

# Recreation, Culture & Parks Master Plan

April 2023





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Prepared by:



Wickens Greenspace  
Consultants |



## Acknowledgements

The Recreation, Culture & Parks Master Plan has been created with the assistance of hundreds of individuals whose diverse range of interests and viewpoints have helped to shape this important document. We wish to thank all members of the community that have contributed their time and input through the consultation process, as well as members of Town Council and Staff that provided critical oversight during the process. Your collective efforts are appreciated and we hope that the Master Plan results in meaningful change through continued enhancement of the facilities serving the parks and recreational needs of Pelham residents for years to come.

### Town of Pelham Council (2022-26)

Mayor Marvin Junkin  
Councillor Kevin Ker (Ward 1)  
Councillor Wayne Olson (Ward 1)  
Councillor Brian Eckhardt (Ward 2)  
Councillor John Wink (Ward 2)  
Councillor Bob Hildebrandt (Ward 3)  
Councillor Shellee Niznik (Ward 3)  
Regional Councillor Diana Huson

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### Project Consultants

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Tucker-Reid & Associates  
Wickens Greenspace Consultants

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which the Town of Pelham is situated is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this land is home to many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging this reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous peoples.

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# 1. Introduction





## 1.1 Master Plan Overview

This Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan provides Town Council, Staff, community stakeholders and the public with meaningful guidance through a ten-year (2023-2032) outlook for municipal recreation, culture and parks facilities and services. In doing so, the Master Plan provides a long-range vision, strategic direction, and coordinated guidance for decision-making in areas vital to the local quality of life and identity.

The scope of the Master Plan includes:

- Indoor recreation facilities, such as arenas, gymnasiums and program space;
- Outdoor recreation facilities, such as sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and pools;
- Arts and cultural opportunities, such as special events and cultural appreciation;
- Parks and open spaces, including parkland acquisition and design; and
- Programs and service delivery, such as activities, policies, best practices and **partnerships (note: the department's organizational structure and staffing levels are addressed in the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Organizational Review completed by KPMG in 2023).**

**This is the Town's first comprehensive plan for recreation, culture and parks.** The Plan responds to several evolving characteristics in the town, such as:

- community needs and expectations;
- demographics, growth and urban structure;
- participation trends (including those influenced by the pandemic); and
- legislative and policy frameworks.

To address these and other factors, the Master Plan follows an approach that is community-driven and responsive to current and future needs, with the goal of ensuring that the Town is positioned to be active and healthy, environmentally sustainable, culturally vibrant, economically strong, and engaged with residents and tourists.

## 1.2 Benefits of Recreation, Culture & Parks

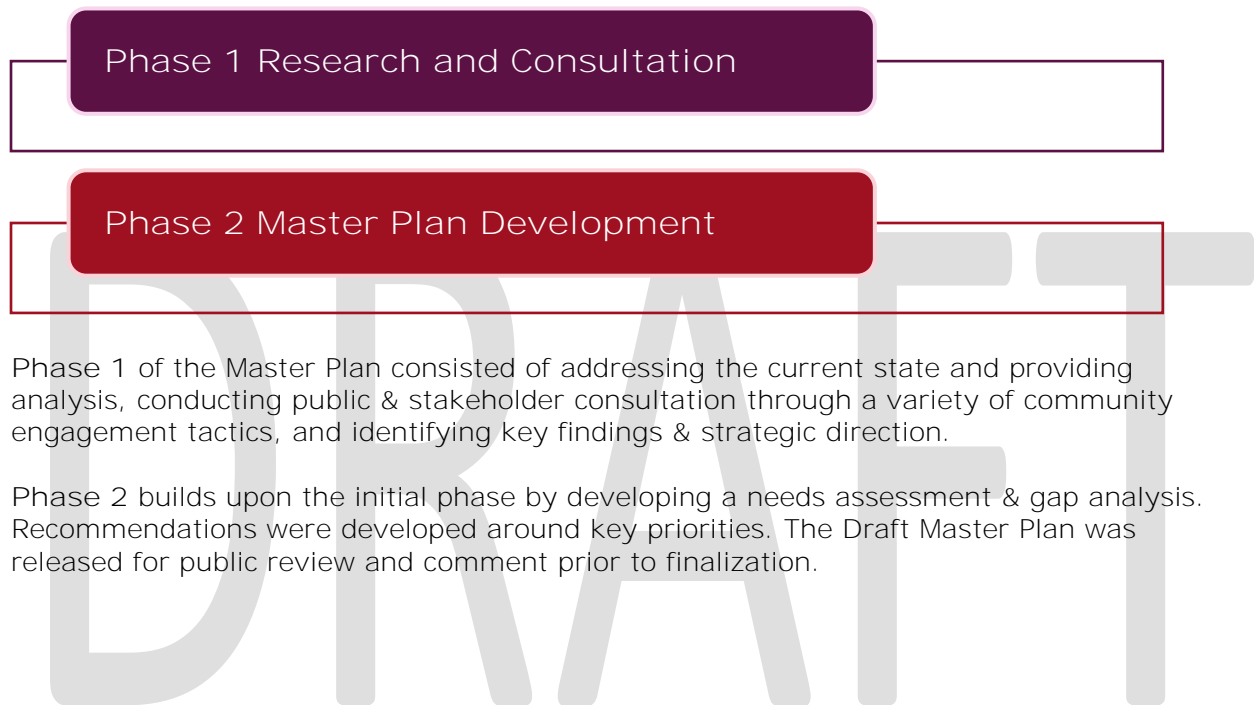
**The Town of Pelham's recreation, culture and parks collectively contribute to the well-being** of residents and to the municipality as a whole. The facilities and programs related to these community services provide **Pelham's residents with several economic, environmental,** health, psychological and physical benefits. These community services offer participants the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through physical and social opportunities, contributing to a vibrant community.

There is plentiful support for recreation, culture and parks at local, provincial and national levels. Supporting charters consist of Parks for All, the Framework for Recreation in Canada, and the Ontario Culture Strategy. This Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan (herein **referred to as "The Master Plan"**) **identifies the Town's high-level needs and priorities.** This Master Plan will help the Town and its community partners provide for the needed programming and servicing for recreation, culture and parks to engage participants in meaningful physical and social opportunities.

## 1.3 Project Methodology

This Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan project began in the summer of 2022. A team led by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. was retained to direct the development of this study with assistance and oversight from a Town Staff project team. The **Master Plan's** process entails two phases to achieve a community responsiveness plan, guided by a terms of reference prepared by the Town.

Figure 1 – Master Plan Process





## 2. Community Context





This section provides an overview of the Town of Pelham's community context, including a look at recreation, culture and park influences such as historical and trajectory of population growth, age cohorts, income, education, immigration, diversity and language.

## 2.1 About Pelham

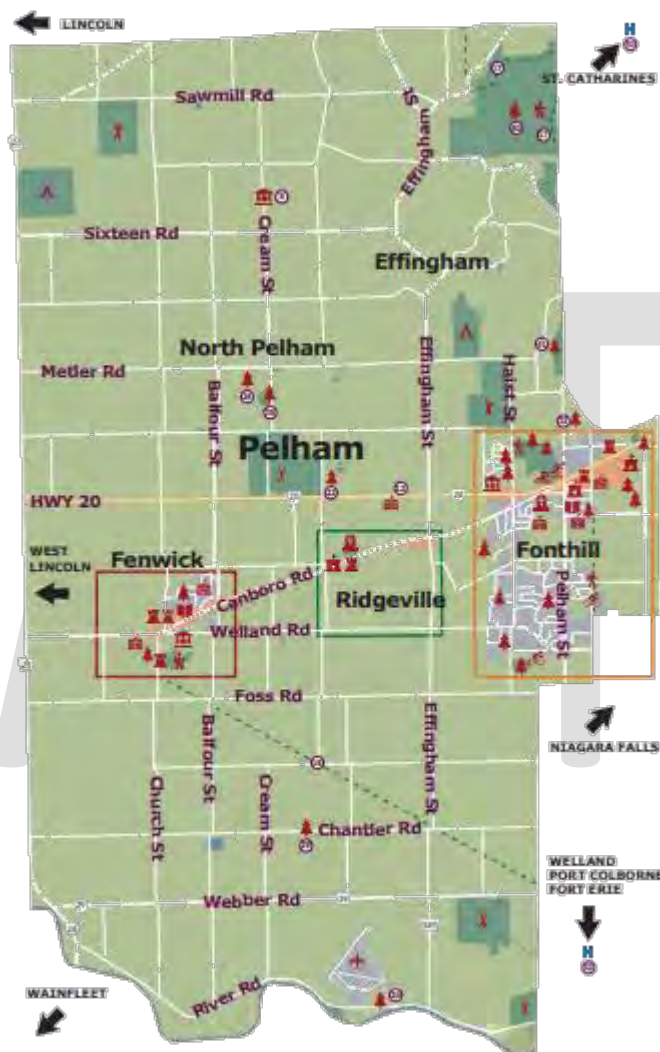
The Town of Pelham is centrally located in Niagara Region and supports a population of 18,192 residents. The Town is comprised of a mixed rural and urban land structure, represented by the communities of Effingham, Fenwick, Fonthill, North Pelham and Ridgeville. The kame and topography in Pelham represent higher elevation throughout North Fonthill and east of Fenwick.

Both Pelham and Niagara Region are above the provincial and national growth rate, reflecting a need to align recreation, culture and park servicing with local demand. It is essential that the Master Plan demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of **the community's context** to effectively guide the Town in optimizing services and encouraging high levels of engagement. This section provides an extensive overview of the corporate frameworks, current trends, a demographic profile and population growth that represents the community.

Pelham has a large representation of seniors and its median age increased to 50.4 years in 2021. The community is a renowned retirement destination and has seen high levels of migration from other regions, which contributes to Pelham's aging population. Increasingly, however, the town is also beginning to attract younger families due to its high quality of life and growing housing options.

The Town supports a diversifying community profile and is a contributor to the vast growth occurring in Niagara Region. The Town's main areas of population growth and intensification consist of Fenwick and Fonthill, supported by the Regional and Town Official Plans, secondary plans, and provincial policy. The Town's diverse changes in its growing population are represented by different abilities, ages, cultural backgrounds, employment and incomes.

Figure 2: Map of the Town of Pelham



To ensure a locally-responsive approach, this Master Plan aligns with existing frameworks and prioritizes **the recreation, culture and park demands of Pelham's current and forecasted demographic profile.**

## 2.2 Recreation, Culture & Parks in Pelham

The Town's Recreation, Culture and Wellness (RCW) and Public Works Departments deliver recreation, culture, and parks services in Pelham. The RCW Department's non-unionized staff team provides and facilitates much of the programming within municipal facilities, while also maintaining indoor and outdoor sports facilities (i.e., field lines, sport amenities). The Public Works Department's unionized staff are responsible for a broader range of service items within parks (i.e., grass cutting, irrigation, trimming), in addition to maintaining the Town's roads/transportation system, water/wastewater system, fleet, facilities, etc.

The Town of Pelham has several facilities and parks that service individual users, organized programs and public events. Major municipal facilities and parks in Pelham include:

- Meridian Community Centre, which is a multi-use community hub consisting of two gymnasiums, two ice pads, walking track, **the Senior's Active Living Centre**, multi-purpose rooms, and more;
- Peace Park, a primary outdoor event venue in Pelham that contains a bandshell and hosts the farmers market, supper market and concerts on Thursday nights in the summertime;
- Centennial Park, **which contains many of the town's sports fields and sport courts**, as well as a new splash pad;
- Marlene Stewart Streit Park, **home to the town's municipal outdoor pool**, skateboard park, and new splash pad;
- North Pelham Park, **located in the town's rural area and serving as a popular destination for baseball activities**; and
- Harold Black Park, which provides several sports fields serving the Fonthill and broader community.

The Town provides a variety of programs for children, youth, adult and senior groups, often in partnership with volunteers and other providers. The Town takes pride in its ability to create positive and memorable experiences for residents and opportunities for them to connect and develop friendships. Services for all age groups continues to keep older members engaged with the community and support-life long relationships. The Town has adopted a strengths-based service provision model whereby the provider that is best suited to deliver a service takes the lead, with support from others. In many cases, the Town of Pelham is a direct service provider (e.g., camps, outdoor aquatics, registered and drop-in programming, major events, etc.), while other groups are responsible for rounding out the leisure offerings (e.g., minor sports, seniors programming, etc.). To ensure accessible and optimal service delivery, community input for programming is frequently collected and quarterly measurements and feedback are presented to the Town Council.

As the town grows, maintaining an active and engaged community remains central to **Pelham's identity. A comprehensive planning approach to recreation, culture and parks will continue to promote this and other local values, including the Town's strong reputation for event hosting and community partnerships.**



## 2.3 Recent Accomplishments

The Town of Pelham is well-known for delivering high quality and responsive recreation, culture and parks services **to its residents. The Town's facilities, parks and special events** are a major contributor the local quality of life for people of all ages. **Pelham's small-town** atmosphere is personified in its approach to customer service, **while the community's ability** to deliver a wide range of programs and events extends beyond the level of service seen in most communities of similar size.

The local hub for community and recreation activities is the 143,000 square foot Meridian Community Centre (MCC), which opened in late 2018. The MCC is **the Town's only** recreation centre and its many activity spaces makes it a true destination for residents and visitors. Notably, the centre is recognized as a Seniors Active Living Centre and its ice pads and gymnasiums are heavily used by local and regional sports teams. The facility contains:

- Two NHL sized arenas
- Two full-size gymnasiums
- Multi-purpose community rooms
- Indoor walking/running track
- Concession areas
- Change rooms & washrooms
- Atrium/lobby area
- Art displays
- Offices for the Recreation, Culture & Wellness Department

From a wide range of special events to age-**specific programs, the Town's recreation** services are progressive and responsive to community needs. For example, the Town provides camps for children and youth (including specialty camps, often in partnership with others), a wide range of swimming programming at the Pelham Community Swimming Pool, and drop-in programming at the Meridian Community Centre gyms and arenas (skating, pickleball, fitness, etc.). All ages from children to seniors are afforded opportunities to stay active. In addition, the Town is well known for its extensive special event programming, which includes (but is not limited to) Summerfest, Summer Chill Series, Canada Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and several other holiday events.

Furthermore, the Town has been very successful in recent years in securing senior government grants to support new and improved capital infrastructure, particularly within its parks system. Some of the more significant capital grants are identified in the table below.

Table 1 – Recent Town of Pelham Recreation, Culture and Parks Investments

Location	Funding
Centennial Park	<p>In 2022, the Town opened a new splash pad at Centennial Park in Fenwick. About one-third of the costs were provided through the Investing in Canada Plan (ICIP) and the COVID-19 Resilience Stream supported by the provincial and federal governments.</p> <p>The Town also received support through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund to assist with the revitalization of tennis courts in 2022. Another grant was received to install a batting cage in 2023.</p> <p>Additionally, funding was provided by the <b>Government of Ontario's</b> Community Building Fund to transform the Centennial Park multi-purpose court into a basketball and ball hockey court with the addition of six new dedicated pickleball courts in 2022.</p>
Peace Park	<p>In 2022, the Town received support from the Federal Economic <b>Development Agency for Southern Ontario's Canada Community</b> Revitalization Fund to support the addition of accessible washrooms and a community room adjacent to Peace Park.</p>
Marlene Stewart Streit Park	<p>In 2022, the Town opened a splash pad and pavilion with grant funding from the ICIP program. Additional grant funding is allocated to the replacement of the outdoor pool in 2026. Provincial and Federal funding total \$2.3 million, covering 73.33% of the project.</p> <p>Additionally, in 2014 the award-winning Isaac Riehl Memorial Skatepark was opened through generous community donations and the Aviva Community Fund.</p>
Steve Bauer Trail	<p>Pelham received a grant of just over \$75,000 through the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling (OMCC) grant program and \$21,250 through the 2021 Canada Summer Games that contributed to the paving of Steve Bauer Trail between Line Avenue and Port Robinson Road in 2020. This has improved cycling and walking connections with the neighbouring municipalities of Welland and Thorold, and provides linkages to the Meridian Community Centre, East Fonthill and Niagara College.</p>

## 2.4 Existing Corporate Frameworks & Relevant Studies

The Town of Pelham is supported by corporate frameworks consisting of municipal and regional legislations and studies. These **assess the Town's planning approach** and guide the provision and service delivery of recreation, culture and parks in the community. Key documents are summarized in Appendix B, with a focus on those with relevance to recreation, culture and parks. The list includes:

- Strategic Plan (revised 2021-2022); a new Strategic Plan will be prepared in 2023
- Official Plan (2014)
- Recreation, Culture and Wellness Organizational Review (2023)
- Active Transportation Plan & Implementation Strategy (2016)
- Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2021)
- Cultural Master Plan (2013)

- Facilities Feasibility Study (2008)
- Heritage Master Plan (2012)
- Public Art Master Plan (2016)

## 2.5 Trends in Participation & Provision

This section identifies trends that are influencing the demand for and delivery of parks and recreation services in Canadian municipalities. Some of these trends have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, while others have been affecting service provision for several years. We firmly believe that long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that the parks and recreation sector plays in our personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.

For continuity with leading sector resources, the trends are organized by the five goals of the Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC). The FRC was developed in 2015 by a team led by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. It presents a renewed definition of recreation and supports coordinated policies and practices in recreation and related sectors in Canada. Its aim is to improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and **natural environments. Part of the FRC's legacy is how it has created a common language for** recreation professionals, with its goals being used to align community priorities with initiatives in the sector.

Figure 3: Goals from the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada



Table 2: Listing of Key Parks, Recreation and Trails Trends by FRC Goal

FRC Goal	Trend
Active Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Recreation are Essential Services</li> <li>• Combating High Levels of Physical Inactivity</li> <li>• Popularity of Unstructured, Self-Directed Activities</li> <li>• Encouraging Free Play</li> <li>• Pandemic Impacts on Community Sport</li> <li>• Pandemic Impacts on Programming</li> <li>• Engaging the Aging Population in Healthy Activities</li> <li>• Emerging Recreational Activities</li> </ul>
Inclusion & Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing Concerns over Affordability</li> <li>• Making Recreation Accessible for Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• Improving Gender Equity in Sports</li> <li>• Using Parks and Recreation to Support Indigenous Reconciliation</li> <li>• Safe Spaces for Marginalized and Displaced Populations</li> </ul>



FRC Goal	Trend
Connecting People & Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rising Use of Parks and Outdoor Recreation</li> <li>• Improving our Connections with Nature</li> <li>• Supporting Active Transportation</li> <li>• Keeping Pace with Parkland Needs in Growing Communities</li> <li>• Increasing Focus on Environmental Design and Climate Change</li> </ul>
Supportive Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-Use Recreation Facilities as Community Hubs</li> <li>• Providing High Quality, Multi-functional and Flexible Facilities</li> <li>• Rationalizing and Addressing Aging Infrastructure</li> <li>• Designing Facilities to be Sport-Friendly</li> </ul>
Recreation Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Great Resignation – Significant Turnover in Recreation Programming Staff</li> <li>• Declining Volunteerism</li> <li>• Pandemic Challenges for Canadian Recreation Sport Organizations</li> <li>• The Necessity of Partnerships</li> <li>• Data, Technology and Digital Transformation</li> <li>• Evolving Financial Challenges</li> </ul>
Arts & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture can be Difficult to Define</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Culture Attendance and Participation is Growing and Evolving</li> <li>• Pandemic Impacts on Arts and Culture</li> <li>• Digital Transformation of Arts and Culture</li> <li>• Theatre Audiences are Changing</li> <li>• Racial Inequity in the Cultural Sector</li> <li>• Demand for Local and Authentic Festivals and Events</li> <li>• Looking to the Past and Documenting our Living Heritage</li> <li>• Creative and Cultural Hubs are Important for Smaller Communities</li> <li>• Rising Land Values are Impacting Cultural Venues</li> <li>• Empowering the Community through Tactical Urbanism &amp; Placemaking</li> <li>• Targeted Support to the Cultural Sector</li> </ul>

These trends are elaborated on further in Appendix C.

## 2.6 Demographic Profile

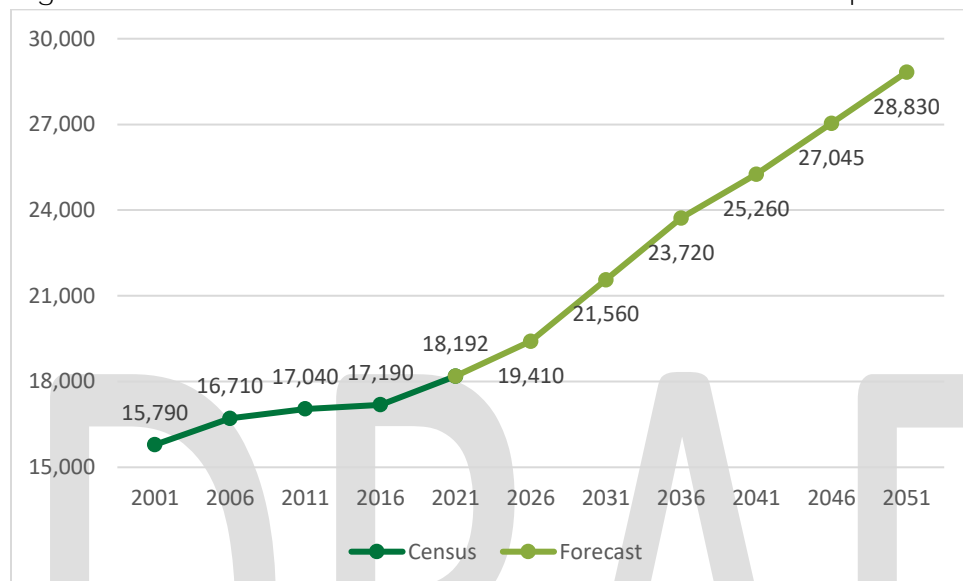
The Town of Pelham supports a growing community with a diverse demographic profile. The Town is represented by an aging population, and is growing at a faster rate than the province alongside the entirety of Niagara Region. As a result, the Town is experiencing changes in **employment, income, and mobility**. **This section examines Pelham’s demographic profile along with the potential implications these changes may have on the Town’s servicing of recreation, culture and parks.**

### Population and Growth

Over the past decade, Pelham has seen its population grow by 10%, reaching 18,192 persons in 2021. The entire Niagara Region experienced 5% growth over the same time period, **indicating that Pelham’s population is increasing at a faster rate**. Collectively, both Pelham and Niagara Region have grown at a quicker pace than the province during this time.

Looking to the future, **Pelham's population is forecasted by** the Niagara 2041 Plan to reach 21,560 by the year 2031, representing a growth rate of 18.5% (Ontario population projections, 2022). **Furthermore, the Niagara Official Plan has forecasted Pelham's** population to reach 28,830 by 2051 (Niagara Official Plan, 2022).

Figure 4 – Town of Pelham Historical and Forecasted Population



Source: Niagara 2041 – Niagara Region <https://www.niagararegion.ca/2041/pdf/mcr-pic3-boards.pdf>

The majority of growth in Pelham under the Official Plan is directed to the urban settlements of East and South Fonthill (primarily) and Fenwick (to a lesser extent). The Town of **Pelham's Development Charge Background Study** from 2018 identifies the distribution of housing growth over a 20-year period to include:

- 70% of housing growth occurring in Fonthill;
- 25% of housing growth occurring in Fenwick; and
- 5% of housing growth occurring in rural areas.

**Pelham's future growth will** also be impacted by immigration and migration. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, many industries across Canada have permitted employees to work remotely which has contributed to many people moving from larger urban centres to smaller sized communities that have more affordable housing choices and a desired quality of life. Growth coupled with changing expectations means that demands are growing for culture, recreation, and park services within Pelham.

## Age Profile

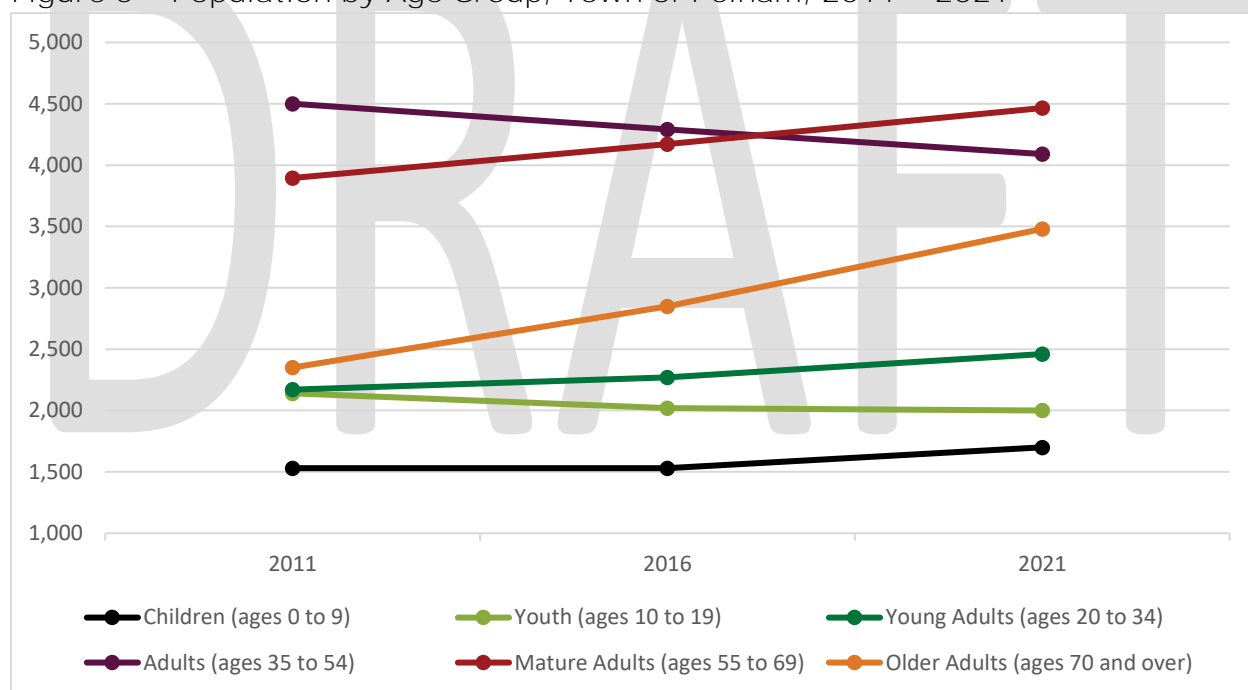
**Pelham's population is** substantially older in comparison to the Province and Niagara Region, and it continues to age although there is some evidence that this is slowing. In 2021, the **Town's population's median age was 50.4 years, which represents a 2.9-year increase** from the median age of 2011. Compared to the rest of Ontario, Pelham has higher rates of mature adults ages 55 to 69 (24.5% v. 19.8%) and ages 70 and over (15.6% v. 12.9%).

Table 3 – Population by Age Group, Town of Pelham, 2011 – 2021

Age Cohort	2011	2016	2021	Change from 2011-2021
Children (ages 0 to 9)	1,530	1,530	1,700	+11%
Youth (ages 10 to 19)	2,140	2,020	2,000	-7%
Young Adults (ages 20 to 34)	2,170	2,270	2,460	+13%
Mature Adults (ages 35 to 54)	4,500	4,290	4,090	-9%
Older Adults (ages 55 to 69)	3,895	4,170	4,465	+15%
Seniors (ages 70 and over)	2,350	2,850	3,480	+48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,595</b>	<b>17,110</b>	<b>18,192</b>	<b>+10%</b>
Median Age	47.5	49.5	50.4	+2.9 years

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

Figure 5 – Population by Age Group, Town of Pelham, 2011 – 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

Looking ahead, although there are currently no official age cohort-based population projections for the town, the projections prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Finance are reasonable indicators of anticipated age-based population changes across the entire Niagara Region. As shown in the following table, the greatest amount of growth is forecasted in the seniors age group (which is anticipated to increase by 38% by 2031), followed by young adults (23% growth by 2031). Most other age cohorts are expected to see more modest growth, though as major users of the parks system, it is notable that the number of children and youth are projected to increase at a slower rate than the overall population.



Table 4 – Niagara Region Population Forecast by Age Group (2021-2041)

Census Year	Change (2021 – 2031)	Change (2021-2041)
Children (ages 0 to 9)	8%	24%
Youth (ages 10 to 19)	9%	19%
Young Adults (ages 20 to 34)	23%	36%
Mature Adults (ages 35 to 54)	9%	24%
Older Adults (ages 55 to 69)	-2%	-8%
Seniors (ages 70 and over)	38%	70%
Total Population	14%	26%

Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance projections (Summer 2022); Reference Scenario

## Income, Employment & Education

Research has found that income and education levels influence (or at least are an indicator of) participation levels in recreation, culture and parks opportunities. As indicated by the **2021 Census, the Town of Pelham's** median total income of households in 2020 was \$110,000, above the Niagara Region and provincial medians, and representing a 16% increase from 2015.

Table 5 –Median Total Income of Households (\$)

	2016	2021
Pelham	\$95,052	\$110,000
Niagara Region	\$65,086	\$79,000
Ontario	\$74,287	\$91,000

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

The Town of Pelham also has a lower proportion of low-income residents, with (5%) living below the low-income measure (after tax) in 2021. By comparison, (10.4%) of residents within Niagara Region and (10.1%) of residents in the province live below the low-income measure (after tax). Collectively, the rates for Pelham, Niagara Region and Ontario decreased between 2016 and 2021.

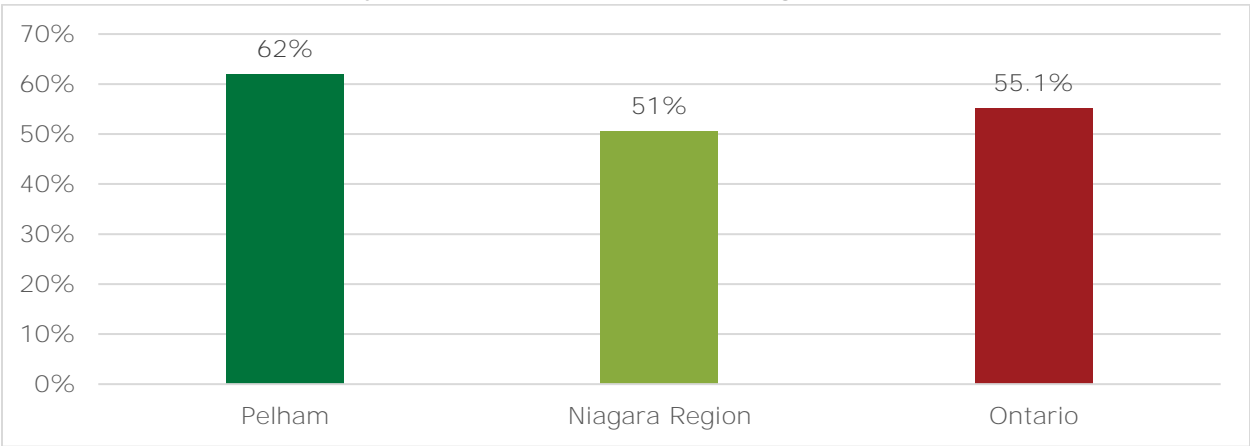
Table 6 – Prevalence of low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax

	2016	2021
Pelham	5.4%	5.0%
Niagara Region	14.5%	10.4%
Ontario	14.4%	10.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

In addition, the proportion of residents in Pelham who have completed a post-secondary certificate, degree or diploma (62%) is higher compared to Niagara Region (51%) and Ontario (55.1%).

Table 7 – Post-secondary Certificate, Diploma or Degree



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Canada

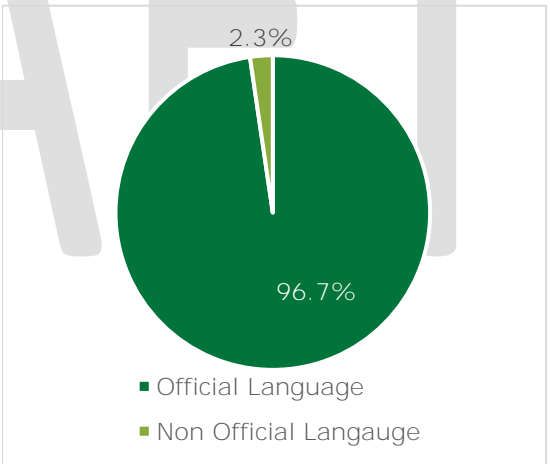
The Town’s income and education profile suggests more residents may be able to pay user fees for culture, recreation and parks programs and services. The Town’s provision of affordable culture, recreation and parks opportunities sees to it that all residents can participate.

Immigration & Language

The Town of Pelham’s population has maintained a steadily declining rate of immigration over recent census periods, indicating that most of the town’s growth has come from non-immigrants. Approximately 13% of Pelham’s population was comprised of immigrants, representing 2,245 persons in 2021.

Furthermore, the distribution of official languages spoken most often at home are represented by 96.3% by English and 0.4% by French. Non-official languages mainly consist of a combination of Indo-European languages (1.6%), with the balancing 0.7% of this group represented by several language categories.

Figure 6 – Language spoken most often at home, Pelham



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Canada



### 3. Community Engagement





### 3.1 Consultation Overview

The Town of Pelham has involved residents through several community consultations to collect input pertaining to the enhancement of municipal parks and recreational services. Each consultation is designed to maximize participation to collect input representing demand and community expectations.

Figure 7 – Public Engagement Tactics



Engagement opportunities were promoted through the project website, media releases, social media, and email networks. The Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan project included a blend of in-person and virtual/online community engagement tactics in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, creating new opportunities for the public and stakeholders to become involved in the planning process.

Note: It is important to note that the information and suggestions presented in this section should not be interpreted as recommendations. Community input has not been altered even **in instances where comments may incorrectly reflect the Town's actual policies, practices or level of provision.**

### 3.2 Introducing the Plan to the Public

#### Pop-up Consultations

Two pop-up open houses were held to introduce the Master Plan project to the community. An evening pop-up was held on September 1, 2022 at Town Hall Park during a Summer Chill Series community gathering, and two morning and evening sessions on October 26, 2022 at the Meridian Community Centre.

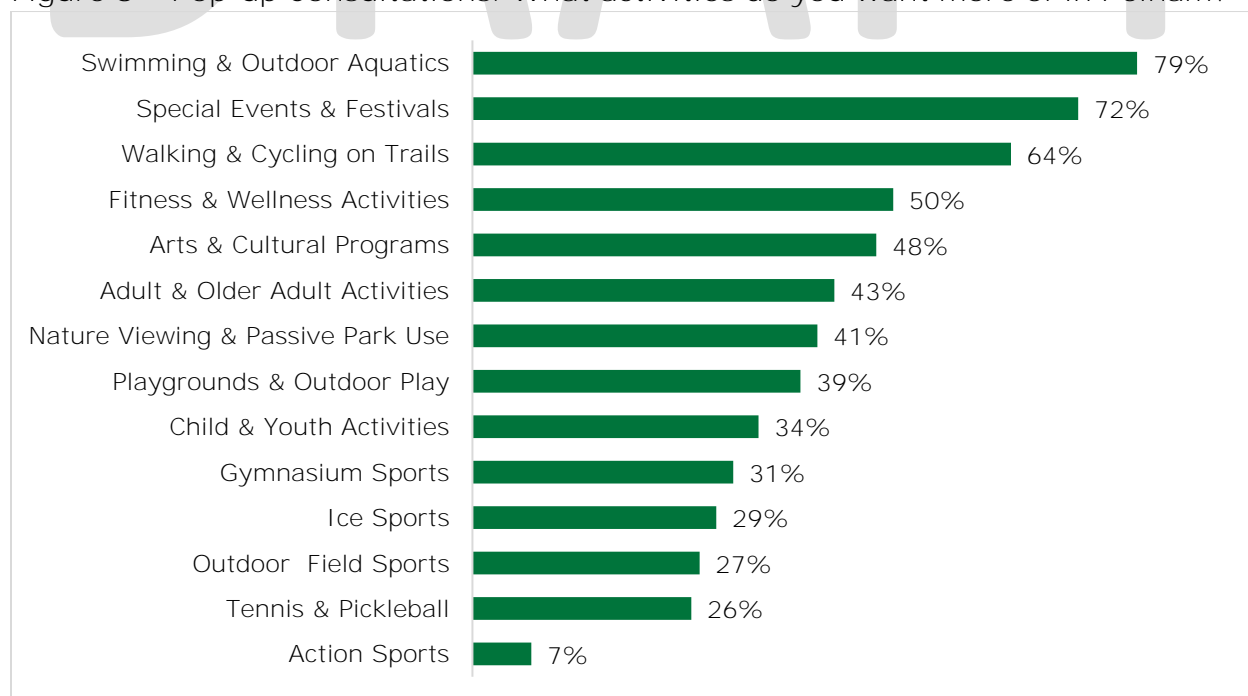
These events consisted of information boards detailing the study scope and process, as well as an interactive voting station to identify public priorities. Commenting stations were also available for gathering qualitative input regarding strengths, challenges and future needs. In addition to joining these promoted events, both sessions were promoted through the Town's website, Town committees, social media accounts, and traditional media. Between the three events, over 220 participants were engaged.



Through the interactive voting stations, respondents were provided five blocks to distribute amongst the recreation, culture and parks activities that they wanted to see more of. Top priorities included:

- Swimming & outdoor aquatics (79%)
- Special events & festivals (72%)
- Walking & cycling on trails (64%)

Figure 8 – Pop-up Consultations: What activities do you want more of in Pelham?



Additionally, display boards were provided for respondents to post suggestions for improving local recreation, culture and parks services. Common themes included:

- 25 respondents suggested improvements to recreation & culture activities & facilities that included the provision of several types of additional programming, an indoor pool, fitness equipment, improved accessibility and more parking.
- 19 respondents suggested improvements to parks & outdoor recreation activities & facilities that included the provision of additional sports fields, trail connections and maintenance, protecting outdoor greenspace, and the addition of additional park amenities.
- 14 respondents identified what they like most about recreation, culture and parks in Pelham, with the **Town's** summer festival concert series being the most common response, as well as **appreciation for the Town's** indoor walking track, Lincoln Pelham Public Library, splash pads and Steve Bauer trail.

### Virtual Open House Session

A virtual open house was held on October 19, 2022 for residents to learn about the Master Plan and provide input on local needs and priorities. The Town provided a link for pre-registration on their website and promoted the event through several platforms (e.g., Town committees, library, MCC programming instructors, the local high school, local businesses, seniors database, ad in the local paper, social media, etc.). Accommodations were made available for registrants upon request. A total of 12 participants attended the session.

When asked about what participants like most about recreation, culture and parks, participants indicated that the Town has a close-knit and engaged community supported by people who are willing to take the extra step to improve the experiences of others. The **Town's trails and their connection to other communities was also complemented.** The **Town's** parks and inventory of amenities was mentioned to be impressive for a municipality of its size. **Pelham's dog park** (operated by the Region) was also viewed as exceptional.

Suggested improvements to recreation and culture programming consisted of the provision of safe and welcoming spaces for younger residents and continuing to pursue strategies to engage new residents. Demand was suggested for additional seniors programming, especially opportunities for social interaction. The provision of an indoor pool **was a suggested improvement to the Town's recreation facilities, which could assist with** providing year-round affordable swim programming. It was indicated that the current availability of basketball courts was limited.

Suggested improvements to outdoor recreation activities and facilities included continuing to value outdoor recreational greenspace in new residential areas as parks are essential to community and individual health and well-being. The addition of water features in parks was suggested to be an improvement as there is a current a lack of these accessories (note: two splash pads were installed in Town parks in late 2022). Lastly, there was a request for indoor or outdoor bocce courts.

### 3.3 Community Online Survey

**A community survey was prepared to support the Master Plan's development. It was** available for ten (10) weeks beginning in August 2022 and extending through October 2022. The survey was extensively promoted by the Town (social and traditional media, email



networks, website, within municipal facilities, etc.). Community members could complete **the survey online through the Town's public engagement site or through hard copies** available at Town Hall and the Meridian Community Centre.

A total of 414 unique responses were received. Responses rates varied by questions as a reflection of the self-directed and voluntary survey structure.

The purpose of the community survey was to prompt residents needs for recreation, culture and parks. Questions were designed to gather information regarding:

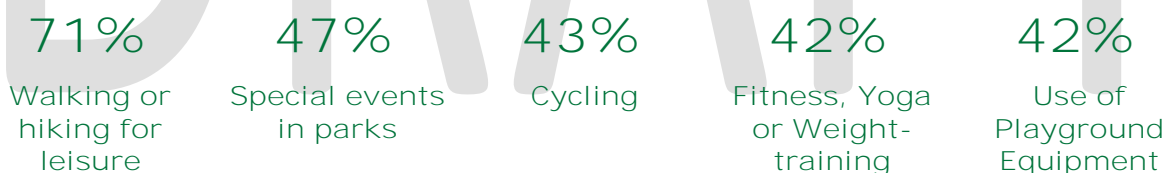
- participation rates in organized and unorganized activities;
- barriers to activity;
- park and facility use;
- recommended improvements;
- support for investment; and
- opinion / agreement with various statements.

Furthermore, the survey helped to establish a profile of community participants by collecting relevant demographic information. Tabulated survey response data has been provided in Appendix A.

### Participation in Recreation, Culture & Parks Activities

The following figure summarizes the five (5) most popular recreation, culture and parks activities respondents have participated in Pelham or elsewhere since 2019 (the period both before and since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic). Interestingly, these suggest that casual, self-directed activities are among the most accessible for participants in the Town.

Figure 9 – Most Popular Recreation, Culture and Parks Activities in Pelham



The following figure displays the full list of activities along with household participation data. In addition to the top five activities, the following pursuits were mentioned by at least one in four respondent households:

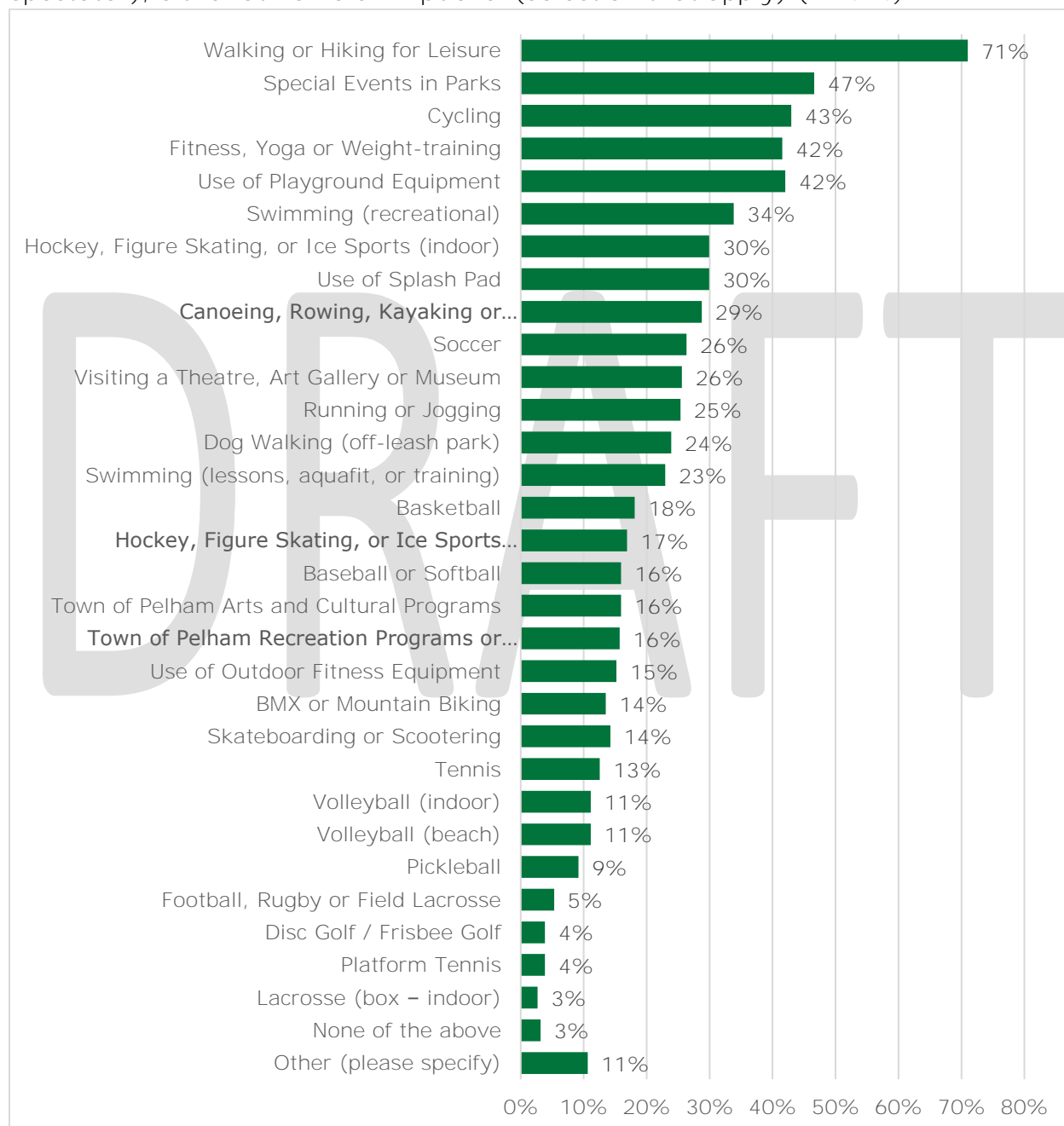
- swimming (recreational) (34%)
- hockey, figure skating, or ice sports (indoor) (30%)
- use of splash pad (30%)
- canoeing, rowing, kayaking or paddleboarding (29%)
- soccer (26%)
- visiting a theatre, art gallery or museum (26%)
- running or jogging (25%)

This suggests that there is a high demand for low to no cost outdoor activities and programming, with the exception of hockey, figure skating or ice sports (indoor).

Some of the most popular indoor recreation activities include fitness, yoga or weight training, swimming (recreational), hockey, figure skating, or ice sports (indoor). Lower

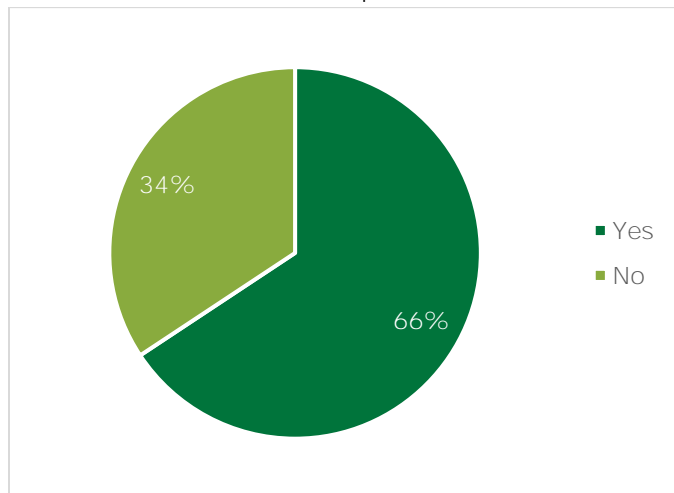
participation activities include lacrosse, platform tennis, disc golf, and football/rugby, which are all sports that have a more limited appeal often based on age or ability.

Figure 10 : Since 2019, in which of the following activities did you or anyone in your household participate, in Pelham or elsewhere? Participation refers to situations where you or a member of your household actively take part (not as a spectator), either at home or in public. (select all that apply) (n=414)



Respondents were asked if they are able to participate in recreation, culture and parks activities as often as they would like. Two-out-of-three (66%) indicated that they are able to participate as often as they would like, while one-out-of-three (34%) indicated that they are not.

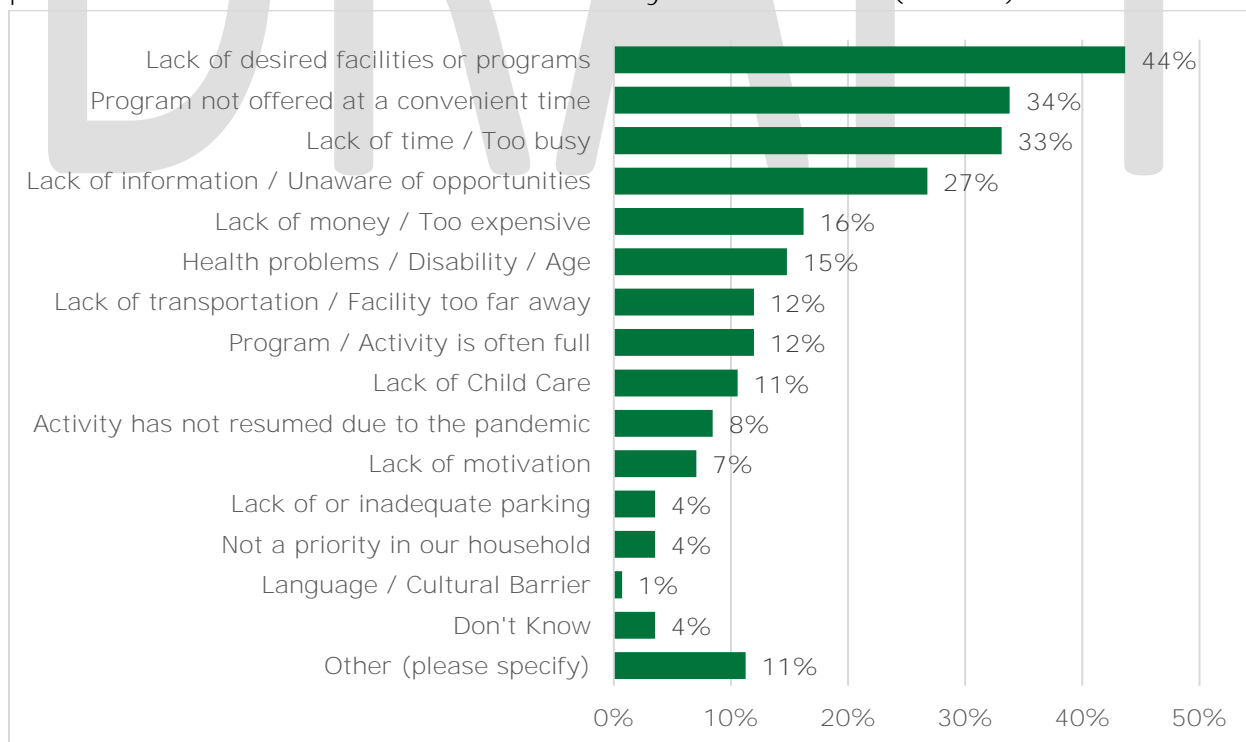
Figure 11 – Are you and members of your household able to participate in recreation, culture and parks activities as often as you would like? (n=414)



Amongst this group, top barriers to participation included:

- Lack of desired facilities or programs (44%)
- Program not offered at a convenient time (34%)
- Lack of personal time / too busy (33%)
- Lack of information /unaware of opportunities (27%)

Figure 12 :Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in parks and recreation activities as often as you would like? (n=142)





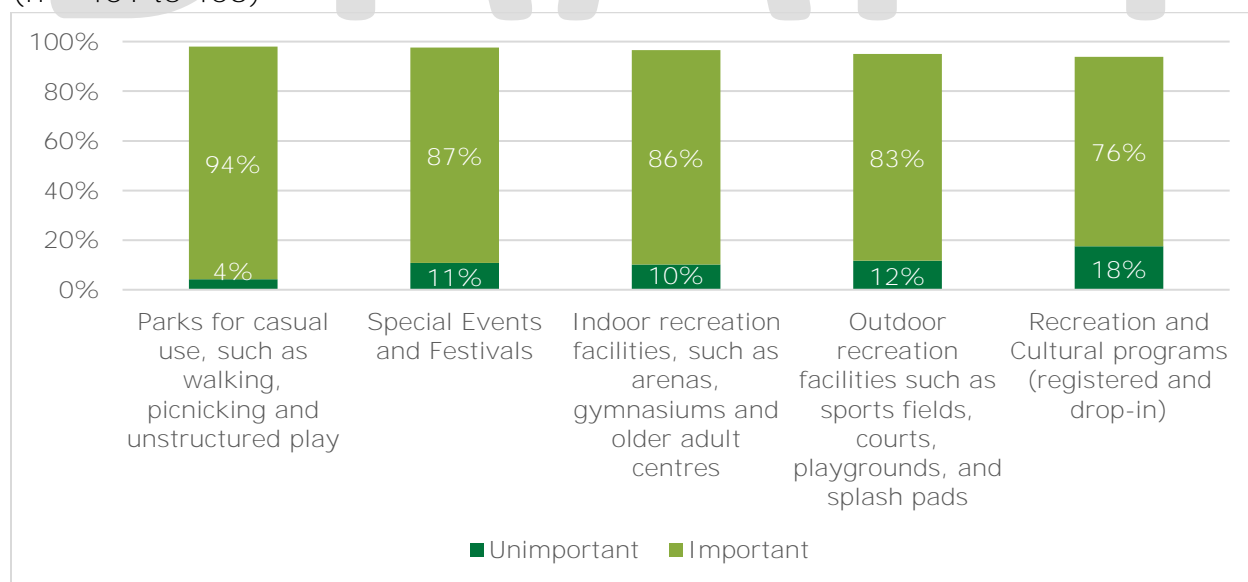
## Importance and Satisfaction

Levels of importance and satisfaction with respect to specific categories of recreation, culture and parks facilities are illustrated through the two figures below. Amongst these categories:

- 94% indicated that parks for casual use, such as walking, picnicking and unstructured play were important to them, with 81% indicating that they were satisfied with this service area.
- 87% indicated that special events and festivals were important to them, with 84% indicating that they were satisfied with this service area.
- 86% indicated **indoor recreation facilities, such as arenas, pools and seniors'** centres were important to them, with 75% indicating that they were satisfied with this service area.
- 83% indicated that outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, tennis or pickleball courts, and skate parks were important to them, with 66% indicating that they were satisfied with this service area.
- 76% indicated that recreation and cultural programs (registered and drop-in) were important to them, with 56% indicating that they were satisfied with this service area.

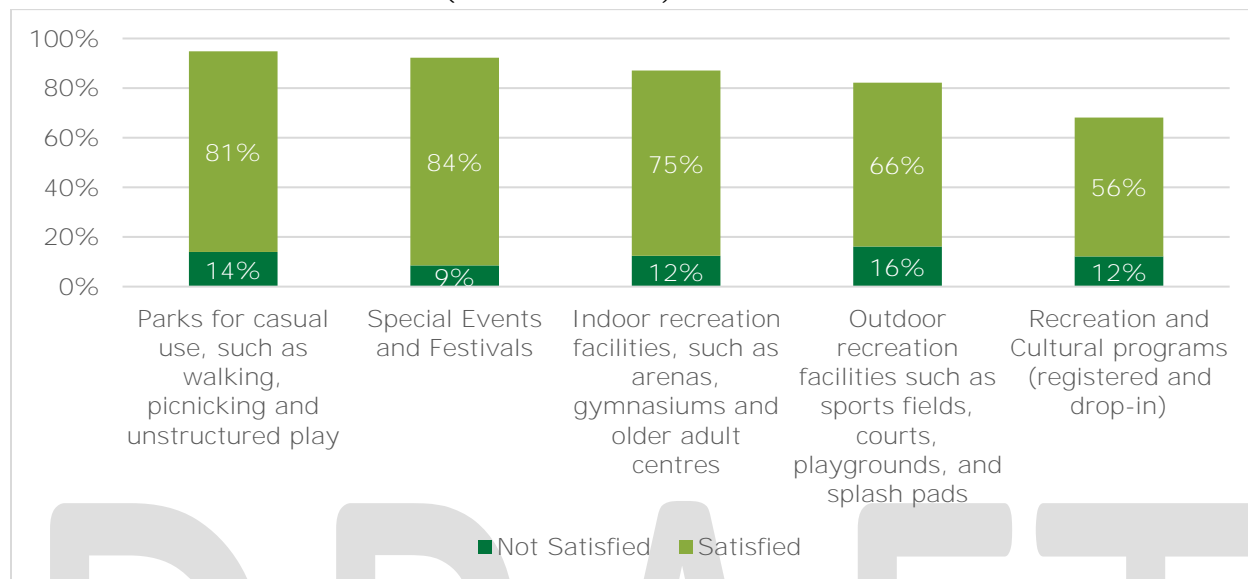
While it is not unusual in surveys such as this to have higher stated levels of importance than levels of satisfaction, it is notable that the gap between these two measures is highest for recreation and cultural programs (registered and drop-in) and outdoor recreation facilities. This suggests that current levels of service may not be meeting many needs in these service areas (recreation/cultural programs and outdoor recreation facilities). Conversely, there was only a small gap between the importance and satisfaction ratings for special events and festivals, indicating that the Town is meeting expectations in this area.

Figure 13 : In general, how important are the following items to your household? (n = 401 to 406)



"Don't Know" responses not shown.

Figure 14 : What is your level of satisfaction with the following Recreation, Culture & Parks services in Pelham? (n=400 to 403)



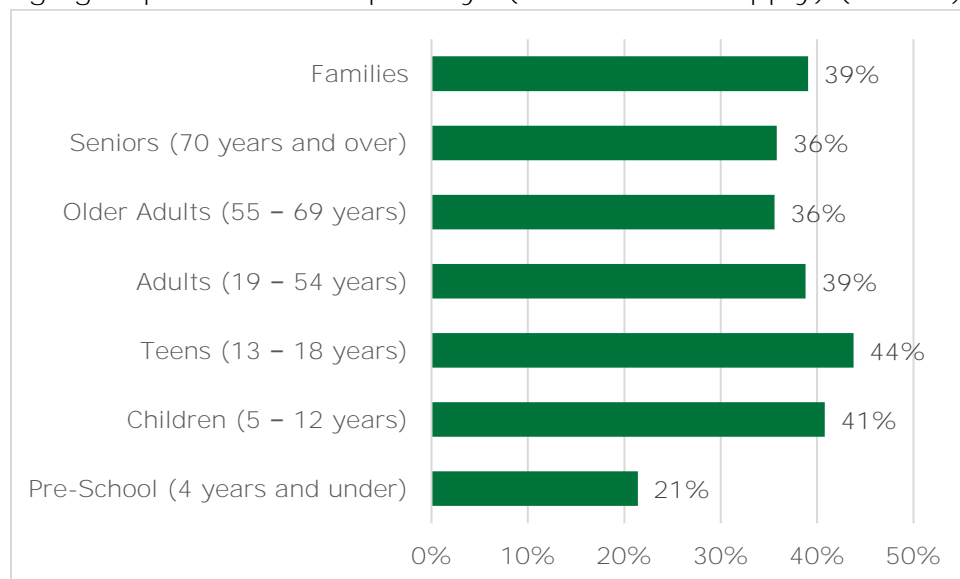
"Don't Know" responses not shown.

### Programs Gaps and Facility Priorities

Respondents were asked to identify the age groups they felt should be a priority if the Town were to provide additional programs or activities. There was little difference between most age groups; however, the highest identified priority groups were:

- Teens aged 13 - 18 years (44%)
- Children aged 5 - 12 years (41%)
- Adults aged 19 - 54 years (39%)

Figure 15 : If the Town were to provide additional programs or activities, which age groups should be a priority? (select all that apply) (n=402)



Over one-half (56%) of respondents identified specific activities that are not currently available (or they were not aware are available) but would like to see offered in the Town of Pelham. The top ten open-ended responses are identified below, with and indoor pool / swim programming being the most common request.

Figure 16 – Are there any Recreation, Culture & Parks activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Town of Pelham that are not currently available? (n = 407)

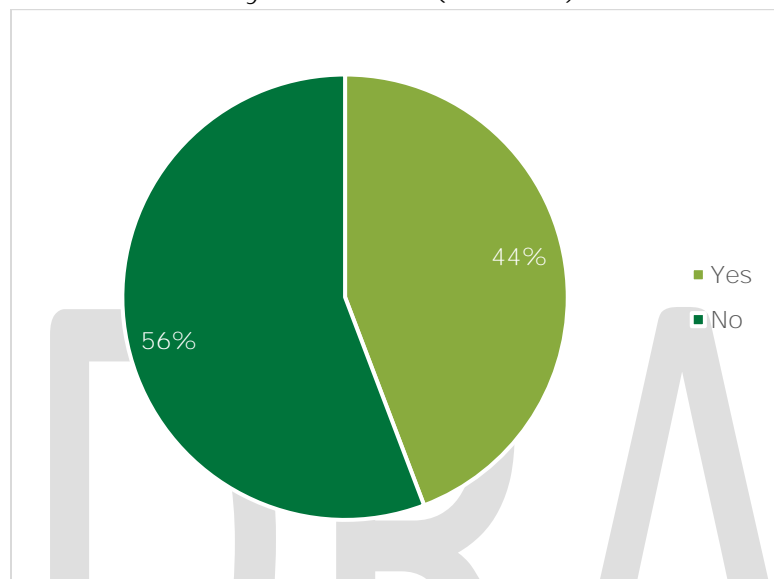
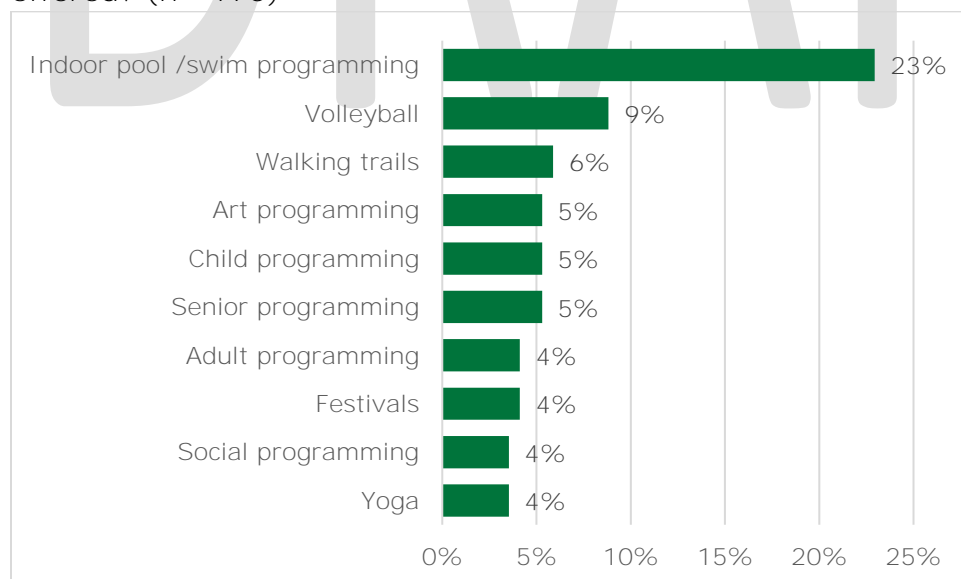


Figure 17: What Recreation, Culture & Parks activities would you like to see offered? (n= 170)

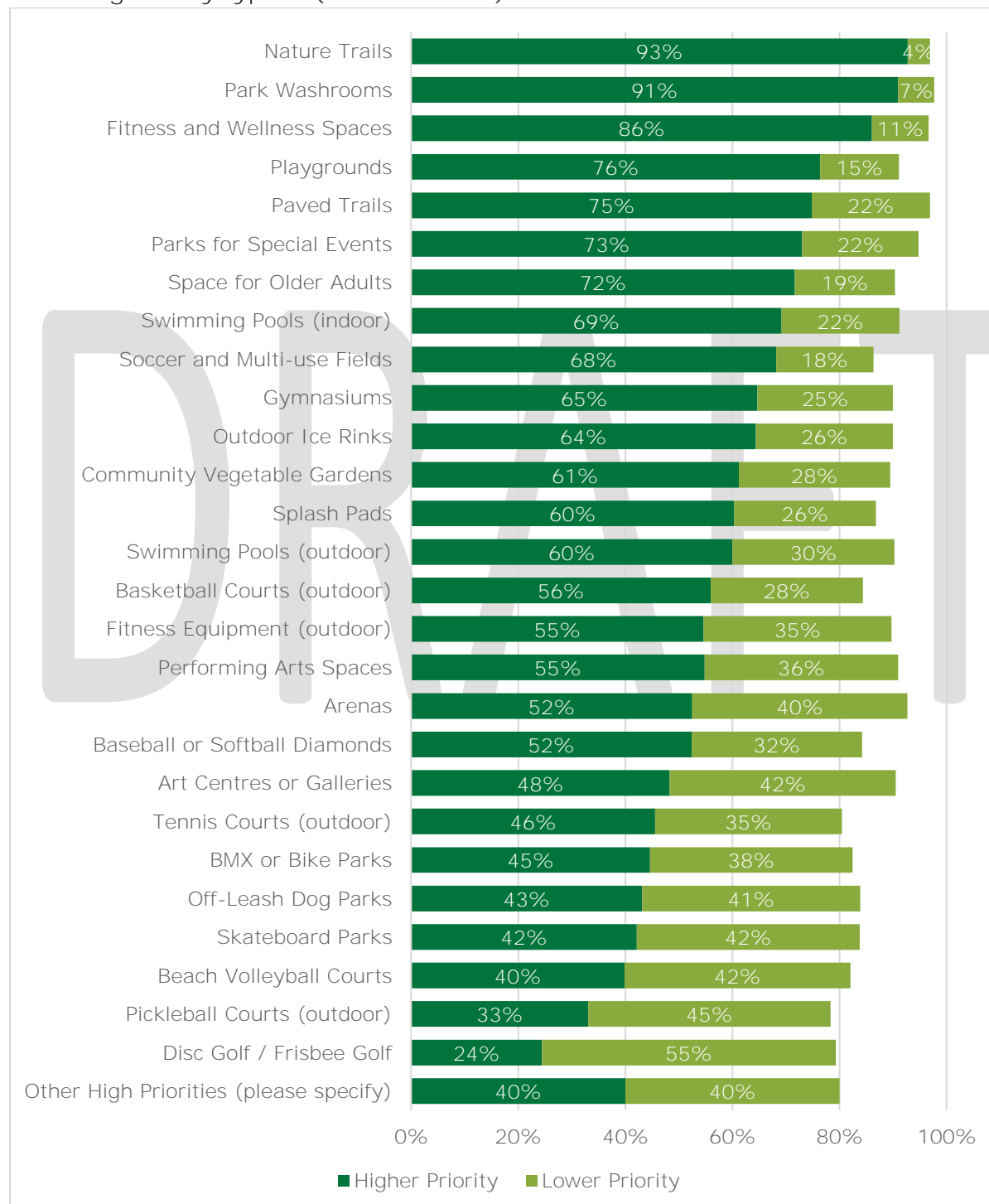


Note: percentages represent proportion of subset that requested additional activities and does not represent the full survey sample.



To guide municipal capital spending decisions, the survey asked about priorities for improving or developing a variety of indoor and outdoor facility types.

Figure 18 : To assist the Town in prioritizing spending, please indicate the level of priority that you feel should be placed on improving or developing each of the following facility types? (n=235 to 387)



"Don't know" responses are not shown.

The highest priorities for additional capital investment include:

- Nature trails (93%)
- Park washrooms (91%)
- Fitness and Wellness Spaces (86%)
- Playgrounds (76%)
- Paved trails (75%)

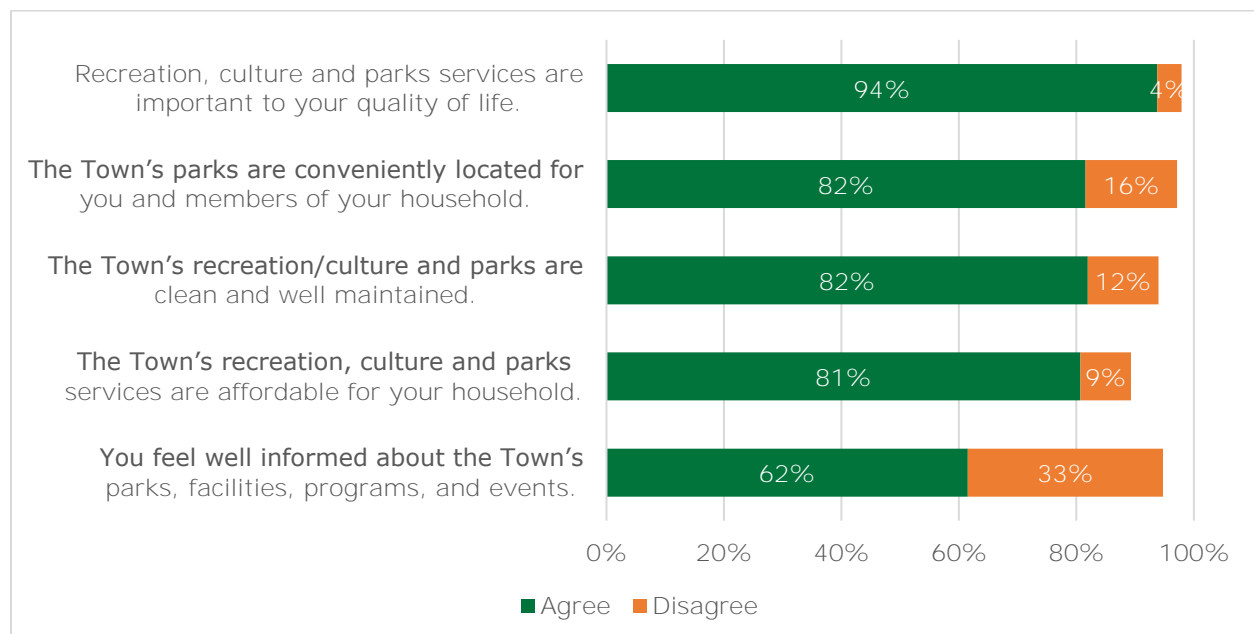
The findings generally reflect the activities that respondents like to participate in the most, with outdoor, casual use amenities being the highest priority for future investment. Other high priorities included parks for special events (73%), space for older adults (72%), swimming pools (indoor) (69%), and soccer and multi-use fields (68%). Lower priority facility types (such as disc golf, frisbee golf and pickleball courts) have a more limited appeal in the community or are currently well supplied.

## Statements

Public opinion was tested for a series of key statements:

- 94% agree that "Recreation, culture and parks services are important to your quality of life."
- 82% agree that "The Town's parks are conveniently located for you and members of your household."
- 82% agree that "The Town's recreation/culture and parks are clean and well maintained."
- 81% agree that "The Town's recreation, culture and parks services are affordable for your household."
- 62% agree that "You feel well informed about the Town's parks, facilities, programs, and events." One-third (33%) disagreed with this statement, suggesting that additional marketing efforts would be well-received.

Figure 19 : Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (n=382 to 385)



"Don't Know" responses are not shown.

## Comments

Nearly two-out-of-five (38%) of respondents provided additional open-ended input regarding recreation, culture and parks in the Town of Pelham. The following categories represent the top key themes from the comments provided:

- Requests for additional programming (18%)
- Greenspaces (13%)
- Accessibility (11%)
- Outreach (7%)
- Pool (7%)
- Park maintenance (5%)
- Splash pad (4%)
- Multi-use trails (4%)
- Sport Fields (4%)
- Bike lanes (3%)
- Playgrounds (3%)
- Tennis Courts (2%)
- Washrooms (2%)
- Fitness Centre (1%)
- Pickleball Courts (1%)

A sampling of typical comments from survey respondents regarding recreation, culture and parks in the Town of Pelham consist of:

- **"Cannot emphasize enough how important recreational activities are to a community- especially for the very young and for seniors!"**
- **"We are extremely satisfied and grateful for the Recreation, Culture & Parks in the Town of Pelham."**
- **"Very well run, [I] saw this first hand with Summerfest!"**
- **"The addition of the Meridian Centre has been fantastic! I find there is a great community for recreation and culture in this town. I appreciate the effort that goes into it and am happy to enjoy it!"**
- **"Programming in local parks would be a great addition to the community, inviting local families to the parks closest to their homes."**
- **"I feel like I am well-informed about events and activities because I know where to look for that information. For Someone who isn't often on a computer, I'm not sure how they would know about recreational activities around Pelham."**
- **"Accessibility to all for aging population should be priority. Indoor Pool is overdue, especially with influx of new residents formerly from communities that have municipal indoor pools."**

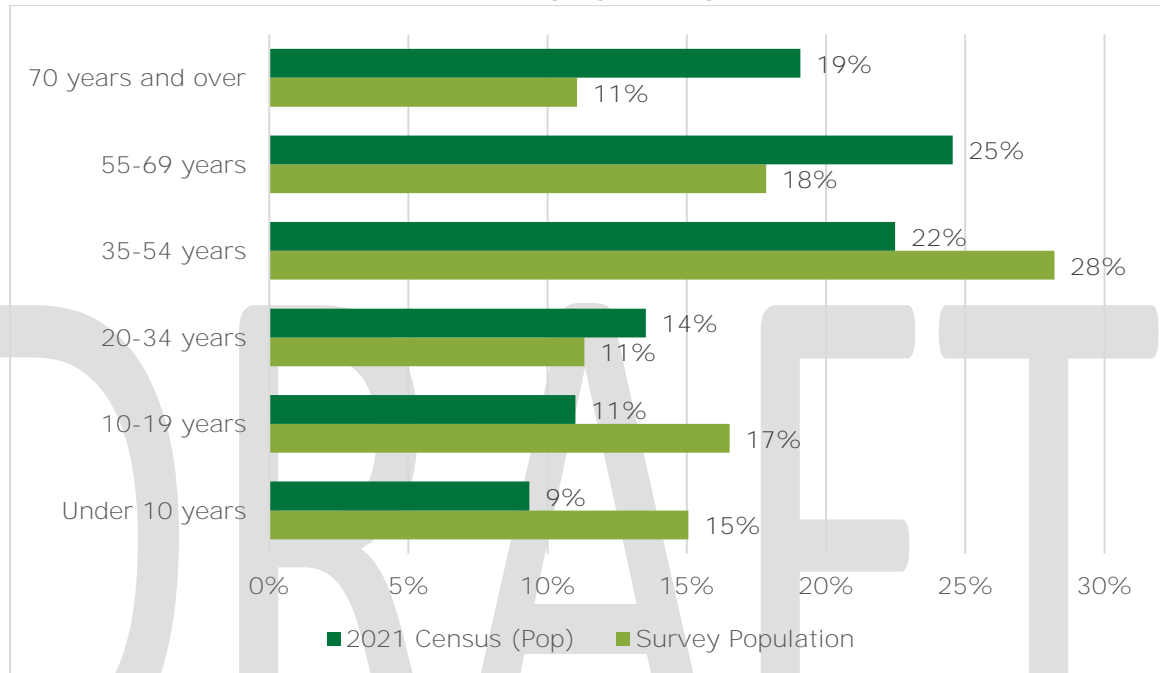
## Profile of Survey Respondents

Key household characteristics of community survey respondents are noted below:

- **The average household size was 3.1 persons, higher than the Town's average of 2.6 persons per private household (2021 Census).**
- **It is estimated that the survey represents the opinions of approximately 2.3% of Pelham's population. The response rate (414 surveys) is satisfactory and – when combined with other consultation tactics and inputs – provides a strong basis for future planning.**

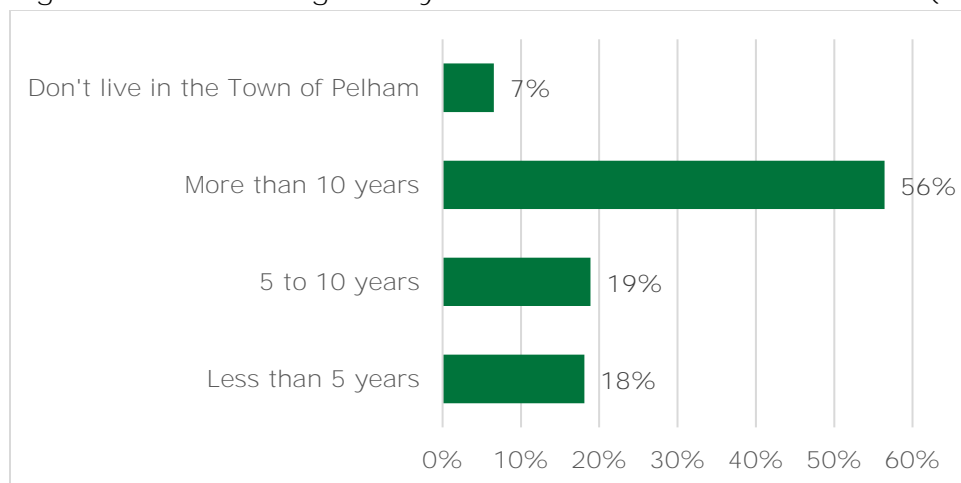
- The survey gathered input from residents of all ages. Compared to the Town's population, families with younger children were more likely to complete the survey – this is a common finding in these types of studies. Efforts were made to reach the older adult and **seniors'** population through hard copy surveys at the Meridian Community Centre and pop-up consultations.

Figure 20: – Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories. (n = 374)



- Over half (56%) of survey respondents have lived in Pelham for more than 10 years, while 37% have moved to Pelham within the past ten years, indicating a number of new residents. Newer residents of Pelham (those moving to the community in the past 10 years) tended to be younger, use splash pads, and indicate an indoor swimming pool as a priority.

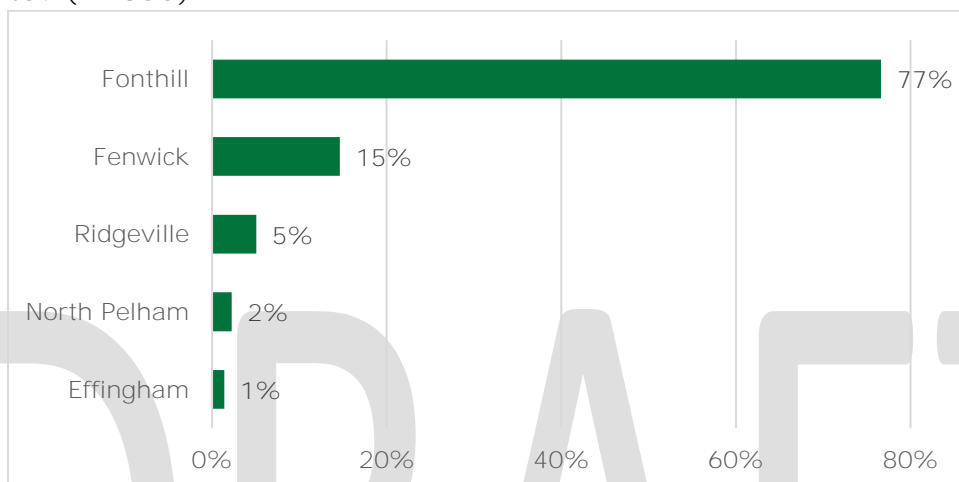
Figure 21 – How long have you lived in the Town of Pelham? (n=381)





- 7% of respondents do not live in Pelham, but most use facilities and parks in the town. Nearly half (48%) of the non-residents live in Welland.
- Of those living in the Town of Pelham, 77% live closest to Fonthill and 15% live closest to Fenwick. The following graph illustrates all of the responses.

Figure 22 – Pelham Residents Only: Which community do you live closest to? (n=355)



### 3.4 Stakeholder Consultation

Pelham is home to numerous service clubs, sports groups, community organizations, and committees that provide a wide variety of recreation, sport, event and community services to residents and visitors. Approximately 20 groups were invited to contribute input into this Master Plan through a stakeholder workshop on December 1, 2022.

The following ten (10) groups attended the session and/or provided submissions relating to the Master Plan process:

- Fenwick Lions Club & Fenwick Lionettes
- Fonthill Lions Club & Fonthill Lionettes
- Fonthill Platform Tennis Club
- Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Kinsmen Club of Fonthill
- Pelham Pickleball Volunteers
- Pelham Tennis Club
- Pelham Soccer Club
- Rotary Club of Fonthill
- Summerfest Committee

Stakeholder input is summarized below.

#### Strengths of recreation, culture and parks in Pelham

Stakeholders identified the following as being core strengths of the local leisure system:

- Several groups commented that Town staff provide exceptional service and park maintenance and are responsive to requests from local organizations.

- There is a strong volunteer commitment in Pelham, including many service clubs that contribute to community improvement projects.
- The Meridian Community Centre is a large, modern facility that is the envy of much larger communities. The facility and has helped basketball grow in Pelham.
- Other recreation facilities such as the Pelham outdoor pool, playgrounds, tennis courts, and trails were also recognized as vital amenities in the community.
- Groups were thankful for recent facility improvements, such as new splash pads, resurfaced tennis courts and new pickleball courts.
- Local trails were identified as a strength, particularly the paved portions of the Steve Bauer Trail and the **Town's commitment to snow removal.**

### Trends and barriers to participation

The Town of Pelham's organizations are influenced by several trends, some of which contribute to barriers to participation. Stakeholders identified:

- **Pelham's** evolving demographics were noted by some groups, including the aging population and a growing number of newcomers to the town (which tend to be younger and more culturally diverse).
- It was suggested that parking availability at the MCC and many parks (e.g., Centennial Park, Peace Park, Marlene Stewart Streit Park, etc.) can be limiting for events (and associated fundraising) and a deterrent to participation. Additional accessible parking spaces at the MCC were requested.
- Safety concerns relating to access to Marlene Stewart Streit Park were raised. Access consists of one (narrow) entrance off a busy highway.
- Park washrooms are not accessible for all users, and at times may not open (e.g., Centennial Park, Marlene Stewart Streit Park, etc.).
- Soccer programming in Pelham has seen substantial growth (30+% increase over last three years), resulting in a lack of training opportunities and overused fields. It was suggested that additional fields are needed to address population growth and increased participation.
- Improved accessibility of trails was requested, possibly through additional signage and improved surfacing. One example was the Gerry Berkhout Trail, recognizing that consideration needs to be given to all trail users, including cross-country skiing in the winter months. Additional trail development (and trailheads) was also suggested for the Lathrop Nature Preserve (owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada).
- Some groups expressed challenges with attracting and retaining volunteers.

### Park, facility and service needs

**Existing parks, facilities and services meet each organization's needs on different levels.** Stakeholders provided several suggestions, ranging from general to site-specific:

- In addition to improved parking, the following suggestions were identified for the Meridian Community Centre and/or other indoor facilities:
  - Demand for gymnasium time is significant, particularly for pickleball. Modifications to how the Town allocates gym time to activities and groups were suggested, including moving fitness activities to the Accursi Room,

- reducing rentals to non-residents and introducing a non-resident surcharge, and offering additional online booking options.
- o Improved audio/video capabilities within the Accursi Multi-purpose Community Room
- o There was a suggestion for a splash pad near the MCC.
- o Some suggested that there is a need for additional accessible (first floor) dedicated space for seniors, similar to seniors' centres in Welland or St. Catharines. A desire was expressed for more social activities and amenities geared toward seniors, such as coffee, shuffleboard, card games, etc.
- The sale of a portion of the former Pelham Arena site and subsequent delay in residential construction has impacted two specific user groups:
  - o The clubhouse for the Fonthill Platform Tennis (approximately 100 members) does not currently have running water (there is one portable washroom) and the re-establishment of this connection has been affected by construction delays. Accessible parking at this location was also requested.
  - o The site also has two small soccer fields (5v5 and 7v7) that cannot be permitted due to the lack of public parking. The Pelham Soccer Club has indicated that they have struggled with finding additional field times to support current programming demands. The Club indicated that a plan is needed to replace these fields, develop new fields, and add lighting to fields.
- Groups were pleased with recent improvements to Centennial Park, but noted the following future considerations:
  - o The addition of a practice wall was suggested for the tennis complex.
  - o The Pelham Soccer Club supports adding an additional full-size lit soccer field at this park and indicated a willingness to assist in providing an accessible clubhouse.
  - o The single park access can create challenges relating to accessibility and safety. Use of the secondary exit at the rear (through the firehall property) was requested during special event times.
  - o It was noted that the Fenwick Lions have a 5-year plan to redevelop their building that is adjacent to Centennial Park. The goal is to create a community hall with a capacity of 150 persons.
- The following suggestions were noted for Harold Black Park:
  - o Improved soccer field drainage.
  - o Moving the play structure closer to the parking lot to improve access and usage.

### 3.5 Internal Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with municipal staff involved in the management, operation and maintenance of recreation, culture and parks facilities and services. Input from these sources was wide-ranging and has been used to inform the Master Plan.

### 3.6 Summary of Key Themes from Consultations

Key findings of the initial public engagement and research phase are summarized below. These themes have been assessed along with community profiles, usage data, and **promising practices from other communities to inform the Master Plan's recommendations.**

1. Recreation, culture, and parks services are very important to Pelham residents. **The Town's recent investments in the MCC and its parks and trails** system are paying dividends as 94% of survey respondents agree that these services are important to their quality of life. Long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that the recreation, culture and parks play in our personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.
2. Pelham has an older population, and accessible spaces and services are very important to the community. **Pelham's population is significantly older than most** other communities (the median age is 50 years). With an aging population comes greater demand for accessible opportunities, not just for seniors but also for persons with disabilities of all ages. There is also evidence that more younger families and residents are moving to the community, generating additional demand for parks and facilities such as the MCC.
3. Pelham is growing and those coming from larger urban centres often have different expectations around service levels. The town is projected to add 3,660 persons by 2031, for an annual growth rate of 1.9%. This will place upward pressure on existing resources and infrastructure. As the town grows, it can also expect to become more culturally diverse. This suggests growing demand for activities that appeal to a broader range of interests, abilities, and age groups. Requests for amenities that are not financially viable for most small towns (such as indoor pools) can be expected, as well as growing interest in cultural services and civic spaces.
4. The pandemic has highlighted the vital role of parks, trails and outdoor recreation opportunities in staying active and connected. Unstructured park and trail use has increased during the pandemic and these spaces have become more important to supporting resident health and wellness. Accessible washrooms in parks and public spaces are also required to support these uses. There is also great potential in creating an active transportation link between Fonthill and Fenwick, as well as establishing partnerships to manage community access to public open spaces.
5. Recent park improvements help to support the growing demand for unstructured activities for all ages. The survey found that the most popular activities in Pelham are those that appeal to all ages and abilities, such as use of parks, walking/hiking, special events, cycling, fitness, swimming, and drop-in programs. The Town has responded to these and other self-directed pursuits through recent investments (often supported by senior government grants) in splash pads, trails, and sport courts. A grant has also been secured to assist with the replacement of the aging Pelham outdoor pool.
6. Customer service is responsive and special events are highly valued. The Town offers more and larger community events (e.g., Summerfest, Summer Chill, etc.) than most communities its size. These events help to keep people connected, support local fundraising, and also attract tourists to Pelham. Many events are also supported by local organizations, some of which expressed challenges with recruiting



and retaining volunteers. It was frequently noted how Town staff go above and beyond to work with groups and address resident concerns.

7. The Meridian Community Centre is a tremendous asset that has untapped potential to serve as a true community hub. Opening in late 2018, operation of the MCC was interrupted by the pandemic and the Town is only now just able to continue its roll-out of new programs and services. Extended use of the gymnasiums, arenas and multi-use rooms can be expected over time as demand grows. Additional staff resources, partnerships, and updated policies and practices may be needed to assist in maximizing community access and participation for all ages.
8. **The Town's parks are largely built-**out with little ability to accommodate new amenities or more parking, and parkland provision standards are declining. This will place more pressure on existing parks and amenities and will require greater emphasis on capital maintenance and pedestrian connections to parks. Population growth and community expectations suggest a need for additional parkland; however, the legislation governing parkland conveyance is changing, making it more difficult to secure parks of adequate size and location.

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## 4. Our Strategic Framework



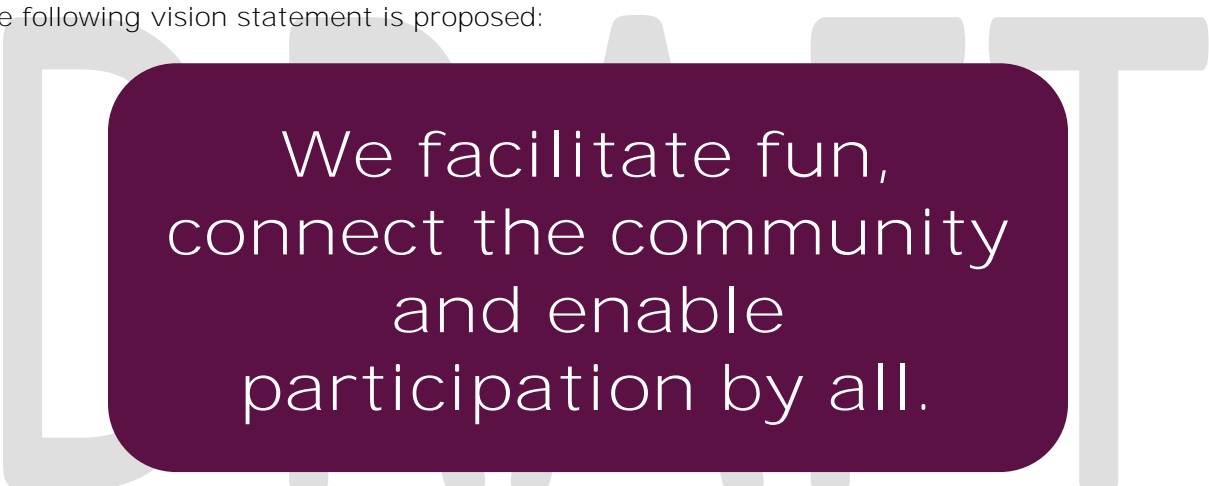
This section identifies the strategic framework that will guide the **Master Plan's development** and implementation.

## 4.1 Vision

Based on local research and public input, the following vision has been established to lead the development and implementation of this Master Plan. This strategy reflects the values and aspirations articulated by the Town and the community as a whole, while also having regard to the Framework for Recreation in Canada, the guiding document for public recreation providers nationwide.

**Setting a "vision" for the Town in the delivery of recreation, culture and parks services is the initial step in setting a strategic path forward.** A strategic vision depicts how the Town wants to be viewed in the future and compels Council, staff, and the community to work together to achieve their collective goals over time.

The following vision statement is proposed:



We facilitate fun,  
connect the community  
and enable  
participation by all.

## 4.2 Master Plan Goals

The Master Plan's development and implementation are also guided by a series of goals that have been designed to reflect the expectations articulated by community and the Town's overall commitment moving forward. Together, these goals describe the core objectives that the Town of Pelham and community partners should strive to achieve over time.

### Goal #1: Respond to Growth

- The community is growing and becoming more diverse. We will maintain our high quality of life and small-town character by proactively planning for the future, monitoring needs, and aligning investment with growth.

### Goal #2: Expand Activity Choices

- As the town grows and new interests emerge, a wider variety of programs will be necessary. We will support an expanded range of activities in collaboration with others in order to foster active lifestyles, skill development, and social connections for residents of all ages and abilities.

### Goal #3: Optimize our Facilities and Parks

- Parks and recreation facilities provide safe places to gather, stay active, and connect with nature. We will improve public enjoyment of our assets through equitable access, welcoming and barrier-free spaces, and high standards of maintenance and sustainability.

### Goal #4: Enhance Service & Capacity

- Services bring people together and help to build strong, caring communities. We will show leadership, strive to eliminate barriers to participation, strengthen community engagement, and work together to support volunteers.

### Goal #5: Ensure Financial Sustainability

- The community expects high quality municipal services, administered efficiently and effectively. We will offer value to taxpayers through a coordinated approach to service delivery, innovative management, and the pursuit of partnerships and external funding.



## 5. Recreation Services & Programs



This section examines the Town's service delivery model, including a review of program offerings and services intended to strengthen organizational capacity in Pelham.

## 5.1 Recreation Service Delivery Goals

### **Pelham's Role in the Delivery of Recreation Services**

It is important to clarify the responsibility of the Town in engaging residents in building and maintaining healthy lifestyles. This will serve to inform the relationships with other service providers and not-for-profit groups as they define the work of Pelham staff. The Town has a strong commitment to its residents in promoting all opportunities, providing support to not-for-profit groups, and coordinating a wide range of services through partnerships and third-party providers.

Specifically, the role of the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department includes consideration of the following:

- a) Pelham will be clear about what its core recreation, culture and wellness services are and how these services will be delivered.
- b) All residents will be provided either by the Town or another provider a range of choices including active, sports, creative, STEM (Science, Technology, Environmental and Mathematics) general interest opportunities, and special events.
- c) Opportunities must be available for residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- d) Intentional efforts will be undertaken to include underrepresented communities and/or individuals through policy and deliberate actions.
- e) Priority allocation and supports will be offered to not-for-profit and volunteer community groups (especially those serving children). A broader range of opportunities can be offered through these community groups and volunteerism is recognized as the backbone of the sport and recreation delivery system.
- f) Regardless of the service delivery methodology, staff must be able to report participation numbers by age group and include the capacity, utilization, and fill rates per age group. This will assist in determining the participation levels by age group.
- g) Staff will work to ensure quality assurance, safety, and legislative compliance in the delivery of service regardless of who is providing the program or service.
- h) Pelham will identify gaps in service and will address these gaps directly should there not be a community-driven service provider
- i) A range of service price points should include free universal programs, low-cost opportunities, and enhanced service levels to include all residents.
- j) The Town will measure its effectiveness in the delivery of recreation, culture and wellness services and set performance targets to demonstrate increased participation, transparency, evidenced-based decision making, and quality assurance.

## Service Delivery Model

**The Town of Pelham's current Service Delivery Model is designed to engage as many** community groups and organizations as possible in the delivery of service. The advantage is that more residents can be engaged and included in recreation, culture and wellness services. The clear aim of contemporary departments in Canada is to increase participation year over year so that residents can lead healthier lives.

The key is to provide the right infrastructure and program mix. Communities respond well when there is a blend of safe and enjoyable opportunities including active, creative, general interest and STEM programming. Providing a full range of programs allows residents and visitors to expand their knowledge, gain skill mastery, and have choice. Engagement in these pursuits is the way to ensure that individuals, families, and the community is achieving a positive state of health and wellness.

The evidence is strong – an active and engaged community is healthier overall, is cohesive, and demonstrates community pride. Active individuals and families have better life outcomes. All efforts of Council, the community, and staff must be directed at providing and enabling quality recreation, cultural, and wellness pursuits.

The goal is to provide and assist in delivering a range of choices for all ages and abilities and to include all residents and visitors regardless of their background. The four main methods of providing and enabling services include: (1) direct provision by the municipality; (2) community development practices in supporting community-based groups; (3) promoting other providers (e.g., not-for-profit and for-profit services); (4) and contracting third-party providers. This takes a holistic approach and the key driver is to provide services efficiently and effectively. Consideration is given to ensure all age groups are included, to engage and hear the citizens voices and include underrepresented residents.

Municipal staff in Pelham tend to provide opportunities directly in aquatics, programs, Summer, March/Holiday break and PA Day camps (including many special interest camps), and generally where there are not other local providers.

Support is offered to local community groups who provide sport, recreation, and cultural experiences by providing spaces (often at reduced rental rates) as well as grants for **initiatives that meet the Town's criteria. The Town** meets regularly with service clubs and sport organizations to discuss upcoming initiatives, discuss challenges, and share information.

The Town of Pelham Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department follows best practices in the delivery of programs and services. The following illustration depicts the process that staff follow in providing/enabling programs and services. Staff first identify needs and the most likely provider. If the program or service is already provided locally, discussions would centre on what supports the municipality could provide. Partnerships are formed whereby the municipality may provide space or promotion and other support. If there is not a community-based provider, the municipality will look to provide the program or service directly. In all cases, staff will promote all opportunities, monitor participation and the quality of the service, and address any improvements that are needed.

Figure 23 – Town of Pelham RCW Program & Service Delivery Model



## 5.2 Programs, Physical Activity & Special Events

### Overview of Programs and Services

One of the baseline evaluation methodologies for recreation programs and services is to assess what opportunities exist for each age group. This is to ensure that each age cohort has barrier free access to a wide range of programs and services (at a minimum: aquatics, drop-in opportunities, active/sport, general interest, creative and STEM programs). The value in this exercise is to look at any gaps in the delivery of service and to ensure that programming addresses emerging demographic groups (such as the growth of young people and families moving to the Niagara Region). Further assessments will include compliance with legislative and industry standards, quality assurance mechanisms, levels of satisfaction, and more.



Table 8 – Current Town of Pelham RCW Program Offerings

Age Grouping	Active/Sport	Creative	STEM	General Interest
Pre-School	Public Skate Stick & Puck Swim Lessons Playgrounds/ Splashpad Parks & Trails	Arts & Cultural Programs	--	--
Children	Public Skate Stick & Puck Bike Camp Tennis Camp Tennis lessons Swim Lessons Swim Team Parks & Trails Playgrounds Splashpad Various Sports	Art & Theatre camp Arts & Cultural Programs	STEM Camps Artificial Intelligence for Change Innovative Mobile Applications Virtual Reality Worlds	March & Winter Break Camp Animal Adventure Camp Junior Firefighter Camp
Youth	Public Skate Stick & Puck Youth Volleyball Swim Lessons Swim Team Leadership Training Spin Classes Parks & Trails Various Sports	Arts & Cultural Programs	--	--
Adults	Public Skate Fitness/Yoga Aqua Zumba Spin Classes Parks & Trails	Arts & Cultural Programs	--	--
Older Adults/Seniors	Public Skate Fitness Classes (Brock U) Aqua Zumba Spin Classes Parks & Trails	Arts & Cultural Programs	--	--
Families	Public swim Public skate Parks and trails	--	--	--

Potential program gaps to further explore include STEM, wellness, drop-in, and general interest programming for pre-school, youth, adults, older adults, and families. With the Meridian Community Centre being used to near capacity at times, opportunities to offer

more programming in parks and outdoor settings, as well as through local schools, churches, and in collaboration with local organizations, should be explored.

## Increasing Physical Activity Levels

Governments continue to emphasize the health of Canadians through the continued promotion of increasing physical activity levels. Canada has made very little progress over the last few decades – the Physical Activity Report Card for 2022 gave adults a C and children an overall D. These ratings continue to be unacceptable and require focused effort. Recreation, Culture and Wellness staff need to continue to work with partners in aligned sectors such as health promotion, education, and more to address this inactivity issue in Pelham.

### Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines have replaced the Physical Activity Guidelines. The new guidelines were introduced in 2020 and depict the amount of time various age groups should **"Sweat, Step, Sleep and Sit"** in a 24-hour timeframe. For example, in each day children between 5 and 17 years should achieve the following.

Table 9 – Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Activity	Time / Day
Sweat	60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity
Step	Several hours of moderate physical activity
Sleep	9-11 hours for 5 – 13-year-olds 8-10 hours for 14 – 17-year-olds
Sit	Limit sitting for extended periods No more than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day

Source: <https://csepguidelines.ca/guidelines/children-youth/>

These new guidelines have been developed for all age cohorts and should be communicated and promoted to the public within facilities, online, and in promotional materials. Opportunities to co-develop and promote activities alongside community partners should be pursued, including efforts to track community progress.

### Physical Literacy

One approach to increasing physical activity is to ensure that community members have the basic physical skills to participate in active opportunities. The Canadian Sport for Life Movement has developed a Physical Literacy program for all age groups to ensure that they can run, throw, catch, etc. Physical literacy can be taught in existing programs and environments such as in daycares, seniors centres, schools, sport clubs, etc. Once people are comfortable with the skills to be more active, it is hoped that some barriers to their participation in physical activities will be alleviated.

### ParticipACTION Active App

ParticipACTION has developed and released a free App that serves to motivate and incentivize Canadians to be more active. As an initial approach, the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department could make efforts to promote its use. The App includes daily quick

tips, articles, videos, can connect to tracking devices and provides weekly, monthly, and yearly rewards. The App will also remind users to be active at pre-set times and continues to include upgrades. This is another opportunity for Pelham to continue to promote physical activity without utilizing significant staff or financial resources.

### The Canadian Community Health Survey

Statistics Canada administers the Canadian Community Health Survey which is a national survey that collects health data and distributes it by Health Region. The survey is voluntary and is confidential for those who choose to participate. As well as behaviours related to physical activity, the survey collects information on physical and mental health status, chronic health conditions, smoking, alcohol consumption, and fruits and vegetable consumption. Data is also collected on socio-economic backgrounds to decipher behaviours by region, age, and socio-economic status. This is valuable information that can be used to inform physical activity plans and strategies at the local level. It is suggested that staff use this data to better inform plans to increase physical activity levels.

### Special Events

Pelham hosts and enables a wide variety of special events for residents on an annual basis. The Town recognizes that special events bring residents and visitors together and result in strengthened community pride and cohesion. The events promote the attributes and uniqueness of the community and bring an economic spin off to local businesses.

Nearly one-half (47%) of the Community Survey respondents indicated that they participated and attended outdoor festivals and special events. A sample of annual events include:

- Summerfest
- Summer Chill Series
- Canada Day
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Christmas in Pelham

As the population grows and requests for special events increase, the Town should be prepared to allocate staff and resources to the events with the highest community benefit. A Special Events Policy will serve to categorize events and provide an equitable level of funding based on whether the event is sponsored by the Town of Pelham, a community-based group, or a commercial venture. Measuring the return on the investment can be done from a financial perspective, such as taking the total municipal costs for the event and dividing it by the number of attendees to arrive at a cost per participant. This can also be achieved by identifying spending patterns per attendee. Quantifying the success of an event would be completed by asking participants their satisfaction levels, monitoring social media activity, and sponsor recognition. Both qualitative and quantitative measures should be undertaken to ensure the best use of public funding.

### Selected Observations for Pelham

Selected observations are offered from an analysis of the participation data provided by Pelham staff, considering current trends and social issues as well predominant themes captured from community and staff inputs.

### Recreation Programs are Important to Pelham Residents and Require Review

The Master **Plan Community Survey** indicates residents' thoughts on both the importance and satisfaction levels of each program/service type (recreation, culture, parks, etc.). There is an average importance level of 85% for unstructured play, special events, indoor and outdoor facilities, and programs, while there is an average satisfaction level of 72% for the same services. These questions about importance and satisfaction determine if there are any appreciable gaps in expectations – one would like to see both indicators at high levels, which would be a measure of a successful program and delivery. Municipalities should strive to achieve scores of 80% or more. In Pelham, there was an appreciable gap between importance (76%) and satisfaction levels (56%) when it came to recreation programs, with many respondents indicating that there is a lack of programs available. Some spoke to needing more social/casual program offerings for older adults (men in particular), while the recent KPMG Review noted potential demand for more **"wellness" activities for all age** groups. Staff will need to further consult with participants within each age cohort as to how they can increase satisfaction levels in programs and respond accordingly to meet the recommended targets.

A preliminary review of Town and community-based offerings found a variety of program types for all age cohorts including pre-school, school-aged children, youth, adults, and older adults. Opportunities in active and sport, creative, general interest and STEM type programming were assessed. The apparent gaps include greater opportunities for youth, adults, and older adults in STEM and general interest programs. Any new program ideas would need to engage these age groups to test their level of interest.

### Drop-In Opportunities Continue to be Popular

There is an overall trend nationwide to move from registered program offerings toward casual drop-in type recreational opportunities. Many communities have witnessed a decrease in participation in registered programs and an increase in drop-in or more casual opportunities. Continued monitoring of both the capacity and utilization of registered and drop-in programs require monitoring to ensuring the maximization of use of public spaces. There is pent-up demand for primetime which is currently utilized by licensees. Maximizing utilization of spaces based on community need will need to be addressed as these agreements come due for renegotiation.

### What Percentage of the Population Participate in all Activities?

The role of the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department is to ensure that there are ample and varied opportunities. Further work is required to determine the number of unique clients (number of residents participating). For example, what percentage of the varying age cohort is participating and what percentage is not? Determining an approximate penetration rate and addressing where most registrants are coming from (using postal codes from the registration system) would assist staff with analysing further. The identification of geographical gaps is critical in focusing on barriers or specific interests and will assist in increasing participation.

### Pelham is Nimble and Responds to New Trends and Interests

A successful recreation program model is nimble enough to respond to new trends and interest in each age group. Having the ability to try new programs and free up space to do so is a sign of innovative and responsive staff members. Currently in Pelham, there is little to no leeway in enabling staff to fund new programs and experiences without proposing



these as part of the annual budget process. It is suggested that a small amount be placed in the budget to try new programs and services.

#### Continue to Support Youth in Pelham

Efforts are currently taken to keep youth engaged within the community and recreation pursuits to be a community that supports their voice and self-governing endeavours. Youth engagement and empowerment requires continued attention to provide friendly and safe environments where youth can decide what leisure opportunities interest them. The Department must remain nimble and responsive to the needs of this age cohort.

#### The Playworks Partnership has Valuable Quality Assurance Criteria

**Ontario's Playworks Partnership for Active and Engaged Youth is comprised of a group** of youth-serving organizations. This community has researched, defined, and promoted a well-recognized quality assurance framework that articulates what must exist in a community to demonstrate support for youth. Youth Friendly Communities work to increase the commitment and interest in increasing recreation services for youth. Communities work with partners to address ten criteria within the community to establish and validate a real commitment toward youth. Communities are awarded Youth Friendly status at varying levels by demonstrating their provision of services and youth engagement efforts. Using these criteria in Pelham will ensure quality experiences for youth.

The ten criteria include:

1. Youth have options for play.
2. Youth are formally connected community wide.
3. It is easy for youth to find information about activities in the community.
4. The community recognizes and celebrates youth.
5. The community formally commits funding for youth play.
6. The community supports positive youth development.
7. Youth feel valued by their community.
8. Schools and school boards support the youth friendly application.
9. Play is accessible to youth.
10. Play is socially inclusive.

While Playworks as an organization is currently experiencing some operational challenges, the research stands and communities should still strive to meet the quality assurance criteria.

#### Older Adults and Seniors Make Up 44% of the Pelham Population

Older adults and seniors (those over 55 years) currently make up 44% of the population of Pelham and, as the community grows over the next ten years, this percentage may increase. This is a significant portion of the community, and every effort must be taken to engage and empower older adults in program development and provision.

Interest was expressed in adding more social/casual programming to augment the active pursuits available currently. There are trends for older adults to join adult programs and for elders to self-organize their own social, creative, general interest and physical activities. Ensuring that there are adequate opportunities for this growing population will require working in partnership with older adult serving organizations and elders themselves. Older adults do exemplary work to self-organize and the municipality should only look to provide

and enable programs and services where there are gaps, and the community is unable to **respond through volunteerism. Use of the Meridian Centre for seniors' programs has proved** to be a central location for older adults to participate. An analysis of potential program choices should be posed to older adults as well as possible space allocation during desirable times to provide a full range of desirable program opportunities.

#### The Principles of Healthy Aging Ensure Quality Experiences for Older Adults

Parks and Recreation Ontario has developed a quality assurance program in the offering of recreation programs and services to older adults and seniors. The course offers staff an insight into the unique requirements of service delivery and engagement with the older population. It builds on the Principles of Healthy Child development for children and **strengthens staff's ability to plan programs, respect what elders face with ageism, physical literacy, social connectedness, and overall enhancements to the quality of life for older adults.** This is a suggested requirement for any full or part time staff working with older adults and seniors.

#### Outdoor Aquatics a Well Appreciated Asset in Pelham

Swimming is a popular activity in Pelham – recreational swimming is within the top six leisure activities that residents enjoy the most. The outdoor pool is well utilized for swim lessons, aquafit classes and drop-in activities.

The role of the municipality in providing aquatic experiences is primarily to ensure that residents can be safe in and around water. Drowning prevention is a key goal in offering learn to swim lessons and water survival. The National Drowning Report produced by the Lifesaving Society of Canada indicates that 1.2 people in every 100,000 population drown in Ontario annually. Drowning is considered a preventable accidental death and knowledge and swimming skills can assist in drowning prevention. As the community grows, staff will need to maximize the use of the outdoor pool for lessons and drop-in opportunities.

#### The Aquatic Safety Management Program is a Strong Preventative Measure

The Lifesaving Society – Ontario Branch has developed an Aquatic Safety Management Program to ensure that pool operators and aquatic service providers can comply with legislative requirements and industry standards. This is critical from a liability and quality assurance standpoint and another measure in preventing the possibility of water incidents. The Society offers an audit service to review all aspects of safety in and around water at pools and waterfronts. An Aquatic Safety Accreditation Program demonstrates levels of compliance. The Pelham outdoor pool is not accredited at this time.

#### Special Events Build Community Pride and Cohesion

The Town of Pelham invests resources to both host and support special events throughout the year. These events benefit the community in terms of strengthening pride and cohesion and as offering a return to local businesses and in supporting tourism efforts. 87% of the respondents to the community survey felt that special events are important while 84% of indicated that they participated and are satisfied with special events in Pelham. This is an excellent benchmark and requires little change to the way special events are organized and executed.

As the need and requests for special events increase, the Town should be prepared to allocate staff and resources to the events with the highest community benefit. A Special

Events Policy will serve to categorize events and provide an equitable level of funding and support to the events that most require them. Quantifying the success of a special events in terms of local spending and satisfaction levels are ways of measuring the effectiveness of the event choices on an annual basis.

## Recommendations

- #1 Regularly solicit requests for program offerings and complete a review of program availability, capacity, and utilization to ensure that public spaces is maximized and all age groups (e.g., pre-school, children, youth, adults, older adults and families) have access to a range of physical activity and sport, creative opportunities, general interest and STEM programming.
- #2 Promote the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines and the use of **ParticipACTION'S Physical Activity App within facilities and the "Life in Pelham" Community Guide. Consider applying to become Canada's Most Active Community** through ParticipACTION once pre-pandemic service recovery levels are achieved.
- #3 **Develop a Special Events Policy to clarify the Town's role in providing** special events, identify resource requirements, and establish the municipal supports provided to external event providers.

## 5.3 Including all Residents is Job One

The Town of Pelham strives to include all residents in recreation, culture and wellness services. A standard approach is taken of developing programs and services based on resident interests and ensuring these services are refined based on participant input. Most residents can navigate the system of seeking out and registering for opportunities; however, some residents may face barriers to participation. Pelham has specific policies and approaches to include some residents who face barriers, specifically those who are experiencing low income and those with disabilities. This section explores approaches to better serve other groups that may be marginalized. Recreation Departments across Canada are recognizing the importance of ensuring all residents can participate and are working to reduce barriers for marginalized or underrepresented groups .

### The Role of the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department in Providing "Access for All"

Municipalities in Ontario are unique and different from each other, and the provision of services must respect and celebrate these differences. Recreation programs and services become more meaningful by knowing the make up of the community and by engaging residents in the determining their needs and addressing any apparent barriers. Formerly, municipalities made accommodations for persons with disabilities and residents experiencing low income and that was the extent of reducing barriers for underrepresented populations. Human Rights legislation ensures that services are open to everyone and requires more proactive efforts.

Many municipal public-facing departments are now developing policies and procedures aimed at increasing participation in programs and services by diverse populations. One key

**guiding principle is to “engage the population that you are serving” to ensure that policies, procedures, and programs are meaningful.**

The following actions are provided to **best inform the Town of Pelham’s actions in better serving marginalized populations.**

- Understand the demographics and socio-economics of the community and strengthen dialogue with support organizations of marginalized populations.
- Develop a Policy to **identify the Town’s Commitment to inclusion and what actions** will be taken.
- Take intentional actions to improve access to increase participation among marginalized and underrepresented populations.
- Assess and monitor affordable access to programs and services.
- Develop opportunities with Indigenous Peoples, including those organizations that promote Truth and Reconciliation through the recreation and parks system.
- Develop or adhere to legislation, policies and promising practices that speak to including marginalized residents within services and develop resource materials for staff.
- Form partnerships in providing leisure programs and services to provide spaces.
- Ensure that staff are trained to reach out and welcome marginalized/underrepresented populations.
- Create a sense of belonging and to create safe and welcoming community spaces.
- Work with partners to increase participation of persons identifying as female in recreational pursuits.
- Create welcoming and safe environments for the LGBTQ2S+ community through training and demonstrating compliance with best practices.
- Work to ensure that staff and volunteers reflect the makeup of the community.
- Measure participation and the effectiveness of reaching out and including marginalized populations.

### Selected Observations for Pelham

The Town of Pelham, as a public institution, is clear about its obligation to include all residents. Specific and intentional approaches must be taken to welcome residents who may have differing needs and/or face barriers to participation. No longer can municipalities offer generalized programs and services in the hope that marginalized residents will participate – any barriers should be identified and addressed as the program is developed or in the evaluation phase. Staff need to identify who might face barriers within Pelham and become more intentional about including diverse and underrepresented populations by better understanding their needs. This can only be done by connecting and listening to diverse and underrepresented populations.

Both staff and volunteers need to be trained in being competent in inclusion strategies and in creating welcoming and safe environments. The makeup of staff and volunteers should represent the population that they serve. Ongoing discussions should be facilitated to continue to work together to reflect the community within recreation programs, services, staff, and volunteers.

Pelham enjoys an increasingly diverse population and has employed varying methods to better include all residents. The approach with the most promising results is the building and strengthening of relationships with the diverse and underrepresented groups that are active in the community. Initial discussions centre on understanding recreation and sport participation needs, how to provide access, and navigate Municipal government. Program-



related initiatives include the introduction of traditional Canadian sports and activities and introducing all residents to diverse activities and leisure pursuits.

Overall, the Town of Pelham continues to be responsive to community needs and demonstrates proactive practices to include persons with disabilities and residents experiencing low income, as well as to recognize the contributions of Indigenous Peoples. As described below, further work is required to touch base with marginalized communities, **intentionally welcome the LGBTQ2S+ community, and work to increase girls and women's** participation in sport and recreation.

#### Persons Experiencing Low Income Face Financial Barriers to Participation

Pelham RCW staff recognize that 5% of its population (approximately 900 residents) are experiencing low income and staff attempt to include as many as possible. Leading edge work in this area of service measures participation rates and targets participation to be at the same rate as the general population. , Universally free special events and access to public spaces is offered to all residents to reduce any stigmas attached to participation and low-cost programming is offered in the mix of program opportunities. Promoting free opportunities and offering equipment lending libraries to provide equipment have also been successful in engaging more residents experiencing low income.

To encourage greater levels of participants, the Youth Sport & Recreation subsidy provided through Pelham Cares offers financial assistance for families who qualify to participate in sports, recreation, and educational activities. Additionally, Pelham Cares also provides support for qualifying residents through its food and hygiene bank, holiday hampers, transportation to medical appointments, back to school backpacks, birthday program, information and referrals, and emergency response, which plays a significant importance in removing potential barriers to participation in the community. It would be helpful for the Town to monitor uptake in this program to ensure persons experiencing low income feel welcomed to utilize this offering.

#### Determining the Recreation and Sport System Capacity for All Residents

Further work should be undertaken every three years to determine the full capacity of directly offered programs, drop-in opportunities, and activities offered by community groups. The objective is to ensure that there are ample opportunities to accommodate a growing diverse community and that spaces and activities are allocated equitably. Working collectively with community groups and agencies representing marginalized residents to address identified gaps, gender equity, participation by marginalized populations, and participation by community (at a minimum) is recommended.

#### Persons with Disabilities Require Modified Approaches to Participate

Pelham staff work with the Accessibility Committee to ensure that physical access and customer service meets the legislative requirements. Pelham RCW staff employ methodologies to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy participating in programs and services through understanding individual needs and making meaningful accommodations. Caregivers are welcomed to assist participants in accessing programs and drop-in opportunities at no additional entrance fee. More discussions with support organizations for persons with disabilities is needed to address increasing participation in recreation and wellness programs and services, especially since as the population ages more recreational opportunities will need to be offered to address therapeutic needs.

### Newcomers may Need Assistance in Navigating Systems

Nearly one in seven Pelham residents (13% or 2,245 persons) are **immigrants**. Canada's immigration policy proposes a significant increase in newcomers in the years to come, creating conditions where all municipalities may welcome more recent immigrants to their communities. For many newcomers, their initial priorities are likely to focus on finding sustainable employment and housing. Research shows that engaging in sport and recreation encourages newcomers to feel connected to their new communities and address settlement issues with less stress. Recreation and sport are often complex systems to navigate to register and understand the requirements in a new country. Working with settlement agencies to encourage newcomers to participate and utilize trails and parks systems will result in greater knowledge and participation.

### Proving Safe Spaces/ Positive Spaces Better Includes the LGBTQ2S+ Community

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Questioning, and Two-Spirited (LGBTQ2S+) community often experience exclusionary behaviours. With the recognition that 13% of the Canadian population identifies as LGBTQ2S+, which could equate to approximately 2,365 Pelham residents. More intentional efforts are needed to provide welcoming recreational **environments to this community. The introduction of "Safe Spaces" is one way of welcoming** this community to public places. Safe Spaces was developed by Safe Spaces Canada whereby signage on the front entrance of a community space indicates that staff have been trained in reducing homophobic and transphobic gestures and slurs and in creating welcoming environments.

### Discussions and Cooperative Efforts with Indigenous Peoples Prove Successful

All communities have a role to play in recognizing the land that Indigenous Peoples lived on before land settlements and development and in being inclusive of this population. Pelham is located on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples and is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Agreement. Staff are making efforts to meet with Indigenous Peoples and groups to best represent them within the provision of recreation, cultural and wellness services.

The Truth and Reconciliation Report (2015) and the Parks for All Report (2017) speak to the role that Canadians have in reconciling with Indigenous Peoples over past history. The following excerpt from the Truth and Reconciliation Report articulates the call to action through sport.

*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action (2015) – Sports and Reconciliation (all levels of government):*

*87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.*

*88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.*

Before Council meetings Pelham offers a Land Recognition Statement to recognize the Indigenous Peoples that inhabited the land in and around the municipality. The Town also

hosts a special event to recognize National Day for Truth and Recognition. Communities and organizations are emphasizing the role of Indigenous Peoples through education, arts, sports, parks amenities, and interpretation. For example, with greater awareness being raised regarding Indigenous Peoples **and the Federal government's focus towards Truth and Reconciliation**, municipalities are showcasing Indigenous history through public art in community centres and parks along with exploring programs reflective of First Nations sports and culture. Leading practices in addressing Truth and Recognition include municipalities hosting discussions with Indigenous Peoples and organizations that represent them to discuss meaningful ways to introduce and educate Indigenous sport and recreation within communities.

### Female Participation in Sport and Recreation is at Canada's Lowest Levels

Participation in sport and recreation by girls and women is on a downward trend in Canada. Canadian Women in Sport in concert with the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities released a national report in June 2020 regarding sport participation for girls aged six to 18. The **findings noted that girl's participation in sport is much lower than boys the same age and** that girls experience a significant drop-out rate by late adolescence. One in three girls leave sport as compared to one in ten boys. Among the barriers cited, girls stated low levels of confidence, low body image, lack of skills, and feeling unwelcomed in a sport environment.

In 1992, over half of females over 15 participated in sport. By 2019, 28% of females participated in sport while 62% do not. Current studies are demonstrating that one in four girls are not committed to returning to sport after the pandemic. This declining participation rate is alarming, yet the Federal government has declared that we will achieve gender equity in sport by 2035 in Canada. The Canadian Women in Sport (CWS) supports and enables girls, women, and gender diverse people in pursuing sport and active lifestyles, keeping women actively engaged in **building community capacity. CWS's priority and focus** is to develop and support sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities, universities, and not-for-profit organizations. They have many resources that are readily available to audit policies and practices and build capacity within the organization. Female participation in community-driven sport and recreation has not been prioritized specifically in Pelham. This is a national priority and Pelham should utilize tools provided by CSW and audit which interventions and inclusionary efforts are required.

### Recommendations

- #4 Create an Internal Staff Team to address increasing participation in recreation, culture, and wellness activities by marginalized populations. Preliminary actions should include (but not be limited to):
  - a. Develop an Access and Inclusion Policy which identifies the underrepresented populations in Pelham and the efforts that will be made to be more inclusive in recreation, wellness, and culture. Consult organizations representing marginalized populations in its development.
  - b. Provide training and professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers with respect to better including marginalized populations in the delivery of service.

- c. Complete visual audits of facilities and public spaces to ensure that recreational use reflects the full citizenry of Pelham. Identify the people who are not regularly utilizing public spaces and engage them to understand any barriers.
- d. Complete a top line analysis of the number of females and those identifying as females participating in recreation and sport pursuits by age group. Address gaps through community discussions with females and those who identify as female to address barriers to participation. Work with regional, provincial, and national organizations to increase female participation in active and sport pursuits.
- e. Meet with groups representing persons with disabilities and persons experiencing low income to develop programs and approaches to increase participation in recreation programs and services.
- f. Ensure that all public spaces and facilities are safe and welcoming spaces for the LGBTQ2S+ community.
- g. Continue to engage with the Indigenous community to best understand how to better include and represent Indigenous Peoples in sport and recreation.

## 5.4 Strengthening Internal Capacity

The willingness and ability of the Town, community groups, organizations, and volunteers to work toward the same goal of increased participation is imperative and will continue to be so as Pelham grows in population. The Town of Pelham has many internal strengths in leading and managing a strong recreation, wellness, and cultural network of opportunities.

**It is in the Town's best interests to ensure that departmental policies and processes** exemplify best practices in organizational effectiveness.

Some promising practices in strengthening internal capacity for Pelham to consider include:

- a) Ensure that Recreation, Culture and Wellness receives an approved mandate through comprehensive Policies and Standards.
- b) Demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and industry standards.
- c) Strengthen community engagement and enhance services through volunteerism.
- d) Promote opportunities through comprehensive marketing and communications.
- e) Utilize technology to streamline operations, produce efficiencies, and form a relationship with residents and visitors.
- f) Increase the number of meaningful community partnerships that serve to engage more residents in leisure opportunities.
- g) Seek out alternate revenues through sponsorships and grants.
- h) Understand the cost of providing services in the development of a fair-minded fee structure.
- i) Demonstrate a strong organizational culture and responsive structure.
- j) Provide continuous staff development and training opportunities.
- k) Set targets, measure, and report out on Departmental performance.



## Selected Observations for Pelham

### Legislative Compliance is Imperative

Reviewing adherence to legislative and industry standards ensures that operations are compliant and embrace the highest standards. Compliance should be tested on an annual basis at a minimum. Each discipline has indicated that they feel that they are compliant for the most part but have not completed an audit to ensure that they are implementing changes to legislation. Legislative compliance is required and must be demonstrated in operations and the delivery of service.

### Policies Set Clear Expectations and Offer Guidance

The Department continues to develop new policies that are relevant to their current operations. A Special Events Policy and an Access and Inclusion Policy (discussed in previous sections) are recommended. This section recommends a Sponsorship and Partnership Policy to look to alternate revenues to fund recreation and other services. Staff are now administering the Rink Board Advertising Program and an evaluation of the staff effort in costs versus the revenues as compared to the net gain in revenues would be appropriate. A review of the Allocation Policy is also required to ensure that facilities and spaces are allocated equitably and according to needs rather than historical precedent (which may or may not be defensible). Each policy that is developed should engage the public and relevant stakeholders to understand their priorities and how certain policy statements may impact their ability to operate groups or access services. Staff should develop a system for automatically reviewing policies on a consistent basis.

### Setting Levels of Service

While levels of service are mostly understood, they are undocumented and it is important to articulate and have levels of service approved by Council. Each discipline (aquatics, programs, camps, maintenance, etc.) will list their services, the frequency, duration, and the staff effort that it takes to offer/ enable these programs and services. This effort **confirms the Town's commitment to the public and identifies what it takes to deliver the service.** Costs can then be tracked and alternate methods of achieving the same level of service can be addressed. Articulating levels of service gains commitment from the public and approval from Council. Further, the resources for any service expansions due to growth or demand can be identified.

### Volunteerism Enhances Service Provision

During the community consultation to support the development of the Master Plan, some community stakeholder groups indicated that they were having issues with the recruitment and retention of volunteers. It would be prudent to meet with community groups to discuss volunteer promotion, a common and central location to list opportunities, and a streamlined approach to matching volunteers with opportunities. Pelham lists all volunteer opportunities on its website which helps to promote the scope of opportunities available. Interested volunteers are directed to the respective department for selection, training, and orientation. Most volunteerism occurs in special events and within community sport groups. The Town recognizes volunteers on an annual basis.

One current best practice in volunteerism involves the use of online software. Pelham lists volunteer opportunities and encourages online applications which assists in streamlining the process and making it easier for volunteers to match their skills with current opportunities.

Many municipalities have implemented an online system to match volunteers with volunteer needs and the department will list their opportunities with this organization as well as recruitment using other mechanisms. It would be prudent to investigate more comprehensive online systems that serve not only to recruit but track hours, and train volunteers in standard practices. This may save staff many hours of repeated training time.

**Volunteer Canada's Code for Volunteer Involvement and other resources can also assist in strengthening volunteerism in Pelham.**

#### Costing of Services in Setting Fair Minded Fees is Defensible

Pelham partially offsets the financial costs of providing recreation and cultural services through several revenue streams, most notably user fees, entrance fees, taxation and, to a lesser extent, sponsorships/grants/partnerships. The Department also accepts that there are non-financial and intangible benefits that offset fiscal expenditures by way of increased physical and social health among residents, contributions to community vibrancy and **cohesion, etc. Therefore, the degree to which quantifiable costs are "recovered" is dictated by Town's philosophy surrounding the "value" of the service that it provides to residents and the community.** The first step in setting fair minded fees and cost recovery levels is understanding the cost to provide the service. This is a first step and an arduous task and will involve guidance and assistance from the Finance Department (to set corporate guidelines) and allocate costs fairly.

Once costs are known (e.g., to produce an hour of ice), the current cost recovery levels can be ascertained by understanding the percentage of the costs that are recovered through the current fee structure. A comparison to the market rate is usually undertaken to determine if fees can be modified. Setting of fees can be developed by determining which age groups or types of programs should receive greater subsidies. Costing of services provides transparency in setting of fees.

#### Community Partnerships and Sponsorships Expand Service Provision

The Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department works with partners to provide the highest level of service to the public. As partnerships are a key tactic used by the Town in **the Master Plan's implementation, an analysis of the Town's approach to partnerships and sponsorships is contained in Section 9.3.**

#### Organizational Effectiveness and Structural Considerations Strengthen Staff Capacity

Strong employee engagement and satisfaction levels were observed within the Recreation, Culture and Wellness work team. Leadership has worked to empower staff to readily suggest improvements for their respective disciplines. There is a sense of dedication and a belief in the value of the services in strengthening the health of the community. This common vision has served to engage staff and create a strong Departmental culture. The culture, values, and respective behaviours are evident but not captured in writing and agreed to by departmental staff. This would be a worthwhile undertaking to create a charter of engagement for current staff and volunteers.

#### KPMG and the Refined Organizational Structure in Recreation, Culture and Wellness

In 2022, KPMG was contracted to complete an overview of the organizational effectiveness and structure of the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department. The scope of the

exercise included considerations surrounding the following key result areas and operational processes:

- Governance and Strategy;
- Service Standards;
- Process and Service Delivery Model;
- Data and Technology, and
- People.

Seventeen recommendations and considerations were offered by KPMG and received by Council. Many of the recommendations are aligned with the findings of the current master planning undertaking. The analysis within this Master Plan supports the findings and recommendations housed in the Organizational Review. The scope of this Master Plan supports the implementation of the primary findings in the KPMG report, including key performance indicators, programming, and standard operating procedures.

**The KPMG report also examined the Department's organizational structure with the goal of creating greater efficiencies and effectiveness in service delivery.** This review allows the Department to rethink the allocation of staff and continue to place like functions and serve like customer objectives together. KPMG found that there is currently an absence of a middle management layer of staff to oversee the development of policies, refine processes, and ensure that there are standard levels of service and operating procedures. Further, the turnover in part-time Customer Service staff is placing pressures in recruitment, selection, training, and onboarding. KPMG recommends the consideration of replacing the equivalent part-time customer service positions with one full-time position. The intent is to lessen the administrative burden and allow for consistent service with less turnover. At the time of writing, the Department has been directed by Council to bring back a follow-up report on implementation and consider alternate models of structuring the Department.

#### Measuring Performance Strengthens Accountability and Improves Services

Performance measures hold staff accountable for their work and provide valuable information in comparing performance against intended service targets. This information provides baseline data on which to refine performance year over year. This approach to enhance service delivery provides a vehicle to analyze what is important and allows staff to change course if refinements are warranted. The objective is to align measures with the goals and objectives of the department(s) through Key Performance Indicators. For example, if the goal is to increase participation and utilize facilities to their maximum capacity with high levels of satisfaction, then measures will centre around increasing participation from the previous year, communicating the capacity and utilization of public facilities, and testing public satisfaction levels. Measures need not be complex – they just need to tell a story, praise a job well done, and influence future actions.

Measuring performance allows an organization to quantify various elements of service delivery and to demonstrate if progress is being made toward intended targets. For example, if hypothetical public satisfaction rests at 70% in camps in year one, the target for the next year would be set at 75% with a long-term target of 90% or more. Staff would test satisfaction levels and address participant concerns toward improving service delivery. This data provides the information needed to complete an annual report or program end analysis and to ensure that program decisions are knowledge-based. This data must also be utilized to compare participation and utilization levels year-to-year.

A framework for measuring performance is suggested and implemented in each discipline. The KPMG Organizational Review noted and recommended that Key Performance Indicators be developed. Data to support these measures is most likely being collected currently. Annual reporting should also be a simple illustration that staff and the public can glean and determine if targets are being met or have been exceeded.

A typical performance measurement framework for Recreation, Culture and Wellness includes capturing the inputs (resources approved to deliver service), outputs (what was achieved within the approved resources, such as number of participants, pool attendance, square metres of facilities tended, etc.), efficiencies (the unit costs to deliver each service) and effectiveness (public and user satisfaction levels).

Table 10 – Sample Performance Measures for RCW

Performance Measure Type	Answers These Questions	Suggested Measures
Inputs	What resources are allotted to Recreation, Culture and Wellness (staff, financial and physical spaces)	Full time equivalents (FTEs) in staff FTEs per service area Budget for key service areas Asset inventory Volunteerism in annual hours
Outputs	What did the Department achieve with the resources provided? Were there increases/decreases in certain areas? How did these outputs compare to previous years and program related targets?	Levels of service achieved Performance against targets Participation in programs and drop-in opportunities Results compared to the previous year or the average of the previous three years Identify pent up demands
Efficiencies	What are the high-level unit costs and have any been reduced by increased participation/productivity?	Impact on unit costs (increased participation might result in a reduction of unit costs over all) Efficiencies achieved Cost savings realized through partnerships and grants or alternate revenue streams
Effectiveness	How do users and public rate services? Have there been satisfaction level improvements in targeted areas?	Overall public and satisfaction levels Number of complaints Comparison to previous year ratings as compared to the average of the last three years

## Recommendations

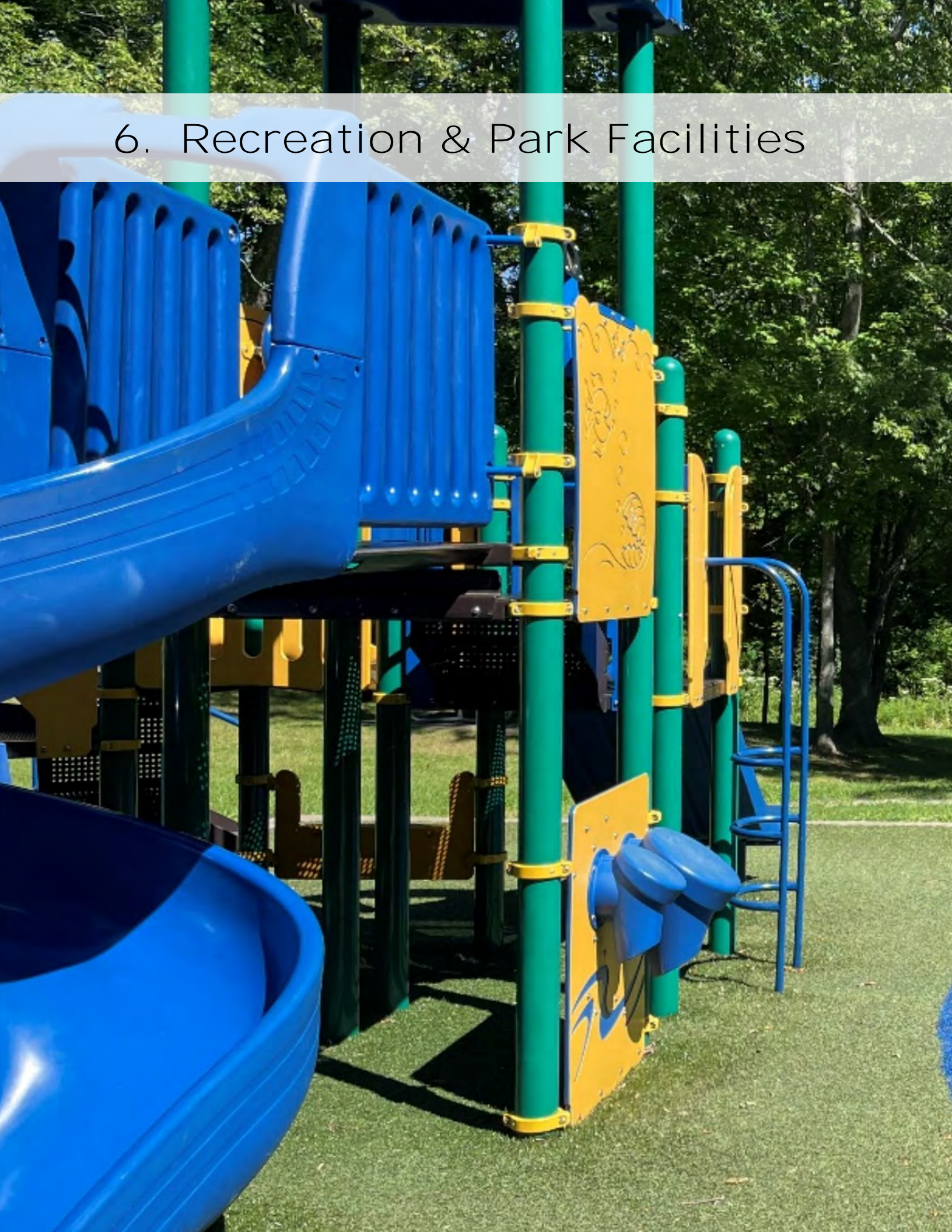
- #5 **Identify RCW's levels of service and corresponding policy, process, and resource requirements for each discipline within the Department for Council's approval. Identify the operational resources required to**



implement the recommendations in the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Master Plan for annual approval as part of the budget deliberation process.

- #6 Complete an audit of current legislation affecting the delivery of Recreation, Culture, and Wellness services and ensure that the Town of Pelham is compliant with these requirements.
- #7 Investigate the efficiencies created through a standard online App to recruit, train, track hours, and serve to recognize volunteers supporting Recreation, Culture and Wellness services.
- #8 Apply a consistent methodology to better understand the costs to provide **RCW's** various services and to determine current cost recovery levels. Develop a fair minded and transparent Pricing Policy to ensure that fees are equitable and respect the value that the program/service provides to the community.
- #9 Develop a meaningful set of performance measures for the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department that describe the inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness measures employed in each discipline.

## 6. Recreation & Park Facilities





Recreation facilities and outdoor amenities play an important role in the daily life of Pelham residents. The Town invests in infrastructure to promote physical activity, healthy lifestyles, skill development, athletic competition, community building, and economic growth. These **assets have positive impacts on residents and contribute to the community's wellbeing.**

This section identifies needs and considerations for the indoor and outdoor recreation and parks facilities in Pelham.

## 6.1 Current Inventory of Recreation & Park Facilities

A summary of notable community facilities and amenities owned and/or operated by the Town of Pelham is shown in the table below.

Table 11 – Summary of Municipal Recreation Facilities in the Town of Pelham

Facility Type	Number	Location
Community Centres	1	Meridian Community Centre
Community Halls	1	Old Pelham Town Hall <i>Note: The Town also owns the Quaker Meeting House, which is leased to a third-party</i>
Ice Pads	2	Meridian Community Centre: Accipiter Arena and Duliban Insurance Arena
Gymnasiums	2	Meridian Community Centre
Rectangular Fields	7	Centennial Park (2 full lit), Glynn. A. Green Public School* (4 mini), Harold Black Park (1 full lit)
Full-size (lit)	3	
Mini	4*	
Ball Diamonds	7	Centennial Park (1 Lit Hardball, 2 Lit Softball), Harold Black Park (1 Lit Softball, 1 Unlit Hardball), North Pelham Park (2 Unlit Softball, one senior and one junior)
Hardball – Lit	1	
Hardball – Unlit	1	
Softball – Lit	3	
Softball – Unlit	2	<i>Note: Gordon Klager Lions Park also contains one lit softball diamond.</i>
Tennis Courts	6	Centennial Park (5), North Pelham Park (1)
Platform Tennis Courts	2	Rolling Meadows Park (2)
Pickleball Courts	6	Centennial Park
Outdoor Basketball Courts	2	Centennial Park (full court), North Pelham Park (full court)
Skateboard Parks	1	Isaac Riehl Memorial Skatepark (Marlene Stewart Streit Park)
Outdoor Pools	1	Marlene Stewart Streit Park
Splash Pads	2	Centennial Park, Marlene Stewart Streit Park
Cool Misters	1	River Estates Park
Off-Leash Dog Parks	1	Centre Street – Leash Free Park (Region of Niagara)

Facility Type	Number	Location
Playgrounds	12	Centennial Park, Cherry Ridge Park, Harold Black Park, Hurleston Park, Lookout Park, Marlene Stewart Streit Park, North Pelham Park, Pelham Corners Park, River Estates Park, Rolling Meadows Park, Weiland Heights Park, Woodstream Park

\* These fields are used by groups under agreement with local schools.

In addition to these municipal facilities, the community also has access to amenities owned and managed by other providers (note: some may have limited access). These include:

- Schools such as E.L Crossley Secondary School and several elementary schools that offer gymnasiums, playgrounds, outdoor courts and fields.
- Conservation Areas consist of Comfort Maple Conservation Area, E.C. Brown Conservation Area, and St. Johns Conservation Area, which are maintained by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Short Hills Provincial Park also borders Pelham. The Lathrop Nature Preserve is located in Fonthill and is owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- Non-profit providers such local churches and the Fonthill and Fenwick Lions Club which maintain halls for community use, among other amenities (e.g., lit ball diamond and outdoor ball hockey rink at Gordon L Klager Fonthill Lions Park).
- For-profit providers include local golf courses, fitness operators, dance and martial arts studies, etc.
- Adjacent Municipalities provide several recreation, culture and parks facilities that may be available to Pelham residents. For example:
  - The City of Welland has Main Arena and Jack Ballantyne Memorial Youth Arena, which are home to Jr. B Hockey, Welland Minor Hockey Association and the Niagara Centre Skating Club. The City has three outdoor large pools and two wading pools amongst its parks. The Welland Community Centre also provides a gymnasium, theatre, three multipurpose rooms, and therapeutic pool. In addition, the membership-based Niagara Centre YMCA contains a five-lane lap pool, a leisure pool, a fitness centre, a gymnasium and an indoor walking track.
  - The Town of West Lincoln is home to the West Lincoln Arena Community Centre, that includes a regulation sized single ice pad with 450 seating capacity, a gymnasium, an indoor walking track and three multi-purpose community rooms. This recreational hub is also adjacent to skateboard park **and splash pad. In addition, the Town's Leisureplex Township Park provides** fourteen different sized soccer fields.
  - The City of Thorold has a community arena with two ice pads, an outdoor community pool and three type A sport fields that possess lights, changerooms and washrooms. The City is also home to Canada Games Park, that includes two ice pads, a para sport gymnasium with four courts, a health and wellbeing centre, **and a 200m indoor track. The Park's outdoor amenities** consist of six beach volleyball courts, a cycling centre, an outdoor storage area, and a track-and-field facility including a full 400m track and areas for jumps and throw disciplines.



- o The City of St Catharines is home to the indoor Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, three Older Adult Centres, and seven total ice pads amongst four arenas (including the Meridian Centre event venue). **In addition, the City's** outdoor recreation facility inventory is highlighted by 32 rectangular fields, 28 tennis courts and 22 multi-use courts.
- o The Town of Lincoln is home to two arenas with two total ice pads, as well as two outdoor pools. Other notable facilities include a Seniors Club and the Lincoln Museum and Culture Centre.
- o Additionally, the athletic facilities at Brock University – such as the Walker Centre pool – provide access for many residents in the region. This also includes the Walker Sports and Abilities Centre, a legacy of the 2022 Canada Summer Games that is operated in partnership with the University, City of St. Catharines, and City of Thorold. This facility contains a twin pad arena, fitness centre and sport performance centre, indoor track, gymnasiums, sports fields and courts, outdoor track, and more.

## 6.2 Community Centres, Halls & Gymnasiums

The Meridian Community Centre (MCC) has been serving Pelham since it opened in late 2018, addressing a wide range of recreation and culture needs. As a large multi-use facility, the MCC serves both a local and regional audience and accounts for the majority of the RCW **Department's budget. The facility's operations have been continuously evolving and** maturing during this time, including throughout the pandemic. The Town took out a long-term debenture to fund the facility's **construction.**

The MCC contains two full-sized gymnasiums, facilitating a variety of activities including basketball, volleyball, pickleball, badminton, martial arts, fitness, and dance classes. **Basketball is one of Pelham's most popular sports with a large number of participants,** and Pelham Minor Basketball has an agreement for access to the gymnasiums. Also located on the main level are two arenas (discussed separately in this plan) as well as a concession lounge near the **building's north entrance.**

There are several rentable community rooms on **the MCC's second floor,** including the Dr. Gary and Mall Accursi community room (3708 sq ft, including a catering kitchen) and the Kinsmen community room (1334 sq ft, divisible space). The second floor also features: a two-lane walking track that is open seven days a week and free for the public to use; a flex space between the two pads that is currently being used as a spin bike studio; food service concession; art gallery displays; and offices for the RCW department.

The Town also owns Old Pelham Town Hall in Ridgeville, which features a large 150-person capacity hall, small activity room, and kitchen. The 1888 Victorian style build possesses heritage status, and is generally used for small weddings, meetings, receptions, family gatherings and bridal or baby showers.

Town facilities are well used by many sports groups, community organizations, and service clubs. Based on current trends and the evolution of municipal programming, there may be a need for additional program space in the longer-term; community partnerships for access to non-municipal spaces (e.g., schools, churches, etc.) should be explored as appropriate.

More immediately, with a key focus toward the optimization of facility space, the KPMG Organizational Review for the RCW Department recommends that the Town develop formalized operating plans for the MCC to guide its programming and performance.

## Recommendations

- #10 Continue to support programming, rentals, and partnerships that optimize utilization of the Meridian Community Centre and Old Pelham Town Hall. Develop formalized operating plans for the MCC to guide programming and performance in keeping with the recommendations of the 2023 KPMG Report.
- #11 Seek out spaces in schools and other appropriate locations for additional programming to augment programs offered at the Meridian Community Centre.

## 6.3 Arenas

The Accipiter Arena (premier rink) and the Duliban Insurance Arena are located at the Meridian Community Centre. Both are NHL-sized surfaces and are heavily used by the Pelham Minor Hockey Association, Pelham Panthers Jr B, Pelham Figure Skating Club, and Southern Tier AAA Admirals, among others. These pads have replaced the single pad at **Town's** former Pelham Arena, which was recently demolished.

**Competitive and organized sports in general require access to "competition-ready" specialized facilities. The MCC's possesses the amenities** essential to hosting tournaments and arena events of large capacities, a broad trend that many communities are encouraging for economic benefit of sport-tourism opportunities.

Ice time is offered within the Duliban Insurance Area year-round, while the Accipiter Arena offers ice time from mid-August through to the end of March, and used is for lacrosse during the summer (serving as the home of Raiders Lacrosse, Youth/Service Club and Adult rental groups). Additionally, the pads are used for ceremonies, concerts, and trade shows, amongst other events. These arenas have had success with ice rentals, servicing both local **and regional demand guided by an ice allocation policy. Amongst the MCC's approximate 49** pledge agreements, many five-year licensing agreements are set to expire in 2023.

The two ice pads were built **to meet the Town's long-term** needs. Hockey, figure skating, and ice sports are among the most popular indoor activities in Pelham, with 30% of households participating. In order to monitor longer-term needs, the Town is encouraged to collect registration data from its core user groups. As a rule of thumb, typical capacities area approximately 400 to 450 youth participants per municipal ice pad, assuming that youth have preferred access to prime time ice. **If and when Pelham's ice pads approach** these thresholds, changes to the ice allocation policy may be required to ensure fair access for priority groups such as local organizations and residents.

## Recommendations

- #12 Monitor ice usage trends and collect registration data to inform a review of the Ice Allocation Policy (at minimum every five years), with the goal of ensuring fair access for priority groups such as local organizations and residents.

## 6.4 Indoor Pools

There are no public indoor swimming pools in Pelham. Residents seeking indoor swimming opportunities are likely to facilities in nearby municipalities (e.g., Niagara Centre YMCA in Welland, Brock Aquatics Centre in St. Catharines, the Kiwanis Aquatics Centre in St. Catharines, etc.). During the summer months the outdoor pool at Marlene Stewart Streit Park offers instructional, fitness, and recreational swimming opportunities to residents.

Nevertheless, resident interest in an indoor pool is high. The community survey found that 69% of respondents identified an indoor swimming pool as a high priority for Pelham. These requests are common in smaller communities that do not provide indoor pools as swimming is an activity that appeals to people of all ages and abilities, and an indoor aquatic centre provides access during the colder months when the outdoor pool is closed. The option of building an indoor pool in Pelham was considered prior to the Meridian Community Centre **being built and was not supported at that time due to the town's small population and high associated capital and operating costs.**

Indoor pools are more commonly provided in communities with larger populations (typically 30,000 or more) or those without ready-access to other pools beyond their community. Pelham is not expected to achieve this population level until beyond 2051.

The decision to provide an indoor aquatic centre is heavily influenced by cost, as municipal indoor pools are highly subsidized facilities that require approximately in the range of \$750,000 of tax support annually (this would be equivalent to a 4.5% **of the Town's 2022** tax levy). Further, construction costs tend to range from \$12 to \$20 million, which can be difficult for smaller communities to afford. While partnerships, grant opportunities, and more minimalistic designs may help to mitigate some costs, sustainable funding strategies are needed to ensure a viable operation.

The Town should continue to encourage the use of the indoor aquatic facilities in adjacent municipalities as there is insufficient demand to warrant the development of an indoor aquatic centre in Pelham over the planning period. Should a public-private partnership opportunity arise for the development and/or operation of an indoor aquatic facility, the Town may evaluate the proposal and consider low-risk participation in such an initiative.

## 6.5 Soccer Fields

Pelham's user groups make use of seven (7) local soccer fields (3 municipal and 4 school fields used under agreement), including full-size fields at Centennial Park (2) and Harold Black Park (1). All three Town fields will have lights for evening play **when Centennial Park's** current unlit field is upgraded in 2023 (offset by grant funding). Additionally, groups currently use four mini fields at Glynn A. Green Public School to accommodate demand. The Town also will occasionally permit ball diamond outfields at North Pelham Park for soccer when necessary (though not ideal).

The Pelham Soccer Club (minor soccer) indicates **that the Town's current inventory** does not adequately support their registration levels and potential future growth. Input from the community survey finds that one-in-four households participate in soccer, and 68% of respondents identify soccer and multi-use fields to be a high priority investment (ranking 9<sup>th</sup> out of 27 facility types). The loss of an intermediate and mini field at the recently reconfigured Rolling Meadows Park / Former Pelham Arena (which now lacks the parking

required to support soccer) **has impacted Pelham's user groups. Furthermore, Pelham's** usage of Concordia School for overflow is not viewed as a sustainable long-term option.

A provision target of one soccer field per 90 participants is recommended to assess current and future demand. **The Town's inventory** offers an equivalent of 8.5 unlit fields (1 lit field is equivalent to 1.5 unlit fields). There are currently 920 participants enrolled in the Pelham Soccer Club (nearly one out of every three children), for an average of one unlit equivalent field per 108 players, indicating that the Town is not achieving the provision target. The following table forecasts the number of youth participants **using the Town's projected** growth rate. If the number of youth participants experience this future growth, an additional 3.7 unlit field equivalents would be required in Pelham by 2031.

Table 12 - Forecasted Demand for Soccer Fields

	2022	2031	2041
Youth Participants (ages 5-19), based on 31% participation rate	920 (Actual)	1,095 (+19%)	1,270 (28%)
Provision Target	One soccer field (ULE) per 90 registered participants		
Number of Fields Required	10.2	12.2	14.1
Number of Fields Currently Provided	8.5 ULE (unlit equivalents)		
Deficit – Additional Fields Needed (ULE)	1.7	3.7	5.6

**To meet Pelham's provision target for soccer fields, it is recommended that the Town** employ a variety of strategies including field upgrades and conversions to increase capacity, formalizing agreements with schools for community access, and developing additional fields in future park sites.

## Recommendations

- #13 Employ a variety of strategies to address current and future needs for community soccer fields, including:
- working with rectangular field users to ensure optimal access to existing fields, coupled with appropriate maintenance practices to support usage levels;
  - formalizing agreements to continue to use soccer fields at Glynn A. Green PS and expanding these agreements to appropriate fields at other school locations, such as E. L. Crossley Secondary School;
  - converting the softball diamond at Harold Black Park to a lit full size soccer field;
  - creating another lit full size soccer field at Centennial Park (as outlined in the 2003 park master plan);
  - designing new mini fields into new neighbourhood parks, where appropriate; and
  - seeking to secure a future community park site to serve long-term needs, capable of accommodating 2 or more soccer fields and other needed recreational amenities.



## 6.6 Ball Diamonds

Pelham has a total of seven (7) ball diamonds located at Centennial Park (one lit hardball, two lit softball), Harold Black Park (one lit hardball, one unlit hardball), and North Pelham Park (two unlit softball). Centennial Park had lighting recently installed on the hardball diamond, and will be adding a batting cage this year. Additionally, there is a lit softball diamond owned and operated by the Fonthill Lions Club that is not part of the municipal inventory.

One-half (52%) of survey respondents indicated that they feel that improving or developing baseball and softball diamonds should be a priority, ranking 19<sup>th</sup> out of 27 facility types. This suggests that the current supply is generally meeting needs and that improvements are a lower priority.

To inform long-term diamond needs, registration data may be collected and applied using a participant-based target of one ball diamond per 80-100 participants. There are 240 **participants in Pelham's minor baseball user groups**; however, data on all user groups is not currently available. Broader trends suggest baseball participation in many communities has been growing as organizations emphasize skill development and build more competitive streams of play.

There would appear to be ample capacity within the current inventory to accommodate future demand. To address more pressing needs for soccer, it is recommended that the softball diamond at Harold Black Park be converted to a soccer field to create a two-field complex at this site. It is also recommended that the Town continue to work with user groups to ensure that localized diamond conditions continue to respond to their more pressing needs.

### Recommendations

- #14 Continue to maintain the existing inventory of ball diamonds (with the exception of the softball diamond at Harold Black Park, which is proposed for conversion to a soccer field).
- #15 Consider installing lights on the hardball diamond at Harold Black Park should demand warrant.

## 6.7 Tennis & Pickleball Courts

Pelham has a total of six (6) tennis courts with five (5) located at Centennial Park and one (1) located at North Pelham Park. **Centennial Park's tennis courts are run by the town with key fob access, primarily used by members with limited access by instructors and the public.** Six (6) pickleball courts were recently built at Centennial Park through a grant (which also supported the resurfacing of the tennis courts at this park).

In addition, two (2) platform tennis courts are open year-round at the former Pelham Arena Park adjacent to Rolling Meadows Park, managed by the Fonthill Platform Tennis Club. This Club has between 400 and 500 members and offers several leagues. Services to the clubhouse were connected to the former Pelham Arena, which has resulted in no running water and portable washrooms. The Town and Club are working to update their agreement to ensure that these items and future responsibilities are clarified.

Input from the community survey found that 13% of households have played tennis recently, with 46% support additional investment in tennis courts (ranking 21<sup>st</sup> out of 27 facility options). Slightly fewer households have played pickleball (9%), though this may have been a function of having no outdoor venues until late in 2022. With the new pickleball complex at Centennial Park, only 33% felt that additional investment was required in outdoor pickleball courts (ranking 26<sup>th</sup> out of 27 options). At the open house vents, requests were also received for the provision of tennis courts in Fonthill and the addition of a tennis wall in Centennial Park.

The recommended provision target for outdoor tennis is one court per 5,000 residents, indicating the Town is well supplied (**the town's current ratio is 1: 3,640 persons**). Tennis is a well-established sport and is maintaining its popularity through provision of accessible outdoor recreation in neighbourhood parks. To address future demand for tennis and improve geographic access, it is recommended that the Town consider establishing a two-court complex in a future park in Fonthill. Additionally, the tennis court at North Pelham Park is aging and is recommended to be reconfigured as a multi-sport pad once it has reached its end of life, removing tennis as a primary use.

There is no industry standard for the provision of pickleball courts, but most Ontario municipalities are quickly adopting strategies to accommodate the sport, both indoors and outdoors. Demand for the sport has increased rapidly in Pelham, with the MCC gymnasiums being a primary venue for play in a controlled environment year-round. Trends indicate that pickleball has become an emerging activity and social sport, accessible to people of all ages **and growing in popularity amongst Canada's aging population.** As a result, the Town should monitor usage of the new Centennial Park courts and consider establishing a multi-court pickleball complex in an appropriate location in Fonthill should demand materialize; due to the need for supporting infrastructure (e.g., parking, washrooms, etc.) and distancing from residential uses to reduce noise impacts, community parks are the preferred location for pickleball courts; this Master Plan recommends land acquisition to support a future community park in Fonthill.

## Recommendations

- #16 Work with the Fonthill Platform Tennis Club to establish a new agreement pertaining to their use of the courts and clubhouse in Rolling Meadows Park.
- #17 Identify a location within a future neighbourhood park in Fonthill for tennis courts (2).
- #18 Monitor the demand for outdoor pickleball in Fonthill and consider a multi-court complex in a future community park, if required.

## 6.8 Outdoor Basketball Courts

Pelham has two full-sized basketball courts, located at Centennial Park and North Pelham Park. **Centennial Park's** court was recently developed, while the court at North Pelham Park is approaching the end of its functional life. The Fonthill community is currently without a public court (some hoops may be available at local schools after hours) and input from the community has indicated that the current availability of public basketball courts is limited.

Basketball is an established sport that is very popular in Pelham, with close to 900 registrants enrolled in the Pelham Minor Basketball Association. From the community survey, 18% of respondent households participate in basketball, and 56% identified outdoor basketball courts as a high priority for investment (ranking 15<sup>th</sup> out of 27 facility types). **The sport's popularity amongst youth suggests that the distribution of courts should consider proximity to residential areas.**

One municipal basketball court per 1,000 youth residents between the ages of 10 and 19 is **a common target. Pelham's two courts align with this provision target. However, having the Town's distribution** of courts extend into the Fonthill community would make courts more accessible to this community; the Town should look to establish half courts in two future neighbourhood parks in Fonthill. Further, it is recommended that the existing basketball / tennis pad at North Pelham Park is redeveloped into a multi-use sport court, along with the addition of a small pavilion to support broader use of the site.

## Recommendations

- #19 Redevelop the existing basketball / tennis pad at North Pelham Park into a multi-use sport court for basketball and ball hockey. Add a small pavilion to support the site.
- #20 Establish half basketball courts in two (2) new neighbourhood parks in Fonthill to improve access for local youth.

## 6.9 Skate & Bike Parks

Pelham is home to the Isaac Riehl Memorial Skatepark located at Marlene Stewart Streit Park. **This concrete skate park has been in the community since 2014, serving as Pelham's** sole all-wheels location (used by skateboards, scooters, and bikes). Input from the community survey identified BMX or Bike Parks (45%) and skateboard parks (42%) to be a high priority, ranking 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> **amongst 27 facility types. The Town's input and level of demand for skate and bike parks suggest that Pelham's current provision levels are** sufficient, and no additional facilities are recommended at this time.

Increasingly communities are considering smaller-scale amenities such as "skate spots" or "bicycle playgrounds" to provide younger children and those residing in the community with accessible opportunities to learn how to skate, bike, etc. These are strategies that could be considered to respond to future demands, should they materialize.

## 6.10 Splash Pads

Pelham has two splash pads located at Centennial Park and Marlene Stewart Streit Park, as well as a misting pole at River Estates Park. The Town received grants to develop the two splash pads in 2022, and they have been well received by the community. Input from the community survey indicated that 30% of households have used splash pads, and this **number that will likely increase once Pelham's splash pads have been open for a full season.** Additionally, 60% of respondents indicated improving or developing splash pads should be a high priority, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> out of 27 facility types.

In smaller municipalities like Pelham, provision targets are typically one per community, **suggesting that the Town's current provision is sufficient.** In the longer-term, the Town may

benefit from incorporating misting poles in community parks and/or a splash pad in east or south Fonthill to improve geographic distribution (such as in a future community park).

## Recommendations

- #21 Consider installing a splash pad in a future community park if the location enhances access for residents in Fonthill (east or south).

## 6.11 Outdoor Pools

**Pelham's sole outdoor pool is about 60-years old**, consisting of a 6-lane 25 metre tank with a bathhouse at Marlene Stewart Streit Park. The Town received a grant to replace this pool, scheduled to take place between 2025 and 2026. The pool at Marlene Stewart Streit Park is well used, although it is supported by limited parking and has a limited window for use (8 to 10 weeks per year).

Outdoor pools are desired public amenities during the summer months and provide a low-cost recreational opportunity, particularly in areas where private backyard pools are not common. **Pelham's Public Pool supports swim lessons (617 registrants in 2022 – a 25% increase over 2019**, indicating a desire amongst many residents to catch-up for time lost during the pandemic), aquatic fitness, recreational swimming, and a swim team. One-third (34%) of survey respondents have recently participated in outdoor swimming (not specifically at the Pelham Public Pool) and 60% of households support investment in this facility type (ranking 14<sup>th</sup> out of 27 options).

The planned reconstruction of the Pelham Public Pool will substantially extend the life of the facility and address barrier-free accessibility through a modern pool design that also considers upgraded change rooms and washrooms. The regulatory and footprint constraints **of the site may limit the range of potential design options, but the community's** long-time support for this site is strong and this investment will retain local swimming options in Pelham for years to come.

## Recommendations

- #22 Continue with plans to redevelop the Pelham Public Pool at Marlene Stewart Streit Park, with consideration of barrier-free access to the pool and bathhouse (change rooms, washrooms, etc.).

## 6.12 Off-Leash Dog Parks

There is one off-leash dog park in Pelham – the Centre Street Leash Free Park, managed by the Region of Niagara. Featuring two fenced areas for small and large dogs, parking, a pavilion, picnic areas, and public trails and paths, the park is well used by the community.

Input from the community survey indicated that 24% of respondent households participated in dog walking (off-leash park). Additionally, more than two-fifths (43%) of survey respondents placed a high priority on improving or developing dog walking (off-leash park), ranking 23<sup>rd</sup> amongst 27 facility types.

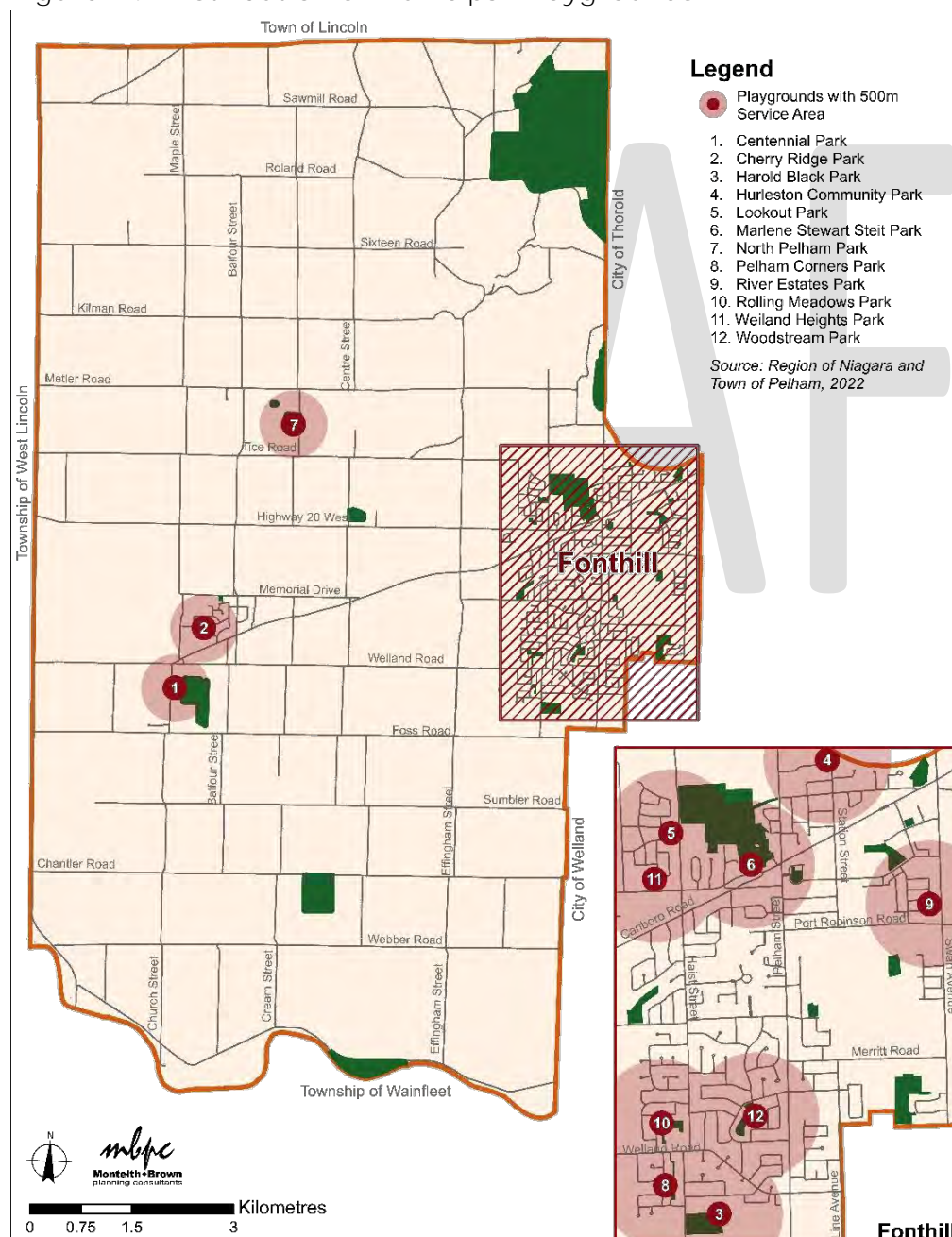
Some suggestions were made for a dog park in the Fonthill urban area, but the addition of another off-leash dog park would be very challenging as there are no existing parks that

would be capable of sufficiently accommodating this type of facility (which requires approximately 2 acres of land and sufficient setbacks from residential uses). The establishment of another off-leash dog park is not a priority at this time.

## 6.13 Playgrounds

Pelham has 12 playgrounds located throughout the town. Most playgrounds have artificial turf surfacing and are well maintained, with many structures being newly replaced through a grant received by the Township. Many playgrounds also include outdoor fitness equipment for use by adults and seniors.

Figure 24: Distribution of Municipal Playgrounds





Input from the community survey indicated that 42% respondent households participated in use of playground equipment, and was an important activity to 76% of respondents, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> out of 27 facility types. It is common to see strong support for playgrounds and **other children's services in surveys of this nature.**

To ensure accessibility, playgrounds should be located within 500 metres of residential neighbourhoods (excluding rural areas). New playgrounds will need to be constructed in new residential areas (e.g., East Fonthill) to meet this target. In central Fonthill, there is a gap in playground distribution between Haist Street and Pelham Street in the vicinity of Pancake Lane. This is an area that is already developed, but would benefit from the provision of a playground to meet the intent of 500-metre distribution target. Furthermore, despite not being a municipal facility, the playground at Gordon L. Klager Park is very old and should be considered for replacement.

## Recommendations

- #23 Establish a target of providing playgrounds within 500-metres of all urban residential areas. Where necessary, install playgrounds in new subdivisions (e.g., East Fonthill, East Fenwick) and seek opportunities to address gaps (e.g., central Fonthill).
- #24 Work with the Fonthill Lions Club to advance the replacement of the playground equipment at Gordon L. Klager Park.

## 6.14 Outdoor Skating Rinks

Pelham currently has one outdoor skating rink, consisting of a flooded space next to Fire Station #3 in North Pelham. Improving or developing outdoor ice rinks was identified as a high priority for 64% of community survey respondents, ranking 11<sup>th</sup> out of 27 facility types. Ice skating is one of several outdoor activities that has grown in interest during the pandemic as people sought safe outdoor places to recreate.

While recreational skating is a Canadian tradition, the ability to maintain natural outdoor ice rinks has become increasingly difficult due to climate change. Natural outdoor rinks are more affordable to build and operate than refrigerated pads, although they can be unreliable when temperatures are near or above freezing. The Town should explore safe and cost-effective ways to facilitate public outdoor ice skating on a demand-driven basis. For example, the Town may facilitate community-supported volunteer rinks within appropriate park types; this requires access to nearby parking, water connections, and consideration of washroom facilities.

## Recommendations

- #25 Consider opportunities to support outdoor skating through park development and redevelopment projects, including volunteer-led rinks in appropriate park sites.

## 6.15 Other Recreation Facilities

The Town occasionally provides other recreation facilities within its parks system that are not specifically addressed within this Master Plan (e.g., bocce courts, etc.). There are no service targets for these types of facilities as there are several factors that need to be considered including, but not limited to, park context, geography, market demand, alternate providers, partnership opportunities, and/or available resources.

Requests for municipal participation in capital projects not identified in this Plan can be expected. In the interest of providing facilities and recreation options that support healthy, active lifestyles for residents, the Town should be open to exploring and discussing opportunities for new and emerging activities. The Town may consider low-risk participation in projects that address unmet demands, make use of underutilized resources, promote healthy living/physical activity, encourage public access, and support other municipal objectives. The Master Plan may be used as a starting point in determining if a proposal serves a priority need in the community.

More specifically, the evaluation of potential capital partnerships should require the proponent to provide information to the satisfaction of the Town, such as (but not limited to):

- a comprehensive business plan, including a needs analysis and operating and capital costs;
- **the organization's financial capacity** (including fundraising commitments) and a demonstration of the sustainability of the project;
- detailed evidence of community benefits; and
- full risk analysis.

### Recommendations

- #26 Municipal provision of recreation facilities not explicitly addressed within this Master Plan will generally not be made a priority, but may be considered in partnership with local organizations where demonstrated demand exists. A standardized partnership framework should be used to evaluate and respond to such requests.



## 7. Arts & Culture



Like many small municipalities, Pelham is home to an active arts and cultural community consisting of business owners, artisans, and other organizations that are dedicated to enriching the lives of others through visual, performing, and creative arts.

This section examines municipal arts and cultural assets, policies and programs. For the purposes of this Plan, **“culture” is broadly defined as the arts, cultural industries and heritage resources.** It includes (but is not limited to) the following opportunities and assets:

- artistic talent and expression (music, theatre, dance, visual art, film, media arts and literature);
- built heritage;
- natural heritage landscapes;
- museums and archives; and
- events, festivals and tourism.

#### A Brief History of Pelham

The following summary provides valuable context for understanding Pelham’s local history and cultures. The reader is encouraged to refer to the Town of Pelham’s 2012 Heritage Master Plan and 2013 Cultural Master Plan for more detail.

*Pelham is situated on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. While Pelham was likely occupied for thousands of years by hunter gatherer groups, no permanent agricultural villages have been found.*

*The area was settled mainly by Quakers and Mennonites as early as 1790, with many fleeing persecution in the United States for their political or religious beliefs. Being the highest point on the Niagara peninsula, the area is defined by its geography, with the northern part being quite hilly, the interior being comprised of gently rolling hills, and the southern portion near the Welland River being predominately flat. This terrain, **combined with the area’s rich soils and warm climate, allowed agriculture to thrive for many decades.** The rural-agricultural environment includes the Short Hills, vineyards, orchards, sand quarries on the Fonthill Kame, and Canada’s oldest sugar maple tree.*

*Pelham incorporated as a town in 1970; the area is an amalgamation of the five historical communities of Fonthill, North Pelham, Ridgeville, Effingham and Fenwick. Today, thoroughfares and scenic routes through the town continue to offer travelers a **glimpse of the town’s past.** The location of the town presents a unique opportunity with respect to the preservation of local culture. **Pelham’s geographical centrality in the Region has allowed the town to benefit from Niagara’s industrial development yet is distant enough to maintain its small town charm, a characteristic that continues to attract new residents to the municipality.***



## 7.1 Cultural Spaces & Amenities

There is a limited base of cultural facilities in Pelham. One of the **Town's most prominent** assets is the bandshell in Peace Park, which is the host site for the Summer Chill concert series and several other well-attended events. Public libraries are also provided in Fonthill and Fenwick.

The Town does not operate any art galleries, theatres, museums or archives, although the Town does accommodate theatre groups and manages an art exhibit space within the Meridian Community Centre, in addition to multi-use spaces that can be used for various activities (e.g., Old Town Hall). Pelham is also home to a variety of historic sites and heritage buildings maintained by private interests and other sectors.

Many creative and visual arts take place in home-based or private studios, area churches and schools, or spaces outside of the Pelham. For example, the nearby City of Welland is home to several notable cultural spaces that may also serve Pelham residents to a degree, such as the Welland Museum, Welland Community Wellness Complex performance theatre (385-person capacity), and Merritt Park Floating Stage and Amphitheatre (750-person capacity).

### Cultural Master Plan

Municipal policies and investments provide the foundation through which the arts and cultural community can grow. For example, the Town encourages the preservation and **maintenance of the Town's historic assets through its Official Plan, Heritage Master Plan,** and related strategic plans and policies.

Additionally, a Cultural Master Plan (see Appendix B for a summary) is in place, but is nearing the end of its 10-year horizon. Developed in 2013, this strategic planning document provides a framework of action to direct, sustain and leverage cultural investment in **Pelham, founded on the following vision: "Where people, arts, history, and creativity connect". The Plan focuses on inter-generational and inter-community participation, local and regional partnership opportunities for cultural tourism and heritage celebration, and celebrates the Town's heritage identity.**

Based on increasing attendance at events and an increasing array of arts-related programs at the Meridian Community Centre, the Town has been effective at implementing many of the recommendations from the Cultural Master Plan. This includes growth in cultural programming and partnerships, new and expanded promotional tactics, event support and expansion, and more.

In the short-term, the Town is encouraged to update the Cultural Master Plan to re-examine facility needs given the recent development of the Meridian Community Centre, as well as to explore how Pelham can further strengthen relationships and promote growing opportunities. There is also value in reviewing leading trends in the arts and culture sector (e.g., creative cultural hubs, interactive and participatory experiences, placemaking, etc.) and to assess their applicability to the local community.



## Cultural Hub

In terms of facilities, the 2013 Cultural Master Plan supports a three-fold approach to the provision of cultural spaces:

1. Developing new spaces and partnerships for new spaces: The Cultural Plan recommended that an infrastructure needs analysis be prepared to guide the design and functional programming for a future cultural facility (this has not been completed). Further, the Plan recommends the development of a new cultural complex and hub in partnership with others, potentially housing art/gallery space, small classrooms/public studio spaces (potentially a community theatre/performance space), conference and meeting rooms.
2. Optimizing existing space: The Cultural Plan speaks to using future recreation spaces (e.g., Meridian Community Centre) for cultural gatherings, education, participation, and public art.
3. Adaptive re-use of spaces for cultural activity (e.g., restoration of heritage-significant buildings to accommodate multiple uses): The Cultural Plan suggests restoring heritage-significant buildings (e.g., Old Town Hall) to accommodate multiple uses, including the potential for a creative hub.

To date, the need for an arts centre has not been fully demonstrated. Demand for arts space was not identified as a strong priority through the Master Plan survey, with performing arts spaces and art centres ranking 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> respectively amongst 27 types of parks, recreation and cultural facility types. While only 26% of survey respondents indicated that they have visited theatres, art galleries or museums since 2019, 47% have attended special events in parks and 73% want to see more events in parks.

It was indicated that the community lacks archival space (formerly housed in the basement of the Fonthill library) and broader trends in the sector suggest that there is growing interest in cultural gathering spaces and teaching/programming spaces that encourage collaboration, innovation, and creation. Additional consultation with the arts and cultural sector, as well as the broader public, is needed to establish a deeper understanding of potential gaps and interests. Space needs should be explored further through an update to the **Town's** Cultural Master Plan, and possibly through a subsequent business plan. One option for the Town to consider is repurposing surplus municipal buildings for arts and cultural uses prior to disposal.

Furthermore, where possible, new public spaces – such as the proposed civic square – **should consider designs that are “arts and culture-friendly” and that can accommodate performances, events, public art, and more.**

## Public Library

The **Town's 2008** Facilities Feasibility Study established a long-term goal of redeveloping the Fonthill library branch as part of the facility that would become the Meridian Community Centre, with the intent of consolidating both facilities into a single building. In September 2022, it was announced that the Town of Pelham received \$5.4 million in federal funding for the construction of a new 18,000 square foot library in Fonthill, to be located adjacent to the Meridian Community Centre. However, due to rising capital cost estimates, the new library is no longer being pursued. Rather, the Town will be focusing on renovations to the existing public library building at 43 Pelham Town Square.

Despite the library project not going forward at the Meridian Community Centre, there is merit in pursuing greater coordination between Lincoln Pelham Public Library and the Town to collaboratively plan and deliver community programs using municipal indoor and outdoor spaces. For example, there are many areas of programming (e.g., STEM classes, educational workshops, social events, arts classes, etc.) that may be considered to limit duplication of effort and enhance sharing of resources, including promotion and use of space. This may require the establishment of additional program and cultural space within the library as part of its future renovation. A service level agreement may be established to guide the respective roles and responsibilities of the Town and Library in this regard, giving recognition to the different audiences, mandates, resources, and cost recovery targets of the two parties.

## Public Art

Public art in Pelham currently takes the form of murals and temporary outdoor art installations structured around special events. Additionally, the Pelham arches in downtown Fonthill were originally built as a temporary structure for Pelham Summerfest, but recently reinstalled as a permanent feature. The Town has also taken steps to establish a public art installation at the East Fonthill gateway to the Town and art and/or water features are being contemplated for the future Pelham Civic Square project.

To guide these and other projects, the Town prepared a Public Art Master Plan in 2016 and **has established a Public Art Advisory Committee to oversee the Plan's implementation and** generally to advise Council on the advancement of arts and culture in Pelham.

Increasingly, municipalities are establishing public art programs, embedding policies within the Official Plans, and funding installations through the development approvals process (e.g., community benefits charges, voluntary contributions, etc.). **The Town of Pelham's** Official Plan supports the establishment of public art in parks, gateways and at the terminus of view corridors in the downtown (Section B1.2.5) and public art is also supported in the Downtown Master Plan for Fenwick and Fonthill. Funding to implement public art can also be secured by allocating a percentage (1%) of the capital cost of municipal projects, such as new civic buildings, parks, trails, etc. Additional policies requiring cash contributions for public art and integrating the recommendations within the Public Art Master Plan should be considered when the Town prepares its next Official Plan review.

Public art is often a symbol of a progressive municipality, showcasing a level of maturity and inspiration that appeals to prospective residents and employers. Parks and civic facilities **provide linkages to Pelham's natural heritage and facilitate healthy lifestyles; thus these public** spaces provide ideal opportunities for public art installations. Such features may provoke reflection on environmental issues, provide interactive elements to engage with children and families, be integrated with the design of the park such as benches, paving and pedestrian **bridges and celebrate the community's past, present, and future, and more.**

The Public Art Master Plan provides provide direction to the municipality with respect to the location, selection and management of public art, as well as maintaining a reserve fund to assist with development and maintenance. The Town should continue to take a proactive **approach that demonstrates Pelham's commitment to recognizing local artisans, supporting** arts and culture in the community, and creating inviting public spaces that are welcoming of **all residents. As a part of the Town's review of its Cultural Master Plan,** consideration should be given to further exploring strategies to encourage and guide public art in Pelham, as well as how public art can be integrated within indoor and outdoor public spaces to increase awareness and appreciation for the history, heritage and stories that are unique to Pelham.

## Recommendations

- #27 **Review the Town's 2013 Cultural Master Plan to update strategies for** promoting and supporting local arts and culture endeavours, including the assessment of programming and space requirements. Revisit the recommendation to develop an Arts and Culture Community Hub, with a focus on partnerships that may support third-party operation within an adaptive re-use building.
- #28 Consider creating a service level agreement to support greater collaboration between the Recreation, Culture & Wellness Department and the Lincoln Pelham Public Library regarding program delivery and promotion.
- #29 Examine opportunities for public art within all park and public space capital projects, as well as and temporary pop-up projects in underutilized civic spaces. Explore approaches to funding public art through the land development process and consider implementing policies through the next Official Plan review.

## 7.2 Cultural Programming & Events

At its core, culture is about the shared experiences between people that connect a community. The Town recognizes that the availability of arts and culture opportunities is very desirable, fostering vibrant and liveable neighbourhoods, contributing to local knowledge, and supporting the local economy. The arts and cultural community in Pelham provides several benefits, such as:

- Creating a sense of local pride through community building, placemaking, and providing quality experiences;
- Working together as a loose collective to promote the arts and support a growing creative class (artists, architects, designers, chefs, etc.); and
- Generating tourism/cultural tourism benefits through unique cultural events and talents.

With the support of Council, the Town of Pelham invests in its arts and cultural system primarily through an extensive schedule of events, programs, and community development **opportunities. Led by the RCW Department's** Culture and Community Enhancement Programmer, the Town has actively developed partnerships with local businesses and volunteer groups that support festivals and special events, as well as the display of local **artists' works at the Meridian Community Centre**. The Town of Pelham is also working to create a local online artist directory to serve both the cultural community and the general public in discover local artisans, performers, teachers, art, music, photography, etc.

The provision of arts and cultural programs is important for people of all ages, but is particularly critical for younger children and older adults – two key demographic groups in Pelham. Involvement in the arts facilitates self-expression, which in turn can develop feelings of confidence and self-worth for children and youth. Participation in the arts at an early age can lead to life-long involvement, something that is also important during older adulthood to minimize cognitive deterioration, dementia, and social isolation.

Examples of cultural and special events organized or sponsored by the Town Pelham include (not a complete list):

- Ballroom Dance Social
- Big Band Dance Night
- Canada Day Parade & Canada Day in the Park
- Comedy Shows
- Culture Days
- Fenwick Lions Spring Parade
- Lincoln Pelham Public Library programming and resources (various)
- **National Indigenous People's Day, workshops and flag raising**
- Pelham Art Festival (Southern Ontario's premier spring art exhibition)
- Santa Claus Parade
- SAY IT on Stage (Seniors and Youth Intergenerational Theatre on Stage)
- Summer Chill (**live music, farmer's market, etc.**)
- Summerfest
- Theatre Series
- Youth Theatre and Summer Camps (Cabar-EH)

Through the consultation process, suggestions were made with respect to expanding arts programming in Pelham, such as art, dance and music classes for younger children, as well as events that celebrate culture and food. Finding qualified instructors will be an important step to deliver the arts and cultural programs that the community desires, which underscores the importance of forming strong partnerships to meet these needs. For example, the Town may wish to bring in local artists to share their craft through registered programming.

Festivals and events are a defining aspect of life in Pelham and were consistently identified as an area that the Town meets or exceeds resident expectations. The Town recognizes the positive impact that festivals and events have on residents, the local business community, and cultural tourism and has established a level of service that would rival that of a much larger municipality. Event planning, coordination, promotion, and implementation are notable strengths of the **Town's staff** team. Further, many of these events take place in parks (in addition to the Bandshell, the Town has a portable stage), animating these public spaces and drawing in visitors.

The trends research (see Appendix C) suggests that event attendance is growing along **with the appreciation for arts and culture across the country. Residents' value authentic** experiences and the unique attributes of communities. People are also experiencing and appreciating arts and culture in less traditional ways and have increasing expectations for **programs and events. With Ontario's population becoming increasingly culturally diverse, a** broadening of arts and cultural activities and interests can be expected in the region.

## Recommendations

- #30 Seek opportunities to expand arts programming and build relationships with local partners that bolster participation and optimize under-utilized spaces.
- #31 Collect cultural asset and participation data (e.g., event attendance, revenues, sponsorships, programs, etc.) to assist in measuring growth in the cultural sector.



## 8. Parks & Trails



Public parks are important places for sporting events, casual leisure activities, special events, building a sense of community, and social belonging. To ensure that the Town keeps pace with land-based demands, this section examines Pelham's parks and open space system, along with future requirements and policy considerations.

## 8.1 Parkland Form & Function

### Parkland Classification and Inventory

Most municipalities use parkland classification systems to guide park development, design and level of service (including maintenance). By identifying intended uses, size, form, function and/or level of amenity, a parkland classification system allows the public to understand what a park may include and positions parkland to be compatible with adjacent land uses.

At present, the Town lacks a formal classification system to define the function, permitted uses, and maintenance levels of each type of park. While Pelham's Official Plan includes reference to various park types, it lacks definition and consistency.

To establish a consistent and town-wide approach that reflects the evolving role of parks in the Town – including a greater emphasis on events, active uses, passive uses and accessibility – an approach for classifying parks is recommended herein. This model blends the effective elements of past approaches with one that is based on park functions and experiences, where all parks have a clear purpose and work together as a system to complement each other and reduce duplication. This will enable the Town to direct its financial and operational resources where they are needed most.

Moving forward, it is recommended that the Town consider the following proposed parkland and open space classification system:

1. **Parkland:** refers to all lands owned, leased and/or managed by the Town and classified as Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, and Village Squares. Parkland typically consists of tableland suitable for the development or installation of built recreational or civic amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, gardens, etc.) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate natural features.
2. **Open Space:** refers to all lands owned, leased and/or managed by the Town (and sometimes other public entities) and classified as Natural Areas and Open Space Linkages. These sites generally have no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as environmental protection/conservation, stormwater management, buffers, etc. The Town may choose to assume open space lands, they should not generally be accepted as part of the parkland dedication requirements.

More detail on the proposed classification system is presented in the tables on the following pages.

Table 13: Proposed Parkland and Open Space Classification Hierarchy

Classification	General Description / Function / Design	Service Area	Current Town-wide Provision	Target Park Size
<b>PARKLAND</b>				
Community Park	Community Parks are used by groups of residents and tourists for community events, festivals and active recreation. They may contain athletic amenities for organized recreation (such as sports fields, support buildings, and community-wide recreation amenities), as well as pathways, pavilions <b>and/or unique elements that make the park a "destination"</b> . Full services (water, sanitary, etc.) are generally required. <i>Example: Centennial Park</i>	Town-wide and beyond	1.79 hectares per 1,000 population	3.0 hectares or more
Neighbourhood Park	<b>Neighbourhood Parks primarily support children's play activities and are</b> often situated within residential areas to promote walkability. Neighbourhood Parks contain playgrounds, local-level play features and activity areas, seating, and/or passive open space intended to serve the immediate area. Unlike community parks, most do not have off-street parking, although they may be coordinated with school sites. These parks <b>may be referred to as "parkettes in the residential neighbourhoods" within</b> the East Fonthill Secondary Plan. <i>Example: Woodstream Park</i>	Surrounding neighbourhood (500-metre radius)	0.73 hectares per 1,000 population	0.4 to 3.0 hectares
Village Square	Village Squares are publicly-owned lands that are located in highly visible and accessible locations, typically in gateways, commercial areas, or higher density mixed use areas. <b>They serve to support the Town's social and cultural fabric and create a sense of place for pedestrians.</b> They are typically characterized by hardscaped areas for events and gatherings, public art, seating areas, related civic uses, etc. These parks may be referred to as <b>"parkettes in the commercial/ employment centre"</b> within the East Fonthill Secondary Plan. <i>Example: Proposed Civic Square</i>	Localized	0.02 hectares per 1,000 population	Less than 0.4 hectares
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>				
Natural Area	Natural Areas are municipal open space and natural properties used for conservation and/or passive recreational activities (e.g., walking, nature appreciation, education). These lands will be largely undeveloped and contain open space or natural heritage features such as woodlots, wetlands, conservation habitat, etc. <i>Example: Bradshaw Memorial Park</i>	Variable	Not applicable	Variable
Open Space Linkage	Open Space Linkages – typically comprised of trails, linear parks or open space parcels – provide connections within the open space system (for habitat) and between local points of interest (for pedestrians and/or cyclists). They consist largely of unimproved open space and/or trail infrastructure. They may be Town-owned or controlled (e.g., easement, agreement, etc.). <i>Example: Portions of the Steve Bauer Trail</i>	Variable	Not applicable	Variable (minimum 7.5 metre width)

Table 14: Suitability of Potential Amenities by Park Type

Facility/Amenity	Parkland				
	Community Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	Village Squares	Natural Areas	Open Space Linkages
Recreation Facilities					
Ball Diamond	●				
Basketball / Multi-use Court	●	●			
Community Garden Plot	►	►		►	
Off-Leash Dog Park	►			►	
Outdoor Rink	●				
Pavilion / Shelter	●	►	►	●	
Pickleball Court	●				
Playground	●	●	►	►	
Recreational Trail	●	●	►	●	●
Skateboard / Bike Park	●				
Soccer Field – full size	●				
Soccer Field – mini	●	●			
Splash Pad	●				
Spray Mister		►	►		
Tennis Court	●	●			
Park Amenities					
Bike Rack	●	●	►	►	
Casual Play Area / Open Space	●	●	►	►	
Naturalized Areas	●	►		●	►
Parking Lot	●			►	
Potable Water Source	●		►		
Seating (fixed or portable)	●	●	●	►	►
Washrooms	●				

● = Permitted; ► = Conditional/Limited

Note: This table identifies potentially suitable uses by park type and is to be used as a guideline only. Site-specific analysis is required to inform park planning and design.



The Town of Pelham's parks system consists of 17 sites accounting for 46.5 hectares (39.5 hectares, excluding woodlots) of municipally-owned and managed active parkland; this includes the Gordon L. Klager Lions Park which is privately owned but serves an important public function. "Active parkland" refers to municipal lands that are suitable for the development or installation of built recreational amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, etc.) and may be used for both organized and unorganized activities, although these parks may also incorporate natural features. Active parkland is the focus of parkland dedication under the Planning Act.

Table 15 – Inventory of Parks (Active Parks only)

Name	Hectares	Classification	Community
Centennial Park*	16.29	Community	Fenwick
Cherry Ridge Park	1.02	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Civic Square (undeveloped)	0.44	Village Square	Fonthill
East Fonthill Park (undeveloped)	2.73	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Gordon L. Klager Park (private, Fonthill Lions)	2.16	Community	Fonthill
Harold Black Park	4.77	Community	Fonthill
Hurleston Community Park	0.27	Neighbourhood**	Fonthill
Lookout Park	1.07	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Marlene Stewart Streit Park*	4.73	Community	Fonthill
North Pelham Park	3.76	Community	North Pelham
Peace Park	0.93	Community	Fonthill
Pelham Corners Park	1.13	Neighbourhood**	Fonthill
River Estates Park	0.20	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Rolling Meadows Park	2.03	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Saffron Meadows Park	1.5	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Weiland Heights Park	0.68	Neighbourhood	Fonthill
Woodstream Park	2.83	Neighbourhood**	Fonthill
Total Active Parks	46.53		
Active Parkland per 1,000 residents (2021)	2.55 ha/1000		
Active Parkland per 1,000 residents, less woodlots (2021)	2.17 ha/1000		

Source: Town of Pelham and Region of Niagara GIS, 2022

Per capita ratios are based on a 2021 population of 18,192 persons.

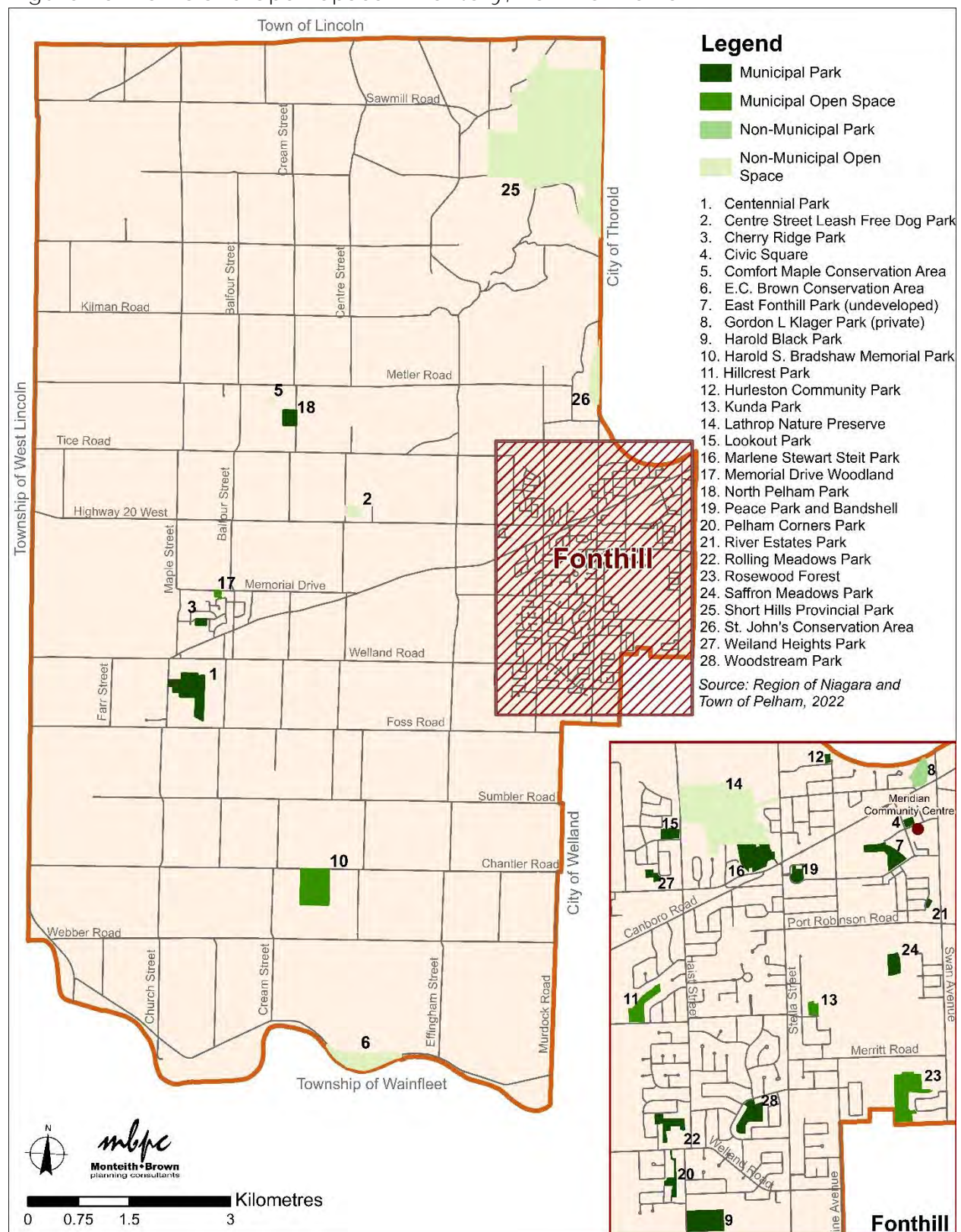
\* These parks contain sizable woodlots that may be deducted from their overall size to arrive at a more accurate calculation of active parkland. For Centennial Park, the woodlot is 4.7 hectares (remaining active parkland is 11.59 hectares). For Marlene Stewart Streit Park, the woodlot is 2.36 hectares (remaining active parkland is 2.37 hectares).

\*\* These parks are classified as "Community Parks" in the Town's Official Plan.

The map on the following page illustrates the location of these active parks and open space sites.



Figure 25: Parks and Open Space Inventory, Town of Pelham



The previous map also shows six municipally-owned and/or managed open space properties totalling 32.7 hectares. This includes the Centre Street Leash Free Park which is owned by the Region of Niagara, but excludes other open space lands owned by the **province and conservation authorities**. “Open space lands” refers to sites with no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as environmental protection and conservation, stormwater management, buffers, etc. Open space lands are not a direct focus of this plan.

Table 16: Inventory of Municipal Open Spaces

Name	Hectares	Classification	Community
Centre Street - Leash Free Park (Region)	2.27	n/a	Rural
Harold S. Bradshaw Memorial Park	20.44	Natural Area**	Rural
Hillcrest Park	2.61	Natural Area**	Fonthill
Kunda Park	0.77	Natural Area	Fonthill
Memorial Drive Woodland	0.48	Natural Area	Fenwick
Rosewood Forest	6.1	Natural Area	Fonthill
<b>Total Open Spaces</b>	<b>32.67</b>		

Source: Town of Pelham and Region of Niagara GIS, 2022

\*\* These parks are classified as “Community Parks” in the Town’s Official Plan.

Unless otherwise noted, this inventory excludes the following open space lands owned and/or managed by non-municipal agencies, including:

- Comfort Maple Conservation Area (Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority), 0.1 ha
- E.C. Brown Conservation Area (Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority), 15.13 ha
- Lathrop Nature Preserve (Nature Conservancy of Canada), 26.0 ha
- Short Hills Provincial Park (Ontario Parks), 251.3 ha
- St. Johns Conservation Area (Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority), 32.4 ha (7.4 ha in Pelham and 25.0 ha in Thorold)

### Recommendations

- #32 **Use the Master Plan’s parkland classification hierarchy to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level and the amenities that they provide. Incorporate the parkland classification hierarchy within the Town’s next Official Plan Review.**
- #33 Update the parks and open space inventory database and mapping regularly to assist in the assessment of land requirements.

### Parkland Design

The size, use and location of each park is will generally define its function and value. Some of a **park’s** key roles can include accommodating special events, athletics, passive recreation, open space buffers, green space and habitat conservation, beautification and more.

Through recent investment, the Town has been expanding the range of recreation opportunities available within its parks system, with consideration of emerging amenities

such as splash pads, pickleball courts, and more. Although new parkland will be required to serve future residents and interests, a focus should be placed on making the best use of existing park sites, keeping parks relevant considering changing demographics, and improving connectivity within the Town.

Designing parks requires a strong understanding of community needs, contemporary design practices, operational requirements, and programmatic considerations. From our observations, **the Town's parks system is well maintained, but some older parks contain** aging buildings (e.g., washrooms) and equipment, lack sufficient parking, lack barrier-free features, and lack potential for expansion. Park renewal and new park development projects provide opportunities to address these some of these shortcomings.

Most of **Pelham's** parks are in good condition and the Town has recently invested in improvements at several locations with assistance from senior government grants. However, strategic improvements and enhancements will help the Town to respond to growth pressures, changing demographics, asset management, community priorities, etc.

Aside from initiatives that improve health, safety and environmental protection, park renewal projects should focus on those sites that receive the heaviest use. This means an emphasis on Community Parks. The possibilities for parkland renewal are limitless, but may include enhanced landscaping, provision of shade structures and other comfort amenities, improved parking, facility upgrades and more.

Some initial ideas received through the public input process are presented in the following table. The implementation of these and other parkland renewal and redevelopment projects should be accompanied by public consultation, park-specific master plans, and facility fit diagrams to obtain accurate costing associated with any capital works. The timing of these projects will be influenced by needs determined through consultation, demand indicators, coordination of works, and the availability of funding.

Table 17: Preliminary Ideas for Improvements to Selected Park Sites

Park	Examples of Possible Improvements
Centennial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade the washrooms (barrier-free) to improve service to the splash pad, playground and sports fields; full renovation or replacement of support building may be required, potentially as part of the proposed Fenwick Lions hall redevelopment</li> <li>Addition of 3<sup>rd</sup> full-size lighted soccer field at the rear (as identified in the 2003 Centennial Park Master Plan)</li> <li>Establish a support building (washrooms, storage) to serve the soccer complex in partnership with Pelham Soccer Club</li> <li>In the longer-term, establish a parks depot (building and works yard) to improve on-site maintenance and create efficiencies</li> <li>Improve parking in coordination with other park improvements, including consideration of secondary exit (through the firehall property) during special events</li> </ul>

Park	Examples of Possible Improvements
Marlene Stewart Streit Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade the washrooms (barrier-free) to improve service to the splash pad, playground and pool</li> <li>Replace outdoor pool (grant funding) by 2025/26</li> <li>Expand parking, to degree possible</li> <li>Enhance safe access to site from Highway 20 – consider establishing egress roadway exiting to Elm Street</li> </ul>
North Pelham Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redevelop tennis court / basketball pad as a multi-use court for basketball and ball hockey</li> <li>Add a small pavilion</li> <li>Upgrades to Diamond 1 (fencing, dugouts, bleachers)</li> </ul>
Rolling Meadows Park (former arena site)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect platform tennis clubhouse to municipal water and address parking issues (will be resolved as adjacent residential lands are developed)</li> <li>Prepare a concept plan to guide the redevelopment of the former soccer field into alternative uses</li> </ul>
Harold Black Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve soccer field drainage to degree possible</li> <li>Upgrade the washrooms (barrier-free) to improve service and universal accessibility</li> <li>Convert softball diamond to lit full size soccer field</li> <li>Relocate the play structure to a more accessible and prominent location in the park</li> <li>Add lights to hardball diamond if needed</li> </ul>
Civic Square Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare architectural designs to support future funding opportunities, grant applications, and the development of the Civic Square planned at the northeast corner of Meridian and Wellspring Way, across from the Meridian Community Centre</li> </ul>

The following are best practices that the Town may adopt in designing new or redeveloped parks.

- Promote universal accessibility in all parks, such as wheelchair access, pathways and ramps to play structure areas, etc.
- Provide both junior and senior play opportunities in parks with playgrounds. Use artificial turf surfacing for play structures, where possible. Ensure appropriate sight lines to play areas.
- Consider activities and programming for the growing older adult population, including increased daytime use and emerging activities such as pickleball.
- Unstructured space within a park that allows for a wide variety of active and passive uses throughout all seasons is considered an asset.
- Locate shade structures and trees central to amenities to protect users from the harmful effects of the sun. Consideration may be given to shade pavilions, shade structures over playground equipment and tree planting.
- Provide informal seating opportunities. Locate seating in shaded areas, along accessible routes, and in proximity to active amenities.



- g) Maintained pathways should be a minimum of 3.0m wide, unless otherwise required. Provide clearance along pathways (waste receptacles, benches, trees, bike racks, etc.) for maintenance vehicles.
- h) Locate waste and recycle receptacles close to park entrances to facilitate maintenance. This includes pet waste receptacles in selected parks and trailhead areas.
- i) Select materials and equipment (e.g., park furniture) that are not easily vandalized and can be easily sourced for repair and/or replacement.
- j) Provide consistent branded signage at all public parks identifying the park name, address and current municipal branding. Additional signage should include emergency contact information and regulatory requirements (e.g., non-permitted uses, park hours, etc.).
- k) Encourage public art within appropriate park locations and in keeping with relevant municipal guidelines and in consultation with the Public Art Advisory Committee.
- l) Adding community vegetable garden plots (with access to a water source and parking) and orchards to expand urban agriculture opportunities and local food security.
- m) Use non-invasive native species in all plantings.
- n) Follow CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles to enhance community security and safety features.
- o) Include buffer space between pathways and adjacent lot lines (minimum of 5.0 metres when abutting a residential property and 2.0 metres when abutting other land uses), as well as high-activity zones and residential lot lines.
- p) Provide naturalized buffers adjacent to natural features. Where appropriate, consider the piloting of naturalization initiatives and pollinator gardens in under-utilized portions of parks to support habitat creation and other environmental objectives.

Additionally, parks help us achieve many of our environmental goals through their ability to mitigate flooding, reduce our carbon footprint, cool urban areas, and build more resilient public spaces. A well-connected and equitably distributed parks system can also reduce vehicle travel and promote active forms of transportation and leisure (cycling, walking, cross-country skiing, etc.). The Town is encouraged to explore ways in which the parks system can contribute to its environmental goals.

### Recommendations

- #34 Maintain a commitment to universal accessibility, safety and comfort within **the Town's parks system. Regularly consult with the Joint** Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike racks, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types to address the needs of all age groups
- #35 Undertake park amenity condition assessments on a regular basis to **inform the Town's asset management plan and long**-term capital plan.



- #36 Identify and plan for additional park renewal and redevelopment projects that address aging infrastructure and capital improvements. Candidates for consideration in the short-term include Centennial Park (e.g., washrooms, support building, new soccer field, etc.), Marlene Stewart Streit Park (e.g., access/egress improvements, washrooms, etc.), and Rolling Meadows Park (concept plan development). Engage stakeholders and the public when designing new and redeveloped parks.
- #37 Prepare design plans for the Pelham Civic Square to support potential **funding opportunities (e.g., grant applications) and the site's future** development.
- #38 Establish consistent and high quality signage at all municipal facilities, parks and trailheads to enhance branding and wayfinding.
- #39 To guide the design of developer-**built parks, formalize the Town's** requirements for parkland design and development through a Park and Trail Design and Development Manual.

## 8.2 Parkland Needs

An appropriate level and equitable distribution of parkland is critical to ensuring a high quality of life and maximizing accessibility to services and amenities that achieve community objectives. Further, there is a growing need for more parkland to serve the increasing number of residents.

Most municipalities use population-based targets to calculate and plan parkland supply. A parkland target is particularly important because it is becoming more complex and costly to secure quality parcels for parkland within new higher density forms of development.

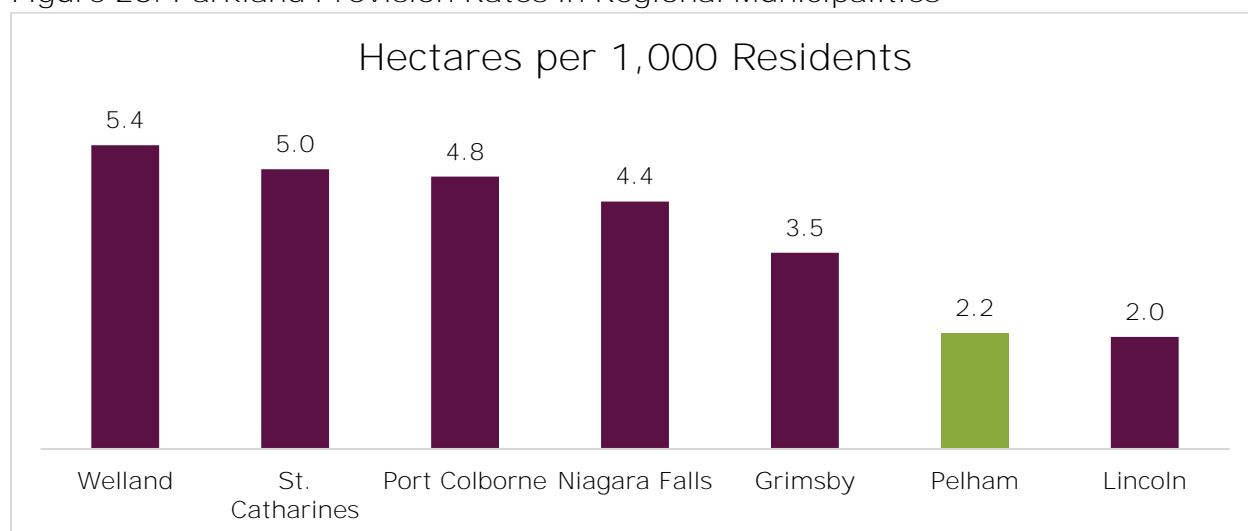
**The Town's current parkland provision rate is 2.17 hectares per 1,000 residents,** excluding open space parcels and woodlots within community parks. Comparable urban/rural municipalities typically strive to achieve provision rates in the range of 2 to 3 hectares per 1,000 residents to meet their active recreational needs associated with sports fields, playgrounds, courts and more. Actual provision rates are often much higher, sometimes exceeding 5 hectares per 1,000 residents. Pelham is near the bottom end of this recommended range.

**A 2019 report examining large parks in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe found that Niagara Region ranked second lowest (behind Toronto) of the seven Greater Golden Horseshoe regions in parkland space per resident<sup>1</sup>. Niagara Region's parkland provision rate was** approximately 3 hectares of parkland per 1000 residents. The following chart illustrates the parkland provision rates of other municipalities in the region with approved parks plans.

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<sup>1</sup> Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Credit Valley Conservation Authority. The State of Large Parks in Ontario's Golden Horseshoe. [https://greeninfrastructureontario.org/app/uploads/2019/06/StateofParks\\_Report-Final.pdf](https://greeninfrastructureontario.org/app/uploads/2019/06/StateofParks_Report-Final.pdf)

Figure 26: Parkland Provision Rates in Regional Municipalities



Source: Council-approved Master Plans (2015-2022). Published data for Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Thorold, Wainfleet, West Lincoln was not available.

Note: some figures may include open space lands as these were not separately itemized in the reports.

**Most of Pelham's larger parks were acquired decades ago.** For many years, the parkland dedication tools within the Planning Act existed to respond primarily to the needs of communities that grew through lower density subdivision and greenfield site development. This served Pelham well, however, as the cost of land and residential densities rise, changes to the Planning Act (most recently through Bill 23) have reduced parkland requirements. While **the Town's** recent park improvements have gone a long way toward meeting current needs, **Pelham's** parkland supply is not keeping pace with growth.

Park demand is influenced by several factors, such as distribution and proximity to residential areas, non-municipal providers, urban density, population composition, amenity needs, existing park types, community objectives, and public input. For example, **Pelham's** population has a high proportion of older adults; thus, the demand for land-intensive park amenities such as sports fields may be lower, suggesting that a conservative provision target is in order. Conversely, community input indicates that the parks system is highly valued by residents and efforts should be made to ensure that provision levels remain appropriate – 94% of survey respondents indicated that parks for casual use, such as walking, picnicking and unstructured play were important to them.

**Our observation of the Town's parks system is that most sites** – especially Community Parks – are fully developed. The only significant park with even modest expansion potential is Centennial Park, which has land for one additional soccer field (although this would necessitate the removal of a portion of an existing woodlot). As Pelham grows, these parks could be subject to overuse which may lead to an accelerated need for renewal or redesign. In addition, most parks have little to no opportunity to add additional amenities as new demands emerge.

Further, as equity and accessibility are key elements of any parks system, it is recommended that the Town continue to strive to provide parkland in populated areas that are void of any park facilities. A review of parkland distribution **finds that the Town's parks** system provides good geographic coverage in **Pelham's** populated areas, although a notable gap exists in central Fonthill (generally in the vicinity of Pancake Lane between

Haist Street and Pelham Street). Although this is largely a mature residential area, infill opportunities or development within nearby secondary plan areas may offer potential to partially resolve the shortfall.

On the basis of the previous analysis, a minimum Town-wide target of 2.2 hectares of parkland per 1,000 residents (excluding open space lands) is recommended. This target should be **included in the Town's Official Plan and** used to guide development applications and other planning exercises.

As shown in the following table, there is a current shortfall of 0.5 hectares of parkland (excluding open space), growing to 8.0 hectares by 2031 (for a total of 47.5 hectares). New parklands should include a mixture of active park types, including a larger community park (3 hectares or larger) to serve the Fonthill community, most likely in South Fonthill.

Table 18: Current and Projected Parkland Needs to 2031

Current Needs (2021)	
Current Population	18,192 persons
Current Parkland Supply, excluding open spaces and woodlots	39.5 ha
Current Parkland Needs, based on 2.2 ha/1000	40.0 ha
Current Parkland Shortfall (2021)	0.5 ha
Future Needs (2031)	
Forecasted Population	21,560 persons
Future Parkland Needs, based on 2.2 ha/1000	47.5 ha
Future Parkland Shortfall (2031)	8.0 ha

Some of these needs will be addressed through the development process as there is an estimated 0.8+ hectares of parkland anticipated to be conveyed to the Town through draft plans of subdivision in East Fonthill and East Fenwick. At this time, the Town anticipates that parkland will be dedicated in the short-term from development in the following locations:

- Forest Park (0.74 ha neighbourhood park), East Fonthill
- Tanner Subdivision (0.05 ha park), East Fonthill
- 3 neighbourhood parks (size tbd), East Fenwick

## Recommendations

- #40 Maintain a minimum town-wide parkland provision rate of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 residents; this target excludes passive open space lands and woodlots. Approximately 8.0 additional hectares of parkland should be secured by 2031 to address gaps and meet growth-related needs. This should include a mixture of park types, including a larger community park (minimum 3 hectares) to serve the Fonthill community. Alternative acquisition strategies may be required to address the entirety of these needs.

## 8.3 Parkland Dedication & Acquisition Guidelines

### Parkland Dedication Policies

There are several provincial and municipal regulations, policies and guidelines governing the acquisition and location of parkland. Key documents include:

- **Planning Act:** Sections 42, 51.1 and 53 of the Ontario Planning Act establish the authority for the dedication of parkland and alternatives. The amount of parkland may vary depending on the application and project type. Further, the Town may require parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland from development and redevelopment projects.
- **Official Plan:** **The Town's Official Plan implements the Planning Act by setting out** objectives for public parkland, along with policies for dedication and development.
- **Parkland Dedication By-law:** The Town's Parkland Dedication By-law contains additional guidelines associated with parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu.

#### A note about changing Provincial planning legislation

In November 2022, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) partially received Royal Assent, impacting several provisions of the Planning Act and other pieces of legislation. The changes are significant and will impact how municipalities manage growth through implementation of the official plan and how they provide essential infrastructure and community services. Notable to this Master Plan, Bill 23 introduced changes that will reduce development charges revenue, community benefits charges, and parkland dedication requirements.

The changes to the Planning Act are significant and will reduce the amount of parkland the Town can receive as part of the development approval process.

Specific to parkland dedication, a summary of some of the recent changes introduced by Bill 23 include:

- The maximum alternative dedication rate has been reduced to 1 ha/600 units for parkland and 1 ha/1000 units for cash in lieu. Further, the legislation caps the maximum alternative dedication rates at 10% of the land for sites under 5 ha and at 15% for sites greater than 5 ha. This will dramatically reduce parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu for applications under Section 42 (development and redevelopment outside of plans of subdivision).
- Affordable residential units, attainable residential units, inclusionary zoning residential units, non-profit housing and additional residential unit developments are exempt from parkland dedication requirements. This will also reduce parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu amounts, possibly increasing the financial burden on taxpayers and/or leading to reduced levels of park service.
- Parkland rates are frozen as of the date that a zoning-by law or site plan application is filed. The freeze is effective for two years after approval. This will reduce cash-in-lieu payments to the Town.

- To take effect at a future date, developers will be able to identify the land they intend to convey to the municipality for parkland. These lands may include encumbered lands and privately-owned public space (POPs). If agreement cannot be reached, the municipality or the landowner can appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This may result in less suitable lands being accepted as parkland dedication.
- There is a new requirement for municipalities to spend or allocate at least 60% of the monies in their parkland reserve account at the beginning of each year.
- Municipalities are required to develop a parks plan prior to passing a parkland by-law. Previously, this requirement applied only to those municipalities that authorized use of the Section 42 alternative rate, but now includes those that include the standard rate (e.g., 5% of lands as per Section 51.1).

The full impact of these modifications will continue to be assessed for the months to come and will be considered by the Town through a future Official Plan review. Reduced levels of service are possible if funding is reduced to growth-related services as is anticipated. This Master Plan reflects the legislative framework that is in place at the time of approval.

The Town's **Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law** include several policies that provide guidance on parkland dedication rates (including the alternative parkland requirement), parkland exemptions or reductions, suitable lands, privately-owned public spaces, cash-in-lieu of parkland, parkland acquisition tools, parkland siting and design, land valuation, reserve funds, and more. These policies are comprehensive, but do not reflect the legislative changes brought about by Bill 23 and will need to be updated at the appropriate time.

Further, in order to apply the alternative rate, an update to the Parkland Dedication By-law is required, as is a Parks Plan. This Master Plan can be used as the basis for a Parks Plan<sup>2</sup> that supports the development of a new parkland dedication by-law, as well as updates to the **Town's Official Plan when it is brought into conformity with Provincial Policy and legislation.**

**Given Pelham's low ratio of parkland to population, it is recommended that the Town adopt a "parkland-first" approach** that directs staff to prioritize the dedication of land in appropriate locations rather than cash-in-lieu of parkland during the development review process. This means that:

- Policies and practices that support on-site parkland dedication and encourage front-end acquisition of parkland should be encouraged.
- Parkland will be required when development will result in a park block that: (i) is at least 0.4 hectares in size; or (ii) expands an existing park site.
- The Town may still accept cash-in-lieu of parkland when it is determined to be more beneficial, especially for development projects that would not meet the minimum requirements. For example, cash-in-lieu may be considered for higher density development or redevelopment sites that cannot physically accommodate a typical

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<sup>2</sup> Municipalities are required to develop a parks plan prior to passing a parkland dedication by-law. It is a requirement of the Planning Act that the municipality shall consult with every school board that has local jurisdiction.



park block (including village squares less than 0.4 hectares). In addition, privately-owned public spaces (POPS) may be permitted, subject to the execution of an agreement acceptable to the Town.

- All lands to be dedicated for park purposes must be to the Town's satisfaction and will not include restricted lands such as Environmental Protection designated lands, hazard lands, steep slopes, contaminated lands, easements, stormwater ponds, etc.

## Parkland Acquisition Alternatives

Some of the Town's future parkland requirements will be addressed through the conveyance of lands through the land development process. However, the recent changes to Planning Act will reduce the amount of land and/or funding available for parkland dedication, making it more difficult to achieve the Town's targets. To address local needs, the Town may need to consider methods beyond the land development process.

The following alternative strategies are the most likely options for addressing parkland gaps and shortfalls, generally listed in order of priority:

- 1) On an ongoing basis, evaluate proposed development applications for future park dedication and connectivity opportunities (e.g., sidewalks, trails, etc.).
- 2) Evaluate other municipal or public lands (not currently designated as parks) within these areas for their ability to be used as parkland or – at a minimum – accommodate a public playground.
- 3) Consider improvements to parks to enhance active and passive recreational opportunities in the vicinity of the growth area.
- 4) Encourage voluntary conveyance, donations, gifts and bequests from individuals or corporations.
- 5) Monitor real estate opportunities and seek to purchase (or swap) one or more properties that could be developed as a municipal park. This may be the highest cost option and would require additional resources.

## Recommendations

- #41 Seek to maximize parkland dedication through development and redevelopment applications, as well as alternative parkland acquisition strategies. **Update the Town's Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law** to align with amendments to the Ontario Planning Act and Bill 23, as well as the recommendations in this Master Plan. This Master Plan can be used as the basis for a parks plan that satisfies the legislative requirements.
- #42 **Adopt a "Parkland First" approach that prioritizes parkland conveyance** over cash-in-lieu of parkland in order to address parkland deficits. Parkland conveyances should: (a) be acceptable to the Town; (b) not include restricted lands; and (c) result in blocks that are at least 0.4 hectares in size (village squares may be smaller) or expand an existing park site.
- #43 Prepare a parkland acquisition strategy to enhance current and future community access to parks, with consideration of alternative acquisition tools (e.g., reallocation of surplus municipal lands, purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, etc.). Where applicable, work with area school

boards and other service providers to maximize community access to quality outdoor parks and recreation amenities on non-municipal sites.

## 8.4 Trails System

**Pelham's** recreational trail system connects users through active transportation means such as walking, cycling, snowshoeing, and more. Recent initiatives have established off-road recreational trails connecting Pelham to adjacent municipalities, while enhancing opportunities for the community to stay active throughout all seasons.

Further, the Town is designated as a Bicycle Friendly Community, the first community of its size to achieve the silver award level. This program encourages the development of attractive, safe, convenient and practical multi-use trails, sidewalks, and amenities that connect neighborhoods to civic destinations and that make walking or cycling viable options for residents.

The most notable recreational trail systems in the Town of Pelham include:

1. **Steve Bauer Trail** – This trail connects Pelham to Thorold in the north and Welland in the south, while offering several looped trail opportunities that connect parks and destinations within Fonthill. Most of the recreational trail was built on a former rail bed, although portions of the trail remain on-road and other portions link neighbourhoods via off-road trails. A six-kilometre segment running from Fonthill to Welland was recently paved and is cleared of snow to promote winter use.
2. **Gerry Berkhout Trail** – This trail runs from Centennial Park in Fenwick to Murdoch Road in Welland. It was established on a former rail bed and consists of a gravel path.
3. **John Nemy Trail** – This trail is within the Lathrop Nature Preserve (owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada) and can also be accessed from Marlene Stewart Streit Park.

**These aforementioned trails are publicized on the Town's website, including links to maps and rules of etiquette.** In addition, there are several smaller trails and pathways within subdivisions, as well as new trails being established in growth areas (e.g., Rice Road Multi-purpose Trail, East Fonthill Trail, etc.).

Pelham residents strongly support their trail system and the paved section of the Steve Bauer Trail and other paved trails has been particularly well received by the community. The Master Plan survey found that nature trails and paved trails were among the highest priorities for future capital investment (ranking 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively).

Strategies for developing cycling and trails routes are guided by the Pelham Active Transportation Committee, with reference to the **Pelham's 2016 Active Transportation (AT) Plan & Implementation Strategy**. Some key priority off-road recreational trail projects recommended in the AT Plan include:

- Establishing pedestrian and cycling networks within East Fonthill, including connections to the Steve Bauer Trail;
- Upgrading specific sections of the Steve Bauer Trail surface to asphalt (completed);
- Completing gaps within the Steve Bauer Trail; and
- Formalizing the connection to Lathrop Nature Preserve from Pelham Street.

In addition, the AT Plan identifies several desired connections that represent long-term projects, such as the use of unopened road allowances, improving winter maintenance, improving wayfinding and signage, etc.

Through the **Master Plan's** consultation process, there were also suggestions for creating a **trail connection between Fontheil and Fenwick. Pelham's AT Plan proposes to achieve this** through the use of paved shoulders within the road network.

With a strong network of trail routes and future plans already in place, the Town and its partners are in a position to continue to enhance the trail network over time. Initiatives that promote walkable and bike-friendly designs, destinations and businesses – including year-round opportunities – should continue to be supported by the Town.

## Recommendations

- #44 Assign high priority to the continued maintenance and expansion of the recreational trails system. Work with the Active Transportation Committee to establish a list of priority projects and work plans.
- #45 Establish and/or expand partnerships that promote public access to and nature-based programming within non-municipal trails and natural areas (e.g., Short Hills Provincial Park, Lathrop Nature Preserve, E.C. Brown Conservation Area, etc.).

## 8.5 Parks & Trails Maintenance

This section provides an assessment of the parks, trails and outdoor amenities maintenance standards for properties owned and managed by the Town, with reference to benchmarks and practices used by peer municipalities and projected future needs for the Town.

For example, there are several trends and best practices related to municipal parks and trails that may impact maintenance and service levels, including:

- **greater diversity and changes in Pelham's demographics, including an increase in** older age groups and young families;
- more demand for accessible parks and trails (and greater regulatory obligations for accessibility);
- increased use of parks and trails, in particular for unstructured, self-directed activities such as hiking, walking and cycling;
- year-round use of parks and trails; and
- a demand for increased provision of park washrooms, shade (trees and structures), benches, and other park furniture.

Additionally, some notable best practices include:

- formal standards for, and tracking of, maintenance (through recording of service requests and work carried out);
- connection of trails wherever possible; surfacing and width of trails appropriate to usage types and levels;
- provision of natural shade, or shade structures and park furniture to accommodate older adults, children and those with mobility issues;
- provision of year-round washroom access, especially in heavily used parks and trails;
- availability of water fountains and filling stations;

- source separation of waste in parks through the provision of receptacles for recycling;
- installation of pet waste receptacles at selected parks and trailheads;
- winter maintenance of selected trails to facilitate year-round walking, cycling, running and other self-propelled activities; and
- regular inspections of all parks and trails – recording of any needed repairs, maintenance issues or safety concerns; monthly, documented inspections of all municipally owned play structures.

In addition to looking at trends and best practices, general industry standards for parks and open space maintenance and benchmarks for maintenance standards in peer municipalities have been reviewed. This information has been incorporated in the development of standards later in this section.

### General Assessment of Parks and Trails Maintenance in Pelham

**Based on site visits to the Town's parks and input from the public through Phase 1 of this study,** parks and park amenities in the Town seem, in general, to be well maintained and elicit a high degree of public satisfaction. The Town has worked to meet the needs of current park users and the results show in the variety and good condition of park assets. Parkland turf is well maintained, there was no litter evident in parks during site visits, and playgrounds, splash pads, park furniture and other amenities are generally in good repair. A variety of outdoor sports facilities are provided by the Town including soccer and ball fields, tennis, basketball, pickleball and multi-use courts, and a skate park. These are also generally in good condition. Weekly park inspections and evening park patrols ensure parks are managed on an ongoing basis and that issues or problems are identified in a timely way.

**Despite the current high level of satisfaction with Pelham's parks** and the satisfactory level of maintenance within those parks, the Town is growing and will grow further in the future. In addition, the population is shifting in terms of both age profile and cultural preferences.

Over the past several years, the Town of Pelham has experienced an influx of new residents, many of whom have come from larger urban centres. This has been partially a reaction to the pandemic with individuals and families seeking a less crowded environment which is perceived as safer. In addition, semi-rural municipalities such as Pelham are experiencing new subdivision development, as the population of Ontario grows, and people seek more affordable housing.

Pelham staff are already hearing requests for new and different municipal park and recreation services and higher levels of maintenance on a year-round basis. These are related to greater diversity and higher expectations given what newcomers may have been used to elsewhere.

Concerns related to service levels, amenities and maintenance in parks identified through our assessments include:

- Service levels for maintenance not being met at busy times, especially during the spring growing season.
- Inadequate, aging public washrooms which are too small for demand, difficult to keep clean and not fully accessible; not enough washrooms in parks.
- An insufficient number of soccer fields to meet demand.
- No clearing of snow and ice on some trails and walkways during the winter months.
- A lack of year-round spaces for gathering and casual play in parks and safe spaces for young people to gather.

- The need for additional dog parks and leash-free areas.
- Difficulties with the quality of contracted maintenance work.
- Inconsistent or inadequate tree maintenance in parks (mulching, pruning, dead tree removal, removal of “suckers”).

The trail sections visited were generally well maintained in terms of litter control, maintenance of a safe surface, cutting of vegetation along trail edges to improve sight lines and management of erosion and washouts where applicable. The Town has provided trail connectivity where opportunities present themselves and has taken advantage of road rights of way, an abandoned railway and parkland to develop its trail network.

**There were some issues with the Town’s trails noted through site inspections** and feedback from users and staff. These include a need for consistent and easy to follow wayfinding and signage, and consistency and regular maintenance of trail surfaces. Trails surfaces and widths vary, and wayfinding is inconsistent and not adequate for users to navigate. There was also a suggestion to remove the rumble strips along the shoulder of Canboro Road to improve active transportation connections between Fenwick and Fonthill. Many of these issues would be alleviated through the continued implementation of the trail design **standards identified in the Town’s 2016 Active Transportation (AT) Plan & Implementation Strategy.**

It should be noted that there was a Wayfinding and Signage Workshop carried out by the Town in 2014, and a report from this session was completed. It would appear that the recommendations of this workshop have not as yet, been implemented. Also, as noted in **the Town’s 2016 AT Plan**, year-round maintenance of selected trails based on established criteria remains desirable.

### Staff Structure, Responsibilities and Resources

A few concerns related to the current organizational structure for the delivery of maintenance for outdoor spaces and facilities have been noted by staff, and in the recent organizational review for Recreation, Culture and Wellness (RCW) carried out by KPMG.

Parkland, trails, open spaces and outdoor facilities are operated and maintained primarily by Public Works (Works) under the Supervisor of Beautification. Works staff include:

- Supervisor of Beautification;
- Grounds Maintenance Operator;
- Student Parks Labourer (May 1 to September);
- 2 Seasonal Parks Operators (April 1 to Nov 30);
- Horticultural Technician; and
- Arborist.

While these staff address the bulk of parks and trails maintenance, staff indicate that preventative maintenance is a gap. Further, RCW staff have taken on specialized maintenance of outdoor facilities including lining of sports fields and ball diamond infield grooming. This arrangement is informal in nature and requires a high degree of coordination and communication between staff in the two units. Staff are also moved around frequently to carry out priority tasks and feel they do not have adequate cross-training to carry out all of the activities they are requested to do.

In terms of resources, the Public Works and RCW Departments share equipment and vehicles. These units are generally located where there is space to store them rather than



where is most convenient for the work being done. This leads to inefficiencies, such as time spent picking up and moving equipment and equipment not being available when needed to complete critical tasks.

In consulting with staff, concerns were also heard related to inadequate numbers of staff and vehicles and equipment to meet existing service level standards. These issues have been driven by budget constraints and have been exacerbated by new park development and addition of park amenities. In addition, replacement of aging vehicles and equipment has not been done in a timely or systematic way, and there is not a proactive fleet maintenance program, leading to equipment breakdown and the need for regular emergency repairs. Issues related to inadequate resources will only increase as the Town continues to grow.

Public Works currently operates from a single depot and yard which is located on Tice Road in the western half of the Town of Pelham. Travel time to maintain parks and trails and to pick up needed equipment from storage is an ongoing issue. In the Public Works Operational Review commissioned 2020, some of the limitations of the existing Public Works yard and depot were noted in this study; however, the report did not specifically address the unique needs required for parks maintenance.

The various issues with staffing and resources identified in the previous section, have their roots in not enough full-time staff and physical resources, the need to better organize staff and equipment resources, and the need to clarify roles and responsibilities. As mentioned previously, these issues were noted both in the Public Works Operational Review (2020) and the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Organizational Review (2022). These reviews offered a number of suggestions and recommendations; implementing these and other needed changes will require a coordinated and cooperative approach involving both Public Works and RCW.

## Parks & Trails Maintenance Standards and Implementation

Public Works has developed Parks Maintenance Levels of Service as part of their overall **operational standards. Current Levels of Service for “Beautification” in the Town of Pelham** are classified under:

- Turf: Sports Fields; Winter Restoration; General Parkland; Contracted Grass Cutting; Trails – Flail Mower
- Horticulture
- Artificial Turf (playgrounds)
- General Maintenance: Repairs – Benches, Picnic Tables, Fencing; Litter; Graffiti removal
- Forestry
- Trails: Inspection; Grooming

**In order to meet the Town’s needs for parks management and maintenance for the future, it is important that Pelham implement a systematic approach, which can be adjusted to address future growth, changes in usage levels, and the inclusion of new activities and amenities. Experiences in other small municipalities suggests that Pelham’s current informal determination and documentation of maintenance priorities and practices, while adequate in the past will become overwhelmed by a growing resident population and increased expectations of parks and open space users.**

The recommended parks and trails maintenance levels of service are contained in Appendix B.

At present the Town of Pelham does not formally track costs and resources used to carry out maintenance of the various park and open space-related spaces and amenities under its care. If the implementation of Levels of Service is to be successful, it is important for the Town to know whether the standards are being met, what resources are being used, and where deficiencies (or areas where service exceeds standards) are.

Public Works has indicated that it plans on implementing an integrated work order and management system in 2023. Ideally the new system should allow the tracking for each of the activities outlined in the Levels of Service including:

- Frequency (dates) of scheduled maintenance;
- Response time for demand maintenance;
- Location of maintenance;
- Person-hours involved, including cost;
- Equipment time, including operating cost; and
- Ideally, any material costs.

Once a full cycle or more of records has been compiled, it will be possible to determine whether Levels of Service are being met and where additional resources, or a shift or resources, are required.

Over time, circumstances, user needs and preferences in Pelham are likely to change. In addition, analysis of information generated by the new system will highlight where Levels of Service are being met, and possibly where these are being exceeded. With this in mind, it is recommended that the proposed Levels of Service be reviewed at least every two years, **and adjustments be made to ensure consistency of service and the Town's ability to meet** the needs of park users. System information will also help to determine areas where service is deficient due to a lack of resources, or where resources need to be reallocated.

## Recommendations

- #46 Move forward with a plan to ensure that Public Works has access to adequate yard and operational space to accommodate the growth of the Town over the next decade. Examine the possibility and value of satellite locations for Parks staff and parks-related vehicles and equipment to reduce travel time and improve efficiency.
- #47 Develop (or have a specialist consultant develop) a fleet and equipment management system to ensure that all units are properly maintained and are retired when repair costs and down-time justify replacement. This system should include a financial structure to ensure there are adequate capital funds in place to replace units when required.
- #48 Implement a budget protocol whereby new capital development of parks, park amenities, or trails triggers additional operating funds for staff and materials to maintain new assets.
- #49 Work cooperatively to develop a new organizational structure including staff job descriptions and responsibilities using the recommendations of the Public Works and RCW Organizational Reviews. This should include

formal agreements addressing responsibilities, staff sharing or temporary transfer, reporting relationships, budgeting, etc.

- #50 Establish classifications for sports fields with appropriate levels of service based on maintenance standards.

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## 9. Implementation Strategy



Active implementation of the Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan is fundamental to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, stakeholders, and the public, as well as a variety of funding options to implement certain aspects of the Plan. **This section provides guidance on the Master Plan's implementation.**

## 9.1 Monitoring & Updating the Plan

The Town should regularly review and assess, and periodically revise, the recommendations of this Master Plan to ensure that they continue to reflect local conditions and that they are responsive to the changing needs of the community. This will require monitoring activity trends, tracking user satisfaction levels, coordinating with community organizations and the public, reporting on progress, and undertaking a comprehensive ten-year update to the Plan. Through these strategies – or as a result of other internal or external factors – adjustment of resource allocations and priorities identified in this Plan may be required.

The Plan should be reviewed annually as part of **the Town's budget** cycle. The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan:

- a. Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.);
- b. Identification of issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, emerging opportunities, etc.);
- c. cursory review of the Plan for direction regarding its recommendations;
- d. Preparation of a staff report to indicate prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the following year based on criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.);
- e. Communication to staff and Council regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects and projects to be implemented in the following year; and
- f. Budget requests/revisions as necessary.

## Recommendations

- #51 Develop a system for the regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Master Plan, which should include tracking of activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends and completed recommendations to provide status reports to Council and the community.
- #52 Establish annual work plans that provide focus on Master Plan recommendations that staff will seek to implement within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, and other logistics required to implement the priority recommendations.
- #53 Undertake a comprehensive review and update of the Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan to begin no later than 2032. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.



## 9.2 Financial Considerations

The Master Plan calls for continued financial investment and outlines a series of planning priorities for the provision of new and existing recreation, culture, and parks infrastructure for the next ten years. To assist the Town in establishing a financial strategy for the Master Plan, several assumptions have been highlighted. These assumptions provide direction towards the various opportunities and constraints that must be considered when budgeting for the Plan's implementation.

In the future, it is expected that:

- Increases in costs to develop, revitalize, and maintain recreation, culture and parks facilities will be greater than the rate of inflation because of rising land costs, **increasingly complex projects, the general public's heightened quality expectations,** legislated building, and accessibility standards, etc.
- The Town will be expected to adhere to fiscally-responsible revenue generation policies and practices, along with the allocation of sufficient capital and operating resources to fund core priorities.
- The magnitude of investments required to achieve and maintain facilities in acceptable condition will grow in proportion to an expanding volume of assets and the increasingly aged stock of facilities.
- The range of new types of parks and recreation infrastructure will continue to expand, which will increase the funding requirements to address a growing inventory.
- The need for sufficient, stable, and predictable infrastructure funding streams will be increasingly important to support sound and proactive facility planning.
- The need for creative infrastructure funding solutions will be greatest in periods of low-growth and where aging facilities need to be revitalized or replaced.
- Working collaboratively with the community, developers, and other partners will be important to successfully keeping pace with escalating needs for more and better amenities.
- It will take time and continued investment to assist the recreation, culture, and parks sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Town has limited resources and cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; underscoring the importance for undertaking the Master Plan in the first place. Although Pelham may experience various challenges in providing the applicable financial **and human resources to achieve the Master Plan's recommendations**, it is expected that the Town will make every effort to implement these strategies through appropriate means.

Full implementation of the Master Plan will require the use of numerous funding sources, including (but not limited to):

- Development Charges and Community Benefits Charges (if applicable)
- Parkland Cash-in-Lieu for land purchases
- Municipal Taxation and Reserves
- Fundraising, Donations and Sponsorships
- User Fees and Surcharges

- Debenture Financing
- One-Time Grants
- Ongoing Government Programs, such as Provincial Gas Tax Revenues (for active transportation projects)
- Partnerships and Sponsorships

## Recommendations

- #54 Where appropriate and consistent with Town policies and priorities, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.
- #55 **Use this Master Plan as a resource in establishing the Town's annual** budget documents, Development Charges, and other related studies.
- #56 Phase in a capital reserve to fund the repair and replacement of major capital infrastructure. This reserve should be an annual line item in the budget that could be linked to objectives in the Asset Management Plan.
- #57 Conduct feasibility studies and business plans (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.

## 9.3 Community Partnerships & Sponsorships

The Town works with community partners to provide the highest level of service to the public while maximizing resources. Examples of successful partnerships include strategic alliances with local service clubs for fundraising and facility operation (e.g., Fonthill and Fenwick Lions, etc.), rental agreements with sports groups (e.g., minor basketball, minor hockey, figure skating, etc.), and service agreements with program providers (e.g., STEM camps, etc.).

From time to time, the Town may consider various arrangements with the private sector, non-profit sector, or other levels of government to develop and/or operate various facilities and services to achieve the desired community and municipal benefits. The goal is to **maximize the community's assets and increase service levels while sharing an appropriate balance of costs and risks.**

Relationships with outside groups may be considered when:

- the Town does not have capacity or budget for direct program delivery or facility management;
- there is an established provider/partner already working with the Town;
- the provider fills or augments service gaps that are a priority to the Town; and/or
- the provider is the preferred/specialist for program delivery.

In all partnership arrangements, specifications and requirements must ensure that the partner respects and aligns with **the Town's key goals and objectives. The value in seeking out and formalizing partnerships provides a net benefit to both organizations and reduce**

costs to the municipality. Where possible, the Town is encouraged to work with community partners and in coordination with other public entities to implement recommendations contained in this Master Plan that would benefit from shared roles, responsibilities, and resources. It is recommended that staff develop written agreements with community partners who may share public spaces or work collectively to offer programs and services.

To assist the Town in evaluating current and future partnerships, the following criteria may be considered:

- The outcome of the partnership should be aligned with municipal values, mandate, and priorities.
- There should be an articulated need for the proposed program or service in the community.
- The financial and liability risks to the Town should be shared or reduced.
- The partner should be equipped and qualified to co-deliver the service through identified efficiencies, with the ability to reach an identified segment of the population.
- The quality of the program or service provided through the partnership should meet municipal quality assurance and risk management requirements and complies with legislation.
- Unsolicited for-profit partnership proposals should be dealt with transparently and through a competitive process as identified in a procurement process.
- Accountabilities and responsibilities should be clearly defined and complied with.
- Annual reporting requirements should capture participation numbers, expenditure reduction or revenue enhancement, and are clearly aligned with departmental objectives.

The Town does not employ a standard approach for developing arrangements with outside groups or for responding to unsolicited proposals, especially propositions arising from the private sector or involving non-traditional facility types. A standardized approach to partnership development would assist the Town to be consistent in its dealings with **individuals or organizations at arm's length to the municipality. Additional detail on the requirement for a proponent-led business plan when assessing unsolicited proposals is included in Section 6.14 of this report.**

Furthermore, the Town will want to ensure that all partnership agreements granting access to space at the Meridian Community Centre are equitable and maximize the use of publicly funded spaces. This is especially pertinent as there are pent up demands for spaces, such as municipal programming and drop-in opportunities. An audit of space utilization and alternative use options should be completed before agreements are developed or renewed.

## Recommendations

- #58 Develop a Partnership and Sponsorship Policy to seek out alternate revenue sources to offset the cost to provide Recreation, Culture and Wellness services. Prepare a standardized partnership and/or sponsorship agreement to apply to various partnership types and to standardize municipal and partner expectations.
- #59 To inform the development and renewal of agreements, conduct an audit of community spaces covered by licensee agreements to ensure that spaces are effectively and equitably utilized given emerging needs and opportunities.

## 9.4 Summary of Recommendations – Priority and Timing

This section contains a summary of recommendations contained within the Master Plan. By approving this Plan, the Town is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities/services in the order, amount or timing indicated; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

The timing of the recommendations proposed in this Master Plan recognizes the need for phased implementation and/or outside funding sources as some recommendations are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what may be financially achievable at the present time. As part of the annual budget process, this Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of implementation. Analysis of implementation options and budget implications should be undertaken prior to approving major projects. The full implementation of this Plan will require the use of various funding sources and partnerships with others.

Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the **Town's capital and operating budget development exercise. It is expected that the** Town will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the budget process.

In addition to funding availability, factors that might change priorities year to year may include:

- capital lifecycle and considerations of safety;
- legislation and mandated requirements;
- changes to service standards;
- public input and community interests;
- emerging trends and changes in participation rates;
- availability of alternate providers; and
- socio-demographic changes and growth forecasts.

Priorities have been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the planning process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of amenities and services, etc.). Municipalities generally seek to address the widest range of needs and achieve maximum community benefit through the efficient use of resources. Priority is often aligned with timing, except for those recommendations that are tied to population thresholds.

Within the tables that follow, the priority, timing, and high-level costing of the recommendations are organized into the following categories:

Priority

- High Priority: Immediate attention is strongly suggested during the timeframe recommended.
- Medium Priority: Attention is required when high priority recommendations have been initiated or completed, or when suitable partners have been identified for funding.
- Lower Priority: Attention is required when high and medium priority recommendations have been initiated/completed.

Timing

- Short-term: 2023 to 2025
- Medium-term: 2026 to 2028
- Longer-term: 2029 and beyond
- Ongoing: Guidelines and practices to be followed on a continual basis

Potential Cost Impacts

(note: all cost estimates are preliminary and to be confirmed through future study)

- Minor (\$): estimated at \$100,000 or less
- Moderate (\$\$): estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$500,000
- Major (\$\$\$): estimated at \$500,000 or more



Table 19: Summary of Recommendations – Priority and Timing

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
Section 5: Recreation Services & Programs				
#1	Regularly solicit requests for program offerings and complete a review of program availability, capacity, and utilization to ensure that public space is maximized and all age groups (e.g., pre-school, children, youth, adults, older adults and families) have access to a range of physical activity and sport, creative opportunities, general interest and STEM programming.	High	Ongoing	
#2	Promote the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines and the use of <b>ParticipACTION'S Physical Activity App within facilities and the "Life in Pelham" Community Guide. Consider applying to become Canada's Most Active Community</b> through ParticipACTION once pre-pandemic service recovery levels are achieved.	Medium	Medium-term	
#3	Develop a Special Events Policy <b>to clarify the Town's role in providing</b> special events, identify resource requirements, and establish the municipal supports provided to external event providers.	High	Short-term	
#4	Create an Internal Staff Team to address increasing participation in recreation, culture, and wellness activities by marginalized populations. Preliminary actions should include (but not be limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop an Access and Inclusion Policy which identifies the underrepresented populations in Pelham and the efforts that will be made to be more inclusive in recreation, wellness, and culture. Consult organizations representing marginalized populations in its development.</li> <li>b. Provide training and professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers with respect to better including marginalized populations in the delivery of service.</li> <li>c. Complete visual audits of facilities and public spaces to ensure that recreational use reflects the full citizenry of Pelham. Identify the people who are not regularly utilizing public spaces and engage them to understand any barriers.</li> </ul>	High	Short-term and Ongoing	

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Complete a top line analysis of the number of females and those identifying as females participating in recreation and sport pursuits by age group. Address gaps through community discussions with females and those who identify as female to address barriers to participation. Work with regional, provincial, and national organizations to increase female participation in active and sport pursuits.</li> <li>e. Meet with groups representing persons with disabilities and persons experiencing low income to develop programs and approaches to increase participation in recreation programs and services.</li> <li>f. Ensure that all public spaces and facilities are safe and welcoming spaces for the LGBTQ2S+ community.</li> <li>g. Continue to engage with the Indigenous community to best understand how to better include and represent Indigenous Peoples in sport and recreation.</li> </ul>			
#5	Identify <b>RCW's levels of</b> service and corresponding policy, process, and resource requirements for each discipline within the Department for <b>Council's approval</b> . Identify the operational resources required to implement the recommendations in the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Master Plan for annual approval as part of the budget deliberation process.	High	Short-term	
#6	Complete an audit of current legislation affecting the delivery of Recreation, Culture, and Wellness services and ensure that the Town of Pelham is compliant with these requirements.	High	Short-term	
#7	Investigate the efficiencies created through a standard online App to recruit, train, track hours, and serve to recognize volunteers supporting Recreation, Culture and Wellness services.	Medium	Short-term	
#8	Apply a consistent methodology to better understand the costs to provide <b>RCW's</b> various services and to determine current cost recovery levels. Develop a fair minded and transparent Pricing Policy to ensure that fees are equitable and respect the value that the program/service provides to the community.	Medium	Medium-term	\$ (<\$100,000)

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#9	Develop a meaningful set of performance measures for the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department that describe the inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness measures employed in each discipline.	Medium	Short-term	
<b>Section 6: Recreation &amp; Park Facilities</b>				
#10	Continue to support programming, rentals, and partnerships that optimize utilization of the Meridian Community Centre and Old Pelham Town Hall. Develop formalized operating plans for the MCC to guide programming and performance in keeping with the recommendations of the 2023 KPMG Report.	High	Short-term	Supported by the RCW Organizational Review
#11	Seek out spaces in schools and other appropriate locations for additional programming to augment programs offered at the Meridian Community Centre.	High	Ongoing	
#12	Monitor ice usage trends and collect registration data to inform a review of the Ice Allocation Policy (at minimum every five years), with the goal of ensuring fair access for priority groups such as local organizations and residents.	Medium	Medium-term	
#13	Employ a variety of strategies to address current and future needs for community soccer fields, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working with rectangular field users to ensure optimal access to existing fields, coupled with appropriate maintenance practices to support usage levels;</li> <li>converting the softball diamond at Harold Black Park to a lit full size soccer field;</li> <li>creating another lit full size soccer field at Centennial Park (as outlined in the 2003 park master plan);</li> <li>formalizing agreements to continue to use soccer fields at Glynn A. Green PS and expanding these agreements to appropriate fields at other school locations, such as E. L. Crossley Secondary School;</li> <li>designing new mini fields into new neighbourhood parks, where appropriate; and</li> <li>seeking to secure a future community park site to serve long-term needs, capable of accommodating 2 or more soccer fields and other needed recreational amenities.</li> </ol>	High	Ongoing	\$\$\$ (>\$500,000); dependent upon strategies chosen

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#14	Continue to maintain the existing inventory of ball diamonds (with the exception of the softball diamond at Harold Black Park, which is proposed for conversion to a soccer field).	Medium	Ongoing	
#15	Consider installing lights on the hardball diamond at Harold Black Park should demand warrant.	Lower	Longer-term	
#16	Work with the Fonthill Platform Tennis Club to establish a new agreement pertaining to their use of the courts and clubhouse in Rolling Meadows Park.	High	Short-term	
#17	Identify a location within a future neighbourhood park in Fonthill for tennis courts (2).	Medium	Medium-to Longer-term	\$\$ (\$100,000 to \$500,000)
#18	Monitor the demand for outdoor pickleball in Fonthill and consider a multi-court complex in a future community park, if required.	Medium	Medium-to Longer-term	\$\$ (\$100,000 to \$500,000)
#19	Redevelop the existing basketball / tennis pad at North Pelham Park into a multi-use sport court for basketball and ball hockey. Add a small pavilion to support the site.	Medium	Medium-term	\$\$ (\$100,000 to \$500,000)
#20	Establish half basketball courts in two (2) new neighbourhood parks in Fonthill to improve access for local youth.	Medium	Medium-to Longer-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#21	Consider installing a splash pad in a future community park if the location enhances access for residents in Fonthill (east or south).	Lower	Longer-term	\$\$ (\$100,000 to \$500,000)
#22	Continue with plans to redevelop the Pelham Public Pool at Marlene Stewart Streit Park, with consideration of barrier-free access to the pool and bathhouse (change rooms, washrooms, etc.).	High	Short-term	\$\$\$ (>\$500,000); grant has been secured to offset funding

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#23	Establish a target of providing playgrounds within 500-metres of all urban residential areas. Where necessary, install playgrounds in new subdivisions (e.g., East Fonthill, East Fenwick) and seek opportunities to address gaps (e.g., central Fonthill).	High	Ongoing	Costs tbd (site-specific)
#24	Work with the Fonhill Lions Club to advance the replacement of the playground equipment at Gordon L. Klager Park.	High	Short-term	
#25	Consider opportunities to support outdoor skating through park development and redevelopment projects, including volunteer-led rinks in appropriate park sites.	Medium	Ongoing	
#26	Municipal provision of recreation facilities not explicitly addressed within this Master Plan will generally not be made a priority, but may be considered in partnership with local organizations where demonstrated demand exists. A standardized partnership framework should be used to evaluate and respond to such requests.	Lower	Ongoing	See also recommendation #58
<b>Section 7: Arts &amp; Culture</b>				
#27	<b>Review the Town's 2013</b> Cultural Master Plan to update strategies for promoting and supporting local arts and culture endeavours, including the assessment of programming and space requirements. Revisit the recommendation to develop an Arts and Culture Community Hub, with a focus on partnerships that may support third-party operation within an adaptive re-use building.	Medium	Short-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#28	Consider creating a service level agreement to support greater collaboration between the Recreation, Culture & Wellness Department and the Lincoln Pelham Public Library regarding program delivery and promotion.	Lower	Short-term	Coordinate with Lincoln Pelham Public Library
#29	Examine opportunities for public art within all park and public space capital projects, as well as and temporary pop-up projects in underutilized civic spaces. Explore approaches to funding public art through the land development process and consider implementing policies through the next Official Plan review.	Medium	Ongoing	Costs tbd (site-specific)



ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#30	Seek opportunities to expand arts programming and build relationships with local partners that bolster participation and optimize under-utilized spaces.	High	Short- to Medium-term	
#31	Collect cultural asset and participation data (e.g., event attendance, revenues, sponsorships, programs, etc.) to assist in measuring growth in the cultural sector.	Lower	Ongoing	
<b>Section 8: Parks &amp; Trails</b>				
#32	<b>Use the Master Plan's</b> parkland classification hierarchy to guide the development or redevelopment of parks and open spaces according to park type, size, service level and the amenities that they provide. <b>Incorporate the parkland classification hierarchy within the Town's next Official Plan Review.</b>	Medium	Ongoing	Coordinate with Planning & Development Dept.
#33	Update the parks and open space inventory database and mapping regularly to assist in the assessment of land requirements.	Medium	Short-term	
#34	Maintain a commitment to universal accessibility, safety and comfort <b>within the Town's parks system. Regularly consult with the Joint</b> Accessibility Advisory Committee and ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Emphasize the provision of amenities such as benches/seating areas, bike racks, shade (structures, tree canopy, etc.), and barrier-free washrooms in appropriate park types to address the needs of all age groups.	High	Ongoing	Costs tbd (site-specific)
#35	Undertake park amenity condition assessments on a regular basis to <b>inform the Town's asset management plan and long-term</b> capital plan.	Medium	Ongoing	\$ (<\$100,000)
#36	Identify and plan for additional park renewal and redevelopment projects that address aging infrastructure and capital improvements. Candidates for consideration in the short-term include Centennial Park (e.g., washrooms, support building, new soccer field, etc.), Marlene Stewart Streit Park (e.g., access/egress improvements, washrooms, etc.), and Rolling Meadows Park (concept plan development). Engage stakeholders and the public when designing new and redeveloped parks.	High	Ongoing	\$\$\$ (>\$500,000); Additional consultation and designs required to determine options, costs, and timing

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#37	Prepare design plans for the Pelham Civic Square to support potential <b>funding opportunities (e.g., grant applications) and the site's future</b> development.	High	Short-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#38	Establish consistent and high quality signage at all municipal facilities, parks and trailheads to enhance branding and wayfinding.	Lower	Short-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#39	To guide the design of developer- <b>built parks, formalize the Town's</b> requirements for parkland design and development through a Park and Trail Design and Development Manual.	Medium	Short-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#40	Maintain a minimum town-wide parkland provision rate of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 residents; this target excludes passive open space lands and woodlots. Approximately 8.0 additional hectares of parkland should be secured by 2031 to address gaps and meet growth-related needs. This should include a mixture of park types, including a larger community park (minimum 3 hectares) to serve the Fonthill community. Alternative acquisition strategies may be required to address the entirety of these needs.	High	Ongoing	See also recommendation #43
#41	Seek to maximize parkland dedication through development and redevelopment applications, as well as alternative parkland acquisition <b>strategies. Update the Town's Official Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law</b> to align with amendments to the Ontario Planning Act and Bill 23, as well as the recommendations in this Master Plan. This Master Plan can be used as the basis for a parks plan that satisfies the legislative requirements.	High	Short-term	Coordinate with Planning & Development Dept.
#42	Adopt a <b>"Parkland First" approach</b> that prioritizes parkland conveyance over cash-in-lieu of parkland in order to address parkland deficits. Parkland conveyances should: (a) be acceptable to the Town; (b) not include restricted lands; and (c) result in blocks that are at least 0.4 hectares in size (village squares may be smaller) or expand an existing park site.	High	Ongoing	

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#43	Prepare a parkland acquisition strategy to enhance current and future community access to parks, with consideration of alternative acquisition tools (e.g., reallocation of surplus municipal lands, purchase/lease, land exchanges, partnerships, etc.). Where applicable, work with area school boards and other service providers to maximize community access to quality outdoor parks and recreation amenities on non-municipal sites.	High	Short-term	Costs tbd through further study See also recommendation #40
#44	Assign high priority to the continued maintenance and expansion of the recreational trails system. Work with the Active Transportation Committee to establish a list of priority projects and work plans.	High	Ongoing	
#45	Establish and/or expand partnerships that promote public access to and nature-based programming within non-municipal trails and natural areas (e.g., Short Hills Provincial Park, Lathrop Nature Preserve, E.C. Brown Conservation Area, etc.).	Medium	Ongoing	
#46	Move forward with a plan to ensure that Public Works has access to adequate yard and operational space to accommodate the growth of the Town over the next decade. Examine the possibility and value of satellite locations for Parks staff and parks-related vehicles and equipment to reduce travel time and improve efficiency.	Medium	Longer-term	Costs tbd through further study
#47	Develop (or have a specialist consultant develop) a fleet and equipment management system to ensure that all units are properly maintained and are retired when repair costs and down-time justify replacement. This system should include a financial structure to ensure there are adequate capital funds in place to replace units when required.	High	Short-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#48	Implement a budget protocol whereby new capital development of parks, park amenities, or trails triggers additional operating funds for staff and materials to maintain new assets.	High	Short-term	
#49	Work cooperatively to develop a new organizational structure including staff job descriptions and responsibilities using the recommendations of the Public Works and RCW Organizational Reviews. This should include formal agreements addressing responsibilities, staff sharing or temporary transfer, reporting relationships, budgeting, etc.	High	Short-term	Supported by the RCW Organizational Review

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#50	Establish classifications for sports fields with appropriate levels of service based on maintenance standards.	Medium	Short-term	
Section 9: Implementation Strategy				
#51	Develop a system for the regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Master Plan, which should include tracking of activity patterns, facility usage, activity levels, trends and completed recommendations to provide status reports to Council and the community.	High	Short-term	
#52	Establish annual work plans that provide focus on Master Plan recommendations that staff will seek to implement within the coming year. Work plans should identify departmental leads, partners, funding requirements and sources, and other logistics required to implement the priority recommendations.	High	Ongoing	
#53	Undertake a comprehensive review and update of the Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan to begin no later than 2032. Timing may be adjusted based on the pace of implementation and changes within the community.	High	Longer-term	\$ (<\$100,000)
#54	Where appropriate and consistent with Town policies and priorities, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches such as (but not limited to) fundraising, grants, private-public partnerships, sponsorships, surcharges, capital reserve contributions, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents.	High	Ongoing	
#55	Use this Master Plan as a resource in <b>establishing the Town's annual</b> budget documents, Development Charges, and other related studies.	High	Ongoing	
#56	Phase in a capital reserve to fund the repair and replacement of major capital infrastructure. This reserve should be an annual line item in the budget that could be linked to objectives in the Asset Management Plan.	High	Ongoing	Costs tbd through further study
#57	Conduct feasibility studies and business plans (with input from the public) prior to undertaking major capital projects to ensure that projects are aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capabilities.	High	Ongoing	

ID.	Recommendation	Priority	Timing	Costs / Comments
#58	Develop a Partnership and Sponsorship Policy to seek out alternate revenue sources to offset the cost to provide Recreation, Culture and Wellness services. Prepare a standardized partnership and/or sponsorship agreement to apply to various partnership types and to standardize municipal and partner expectations.	Medium	Short-term	See also recommendation #26
#59	To inform the development and renewal of agreements, conduct an audit of community spaces covered by licensee agreements to ensure that spaces are effectively and equitably utilized given emerging needs and opportunities.	High	Short-term	

DRAFT



# Appendix A: Record of Public Input

See following pages.

DRAFT

**Participation in Recreation, Culture & Parks Activities**

1) Since 2019, in which of the following activities did you or anyone in your household participate, in Pelham or elsewhere? Participation refers to situations where you or a member of your household actively take part (not as a spectator), either at home or in public. (select all that apply)

	#	%
Baseball or Softball	66	16%
Basketball	75	18%
BMX or Mountain Biking	56	14%
Canoeing, Rowing, Kayaking or Paddleboarding	119	29%
Cycling	178	43%
Disc Golf / Frisbee Golf	16	4%
Dog Walking (off-leash park)	99	24%
Fitness, Yoga or Weight-training	172	42%
Football, Rugby or Field Lacrosse	22	5%
Hockey, Figure Skating, or Ice Sports (indoor)	124	30%
Hockey, Figure Skating, or Ice Sports (outdoor)	70	17%
Lacrosse (box – indoor)	11	3%
Pickleball	38	9%
Platform Tennis	16	4%
Running or Jogging	105	25%
Skateboarding or Scootering	59	14%
Soccer	109	26%
Special Events in Parks	193	47%
Swimming (recreational)	140	34%
Swimming (lessons, aquafit, or training)	95	23%
Tennis	52	13%
Town of Pelham Recreation Programs or Camps	65	16%
Town of Pelham Arts and Cultural Programs	66	16%
Use of Outdoor Fitness Equipment	63	15%
Use of Playground Equipment	174	42%
Use of Splash Pad	124	30%
Visiting a Theatre, Art Gallery or Museum	106	26%
Volleyball (beach)	46	11%
Volleyball (indoor)	46	11%
Walking or Hiking for Leisure	294	71%
None of the above	13	3%
Other (please specify)	44	11%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>414</b>	

<b>Other (top responses)</b>	<b>#</b>
Dance Lessons	4
Golf	4
Community Events	3
Walking	3
Rollerblading	2
Dirt Biking	2
Karate / Tai Chi Classes	2
Curling	2
Art	2
Snow Activities	2

2) Are you and members of your household able to participate in Recreation, Culture & Parks activities as often as you would like?

	#	%
Yes	272	66%
No	142	34%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>100%</b>

**3) Why are you and members of your household not able to participate Recreation, Culture & Parks activities as often as you would like? (select up to 3 responses)**

	#	%
Activity has not resumed due to the pandemic	12	8%
Health problems / Disability / Age	21	15%
Lack of Child Care	15	11%
Lack of desired facilities or programs	62	44%
Lack of information / Unaware of opportunities	38	27%
Lack of money / Too expensive	23	16%
Lack of motivation	10	7%
Lack of or inadequate parking	5	4%
Lack of time / Too busy	47	33%
Lack of transportation / Facility too far away	17	12%
Language / Cultural Barrier	1	1%
Not a priority in our household	5	4%
Program / Activity is often full	17	12%
Program not offered at a convenient time	48	34%
Don't Know	5	4%
Other (please specify)	16	11%

answered question 142  
skipped question 272

Other (top responses)	#
COVID	4
Not Available	3
Lack of Child Programming	2

**Importance and Satisfaction****4) In general, how important are the following items to your household?**

	Not at all important		Somewhat		Somewhat Important		Very Important		Don't Know / Don't Use		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Indoor recreation facilities, such as arenas, gymnasiums and older adult centres	8	2%	33	8%	130	32%	219	54%	14	3%	404	100%	10
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, courts, playgrounds, and splash pads	18	4%	29	7%	106	26%	228	57%	20	5%	401	100%	13
Parks for casual use, such as walking, picnicking and unstructured play	8	2%	9	2%	88	22%	293	72%	8	2%	406	100%	8
Recreation and Cultural programs (registered and drop-in)	22	5%	49	12%	158	39%	150	37%	25	6%	404	100%	10
Special Events and Festivals	11	3%	33	8%	160	39%	192	47%	10	2%	406	100%	8

**5) What is your level of satisfaction with the following Recreation, Culture & Parks services in Pelham?**

	Not at all Satisfied		Somewhat		Somewhat Satisfied		Very Satisfied		Don't Know / Don't Use		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Indoor recreation facilities, such as arenas, gymnasiums and older adult centres	9	2%	41	10%	170	42%	130	32%	52	13%	402	100%	12
Outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields, courts, playgrounds, and splash pads	3	1%	62	15%	159	39%	107	27%	72	18%	403	100%	11
Parks for casual use, such as walking, picnicking and unstructured play	6	1%	50	12%	181	45%	143	36%	21	5%	401	100%	13
Recreation and Cultural programs (registered and drop-in)	7	2%	42	10%	169	42%	56	14%	128	32%	402	100%	12
Special Events and Festivals	3	1%	31	8%	165	41%	170	43%	31	8%	400	100%	14

**Program Gaps and Facility Priorities**

6) If the Town were to provide additional programs or activities, which age groups should be a priority? (select all that apply)

	#	%
Pre-School (4 years and under)	86	21%
Children (5 – 12 years)	164	41%
Teens (13 – 18 years)	176	44%
Adults (19 – 54 years)	156	39%
Older Adults (55 – 69 years)	143	36%
Seniors (70 years and over)	144	36%
Families	157	39%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>402</b>	
skipped question	12	

7) Are there any Recreation, Culture & Parks activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the Town of Pelham that are not currently available?

	#	%
Yes	180	44%
No	227	56%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	7	

8) What Recreation, Culture & Parks activities would you like to see offered?

	#	%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>70%</b>
skipped question	244	60%

<b>Open-ended (top responses)</b>	#
Indoor pool /swim programming	39
Volleyball	15
Walking trails	10
Art programming	9
Child programming	9
Senior programming	9
Adult programming	7
Festivals	7
Social programming	6
Yoga	6

## 9) To assist the Town in prioritizing spending, please indicate the level of priority that you feel should be placed on improving or developing each of the following facility types?

	Not a Priority		Low Priority		Medium Priority		High Priority		Don't Know / Don't Use		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Arenas	64	17%	89	23%	118	31%	82	22%	28	7%	381	100%	33
Art Centres or Galleries	64	17%	96	25%	128	34%	55	15%	36	9%	379	100%	35
Baseball or Softball Diamonds	38	10%	83	22%	148	39%	51	13%	60	16%	380	100%	34
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	36	10%	71	19%	136	36%	75	20%	59	16%	377	100%	37
Beach Volleyball Courts	68	18%	92	24%	101	27%	50	13%	68	18%	379	100%	35
BMX or Bike Parks	56	15%	88	23%	112	29%	58	15%	67	18%	381	100%	33
Community Vegetable Gardens	47	12%	60	16%	119	31%	113	30%	40	11%	379	100%	35
Disc Golf / Frisbee Golf	102	27%	105	28%	73	19%	19	5%	78	21%	377	100%	37
Fitness and Wellness Spaces	11	3%	30	8%	145	37%	188	49%	13	3%	387	100%	27
Fitness Equipment (outdoor)	48	13%	85	22%	114	30%	93	25%	39	10%	379	100%	35
Gymnasiums	25	7%	71	19%	135	36%	110	29%	38	10%	379	100%	35
Nature Trails	2	1%	14	4%	80	21%	278	72%	12	3%	386	100%	28
Off-Leash Dog Parks	66	17%	88	23%	96	25%	67	18%	61	16%	378	100%	36
Outdoor Ice Rinks	35	9%	62	16%	103	27%	141	37%	38	10%	379	100%	35
Parks for Special Events	22	6%	61	16%	143	37%	136	36%	20	5%	382	100%	32
Park Washrooms	5	1%	21	5%	119	31%	233	60%	9	2%	387	100%	27
Paved Trails	25	6%	60	16%	141	37%	147	38%	12	3%	385	100%	29
Performing Arts Spaces	49	13%	87	23%	129	34%	77	20%	34	9%	376	100%	38
Pickleball Courts (outdoor)	72	19%	99	26%	78	21%	47	12%	82	22%	378	100%	36
Playgrounds	22	6%	34	9%	118	31%	173	45%	34	9%	381	100%	33
Skateboard Parks	66	17%	93	24%	102	27%	59	15%	62	16%	382	100%	32
Space for Older Adults	26	7%	46	12%	126	33%	149	39%	37	10%	384	100%	30
Swimming Pools (indoor)	44	11%	41	11%	101	26%	166	43%	34	9%	386	100%	28
Swimming Pools (outdoor)	39	10%	76	20%	129	34%	99	26%	37	10%	380	100%	34
Soccer and Multi-use Fields	29	8%	40	11%	131	34%	128	34%	52	14%	380	100%	34
Splash Pads	42	11%	58	15%	100	26%	128	34%	50	13%	378	100%	36
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	41	11%	89	24%	107	29%	63	17%	73	20%	373	100%	41
Other High Priorities (please specify)	47	20%	47	20%	47	20%	47	20%	47	20%	235	100%	179

## Statements

## 10) Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Don't Know		Answered		Skipped
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Recreation, culture and parks services are important to your quality of life.	7	2%	9	2%	120	31%	241	63%	8	2%	385	100%	29
The Town's parks are conveniently located for you and members of your household.	10	3%	50	13%	202	52%	112	29%	11	3%	385	100%	29
The Town's recreation/culture and parks are clean and well maintained.	5	1%	41	11%	212	55%	101	26%	23	6%	382	100%	32
The Town's recreation, culture and parks services are affordable for your household.	4	1%	29	8%	217	57%	92	24%	41	11%	383	100%	31
You feel well informed about the Town's parks, facilities, programs, and events.	21	5%	106	28%	183	48%	52	14%	20	5%	382	100%	32

## Comments

## 11) Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding Recreation, Culture &amp; Parks in the Town of Pelham. (Maximum 100 words)

	#	%
answered question	158	38%
skipped question	256	62%



**Demographic Information****12) How many people, including yourself, live in your household?**

	#	%
1	30	8%
2	114	32%
3	63	17%
4	95	26%
5	46	13%
6	9	2%
7	3	1%
8+	1	0%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	53	
<b>Total Persons</b>	<b>1,140</b>	
Average Person per Household	3.2	

**13) Please indicate the total number of persons within your household that fall into the following age categories.**

	# of Households	% of Households	# of People	% of People	2021 Census (Pop)
Under 10 years	103	25%	173	15%	9%
10-19 years	115	28%	190	17%	11%
20-34 years	92	22%	130	11%	14%
35-54 years	195	47%	324	28%	22%
55-69 years	132	32%	205	18%	25%
70 years and over	88	21%	127	11%	19%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>374</b>		<b>1,149</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
persons per household	3.1				

**14) How long have you lived in the Town of Pelham?**

	#	%
Less than 5 years	69	18%
5 to 10 years	72	19%
More than 10 years	215	56%
Don't live in the Town of Pelham	25	7%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	33	

**15) Which community do you live closest to?**

	#	%
Effingham	5	1%
Fenwick	52	15%
Fonthill	272	77%
North Pelham	8	2%
Ridgeville	18	5%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	59	

**16) If you do not live in the Town of Pelham. In which municipality do you reside?**

	#	%
Welland	10	48%
Thorold	4	19%
St. Catharines	2	10%
Wainfleet	2	10%
Grimsby	1	5%
Niagara Falls	1	5%
Port Colborne	1	5%
<b>answered question</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>
skipped question	4	

# Appendix B:

## Summary of Supporting Documents

Key municipal studies and reports related to recreation, culture and parks are summarized below.

### Strategic Plan (revised 2021-2022)

**The vision established for Town of Pelham's is "Working together with the community to strengthen trust, enhance the quality of life and economic well-being for today and for the future." The strategic priorities – which define what the Town will focus on during the planning period – are as follows:**

1. Support a strong organization;
2. Ensure financial sustainability;
3. Enhance communication and engagement;
4. Build strong communities and cultural assets;
5. Develop a risk management framework to prioritize decisions
6. Grow revenue by promoting our cultural assets while protecting our environmental assets.

In 2020, Town Council completed a comprehensive review of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan that ultimately revised the actions presented in 2019 to reflect new issues and priorities. The completion of a Parks and Recreation Review was one of the stated priorities. a new Strategic Plan will be prepared in 2023.

### Official Plan (2014)

**The Town's Official Plan is the guiding document for the Town of Pelham and the primary tool for managing growth.** It identifies a vision for the future and goals, strategic directions, and policies to achieve this vision through land use designations and the development process.

The Plan supports recreation, culture and parks in the community to keep members engaged, and as a tool to encourage tourism and attract residents seeking an active recreational community as a lifestyle or retirement choice. The Town encourages these uses to be designated in areas undergoing intensification, and to provide opportunities in proximity to residential areas.

The Official Plan provides the policy framework for parkland dedication via the development process. This includes guidance on parkland requirements, classifications, acceptability, and more. Recent changes to the Planning Act through Bill 23 may necessitate an updating to some of these policies.

The Official Plan is supported by other planning studies, including the East Fonthill Secondary Plan and a Community Improvement Plan for Downtown Fonthill.

## Recreation, Culture and Wellness Organizational Review (2023)

The review was completed by KPMG and examines the organizational structure of the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department, as well as the optimization of facility space at the Meridian Community Centre. Selected recommendations with relevance to this Master Plan include:

- Develop formalized operating plans
- Develop Key Performance Indicators
- Improve cross-departmental communication
- Clarify roles and responsibilities with Public Works
- Re-evaluate programming and explore collaboration with local organizations (e.g., library)
- Define key service delivery tasks and activities
- Optimize advertisement revenue
- Develop standard operating procedures
- Streamline process for late applications for programming
- Update Asset Management plan
- Update job descriptions/titles
- Address middle management gap
- Address concerns with part time employment

## Active Transportation Plan & Implementation Strategy (2016)

The Pelham Active Transportation Master Plan was developed as a cycling and trails blueprint for staff, stakeholders and the public. Recommendations for recreation include:

- providing recreation to surrounding areas to increase the quality of life of local residents;
- providing existing linear trails to provide both recreational and commuter walking and cycling opportunities found in hydro corridors and along abandoned rail corridors;
- providing off-road opportunities for more recreational trips;
- providing cycling networks intended to be used for commuters within the community or for fitness and recreation;
- providing recreational and touring cycling routes that include off-road linkages and secondary connections which provide access to the areas of natural and cultural significance and local neighbourhoods.

## Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2021)

The Town's **Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP)** addresses 8 goals to become more resilient and adaptive towards climate change. These include:

- protecting community members and outdoor workers from potential health risks related to climate change;
- **building awareness of climate change impacts and risks among Town's staff and community members;**
- developing a comprehensive strategy to manage extreme weather events and emergencies;
- foster adaptive capacity in the design, construction, and maintenance of Town-owned infrastructure;
- cultivating resiliency to heavy rainfall and flooding events;
- streamlining Town services to provide sustained support to Pelham community.

These goals can be supported by recreational facilities and park spaces being designed to manage higher levels of rainfall,

## Cultural Master Plan (2013)

The Pelham Cultural Master Plan has served as a strategic guide to ensure that the Town **continues to thrive, the Town's local heritage and culture is preserved and celebrated, and** new opportunities for cultural expression are explored in a sustainable and fiscally-sound manner. **The roadmap for cultural development's strategic directions consists of:**

- 1) Cultivate community cultural awareness, knowledge-sharing and participation in culture;
- 2) Foster creative industry development, growth and attraction;
- 3) Develop and enhance of cultural spaces and places;
- 4) Expand and enhance cultural products and experiences;
- 5) Investment and development of culture through Town Planning; and
- 6) Strengthen cultural tourism and regional presence.

**Actions and recommendations of the Master Plan support the enhancement of the Town's** role as a facilitator of culture via a comprehensive and holistic approach to support the development of the sector in a manner which further addresses the need for creative industry development and business attraction, cultural product, service, programming and tourism development. This includes the development of a new cultural centre in a single location (Fonthill) as representing the most viable opportunity to add space for cultural uses to the Town. The full list of actions and recommendations are noted in the following table.

Table 20 –Roadmap for Cultural Development (Town of Pelham 2013 Cultural Plan)

Strategic Direction 1: Cultivate community cultural awareness, knowledge-sharing and participation in culture
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and explore partnerships with local schools/Schools Boards to raise exposure and awareness of culture to youth in the Town.</li> <li>2. Develop Cultural Asset Database and Resource Maps into an Accessible Neighbourhood Resource and Information Tool.</li> <li>3. Develop a Community Web Space/Portal for Culture on Municipal Website.</li> <li>4. Support for Growth in Cultural Programming.</li> <li>5. Establish a Pelham Cultural Committee/Roundtable.</li> </ol>
Strategic Direction 2: Foster creative industry development, growth and attraction
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage Small Business Growth and Development</li> <li>2. Partner with Regional Colleges for Talent Recruitment</li> <li>3. Expand Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to support Culture</li> <li>4. Assess Economic Impact of Cultural Sector Growth and Investment</li> </ol>
Strategic Direction 3: Develop and Enhance of Cultural Spaces and Places
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake an Infrastructure Needs Analysis for Cultural Facilities</li> <li>2. Medium-term Plan for Recreation Complex</li> <li>3. Develop a New Cultural Complex and Hub</li> <li>4. Invest in the Adaptive Reuse of Existing Spaces and Places</li> </ol>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop Linked Cultural Nodes along Heritage Routes</li> <li>6. Develop a Public Art Strategy</li> </ol>
Strategic Direction 4: Expand and Enhance Cultural Products and Experiences
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish and Develop Cultural Heritage Routes</li> <li>2. Further local food links to Niagara Culinary Trail</li> <li>3. Continue to Support Growth &amp; Market Draw of Local festivals &amp; Events</li> <li>4. Develop Doors Open Cultural Program</li> <li>5. Collaboratively Expand &amp; Develop Pelham Culture Days</li> </ol>
Strategic Direction 5: Investment and Development of Culture through Town Planning
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish Clear Commitment to Arts, Heritage and Cultural Preservation, Development, Promotion and Tourism within Municipal Corporate Priorities</li> <li>2. Appoint a Municipal Cultural Officer <b>within the Town's RCW Department</b></li> <li>3. Leverage Opportunities for Funding and Investment from Upper-levels of Government to Support Cultural Development</li> <li>4. Develop an Integrated Implementation Plan for <b>the Town's Heritage and Cultural Master Plans</b></li> <li>5. Merge Existing Culture and Heritage Asset Databases</li> <li>6. Develop a protocol for expanding, updating and maintaining the cultural asset database</li> <li>7. Develop a Communication Plan for Culture</li> <li>8. Ensure Cultural Planning Occurs Across Municipal Departments</li> </ol>
Strategic Direction 6: Strength Cultural Tourism and Regional Presence
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake Tourism Strategy</li> <li>2. Launch Stand-Alone Cultural Tourism Website</li> <li>3. Partnerships for the Co-Marketing of Events and Activities</li> <li>4. Collaboration for Regional Cultural Exchange</li> </ol>

## Facilities Feasibility Study (2008)

The Town of Pelham commissioned a **10-year feasibility study to determine the community's** needs for facilities and administration. The study proceeded previous studies for sports and recreation facility assessment. In addition to a community profile and trends, inventory, programming, stakeholders and comments were identified for several facilities in this study:

- Twin Pad Arena
- Community Space
- Office space for Leisure Services Staff
- Fire Halls (3)
- Maple Acre Branch Library addition
- Consolidated Library
- Administrative Building

Recommendations were provided for each of the discussed recreation and culture facilities, **including several that supported the development of the Town's** current Meridian Community Centre.



Table 21 – Facilities Feasibility Study Recommendations (2008)

Arena Recommendations	
A1	Short-term development of a twin pad arena on a new site large enough to accommodate future expansion of arena space as well as other community space;
A2	Continue to investigate partnership options with both the City of Welland and Niagara College for the development of a multi-pad ice facility;
A3	investigate options to build and operate the arena in partnership with the private sector, and/or the City of Welland, and/or Niagara College;
A4	Decommission the existing Pelham arena as an ice rink and consider repurposing it for use as an indoor facility to accommodate indoor soccer, roller hockey, indoor tennis etc.;
Multi-Purpose Space Recommendations	
MP1	In the short term develop up to 5,000 square feet of community space as a component of arena;
MP2	In the short term develop a portion of the community space to accommodate; informal/unstructured social space that can be scheduled for use by both youth and seniors. In partnership with groups such as the library and local businesses, investigate opportunities to incorporate a supervised computer area;
Civic Centre Recommendations	
C1	Short-term develop appropriate space for Town recreation staff, including space for program registration and administrative space for the Recreation Department within the new arena.
C2	In the short term prepare a site master plan for Pelham Town Square. This master plan should identify opportunities to consolidate the existing library and civic centre within a single building that provides: strong presentation of civic features, strong connection to other businesses and residential components of the site, and excellent opportunities to accommodate civic events, parking and traffic flow.
C3	In the short to medium-term confirm the most appropriate location for a new Civic Centre and Library.
C4	In the long-term redevelop the Civic Building and Fonthill Branch of the Pelham Library into a single facility.

## Heritage Master Plan (2012)

The Heritage Master Plan recognizes Short Hills Park and Marlene Stewart Streit Park as cultural assets with historical association. The Plan recognizes that the region is becoming a major tourism attraction and a desirable place to live and work. The plan provides an **extensive overview of the Town's history and supports the unique cultural services that** have been a major attraction for tourists and new community members.

## Public Art Master Plan (2016)

As important recreational destinations, parks and open spaces play a significant role in the daily lives of residents. These spaces host community events and public gatherings and also play a role in connecting residents of all ages to the surrounding community. In particular, **greenspaces provide linkages to Pelham's natural heritage and facilitate healthy lifestyles.** These public spaces provide opportunities for public art installations which can provoke

reflection on environmental issues, provide interactive elements to engage with children and families, be integrated with the design of the park such as benches, paving and pedestrian **bridges and celebrate the community's past**, present and future.

Funding to implement public art is typically secured by allocating a percentage (1%) of the capital cost of municipal projects – new community centres, recreation buildings, civic buildings, streets, parks, trails, etc.

While all departments are encouraged to participate, the recommended lead on the public art program is the Recreation, Culture and Wellness Department.

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# Appendix C:

## Trends in Participation & Provision

Identified below are trends that are influencing the demand for and delivery of recreation, culture and parks services in Canadian municipalities. For continuity with leading sector resources, the trends are organized by the five goals of the Framework for Recreation in Canada (FRC).

### Active Living

#### Parks and Recreation are Essential Services

The evidence is clear – communities are increasingly viewing recreation and parks as essential services and believe that these spaces and services will be a critical contributor to our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The large majority (82%) of Canadians said that parks and outdoor spaces have become more important to their mental health during COVID-19 and 70% indicated that their appreciation for parks and green spaces had increased during the pandemic<sup>3</sup>. Access to public spaces and programs is a fundamental service for Canadians and we are living in a time where we need more public space, not less.

#### Combating High Levels of Physical Inactivity

Physical inactivity rates remain alarmingly high. The 2021 ParticipACTION report card on physical activity graded overall **physical activity levels a “D”<sup>4</sup> for children and youth and “F” for adults**, reflecting a decline from prior years as activity levels dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Canadian Community Health Survey found that the percentage of youth meeting the Canadian physical activity recommendation dropped from 51% in the fall of 2018 to 37% in the fall of 2020.<sup>5</sup> Further, 42% of adults described their level of vigorous physical activity to be somewhat or much less in March 2021 compared to the pre-pandemic period<sup>6</sup>.

For many, municipal parks and recreation services provide critical supports to maintain personal health and physical literacy by addressing inactivity levels, social isolation, stress and anxiety. Access to outdoor spaces, active transportation, and affordable, accessible leisure activities are key determinants in engaging people in active recreation. Proximity to parks and facilities is also correlated with higher levels of physical activity and there is

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<sup>3</sup> Park People. COVID-19 and Parks Survey. July 2020. <https://parkpeople.ca/2020/07/16/covid-19-and-parks-highlights-from-our-national-surveys>

<sup>4</sup> The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Adults (2021) and Children and Youth (2022). <https://www.participation.com>

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 82-003-X. The unequal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical activity habits of Canadians. <https://doi.org/10.25318/82-003-x202200500003-eng>

<sup>6</sup> CFLRI. 2020-2021 Impact of COVID-19 on Physical Activity Survey.

evidence that larger parks have a more direct impact on physical activity as they have the space to accommodate a wider variety of amenities and experiences.<sup>7</sup>

Reliance on automobiles (as opposed to walking or biking) has contributed to this culture of physical inactivity, while sedentary activities further exacerbate this trend. Education initiatives can focus on both raising awareness of the importance of increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviours. Piloting new programs that fit physical activity **into peoples' daily lives should** also be encouraged, including participation in outdoor activities such as walking, wheeling or cycling along safe streets and trails.

#### Popularity of Unstructured, Self-Directed Activities

With increasingly busy lifestyles, participation is gradually shifting away from structured programs and set schedules as people are demonstrating a desire for more drop-in, unstructured and self-directed participation options. This is compounded by changes in demand for prime-time access – more adults and seniors are seeking activities during the evening, a shift from traditional daytime or late-evening provision. Participation in adult recreational activities is also growing at the same time that municipalities seek new ways to engage youth in meaningful activities.

There is also a growing desire for innovative programming and space for unstructured **activities. Municipalities that have traditionally just been “facility providers” are evolving into “activity enablers”, sometimes through partnerships with other service providers.** Increasingly, this is leading to opportunities that go beyond traditional activities and by **creating “experiences” often linked to broader interests in community life, the arts, and more.**

#### Encouraging Free Play

Play is critical to the holistic social and physical development of children. A majority (57%) of Canadian parents believe that children these days spend too much time in organized activities, and not enough time just playing.<sup>8</sup> According to some, the erosion of play has become a silent emergency across the world, with **1 in 5 children saying they are ‘too busy’ to play.**<sup>9</sup> Lifestyles are also changing, with a growing prevalence of insecurity and parental risk aversion, the increasing prevalence of technology in our lives, and a recurring time-scarcity problem, each of which impact children’s play experiences.

Play is often seen as an activity confined to playgrounds or schools, but communities are working to design public spaces to better support play and learning opportunities for children, such as the use of more natural play features and loose toys/tools for imaginative play. Everyday activities such as walking and cycling can also support a physically active population.

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<sup>7</sup> Urban Institute. The Health Benefits of Parks and their Economic Impacts: A Review of Literature. February 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Ipsos. One in Three (32%) Families Going into Debt to Fund their Children’s Extra-Curricular Activities, Up 5 Points from Last Year. 2018. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/back-to-school-2018>

<sup>9</sup> Real Play Coalition. Reclaiming Play in Cities. 2020. <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/reclaiming-play-in-cities>

### Pandemic Impacts on Community Sport

Prior to the pandemic, about 75% of Canadian children age 5 to 17 years participated in organized sport<sup>10</sup> and participation increased from 2005 to 2016<sup>11</sup>. Rates of sport participation are largely the same for girls and boys, but participation decreases with age.<sup>12</sup> Further, participation is consistently lowest in lower-income and other marginalized groups, indicating that more can be done to include all persons in affordable and accessible sport opportunities.

Amongst adults, just over one-quarter (27%) participate in sport, a figure that has varied little over the years. Men are nearly twice as likely to participate in sport as women, and participation generally declines with age (from 44% of people aged 18 to 24 years, to 16% of adults aged 65 years or older). Those with higher levels of income and educational attainment are also significantly more likely to participate in sport.<sup>13</sup>

More recently, sport participation has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to public health restrictions and facility closures. A report from 2022 indicates that one-half (49%) of parents say the number of organized sports their child participates in has declined and 45% say that their child is no longer playing sports.<sup>14</sup> This is having adverse effects on children. 74% of Canadian parents indicated that their children feel isolated and lonely, 69% indicated that their children are showing signs of decreased physical fitness, and 64% said their children are finding it difficult to reduce their stress and anxiety.<sup>15</sup> A return to activity is critical for children and youth to once again achieve the many positive benefits of participation.

### Pandemic Impacts on Programming

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted municipal programming as a result of facility closures and capacity restrictions. From 2020 until the beginning of 2022, public participation in organized activities plummeted. During this time, close-to-home recreation and at-home fitness became common, with one-third (33%) of Canadian gym-goers streaming exercise videos at home<sup>16</sup>. While virtual programming will provide municipalities with an additional tool by which to deliver their services in the future, it is less accessible for many vulnerable populations and does not offer nearly the same revenue potential as traditional models.

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<sup>10</sup> Canadian Heritage. (2013). Sport Participation 2010. Ottawa, Canada: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.

<sup>11</sup> Barnes, J. D. & Tremblay, M. S. Changes in indicators of child and youth physical activity in Canada, 2005–2016. Can. J. Public Health Rev. Can. Santé Publique 107, e586–e589 (2016).

<sup>12</sup> Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute. Kids CAN PLAY! Bulletin 2: Participation in organized physical activity and sport. 2018.  
[https://cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/1671/files/CPLY%202014-2016%20Bulletin%20%20-%20Organized\\_EN.pdf](https://cflri.ca/sites/default/files/node/1671/files/CPLY%202014-2016%20Bulletin%20%20-%20Organized_EN.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> CFLRI. 2019-2021 Physical Activity Monitor.

<sup>14</sup> Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. Jumpstart State of Sport Report. 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. Jumpstart State of Sport Report. 2021.  
[https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart\\_State\\_of\\_Sport\\_Report\\_March\\_2021.pdf?v=1616793836](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart_State_of_Sport_Report_March_2021.pdf?v=1616793836)

<sup>16</sup> IHRSA. The COVID Era Fitness Consumer. IHRSA, Oct. 2020,  
<https://www.ihrsa.org/publications/the-covid-era-fitness-consumer>.



With public health restrictions now lifted, more recent trends indicate that programming is beginning to rebound to pre-pandemic levels for a number of different activities such as youth sports leagues, childcare and camps, adult fitness classes, older adult programming and holiday events/festivals. The recovery is likely to be quicker for certain programs (such as outdoor sport and arena activities) due to the established volunteer network and a lower reliance on municipal program staff; though it is worth noting that many community organizations are dealing with a loss of volunteers, underscoring the need to engage the younger generation to sustain these services moving forward. For other services that rely on leadership and certification programs (most notably aquatics, camps and specialized programs) it will take longer to attain past registration levels.

### Engaging the Aging Population in Healthy Activities

**Canada's population has been getting older for many decades. In 2021, its median age was 41.6 years, an increase of four years since 2001 (37.6 years).** Aging is a significant driver of increased health care costs and is also significantly influencing parks and recreation opportunities. For example, an aging population may mean demand for activities that support social connections and healthy active aging, including more daytime services.

In response, providers are offering an increased variety of older adult programs for those wishing to remain active as they age, including those seeking lifelong learning opportunities, persons managing chronic illness and disease, and those that are seeking low-impact, therapeutic, and rehabilitative programs. However, there can be significant variation among different segments within the older adult community based on age, abilities, lifestyles, and interests – **as a result, there is no “one size fits all approach”.**

### Emerging Recreational Activities

The popularity of recreation and sport activities changes with time and can be affected by several factors, such as socio-economic characteristics, lifestyle trends, and the activity's exposure and accessibility. National registration figures indicate that, where once ice hockey and baseball were dominant, soccer has taken rise since the 1990s. More recently, a national study **found that interest in children's activities was beginning to shift away from** these sports towards other less formal extracurricular activities, such as music lessons, dance lessons, language classes, and drama classes.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, the once popular sports of curling, racquetball, and aerobics – though still prevalent in some areas – have generally given way to new and emerging activities such as pickleball, disc golf, skateboarding and BMX biking, outdoor fitness and new forms of body weight training, cricket, year-round indoor athletic training, challenge courses and adventure play, plus other sports that are established but growing such as basketball and tennis. Many municipalities are also offering a wider variety of programming focused on physical activity and mental wellness, mindfulness, inter-generational opportunities, and outdoor programs (e.g., meditation, nature walks, yoga, etc.).

The pandemic and rising interest in outdoor activities has led to increased requests in many communities for spaces that support individual or small group usage, such as off-leash dog

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<sup>17</sup> Ipsos. One in Three (32%) Families Going into Debt to Fund their Children's Extra-Curricular Activities, Up 5 Points from Last Year. 2018. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/back-to-school-2018>

parks, multi-use trails, sport courts, community gardens, outdoor classrooms, outdoor skating rinks, unstructured spaces, and digital infrastructure (e.g., Wi-Fi in parks, etc.).

## Inclusion & Access

### Growing Concerns over Affordability

Affordability is a concern for many households given the current challenging economic climate and the fact that participation in leisure activities is one of several spending choices for discretionary income. In particular, income can be a significant barrier to participation in organized sports where equipment, travel and rental fees result in greater costs to the **participant. Research from 2018 found that the cost of children's activities put a strain on** the finances of a majority (55%) of Canadian parents. Hockey topped the list as the most expensive extracurricular activity (an average cost of nearly \$750) and the research found that parents were increasingly less likely to enroll their children in hockey as a result. Conversely, swimming was one the most affordable and popular after-school activities for children.<sup>18</sup>

### Making Recreation Accessible for Persons with Disabilities

One in five Canadians aged 15 years and over (amounting to 6.2 million individuals) have one or more disabilities relating to physical, sensory, cognitive or mental health<sup>19</sup>. As the average age of Canadians continues to increase, so will the number of persons living with disabilities.

Accessibility-related barriers affect persons with disabilities from achieving the full benefits of participating in leisure activities and other aspects of daily life. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA) directs municipalities to consider the needs of persons with disabilities through facility design and service delivery. By 2025, municipalities are required to remove all barriers within new and redeveloped municipal facilities, including those related to physical space and through customer service training.

Further, access to the outdoors and exposure to recreation and the arts can be valuable in providing therapeutic relief, while exercise and cognitive stimulation afforded through leisure participation can mitigate the onset of chronic conditions associated with aging such as limited mobility and dementia. Many communities are beginning to provide outdoor spaces that directly benefit persons with disabilities, such as sensory gardens, quiet areas, raised garden beds, and autism-friendly playgrounds.

### Improving Gender Equity in Sports

A substantially higher percentage of boys and men participate in sport compared to girls and women. Starting in late adolescence, one-in-three women leave sport as compared to one-in-ten boys<sup>20</sup>. This trend has worsened since the onset of the pandemic, when it was reported that 90% of female recreation participants were negatively impacted (specifically young women ages 6 to 18 years old). The research suggests that young women are

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Survey on Disability. 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/181128/dq181128a-eng.htm>

<sup>20</sup> Canadian Women & Sport. The Rally Report. 2020. <https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Canadian-Women-Sport-The-Rally-Report.pdf>

participating substantially less than they did pre-pandemic and that 25% are not committed to returning to sport after the pandemic.<sup>21</sup> To bolster participation among women, the Federal government has established a goal of achieving equity in sport participation by the year 2035.

Many municipalities and recreation providers have been instrumental in providing leadership opportunities, gender-specific sport leagues, and local engagement initiatives. A recent survey found that 84% of Ontarians believe recreation programs, parks and community facilities make it easier for people to socialize and feel included.<sup>22</sup> Beyond sport, thoughtful design of public spaces can make them more fun, safer for diverse groups, and generally more inclusive of everyone. Examples include providing a wider variety of play opportunities, including gender-neutral forms of play such as climbing (e.g., natural elements) and building (e.g., loose parts).

### Using Parks and Recreation to Support Indigenous Reconciliation

Indigenous awareness, recognition, understanding, and reconciliation are addressed through a number of sectoral documents, such as Parks for All (2017) and the calls to action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). The latter calls upon all levels of government to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development, growth and public education.

All communities have a role to play in recognizing the importance of Indigenous voices in parks, recreation, and sport. For example, many municipalities are showcasing Indigenous history through public art and plaques in community centres and parks, along with exploring sports programs and ceremonial events that deepen our understanding of these cultures. A recent survey saw that 59% of Canadians want to see Indigenous place names restored and 68% support more Indigenous representation through art, native plant gardens, and signage.<sup>23</sup> Reconciliation is an ongoing process that must occur in a respectful manner recognizing Indigenous cultural traditions and practices. Ensuring that Indigenous voices are sought and included in planning and policy development is growing as a priority for municipalities.

### Safe Spaces for Marginalized and Displaced Populations

The pandemic has intensified social inequities and negatively impacted vulnerable populations such as lower-income households, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities. The research is clear that marginalized populations have been disproportionately impacted and finding it harder to remain active.

Intentional decisions and meaningful action are required to improve equity in resource provision and access to recreation services for all populations. For example, recreation facilities can play a role in supporting under-housed and displaced populations, serving as cooling centres, community showers, food pantries, and safe spaces. Most parks and recreation departments are not well equipped to deal with this challenge and greater education and dialogue are often required. While policies and approaches for

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<sup>21</sup> Canadian Women & Sport and E-Alliance. COVID Alert Pandemic Impact on Girls in Sport. 2021. <https://womenandsport.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/COVID-Alert-final-English-July-2021.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Parks and Recreation Ontario. Value Survey, 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Park People. Reclaiming Urban Spaces is a Decolonial Act. 2022. <https://ccpr.parkpeople.ca/2022/stories/inclusion/reclaiming-urban-spaces-is-a-decolonial-act>

accommodating transient residents may differ, municipalities are increasingly serving a wider range of needs and working with other sectors to connect residents to essential services.

## Connecting People & Nature

### Rising Use of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Communities witnessed increased demand for unstructured outdoor recreation activities within parks and trails during the COVID-19 pandemic as people found or rediscovered new ways to remain active and connected. Although this created some operational challenges and created added strain on budgets, it has largely been viewed positively as it has **strengthened residents' connections** with their community and nature, and introduced many people to new activities, often within their local neighbourhood. Park usage has continued to climb during the pandemic – 55% said they spent more time in parks in 2021 than in 2020, and 58% indicate that they would like to spend even more time in parks.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of this renewed interest, residents expect more from their parks in terms of amenities and quality. Many communities are reimagining existing spaces in creative ways, such as car-free streets (or temporary street closures), outdoor workout areas, and open space enhancements that allow for creative programming and community interaction (e.g., Wi-Fi in parks, increased seating options, creation of new activity zones, challenging play opportunities, nature-based programs, etc.). Public demand is especially strong for year-round washrooms in parks and natural areas. Although meeting these needs will be a challenge due to rapidly rising costs and supply chain issues, a recent report suggests that there is substantial support for public investment – 87% of city residents support more public funding for parks.<sup>25</sup>

### Improving our Connections with Nature

There is a growing amount of research highlighting the physical and psychological health benefits of interacting with nature for people of all ages. For example, children with access to parks, playgrounds and other outdoor amenities are more likely to be physically active, and are less likely to be overweight and obese; this is especially true if the parks are within walking or biking distance and have facilities that encourage physical play. Time in nature also provides children the chance to develop social-emotional skills and healthy behaviors **critical to thrive. Unfortunately, children's overall exposure** to nature has been steadily declining.

Some ways that municipalities have encouraged residents to spend time outdoors are through the provision of off-road trail networks, community gardens, naturalization initiatives, nature-based programming, stewardship activities, educational programs, etc. Trails systems offer residents and visitors an opportunity to connect with nature through natural environments within and surrounding the community. Emphasis is also being placed on expanded outdoor play opportunities for children and youth, including natural playgrounds.

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<sup>24</sup> Park People. The Canadian Parks Report: Nurturing Relationships & Reciprocity. 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

Nearly half (48%) of Canadians indicate that they have been spending more time in naturalized spaces during the pandemic.<sup>26</sup> In some places, concern has been expressed over over-use of natural areas due to increased visitation (large parks in particular saw a spike in usage). Intentional planning is critical to ensuring that natural areas are properly managed and able to support priorities such as expanded biodiversity.

### Supporting Active Transportation

Active transportation offers many personal health and wellness benefits and is a core **element of complete communities**. Recently, the concept of a “15-minute city” has been gaining prominence, requiring that neighbourhoods be designed to allow people access to basic and essential services at distances that can be accessed by foot or bicycle within 15 minutes of their home.

During the pandemic, municipalities observed a surge in recreational trail use as residents participated close-to-home and sought connections with nature. Expanded use of these networks can be expected to continue – interest in bike lanes, off-road trails and cycling infrastructure are common requests in most communities. Active transportation is environmentally-friendly as it reduces road congestion and vehicle-related greenhouse gas emissions.

### Keeping Pace with Parkland Needs in Growing Communities

Access to outdoor space matters. There is a growing recognition of the broader utility and value of parks for individuals and communities, including their many physical and mental health, social, environmental, and economic benefits. However, with many communities experiencing fast growth in population and density, most are finding it challenging to develop new parks to meet growing demand due to land scarcity and rising land values.

Another issue is equity. Several studies have found that under-served populations (e.g., low-income households, visible minorities, recent immigrants, Indigenous communities and more) tend to have below average access to parks, particularly larger open space areas<sup>27</sup>. It is important not only to ensure that sufficient parkland is secured, but that it is equitably distributed across communities so that all residents can enjoy the benefits. Now more than ever, municipalities have an obligation to target investment (including park development and renewal, facility development) within neighbourhoods without adequate access.

### Increasing Focus on Environmental Design and Climate Change

There is an increasing need to reduce our impact on the environment to be more sustainable and resilient to climate change. The way in which we design and operate our recreation and parks facilities can help us meet our environmental objectives. Increasingly, municipalities are designing facilities to meet “net zero” and “carbon neutral” targets through the use of technologies that enhance energy efficiency, reduce waste, and lower our greenhouse gas emissions. Although these enhancements often come with a higher initial capital cost, they must be balanced against improved sustainability, resiliency, and potentially longer-term operational savings.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition and RePublic Urbanism. Improving Access to Large Parks in Ontario’s Golden Horseshoe. March 2022.



Fortunately, the many environmental benefits of parks and public spaces – such as reducing the urban heat island effect, mitigating flooding, and improving air quality – illustrate the critical importance of their role as public infrastructure and lend support for further **investment. Already thought of as “green infrastructure”, parks are being positioned to be** more environmentally sustainable through reducing grass cutting and naturalization initiatives, planting of native species, tree canopy targets, net zero infrastructure, and programs that educate about local natural heritage features (e.g., outdoor classrooms or interpretive signage). More communities are also experimenting by piloting new approaches in parks, such as bioswales, rain gardens, pollinator gardens, habitat restoration, and biodiversity initiatives. Green infrastructure strategies that include directions for parks are becoming more common and helping to ensure these practices become standard.

## Supportive Environments

### Multi-Use Recreation Facilities as Community Hubs

In this era of user convenience and cost recovery, most municipalities (like Gravenhurst) are centralizing multiple recreational and cultural facilities under one roof. There are a range of benefits of multi-use facilities including the creation of a “one-stop-shop” destination where all household members can gather and engage in recreation activities, thereby contributing to sport development, tourism, and operational efficiency. During the pandemic, many of these spaces provided critical services relating to public health (e.g., testing and vaccination centres)

**Increasingly, these facilities are being designed as “community hubs” that provide a central access point for a range of needed health and social services – along with cultural, recreational and greenspaces – to nourish community life.** They are serving an important role by connecting people to necessary services that extend well beyond traditional sport and recreation activities (e.g., child care, food distribution, warming and cooling centres, emergency shelters, etc.). Partnerships with service providers can help municipalities leverage resources and reach new audiences.

### Providing High Quality, Multi-functional and Flexible Facilities

**Today’s consumers expect and demand high quality sports and recreation facilities that can** support an increasingly sophisticated network of users, athletes, and related service providers. Part of this can be explained by the exposure of residents to newer facilities in other communities. With many smaller communities witnessing significant population growth and in-migration of residents from larger urban centres, these residents are bringing their bigger city expectations with them and anticipating similar levels of service. Complete communities with a variety of accessible leisure opportunities will be poised to capitalize on this trend, while those with under-funded or inadequate amenities will be expected to increase investment to keep pace.

This trend also reflects the expectations that come with increased spending in the sector. In 2019, Canadians allocated 5% of their annual household expenses to recreation and culture activities (including the purchase of sports equipment, art supplies and musical instruments,

as well as admission to movies, live performances, and museums, membership payments towards recreation and leisure facilities, etc.), an average of over \$4,600 per household.<sup>28</sup>

The provision of high quality, multi-use facilities encourage physical and social activity among all age groups, while also creating opportunities for sport tourism at a regional scale. Best practices in facility design consider safety, accessibility, comfort, placemaking and opportunities for community gathering, socialization, and inclusive experiences. A recent focus has been placed on the provision of experiential amenities (e.g., indoor playgrounds, challenge courses and rock climbing, functional training areas, etc.).

*There may be new infrastructure needs in a post-COVID-19 setting, with a priority being placed on accessible, resilient, and human-scaled spaces that provide for adequate separation and improved ventilation.* An emphasis may be placed on flexible spaces that can be closed off from other areas and subdivided for a variety of small and large group activities, as well as non-recreational use during public health emergencies. Economic stimulus to the sector – such as continued senior government grants – may help many communities to address needed infrastructure improvements, particularly those projects with wide-ranging benefits and sound rationale. Added costs for design and capital construction can be anticipated for certain facility types given recent supply chain issues, labour shortages, and rising inflation rates.

#### Rationalizing and Addressing Aging Infrastructure

The 2019 Canadian Infrastructure Report Card found that approximately one-third of **Canada's sports and recreation facilities (including arenas and pools) were considered to be** in fair to very poor condition (ranking only behind bridges and roads) and in need of revitalization and expensive repairs.<sup>29</sup> Many of these facilities were built in the 1970s or earlier and, due to the era of construction, have various design and age-related deficiencies that are impacting their operational efficiency and ability to adequately serve their patrons.

Facility renewal and reinvestment projects have been a focus for local governments for some time, often requiring alternative funding sources such as senior government grants, naming rights, operating partnerships, land swaps, and more. Due to the current economic situation and resultant cost escalations, many communities will require increased financial commitments from all levels of government to facilitate the redesign, development and retrofitting of parks and recreation facilities. The infrastructure deficit provides an opportunity not only to modernize facilities by making them more multi-use, but also to consider facility conversion or adaptive re-use options that accommodate emerging activities.

#### Designing Facilities to be Sport-Friendly

Organized sport in general – but particularly at high-performing levels – requires access to specialized facilities such as aquatic centres, arenas, and sports fields. Increasingly, athletes and organizations serving the competitive sport market are seeking recreation infrastructure

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<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0222-01. Household spending, Canada, regions and provinces. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110022201>

<sup>29</sup> **Monitoring the State of Canada's Core Public Infrastructure: The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card 2019.** <http://canadianinfrastructure.ca/downloads/canadian-infrastructure-report-card-2019.pdf>

that is built to be **“competition-ready”** in order to accommodate elevated training and sport tourism opportunities.

In evaluating the needs of sport in the design of new and redevelopment of existing recreation facilities, municipalities must factor in existing and future demand, as well as opportunities for sport tourism. Sport tourism offers a number of economic benefits, supporting amenities such as hotels, restaurants, and parking, among other industries.

**“Tourna-cations”** – families of athletes scheduling family vacations to coincide with athletic tournaments – is a recent trend and means that facilities must consider the needs of both participants and spectators (e.g., Wi-Fi, charging stations, higher-end concessions, family entertainment options, wayfinding kiosks, pet-friendly public spaces, etc.).

## Recreation Capacity

### The Great Resignation – Significant Turnover in Recreation Programming Staff

Since the beginning of the pandemic, many parks and recreation departments have experienced a decline in their number of employees, particularly part-time staff and seasonal workers. This time period – **“The Great Resignation”** – has seen many staff leave their jobs for a multitude of reasons, resulting in an increased workload for remaining employees and decreasing opportunities for people to participate in activities.<sup>30</sup> For example, pandemic restrictions led to a reduction in training opportunities for many municipalities, which is currently impacting the number of lifeguards and program instructors, leading to program cancellations. These workers are integral to the recreation services that keep their community engaged.

Due to the low availability of qualified workers and rising operating and staffing costs, there is concern that non-profit agencies may stop offering affordable programming (e.g., before- and after-school programs, summer camps, etc.). For example, several YMCAs in Ontario have permanently closed due to significant membership losses during the pandemic, leaving a void in many communities.

### Declining Volunteerism

Volunteers are critical to the delivery of community-based parks and recreation activities and events; however, the number of volunteers and their commitment are declining. In 2018, Canadian volunteers devoted about 1.65 billion volunteer hours, down from 1.96 billion in 2013 – a 16% decrease in only five years.<sup>31</sup> The pandemic has further accelerated this trend.

**The most important factor preventing individuals from volunteering in sport is “time or busy schedule”.** More adults volunteer in an informal capacity (especially young adults), compared to a formal capacity (which is more common amongst older adults). The role of younger volunteers is vital to the sustainability of sport, especially in light of the pandemic and its greater impact on older populations.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Roth, K. NRPA Parks Snapshot: 2021 Year-End Survey Results. 2021.

<https://www.nrpa.org/blog/nrpa-parks-snapshot-2021-year-end-survey-results/>.

<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada. 2018 General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

<sup>32</sup> CFLRI. Monitoring & Tracking the Field: Volunteering in Sport. 2022.

### Pandemic Challenges for Canadian Recreation Sport Organizations

Sport organizations have been significantly affected as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A report from early 2022 finds that 52% of Canadian sport organizations say that it will take until at least 2024 to reach their pre-pandemic state. Further, 75% of sport organizations indicate that the costs of running sport programs have increased and 94% are concerned that youth will be particularly impacted.<sup>33</sup> A previous survey of Canadian sport organizations from 2021 found that one-third (33%) of organizations were bankrupt or are nearing having to file for bankruptcy and 30% of organizations had temporarily or permanently closed during the pandemic.<sup>34</sup>

Many communities rely on organizations and spaces provided by third parties (e.g., schools, churches, non-profits, private sector) to support programming. Service reductions and closures can create program gaps, sometimes with an expectation for municipalities to step in and fill the void. Recognizing that this situation is evolving, service providers must closely monitor demand, participation, and usage levels to adjust resource allocations as necessary. Working with local community organizations will be critical as we emerge from the pandemic to ensure programming continues to be successful over the long-term.

### The Necessity of Partnerships

Municipal parks and recreation departments throughout Ontario are increasingly challenged to provide and maintain top quality facilities, programs and services within defined budgets. As financial pressures mount and the need for cost containment rises, communities are examining new and creative service delivery models, including developing relationships with third-party entities. With municipalities facing increasing demands for new amenities, many are turning to partnerships with non-profits and community groups to bring expertise, new programming, alternative funding, and shared risks. Most municipalities have a long history of working with public libraries, school boards, service clubs, or other providers to maximize resources.

Looking ahead, the sector is likely to see more partnerships than fewer. Sport for Life reported that 72% of organizations have reached out to work with others and/or support one another in starting initiatives.<sup>35</sup> The pandemic has also strengthened existing and created new forms of collaboration with other sectors, something that may carry forward into the future. Many of these new roles – including community-based supports (e.g., food security, health service coordination, homelessness, etc.) – will require additional policy direction, training, and support.

### Data, Technology and Digital Transformation

Data is becoming more accessible and mainstream, with increased data literacy enabling more informed decision-making. Parks and recreation departments are gaining access to growing amounts of data geared specifically towards the sector. These advanced analytics

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<sup>33</sup> Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. [Jumpstart State of Sport Report](#). 2022.

<sup>34</sup> Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. [Jumpstart State of Sport Report](#). 2021. [https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart\\_State\\_of\\_Sport\\_Report\\_March\\_2021.pdf?v=1616793836](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0122/8124/9892/files/Jumpstart_State_of_Sport_Report_March_2021.pdf?v=1616793836).

<sup>35</sup> Sport for Life. [Impacts of COVID-19 on Local Sports Organizations Nationwide Survey Results](#). Sport for Life, June 2020, <https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/National-Report-Impacts-of-COVID-19-on-Local-Sports-Organizations-1.pdf>.

allow for more in-depth analysis on trends and tendencies that can support predictive modelling.

Technological advances are also enabling service providers and users to be more aware of leisure opportunities in their communities. From online services, virtual programming, and mobile and wearable technologies, the integrated application of technology in recreation service delivery can assist in enhancing client experiences and engaging a wider user base.

Digital technology is becoming pervasive in the public realm, enhancing client experiences beyond the walls of community facilities. Some examples include<sup>36</sup>:

- Public Wi-Fi / hot spots
- Device charging stations / hubs
- Digital screens / kiosks
- Smart transportation infrastructure (e.g., smart traffic signals, pedestrian crossings, smart sidewalks, parking sensors)
- Smart street furniture (e.g., smart lamp posts, smart benches)
- Digital public art
- Digital wayfinding

### Evolving Financial Challenges

Parks and recreation department budgets were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as facilities were closed and revenue streams dried up. Now, as operations resume and ramp up to pre-pandemic levels, most municipalities are experiencing escalating cost factors and staffing shortages that are leading to rapidly rising capital and operating budget needs, along with delays in much-needed capital projects.

The effects of the current economic situation will be felt for some time and are likely to cause most communities to more actively seek out alternative funding sources. Some options include grants, naming rights, and innovative partnerships. The recreation sector **has a history of “doing more with less” and finding creative ways to ensure that residents** are able to participate and engage fully in these essential services.

## Arts & Culture

### Culture can be Difficult to Define

**The term “culture” is a multi-faceted concept and, as a result, is frequently misused and misinterpreted. Recent literature in cultural planning points to defining “culture” as activities** that: harness the assets of a community; celebrate the unique resources, such as heritage properties, natural assets, and community spirit; revitalize downtown cores; honour and respect the unique contributions of artists and artisans; create diverse and safe neighbourhoods; raise the bar for urban design; and protect public spaces. Cultural plans often encourage professionals and individuals within the arts and culture sector to lead informed conversations about culture (employed as cultural planners or added to municipal

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<sup>36</sup> Lenarcic Biss, Danielle and Pamela Robinson. Parks and Open Spaces: Challenges and Opportunities of Smart Technologies. February 2021.



committees), what it means, how it impacts communities, and, importantly, whose cultures should be included or have been excluded in the planning process.

### Arts and Culture Attendance and Participation is Growing and Evolving

Research on attendance is broad but highlights growing participation and high levels of **appreciation for arts and culture across the country. Residents' value authentic experiences** and the unique attributes of communities. People are also experiencing and appreciating arts and culture in less traditional ways and have increasing expectations for programs and events.

Data from the 2016 Canadian Social Survey indicates that 99.5% of Canadians aged 15 or older participated in some type of arts, culture, or heritage activity. This includes 86% that attended an art gallery, an arts performance, an artistic or cultural or festival, or a movie theatre. There has been a strong increase in the percentage of Canadians visiting art galleries and historic sites between 1992 and 2016.

In addition, the participation rates for many arts, culture, and heritage activities have increased over 25 years, with 50% of Canadians making or performing art in 2016 (led by crafts at 18%, music at 15%, visual arts at 13%, writing at 11%, and dancing at 9%).

Patterns of higher attendance rates were found for many demographic groups, including women, youth, families with higher income and levels of educational attainment, and non-religious Canadians. Additionally, recent immigrants tend to have much higher attendance rates than earlier immigrants. While higher income positively correlates with arts attendance, it has little influence on the proportion of Canadians that participate in making or performing art.<sup>37</sup>

### Pandemic Impacts on Arts and Culture

Arts and cultural industries were categorized as non-essential and were hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Theatres and museums were closed and festivals were cancelled across the county. For a sector that was already in a precarious state prior to the start of **the pandemic, being the "first to close and last to open" has been a significant challenge** for many. Notably, there was a 25% decrease in employment levels (including self-employment) in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector – higher than any other industry in 2020.<sup>38</sup> Many organizations also count on sponsorships for funding, which dried up due to the pandemic.

Fortunately, there are signs that the industry is recovering as many activities are resuming in 2022. However, the sector is also affected by the same staffing and volunteer shortages seen in the recreation sector. Inclusive and affordable opportunities for arts and cultural participation and attendance will be important to our recovery.

It is difficult to predict what will come next for the industry as we emerge from the **pandemic, though it is clear that there are increasing options and competition for ones' time. As one study puts it: "It seems the shift in the use of technology for the consumption** of arts and culture content will stick around even once the pandemic begins to subside. The

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<sup>37</sup> Hill Strategies Research Inc. [Demographic Patterns in Canadians' Arts Participation in 2016.](https://hillstrategies.com/resource/demographic-patterns-in-canadians-arts-participation-in-2016/)

<sup>38</sup> Hill Strategies Research Inc. [Organizational stress and resilience in the arts in Canada.](#) 2021.

pandemic has created new competition for live entertainment further complicating the effort needed to get Canadians out of their homes. Rethinking the customer journey will be critical as we **emerge from the pandemic.**"<sup>39</sup>

### Digital Transformation of Arts and Culture

The pandemic accelerated technological shifts that were already influencing large segments of the creative and recreational industries. For example, digital technologies have allowed creative individuals to self-publish, produce, market, distribute, and sell their creations, no longer relying on traditional means of production, distribution, and marketing. Digital culture has also allowed the creator to engage with audiences directly, and allows for creators to reach mass markets and tailor their products to suit consumers across borders.

This pivot to digital programming and practices has opened up new opportunities for artists and arts organizations. During the pandemic (and potentially beyond), some artists created virtual shows (e.g., music, theatre, etc.) to continue to reach their audience. In the heritage sector, museums developed digital resources, providing access to collections online, educational programs, virtual tours, self-organized experiences, etc. However, not all organizations have the capacity or the resources to deliver online programs, with smaller organizations requiring the greatest amount of continued support.

### Theatre Audiences are Changing

In 2016, 72% of Ontarians aged 15 and older attended an arts event (excluding movie theatres); for many, this would have included theatre activities such as performing arts. While the business model for municipal and other theatres is unique to each venue, the industry is increasingly being impacted by changing demographics and competition. For example, the baby boom generation – which has helped to sustain many theatres over the decades – is rapidly aging and the next generation has different expectations and interests. Furthermore, popular culture is becoming increasingly fractured (e.g., there are over twenty identifiable music genres) and our population is becoming more diverse. Additionally, there are now more ways for people to consume arts and culture, often from the comfort of their own home. While these factors are not a death knell to the industry, it does suggest that many community theatres may need to adjust the diversity and focus of their business model in the years to come.

### Racial Inequity in the Cultural Sector

Changing demographics and increased diversity in many communities and neighbourhoods will impact the cultural sector. Although the arts appeal to a large majority of Canadians in all demographic groups, there has been growing recognition in Canada of the lack of diversity in mainstream arts, culture, and heritage experiences, and also in the make-up of arts, culture, and heritage administrations, creators, instructors, and presenters. However, Indigenous, Black, and racialized artists are the highest underrepresented within Canadian

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<sup>39</sup> Abacus Data. Arts and culture during a pandemic and what will come next. 2021.  
<https://abacusdata.ca/arts-culture-pandemic-canada-polling/>

cultural institutions both as presenting artists, and within management, executive positions, and boards.<sup>40</sup>

The pandemic has raised awareness that many socio-economic factors (e.g., income, age, Indigenous identity, racialized groups) **can have a substantial influence on individuals' health and wellbeing**. A study from 2016 found that cultural activities have a positive impact **on Canadians' health and wellbeing, thus equitable access to culture can be related to equitable health outcomes**.<sup>41</sup> **Traditional' arts and culture representation will need to expand** to incorporate and exhibit new forms of art for a wider community, ensuring racial equity in the arts.

### Demand for Local and Authentic Festivals and Events

Pandemic aside, technological innovations, changing demographics, lifestyles, and interests are impacting the delivery of festivals and events. For example, the internet and social media have fundamentally changed the way festivals and events are marketed, providing a more effective way to reach target audiences than traditional advertising. Online ticketing is now common across all event sizes (small to large), allowing for more information on audiences and the effectiveness of marketing tactics.

Festivals and event goers are also becoming more demanding. They expect more choices, experiences and authentic programming. There is an increasing demand for events that provide food, wine, and craft beer. Additionally, hybrid events – those that broaden the appeal of an event by adding complementary activities either in-person or in tandem online – are increasing in number. This helps to grow audiences, give them more ways to spend money, and expand the sponsor pool. As noted previously, many festivals and event organizers have also pivoted to delivering these experiences through online mediums, directly as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Looking to the Past and Documenting our Living Heritage

As communities diversify and cultures are shared across the globe, there has been a move toward gathering, protecting and featuring intangible heritage elements. This includes many **aspects of a community's culture that are not represented by traditional physical artifacts**, buildings or monuments such as: storytelling, skill sharing and knowledge building. Often these intangibles are created, transmitted and maintained organically by a community without a realization that they are explicitly maintaining culture and heritage.

Rapidly changing demographics have pushed organizations and groups to document these intangibles for future generations as well as for cross-cultural learning and understanding. Many heritage groups, museums and galleries are using technologies to collect, archive and exhibit their local intangible heritage assets. Given our changing demographics, it is increasingly important to expand the definition of heritage beyond a Canadian-only focus to one that is encompassing of diverse histories of our new populations.

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<sup>40</sup> Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC). Positioning the Arts as a Key Economic Driver in COVID-19 Recovery. 2021. <https://www.carfac.ca/carfacwp2019/wp-content/uploads/CARFAC-2021-Pre-budget-Consultation.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Hill Strategies Research Inc. Canadians' Arts Participation, Health, and Well-Being. 2021.

### Creative and Cultural Hubs are Important for Smaller Communities

With the help of increased federal funding, Canada has seen a rise of cultural hubs in recent years. Creative and cultural spaces bring people together – artists, cultural entrepreneurs, and organizations – in spaces that encourage collaboration, innovation, and development. These hubs give artists the platforms and access to tools they need to succeed creatively. They are key economic drivers to attract skilled labour and innovation to specific places, particularly in small towns and rural areas. Hubs can take the form of districts, or individual facilities that inherently become multi-use spaces. The adaptation of existing spaces (often humble accommodations that facilitate placemaking) allows access for various activities without additional development in communities where land or resources are limited.

### Rising Land Values are Impacting Cultural Venues

Over the last few years, most cities have experienced rising land values, sometimes resulting in the displacement of arts and cultural activities.<sup>42</sup> For example, it has been common for studio spaces to have closed due to increases in property tax and rent, competition with higher-value land uses, and development pressure. The World Cities Culture Forum has also identified this as an issue in growing communities around the globe. **It is especially a concern for large cities as 50% of Canada's 158,100 artists reside in the nation's twelve largest cities, despite these cities accounting for only 34% of the overall Canadian population.**<sup>43</sup>

In response, a growing trend in some communities has been the retrofitting / use of community hubs and heritage homes (e.g., schools, old barn houses, homes, etc.) as cultural spaces. Multi-purpose cultural assets have become standard practice in many cultural plans today, in particular spaces that encourage different and complimentary types of activities, allowing for enhanced interaction within the community and providing opportunities for collaboration.

### Empowering the Community through Tactical Urbanism and Placemaking

Residents and communities often take it on themselves to change, repair or beautify public spaces through a concept known as tactical urbanism. Tactical urbanism is a collection of temporary changes to the built environment to improve neighbourhoods and community gathering spaces. These changes can vary in cost and size and usually start at the community level as a way to create spaces that are inviting, easy to navigate and offer residents a sense of ownership and communal pride for their public spaces. This concept is extended to temporary or pop-up initiatives that can help to test out creative placemaking ideas.

### Targeted Support to the Cultural Sector

The local arts and culture sector has been developed over decades through the dedication of its artists and cultural leaders, and the support of its audiences, philanthropists, volunteers, **sponsors and donors. Nurturing local cultural activity can be considered an "investment"** that can reap long-term rewards. For example, arts education helps in child-development and has many positive social impacts such as social cohesion, sense of place, economic

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<sup>42</sup> World Cities Culture Forum, [worldcitiescultureforum.com](http://worldcitiescultureforum.com)

<sup>43</sup> Hill Strategies Research Inc. [Artists in Canadian Municipalities in 2016](#). 2020.

diversification, and cultural awareness. It is in the best interest of residents, businesses and visitors to continue to support a vibrant, sustainable and resilient arts and culture sector.

As a result, most municipalities are seeking strategic approaches to support local organizations, including funding and subsidy programs. A recent example is the City of Toronto which recently reviewed its two cultural community grant programs. The City considered how it could more effectively influence the reach of these grants by targeting specific cultural organizations that could trickle down the grants via partnerships with others, as well as the establishment of a separate cultural festivals program and a new cultural access and development program to encourage participation by all in the arts and culture sector.

DRAFT



# Appendix D:

## Service Levels for Parks & Trails

Identified below are recommended Parks and Trails Maintenance Levels of Service based on the analysis from Section 8.5. Levels of Service have been reorganized where appropriate, gaps have been filled, and missing service areas have been added.

In developing the recommended Levels of Service for the Town of Pelham, the following methodology has been used:

- A review was carried out of current Town Levels of Service (both formal or informal) and of work currently performed in parks and other Town spaces through documentation and discussions with management and front-line staff.
- The current staff complement carrying out parks and trails maintenance, the Public Works and RCW organizational structures related to outdoor maintenance, and the vehicle and equipment inventory and deployment were reviewed.
- Parks and trails hierarchy and classifications were considered in concert with recommendations in Section 8.1.
- Existing Park inventories and amenity assessments were reviewed.
- **Pelham's parks, facilities and trails parks were visited to determine their current condition.**
- Discussion with staff took place to determine any problems delivering service or areas of complaint from the public or other stakeholders.
- Existing Levels of Service for Pelham were compared to benchmark municipalities, industry norms, and requirements related to safety and liability, regulations, or legislation.

The recommended Levels of Service below have been organized by service areas and specific locations or amenities. The actions specified for the various service areas may be best carried out by the Public Works or RCW Departments. Determining responsibility will require additional review by the Town.

### Service Area – Turf Maintenance

Parks and Trails	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Community and Neighbourhood Parks, Open Space, Town Facilities	Grass cutting and trimming.	Healthy turf cut <b>to a 3" height.</b> Areas around structures, beds, trees and hard surfaces trimmed.	Cut and trim weekly.	Restore winter damage to turf in spring as required.
Trails	Grass cutting.	Turf adjacent to trails cut one mower width to <b>4" height.</b>	Cut and trim weekly.	N/A
SWM Pond Edges	Contracted grass cutting.	<b>Turf at 6".</b>	N/A	N/A

Notes: The Town may wish to consider higher levels of turf maintenance for Community and higher profile parks, and Town Facilities.

## Service Area – Sports Fields

Sports Fields	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Inspection	Inspection as per checklist. Deficiencies recorded and reported.	Field and field amenities in good, safe and playable condition.	Inspect weekly in season.	Rectify deficiencies.
Soccer Fields	Irrigation of fields where systems installed as per schedule or through sensors.	Turf is irrigated sufficiently to promote healthy growth.	Line a minimum of once per week during the soccer season. Monthly inspection and testing of irrigation controllers and systems. Seasonal startup and shutdown of systems.	Turf repair (sodding or seeding) as determined through inspection or discussion with user groups. Repair to field amenities as required. Repair as required based on inspection or reported malfunction. Calibration, adjustment of heads and resetting of timers as required.
Ball Diamonds	Grass Cutting and trimming. Lining. Infield grooming.	Field is healthy at <b>2"-3" providing a safe surface.</b> Fencing, benches, bleachers and backstops in good state of repair. Lines visible. Infield is level, drains properly and there is a smooth transition between the infield and outfield turf.	Lined a minimum of once per week during ball season.	Infield leveling and filling of low areas as required.

Notes: A maximum 2" length of turf is desirable for soccer for playability

## Key actions include:

- a) The Town should consider implementing a program of regular topdressing, overseeding, fertilizing and aerating of sports fields, especially for soccer facilities. This work will improve the health of the turf and field resilience. It could be taken on by the Town or contracted.
- b) Irrigation should be installed at high use fields to improve turf health.

## Service Area - Horticulture

Horticulture	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Primary Beds	Planting and maintenance of annuals in primary beds.	Beds are weed free; plants are healthy and properly spaced.	Planting in June, weeding by-weekly, watering every 2 days. Pruning of shrubs 2x per year.	Removal of dead plants and replace as required.
Secondary Beds	Planting and maintenance of annuals in park beds.	Beds are weed free; plants are healthy and properly spaced.	Planting in June, weeding by-weekly, watering every 2 days. Pruning of shrubs 2x per year.	Removal of dead plants and replace as required.
Hanging Baskets	Installation and maintenance of hanging baskets.	Baskets are attractive and plants are in good condition.	Installed in June, Water every 3-4 days.	Remove any dead plant material.
Town Facilities	Planting and maintenance of annual and shrub beds outside Town facilities.	Beds are weed free; plants are healthy and properly spaced.	Beds inspected weekly. Shrubs pruned as required. Annual planting in June, weeding by-weekly. Watering every two days.	Removal of dead plants and replace as required.

Notes: Primary beds are located in "Designated Business Areas". Secondary Beds are located in parks.

Key actions include:

- a) The Town should investigate the installation of irrigation in high profile beds to reduce labour costs and time.
- b) The Town should consider mulching of beds. This will reduce requirements for weeding and watering.

## Service Area - General Maintenance

General Maintenance	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Park Furniture	Repair or replacement of park benches, picnic tables.	Park furniture is safe and in good repair.	Annual inspection of all park furniture.	Repair of park furniture within one week of inspection or concern from user.
Parks Fencing	Repair of Town-owned park and open space fencing.	Fencing is safe and in good repair.	Inspection of all fencing in spring and fall.	Repair of damage to fencing within one month of inspection or concern from a user.  Replace fencing or sections of fencing as required based on inspection.
Park signs	Repair or replacement of park signs.	All signs are legible and in good condition.	Inspection of park signs on a weekly basis as part of litter pickup.	Replacement or signs as required.
Graffiti	Removal of graffiti from parks and open space signs, structures, and amenities.	Parks and open spaces are free of graffiti.	Inspection of parks and open spaces for graffiti as part of regular maintenance. Field staff to report any graffiti found.	Removal of graffiti reported by staff or users within one week.
Waste Receptacles	Repair or replacement of waste receptacles.	All waste receptacles are in good condition and in the proper locations.	Inspect waste receptacles as part of park waste management and report any issues.	Repair, replace or relocate any receptacles reported within a week.

Notes: Graffiti removal is carried out by Public Works beautification staff. The Town may wish to investigate contracted graffiti removal.

Key actions include:

- a) **Given Pelham's large older population, the Town may consider adding additional benches along park pathways and trails to allow for frequent rest stops.**

## Service Area – Waste Management

Waste Management	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
All Parks and Trails and the exterior of Town Buildings.	Litter pickup and removal from all areas. Emptying of waste receptacles.	Parks, outside areas and trails rights of way are free of litter. Receptacles emptied when more than 75% full.	A minimum of once per week and prior to grass cutting. Emptied as per agreement with Niagara Region and private contractors.	More frequent pickup as required for events and tournaments, or in high use areas. Emptying of overflowing receptacles or removal of dumped household waste within 24 hours of report.
Open Space	Pickup and removal of litter including any dumped material. Emptying of waste receptacles.	Areas free from litter and dumped material. Receptacles emptied when more than 75% full.	Pickup and removal of litter spring and fall. Receptacles emptied once per week.	Pickup of reported dumped material within one week of report.

Notes: Receptacles should be placed at park and open space entrances, parking lots and along roadways where practical to facilitate waste removal

## Service Area – Play Amenities

Play Amenities	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Play Structures	Inspection of playgrounds, repair and maintenance of play structure components and surfaces.	All play structures and surfaces meet CSA safety standards; no glass or other hazards on playground surfaces.	Monthly documented inspection by a certified playground inspector.	Based on regular inspection or concern from the public, repair or replacement of any damaged component within three days; safety concerns to be addressed immediately.  Repair to surface (artificial turf) as required. Blow off or sweep surface as requires; remove any hazardous material (e.g. glass, sharp objects).



Play Amenities	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Skate Park	Inspection, repair and maintenance of skate park features and surfaces.	All components and equipment are fully functional; no graffiti or hazards on surfaces.	Documented inspection of skate park components and surfaces every month.	Based on regular inspection or concern from the public, repair or replacement of any damaged component within three days; safety concerns to be addressed immediately.
Spray Pads	Inspection, repair and maintenance of spray pad components and surrounding surfaces.	All spray pad components are fully functional; surfaces are clean and free of hazards.	Inspection and cleaning daily. Seasonal start-up and shutdown (spring and fall).	Component repair and replacement and surface repair acted on within three days of report.

Notes: Some municipalities permit graffiti at skate parks, on a managed basis, if desired by users. If desired, the Town should develop an internal policy, in consultation with users.

Key actions include:

- a) The Town should consider annual assessment of all play structures with regard to condition, lifecycle and the need for replacement, in addition to monthly inspections.

#### Service Area – Outdoor Sports Courts

Outdoor Sports Courts	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Tennis/Pickleball	Inspection, maintenance, sweeping and surface repair of tennis/pickleball courts.	Court surfaces are level, free for cracks and debris; lines are visible; nets are in good repair and adjusted for tension. Perimeter fencing is in a good state of repair; lighting is functioning.	Inspection of court monthly in season. Sweep courts monthly. Install and remove nets spring and fall. Adjust lighting timer as required.	Remove debris, adjust and repair nets, repair surfacing and fencing as required based on inspection or user concern.
Basketball/Multi-Sport	Inspection, maintenance, sweeping and surface repair of basketball/multi-sport courts.	Court surfaces are level, free for cracks and debris; lines are visible; basketball goals and backboards are in good repair. Perimeter fencing is in a good state of repair.	Inspection of court monthly in season. Sweep courts monthly.	Remove debris, repair basketball goals and backboards, repair surfacing and fencing as required based on inspection or user concern.

## Service Area – Trails and Pathways

Trails and Pathways	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Inspection	Inspection of trails.	All trails are inspected regularly, and deficiencies documented.	Inspect trails monthly to identify hazards, potholes or washouts, deadfalls, missing or damaged signage and sight line or other safety issues.	Deficiencies documented.
Asphalt/ Hard Surface Trails and Pathways	Maintenance and repair of trail treadway surface and shoulder.	Trails and pathways have an even, trip-free surface with no ponding. The right of way provides for safe sight lines.	Annual spring sweeping.	Repair of potholes, washouts and other hazard as determined by inspections of user concerns. Removal of deadfalls or other debris as determined by inspections or user concerns.
Limestone screenings, Stone Dust or Gravel Trails	Maintenance and repair of trail treadway surface and shoulder.	Trails and have an even, trip-free surface with no ponding, washouts, or potholes. The right of way provides for safe sight lines.	Addition of granular material and grading in spring as required.	Repair of potholes, washouts and other hazard as determined by inspections of user concerns. Removal of deadfalls or other debris as determined by inspections or user concerns.
Natural Trails (Soil, Turf, Mulch)	Maintenance and repair of trail treadway surface and shoulder.	Trails and have an even, trip-free surface with no ponding, washouts, or potholes. The right of way provides for safe sight lines.		Filling of holes or washouts as required.
Vegetation Control Trail ROW	Flail Mowing of the ROW for Steve Bauer and Gerry Berkhout Trails.	Vegetation is cut to provide for safe sight lines.	Every 2 years.	Cut more frequently if required based on inspection or user concerns.

Notes: Winter maintenance is currently provided on all paved trails, paved multi-use pathways, and park walkways through Public Works roads staff. See "Turf Maintenance" for grass cutting adjacent to trails.

Key actions include:

- a) The Town should consider the recommendations of its 2016 AT Plan regarding the winter maintenance of selected cycling routes, trail, and park pathways in order to facilitate appropriate winter use of designated parks and open spaces.

#### Service Area – Trees in Parks and Trails and Open Spaces

Trees in Parks and Trails and Open Spaces	Description of Service	Target Condition	Scheduled Actions	Demand Actions
Inspection	Inspection of park trees.	N/A	Inspect park trees each fall.	Inspect park trees in response to user concerns.
Mulch	Mulching of park trees.	Trees are mulched correctly.	Mulch all park trees annually in spring or fall.	N/A
Pruning	Pruning of dead limbs on park trees. Prune of trees to provide appropriate sight lines.	Trees in parks are healthy, safe and allow for CPTED requirements.	N/A	Pruning of trees in response to inspections or staff/user concerns.
Removal of Dead or Hazard Trees in Parks	Tree removal as required.	Dead or hazard trees are not present in parks.	N/A	Removal of dead or hazard trees in response to inspection or staff/user concerns.
Removal of Dead or Hazard Trees in Open Spaces and Trails	Tree Removal as required.	Dead or hazard trees are not present in target areas (see Notes) in open spaces and adjacent to trails.	N/A	Removal of dead or hazard trees in response to inspection or staff/user concerns.

**Notes:** Public Works beautification staff carry out park tree maintenance in accordance to the Town's Tree Maintenance Policy. Park trees are not consistently mulched at the base and have sustained damage from string trimmers. "Target Areas" refers to trails, pathways or other areas of public access, or structures or other assets which may be impacted by falling trees or branches.