

Parks & Recreation Service Area



Community and Protective Services Committee
December 16, 2014

Community Recreation, Parks & Leisure

- This service, delivered by Parks & Recreation, Neighbourhood, Children & Fire Services, and Environmental & Parks Planning directly serves Londoners of all ages through all stages of life
- Emphasis on quality, accessible, affordable, diverse programs and facilities which produce both public and individual benefits

Community Recreation, Parks & Leisure

“Public benefits” of recreation are realized when:

- Large numbers of residents participate in activities;
- The opportunity to participate is broadly accessible and inclusive (all ages, all abilities, all cultures);
- Londoners are deriving individual benefits from participating:
 - improved health and wellness
 - social opportunities = less isolation
 - practical skill development
 - improved self esteem
- The quality of the experience encourages lifelong participation in recreation activities of some kind.

Community Recreation, Parks & Leisure

- **Every Londoner is positively impacted by recreation – directly or indirectly:**
 - Healthcare costs are lowered by promoting health and wellness;
 - Strong, safe neighbourhoods and communities are supported;
 - Increased productivity and reduced workplace “lost time”;
 - Increased social cohesion and integration;
 - More skilful, confident population; and,
 - Fostering of community leadership.

Ontario Charter for Recreation & Parks

- In 2010 Council endorsed the Ontario Charter for Recreation and Parks that set out a common vision that reinforces the primary principles in our own Master Plan. The Charter states that:

“Everyone in Ontario has a right to quality, accessible and inclusive recreation and parks services in their communities – services that are essential for the health of Ontarians, the quality of life in our communities and the sustainability of our environment.”



THE PARKS & RECREATION STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

Provides direction and guidance for managing parks and recreation programs, infrastructure (facilities, parks, trails) and investment to the year 2025.

It is an important tool for decision-making and resource allocation strategies.

Guiding Principles of:

- Strong Neighbourhoods
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Sustainable Environments.

Contains 182 recommendations – we have collectively taken action on 179 of them

Plan will be updated in 2015-2016.



Parks & Recreation Mandate

*Moving Londoners towards healthier lifestyles through **amazing experiences**.*

We do this by sustaining a park system and a network of recreation facilities that offer a variety of opportunities for Londoners to participate in activities which lead to better health and well-being. In Parks and Recreation there are many ways to



**Play
Your
Way!**



Parks & Recreation Service Area

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Storybook
Gardens

Aquatics

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Parks &
Community Sports

Customer
Service

Special Events

Allocations &
Sport Services

Parks & Recreation

Division Updates

- **Aquatics, Arenas and Storybook Gardens**
- **Parks and Community Sports**
 - Parks Operations (Property Management - parks and open space, roadsides, facilities, horticulture)
 - Sport
 - Golf
 - Special Events
 - Parks and Recreation Customer Service



Why we do it

- Work to reduce the incidence of drowning through education and skill development.
- Safe aquatic opportunities and water safety education to the public.
- Help reduction in obesity and improve associated cardiovascular health.
- Partner with community swimming clubs to provide an environment for local aquatic athletes to flourish
- Create opportunities for introductions to competitive sport both in-house and in partnership with local clubs.
- Act as a regional leader in the teaching of advanced aquatic qualifications.
- Provide employment, learning, growth and leadership opportunities to youth.
- Act as a leader, both within and beyond the borders of London, in aquatic safety expertise and community education.

Aquatics

- 3 indoor pools (plus Stoney Creek Community Centre/YMCA indoor pool)
- 12 outdoor pools, 12 wading pools, 12 spray pads
- 19,000 registered swim lesson participants per year
- +/-570,000 participant/visits per year in programs
- 9 full time staff, 300 summer and 165 casual employees

Watch for... in 2015:

- New spray pad in Meadowgate Park
- Consultation in development of new SW Multi-purpose Recreation Facility (indoor pool)
- More energy conservation initiatives

Arenas and Rec. Operations

Why we do it

- Provide accessible, enjoyable community facilities that contribute to the wellbeing of London's individuals and families while promoting liveable and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- Provide a place for those engaged in ice sports to deliver quality programming where the benefits of sport involvement are realized.
- Arenas help support and promote sport tourism initiatives through provision of quality ice pads, meeting and banquet rooms for hosting tournaments.



Arenas and Rec Operations

- 18 pads of ice at 11 municipal facilities plus 4 pads at Western Fair Sports Centre (agreement for ice allocation) and 3 outdoor rinks
- Shared staff with parks operations - plus 146 temporary and casual winter staff
- Award winning energy conservation initiatives!
- 2.4M visits annually

Watch for...in 2015:

- Kinsmen Arena facility renewal
- Development of 2 new pads of ice at Southwest Multipurpose Recreation Facility (open 2018)

Storybook Gardens

Vision:

- To inspire the imagination through interactive play and learning within an enchanted storybook environment.

Why we do it.

- Provides Londoners with a one-of-a-kind, day trip destination that is affordable and attractive for families.
- Storybook contributes to the diversity of recreation services available to Londoners, contributing to a happier and more livable city.
- Storybook Gardens provides a unique setting for people to connect, engage with each other and to participate in park special events and activities.
- Helps to build developmental assets in children through focus on the core themes of interactive play, enhancing literacy and connection with the natural world.
- Storybook provides healthy outcomes for children by maintaining a variety of engaging play environments that encourage social and mental growth as well as physical activity.

Storybook Gardens

- Member of the Child and Youth Network, promotes emergent literacy through programs and our storybook-themed setting. Literacy supportive activities are part of the daily schedule for day-use visitors and all Storybook day camp programs and special events include activities that enhance literacy.
- Encourages interaction with the natural world, through direct contact with domestic animals, teaching gardens and natural and naturalized spaces.
- Storybook receives 125,000 visits a year, and many are repeat customers due to the quality of programs and activities.
- Storybook Gardens was voted “Best Local Tourist Attraction” in the 2012, 2013 and 2014 “Best Of” reader poll in the London Free Press.



Storybook Gardens

- Seasonal attraction
- Youth employment opportunities
- 4 full time staff, 70 summer and 15 winter casual staff



Watch for... in 2015:

- The Storybook spray pad will undergo refurbishment and expansion. This project help build attendance and enhance the visitor experience while reducing operating costs and environmental impact through the installation of a recirculating water system.

Parks & Horticulture - Property Management

Why we do it

- Support to the community's parks and open space system in order to ensure that the City's investment in parks infrastructure contributes to the attractiveness of the City and quality of life of Londoners where they take pride in where they live, work and play.
- Ensure that Parks and open spaces remain safe and usable for the intended purposes
- Maintain and beautify city-owned properties and facilities
- In collaboration with others ensures that natural systems are enhanced or sustained

Parks & Horticulture - Property Management

- 80 staff shared between Parks, Arenas and EESD operations plus 90 summer temporary staff
- 100's of vehicles and pieces of equipment
- Parks and Open Space
 - 430 parks, 2,575 hectares, 60 km of trails
 - Major parks like Springbank and Victoria Park to your local Neighbourhood Parks
 - Dozens of Recreation Facilities (standalone and in park campuses)
 - Naturalization initiatives
 - Different frequency service levels of maintenance

Parks & Horticulture - Roadsides

- Roadsides- How the City looks and “Feels”
 - 100’s of kms of roadside mowing and litter collection
 - Maintain all turf, grass boulevards, centre median weed control
 - Beauty Strips and natural areas on major roadways
 - Veterans Memorial Parkway – commemorative features with VMP Committee
- Recreational Amenities
 - 11 skate parks, 170 play spaces, 94 rectangular fields, 71 diamonds, tennis courts, urban parks, trails

Parks & Horticulture - Property Management

- Horticulture

- 50,000 annuals – floral displays throughout city parks and facilities – Springbank, Victoria, Peace Garden
- Downtown plantings (400 baskets)
- Centre medians at Gateways to City



Watch for.... In 2015:

- Community Gardens Strategic Plan
- CAM Pilot Project

Sport Services

Why we do it

- Sport at its highest potential can make significant contribution to the development of youth, the well-being of individuals and the quality of life of our community. (True Sport)
- Provision of sport facilities help Londoners realize these benefits. Recreation and sport is essential to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the community and is a core service
- Investing in recreation benefits everyone; reducing health care, social service and police/ justice costs. (CPRA Benefits Catalogue)
- Supports tourism initiatives through provision of appropriate sport facilities.
- Quality sport facilities are a source of pride for Londoners that they identify with.

Sport Services

- 2 full time staff plus 70 winter and 25 summer casual staff supporting programming
- Allocations (fair and equitable distribution of resources):
 - Ice pads – over 10,000 participants on 22 pads of ice (including 4 at Western Fair)
 - Diamonds – 4,200 participants on 71 fields (11 irrigated); Canada Games and national and provincial championships
 - Rectangular Fields – 20,000 participants 94 fields, 40 premier irrigated fields (soccer, lacrosse, football)
 - Artificial Turf – 2 fields used for soccer, football and lacrosse

Sport Services

- Allocations (cont'd):
 - New sport amenities – cricket, beach volleyball, disc golf and pickle ball courts
 - Partnership Agreements – Western; Fanshawe; Western Fair; School Boards
- Volunteer sport organizations donated nearly \$500,000 over past 8 years to enhance sports fields
- Adult leagues (volleyball, basketball)
- Learn to Skate, Public Skating (shinny, seniors, parent/tot)

Watch for... in 2015:

- Engagement of Sport groups in Master Plan update
- CS4L / LTAD / Physical Literacy

Why we do it

- Golf is an excellent game to encourage outdoor activity and friendships in all age groups and genders. Golf courses provide opportunities for individuals and families to engage in sport and the health and social benefits derived from participation in golf.
- Goal is to maintain a municipal golf system at an appropriate and affordable level. The city provides quality municipal golf facilities and services to attract and develop a loyal following of golfers, while striving to be financially self-sustaining as a municipal system of golf.

Golf

- 90 holes of golf at Thames Valley, Fanshawe and River Road
 - Parkside Nine – accessible course; Special Olympics program
- 3 Golf Pros, 6 staff and 53 casual summer employees, and 26 temporary summer workers
- 2,000 members
- 120,000+ rounds played per year
- Golf pays for golf!



Watch for... in 2015:

- Three-year Business Plan (2016-2018)

Special Events

Why we do it

- We are a creative, vibrant and engaged community that encourages Londoners to come together to attend festivals and events where cultural diversity can be celebrated in a safe, respectful and engaging manner.
- We continue to grow and build the vibrancy of the downtown through special events. It is important that as a municipality we provide a quality service that meets the needs of the event operators to help them to develop quality events.



Special Events

- 3 staff plus 17 casual employees to support over 175 events (Home County Folk Fest, Sun Fest, Rock the Park etc.)
- Facilitate and coordinate
- Work with event organizers and internal departments
- City Hall Cafeteria – 2 full time and 8 part-time staff
- Internal catering

Watch for... in 2015:

- Yearly updates to Special Events Policy
- Continued greening of the festivals – grey water, drinking water stations, recycling



Customer Service

Why we do it.

- Connecting users with space, place and programs
- 10 staff at 6 locations
- Spectrum program registrations, community centre rentals, sport field and arenas – 57,000 registrations per year
- Customer service information and inquiries

Watch for... in 2015:

- New Recreation Activity Management System

Special Projects

- New Smoke-free Ontario Act
- Sport pricing Framework / Allocation guidelines
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- “At Your Service”
- Corporate Asset Management
- Cross-Service Area Projects supported:
 - The London Plan
 - Age Friendly London (Age Friendly Parks)
 - London Strengthening Neighbourhoods
 - Child and Youth Agenda
 - Thames Valley Corridor Plan
 - Secondary Plans / Natural Areas Plans

Special Projects

Watch for... in 2015:

- Sponsorship and advertising program launch
- Update to Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan
- “At Your Service”

