear to be more precarious but are proven to stimulate greater sensory and imaginative play compared to traditional plastic structures; research also shows that children's immune health can benefit from exposure to natural materials.

Figure 10: Distribution of Playgrounds



Access to active play in nature and outdoors - with its risks - is essential for healthy child development. We recommend increasing children's opportunities for self-directed play outdoors in all settings - at home, at school, in child care, the community and nature.

~ Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health,
2018

Playgrounds: Recommendations

- #37. Construct one natural playground at a Regional or City-Wide Park (as classified by the City of Welland Official Plan) – with consideration given to the Welland Recreational Corridor to complement its natural surroundings – while a minimum of two new playgrounds should serve future residential areas in the North West Welland Secondary Plan. Any new or redeveloped playgrounds should consider accessible components, natural play areas, and challenging/adventure play as appropriate.

5.8 Skateboard Parks

The Welland Skateboard & BMX Park is a quality facility designed with a number of features that provide a good experience for both introductory and advanced level riders. Its centralized location and service level of one skatepark per 5,600 youth (between 10 and 19 years of age) are benefits and are anticipated to serve the City well over the master planning period. In fact, the current skateboard park should sufficiently meet needs until Welland's youth population exceeds 10,000 persons, which is expected to be reached at least 15 years from now. As a result, no further additions to the skateboard and bike park supply are proposed through the PRC Master Plan.



Section 6 Culture in Welland



6.1 Welland's Arts & Culture System

The City of Welland origins are as a scattering of farms established as an outgrowth of a settlement around the year 1788, between what is now known as Quaker Road and South Pelham Street, along the Welland River. A cairn located near the City's eastern boundary on Lyons Creek Road marks the spot where the United States and those of Canada met for the last time in armed conflict, nearly 200 years ago. In 1829, a wooden aqueduct was built to carry the Welland Canal over the Welland River which solidified the settlement and the name was changed to Merrittsville in 1844 to honour William Merritt. The settlement was incorporated as the Village of Welland in 1858. Incorporation as a town took place in 1878, and as a City on July 1, 1917.¹¹

Today, Welland's arts and cultural sector is commonly associated with built assets such as the Museum, Floating Stage, Farmers' Market, and buildings in the historic downtown. However, culture at its core is about the shared experiences between people that connects a community. The City of Welland recognizes that the availability of arts and culture opportunities is very desirable, fostering vibrant and liveable neighbourhoods, contributing to local knowledge and supporting the local economy. The arts and cultural community in Welland benefit the City in a number of ways such as:

- Lending itself to developing a "creative economy" that attracts labour through the creative class (artists, architects, designers, chefs, etc.)
- Sharing a willingness to form a collective and create incubators; and
- Generating tourism/cultural tourism benefits using unique cultural individuals, assets, and events found here.

"Culture shapes and profoundly enriches our lives and communities. Engagement in cultural activities strengthens empathy, cross-cultural understanding, and sense of community."

~ Ontario Culture Strategy: Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy
Discussion Paper

Arts & Cultural System Highlights

Welland Canal Bridge 13

Welland Farmers' Market

Merritt Park Floating Stage & Amphitheatre

Welland Historical Museum

WCWC Performance Theatre

Battle of Cooks Mills National Historic Site (Parks Canada)

Canoe Art Project & Downtown Murals

Welland Canal Memorial Monument

Canalside Players Theatre Productions

Various Buildings with Historical & Distinctive Architectural Features

Dozens of festivals, special events and concerts

¹¹ City of Welland. <https://www.welland.ca/aboutwelland>. Accessed on May 2, 2019.

6.2 Providing a Foundation for Arts and Culture

In 2006, a landmark document for culture was prepared for the Government of Canada that identified culture as being one of four pillars of community sustainability.¹² Across Canada and around the world, demonstrate that a thriving arts, culture and heritage system brings multi-faceted benefits to a community. Ontario's arts and culture industry generated \$22 billion in GDP in 2010, representing nearly 4% of the total economy as well as employing 4% of the provincial workforce.¹³

The City of Welland is keen to leverage the contributions and talents of its creative collective; over the years, the City has invested in its arts and cultural system through physical infrastructure, program delivery, and community development. A strong Municipal Arts & Culture Policy is in place that provides a framework for planning, delivering and supporting arts and cultural services.

Municipal policies and investments provide the foundation through which the arts and cultural community can grow. The City has actively developed partnerships in the community such as local businesses and volunteer groups that run theatre productions, festivals and special events.

The provision of arts and cultural programs is important for people of all ages, but is particularly critical for younger children and older adults. Involvement in the arts facilitates self-expression which in turn can develop feelings of confidence and self-worth for children and youth. Participation in the arts at an early age can lead to life-long involvement, something that is also important during older adulthood as there is ample research linking participation to the prevention of cognitive deterioration and dementia, and minimizing social isolation. In the current day and age, more people are tapping into their creative sides using technology available through their smartphones and tablets (e.g. writing/blogging, photography, music and video creation), meaning that there is upside for participation in arts and culture activities.

Definition of the Arts

“The creative arts in all its forms of expression [including the] visual arts, literary arts, performing arts, media arts, material arts, arts industries, civic arts, culturally specific arts, and community arts.”

Definition Culture

“The values, customs, heritage and traditions that characterize the community. Culture is inclusive and reflects the elements and traits of people from historical and contemporary settlement, popular culture, and the places, physical amenities, events, products and creations that contribute to such values, customs and traditions.”

~ City of Welland Municipal Arts & Culture Policy (revised February 2018)

¹² Government of Canada. From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future for All Canadians. (2006). Final Report of the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities.

¹³ Statistics Canada. June 2015. Provincial and Territorial Culture Satellite Account, 2010.

6.3 Cultural Diversity in the City

A community's ethno-cultural diversity can play a prominent role in shaping local arts and culture system, often contributing to a community's identity and traditions that have carried over time. Ethno-cultural background is also part of establishing new traditions and offerings, part of the reason that a community's cultural identity is dynamic and constantly evolving.

Despite modest increase in the immigrant population over the past decade, historical immigration continues to play part of the sustained identity of many ethno-cultural groups. Immigration patterns can be expected to change and the City's cultural diversity may increase, particularly if new residential lands are released and as Welland – like certain other Niagara Region municipalities – becomes more popular among retirees, many of whom represent diverse cultural backgrounds.

With Ontario's population becoming increasingly culturally diverse, arts and cultural activities will be reflective of such changes. The City of Welland celebrates its broad cultural diversity with a broad range of events (e.g., Luck of the Irish), programs (e.g., Tai Chi), and facilities (e.g., cricket pitch) to recognize global cultures that are living and visiting locally. Since 89% of Welland's population are non-immigrants, barriers to participation (e.g. religious, cultural or language-related reasons) are less likely to be significant in Welland but nevertheless need to be considered in the delivery of services.



6.5 Heritage

Heritage sites and buildings are often positive attributes in a community. They provide opportunities for regeneration through community revitalization efforts, economic development and tourism, interpretation and education, housing or commercial/employment uses, and can be venues for municipal programming/rentals. The Welland Museum is but one of the excellent examples of adaptively re-using a historically important structure.

The Ontario Heritage Act and the Ontario Planning Act are the principal pieces of legislation guiding historical preservation and conservation efforts. As such, the City of Welland Official Plan is the primary implementing document for heritage planning at the local level, with a Heritage Advisory Committee supporting City Council and Staff. Welland contains many structures and sites that represent its early history, particularly in its downtown core, some of which are designated Heritage properties.

6.6 Arts & Cultural Space

The City of Welland most recent investments in purpose-built arts and cultural space over the past decade are the Welland Community Wellness Complex performance theatre and the Merritt Park Floating Stage and Amphitheatre. Longstanding built civic spaces include the Welland Museum, the Welland Farmers' Market and the Welland Public Library branches.

Indoor & Outdoor Performance Space

The Wellness Complex's theatre has a capacity of 385 persons with its retractable seating system and is home to the City-funded, volunteer-run Canalside Players who put on one production annually. The theatre also attracts a few travelling productions every year and a number of concerts. While it is viewed as a successful theatre, some logistical challenges exist such as the demand for multi-purpose program space within the Wellness Complex that results in the theatre being used for group fitness or meetings/gatherings. This reduces the time and ability to host additional longer-running productions, build sets, deliver additional arts and cultural programs, etc.

It is excellent that the theatre is flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of uses, thereby resulting in a good utilization rate, but poses challenges to performance groups wishing to make more use of one of the few facilities in Welland that can meet their needs. Compounding logistical challenges is the limited storage space which has resulted in one of the dressing rooms being taken over for storage and equipment being stored in the theatre's wings; neither of these is ideal for performance groups. Furthermore, the Green Room is presently being used for administrative purposes.

The Floating Stage and Amphitheatre at Merritt Park is truly a unique and attractive outdoor performance/special event venue. With seating for up to 750 people, the amphitheatre is the location of choice for many summer festivals in Welland. City staff



Cultural Snapshot

The Battle of Cooks Mills National Historic Site was designated in 1921. It was the site of an engagement between British and Canadian troops and American forces during the War of 1812 where the Americans were forced to withdraw following a heavy skirmish.



identify that there are some functional limitations relating to storage and complexities to set up events, as well as noting that certain lifecycle components of the stage are beginning to deteriorate. Recommendation #15 of the PRC Master Plan advances rejuvenation of the Floating Stage with a view of integrating components that potentially allow a broader range of programs and events to take place.

Visual Arts & Exhibition Space

There are no purpose-built visual arts spaces operated by the City of Welland, though a number of its multi-purpose rooms – such as at the Welland Community Wellness Complex – can be used for painting, craft work, and certain other visual arts activities. Most visual arts are presumably taking place in home-based or private studios, and exhibited in private galleries.

The Welland Museum

The Welland Museum is located in a designated heritage building, occupying a former Carnegie Library. It operates at arms-length from the City of Welland which funds the Museum (along with other supporters); it is a registered charity and incorporated non-profit entity that is governed by a Board of Directors. The Museum provides two floors of exhibits and archival materials that are generally focused on the historical founding, settlement and development of Welland, Pelham and surrounding area. The museum delivers educational and recreational programming for all age groups.

Welland Public Library

Welland Public Library has three branches. The main branch at Civic Square (City Hall) is supported by smaller branches at Seaway Mall and at Diamond Trail Public School. In addition to print resources, the Welland Public Library offers digital information, media, and 3D printing. Other services include room rentals, programming, support services, and dedicated spaces for children and teens.

Like many progressive library systems, Welland Public Library is a multi-faceted community destination whose programming portfolio to include non-traditional, but nevertheless complementary offerings. This includes vegetable gardening classes (which could potentially align with recommended support for community gardens in Section 4.4), arts and crafts programs such as knitting and painting, music and technology, and even some fitness programs as part of its commitment to wellness.

As a City-funded department, there is merit in pursuing greater coordination between Welland Public Library, the Recreation & Culture Division, and the Parks Division to collaboratively plan and delivery programs using indoor and outdoor municipal spaces. Greater coordination could reduce service duplication between some program offerings between the Divisions and the Library, while allowing each other to maximize use of resources and share subject matter expertise with one another through each other's respective program delivery.

While not part of the public library system, a small user-curated library space is contained within the Welland Community Wellness Complex.

Welland Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market has a history dating back to 1907 and is now the largest farmers' market in Niagara Region. It is a gathering place for the community and is a regional tourist destination focused upon the sale of fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and cheeses, baked goods, and wares crafted by artisans from across the region. The City has upgraded the Farmers' Market Building and undertaken aesthetic and functional improvements to the outdoor area through plantings, decorative signage, and the open air pavilion. There is also a demonstration kitchen located within the building with video camera and television setups, along with a patio area; given its low usage during the week and limited interest in municipally-run culinary programs thus far, the City should explore the ability of this space to be used as a business incubator during the week (e.g. home-based food production enterprises) which falls in line with Recommendation #45 in the pages that follow.

Exploring an Arts & Cultural Hub

With PRC Master Plan consultations expressing desires for additional space for the arts, there is merit in exploring the creation of a facility that can centralize programming and potentially serve as an incubator for the creative individuals/entrepreneurs. Such as "hub" for arts and culture could integrate studio space and workshops, performance space, exhibition space, program rooms, and administrative areas as examples.

Consultations consistently pointed to the downtown as the creative engine of the community where people draw inspiration from the area's natural beauty and historic surroundings. Downtown Welland is home to several critical pieces of cultural infrastructure (Bridge 13, Welland Museum, Farmers' Market, etc.), many of which could support the presence of a hub facility but also to be leverage as part of ongoing downtown revitalization efforts. Some consultation participants thought that adaptive re-use of an existing downtown building, preferably one with a historic element, would be ideal to create new cultural space; the Central Fire Hall with its Edwardian Classical architectural style was noted as an example of a space that could be used for the arts by some residents.

An arts and culture hub, potentially to be referred to as a "resource centre" is envisioned to be scaled as a grassroots-level facility oriented to community programming rather than a large performing arts centre or art gallery found in larger municipalities. An arts and culture resource centre is viewed as a multi-disciplinary space where creative individuals can gather, share ideas, and support each other. The multi-disciplinary philosophy also responds to current trends in the sector that show artists – particularly Generation X and Millennials – transcending their arts across many disciplines/forms of expression as opposed to focusing on single media as tended to be in the past.

Prior to pursuing an arts and cultural resource centre or hub facility, a number of items relating to funding, governance, partnership potential, etc. will need to be confirmed. As such, the City should initiate a consultation, feasibility study and site selection process.



Arts & Cultural Space: Recommendations

- #38.** Continue to promote arts, culture and heritage activities within public spaces such as parks and civic buildings by employing a comprehensive strategy that considers design and amenity requirements, interpretive signage and public art, exhibition areas, and more.
- #39.** Establish an arts and cultural resource centre, potentially in downtown Welland. At a minimum, the City should engage local organizations and/or businesses to discuss the feasibility of such a project, prospective partnerships, as well as the funding and governance models that need to be in place prior to investing in a dedicated centre for arts and culture.
- #40.** Pursue greater inter-departmental collaboration between the Recreation & Culture Division, the Parks Division, and the Welland Public Library to coordinate program planning and delivery. In doing so, explore ways to share expertise, deliver joint-programs, and minimize service duplication with the view of improving efficiencies across the Corporation.

6.7 Public Art in Welland

Public art has featured prominently in Welland for decades, playing an important role in animating public spaces, sparking creativity and imagination, showcasing historical and cultural values, and ultimately creating welcoming and attractive environments. The Festival of Arts historic murals project was initiated in 1986 in the midst of economic uncertainties, commissioning murals to re-instill a sense of community pride, stimulate an aesthetic revitalization of the core and promote tourism.

More recently, the former Welland Recreational Canal Corporation and the City's Arts and Culture Advisory Committee collaborated to initiate the Canoe Art Project; there are 10 Canoes Art displays across the City - most are in or near the Welland Recreational Corridor - each of which commemorates Welland's heritage, sporting history and contemporary culture in a unique way.

Public art is often a symbol of a progressive municipality, showcasing a level of maturity and inspiration that many prospective residents and employers may base a decision to relocate upon. The Municipal Arts & Culture Policy places a strong focus on public art, and a new Public Art Fund has been created in 2019 that allocates \$6,500 towards new public art projects or restoration/maintenance of existing displays.

The City should explore the feasibility of applying the "Percent for Public Art" concept as a potential funding source for the Public Art Fund. Used in municipalities across the world (with many Canadian examples), the Percent for Public Art program is commonly embedded in the land development approvals process through Official Plan policy that enables a municipality to collect one percent of gross construction costs for the purposes of public art. This often supports voluntary contributions from land developers as well as instances where the Planning Act's Section 37 density bonusing permissions apply.

In order to realize the ongoing benefits for public art, the works must be maintained to keep up the appearance originally intended by their artists. Welland's public art should thus be supported by a Maintenance Plan that documents the cost of maintaining or restoring public art pieces. In developing such a plan, the City puts itself in a position of understanding whether its annual Public Art Fund contributions are sufficient as well as provide a long-range plan to fund maintenance/restoration works specific to future years.



The Maintenance Plan could initially be focused upon public art located on City property such as the Canoe Art displays and the Merritt Park storage container, but could potentially be extended to private properties. For example, the deteriorating state of many murals was brought up frequently in the PRC Master Plan consultations and that there needs to be more incentives communicated to their private property owners. A Maintenance Plan could thus help building owners on which the murals are located to understand what works are required to retain the art, the costs involved with doing so, and communicate incentives available to them such as the Recreation & Culture Division's Public Art Fund and the Planning Division's Façade Improvement Grant (the latter of which grants up to \$12,500 per project or up to \$20,000 for designated heritage structures). The Region of Niagara also has a community improvement plan funding for building and façade improvements of up to \$10,000, though that applies to properties situated on Regional Roads.

As a modern twist in the spirit of the murals project legacy, suggestions for a "graffiti wall" were received from the community. The concept has been successfully in other parts of the world where street/graffiti artistic are provided with a blank canvas in the form of a sanctioned wall on a building or as simple as setting up temporary plywood fixtures. There is a level of respect that is gained when urban art is created amongst this micro-community of artists/taggers and does not tend to result in the negative aspects commonly associated with graffiti art. Furthermore, it provides a creative and positive outlet for youth that might otherwise be inclined to vandalize private property, potentially aiding in downtown revitalization efforts. A permanent wall typically involves commissioning a well-established artist who would define his or her vision to the City in advance and often will hire youth or other street artists to assist in the painting. This can be a highly empowering approach and lends financial support and practical experience to all involved. A temporary wall can also involve commissioning an artist(s) but can also be setup in a way that the wall is painted over after a communicated set period of time thereby allowing many artists an opportunity to regularly showcase their work.

Public Art: Recommendations

- #41.* The Public Art Fund recently added to the Departmental 2019 operating budget should be reviewed after its first full year to determine whether the funding allocation is sufficient to encourage new public art projects and the restoration/rejuvenation of existing public art works. The City should explore the feasibility of supporting the Public Art Fund using a "One Percent for Public Art" policy approach as well as preparing a Public Art Maintenance Plan so that the City strengthens its understanding of renewal costs, and allocate funding appropriately for future years.

- #42.* Create a wall for street paintings/graffiti art within downtown Welland and/or the Welland Recreational Corridor to provide a creative outlet and discourage vandalism that might otherwise occur on private property. The wall could be permanent or temporary in nature.

6.8 Festivals & Events

Festivals and events have several positive impacts on life in Welland. They provide an opportunity for residents to gather while serving as important platforms to celebrate local culture, heritage, talent, and achievements. The City of Welland has demonstrated its commitment to supporting local festivals and special events by providing indoor and outdoor venues, offering support through funding and logistical resources, and facilitating the planning and delivery of the events themselves.

Festivals or events are each unique in terms of their target audience, type of activities taking place, their complexities to plan and execute, and ultimately their size. The number of City Departments involved and the permits required depends on the type of event, whether it uses a facility or outdoor space (or both), whether road closures are needed, if the event is licensed for alcohol consumption, and any other approvals from municipal or other governmental agencies.

Consultations held throughout the master planning process demonstrated that residents and decision-makers want to see more festivals and special events, while strengthening existing ones. The City is working to streamline coordination with the community by having festival and event applications directed through a single point of contact within the City, who can then direct further inquiries to the appropriate person within the corporation.

In terms of internal coordination, the Community Development, Community Recreation, and Arts & Culture Coordinators collectively work together when an event includes programs/services that fall within their responsibilities. While the Coordinators' ability to dedicate sufficient time can be constrained due to their other departmental responsibilities, the festivals and events season peaks between May and November. The summer student position advanced in Recommendation #8 (see Section 3.5) would alleviate some pressures on the Coordinators by assuming peak season marketing and awareness tasks.

A Festivals and Events Strategy should be prepared in order to provide the City with a robust understanding of the resources required to effectively deliver upon its responsibilities. This Strategy would provide guidance to decision-makers and festival /event organizers by developing:

- A long-term vision for festivals and events in Welland;
- Strategic directions, initiatives and recommendations alongside a timeline for implementation;
- An understanding of gaps in service along with how existing infrastructure (streets, community centres, parks, etc.) can be leveraged as well as any new infrastructure that may be required;
- Strategies for marketing, promoting and funding festivals/events;
- Opportunities for collaboration between community stakeholders, City Departments and the Region of Niagara; and
- Funding and staffing requirements associated with implementing the vision and recommended actions to bolster festivals/events.

"Concerts on the Canal
is a GREAT series of
events!"

~ Your Channel
Welland Comment

Figure II: Spectrum of Festivals and Events

Private Festivals & Events	Restricted to a limited, invited group of patrons.
Local Festivals & Events	Geared to a specific neighbourhood or stakeholder group.
Major Festivals & Events	Originates from within the local community and often produced by local residents, and the event is typically promoted to the Community at large. Canada Day and Concerts on the Canal are examples of this category.
Signature Festivals & Events	A public one-time or recurring festival or event that possesses significance, tradition, attractiveness or publicity that provides the host community with a competitive advantage. The Welland Rose Festival is an example of this category.
Mega Festivals & Events	A public one-time or recurring festival or event that is distinguished by its focus on international participation and visitation, level of public funding, infrastructure, legacy development and economic impact. Festivals and events put on through the Welland International Flatwater Centre are examples of this category.

Source: Town of Richmond Hill, Festival & Events Resources Manual, 2019.

Festivals & Events: Recommendations

- #43. Prepare a comprehensive Festivals & Events Strategy that defines the role and responsibilities of the City of Welland in delivering and facilitating events. The Strategy should articulate funding and staffing requirements, promotional and awareness strategies targeted to local residents and tourists across the region, and identify how existing and future physical infrastructure can be better leveraged to deliver quality experiences.

6.9 Resourcing Arts & Culture in Welland

Implementation of cultural policies and initiatives identified in the PRC Master Plan must be accompanied by appropriate resources; ensuring that funding and staffing are sufficiently allocated will increase the likelihood of success. Arts & Culture is allocated \$25,000 in the operating budget that primarily goes towards program instructors, equipment and supplies; however, the new \$6,500 Public Art fund will be over and above this amount. Accordingly, the City allocates approximately \$0.56 per capita that is directly assignable to arts and culture, plus other funding in the Recreation & Culture Division that is common among arts, culture, and recreation services (e.g. promotion, some staffing, etc.).

The City and local non-profit organizations are also eligible to apply for the annual Niagara Investment in Culture program that funds a range of innovative and collaborative projects (new projects/events only). In 2018, the program funded local projects such as the concert for the 2018 Canoe Polo World Championships, the Battle of the Bands competition through Welland Public Library showcasing youth aged 12-25 as well as performances by established local musicians, a local theatre production, and the BIA's Welland Supper Market.

Building capacity in the arts and culture sector goes beyond dollars and cents. The City's role is multi-faceted with funding being but one component; it will need to also act in a planning, coordination and facilitation capacity if to be successful. Many City Departments and Divisions face resourcing challenges where multiple responsibilities are often combined when in fact certain portfolios require full-time attention. Staffing challenges are common in many municipalities and while it would be ideal to direct necessary resources to addressing such challenges, it is not always pragmatic or feasible to do so. Therefore, the community development approach advanced in Section 3 of the PRC Master Plan along with a commitment to a corporate culture of integrated and coordinated departmental communications will be important. Furthermore, the citizen-based Arts and Culture Advisory Committee and the Heritage Advisory Committee are important resources whose knowledge the City should continue to leverage.

Resourcing Arts & Culture: Recommendations

- #44. Allocate the funding and staffing resources required to deliver upon the existing arts and cultural opportunities along with those articulated in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Plan such as an arts and cultural resource centre, related programming, public art and festivals/events.
- #45. Connect the City's arts and cultural facilities (existing and future), festivals/events, and programming through coordinated/targeted advertising and promotion, signage, and integration with and connectivity to physical infrastructure such as parks, streets and civic spaces.



Section 7 Implementing the Master Plan

7.1 Monitoring & Updating the Master Plan

The City should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the recommendations of the Master Plan in order to ensure that they remain reflective of community needs. This may require monitoring activity levels, utilization, demographics, and continuing dialogue with community organizations. The development of annual work plans and year-end reporting should be undertaken to track achievements and lessons learned in order to determine the success of the Master Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustment in resource allocations and priorities may be required. The following steps should be considered to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan.

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

Monitoring & Updating the Master Plan: Recommendations

- #46.* Update the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan in the year 2024 to coincide with the end of the five year detailed implementation period associated with it. Progress in implementing the Master Plan should be tracked annually with results (and other related corporate achievements) communicated to City Council and the general public on a regular basis.

7.2 Financial Considerations

Due to the City's historical investments in its parks, recreation and culture sector, the PRC Master Plan's recommendations have largely been able to focus upon leveraging ongoing works and existing infrastructure. Major capital expenditures are attributable to the continued development efforts within the Welland Recreational Corridor and a possible arts and culture resource centre. Both of these initiatives require further consultation and design-based work to be completed prior to understanding their respective capital implications. Costs of implementing the Vista Park (Atlas Landfill), Rotary Park, and Memorial Park concepts would be articulated through those separate processes.

All recommendations that have a capital requirement would be brought forward on an annual basis through the budgeting process once the City has the information it needs to develop costs (e.g. amount of parkland being conveyed, site selection, design characteristics, financial contributions from non-municipal sources, etc.). For the purposes of providing a preliminary estimate of capital cost implications for selected recommendations, Table 2 indicates that the City can expect to expend a minimum of \$1,725,000 of which the majority would be eligible for Development Charge funding under current provincial legislation (however, see the paragraphs that follow).

Similarly, it is envisioned that a number of service-delivery focused recommendations centred upon communications, policy development and volunteer supports can be worked into existing staff workloads. Certain others can be assumed into the two new staff positions being recommended (Welland Recreational Corridor Coordinator and Marketing/Promotions Coordinator) whose salaries will depend upon FTE status and municipal pay structure if/when approved to be added.

Table 2: Preliminary Capital Implications of Selected Recommendations

Major Capital Item Recommended	Estimated Cost
Welland Recreation Corridor Developments, Competitive Rowing Course, and Arts Resource Centre	To Be Determined
<u>Recreation Facility Developments</u>	
Rectangular Fields (x2)	\$750,000
Natural and Standard Playgrounds (x3)	\$300,000
Sport courts (x7)	\$350,000
Chippawa Park Sand Court Lighting	\$50,000
Public Art Maintenance Fund (assumes \$10,000 annual contribution)	\$100,000
Street Painting / Graffiti Wall	\$30,000
<u>Consulting / Design Studies</u>	
Trails / Active Transportation Master Plan	\$50,000
Festivals & Events Strategy	\$30,000
PRC Master Plan Update	\$65,000
Preliminary Capital Implications	\$1,725,000 + TBD Items
<u>Related Initiatives*</u>	
Memorial Park Concept Plan Implementation*	\$3,600,000
Atlas Landfill (Vista Park) Concept Plan Implementation	\$1,350,000
Rotary Club of Welland Park Concept Plan Implementation	\$2,000,000

* Cost estimates provided by the City of Welland based upon current conceptual/capital plans, and do not reflect changes that may result from PRC Master Plan Recommendations

Notes: Costs for PRC Master Plan major capital items exclude purchases of land and assume optimal geotechnical and site development conditions. Costs are order of magnitude, preliminary in nature based on experience in other municipalities, and should be confirmed by the City through detailed analyses prior to integration into budgets/work plans.

It bears noting that recent legislation introduced by the Government of Ontario through Bill 108 alters the way that the City would fund many of the parks, recreation and cultural services articulated in the PRC Master Plan. Bill 108 proposes changes to the growth-related charges and has identified a “Community Benefit Charge”; the bill has passed its first reading and implementation details have not been identified thereby requiring municipalities to remain apprised of the Bill’s implications over the months to follow. The City needs to monitor this legislation and should revisit any recommendations contained in the PRC Master Plan that have the potential to be affected by the legislative changes to reconfirm their feasibility.

Monitoring the Master Plan: Recommendations

- #47. Revisit Recommendations contained in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan that will be affected by the Provincial Bill 108 to reconfirm their feasibility in light of a new legislative planning and funding framework.

7.3 Implementation Strategy

The following pages summarize Recommendations contained within the PRC Master Plan. Year of implementation for Recommendations to be initiated in the next 5 years are identified individually, while Recommendations that are longer-term or ongoing are shown in a consolidated 5 to 10 year timeframe.

Timing assigned to individual recommendations should be considered as a preliminary estimate as it largely relies upon the City achieving forecasted population thresholds as identified in the PRC Master Plan. It is not the intent of this Master Plan to recommend timing of Recommendations but rather **to provide a general indication of when the need to implement the actions could be considered** along with other future variables. The City should use a combination of service level targets, historical demand indicators and adherence to fiscally responsible business practices prior to determining the type and timing of recommended facilities and services.

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
Department-Wide Objectives						
#1 Requests for facilities and services that are not part of the City’s core mandate should be evaluated based on anticipated municipal role, quantifiable measures of demand and costs to the City, and other long-term implications prior to decision whether or not to partner in the public interest.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#2 Continue to support Welland’s volunteer sector through appropriate community development and capacity building initiatives.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#3 Convene training opportunities for local volunteer organizations aimed at organizational effectiveness, capacity building, succession planning, etc. potentially hosted in collaboration with major agencies or organizations that also rely upon volunteers.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#4 Organize annual forums for volunteer and community organizations delivering parks, recreation and culture services in Welland to allow information/idea sharing and networking opportunities to take place. Such forums could be tied in with new or existing volunteer recognition events.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#5 Regularly meet with partners to discuss implementation of partnership agreements, and where necessary, revisit and/or strengthen agreements to maximize benefits to all parties and the general public.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#6 Proactively seek partnerships with parks, recreation and cultural service providers including, but not limited to, educational and healthcare institutions, non-profit agencies, sport organizations, and arts and cultural collectives, and entities interested in operating within the Welland Recreation Corridor or other City properties.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#7 Develop a standardized process or framework for evaluating and responding to requests for partnerships, with the view of maximizing public interests.			●			

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
#8 Create a Staff Position (FTE to be determined) within the Recreation & Culture Division that is responsible for the coordination of marketing and awareness initiatives for programs, events, and sponsorship/rental opportunities. The new position could be supplemented during peak months with a student (paid, volunteer and/or co-op) to assist with certain tasks and could benefit from youth job creation grants from senior levels of government		•				
#9 Continually review participation in the Wellness For All program to determine its effectiveness in reaching low-income populations, while working with agency partners to raise awareness of all financial assistance programs available through the City, Region and other partners.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#10 As growth in the number of persons with disabilities, diverse ethno-cultural groups, and LGBTQ+ communities continues in Welland, the City should engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives of such groups. The intent is to understand the parks, recreation and cultural needs of marginalized populations in terms of demands for traditional activities delivered by the City as well as new programs and services that result in these populations becoming active and connected.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#11 Develop additional youth-specific drop-in and registered programs to be offered in parks, recreation and culture facilities, libraries, and the Youth Innovations drop-in centre. The Welland Youth Advisory Council, youth-serving agencies and providers - including those delivering social services - and a broader cross-section of youth ages 13 to 18 living in Welland should be engaged in the program development process.		•				
#12 Work with the Rose City Seniors Foundation and other older adult service partners to better understand how older adults are using the City of Welland's parks, recreation and culture services, and collectively find ways to increase participation rates in response to emerging trends and issues.				•		

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
Parks in Welland						
#13 Initiate a second phase study of expanded uses and action plans for the Welland Recreational Corridor that tests public opinion and the business case to create a “leisure zone” for non-motorized marine uses within the portion of the waterway corridor that exists between Woodlawn Road and Ontario Road. At a minimum, leisure uses to be explored should include areas for public swimming (such as a beach area) and a splash pad, additional shaded seating areas and permanent or portable washrooms along the Welland Canals Trail, vehicular parking, and interpretive/way-finding signage and public art.		•				
#14 Investigate the feasibility of establishing a competitive rowing course within the southern portion of the Welland Recreational Corridor (i.e. south of Townline Tunnel Road). The ability to involve local, regional and/or provincial rowing organizations as funding or operating partners should be explored as part of this process.	•	•				
#15 Invest in outdoor aquatics and fitness infrastructure within the Welland Recreational Corridor through outdoor fitness equipment, rejuvenation of the Floating Stage, open-water swimming amenities, and others as identified. In tandem with these investments, explore the delivery of unique programming related to land-based and open-water activities such as triathlon, paddleboard yoga, advanced aquatic leadership, and group fitness classes.			•	•		
#16 Establish a Full-Time Staff position (1.0 FTE) to oversee and coordinate initiatives related to the growth, delivery and development of programs and infrastructure within the Welland Recreational Corridor and the Welland International Flatwater Centre.		•				
#17 Acquire new parkland in future development areas primarily through maximizing parkland dedication allowable under the Ontario Planning Act, and where necessary through municipal purchase or securing agreements with other landholders. In particular, focus acquisition on a minimum of one City-wide Park along with the requisite number of Neighbourhood Parks that will result in strong walkability within future residential areas.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
#18 Upon completing the decommissioning of the Atlas Landfill and obtaining the requisite approvals to make it accessible for public use, convert the site into City-wide Park thereby improving the service level for that park typology. Implementation of the Vista Park Concept Plan should guide the development of this future park.				●		
#19 Park and trail development/redevelopment projects should integrate comfort elements to encourage public use. At a minimum, elements may include shade, seating, lighting and/or washrooms where appropriate.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#20 Install consistent signage using the municipal brand for residents to easily identify that they are at a City of Welland park or trail. Interpretive and wayfinding signage should also be installed where appropriate so that park users can directly relate to their surroundings (including local historical or natural heritage features), learn about the benefits of physical activity, and identify connections to other community parks, recreation and culture activities and/or facilities.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#21 Formalize a volunteer-driven approach to establishing community allotment gardens through municipal provision of in-kind and/or financial supports whereby residents and businesses mobilize into self-governing entities responsible for oversight, operation and programming of their respective community gardens.				●		
#22 In keeping with the identity as the “Rose City” identity, engage local horticultural organizations to develop and deliver intergenerational gardening programs within municipal parks and/or facilities (the valuable expertise of Parks Division Staff should also be leveraged in program design and delivery).					●	
#23 Investigate potential sites for a second off-leash area in the northern half of Welland while integrating selected amenities at the Welland Off-Leash Dog Park, at a minimum which should include a closed-lid waste container and provision of shade (through plantings or a shade sail/structure).						●

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
#24 Prepare a Trails / Active Transportation Master Plan to confirm the feasibility, costs and potential to work with public and private landowners in order to implement the conceptual trails map contained in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan.				●		
#25 Publish a Welland Trails Map that clearly identifies current trail routes in relation to other major destinations in the City. This map should be designed in a reader-friendly format that can be used as part of communications and signage strategy for the trails system					●	
Recreation in Welland						
#26 Engage the YMCA of Niagara to discuss ways to collaboratively address the broad range of aquatic programming needs and address aquatics staffing challenges common to itself and the City of Welland.	●					
#27 Dedicate a full-time staff person that possesses the requisite training in the aquatics sector to administer, program, and promote the City of Welland's indoor and outdoor pools. This should be implemented by converting the existing part-time Aquatics Coordinator to a full-time position (i.e. representing a 0.5 FTE increase in staffing).				●		
#28 Pilot an expanded range of aquatics programming within the three outdoor pools and the Welland Recreation Corridor, the latter potentially at Rotary Club of Welland Park and/or any designated outdoor swimming areas that may be developed in the future. Programs to be tested could span advanced leadership, aquatic sports, and aquatic fitness.		●				
#29 Review the recommendations that ultimately emerge out of the ongoing Outdoor Pool Rationalization Study with the aquatic implementation strategy articulated in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan (for pools and the Welland Recreation Corridor) in order to confirm the future course of action for the City of Welland's outdoor aquatic services.		●				
#30 Gymnasium needs should be addressed by exploring joint or reciprocal use agreements with the District School Board of Niagara, the Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara College, the Niagara Centre YMCA, and other prospective community hub partners.	●					

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
#31 Work with pickleball organizations operating in Welland to explore how the City can facilitate access to additional times at municipal and non-municipal gymnasiums/halls, potentially through partnerships and agreements per Recommendations #6 and #30 of the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan.	•					
#32 Construct two new natural grass rectangular fields, one or both of which should be located in the North West Welland Secondary Plan area.			•	•		
#33 Re-engage ball diamond user groups to reconfirm ball diamond plans proposed for Memorial Park, and investigate whether identified needs (for hardball and t-ball diamonds) can be accommodated within the 2017 Memorial Park Master Plan concept.	•					
#34 Construct a minimum of four outdoor pickleball courts as part of implementing the Rotary Club of Welland Park redevelopment project.		•				
#35 Construct a total of three multi-use courts (basketball/tennis combination) to be located at a future park in the North West Welland Secondary Plan, Memorial Park and St. George Park.			•		•	•
#36 Engage the beach volleyball community to determine whether sand courts would be supported in the Welland Recreational Corridor, both in terms of rentals as well for beach volleyball programs, camps or leagues. The ability to install lighting at the Chippawa Park sand courts should also be explored to extend rentals after dusk.	•					
#37 Construct one natural playground at a Regional or City-Wide Park (as classified by the City of Welland Official Plan) - with consideration given to the Welland Recreational Corridor to complement its natural surroundings - while a minimum of two new playgrounds should serve future residential areas in the North West Welland Secondary Plan. Any new or redeveloped playgrounds should consider accessible components, natural play areas, and challenging/adventure play as appropriate.			•			

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
Culture in Welland						
#38 Continue to promote arts, culture and heritage activities within public spaces such as parks and civic buildings by employing a comprehensive strategy that considers design and amenity requirements, interpretive signage and public art, exhibition areas, and more.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#39 Establish an arts and cultural resource centre, potentially in downtown Welland. At a minimum, the City should engage local organizations and/or businesses to discuss the feasibility of such a project, prospective partnerships, as well as the funding and governance models that need to be in place prior to investing in a dedicated centre for arts and culture.			●			
#40 Pursue greater inter-departmental collaboration between the Recreation & Culture Division, the Parks Division, and the Welland Public Library to coordinate program planning and delivery. In doing so, explore ways to share expertise, deliver joint-programs, and minimize service duplication with the view of improving efficiencies across the Corporation.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#41 The Public Art Fund recently added to the Departmental 2019 operating budget should be reviewed after its first full year to determine whether the funding allocation is sufficient to encourage new public art projects and the restoration/rejuvenation of existing public art works. The City should explore the feasibility of supporting the Public Art Fund using a “One Percent for Public Art” policy approach as well as preparing a Public Art Maintenance Plan so that the City strengthens its understanding of renewal costs, and allocate funding appropriately for future years.		●				
#42 Create a wall for street paintings/graffiti art within downtown Welland and/or the Welland Recreational Corridor to provide a creative outlet and discourage vandalism that might otherwise occur on private property. The wall could be permanent or temporary in nature.					●	

Recommendation	Short-Term					Long-Term
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 to 2029
#43 Prepare a comprehensive Festivals & Events Strategy that defines the role and responsibilities of the City of Welland in delivering and facilitating events. The Strategy should articulate funding and staffing requirements, promotional and awareness strategies targeted to local residents and tourists across the region, and identify how existing and future physical infrastructure can be better leveraged to deliver quality experiences.		•				
#44 Allocate the funding and staffing resources required to deliver upon the existing arts and cultural opportunities along with those articulated in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Plan such as an arts and cultural resource centre, related programming, public art and festivals/events.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
#45 Connect the City's arts and cultural facilities (existing and future), festivals/events, and programming through coordinated/targeted advertising and promotion, signage, and integration with and connectivity to physical infrastructure such as parks, streets and civic spaces.	Ongoing	→	→	→	→	→
Implementation						
#46 Update the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan in the year 2024 to coincide with the end of the five year detailed implementation period associated with it. Progress in implementing the Master Plan should be tracked annually with results (and other related corporate achievements) communicated to City Council and the general public on a regular basis.						•
#47 Revisit Recommendations contained in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan that will be affected by the Provincial Bill 108 to reconfirm their feasibility in light of a new legislative planning and funding framework.		•				

Appendix A: Facility Inventories

City of Welland

Recreation Facility Supply	Locations
Aquatic Facilities: 10 2 Indoor Aquatic Facilities 3 Outdoor Pools and Wading Pools 3 Splash Pads 2 Other Outdoor Aquatics	<u>Indoor Aquatic Facilities:</u> Welland Community Wellness Complex, Welland International Flatwater Centre <u>Outdoor Pool and Wading Pool:</u> Maple Park, Memorial Park, St. George Park <u>Splash Pad:</u> Chippawa Park, Glenwood Park, Memorial Park <u>Outdoor Open Water:</u> Welland Recreational Corridor, Welland Community Boathouse
Ice Pads: 2	Jack Ballantyne Memorial Arena (Youth), Welland Main Arena
Fitness Centre and Studio: 2	Welland Community Wellness Complex, Welland International Flatwater Centre
Gymnasium: 2	Welland Community Wellness Complex, Carrie Lynn Pinard Centre (leased to a neighbourhood association)
Dedicated Age Spaces: 1	Youth Innovations
Indoor Artificial Turf Field: 1	Youngs Sportsplex
Soccer Fields: 21 (24 unlit equivalents) 2 lit artificial turf fields 2 full-size natural grass fields 14 mini Fields 3 community Fields	<u>Artificial Turf Fields:</u> Youngs Sportsplex (2) <u>Full Natural Grass Fields (Lit):</u> Youngs Sportsplex (2) <u>Mini Fields:</u> Youngs Sportsplex (14) <u>Community Fields:</u> Hooker Street Park, Manchester Park, Plymouth Park
Ball Diamonds: 22 (25.5 unlit equivalents) 3 lit and 1 unlit hardball diamonds 4 lit and 7 unlit slo-pitch diamonds 7 other diamonds	<u>Lit Hardball:</u> Burgar Park, Memorial Park, Welland Sports Complex <u>Unlit Hardball:</u> Memorial Park <u>Lit Slo-Pitch:</u> Memorial Park, Plymouth Park, Welland Sports Complex <u>Unlit Slo-Pitch:</u> Bemus Park, Chippawa Park, Glenwood Park, Maple Park (2), Memorial Park, Trelawn Park <u>Other Diamonds:</u> Bridlewood Park, Cook Mills Park, Glenwood Park, Manchester Park, Memorial Park (2), St. George Park
Cricket Fields: 1	Cooks Mills Park
Tennis and Pickleball Courts: 7 8 lit tennis courts 1 unlit tennis court 2 pickleball courts 4 indoor tennis courts	<u>Lit Tennis Court:</u> Hooker Street Park (Tennis Club) (8) <u>Unlit Tennis Court:</u> Gaiser Park <u>Unlit Pickleball Court:</u> Maple Park (2) <u>Indoor Tennis Courts:</u> Youngs Sportsplex (4)
Outdoor Basketball Courts: 8 2 full courts 7 half courts	<u>Full Court:</u> Gaiser Park, Glenwood Park <u>Half Court:</u> Almond Street Park, Gaiser Park, John Deere Park, Lancaster Park, Ricelawn Park, Sherwood Forest Park, Station Park
Skateboard Parks: 1	Welland Skateboard and BMX Park
Playgrounds: 38 locations	See Figure 10
Sand Volleyball Courts: 3	Chippawa Park (3)
Dog Parks: 1	Welland Leash-Free Dog Park
Outdoor Ice Skating: 15	Civic Square (refrigerated), Chippawa Park, Woodlawn Park, St. George Park, Broadway Park, Cooks Mills Park, Elmwood Park, Glenwood Park, Gram Avenue, John Deere Park, Manchester Park, Memorial Park, River Road Park, Stop 19 Park, Summerlea Park

Non-Municipal Providers

Non-Municipal Recreation and Community Facilities	Amenities
Niagara College Canada (Athletics Centre)	Gymnasium, fitness centre, multi-purpose studio, athletic therapy clinic, support spaces
Niagara Centre YMCA	Gymnasium, fitness centre, walking track, cycling studio, four lane lap pool, leisure pool, group fitness classes, child minding, recreation programs
Welland Curling Club	Curling facility (eight sheets)
Aereo Gymnastics Club	Gymnastics training facility, indoor walking track
Welland Fairgrounds (Niagara Regional Agricultural Society)	Indoor multi-use buildings, livestock barn, horse show ring, poultry building, camping area
BP Sports Park	Indoor multi-use turf field (soccer, baseball, etc.), indoor volleyball and basketball

Non-Municipal Fitness Centres and Studios	
Aereo Gymnastics Club	LRV Cardio Kickboxing and More
Anytime Fitness	Modern Vision MMA
Black Panther Jiu-Jitsu	Nappers Boxing Club
Boomer to Zoomers	Niagara Centre YMCA
Chameleon Fitness	PACE
Club Eighty 8 Health and Fitness	Paschima
Crossfit Welland	Studio Twenty Inc
Crunch Fitness	Super Kix Kickboxing
Dance Place-Welland & Fonthill	Therapeutic Fitness and Wellness Centre
Experience Physical Activity	Timberline Club Track
Forge Fitness	Top Dawgs Fitness and Strongmill Crossfit
Good 4 U Toning and Shaping Studio	Welland Martial Arts Centre
Kinetic Kids	Welland Taekwondo
Kinetic Synergy	X Fitness Welland Inc.

Non-Municipal Youth Support Spaces and Services	
87 Eagle Royal Canadian Air Cadets	Precious Beginnings Daycare
Adolescents Family Support Services	Rose City Kids Youth Centre
Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Niagara	Seven C's
Dream Youth Services	St. Andrew Child Care Centre
EarlyON	St. David's Co-Op Nursery School
G & M Before and After School Home Daycare	Tammy's Home Daycare
Niagara Centre YMCA	Welland Child Care Centre
Niagara Counselling Services	YMCA Child Care Centres (Various locations)

Non-Municipal Senior Support Spaces and Services	
Royal Canadian Legion	Various retirement residences that provide programs and services
Meals on Wheels Community Support Services	
Shevchenko Senior Citizens	
Rapelje Lodge	

Non-Municipal Arts and Culture Facilities

Auberge Richelieu	Tatiana's Music Studio
BLX Studio	The Art Space Welland
Centre De Sante Communautaire Du Niagara	The Music Depot
Cris Delara Art Studio	Welland Heritage Council – Immigrant Settlements
Croatian National Home	Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre
Hungarian Hall	Welland Museum
Royal Canadian Legion	Welland Public Library (multiple locations)
Starfire Theatre	

Note: all non-municipal providers listed herein reflect the best understanding of the local market based upon available research at time of writing

