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Parks, Open Space & Leisure Background Report and Executive Summary

July 2004

*Developing a single, up-to-date
Official Plan that fosters sustainable growth,
economic development and a high quality of life
to attract people and investment.*

*Élaborer un seul Plan officiel à jour qui favorise
la croissance durable, le développement économique
et une qualité de vie élevée afin d'attirer
des gens et des investissements.*





City of Greater Sudbury

Parks, Open Space & Leisure

BACKGROUND REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 2004

Prepared for:

City of Greater Sudbury
Economic Development & Planning Department
Planning Division

Prepared by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parks, open space, and leisure facilities contribute to the social, cultural, and economic well being of Greater Sudbury residents and enhance overall quality of life. These elements are some of our most valued assets and their protection and enhancement through Official Plan policy is the primary objective of this study.

This background report contains analyses and recommendations pertaining to parks, open space and leisure for the purposes of developing the City of Greater Sudbury's new Official Plan ("One Plan for One City"). In preparing this report, socio-demographic and leisure trends have been examined, land use policies and approaches in Greater Sudbury and other municipalities have been researched, the public has been consulted, and the parks and leisure needs of the City (as identified in its 2004 Master Plan) have been expressed, culminating in the identification of various policy considerations for the new Official Plan.

The primary issues, opportunities and challenges related to parks, open space and leisure – as they relate to the development of a new Official Plan – are identified below, in no particular order.

1.0 POPULATION CHANGES & DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS

- ❖ An over-riding goal of the Official Plan will be the need to attract and retain residents, especially young adults and families. One of the main drivers to achieve this goal should be the provision of parks, trails and leisure facilities that are aesthetically-pleasing, multi-season, and that appeal to all ages and skill levels.
- ❖ Goals and objectives should encourage the financially-responsible development of parks and open spaces that reflect the needs of the changing population, including older adults and tourists.
- ❖ Slow population growth will not create many opportunities for large park sites to be dedicated to the City. The Plan should establish guidelines for deciding between parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu under the *Planning Act*.
- ❖ Multi-purpose and multi-generational community leisure facilities should be encouraged.

2.0 DEMAND FOR MORE MULTI-USE TRAILS AND BIKE LANES

- ❖ Physical linkages and accessibility to as many citizens as possible should be key goals of the Plan, recognizing the constraints created by the City's vast size and physical terrain; included in this is a focus on trails and routes for walking and cycling.
- ❖ Policies should be developed to encourage the development of a comprehensive multi-use, multi-modal, linked trail system that is linked to major civic facilities, parks, educational institutions, employment areas, tourist attractions, etc. The illustration of

conceptual locations for trail access / trailheads should be considered.

- ❖ Encourage further the implementation of the Junction Creek Waterway Park Community Improvement Plan, which proposes, among other things, to establish an 18-kilometre linear multi-use trail extending from the Maley Conservation Area in New Sudbury, through downtown Sudbury, to Kelley Lake in the West End.
- ❖ There is a need to link parks and open space policies to the Transportation policies. Existing and proposed multi-use trails (as per the Trans Canada Trail Master Plan and the Bell Park Master Plan) should be shown on the Transportation Schedules.
- ❖ Policies need to ensure that the continuity of the existing and proposed multi-use trail system is maintained and that connections are provided where there are opportunities. Development applications should be reviewed with trail, walkway, and bikeway linkages in mind.
- ❖ The City should prepare a Bicycle Route System Master Plan (Cycling Plan) that builds upon the work of the former City of Sudbury Bicycle Advisory Committee and similar organizations.
- ❖ Policy should be developed for instances where trails cross lands not in the jurisdiction of the City. For example, the City should negotiate with the landowner regarding the nature, location, and maintenance of the trail.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP / PROTECTION

- ❖ Environmental stewardship and the development of healthy communities should be reflected as top priorities and appropriately supported in policy.
- ❖ Strong policies should be developed for the restoration, protection, and enhancement of natural areas.
- ❖ Policies should be developed that encourage the integration of open spaces into the City's parks system, especially those that provide connections to other parks, trails, water bodies and scenic vistas. The development of a framework for the systematic evaluation of open space should be recommended.
- ❖ The Official Plan should recognize the role that lakes such as Ramsey, Nephawin, Whitewater, Vermilion, Fairbank, Wanapitei and other lakes in the environmental, recreational, social, and economic health of the City. Public access to shorelines of major lakes should be maintained and/or secured.
- ❖ Encourage the protection of privately-owned open space. The "Private Open Space" designation should be preserved, with the caveat that this designation does not necessarily mean that such lands are public-accessible.
- ❖ Public and private "Open space" should be defined terms and should be separate from the "Parks" designation.
- ❖ There is a need to link parks and open space policies to the Natural Heritage policies.

4.0 DEMAND FOR PASSIVE / NATURAL PARK SPACE

- ❖ There is a need to strike a balance in the management of passive open spaces between protecting natural functions and providing for leisure needs. Open space should be integrated throughout the built environment.
- ❖ In acquiring new park sites for passive or active uses, an emphasis should be placed on acquiring larger sites (e.g., four hectares or more).
- ❖ Naturalization of City-owned open spaces should be encouraged, where appropriate. Furthermore, landscaping improvements and tree planting initiatives should also be promoted within privately-owned open space.
- ❖ Priority should be placed on acquiring and developing Greenway Park and Junction Creek Waterway Park as greenspace parks that serve to protect the natural environment as well as provide opportunities for public use that are non-intrusive and non-exploitive (e.g., walking/hiking, picnicking, nature appreciation, water access, etc.). A significant proportion of the proposed Greenway Park remains under private ownership and acquisition of this land (or designation at the very least) should be a high priority.
- ❖ Reference should be made to the need to investigate the potential of one or more existing parks to accommodate a fenced area for off-leash dog activity.

5.0 IMPROVING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PARKLAND

- ❖ Minimum targets for parkland and open space provision should be set (e.g., 4 hectares per 1000 population; park sites within 800 metres of residential areas without having to cross a major barrier such as a highway, railway or river, etc.).
- ❖ Maintaining access to or acquiring closed schools, infill sites, reclaimed lands, etc. to serve neighbourhood-level leisure needs should be encouraged.
- ❖ Policies should be developed to include means other than direct acquisition to provide public access to parkland and open space, including public trusts, partnerships with public or private organizations, restrictive covenants, easements, bonusing, etc.
- ❖ Priority areas for parkland acquisition should be established based upon overall provision and distribution.

6.0 MULTI-USE RECREATION COMPLEX LOCATION

- ❖ A policy should be created to encourage municipal acquisition of a site in the New Sudbury / Flour Mill area (in the vicinity of LaSalle Boulevard and/or Notre Dame Avenue) to develop a multi-use recreation complex. The site should have transit access, be located on or near an existing or proposed trail route, and be visible from many vantage points within the area.

- ❖ Where appropriate, partnerships and innovative approaches to facility development should be encouraged.

7.0 SURPLUS PARKLAND

- ❖ Policies and criteria relating to the disposal and re-zoning of surplus parks should be established. Consultation with adjacent landowners should be a pre-requisite. These sites should not be designated as open spaces or parkland, rather this should be left to the Zoning By-law. Mapping should be limited to developed parks and protected open spaces owned by government agencies.
- ❖ As a general principle, municipally-owned waterfront property should not be declared surplus.
- ❖ There is a need to identify all unimproved municipally-owned lands obtained through parkland dedication mechanisms. Each of these parcels should be evaluated according to the established criteria before a decision is made to maintain the park in its current state, develop the park, or dispose of the park.
- ❖ Revenue generated from the sale of any surplus parkland should be utilized to improve existing parks and leisure facilities.
- ❖ As an alternative to the outright sale of surplus parkland, the City may consider the exchange of land in order to acquire and develop parkland in under-served areas.

8.0 AGING INFRASTRUCTURE & LEISURE FACILITY CLOSURES

- ❖ Increased investment should be encouraged to upgrade or replace necessary infrastructure and to adapt it to the changing needs of the population.
- ❖ Recognition of the fact that partnerships and senior government investment will be required to even partially address the problems associated with the City's aging leisure facilities.
- ❖ Policies need to be flexible to allow for alternate uses for surplus/ decommissioned leisure facilities.
- ❖ The need to regularly monitor and periodically update the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan should be mentioned.

9.0 PARK MAINTENANCE, DESIGN & FUNDING

- ❖ Greater emphasis should be placed on high-quality park and facility design (possibly through urban design policies or guidelines).
- ❖ The Official Plan should state the need to develop attainable maintenance standards for each park type.

- ❖ Consistent designs for signage, buildings and development features should be implemented to help unify the system for residents and tourists and to clearly identify City-owned (publicly-accessible) parkland.

10.0 PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

- ❖ A park classification system that addresses a range of different types and characteristics of parks and open spaces should be developed to guide the development, acquisition, and management of existing and future parks. A classification system consisting of the following categories should be considered: School Park, Playground, Community Park, Regional Park, Greenway or Linear Park, and Open Space or Greenspace (see Table 6-1).
- ❖ Separate land use designations may be considered for some classifications (i.e., not all parkland needs to be placed into one land use designation such as “Public Park”). For example, the Official Plan could contain a “Community Parkland” designation for Playgrounds and Community Parks, a “Regional Parkland” designation for Regional parkland, and an “Open Space” designation for Greenspace. Furthermore, School Parks could be allowed within Institutional areas and Greenway/Linear Parks could be permitted in all areas.

11.0 PARTNERSHIPS

- ❖ The Plan should support the formation of partnerships with the public, not-for-profit, and/or private sector in the provision and operation of recreation facilities (e.g., multi-use recreation complex), trails, parks and leisure services where there is sufficient benefit to the City and community.
- ❖ The School Boards should consult with the City of Greater Sudbury when planning to develop or close schools; the City should continue to be given the first option to purchase abandoned schoolyards. The acquisition of abandoned school sites would likely be for parkland purposes only (the Leisure Master Plan does not recommend any new community centres for the next ten years or more). In cases where the City requires abandoned schoolyards to meet gaps in parkland distribution, it may be prudent to encourage school boards to sever the park space from land upon which former school buildings are situated so that the land can be purchased separately.
- ❖ Encourage the formation of park associations and/or neighbourhood watches to report misuse of park property and vandalism activity and to assist in the development and/or maintenance of area parks.

12.0 ACCESSIBILITY

- ❖ Through policy, the Official Plan should provide support to the City's Accessibility Plan and its efforts to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. Reference should be made to the City's desire for more accessible playgrounds, sidewalks that provide access to parks and community facilities, continued improvements to leisure facilities, as well as the enhancement of customer service initiatives for people with disabilities. Other specific policies may reference the need to: (1) develop accessibility standards for special events and accessibility guidelines for community-led leisure programming; (2) Conduct accessibility audits of leisure facilities and phase-in necessary improvements; and (3) establish standards for trail development and maintenance in consultation with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and local trail organizations.
- ❖ There is a need for the Plan to recognize the personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of leisure activity, including the benefits of physical activity to people with disabilities and older adults.

13.0 PARKLAND CONVEYANCE / CASH-IN-LIEU

- ❖ Policies affording the City the full range of options as established in the *Planning Act* should be included in the Official Plan.
- ❖ As in the Regional Official Plan, all land conveyed must be suitable for recreational purposes and be acceptable to the City. Dedication of additional land for public open space may be required as a condition of development approval.
- ❖ The dedication of land for park purposes should only be required in cases where the City intends to develop the land for park purposes; cash-in-lieu should be obtained where additional parkland is not required. Funds must be used to upgrade additional parks or leisure facilities within under-served areas in the same community first and foremost, but may be used anywhere in the City where needed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The role of this background document is to provide input pertaining to parks, open space and leisure to the City of Greater Sudbury's new Official Plan. The Official Plan will provide policy direction related to parks, open space, and leisure within the City for a period of twenty years with the primary objective of improving the City's quality of life through adapting parks and leisure services to the changing demographic profile and leisure needs of the community. This Background Study is being prepared in conjunction with other Official Plan studies as well as a new Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan for the City's Leisure Services Division.

In simple terms, the Official Plan sets out the scope and direction of development for our community. Land use traditionally functions as the predominant theme of an Official Plan and the provision of municipal services and facilities – including, but not limited to, parks and recreation infrastructure – is an integral part of the analysis. The Official Plan also encompasses the community's objectives related to social, economic and environmental matters by drawing on past initiatives and public consultation to formulate policies that are consistent with our shared values and goals. In addition to the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Background Study, the City is currently completing a number of other supporting documents (e.g., transportation, natural heritage, etc.) that will provide technical information for the development of the policies and programs of the new Official Plan.

Parks, open space, and leisure facilities contribute to the social, cultural, and economic well being of residents and enhances their overall quality of life. These elements are some of our most valued assets and their protection and enhancement is the primary objective of this study.

1.2 Community Context

The City of Greater Sudbury is a dynamic and diverse community consisting of approximately 155,000 people (year 2001). Over half of the City's population lives within the former City of Sudbury, however, with an area of 3,627 square kilometres, the City contains numerous smaller settlement areas spread across its vast landscape.

Greater Sudbury is the service hub for all of northeastern Ontario – a market estimated at 550,000 people. While mining remains a major influence on the local economy, the City has diversified significantly in recent years to establish itself as a major centre of financial and business services, tourism, health care and research, education and government. The City has also earned international recognition for its efforts in environmental stewardship and the land reclamation that have created a greener, more sustainable community.

The current municipal structure was brought into place on January 1, 2001 with the creation of a one-tier municipal system. Prior to 2001, the area was overseen by a regional government and 7 lower-tier municipalities (the Cities of Sudbury and Valley East and the Towns of Capreol, Nickel Centre, Onaping Falls, Rayside-Balfour, and Walden). Several townships were also incorporated into the new City through amalgamation.

Prior to the amalgamation of the City of Greater Sudbury, parks and leisure services fell within the administration of the seven former area municipalities. Through its Regional Official Plan, the former Regional Municipality of Sudbury was involved in setting broad policies on recreation and the identification of region-wide park systems. Since amalgamation in 2001, all physical assets for leisure and recreation purposes and all public open space holdings have been consolidated within the City of Greater Sudbury. As well, all programs for leisure activities have become the responsibility of the City's Leisure Services Division.

The consolidation of responsibilities created by amalgamation, the changing demographic composition of the community, and emerging leisure needs and expectations have created the need to integrate and update the City's parks and leisure land use policies. This coming together has created an opportunity to develop a single Official Plan for the City of Greater Sudbury ("One Plan for One City").

1.3 Planning Process

Guided by a Technical Committee comprised of staff from the City's Leisure Services and Economic Development & Planning Divisions, the Background Study and Master Plan process began in May 2003. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants were retained to facilitate the project.

The Official Plan is very much a community document that is driven by consultation with stakeholders and the general public. As such, a primary goal of this project was to obtain input from all levels of the community (e.g. residents, community groups, politicians, City Staff, etc.) on current and future parks and leisure service issues and expectations. Directed by a communication strategy intended to solicit information and opinions relevant to both the Background Study and Master Plan, stakeholders and the public were encouraged to participate in planning process through:

- a) a survey distributed to over 400 stakeholder groups;
- b) five public input sessions with stakeholder groups and residents;
- c) face-to-face interviews with over 30 City Councillors and administrators;
- d) an Internet-based feedback form and e-mail correspondence; and

- e) meetings with the Technical Committee and Principal Planning Consultant.

In addition to the public consultation program, the following tasks were integral to the development of this Background Study:

- a) a detailed review of existing previous and current studies, documents, and data;
- b) extensive market research culminating in the preparation of a leisure trends discussion paper;
- c) completing a detailed inventory of municipal facilities, parks and open spaces;
- d) socio-demographic analysis;
- e) research and review sample parks and leisure policies in official plans in other Ontario municipalities;
- f) developing policy approaches for addressing key items identified in the Terms of Reference, including the incorporation of natural areas into the park system, definition of a parks hierarchy, etc.; and
- g) identifying facility, park, program and service standards, gaps and needs, culminating in the development of the City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan in June 2004.

Following the acceptance of this Background Study by the Technical Committee, the Principal Planning Consultant will synthesize the Study's findings and, through additional public consultation, will develop the City's Official Plan (currently targeted for late 2005).

1.4 Organization

The Parks, Open Space and Leisure Background Study consists of the following sections:

- 1.0 Introduction - provides an overview of the Plan's purpose, objectives, scope and planning process;
- 2.0 Guiding Principles - identifies the primary principles and objectives that will guide the development of the policy options;
- 3.0 Socio-Demographic & Leisure Trend Analysis - identifies the primary demographic and recreation trends and their relevance to Greater Sudbury's parks and leisure system;
- 4.0 Summary of Existing Resources - reviews the supply of parkland, open space and

leisure facilities within the City's various settlement areas;

- 5.0 Policy Review - provides a comparison of Official Plan policies within the City and across Ontario, as well as a summary of Master Plan recommendations pertinent to the Official Plan; and
- 6.0 Issues & Implications - identifies the key issues arising from the policy review, Master Plan, and public input and their implications on the development of Official Plan policies.

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section identifies the strategic framework that will guide the development of this Background Study and policy options.

2.1 Official Plan

The following key principles have been established by City Council to guide the development of the Official Plan:

- a) One Plan for One City – a rationalized policy framework applied to the entire City;
- b) A Healthy Community – a balanced approach based on healthy community determinants;
- c) Open for Business – facilitating economic development initiatives;
- d) Sustainable Development – fostering Smart Growth and supporting ecosystem sustainability; and,
- e) A Focus on Opportunities – identifying areas for community improvement and promoting development initiatives.

2.2 Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan

The City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan also established a number of guiding principles to provide direction to the development and implementation of the Master Plan's recommendations. These guiding principles are grounded in the recognition that parks and leisure provide numerous physical, social, economic, and environmental benefits that are essential to creating a healthy community for all current and future citizens.

- a) Long-term financial sustainability will be ensured through the cost-effective and efficient management of resources, the appropriate and reasonable application of user fees, and the maximization of community resources.
- b) Generally speaking, the City's parks and leisure infrastructure is aging and is in need of additional investment. The use of existing facilities will be maximized, however, increased investment in infrastructure for parks and leisure is necessary to build a physically, intellectually, socially, ecologically, and economically healthy community.
- c) The City will continue to implement a community development approach to leisure

service delivery through the support of volunteers and community capacity building.

- d) The City will continue to be the primary provider of infrastructure for parks and leisure within the community.
- e) The City will be an indirect provider of leisure programs, except in cases where no community capacity exists to deliver a program that provides a core benefit to a core market.
- f) Multi-purpose facilities are preferred over single purpose facilities, although they are not appropriate for all communities. Where appropriate and feasible, future infrastructure investments will give due consideration to the development of multi-purpose facilities.
- g) The City's natural environment is a key contributor to a healthy community and this asset will be protected and integrated into the leisure system wherever possible.
- h) Partnerships with outside parties in the provision and delivery of facilities and services are desired where there is sufficient benefit to the City and community.
- i) All citizens are deserving of appropriate leisure and recreation opportunities, however, children will continue to be a priority target group.
- j) The City will strive to provide an affordable, accessible and equitable distribution of parks and leisure facilities and services, recognizing the City's large geographic area and the unique local values of Greater Sudbury's distinct ethnic, cultural and geographic communities.
- k) All decisions with respect to parks and leisure will be based on a balance between the impact on quality of life and financial sustainability.

These principles are largely complementary, but no one principle takes priority over another – they should be read and interpreted as a set, rather than as separate, isolated statements. Clearly, some principles will be more difficult to achieve than others, however, they should be interpreted as being goals to which the City and community aspire.

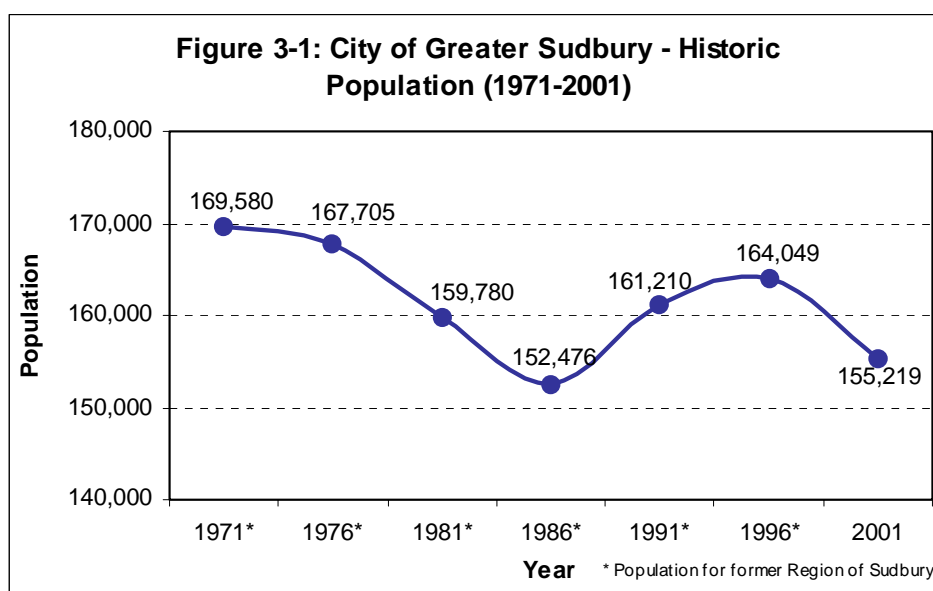
3.0 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC & LEISURE TREND ANALYSIS

In order to provide a context for understanding the findings of the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Background Study, the composition of the City's existing and future population has been examined. Also discussed briefly within the section are trends affecting the provision of parks and recreational infrastructure, which are key determinants in establishing leisure needs.

3.1 Socio-Demographic Analysis

3.1.1 Historic Population Figures

Greater Sudbury's population has experienced both decline and recovery over the past three decades as a result of its reliance on natural resources. The City's population peaked in 1971 at 169,580 and now sits at 155,255 (2001 Census) due to consistently high levels of out-migration (see Figure 3-1). Of note, Greater Sudbury experienced the greatest population decline of all Census Metropolitan Areas in Canada between 1996 and 2001 (6%).



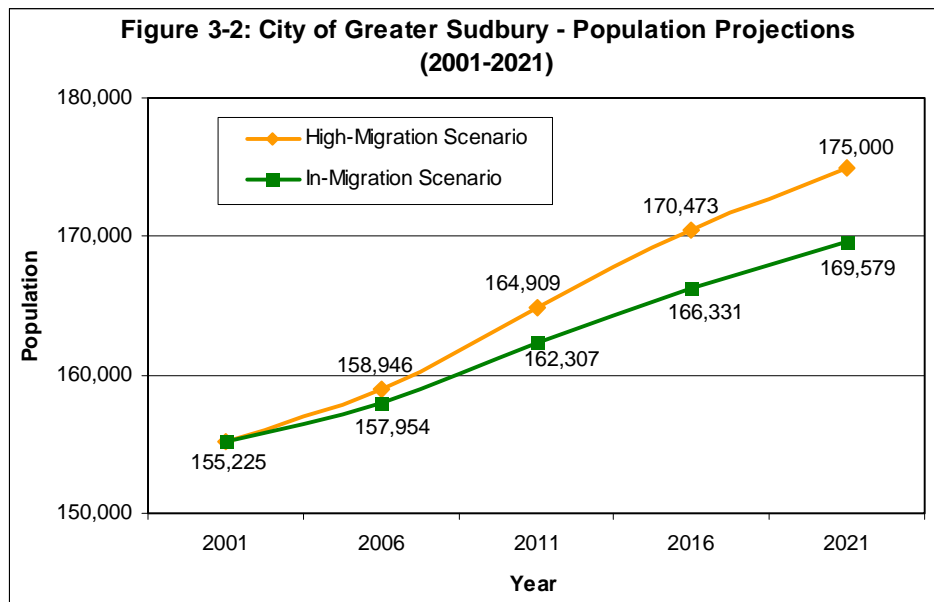
Due to a decline in population, certain elements of the City's parks and leisure infrastructure are sufficient to support approximately 170,000 people, which is the peak population experienced in the past thirty years. This is especially true for leisure facilities that require a certain critical mass to support (e.g., arenas, ball diamonds, etc.). That being said, if the parks and leisure infrastructure was built to meet the peak in 1971, several of these facilities are quite old and antiquated and likely approaching a point where considerable capital improvements are required. The City may have a surplus of certain facility types due to its declining population, however, consideration needs to be given to the geographic

distribution and quality/condition of facilities.

3.1.2 Projected Population Figures - City of Greater Sudbury

Based on past growth rates and migration patterns, Statistics Canada is projecting a further decline in the City's population between 2001 and 2006 (to approximately 147,000). The City is, however, working diligently to reverse this trend. Diversification within the local economy, improving economic conditions, opportunities created by the looming retirement of many "baby boomers", and strong economic development strategies are anticipated to generate gradual population growth over the next twenty years.

For the City's new Official Plan, a series of possible future growth rates were considered ranging from out-migration to high in-migration. For the purposes of determining growth for this Study, two sets of population projections have been considered – the "in-migration" scenario and the "high-migration" scenario (see Figure 3-2). Both of these models are predicated on the goal of attracting new residents to the City and retaining a high proportion of existing citizens. These scenarios have been considered for the purposes of this analysis in order to plan for the provision of adequate services even at the highest of growth rates.



The in-migration scenario is based on the historic high population of 169,580 reached in 1971 (Sudbury Regional Municipality census division). This scenario establishes this population figure as the upper limit of growth (2021) and is useful in assessing the adequacy of infrastructure for planning purposes.

The high-migration scenario was developed to reflect a target established by City Council. Specifically, a goal of 175,000 residents has been set, with the intention of attaining this population level by 2021 or earlier.

Both scenarios envision growth, which translates into a need to either develop new infrastructure or to upgrade and/or adapt existing infrastructure to meet the needs of new residents. A combination of both strategies is the most logical approach, especially given that changes in activity patterns and leisure trends will place pressures on the City to redesign facilities and programs even in a no-growth scenario.

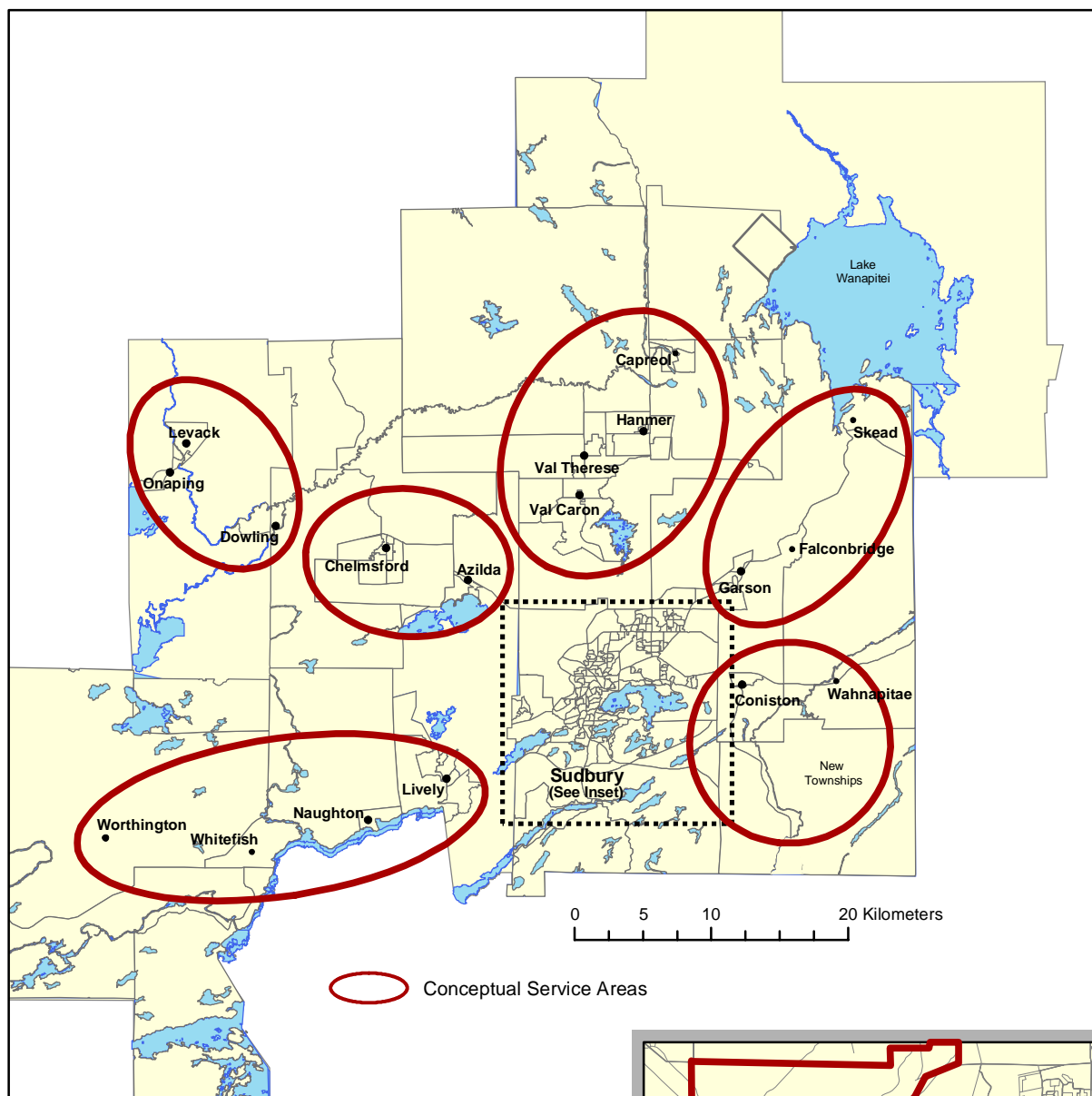
Although there is considerable optimism that the population of Greater Sudbury will increase over the coming years, historic population fluctuations indicate that a cautious and balanced approach to parks and facility planning should be taken. The last thing the City wants to do is to overbuild facilities for a peak population if it is never realized. If the population increases as projected, however, the City must be in a position to provide sufficient leisure opportunities to meet the needs of the larger population base. Because future population levels are heavily dependent on factors outside of the influence of this Plan (and municipal initiatives for that matter), this Plan utilizes a flexible and market-driven approach to parks and facilities planning that will enable the City to adjust its strategy based upon revised population data when it becomes available over the coming years.

3.1.3 Projected Population Figures - Local Communities

The City of Greater Sudbury contains a number of distinct communities and settlement areas. Population projections for each community were developed through an analysis of draft approved lots and designated lands undertaken as part of the Official Plan process. Future development approvals, declining household sizes, economic conditions, and a range of other factors, however, will significantly impact on the accuracy of these projections and, therefore, the community-specific projections should be used for broad-based planning purposes only. It will be important for the City to update these figures as new Census data is released and development approvals are granted.

The projections indicate that the majority of future population growth within the City is expected to occur within the former City of Sudbury (58%). Most of this growth is forecasted for South End (30%) and Minnow Lake (18%), followed by The Valley / Capreol (17%), and Azilda / Chelmsford (9%). Little to no population growth is anticipated for Downtown Sudbury, Dowling / Levack / Onaping, Coniston / Wahnapiatae, the West End, Copper Cliff, and Flour Mill / Donovan.

Map 3-1 illustrates the location of the City's various communities. Each community/ neighbourhood has been grouped into a conceptual "service area" for the purpose of this Study. The use of service areas provides greater detail in terms of City-wide distribution while, at the same time, recognizing transportation patterns and relationships between communities.



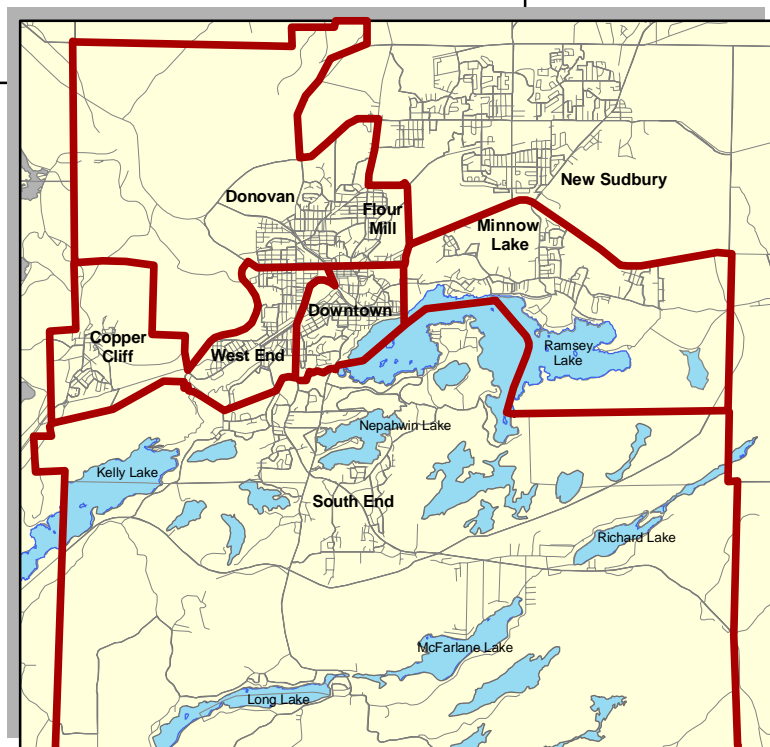
MAP 3-1: COMMUNITIES

City of Greater Sudbury Parks, Open Space and Leisure Official Plan Background Study



- Roads
- Major Lakes

Prepared by the Community & Strategic Planning Section, City of Greater Sudbury (June 18, 2003)
Modified by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants (June 2004)
Source: Statistics Canada; 2001 Census of Canada, 2001 Road Network File - Greater Sudbury CMA.



Inset: Former City of Sudbury

3.1.4 Age Composition

Like most municipalities in Canada, Greater Sudbury is experiencing a considerable aging of the population due largely to the baby boom population nearing retirement age and to declining fertility rates. This trend is expected to become more pronounced over the next twenty years. This aging trend, however, is magnified in Greater Sudbury and other Northern Ontario communities by the significant out-migration of younger populations looking for different lifestyles and/or career opportunities; total net out-migration for Greater Sudbury between 1996 and 2001 was 7,320 people, of which over 60% were ages 20 to 34. Although the City may be able to partially counteract this trend through various strategies and economic development initiatives, it is one that is at least expected to continue in the near term. Conversely, if the City adopts a strategy to market Greater Sudbury as a retirement community, then this aging trend could be accelerated.

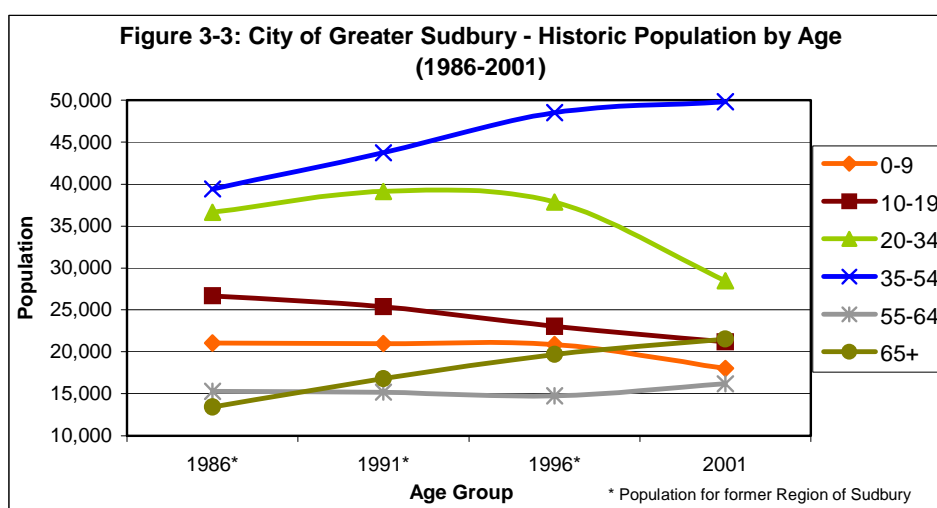
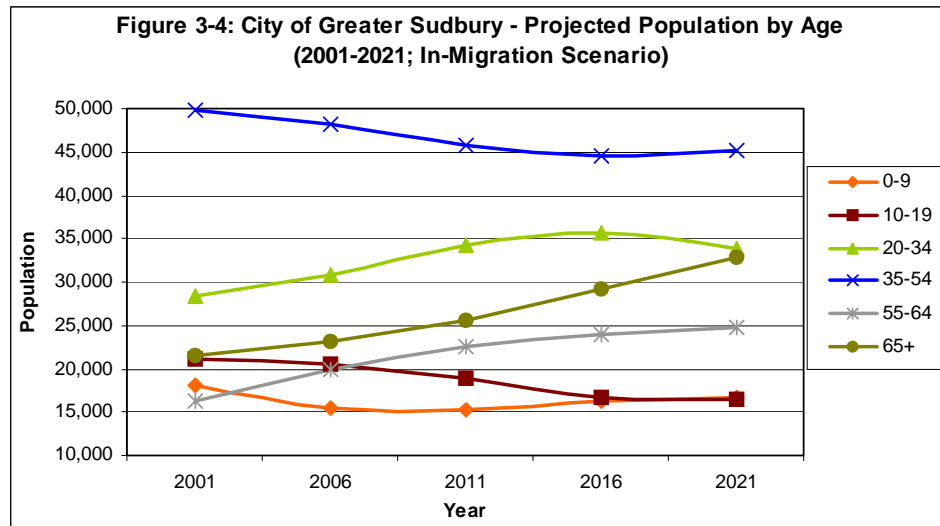


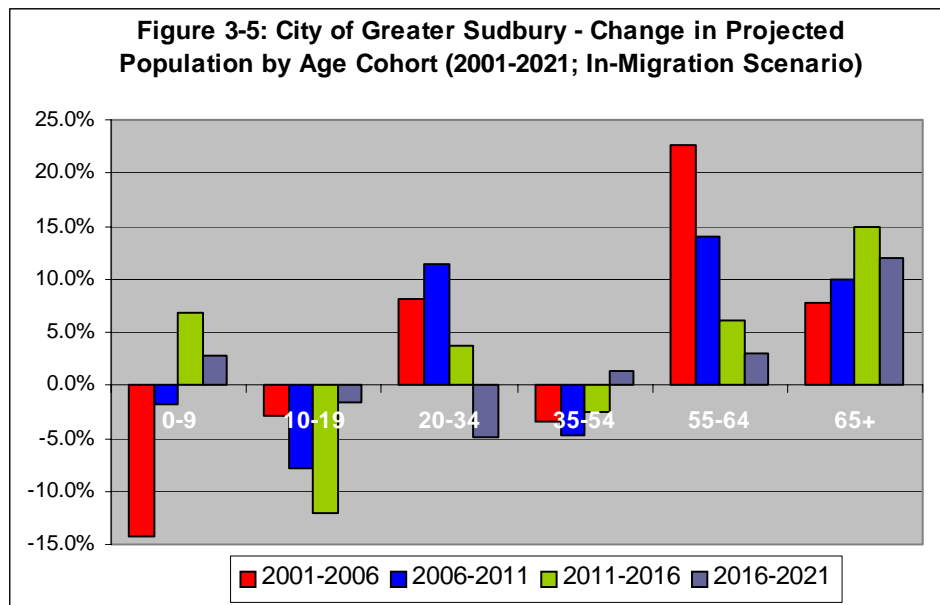
Figure 3-3 illustrates the decline in the younger age groups and the increase in the older age groups since 1986 (when the total population was similar to where it is today). Looking at age composition by individual communities, the data illustrates that the greatest concentrations of children and teens are in Garson / Falconbridge and Valley / Capreol areas, whereas the older populations tend to be found in the former City of Sudbury (especially the Downtown, West End, South End and New Sudbury areas).

In terms of total population the 0-9 age group declined by 14% since 1986 and the 10-19 age group is 21% smaller than it was then; both of these age groups are key users of the City's parks and leisure system. The 65 and over age group has increased by over 60% in the past fifteen years.

The City's population projections were developed using a cohort survival model and is able to generally predict the population of each age group in the future. Figures 3-4 shows that the aging trend is expected to continue.



Population forecasts indicate that the 0-9 age group will experience a 5% to 8% decline by 2021 (despite modest gains in 2016 and 2021) and that a 20% to 23% decline is anticipated for the 10-19 age group. Both the 55-64 and 65+ age groups are expected to increase by over 50% over the next twenty years. These changes are illustrated in Figure 3-5.



3.1.5 People with Disabilities

People with disabilities represent a growing part of the City's population. It is estimated that about 18,000 people in the City of Greater Sudbury have a long-term disability, of which 900 are children and 8,000 are 65 years or older. Furthermore, approximately 2,000 children in Greater Sudbury are considered to be "at risk" for physical disabilities. Statistics indicate that the number of people with disabilities will grow over the coming years (possibly from 13% of the population to 20%).

In response to these trends and Provincial legislation, the City has developed an Accessibility Plan that is intended to address existing barriers to people with disabilities and to prevent new barriers from being established. City Council has adopted a Policy of Universal Access that requires its services, programs and facilities to be accessible to people with disabilities regardless of the type of disability and age. Full implementation of this policy will take time.

In relation to leisure services, the Accessibility Plan recommends that the City initiate an assessment of accessibility for municipal facilities including, but not limited to, arenas and community centres. Other key recommendations include: (1) the assessment of current recreational programs for accessibility; and (2) the development of partnerships and costing with the community to deliver recreational programs that have been identified with the community been identified with the community with disabilities.

The City's Official Plan and Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan fully supports the City's Accessibility Plan and its efforts to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. "Barriers" are defined to include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barrier. Accessibility is an important theme within guiding principles for both the Official Plan and Master Plan. Specific recommendations have been made within the Master Plan relating to accessible playgrounds and the need to ensure physical/architectural accessibility in the City's leisure facilities. Staff training relating to the provision of services for people with disabilities should also continue to be a high priority.

3.2 Leisure Trends

Major trends in leisure activities and their implications on land use planning are discussed below. Extensive research has been conducted at local, provincial, national and international levels in order to provide a comprehensive and well balanced perspective.

Not surprisingly, many of the trends are linked to demographic characteristics. From an economic development perspective, the City would like to maintain and enhance services and facilities that cater to the younger population in order to counteract the significant out-migration that has been occurring. However, because the City's existing demographic

profile is an aging one, the needs of older residents will also have to be addressed. One potential approach may be to provide more unstructured and multi-purpose facilities that cater to all variety of ages and activities.

Another significant trend in leisure demand is a movement towards more unstructured opportunities. Sports participation is generally in decline, although this may not seem immediately evident in the City because the majority of municipalities are still playing "catch-up" with respect to facility development (e.g., soccer fields). Furthermore, across Ontario, people have been identifying walking and an interest in the environment as their preferred leisure activities for the past twenty years, yet many municipalities are still struggling with the development of comprehensive trail networks that provide both linkages to community facilities and an opportunity to enjoy nature.

The major parks and leisure trends that are relevant to land use planning policy include:

a) Multi-Use Trails in Demand

There is an increasing interest in walking and cycling, resulting in greater demand for multi-use trail development and connections between trails. As trails are desired by all ages and especially adults and seniors, they are well suited to the demographic profile of Greater Sudbury.

b) The "Green Movement": Passive Parks and Open Spaces

Interest in the outdoors is growing and greater demand for passive park spaces to suit an aging population is anticipated. There is a need to balance the preservation of natural open space opportunities with a need to develop "bricks and mortar" facilities in Greater Sudbury.

c) Tourism: Marketing Greater Sudbury's Recreation Resources

Sport tourism is a growing market nationwide. Greater Sudbury's role as a regional centre requires greater attention to tournament quality facilities (e.g., track and field, aquatics, nordic skiing, curling, soccer, hockey, etc.), many of which require large, flat parcels of land. The City's parks, lakes and trails offer significant tourism potential during all seasons.

d) Multi-Purpose Recreation Facilities

Enhanced operational efficiencies and the ability to cross-program for the whole family have created a new standard for the design of leisure facilities – that being the multi-purpose recreation complex. For similar reasons, as well as for improved tournament potential, multi-pad arenas are preferred over single-pad arenas. Most of Greater Sudbury's recreational venues are single-use stand-alone facilities (e.g., single-pad arena on one site, indoor pool on another, community centre on yet

another). As many of these facilities are aging and requiring significant capital investment, the City will be looking to consolidate the operations on fewer, but larger sites. This will create opportunities to develop alternative uses (municipal or private) for decommissioned facilities.

4.0 SUMMARY OF EXISTING RESOURCES

This section provides a summary of parkland, open space and leisure facility supplies within the City's various settlement areas. The information contained herein has been drawn from the City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan (2004), which provides a comprehensive documentation of the policies, standards and service levels that the City would like to achieve over the next ten to twenty years. Master Plan recommendations pertinent to this Background Study are identified in Section 5.0.

4.1 Existing Parks and Open Space

Public parkland is the land base required for recreational activities and outdoor facilities. Among other benefits, parks and open space also contributes to the preservation and conservation of natural features, provides opportunities for passive recreational activities, provides physical linkages for the movement of humans and animals, and contributes to the aesthetic value of the community. Within Greater Sudbury, developed parks are provided primarily by the City, schools, and some community organizations, while undeveloped open space is owned by both public agencies and private individuals.

For the Master Plan project, a detailed inventory database was developed to assist in the assessment of park and facility needs as well as the City's future planning initiatives. Once linked with the City's new Geographic Information System and eventually the City's web site, this database will enhance the City's ability to manage its existing resources and to disseminate information to the public.

Two of the key elements of any parks system are equity and accessibility. In this regard, it is imperative that the City strive to provide parkland in populated areas that are void of any park facilities, as well as those that are under-supplied. Two key standards are generally used to assess the supply and distribution of parks:

- a) Supply - that a minimum of 3 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents is provided; and
- b) Distribution - that parks are generally located within 800-metres of residential areas within urban communities (without having to cross a major barrier such as a rail line, river, or highway).

Parkland per capita is a useful tool in monitoring how well the City is serving residents and achieving its goals in comparison to both historical measurements, as well as future projections. **Table 4-1** translates the park acreage data into provision levels per 1,000 residents using 2001 population estimates and acreage figures collected by the consultant. Due to the considerable number of communities, they have been grouped into "service areas" (see Map 3-1).

Table 4-1: Existing Parkland Inventory by Service Area (hectares)

Community / Service Area	City Park Sites*	City Park Hectares per 1000 population	Green-space†	Non-City Park Sites‡	Total	Total Hectares per 1000 population
Azilda, Chelmsford	45.9	3.05	0	0	45.9	3.05
Coniston, Wahnapiatae, New Townships	9.6	1.85	0	0	9.6	1.85
Dowling, Levack, Onaping	18.2	3.73	5.9	0	24.1	4.94
Garson, Falconbridge, Skead, Bowland's Bay	35.7	4.03	5.6	1.2	42.5	4.8
Lively, Naughton, Whitefish, Worthington	193.3	19.09	2.5	5.7	201.5	19.89
Sudbury - Downtown	56.5	8.24	0	0	56.5	8.24
Sudbury - Flour Mill	13.6	0.97	0	0	13.6	0.97
Sudbury - Minnow Lake	120.7	12.18	13.9	0	134.5	13.57
Sudbury - New Sudbury	19	0.79	13.8	2.7	35.6	1.47
Sudbury - South End	21.5	1.1	12.2	8.9	42.6	2.18
Sudbury - West End & Copper Cliff	19.6	1.82	0	0	19.6	1.82
Val Therese, Hanmer, Val Caron, Blezard Valley, McCrear Heights, Capreol	95.8	3.71	17.2	7.6	120.7	4.66
City of Greater Sudbury	649.3	4.18	71.1	26.2	746.6	4.81

* Includes all City-owned and developed (or partially developed) sites containing parks and leisure facilities, with the exception of ski hills and cemeteries.

† Includes City-owned and undeveloped land zoned "P" (Park) in the local zoning by-laws. Does not include undeveloped municipal land zoned for residential or other purposes.

‡ Includes lands owned by community organizations containing parks or playgrounds, excluding all lands owned by the Nickel District Conservation Authority and schools.

The City provides a ratio of 4.18 hectares of developed parkland per 1,000 population (or 3.83 hectares when parks are included and facilities are excluded). This figure increases to 4.81 hectares/1000 when municipally-owned greenspace and parks/facilities owned by City-affiliated organizations are included. In addition, the City has 23 municipally-owned cemeteries that contain landscaped open spaces suitable for leisurely walks.

With the exception of the Minnow Lake area (which contains Moonlight Beach) and Downtown (which contains Bell Park and Lily Creek), all of the other planning areas within the former City of Sudbury have considerably low levels of municipal parkland provision and are below the benchmark of 3 hectares per 1000 population. Sudbury South End does, however, have the sizeable Lake Laurentian Conservation Area within its boundaries. The Coniston/Wahnapiatae also has a lower than average provision level, although it should be noted that acreage figures were not available for some parks in Wahnapiatae. At the other end of the scale is the Lively/Naughton service area, which has a supply of over 19 hectares/1000 people due largely to the Naughton Trail Centre and Camp Wassakwa.

In terms of parkland types, the City has no formal park classification system by which to analyze the existing inventory or to assess future needs. This and other issues are discussed in the subsequent sections of this Study.

It should be noted that the data contained in Table 4-1 is only an estimate based upon information that was readily available at the time of this Study. Land area figures and ownership were obtained from cross-referencing aerial photography, zoning by-laws, and assessment information. Land area and ownership information was not able to be collected for approximately fifteen parks (nearly all of which are believed to be relatively small parcels) and a number of “greenspaces”. Because of these omissions, it is expected that the total acreage of municipal parkland is somewhat greater than what is reported in Table 4-1. This data should be re-examined once the City develops its Geographic Information System with detailed parcel fabric mapping.

Should the City decide to adopt an overall parkland provision level of 3 hectares per 1000 residents (as is proposed later in this Study), as a whole it will not be deficient in public parkland. The public and staff consultation program, however, found strong support for the acquisition of more greenspace and the expansion of passive, nature-oriented recreation activities (e.g., walking, hiking, nature appreciation, etc.). In addition, current supplies and anticipated future growth (especially in the South End of the former City of Sudbury) suggest that additional land should be acquired in the following service areas (in general order of priority):

- a) Sudbury - Flour Mill/Donovan area
- b) Sudbury - New Sudbury area
- c) Sudbury - South End
- d) Sudbury - West End & Copper Cliff
- e) Coniston, Wahnapiatae & the New Townships
- f) Chelmsford & Azilda

4.2 Existing Recreational Trails

The City works in partnership with the Rainbow Routes Association and local community groups in the development of trails across Greater Sudbury. At present, there are approximately 156 kilometres of off-road nature and paved trails available for walking, cycling, inline skating, and cross-country skiing. The trail network continues to grow, particularly since 2001 when substantial grants were secured through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

The following is a list of non-motorized trails of varying surfaces that are formally recognized as municipal/public trails:

- a) Former City of Sudbury (85 kilometres)
- b) Former City of Valley East (4 kilometres)
- c) Former Town of Capreol (2 kilometres)
- d) Former Town of Onaping Falls (25 kilometres)
- e) Former Town of Rayside-Balfour (12 kilometres)
- f) Former Town of Nickel Centre (1 kilometre)
- g) Former Town of Walden (27 kilometres)

The City's current multi-use recreational trail system is comprised of three classes as defined in the Trans Canada Trail Master Plan and identified below:

- a) Class I - Path/Trail
A trail designated for the use of the recreation user that is separated from the travelled portion of existing roadways. "Major Trails" are typically linear, goal-oriented, hard-surfaced, and are designed for a wide range of users. "Hiking / Nature Trails" are located in natural environment areas and designed for aesthetic enjoyment and nature appreciation.
- b) Class II - Walk/Bicycle Lane
Comprised of a designated lane within a street or roadway designed for one-way pedestrian or cyclist use (e.g., painted strip, wider paved shoulder, etc.).
- c) Class III - Signed Route
A trail route local along a road right-of-way or public open space which is signed including, but not limited to, sidewalks.

In 2001, Rainbow Routes prepared the "Trans Canada Trail Master Plan" in partnership with the City. The plan identifies a Trans Canada Trail route as well as conceptual trail links to communities not on the proposed route in an attempt to connect the disjointed and disparate network of existing trails. Connections to major recreational, educational, residential, and commercial points of interest played an important role in determining the proposed route. When completed, the Trans Canada Trail through the City of Greater Sudbury will be approximately 133 kilometres in length, more than half of which is already existing.

While the Trans Canada Trail will provide valuable linkages between communities both within and outside of Greater Sudbury, other significant trails exist within the City. For instance, the Master Plan for Greenway Park, which is situated on Lake Ramsey (a community and tourist focal point), proposes a continuous linked trail around Ramsey Lake and the purchase of additional acreage to create a 430 hectare park (the City's largest) at the east end of the lake. Trails at Ramsey Lake and Bell Park were the most frequently mentioned projects at the public workshops, as was the general need for additional trails throughout the City.

In addition to the aforementioned multi-use trails, the City's five volunteer cross-country skiing clubs (located in Dowling, Naughton, Capreol, Sudbury and Azilda) operate and maintain an extensive series of ski trails totalling approximately 90 to 100 kilometres. The Naughton and Azilda clubs are located in City-owned lands and the City provides grants to all five organizations to assist in their annual operation. An extensive network of snowmobile trails also exists within the City and is not reflected in the inventory due to the inherent conflicts with non-motorized use.

4.3 Existing Leisure Facilities

The inventory of existing leisure facilities within the City is contained within Table 4-2. Inventory data by service area is described in the City of Greater Sudbury Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan.

Table 4-2: City-wide Inventory of Publicly Accessible Leisure Facilities

Facility Type	Supply	Population per Facility (2001)
INDOOR FACILITIES		
Ice Pads	15	10,348
Indoor Pools (incl. schools & Y)	8	19,402
Fitness Centres	5	31,044
Gymnasiums	7	22,176
"Major" Community Centres	8	19,403
"Minor" Community Centres	8	19,403
Community Halls (incl. non-City facilities)	11	14,111
Indoor Turf Fields	1	155,230
OUTDOOR FACILITIES		
Playground Sites	159	976
Soccer Fields (Lit = 2; incl. schools)	71	2,186
Ball Diamonds (Lit = 2)	70 (league) 22 (casual)	1,687
Football Fields (incl. Schools)	16	9,702
Basketball Courts (half = 0.5)	27	5,749
Tennis Courts	56	2,772
Outdoor Rinks (boarded)	45	3,449
Running Tracks (City only)	5	31,044
Skate Parks	0	--

The City's Master Plan has recommended additional facility development in certain areas over the next ten years and beyond. Those recommendations that are pertinent to this Background Study are identified in Section 5.0.

5.0 POLICY REVIEW

This section describes the current policy framework for parks, open space and leisure within the City of Greater Sudbury and provides insight into policies and approaches across Ontario.

5.1 Changes in Planning Context

Since the early days when the former Region was formed, the community has experienced many changes. Some of these are physical, while others are social. From a planning perspective, many new planning concepts have emerged over the past 25 years, including an increased emphasis on “Smart Growth”, “Healthy Communities”, and “Economic Development”.

The Province of Ontario began to embark on an Ontario Smart Growth strategy for the Province and its communities in 2002. Smart Growth refers to land use and development practices that enhance the quality of life in communities and preserve ecological integrity. Smart Growth is a way of managing growth to create strong communities, a strong economy and a clean, healthy environment. The goals of the Smart Growth initiative are as follows:

- a) Grow Toward a Better Future - Smart Growth will take a co-ordinated approach to managing and promoting sustainable growth, involving all levels of government and stakeholders from diverse sectors.
- b) Improve Competitiveness and Increase Opportunity - Smart Growth will help Ontario communities reach their economic potential by building on their local strengths, facilitating decisions on issues that cross community boundaries and promoting investments consistent with the Smart Growth vision.
- c) Make Better Decisions About Infrastructure - Smart Growth promotes using our resources more wisely by optimizing the use of existing infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water systems, and guiding future decisions on infrastructure investment.
- d) Create Transportation Choices - Smart Growth will encourage better choices in travel between and within communities and promote a more integrated transportation network for people and goods.
- e) Protect and Enhance the Environment - Smart Growth will work to protect the quality of our air, our land and our water by steering growth pressures away from significant agricultural lands and natural areas.
- f) Build Livable Communities - Smart Growth will contribute to building strong, safe attractive and vibrant communities.

During the past decade, new emphasis has been placed on the Healthy Community model in which Leisure Services staff's primary goal is to facilitate the delivery of leisure services through the community development concept. This concept involves working in co-operation with volunteer organizations and social agencies to develop partnerships for the successful implementation of services and programs in support of a community that is physically, intellectually, socially and ecologically healthy. The Healthy Community model is also one of the four strategic directions that Council has adopted for the City of Greater Sudbury. A Healthy Community Study is currently being prepared that will refine the healthy community concept and develop a strategy for implementation in Greater Sudbury. Qualities of a Healthy Community may include¹:

- a) clean and safe physical environment
- b) peace, equity and social justice
- c) adequate access to food, water, shelter, income, safety, work and recreation for all
- d) adequate access to health care services
- e) opportunities for learning and skill development
- f) strong, mutually supportive relationships and networks
- g) workplaces that are supportive of individual and family well-being
- h) wide participation of residents in decision-making
- i) strong local cultural and spiritual heritage
- j) diverse and vital economy
- k) protection of the natural environment
- l) responsible use of resources to ensure long-term sustainability

The City of Greater Sudbury has recently completed a Healthy Communities Report that documents the primary determinants that would lead to the implementation of Sudbury's healthy community policy. These determinants are as follows:

- a) Citizens engaged in their community through local decision-making processes.
- b) Accessible, utilized recreation programs and facilities for all residents.
- c) Prosperous community with abundant employment opportunities.
- d) Accessible Health Care and Fitness to improve individual well-being.
- e) Preservation of our Natural assets through environmental stewardship principles.
- f) Sound municipal infrastructure with quality service delivery.
- g) A community that is inclusive, diverse, and tolerant.
- h) Social support available for all challenged citizens.
- i) A unified city with proud citizens.
- j) A safe city in which to live.
- k) Superb educational opportunities accessible to all residents.
- l) Compelling community vision with strong leadership at all levels.

¹ Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, "What makes a Community Healthy?". 2002-2003.
http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca/about_us/healthy_community.htm. (Accessed June 2004)

Lastly, as economic development is a prime focus for Greater Sudbury, the Official Plan must become one of the tools that facilitates the goals associated with this initiative. In June 2003, the Greater Sudbury Development Corporation developed a Strategic Plan ("Coming of Age in the 21st Century"). The Strategic Plan identified five primary "engines" or goals to help achieve its vision, including becoming one of Ontario's top four destinations. Strategies to achieve this particular goal include leveraging natural amenities as recreational and lifestyle attractors, selectively enhancing arts and cultural amenities to fit unique heritage and local strengths, and positioning Greater Sudbury as an outdoor paradise for all kinds of lifestyles at affordable prices. Specific suggestions include investing in outdoor recreational amenities (e.g., bike and walking trails, roller-blading rinks), attracting more events (e.g., triathlons, marathons, bike races, rowing competitions), and expanding and upgrading space to attract more conferences and sporting events.

5.2 Pertinent Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan Recommendations

Note: The City's Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan has been received by the City's Priorities Committee and the Committee is currently working to prioritize the recommendations. As such, the recommendations described below are not in priority order and may be revised based on further direction from Council.

This Background Study has been prepared on the heels of the City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan (2004). The Master Plan identifies detailed strategies that will guide the ongoing provision and management of municipal parks and leisure services and facilities to the year 2014 and beyond. The scope of the Master Plan is quite broad and addresses issues relating to infrastructure management and provision, facility requirements (e.g., parks, trails, arenas, soccer fields, etc.), and the delivery of services (e.g., leisure programs, community development, user fees, etc.).

Master Plan findings and recommendations pertinent to the scope of this Background Report are summarized below:

a) Leisure Facilities - Master Plan

In general terms, municipal investment in existing leisure infrastructure has not kept pace with capital requirements and public expectations, resulting in facilities that are outdated and require substantial improvements. The Master Plan recommends a number of upgrades to existing facilities, including playing fields, running tracks, playground equipment, arenas and community centres.

Most notable is the recommendation for the development of a multi-use recreation complex consisting of two ice pads, a gymnasium, multi-purpose program space, outdoor soccer/football fields, and other amenities based upon a facility-specific needs assessment/feasibility study. The Master Plan proposes that this facility (or components of this facility)

be developed and/or operated in partnership with the private sector. A location serving the New Sudbury and Flour Mill areas is required, preferably near the Notre Dame Avenue or LaSalle Boulevard corridors. The multi-use recreation complex will require a land base of approximately 20 to 25 acres with a configuration and terrain suitable for such uses.

In addition to the new twin pad within the multi-use recreation complex, the development of a second ice pad at Countryside Arena is recommended. As arena supply currently exceeds demand, any new arena development would trigger the decommissioning of existing ice pads. When the multi-use complex is built in the New Sudbury/Flour Mill area, Cambrian Arena and Capreol Arena (Pad #2) should be decommissioned. When Countryside is twinned, one of either Chelmsford Arena, Jim Coady Arena or Raymond Plourde Arena should be decommissioned. Lastly, in order to reduce the supply from 15 ice pads to 14 in keeping with existing and long-term demands, one additional arena should be decommissioned once the multi-use recreation complex is operational for one season.

The decommissioning of arenas will create opportunities to redevelop them for alternative uses (e.g., indoor soccer, private arena, outdoor playing fields, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, etc.). Should these arenas be closed, alternative land uses could be considered through the Official Plan process.

New soccer fields, skateboard parks, basketball courts, accessible playground sites, etc. have also been recommended, however, it is expected that these will be able to be accommodated within existing municipal parks. The conversion of under-utilized ball diamonds and tennis courts to higher and better leisure uses is also recommended.

b) Parks / Open Space

With an estimated supply of 4.2 hectares of municipal parkland per 1,000 residents, the Master Plan established that there is a sufficient supply of parkland City-wide, although some areas have more adequate supplies than others. In an effort to achieve a more favourable per capita ratio of parkland within the City's individual communities, the Master Plan recommends that the City capitalize on opportunities to acquire park sites for both active and passive recreation that are 10 or more acres in size in the following areas (in priority order):

- i) Sudbury - Flour Mill/Donovan area
- ii) Sudbury - New Sudbury area
- iii) Sudbury - South End
- iv) Sudbury - West End & Copper Cliff
- v) Coniston and/or Wahnapiatae
- vi) Chelmsford and/or Azilda

The City has nearly 200 developed park sites and potentially hundreds more that were acquired through the parkland dedication process that remain undeveloped. Nearly 60% of the City's "developed" park sites are less than 2 acres in size (0.8 hectares). Needless

to say, there are few (if any) available sites to accommodate the proposed multi-use recreation complex in the New Sudbury / Flour Mill area – land will have to be acquired in this area in order to achieve this goal.

At the same time, the Master Plan recommends that the City initiate a process whereby it can evaluate sites to determine whether or not they should be considered surplus. Conversely, there may also be “gaps” in the geographic distribution of playgrounds. The Master Plan recommends that, when the City has its Geographic Information System in place, a map illustrating the 800-metre requirement be prepared in order to identify any geographic service gaps within urban residential areas. The City should endeavour to acquire or gain access to playgrounds within gap areas (if any) when opportunities present themselves.

The development of parkland classifications and standards was not addressed in the Master Plan – this will be a key area of focus for the City’s Official Plan. In addition to the establishment of a formal parkland classification system, the Official Plan should propose policies for the future acquisition, dedication, and management of municipal parks and open spaces.

c) Trails

Supported by public input and trends research, the Master Plan places a high priority on the extension and maintenance of multi-use trails in the City. Although the City’s Trail Master Plan outlines the preferred trail development routes, it is recommended that priority be given to the completion of existing trails and creating bicycle routes (on and/or off-street) from the two major growth areas of New Sudbury and South End to the City core and major points of attraction and/or employment lands.

It is expected that the Transportation policies for the Official Plan will address the integration of walking/cycling lanes and signed routes with existing and planned paths/trails (as identified in the Trans Canada Trail Master Plan and other planning documents) in order to provide a connected and destination-oriented multi-use trail system.

5.3 Land Use Policies

The following discussion provides a brief overview of policies in local land use planning documents (i.e., Official Plans and Secondary Plans), as well as those in other municipalities for the purposes of comparison. Much of the associated text is contained within the Appendices.

5.3.1 City of Greater Sudbury

One of the goals of this Study was to provide sample parks and leisure policies from adopted Official Plans in other Ontario municipalities. Before these comparisons are made, it is first necessary to review the parks and leisure policies contained within the City's current planning documents. A review of the existing goals and policies is required to understand past and present issues and planning approaches and to determine appropriate goals and policies for the provision of parks, open space, and leisure opportunities in the new City of Greater Sudbury.

A list of the planning documents that were reviewed is contained in **Appendix A**. The goals, objectives, and policies of each Official and Secondary Plan as they relate to the provision of parks and leisure facilities and services are summarized in a table format in **Appendix B**. These documents have been reviewed and compared to identify similarities and differences in the approaches taken by the former area municipalities in addressing parks and leisure-related issues. A summary of the key issues is provided below:

a) Principles, Goals, and Objectives Related to Parks and Leisure

- i) The goals of the Regional Official Plan (s. 1.9 to 1.22) do not specifically identify the provision of parks, open space, and leisure facilities as a priority, although related objectives are provided in sections 4.22 and 8.23 of the Plan.
- ii) A common theme is the need to provide a linked, accessible system of parks, open space, and recreational lands.
- iii) The Sudbury Secondary Plan contains policy that requires the provision of adequate parks and open space to meet the active/passive recreation needs of the community.
- iv) The Rayside-Balfour Secondary Plan emphasizes a high quality of life, with a priority on active living opportunities with parks and recreation facilities being a core component.

b) Problems, Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities

- i) The Regional Official Plan and many secondary plans note that an integrated system of recreation does not exist in the area. Many of the former area municipalities cite that the problem is not a deficiency of parkland but rather a lack of linkages among existing park sites to support pathway-oriented activities.
- ii) Other common issues: (1) uneven supplies of parkland and accessible open space; (2) inconsistent design/ maintenance/ provision standards, resource

limitations, and high maintenance costs; and (3) difficulty in maintaining current level of facility and service provision.

- iii) Some opportunities that were mentioned include the area's diversified landscapes, numerous water bodies and creek systems, surplus of Crown and mining land, natural topography, etc.

c) Parks Classification / Hierarchy

At present, there are multiple park classification systems within the City (see Table 5-1), neither of which is complete nor provides detailed definitions. For example, the Regional Official Plan and most secondary plans provide no discernible classification of parks and open space; only the Valley East Secondary Plan makes an attempt at establishing a classification system. The Sudbury Secondary Plan, however, identifies that each park should fit into an overall park system and have a clearly identifiable role, but does not go a step further to identify the system or attempt to classify different levels of facility provision.

Table 5-1: Current Parkland Classification Systems in the City of Greater Sudbury

Source	Leisure Services Budget Reporting	Leisure Services Parks Mapping	Various Secondary Plans
Park Classifications	Major Community Parks Local and Linear Parks Athletic Fields Playgrounds & Tot Lots	Parks Playgrounds Tot Lots	Local / Neighbourhood Parks Community parks Greenbelt
Classifications are Based on	Park Function	Park Size	Park Function & Size
What's Missing	Greenspace	Greenspace Linear Parks/Trails	Linear Parks/Trails

The City of Greater Sudbury's new Official Plan will serve to reconcile these and establish a more formalized park hierarchy.

d) Parkland Provision Standards

- i) The Regional Official Plan identifies a target of 4.0 ha/1000 population for "Regional Recreation Lands".
- ii) Secondary/Local Plans only touch on this component in a conceptual fashion (e.g., the Capreol Official Plan sets an objective to "aim to provide a balanced park system catering to a wide range of uses").
- iii) The Rayside-Balfour Secondary Plan defers specific detail to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This is an approach taken by many municipalities

throughout the Province, however, it is not recommended because it requires reference to another document that has no legal status.

- iv) The Sudbury Secondary Plan speaks to standards of maintenance, drainage, grading, safety, etc. These aspects could form part of the details of the classification system where different standards of construction and maintenance are applied to the various levels of parks.
- v) Some former area municipalities identify that there is no further need for certain types of parks. For example, land for tot lots and playgrounds are deemed sufficient in Valley East, meaning that the provision standard is the same as existing supply.

5.3.2 Policies in Other Municipalities

In addition to reviewing the existing policy documents, several recent Official Plans of other municipalities were used to identify alternative policy approaches to deal with parks and leisure-related issues at the Official Plan level. These comparisons also provide a means of “benchmarking” current provision standards, land dedication requirements, and similar policies in the City of Greater Sudbury against those of other municipalities. This exercise also provides a good cross-section of up-to-date Official Plan policies of other municipalities for consideration in developing the policy framework of the parks and leisure components of the new City of Greater Sudbury Official Plan.

The Official Plans reviewed as part of this exercise include the following:

- a) City of Burlington Official Plan
- b) City of London Official Plan
- c) City of Mississauga Official Plan
- d) Town of Oakville Official Plan
- e) City of Ottawa Official Plan
- f) City of Thunder Bay Official Plan

Appendix C contains summaries of the parks and leisure policies of these Plans.

Some of the best practices or unique aspects of the plans reviewed and their applicability to the City of Greater Sudbury’s new Official Plan are discussed below.

- a) Park Classification / Hierarchy / Provision Standards

Most Official Plans contain mention to a hierarchy of parkland. Examples of park types include: parkette, neighbourhood park, community or district park, city park, regional park, special resource area, greenbelt, tableland woodlot park, community link park, and major and minor valley park. All of the Plans reviewed contained

direction with regard to the purpose and key design features of each park type, although the London Official Plan deferred details on provision standards, service radii, and size to its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This approach is not suggested for the City of Greater Sudbury Official Plan, as its Master Plan does not contain sufficient direction regarding parkland classification. Section 6 of this report provides more detail in this regard.

In addition to the traditional categories of neighbourhood, community, and city/regional parks, the increasing importance of environmental preservation and corridor protection is evident in the establishment of categories such as “valley park” and “community link” in Oakville, “greenbelt” in Mississauga, and “special resource area” in Burlington.

b) Cash-in-Lieu/ Land Dedication Policies

The London and Oakville Official Plans include policies for the establishment of a credit system whereby excess parkland dedicated by one development can be used to satisfy the required parkland dedication for another development in the future by the same proponent. This flexibility may be of assistance in meeting demands in under-served areas.

Most cash-in-lieu and land dedication policies do not deviate substantially from the requirements of the *Planning Act*. The decision to accept either cash-in-lieu or land is typically based on the need for parkland in an area and the suitability of the land to be dedicated (e.g., London OP requires land to be of a suitable shape, size, location, drainage/ grading, and free of contamination).

Most of the benchmarked municipalities do not accept environmental areas, hazard lands, natural/ greenway corridors, or buffer areas as parkland dedication, although Burlington’s policies allow for the dedication of natural areas only if they provide needed public recreational opportunities. Another exception is the City of London, which may accept parkland dedication in the Downtown in the form of setbacks or landscaped plaza areas if they contribute to beautification and pedestrian-oriented objectives. Also, London’s Plan contains a policy stating that required parkland for an area may be reduced if the neighbourhood or district park is adjacent to school site.

Some Plans reference the fact that cash-in-lieu need not be applied to other lands or facilities in the vicinity, but rather can be used City-wide – this is a policy that Greater Sudbury should consider.

c) Transportation (trails, bikeways, etc.)

Most Official Plans support, encourage, and promote the development of a multi-modal transportation system that includes bikeways, routes, pedestrian pathways,

trails, etc. for both transportation and recreational purposes. Connecting these routes with residential areas, recreational lands, and other activity areas is a key theme. The City of London makes an effort to integrate land use development proposals with park linkages prior to approval, while the City of Mississauga requires the development of trails as shown in its Trail Master Plan as part of development approval. The City of Burlington has a policy to secure rights-of-way for pedestrian and bicycle trails during the development process. Also of note, the cities of Burlington and Ottawa promote the provision of bicycle parking facilities.

d) Waterfront

Like Greater Sudbury, many of the benchmarked municipalities have frontage on or contain significant bodies of water and, as a result, provide detailed policies in their Official Plans. Public accessibility to waterfront areas is a key theme, as is the development of a trail system along the shoreline (similar to that proposed and partially developed along Lake Ramsey). Both Burlington and Oakville require the provision of public open space for development proposals along the waterfront (e.g., dedication of a 15-metre wide strip of land with compensation for surplus lands dedicated as a result of this requirement). The Thunder Bay Official Plan also requires development proposals to provide for public open space use (through public access points). Burlington uses the bonusing provisions of the *Planning Act* to encourage the development of public open spaces along the waterfront.

e) Partnerships

Most municipalities recognize that partnerships with the community and local organizations are required to provide a well-rounded park system. For example, many Official Plans contain policies seeking cooperation with other levels of government and/or private sector in providing parkland and facilities, especially for those with a regional, provincial or national significance, including major competitive sports facilities. Mississauga also encourages Conservation Authorities to acquire lands for conservation and recreation purposes beyond that required for flood control purposes to ensure that the lands form integral components of the municipal open space system.

Most Plans encourage coordination with school boards when planning, acquiring, and administering these sites and facilities. For example, both Burlington and London Official Plans contain policies relating to the adjacent development of parks and schools, as well as the potential to acquire surplus school sites for parkland.

f) Corridors/Linkages/Utilities

Many Official Plans encourage the public acquisition of utility corridors and rights-of-way (including abandoned railway lines) for the purposes of expanding the City's trail system.

g) Parks and Recreation Facilities - Designations Where Permitted

Although most Official Plans have separate Parks and Open Space designations, many tend to address the issues of permitted uses and designations where permitted differently. For example, some municipalities use separate designations for publicly-owned and privately-owned open space. Mississauga, Oakville, and Thunder Bay clarify that lands within private open space designations are not free and open to the public and may not necessarily be acquired by the municipality.

London permits parks and public recreation facilities in all land use designations, although it has more stringent requirements for private commercial recreation establishments. Other Plans use an Institutional designation for leisure facilities and permit some parks and facilities in Residential and Employment Area designations. Such uses are typically prohibited in Agricultural areas and limited in scale and scope in Rural and Natural Heritage areas. Also of note, the City of Ottawa permits open space as an interim use of vacant lands in its downtown.

h) Urban Design

Most Official Plans include at least a passing mention to urban design in terms of local parks and leisure facilities (usually in the way of a broad objective). A specific mention is made in the Mississauga Plan regarding the promotion of public art in civic open spaces.

6.0 ISSUES & IMPLICATIONS

Based upon the extensive public and municipal consultation process for this Study and the Master Plan, a review of existing land use policies, an assessment of parks and leisure needs within the City, and other relevant factors, there are a number of issues that should be considered in developing the City's new Official Plan. This section identifies the primary issues related to parks, open space and leisure in relation to the Official Plan and discusses the various opportunities and challenges in addressing them through the Plan's goals, objectives and policies.

6.1 Population Changes & Demographic Shifts

One of the major challenges facing the City is the impact of changing demographics, recreational activity patterns, and aging and outdated facilities on the viability and sustainability of municipal infrastructure.

The City has witnessed considerable fluctuations in population levels over the years and, although the optimism for future growth is warranted, a flexible and market-driven approach to parks and facilities planning is essential to allow the City to adjust to emerging population characteristics. At the same time, the City's parks, open space and leisure system provides an integral contribution to the overall quality of life in Greater Sudbury and, in combination with other initiatives, can be used to attract and retain residents. This Study supports the municipal strategy to increase the City's population through the use of a planning framework that balances both current and future needs, as well as local and regional needs, in a fiscally responsible manner.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) An over-riding goal of the Official Plan will be the need to attract and retain residents, especially young adults and families. One of the main drivers to achieve this goal should be the provision of parks, trails and leisure facilities that are aesthetically-pleasing, multi-season, and that appeal to all ages and skill levels.
- b) Goals and objectives should encourage the financially-responsible development of parks and open spaces that reflect the needs of the changing population, including older adults and tourists.
- c) Slow population growth will not create many opportunities for large park sites to be dedicated to the City. The Plan should establish guidelines for deciding between parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu under the *Planning Act*.
- d) Multi-purpose and multi-generational community leisure facilities should be encouraged.

6.2 Demand for More Multi-Use Trails and Bike Lanes

Trends research indicates that walking is the second most popular leisure activity, behind only reading. Furthermore, as age increases, so too does the propensity to identify walking as a favourite leisure time activity. This bodes well for future demand given that the 55+ age group is expected to grow substantially over the course of the planning period. Although bicycling and walking are somewhat limited as modes of transportation in the City due to the length and severity of the winter climate, the topography of some areas and the dispersed nature of land use patterns, they are important parts of a sustainable and efficient transportation system.

Public input suggests strong support for the expansion of Greater Sudbury's trail network. Several individuals have also provided input regarding the need for a comprehensive cycle/pedestrian transportation system consisting of trails, bike lanes, and on-street routes.

The most easily identifiable benefits of a multi-use recreational trail program involve recreational opportunities. Leisure trends suggest an increasing demand for "unprogrammed" active living recreational opportunities that are more compatible with the lifestyles of the aging population. The use of trails is unorganized and spontaneous and thus more attractive for busy individuals whose leisure time is at a premium and often unplanned. Trails appeal to people of all ages and abilities because of their flexibility, low cost, and accessibility. Skill is not a factor – the same trail is equally attractive to people with varying levels of fitness and expertise.

Trail development has many positive benefits for local residents in addition to recreation, including increased: community livability, transportation options, patronage to trail-side businesses, personal health and fitness, tourism development, scenic beautification, and improved air and water quality. Furthermore, trails provide opportunities for both residents and visitors to travel to and experience local heritage, recreation, and cultural attractions.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Physical linkages and accessibility to as many citizens as possible should be key goals of the Plan, recognizing the constraints created by the City's vast size and physical terrain; included in this is a focus on trails/ routes for walking and cycling.
- b) Policies should be developed to encourage the development of a comprehensive multi-use, multi-modal, linked trail system that is linked to major civic facilities, parks, educational institutions, employment areas, tourist attractions, etc. The illustration of conceptual locations for trail access / trailheads should be considered.
- c) Encourage further the implementation of the Junction Creek Waterway Park Community Improvement Plan, which proposes, among other things, to establish an 18-kilometre linear multi-use trail extending from the Maley Conservation Area in New Sudbury, through downtown Sudbury, to Kelley Lake in the West End.

- d) There is a need to link parks and open space policies to the Transportation policies. Existing and proposed multi-use trails (as per the Trans Canada Trail Master Plan and the Bell Park Master Plan) should be shown on the Transportation Schedules.
- e) Policies need to ensure that the continuity of the existing and proposed multi-use trail system is maintained and that connections are provided where there are opportunities. Development applications should be reviewed with trail, walkway, and bikeway linkages in mind.
- f) The City should prepare a Bicycle Route System Master Plan (Cycling Plan) that builds upon the work of the former City of Sudbury Bicycle Advisory Committee and similar organizations.
- g) Policy should be developed for instances where trails cross lands not in the jurisdiction of the City. For example, the City should negotiate with the landowner regarding the nature, location, and maintenance of the trail.

6.3 Environmental Stewardship / Protection of Natural Environment

The impact of forestry and mining activities on Sudbury's natural environment over the years has been well documented. So too have the "re-greening" efforts undertaken by various levels of government over the last thirty plus years (approximately 8 million trees have been planted since 1978!). Although new technology and practices have contributed to a cleaner environment, a greater overall awareness of environmental and health-related issues has been a key factor in the movement to improve Sudbury's natural environment through its award-winning land reclamation and rehabilitation initiatives.

Residents of Greater Sudbury show great pride in the natural environment and their love of an active lifestyle. The City's natural environment presents tremendous opportunities for new parks and trail development and as more and more land is restored to its natural state, there will be greater opportunities to incorporate these areas into the City's parks and open space system.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Environmental stewardship and the development of healthy communities should be reflected as top priorities and appropriately supported in policy.
- b) Strong policies should be developed for the restoration, protection, and enhancement of natural areas.
- c) Policies should be developed that encourage the integration of open spaces into the City's parks system, especially those that provide connections to other parks, trails, water bodies and scenic vistas. The development of a framework for the systematic

evaluation of open space should be recommended.

- d) The Official Plan should recognize the role that lakes such as Ramsey, Nephawin, Whitewater, Vermilion, Fairbank, Wanapitei and other lakes in the environmental, recreational, social, and economic health of the City. Public access to shorelines of major lakes should be maintained and/or secured.
- e) Encourage the protection of privately-owned open space. The “Private Open Space” designation should be preserved, with the caveat that this designation does not necessarily mean that such lands are public-accessible.
- f) Public and private “Open space” should be defined terms and should be separate from the “Parks” designation.
- g) There is a need to link parks and open space policies to the Natural Heritage policies.

6.4 Demand for Passive / Natural Park Space

The public consultation program found strong support for the acquisition of more greenspace and the expansion of passive, nature-oriented recreation activities (e.g., walking, hiking, nature appreciation, etc.). Past planning studies, most notably the various Community Improvement Plans, stress the importance of preserving natural greenspace through the acquisition and development of large public parks (e.g., Greenway Park, Junction Creek Waterway Park, etc.). Trends also indicate that older adults favour passive park space and Greater Sudbury’s aging population does not appear to be any different.

Not all parks need to be either “active” or “passive” parks. Larger park sites should incorporate both elements, depending on the function of the park and the existence of natural vegetation, terrain, etc. In parks with under-utilized spaces, the City may even consider naturalizing them through the introduction of native plant species.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) There is a need to strike a balance in the management of passive open spaces between protecting natural functions and providing for leisure needs. Open space should be integrated throughout the built environment.
- b) In acquiring new park sites for passive or active uses, an emphasis should be placed on acquiring larger sites (e.g., four hectares or more).
- c) Naturalization of City-owned open spaces should be encouraged, where appropriate. Furthermore, landscaping improvements and tree planting initiatives should also be promoted within privately-owned open space.

- d) Priority should be placed on acquiring and developing Greenway Park and Junction Creek Waterway Park as greenspace parks that serve to protect the natural environment as well as provide opportunities for public use that are non-intrusive and non-exploitive (e.g., walking/hiking, picnicking, nature appreciation, water access, etc.). A significant proportion of the proposed Greenway Park remains under private ownership and acquisition of this land (or designation at the very least) should be a high priority.
- e) Reference should be made to the need to investigate the potential of one or more existing parks to accommodate a fenced area for off-leash dog activity.

6.5 Improving the Distribution of Parkland

An examination of the City's parks inventory indicates that per capita provision levels vary considerably from community to community (from less than 1 hectare per 1000 residents in the Flour Mill area to nearly 20 hectares per 1000 population in the Lively service area). City-wide, Greater Sudbury currently provides a ratio of 4.18 hectares of developed parkland per 1,000 residents. In an effort to achieve a more favourable per capita ratio of parkland in under-served areas, the City should capitalize on available opportunities to acquire park sites for both active and passive recreation that are 10 or more acres in size in the following areas (in general order of priority):

- a) Sudbury - Flour Mill/Donovan area
- b) Sudbury - New Sudbury area
- c) Sudbury - South End
- d) Sudbury - West End & Copper Cliff
- e) Coniston, Wahnapiatae & the New Townships
- f) Chelmsford & Azilda

The Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan recommends that the City maintain an standard of 3.0 hectares of parkland per 1,000 population. The intent of this standard is that it be applied to individual communities to determine areas requiring more park space. The City as a whole, however, should generally continue to maintain its current standard of provision, which is 4.2 hectares/1000. This standard is examined in more detail under Section 6.10 (Parkland Classification System).

The success of a parks system is not only measured by its total land area, but also its distribution. Parks should be easily reachable from every neighbourhood. With nearly 200 park sites through the City, however, distribution is not a major issue. Nevertheless, the City should undertake an analysis using its new GIS software to ensure that each residential area is located within 400 to 800 metres of a park with a playground, without having to cross a major barrier such as a highway, railway or river. Some of the City's existing planning documents suggest that parks be located within a 5-minute walk of all residential units, which generally equates to 400-metres. The West End Community

Improvement Plan, for example, indicates that the Spruce Street corridor is within a “gap area” and that vacant land should be acquired and developed for a public park.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Minimum targets for parkland and open space provision should be set (e.g., 4 hectares per 1000 population; park sites within 800 metres of residential areas without having to cross a major barrier such as a highway, railway or river, etc.).
- b) Maintaining access to or acquiring closed schools, infill sites, reclaimed lands, etc. to serve neighbourhood-level leisure needs should be encouraged.
- c) Policies should be developed to include means other than direct acquisition to provide public access to parkland and open space, including public trusts, partnerships with public or private organizations, restrictive covenants, easements, bonusing, etc.
- d) Priority areas for parkland acquisition should be established based upon overall provision and distribution.

6.6 Multi-Use Recreation Complex Location

The City's Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan has identified the need for a multi-use recreation complex containing (at a minimum) two ice pads, a gymnasium, multi-purpose program space, and outdoor playing fields. Additional components may be required over the longer-term, therefore, expansion potential on-site is desirable.

Although the complex will serve the entire City, it is recommended that it be developed in the New Sudbury / Flour Mill area (preferably along the Notre Dame Avenue or LaSalle Boulevard corridors. A specific location for the facility has not yet been established and a review of property records did not identify any municipally-owned parcels of sufficient size in this area. It is estimated that a relatively flat parcel of land approximately 20 to 25 acres in size is required to accommodate the proposed facility. This land base would also allow for some expansion over the longer-term should this be required.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) A policy should be created to encourage municipal acquisition of a site in the New Sudbury / Flour Mill area (in the vicinity of LaSalle Boulevard and/or Notre Dame Avenue) to develop a multi-use recreation complex. The site should have transit access, be located on or near an existing or proposed trail route, and be visible from many vantage points within the area.

- b) Where appropriate, partnerships and innovative approaches to facility development should be encouraged.

6.7 Surplus Parkland

One significant issue is the considerable number of small, unimproved park sites within the City. A query of the City's assessment system indicates that there are over 1,600 parcels classified as "Vacant Land". Some of these lots are "developed" parks without buildings, others contain various municipal infrastructure, but the vast majority are undeveloped properties. Over 1,100 of these lots are less than one acre in size and many have been acquired by the City through a variety of means, including its parkland dedication policies.

Furthermore, most of these lots are located in residential areas and are zoned R1 or R2, although some are designated for parkland purposes in the City's various planning documents. In some cases, local neighbourhoods have expectations that these lots will one day be developed as parks or, at the very least, that they will remain in their natural state and not sold as residential lots. The disposal of surplus lots within residential areas would generally be supported by "Smart Growth", which promotes infill development in appropriate situations.

Before deciding whether or not these unclassified, residentially-zoned "park" parcels should be declared surplus, the City should identify and evaluate them on a site-by-site basis. Preference should be given to maintaining parks that are already developed, contain important natural heritage features, and/or that provide public access to local water bodies.

Potential criteria for parkland disposal may include:

- a) overlapping service areas (e.g., two municipal parks/playgrounds within 400-metres);
- b) no facilities (or rights-of-way) or severe under-utilization;
- c) no important ecological or environmental functions, including no steep slopes;
- d) located within an area that has an oversupply of existing or planned parkland;
- e) not needed for future parks or municipal infrastructure requirements;
- f) no frontage on a public or private road; and
- g) no public waterfront access.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Policies and criteria relating to the disposal and re-zoning of surplus parks should be established. Consultation with adjacent landowners should be a pre-requisite. These sites should not be designated as open spaces or parkland, rather this should be left to the Zoning By-law. Mapping should be limited to developed parks and protected open spaces owned by government agencies.
- b) As a general principle, municipally-owned waterfront property should not be

declared surplus.

- c) There is a need to identify all unimproved municipally-owned lands obtained through parkland dedication mechanisms. Each of these parcels should be evaluated according to the established criteria before a decision is made to maintain the park in its current state, develop the park, or dispose of the park.
- d) Revenue generated from the sale of any surplus parkland should be utilized to improve existing parks and leisure facilities.
- e) As an alternative to the outright sale of surplus parkland, the City may consider the exchange of land in order to acquire and develop parkland in under-serviced areas.

6.8 Aging Infrastructure & Leisure Facility Closures

Most of the City's leisure facilities were built in the 1960's and 1970's with financial assistance from Provincial programs and lottery-generated grant monies. With most facilities being 30 or more years old, there is a real need to reinvest in many of them through significant renovations, upgrades and even replacement. In recent years, the City has contributed to numerous safety-related improvements, however, capital demands continue to pile up and there is no municipal replacement fund. Operating costs of these facilities are also considerable due to their age and lack of modern energy efficiencies. Modern designs and requirements (e.g., female dressing rooms at arenas) are also beginning to make many municipal facilities obsolete. These and a variety of other factors have contributed to the closure of major recreation facilities in recent years and more could be required if the City and community do not properly reinvest in public facilities.

Unfortunately, the infrastructure renewal and facility development needs of the Leisure Services Division over the next ten years far outstrip the resources allocated in the City's capital program. Tough decisions will have to be made over the coming years as to how best to manage and adapt existing infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future populations in a financially-responsible manner.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Increased investment should be encouraged to upgrade or replace necessary infrastructure and to adapt it to the changing needs of the population.
- b) Recognition of the fact that partnerships and senior government investment will be required to even partially address the problems associated with the City's aging leisure facilities.
- c) Policies need to be flexible to allow for alternate uses for surplus/ decommissioned leisure facilities.

- d) The need to regularly monitor and periodically update the Parks, Open Space and Leisure Master Plan should be mentioned.

6.9 Park Maintenance, Design & Funding

Chronic under-funding in the area of park maintenance has led to a gradual degradation of park amenities, playing surfaces and overall upkeep. Neighbourhood playground associations assist in keeping parks in generally good condition, however, numerous complaints were received during the public consultation process that suggest more needs to be done to maintain parks.

Furthermore, City parks and leisure facilities lack appropriate, standardized directional, park entrance, and park rules signs. Signs would greatly assist users and tourists in locating parks and facilities. A consistent sign design would also help to separate municipal parks from private lands, thereby mitigating safety, liability and trespassing concerns.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Greater emphasis should be placed on high-quality park and facility design (possibly through urban design policies or guidelines).
- b) The Official Plan should state the need to develop attainable maintenance standards for each park type.
- c) Consistent designs for signage, buildings and development features should be implemented to help unify the system for residents and tourists and to clearly identify City-owned (publicly-accessible) parkland.

6.10 Parkland Classification System

The City of Greater Sudbury is currently operating under a series of Official Plans and Secondary Plans that predate amalgamation and there is no one policy regime that is applicable to the parks system. Most notably, policies need to be developed within the new Official Plan to establish an appropriate parks typology that recognizes the form and function of the existing parks system, provides guidance for the future development and redevelopment of parks, and conserves open space resources.

The definition of a park classification system that encourages a broad range of park types and facility combinations is an important first step in meeting the varied needs of the public. A parks hierarchy typically defines that various aspects of each park type, including such items as the general intensity of development, intended service area, and potential complement of facilities. Decisions relating to the future planning, acquisition, and development of park resources should be guided by policies contained in the Official Plan.

For the purposes of this Background Study, a preferred parkland classification system has been suggested (see Table 6-1).

Table 6-1: Suggested Parkland Classification System for the City of Greater Sudbury

	School Park	Playground	Community Park
General Description	<p>Include playgrounds and schoolyards that the City has developed and/or improved in partnership with a local school board.</p> <p>Owned by school board, not the City.</p> <p>Must be publicly-accessible after school hours.</p> <p>Not considered to be a primary community parkland resource, but rather are intended to mitigate gaps in local parkland distribution.</p>	<p>Small parks that contain play equipment (tot lot) and a limited supply of other leisure facilities.</p> <p>Should be centrally located within neighbourhoods, with safe and convenient walking distance of residential areas, and have street frontage for visibility and safety.</p> <p>Most are municipally-owned, but can be owned by community organization/ agency (not including school board) if long-term agreement for access exists.</p>	<p>Provide a focus for active recreation (organized and unorganized) in the surrounding community, including tournaments.</p> <p>Often multi-purpose and cater to activities for all ages.</p> <p>Generally centrally located within community (for pedestrian access) and on an arterial or collector road (for vehicular access). Access to public transit is preferred.</p>
Facilities/ Features	<p>Should include playgrounds and may also include sports fields and courts in limited numbers.</p>	<p>Must include play equipment for children and provide for pedestrian access.</p> <p>May also include non-permitted sports fields for casual play, as well as a limited supply of hard courts, paths, landscaped areas, open space/ natural areas, and resting and shaded areas.</p> <p>Parking is limited (or only on street).</p>	<p>Must include some degree of leisure facilities for organized play and sufficient parking areas.</p> <p>May include single or multiple sports fields, hard courts, fieldhouses, beaches, picnic areas, play equipment, outdoor rinks, open space/ natural areas, paths, and indoor leisure facilities.</p>
Size	Varies	Typically 0.2 to 1.0 hectares. Maximum 3 hectares if significant portion of park contains passive open space land.	Typically 2 to 10 hectares.
Service Area	Immediate neighbourhood	Neighbourhood (approx. 10-minute walk)	Community/ Settlement Area (approx. 20-minute walk)
Provision Standard	Although additional School Parks are not anticipated to be required during the course of the planning period, the creation of any new school site should have regard for the "school park" concept.	0.25 hectares per 1,000 population	1.5 hectares per 1,000 population

continued...

Table 6-1: Suggested Parkland Classification System for the City of Greater Sudbury (...continued)

	Regional Park	Greenspace	Linear Park
General Description	<p>Large parks providing a unique function to residents of the entire City of Greater Sudbury as well as tourists (e.g., Bell Park, Camp Wassakwa, etc.).</p> <p>Typically are single purpose facilities containing specialty activities.</p> <p>Location is often dependent upon natural features (e.g., lake, hills, etc.). Widely distributed amongst both urban or rural areas, generally located along an arterial or collector road. Linkages to the City's trail system is recommended.</p>	<p>Undeveloped municipally-owned parcels of land that remain in their natural state (e.g., woodlots, floodplains, etc.).</p> <p>Lands will be protected and preserved. There is no intention to develop the land, with the exception of informal trails where compatible and ecologically feasible.</p> <p>Lands should be appropriately designated and zoned in City planning documents.</p> <p>Publicly-accessible, but may not be advertised as such.</p> <p>Location can vary. Should be connected to the City's trail system where possible.</p>	<p>Linear strips of land that provide corridors for trails (Class 1), greenways, open space, and physical buffers. May also encompass adjacent pockets of open space.</p> <p>Purpose is to connect parks and other points of interest (e.g., leisure facilities, schools, residential neighbourhoods, business districts).</p> <p>Provide an emphasis on walking, jogging and cycling. Usage of motorized vehicles is not recommended, but may be considered when required to link privately-owned routes.</p> <p>Located throughout the City (but outside of other public parks), often in rights-of-way.</p> <p>Development of linear parks is a high priority.</p>
Facilities/ Features	<p>Special purpose facilities (e.g., tourist attractions, ski hills, summer camps, historic or culturally significant sites, beaches/ waterfront areas, etc).</p> <p>Must include sufficient parking areas.</p> <p>May include leisure areas ancillary to primary use, as well as open space/ natural areas. Linkages to the City's trail system is recommended.</p>	<p>Natural features (e.g., woodlots, open space, waterbodies, etc.), areas of hazard (e.g, flooding), scenic vistas, habitat corridors, or other natural landscapes.</p> <p>May contain informal, unpaved trails and ancillary amenities. Land is intended for passive, low-intensity, dispersed recreation.</p> <p>Should not contain environmentally-sensitive features as lands may be publicly-accessible.</p>	<p>Contain formal or informal trails and accessory uses (e.g, parking areas).</p> <p>May contain open space/ natural areas and limited leisure facilities, such as play equipment, pavilions, picnic areas, etc.</p>
Size	Varies, but often larger than 10 hectares.	Varies, but often between 0.5 and 10 hectares.	Varies, but should be of sufficient size to accommodate trail-related activities (minimum width of 15 metres is recommended).
Service Area	Entire City and beyond	Neighbourhood to Community	Entire City and beyond
Provision Standard	2.25 hectares per 1,000 population	Greenspace is acquired based on opportunity and the need to preserve natural areas.	Provision should be based on need for linkages not land-based requirements.

Park classifications are important because they help to focus planning, development and management efforts in a manner that balances public needs and expectations with dimensions related to physical, natural and financial resources. Through a classification framework, a consistent management approach can be created that improves equity and responsiveness to community needs.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) A park classification system that addresses a range of different types and characteristics of parks and open spaces should be developed to guide the development, acquisition, and management of existing and future parks. A classification system consisting of the following categories should be considered: School Park, Playground, Community Park, Regional Park, Greenway or Linear Park, and Open Space or Greenspace (see Table 6-1).
- b) Separate land use designations may be considered for some classifications (i.e., not all parkland needs to be placed into one land use designation such as “Public Park”). For example, the Official Plan could contain a “Community Parkland” designation for Playgrounds and Community Parks, a “Regional Parkland” designation for Regional parkland, and an “Open Space” designation for Greenspace. Furthermore, School Parks could be allowed within Institutional areas and Greenway/Linear Parks could be permitted in all areas.

6.11 Partnerships

The City alone does not have the resources to provide all parks, trails and leisure facilities desired by the community. Partnerships with other agencies and the community itself are required to maximize the benefits of the local parks and leisure system for citizens of all ages and abilities. Pressures caused by shrinking budgets, reduction of capital funds, influences of technology, shifts in participation trends, and the desire for increased operating efficiencies are all big reasons why the City should continue to form alliances, agreements, and partnerships.

Excellent examples of partnerships include the maintenance of Conservation Areas by the Nickel District Conservation Authority, the development of parks by service clubs such as the Rotary Club, the operation of leisure facilities by community-based organizations, granting of easements by private landowners for the development of linear trails, sponsorship of events and facilities by local industry, reciprocal agreements with school boards, etc.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) The Plan should support the formation of partnerships with the public, not-for-profit, and/or private sector in the provision and operation of recreation facilities (e.g.,

multi-use recreation complex), trails, parks and leisure services where there is sufficient benefit to the City and community.

- b) The School Boards should consult with the City of Greater Sudbury when planning to develop or close schools; the City should continue to be given the first option to purchase abandoned schoolyards. The acquisition of abandoned school sites would likely be for parkland purposes only (the Leisure Master Plan does not recommend any new community centres for the next ten years or more). In cases where the City requires abandoned schoolyards to meet gaps in parkland distribution, it may be prudent to encourage school boards to sever the park space from land upon which former school buildings are situated so that the land can be purchased separately.
- c) Encourage the formation of park associations and/or neighbourhood watches to report misuse of park property and vandalism activity and to assist in the development and/or maintenance of area parks.

6.12 Accessibility

People with disabilities represent a growing part of the City's population. It is estimated that about 18,000 people in the City of Greater Sudbury have a long-term disability, of which 900 are children and 8,000 are 65 years or older. Furthermore, approximately 2,000 children in Greater Sudbury are considered to be "at risk" for physical disabilities. Statistics indicate that the number of people with disabilities will grow over the coming years (possibly from 13% of the population to 20%).

In response to these trends and Provincial legislation, the City has developed an Accessibility Plan that is intended to address existing barriers to people with disabilities and to prevent new barriers from being established. Barriers are defined to include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barrier. City Council has adopted a Policy of Universal Access that requires its services, programs and facilities to be accessible to people with disabilities regardless of the type of disability and age.

In relation to leisure services, the Accessibility Plan recommends that the City initiate an assessment of accessibility for municipal facilities including, but not limited to, arenas and community centres. Considerable inroads have already been made in this regard given the recent improvements to indoor pools and arena entryways. Furthermore, the City's Master Plan recommends that additional accessible playground sites be developed and that physical/architectural accessibility in the City's leisure facilities be maintained and/or improved.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Through policy, the Official Plan should provide support to the City's Accessibility Plan and its efforts to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. Reference should be made to the City's desire for more accessible playgrounds, sidewalks that provide access to parks and community facilities, continued improvements to leisure facilities, as well as the enhancement of customer service initiatives for people with disabilities. Other specific policies may reference the need to: (1) develop accessibility standards for special events and accessibility guidelines for community-led leisure programming; (2) Conduct accessibility audits of leisure facilities and phase-in necessary improvements; and (3) establish standards for trail development and maintenance in consultation with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee and local trail organizations.
- b) There is a need for the Plan to recognize the personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of leisure activity, including the benefits of physical activity to people with disabilities and older adults.

6.13 Parkland Conveyance / Cash-in-Lieu

Section 42 of the *Planning Act* permits a municipality to require, as a condition of development or redevelopment, that lands be conveyed to the municipality for park or other public recreational purposes. Up to 2% of the land can be required for commercial or industrial development and 5% can be conveyed for residential developments. The City may require the payment of money (cash-in-lieu) in place of the conveyance of land. The amount of cash-in-lieu is generally assessed as of one day prior to draft plan approval and can only be spent on parkland acquisition or capital recreation needs. The City of Greater Sudbury has recently established a cash-in-lieu land value that can be applied "across the board" – the value represents a compromise between the most recent practice and strict adherence to the *Planning Act*.

If specific policies are contained in the Official Plan, a municipality may require one hectare of land per 300 residential dwelling units as an alternative to the 5% dedication. This standard provides more parkland than the traditional 5% conveyance when development densities exceed 6 units per acre.

Implications for parks, open space and leisure policies in new Official Plan:

- a) Policies affording the City the full range of options as established in the *Planning Act* should be included in the Official Plan.
- b) As in the Regional Official Plan, all land conveyed must be suitable for recreational purposes and be acceptable to the City. Dedication of additional land for public open space may be required as a condition of development approval.

- c) The dedication of land for park purposes should only be required in cases where the City intends to develop the land for park purposes; cash-in-lieu should be obtained where additional parkland is not required. Funds must be used to upgrade additional parks or leisure facilities within under-serviced areas in the same community first and foremost, but may be used anywhere in the City where needed.