

London has been proactive in ensuring that its community centres are positioned to meet the needs of both current and future residents across the city. In 2018, the City opened the Bostwick Community Centre, YMCA and Library (large multi-use centre). The East Community Centre (mid-size multi-use centre) is expected to be completed in 2019. Both facilities contain a variety of recreational and sport components that will address longstanding community needs.

Looking to the future, the Master Plan recommends the development of a **mid-size multi-use community centre in Southeast London** (including twin ice pads, large gymnasium, activity rooms, multi-use space, etc.). The acquisition of a suitable site is a critical first step in this process. Providing two new ice pads at this location would allow for Farquharson Arena to be decommissioned as an ice facility, consistent with previous studies and Council direction. Outdated and inefficient facilities – such as Silverwood Arena – may present opportunities to serve more contemporary roles within neighbourhoods should they be renovated or repurposed to include components such as activity space, multi-use community rooms, gymnasiums, and/or other in-demand spaces.

A gap in community centre distribution is emerging in **Northwest London** due to lack of capacity at existing facilities, combined with the area's large and growing population base. A **mid-size multi-use community centre** is recommended (at a site to be determined), potentially consisting of an indoor pool, large gymnasium, and multi-use space. It is recognized that additional study is required to determine the preferred facility model in Northwest London, which could influence location(s), timing, and/or partners.

Population growth, distribution, and alternate providers are key considerations for the delivery of smaller **neighbourhood community centres**. Based on these criteria, the City should consider developing one neighbourhood centre in **North London** (first priority) and another in **Central London** (second priority) between 2024 and 2029. These neighbourhood centres may include large gymnasiums, community kitchens, multi-purpose spaces, and specialty/partnered spaces based on demonstrated needs. In the longer-term, one to two additional neighbourhood centres should be considered to address gap areas in **South London**.





Traditional **models of facility provision** may evolve as the city intensifies within the Primary Transit Area. The City will continue to adapt its facilities to serve people of all ages across London, setting priorities based on equity, demographics, utilization, and economic considerations. For example, community centres are increasingly including amenities and services such as child minding, flex space, sensory rooms, and therapeutic spaces, Wi-Fi, community kitchens, municipal information and services, emergency support, and other specialized community services in partnership with others. These and other considerations will be examined through the planning and design of new and renovated centres.

Furthermore, the public is supportive of collaborations with service providers such as schools, libraries, and non-profit agencies, including the development of **neighbourhood hubs**. Most residents support the co-location of community centres with other types of spaces and services. Opportunities to work with the London Public Library on future capital projects and with school boards on the reuse of former school sites should continue to be explored. To achieve the full potential of neighbourhood hubs, the City should continue to leverage its network of facilities to enhance awareness of and disseminate information on other City of London services.

Gymnasiums and activity spaces are common elements within many of London's community centres. These flexible spaces can accommodate a wide range of activities, programs, events, and rentals and are in demand across the city. For example, pickleball lines have been painted on many gymnasium floors to accommodate this fast-growing activity. Most gymnasiums are at capacity and enhanced access to non-municipal facilities is critical to accommodating the City's programs and the increasing needs of the sport community (e.g., volleyball, basketball, pickleball, badminton, etc.).

The creation of a **Gymnasium Strategy** is recommended to review access policies, other providers (schools, post secondary, non-profit, private, etc.), needs (rentals, community recreation, events, training, etc.), and provision strategies. Continued efforts to extend joint-use agreements remains a key objective, particularly where they can bolster neighbourhood-level access to community programs and rentals. Opportunities should also be sought to increase the supply of large municipal gymnasiums through the development of new community centres, as well as expansions to existing sites where practical (**for a total of six more by 2039**).

Some community centres contain specialized or unique spaces. For example, the City provides **indoor courts** (three tennis and two squash) and a dry floor pad at the North London Optimist Community Centre. Future community centres will be designed to include flexible **multi-purpose spaces** that can accommodate a variety of general interest, physical activity, age-specific, and fitness programming. Facilities such as child care centres, community services, and meeting rooms may also be clustered with indoor recreational facilities to encourage the creation of neighbourhood hubs.

London is an aging community. Trends and promising practices suggest a continued focus on accommodating seniors' recreation activities within community centres, rather than developing additional single-use, dedicated spaces. Community interest was expressed for expanding the City's **senior satellite model** to offer additional program hours within neighbourhoods experiencing high demand. The City should continue to seek opportunities to offer program models and activities that are convenient for older adults and seniors. It is a key objective to maximize the use of physical space and program offerings by supporting community interests.

Indoor Pools

The City's Aquatics Services provide London families and individuals of all ages with opportunities to participate in unstructured aquatic activities and structured programs (including swimming lesson instruction, leadership development, fitness, and recreational swimming). Equally important are educational and outreach programs for drowning prevention and water safety. The City's six indoor pools (including the new East Community Centre and two facilities that are operated in conjunction with the YMCA) play a large role in the delivery of these benefits to residents of London and surrounding municipalities. These facilities are supplemented by indoor pools operated by other providers, particularly non-profit organizations (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, University, schools, etc.) that allow for community access.

The community has stated a desire for an improved distribution of indoor aquatics services to enable swimming activities closer to home. However, the magnitude of indoor aquatic centres is such that they cannot feasibly be provided in every community. New indoor **pools** must be properly justified and should be co-located with other community spaces.



The Master Plan seeks balance by proposing indoor pool developments in growing areas of the city, including a seventh community pool in **Northwest London**. Additional study is required to evaluate potential locations for the pool, such as within the proposed community centre for the area or as part of an existing facility. The consultation program found considerable interest for adding a 25-meter tank to the Canada Games Aquatic Centre in Northwest London; if located here, the additional tank could be used for warm-up/cool-down activities associated with meets, as well as swim programs.

Long-term demand for an eighth indoor pool location should be monitored and reassessed through the next Master Plan update, possibly in partnership with an alternate provider in Central London. Universal change rooms and barrier-free access are among the many design standards being recommended for modern aquatic facilities, both indoor and outdoor.

Arenas

The City of London facilitates public access to 22 indoor ice pads at 11 facilities, including the four rinks at Western Fair Sports Centre that are operated through a third-party agreement. Budweiser Gardens (event venue), Thompson Recreation and Athletics Centre (Western University), and the London Sports Park (private provider) are excluded from the municipal supply, although it is recognized that these facilities help to alleviate pressures placed on London's arenas.

Overall demand for indoor ice activities is not increasing as fast as London's population and it is recommended that the City **maintain a supply of 22 indoor ice pads until at least 2031**. During this time, new arenas should only be provided as replacement facilities, typically through efficient multi-pad designs in conjunction with other community spaces.

Beyond 2031, a requirement for **one additional ice pad** is projected, which may be achieved through a multi-pad replacement and/or partnered project. In the interim, facility usage and registration trends should be monitored, as should capacities and capital plans in adjacent municipalities.

Consistent with the direction established in the 2017 Interim Update, the City will remove **Glen Cairn Arena** and repurpose **Silverwood Arena** into alternate uses now that the ice pads have been replaced through the arena at the Bostwick Community Centre. The future of Silverwood Arena will be guided by a feasibility study and community stakeholder engagement process.

Farquharson Arena is an aging, under-utilized facility with several functional shortcomings. As per previous studies and Council direction, Farquharson Arena is to be decommissioned once the ice pads can be replaced at the proposed Southeast Multi-purpose Recreation Centre. Recognizing the potential to repurpose the site to other non-ice uses that strengthens the local community and offer responsive and accessible programming, additional discussions with the landowner (Thames Valley District School Board) are underway regarding the future of this facility.

It is acknowledged that the repurposing and/or removal of older single pad arenas requires site- and community-specific assessments. Several requests for the **adaptive reuse of facilities** were received through the Master Plan's consultation phase, including (but not limited to):

- Dry pads for floor sports such as lacrosse, ball hockey, roller derby, or skateboarding (the City is currently testing this option at Silverwood Arena and also offers a dry floor at North London Optimist Community Centre);
- Community space (e.g., gymnasiums, activity rooms, etc.); and,
- Specialized spaces (e.g., curling sheets, indoor track, etc.).

The City will continue to undertake **renewal projects** as required to update and modernize aging arenas. Where supported by community input and technical analysis, long-term consideration may be given to phasing out of the City's remaining single pad arenas in favour of multi-pad and multi-use facilities.

Table 9: Municipal Indoor Recreation Facility Inventory & Future Development Strategies

Facility Type	Municipality Supply (2019)	Changes to Supply since 2009 Plan	Updated Target	Additional Facilities Required by 2039
Community Centres	<p>7 large/mid-size multi-use centres: <u>Large (2):</u> Bostwick CC, Stoney Creek CC <u>Mid-size (5):</u> CHOCC, East CC, Lambeth CC, South London CC, Stronach CRC</p> <p>16 neighbourhood centres: Argyle Arena, Boyle Memorial CC, Byron Optimist CC, Carling Recreation Centre, Civic Gardens, Earl Nichols RC, Farquharson Arena, Hamilton Road Seniors CC, Kinsmen RC, Kiwanis Seniors CC, Medway CC, NLOCC, Oakridge Arena, Silverwood Arena, South London Community Pool, Springbank Gardens CC Note: Some centres contain specialized spaces, such as indoor courts</p>	Three new Large Multi-use Centres: Bostwick CC, East CC, Stoney Creek CC	<p>1 per 55,000 population (Multi-use CCs)</p> <p>1 per 25,000 population (Neighbourhood Centres)</p>	<p>2 additional multi-use centres</p> <p>3 to 4 additional neighbourhood centres</p>
Arenas	<p>22 ice pads: <u>Quad (4 total pads):</u> Western Fair Sports Centre (agreement) <u>Triple (3 total pads):</u> Earl Nichols <u>Twin (12 total pads):</u> Argyle, Bostwick, Carling, Farquharson, Kinsmen, Stronach <u>Single: (3 total pads):</u> Lambeth, Medway, Oakridge</p>	No change to supply. Bostwick CC (2 pads) replaced Glen Cairn and Silverwood Arenas	1 per 425 organized youth participants	Up to 1 additional ice pad to meet long-term needs
Indoor Pools	<p>6 locations: <u>Olympic (1):</u> Canada Games Aquatic Centre <u>Competition (4):</u> Bostwick, CHOCC, East CC, Stoney Creek <u>Community (1):</u> South London</p>	Three new aquatic complexes: Bostwick CC, East CC, Stoney Creek CC	1 per 65,000 population	1 to 2 additional indoor pool locations
Fitness Centres	3 locations: Bostwick CC (YMCA), CHOCC (fitness room), Stoney Creek (YMCA)	Two new locations: Bostwick CC, Stoney Creek CC	None – not a core municipal service	Evaluate partnership opportunities
Gymnasiums	10 locations: Bostwick CC, Boyle CC, Byron Optimist CC, CHOCC, East CC, Lambeth CC, NLOCC, South London CC, Stoney Creek CC, Stronach CRC	Three new locations: Bostwick CC, East CC, Stoney Creek CC	1 per 30,000 population	6 additional locations
Older Adult Spaces	<p>9 locations: <u>Seniors' Centres (2):</u> Hamilton Road, Kiwanis <u>Satellites (7):</u> various</p>	Seniors' Satellites are new	No additional stand-alone centres	Expansion of senior satellite model on a case-by-case basis

Recommendations

Community Centres

48. Develop a mid-size, multi-use community centre in **Southeast London**, with an emphasis on securing an alternate site (considering the site selection criteria developed in 2010) in the short-term. Proposed components (to be confirmed through community and partner consultation) include twin ice pads (as a replacement for Farquharson Arena), large gymnasium, activity rooms, and multi-use space. Potential partnerships will be considered.
49. Develop a mid-size multi-use community centre in **Northwest London** (following the Southeast London project). Proposed components (to be confirmed through community and potential partner consultation) include an indoor pool, large gymnasium, activity rooms, and multi-use space. Potential partnerships will be considered. Additional study is required to determine the preferred facility provision model, which could influence location(s), timing, and/or potential partners.
50. Expand the network of **neighbourhood community centres** by establishing a facility in North London and another in Central London between 2024 and 2029. Neighbourhood centres would generally include large gymnasiums, community kitchens, multi-purpose spaces, and/or specialty/partnered spaces based on demonstrated needs. In the longer-term, one to two additional neighbourhood centres should be considered to address gap areas in South London. Traditional models of provision may evolve as the city intensifies within the Primary Transit Area.
51. Build **gymnasiums and multi-use activity space** as part of each proposed multi-use and neighbourhood centre, for a total of six new gymnasiums by 2039. Consider opportunities to add gymnasiums to existing centres or repurposed facilities to assist in meeting this goal.
52. Prepare a **Gymnasium Strategy** to review current access policies, other providers, needs, and provision strategies, with a goal of enhancing access to large gymnasiums for programs, events, and rentals.
53. Establish a strategy to **expand the senior satellite model** in consultation with stakeholders, with a view toward coordinated service delivery at the neighbourhood-level. Considerations include:
 - a) Adding a new satellite site in the short-term;
 - b) Program expansion, low-cost and/or unstructured options, sustainable multi-site membership model, and expanded hours at locations that are experiencing high attendance and unmet demand;
 - c) Establishing criteria for evaluating priorities and track performance over time; and,
 - d) Working with Parks Planning to identify outdoor spaces that can be used to complement programming at seniors centres and satellites.

Indoor Pools

54. Work with local users to ensure that the **Canada Games Aquatic Centre** remains able to host competitions and meets, with consideration being given to pool depth, technical requirements, and support spaces.
55. Develop a new indoor 25-metre 6-lane pool for community use in **Northwest London** in the short-term. Further study is required to determine if the pool is best provided as part of the proposed large multi-use community centre or through an expansion to the Canada Games Aquatic Centre.
56. Reassess longer-term demand for an **eighth municipal indoor pool location** through the next Master Plan update, possibly in partnership with an alternate provider in Central London.

Recommendations

Arenas

57. Maintain public access to 22 indoor ice pads until 2031, at which point planning may begin for **one additional ice pad** (as a multi-pad replacement and/or partnered project). Long-term consideration may be given to **phasing out single pad arenas** in favour of multi-pad facilities with community space. To confirm these directions, facility usage and registration trends should be monitored, as should capacities and capital plans in adjacent municipalities.
58. Continue to examine and assess the need for **dry pads for floor sports** and community activities. Where supported by demonstrated demand, consider opportunities to repurpose under-utilized spaces.
59. Repurpose **Silverwood Arena** to alternate community uses. Initiate a Request for Expression of Interest and/or Proposal process (with identified objectives and outcomes) and feasibility study (with community input) to guide the project.
60. Remove **Glen Cairn Arena** as a municipal capital asset as it is surplus to community needs.
61. Include two ice pads as part of the proposed multi-use community centre in **Southeast London**. Upon opening, remove the ice pads at **Farquharson Arena** from the inventory. Continue discussions with the landowner (Thames Valley District School Board) regarding the future of Farquharson Arena.



7.3 Outdoor Recreation Amenities

This section examines outdoor recreation facilities and park amenities, such as outdoor aquatic facilities, sports fields, playgrounds, courts, skate and bike parks, golf courses, Storybook Gardens, off-leash dog parks, community gardens, and more – totalling nearly 600 recreational amenities. Responsibilities for the planning, development, maintenance, and operation of these amenities are shared by several City service areas. Recommendations for recreational trails and pathways are contained in Section 6.2 and recommendations for the planning and design of the city’s parks and open space network (including policy directions) are contained in Section 7.4.

The assessment of outdoor facility needs to 2039 is based on a mixture of inputs, including public and stakeholder input, demographics and growth, gaps, participation trends, alternative providers, parks observation audit, etc. Many recommendations are supported by targets that are specific to London’s unique demand factors, while others represent best practices that the City will work to achieve over time. In instances where the City has prepared recent policy or technical reports, the identified strategies have been updated and reflected within the Master Plan.

Outdoor Aquatics

Outdoor aquatic facilities are important community resources that provide opportunities for fun, recreation, and instruction within an outdoor setting. They appeal to children, families, and recreational swimmers (e.g., lane swimmers) and are especially well used on hot summer days and for day camps. Depending on the type of facility, residents are seeking a wide variety of features at each location, such as shade, washrooms, universal change rooms, heated water, beach entries, interactive components, ample deck space, etc. The City has recognized this through the recent rehabilitation of several outdoor pools (e.g., Byron, Northeast, Southcrest, and Westminster) and development of new spray pads.

London’s eleven **outdoor swimming pools** have capacity to accommodate additional usage. Due to variable demand, high operating costs, the short season, and susceptibility to changing weather, no additional outdoor pools are recommended. In addition, many of London’s outdoor and wading pools have exceeded their anticipated lifespan and offer limited appeal to the neighbourhoods they serve. Across London, outdoor pool usage declined by 19% between 2012 and 2017. The significant cost of renewal and redevelopment must be weighed against factors such as service levels, usage trends, and other recreation needs. As a result, an increase in the number of year-

round indoor pools is recommended to serve future growth.

There remains a need to rationalize the City's long-term supply of outdoor pools and to pursue strategies to enhance use and efficiencies, such as the introduction of new activities. With the closure of Silverwood and Glen Cairn Arenas – and opening of the East Community Centre indoor pool – **removal** of the associated community pools should be considered, as well as the development of a spray pad and/or park space (in consultation with the community). The viability and usage of the two remaining older community pools within the inventory (Northridge and Oakridge) and their associated support buildings should be evaluated prior to undertaking major capital repairs.

It is recommended that the City develop a **strategy** to assess how its pools are used and to guide future programming and reinvestment priorities, such as adding shade, deck space, new features, universal change rooms, heaters/solar panels, etc. The strategy should also consider the sustainability and public accessibility of non-profit community pools. Opportunities to introduce new programming, accessible services, and modernization initiatives may assist the City in maintaining or increasing usage levels over time.

The City's nine neighbourhood-based **wading pools** offer affordable access to unstructured activities for young children, allowing them to be introduced to shallow water. However, the outdoor aquatic experience is changing and the appeal of wading pools is limited compared to other amenities that are growing in popularity. Wading pool usage

is significantly lower than that of outdoor swimming pools and many are serving neighbourhoods with declining child populations. Like outdoor pools, wading pools are also costly to operate due largely to the staffing requirements.

Based on direction from the 2009 Strategic Master Plan, the City has removed nine aging wading pools from the inventory. It is recommended that the City continue its practice of **decommissioning park site wading pools or converting them** to spray pads or other amenities based on low utilization and/or prior to undertaking major capital repairs. Potential candidates requiring further study and community consultation include: McMahan, Meredith, Murray, Silverwood, Smith, and University Heights. Criteria for wading pool decommissioning should be developed. No additional wading pools are recommended.

The City frequently receives requests for the installation of spray pads across London. It is recognized that they are not neighbourhood-level amenities due to their cost and level of use – many attract high levels of use that needs to be supported by off-street parking, washrooms, shade, and other recreational amenities (features frequently associated with indoor recreation facilities).

Based on a revised target and gap analysis, it is projected that five additional spray pads (for a total of 21) will be required by 2039. In the short-term, projects are planned within Foxfield Park and Riverbend Park. Over the longer-term, spray pads may be considered for North London (one spray pad) and Southwest (two spray pads). New spray pads should be provided through park development



projects or wading pool conversions that fill gaps in underserved areas, with an emphasis on district-level sites with washrooms, parking, and shade. Consideration may be given to different levels of spray pad design (e.g., basic and enhanced).

Sports Fields

The City allocates 130 **rectangular sports fields** for activities such as soccer, football, and rugby. With over 15,500 registered players in London, soccer is the predominant user of these fields. Any new demand is largely driven by a shift toward skill development and adult play as London's youth registration figures are unchanged from ten years ago. Although participation in field sports other than soccer is increasing, they account for a much lower proportion of municipal field use. Requests were received for additional artificial turf fields as these accommodate the widest range of sports over an extended season.

The number of rectangular sports fields is adequate at the present time, but demand is expected to increase as the city grows. It is projected that up to 28 additional rectangular fields (unlit equivalents (9)) will be required by 2039 – a rate of approximately three fields every two years. The City will work with partners to achieve this.

Guided by previous Master Plans, the City has undertaken improvements at several **ball diamonds** (often in partnership with minor sport groups) and removed lower quality diamonds from the inventory. The City currently allocates 73 ball diamonds. Where once there was a surplus of fields, recent increases in participation are placing pressures on existing diamonds. Part of the demand is associated with the recent closure of the non-municipal Southwest London Baseball Complex (Dreamers). Fortunately, the City has been able to accommodate most active players within its inventory since this complex closed, aided by upgrades to existing diamonds.

The City's primary focus is on meeting City-wide ball diamond needs for youth. Adult players are accommodated where scheduling allows (particularly on lit diamonds), but the development of an adult ball complex (e.g., a replacement for the Southwest London Baseball Complex) is not likely to be achieved without collaboration and outside

funding. To serve existing users and accommodate future growth, there will be a need for approximately 12.5 additional ball diamonds by 2039 (unlit equivalents (10)).

Cricket is an emerging sport in the city and is presently served by one non-regulation size pitch at North London Athletic Fields. Interest in the sport is being driven by London's diverse and growing population, though fields can be difficult to create due to their large land base. There is sufficient demand to develop a second full-size cricket pitch (potentially spanning two rectangular sports fields). Longer-term needs should be examined once the second pitch is fully operational.

To address current and future needs for rectangular fields, ball diamonds, and cricket pitches, the City will employ a variety of strategies, including:

- New park development, such as the proposed Killaly Fields and Foxfield District Park;
- Enhancements to the existing supply, such as grading, drainage, lighting, irrigation, expansion, etc.; and,
- Access to existing non-municipal fields, such as schools.

Regarding the latter strategy, there is presently no shared use agreement in place to manage public access to **school sports fields**, although some collaboration occurs on a site-specific basis. Given the large land base required for sports fields, opportunities to maximize community use of all public recreational lands – including schools and their sports fields – should continue to be pursued.

Fieldhouses are unstaffed, stand-alone, and seasonal structures containing washrooms, change rooms, concessions, storage, and/or meeting rooms. They are commonly provided in sports parks to support large sports field complexes. Requests were received from user groups for the expansion and development of additional fieldhouses, citing a need for more and larger structures to support their activities and events. Current funding levels are insufficient to address the full range of community requests; therefore, an updated approach to fieldhouse provision is required, with consideration of appropriate service levels, capital requirements, public access, and management responsibilities.

(9) Each lit natural and artificial turf field provides the equivalent capacity of 1.5 and 2.0 unlit natural fields during peak season, respectively.

(10) Each lit ball diamond provides the equivalent capacity of 2.0 unlit ball diamonds.

Playgrounds

Equity and geographic accessibility are vital to identifying **playground** needs, which are consistently identified among the most desirable local-level recreation amenities. To achieve this, the City has established a target of providing one playground generally within an 800m radius of every residential area (without crossing a major arterial road or physical barrier). Presently, there are 164 playground structures at 141 park sites across London. Over time, additional playgrounds will be required to resolve gaps (Medway and Central London) and serve greenfield growth areas.

Many of London's playgrounds require **replacement** as they are approaching the end of their life. Current funding levels are insufficient to replace playgrounds in line with life expectancy and to address associated landscaping, site furniture, and supporting amenities. The design of playgrounds should continue to evolve (with a growing focus on accessible components, natural play areas, challenging/adventure play, etc.), which will also require increased internal and external funding.

For adults, municipalities are increasingly providing **outdoor fitness equipment** (adult playgrounds) that rely on body weight resistance. London currently has one such installation (located at Capulet Park in Northwest London) and another one to be built in Springbank Park in 2019. These amenities can improve balance, speed, and coordination, as well as reduce social isolation and associated behaviours.

To facilitate no-cost unstructured outdoor fitness opportunities, the City should consider adding adult fitness equipment to selected parks or trails on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, designated tai chi / exercise areas may also be identified. Conditions for success include safe locations, community support, instructions for use, adjacency to indoor spaces with access to washrooms, and proximity to older adult and populations that value outdoor recreation.



Outdoor Courts

The City provides 59 **outdoor tennis courts** throughout London. Interest in tennis is rising in Canada, leading to demand for higher quality courts. However, there is capacity for additional use at many London courts. While growth projections support up to eleven additional courts by 2039, a **Tennis / Multi-use Court Strategy** is needed to:

- Identify locations for future tennis and/or multi-use courts (e.g., tennis, basketball, pickleball, ball hockey, ice skating, etc.), with a focus on addressing gaps in distribution. New tennis courts should be concentrated at City-Wide or District Parks, in groups of two or more.
- Evaluate the condition of courts and establish a prioritized list for replacement or removal.
- Consider opportunities to repurpose underutilized courts to other recreation uses.
- Identify a funding strategy to support the construction and lifecycle renewal of courts.

Since the 2009 Strategic Master Plan was prepared, the City has also begun constructing outdoor **pickleball courts** and now has six courts at three sites. Pickleball is a new and fast-growing sport that is popular with older adults, although it can be played by all ages in an indoor or outdoor setting. Where supported by demonstrated demand, pickleball courts may be constructed in areas with demonstrated demand. Where possible, they should be co-located with tennis courts in groups of two or more to facilitate simultaneous play and

be supported by shade, washrooms, and nearby parking. Opportunities to develop a complex of four or more pickleball courts should be explored further with potential partners/funders.

New **outdoor basketball courts** have been a key point of emphasis in park development projects since the 2009 Strategic Master Plan was approved. To enhance distribution, courts should be provided in key gap areas (Central London, Oakridge, Medway, Westmount/Highland, and Byron), supported by further study. Courts should continue to be considered in parks within growing areas; a minimum of nine additional hoops will be required over the master plan period to serve growth. Half courts have been a staple of recent park designs and may be considered within smaller park sites. For larger or higher-level parks, trends suggest a growing emphasis on **multi-use courts** that can accommodate multiple sports and activities, such as basketball, ball hockey, ice skating, tennis, etc.

The City has fourteen **outdoor beach volleyball courts**, all of which are at the North London Athletic Fields. Ten of these courts were completed in 2018 to support the Ontario Summer Games, funded by grants from the Ontario Volleyball Association and the Summer Games organization. The current supply is sufficient to meet foreseeable demands, although additional courts may be considered based on emerging requirements.





Skate and Bike Parks

Skateboarding and other action sports are mainstream pursuits (primarily for youth, but increasingly for adults). Municipalities and other providers are seeking safe and suitable locations to accommodate these sports; a non-municipal indoor skatepark recently opened in the city to serve year-round demand. Investing in unstructured activities responds to national trends of declining participation in organized sports.

There are 13 **skate parks** in London; each varies in size, design, and range of amenities such as ramps, railings, ledges and wedges, and more. The City's Outdoor Skateboard Park Implementation Strategy has guided investment for several years and should be updated, including a review of skate park typologies, needs, and potential locations. Site selection criteria should be revisited, as well as design standards (such as lighting of City-wide skate parks, etc.).

In the interim, it is recommended that the City seek to develop **district-level skate parks** in Southwest and Southeast London, pending the identification of suitable sites. The siting of skateboard parks

has been a challenge for the City due to perceived impacts; therefore, additional neighbourhood-level skate parks should only be pursued where there is demonstrated demand, a gap in service (e.g., Northwest and Southwest London), and a suitable location that is locally supported. Locations and designs should be confirmed through consultation with youth, the skateboarding community, and local neighbourhoods.

The City has been receiving requests for bicycle-based infrastructure in parks (e.g., dirt jumps, pump tracks, technical bike parks, and cross-country mountain biking facilities) dating back to the 2003 Strategic Master Plan. The City does not currently provide any dedicated **BMX or mountain bike parks**, although some non-municipal facilities permit these types of activities. To promote responsible riding outside of protected natural areas, it is recommended that the City support these activities through the development of an initial outdoor BMX/ bike park, guided by a feasibility study. Longer-term supplies should be informed by a strategy that identifies capital projects and practices that can support the sport, as well as requirements for minimizing risk.

Other Outdoor Sites and Amenities

Off-leash dog parks provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize with their dogs in a controlled area. These spaces are also beneficial for residents and community interaction, particularly for residents living in isolation. There are currently five off-leash dog parks in London. The establishment of new dog parks is a lower priority at this time; however, gaps will develop in Northwest and Southwest London as the city grows. A site selection exercise and community consultation should be completed should demand be demonstrated in these areas. To address growth in intensification areas, the City should develop a tiered model of dog park designs and work with developers to provide amenity space for dog owners.

The City provides refrigerated **outdoor ice skating rinks** in Victoria Park and Convent Garden Market and supports neighbourhood rinks (natural ice) maintained by volunteer groups. The number of neighbourhood-supported outdoor ice rinks can vary from year-to-year depending on requests, volunteer commitment, and weather conditions. Rinks are used for recreational skating and shinny. No new refrigerated rinks are anticipated during the life of this Master Plan; however, the design of new multi-use courts (including pads with boards), may provide opportunities to support additional community rinks and year-round use.

Community gardens are integral to building a healthy, green city with a strong, resilient food system. They form part of the City's Urban Agriculture Strategy and are guided by the London Plan and Community Gardens Strategic Plan. With 17 locations and over 450 plots, community gardens provide healthy and fresh food choices, enhance food security, bring residents together, and offer educational and stewardship opportunities. To encourage participation by all, the City continues to undertake accessibility improvements at existing community gardens and explore opportunities to provide new gardens in parks with sufficient space, support infrastructure, and accessible features. Growing interest has been expressed for the establishment of pollinator projects (a trend seen across parks systems throughout Canada). The City has been supporting these projects for over fifteen years; further opportunities to enable community projects should be explored.

The City of London has a long history of providing high quality, accessible, and affordable **golf experiences** for Londoners and visitors. Participation in golf encourages healthy outdoor activity and social opportunities for all ages and abilities. Through its Municipal Golf Business Plan, the City will continue to seek ways to improve playability, conditioning, and presentation of the golf courses in delivering an experience appropriate for its customers. This includes (but is not limited to) opportunities to extend year-round use and maximizing clubhouse facilities as community space. A review of the golf course service delivery model and standards will be undertaken during the life of this Plan.

Storybook Gardens is a unique, admission-based local learning and recreation facility that contributes to the diversity of recreation services in London. Serving over 135,000 visitors per year, Storybook Gardens provides a unique and memorable setting for people to come together, to connect and engage with each other, and to participate in special events and activities. The park's naturalized environment and various features encourage children to explore in an interactive way and for families to play and learn together. Attendance at Storybook Gardens has been rising in recent years, supported by an increased focus on year-round programs and events. The City will continue to support Storybook Gardens through investment and initiatives that meet the changing needs and expectations of visitors.

Several London parks, civic spaces, and facilities support **special events** ranging from neighbourhood gatherings to Canada Day festivities and everything in between. Cultural, sporting, and community events provide opportunities for Londoners to come together to participate in a safe, respectful, and engaging manner. London's event hosting capacity is well suited to accommodate a wide range of community events at well-known sites such as Victoria Park, Harris Park, Springbank Gardens, Greenway Park, and more. However, the number and complexity of events are continually increasing, placing added pressure on resources and infrastructure. Overuse and the staging of events in spaces not designed for intense use can have negative impacts on the parks system and surrounding area. New civic spaces and event areas (e.g., Dundas Place) are being developed to address these concerns and increase event

capacity. Continued investment in infrastructure to support special events (e.g., civic spaces, Victoria Park Kiwanis Memorial Bandshell, drive zones, and turf applications to reduce wear and tear, etc.) and assist organizers is vital. Additional parks and civic spaces that support events should be considered.

The City does not presently have a service level for **seating areas**. Traditionally provided along trails and pathways and near amenities such as playgrounds, there is a movement toward the thoughtful placement and incorporation of seating areas in a variety of settings. With the aging population and growing unstructured use of parks and civic spaces, demand for seating amenities is on the rise. Seating – such as benches and other forms of urban furniture – helps to create welcoming spaces that bring the community together. Benches gives people a place to rest, meet with or be around others, and connect with nature in a communal and accessible setting. Seating is a critical element of placemaking and should be planned in areas where pedestrian movement is encouraged. A service standard for seating should be developed to support the City's efforts related to park and civic space design, active transportation, and complete streets.

In addition to the amenities discussed above, there are several **unique public spaces** that are used for various parks, recreation programs, and sport services facilities, such as (but not limited to) Dundas Place flex street. These public spaces support opportunities to strengthen our community through passive recreation, gatherings, and events. They are key building blocks that bring people together and their contributions to enhancing the quality of life in London should be recognized through the Master Plan's implementation.



Table 10: Municipal Outdoor Recreation Facility Inventory & Future Development Strategies

Facility Type	Municipal Supply (2019)	Changes to Supply since 2009 Plan	Updated Provision Target	Additional Facilities Required by 2039
Outdoor Aquatics				
Outdoor Swimming and Wading Pools	11 swimming pool locations 9 wading pool locations	One fewer swimming pool (East Lions) and nine fewer wading pools (Byron, Doidge, East Lions, Fairmont, Kiwanis, Oakridge, Southcrest, Westminster, White Oaks)	No additional pools	No additional pools; some pools may be removed through attrition
Spray Pads	16 locations (plus Storybook Gardens)	Seven additional spray pads (Constitution, Ed Blake, Meadowgate, Medway, Oakridge, Queens, South London)	1 spray pad per 4,000 children (ages 0-14)	5 additional spray pads
Sports Fields				
Rectangular Sports Fields	130 fields (137 unlit equivalents) School fields excluded	35.5 additional fields (ULE)	1 per 2,000 residents age 0-54 years	Up to 28 additional fields (ULE)
Ball Diamonds	73 diamonds (80 unlit equivalents) School fields excluded	7.5 fewer diamonds (ULE)	1 per 75 youth participants or 150 adult participants	Up to 12.5 additional diamonds (ULE)
Cricket Pitches	1 pitch	Not inventoried	Based on demonstrated demand	1 additional cricket pitch
Fieldhouses	33 with public washrooms	Not inventoried	Based on demonstrated demand	To coincide with major sport field development
Playgrounds				
Playgrounds	140 locations (163 play structures, plus additional free-standing swings and components)	29 new locations	1 per 800 metres within residential areas	Additional playgrounds to serve gap and growth areas
Adult Exercise Equipment	1 installation	One new installation	No target set	Site-specific analysis required

Facility Type	Municipal Supply (2019)	Changes to Supply since 2009 Plan	Updated Provision Target	Additional Facilities Required by 2039
Courts				
Tennis Courts	59 courts (54 unlit and 5 lit)	Seven fewer tennis courts	1 per 7,000 population	11 additional tennis courts
Pickleball Courts	6 courts	All pickleball courts are new	No target set; based on demonstrated demand	Site-specific analysis required
Basketball Courts	47 courts (30 full courts, 17 half courts, and 6 hoops at multi-use courts for a total of 83 hoops)	21 additional hoops (mostly via new full courts)	1 hoop per 750 youth (ages 10-19) applied to future growth	Minimum of 9 new hoops, plus others to fill gaps
Multi-Use Courts	12 courts	Not inventoried	No target set	Site-specific analysis required
Outdoor Volleyball Courts	4 courts	Not inventoried	No target set; based on demonstrated demand	Site-specific analysis required
Skate and Bike Parks				
Skate Parks	13 locations	Six new locations (Constitution, Kiwanis, Medway, Springbank, St. Julien, Stoney Creek)	Target based on geographic distribution	2 district-level skate parks; neighbourhood-level skate parks on a case-by-case basis
BMX / Mountain Bike Parks	None	n/a	1 to serve entire city	1 to serve entire city
Other Outdoor Sites and Amenities				
Outdoor Ice Rinks	2 locations (refrigerated), plus park sites (natural)	n/a	No target set	Site-specific analysis required
Off-Leash Dog Parks	5 locations	Two new off-leash dog areas (Campbell and Caesars)	No target set; based on demonstrated demand	Site-specific analysis required
Community Gardens	16 locations	Not inventoried	No target set	Site-specific analysis required

Note 1: Each lit rectangular sports field is equivalent to 1.5 unlit fields; each lit artificial turf field is equivalent to 2.0 unlit fields

Note 2: Each lit ball diamond is equivalent to 2.0 unlit diamonds

Note 3: Each half court is equivalent to 0.5 of a full basketball court.

Recommendations

Outdoor Aquatics

62. Develop five additional **spray pads** (for a total of 21) by 2039, with a focus on identified gap areas (Foxfield Park, Riverbend Park, one in North London, and two in Southwest London). New spray pads should be provided through park development projects or wading pool conversions, with an emphasis on district-level sites with existing washrooms, parking, and shade. Consideration may be given to different levels of spray pad design (e.g., basic and enhanced), as well as options for recirculated/ treated water systems.
63. Assess usage trends at **outdoor swimming pools** and develop a strategy to guide future programming and reinvestment priorities, including consideration of the City's role in ensuring community access to non-profit community pools. No additional outdoor swimming pools are recommended.
64. Continue to reduce the number of **wading pools** within City parks and develop criteria for wading pool decommissioning. Wading pools that are under-utilized, in poor condition, serving aging communities, in close proximity to alternative aquatic services and/or are not associated with outdoor pools are likely candidates for removal. They may be replaced with spray pads or other in-demand park amenities identified through community consultation.

Sports Fields

65. Develop up to 28 additional **rectangular sports fields** (unlit equivalents) by 2039 through new park development, improvements that create capacity (e.g., upgrades such as adding lights, expanding fields, etc.), and enhancing access to non-municipal fields. Where possible, priority should be placed on multi-field complexes with full-size, lit, and irrigated fields (including artificial turf fields that extend the season and accommodate multiple sports).
66. Develop up to 12.5 additional **ball diamonds** (unlit equivalents) by 2039 through new park development, improvements that create capacity (e.g., adding lights), and enhancing access to non-municipal diamonds. Most of these diamonds are required in the short-term to accommodate the recent increase in youth participation and loss of fields at the Southwest London Baseball Complex. Where possible, priority should be placed on multi-field complexes with full-size, lit diamonds.
67. Develop a second full-size **cricket pitch** (potentially spanning two rectangular sports fields). Longer-term needs should be examined once the second pitch is fully operational and usage patterns can be assessed.
68. Continue to undertake **upgrades and improvements** to existing sports fields, supported by demonstrated demand and in cooperation with sports organizations. Examples include field dimensions, lighting, grading, irrigation, drainage, turf, infield improvements, fencing, benches, shelters, etc. Efforts should be made to add lights to fields prior to nearby residential construction taking place.
69. Continue to work with local **school boards** to improve the quality of school fields as demand grows. By enhancing public access to quality, non-municipal fields, the City will be able to add capacity and reduce development costs. Options for improving the quality and maintenance of school fields should also be explored.
70. Update the **fieldhouse strategy** to confirm the preferred level of service and development and renewal needs.
71. Develop a **sports field allocation policy** and integrate emerging sports into existing allocation policies.

Recommendations

Playgrounds

72. Seek a balanced **distribution of playgrounds** by providing one play structure generally within an 800-metre radius of every residential area (without crossing a major arterial road or physical barrier).
73. Design new and redeveloped playgrounds for **accessibility** (including surfacing and components), as well as consideration of challenging/adventure and natural play areas. The standard for City-Wide and District Parks should be fully accessible playgrounds with rubber surfacing. Playgrounds in Neighbourhood Parks should generally have engineered woodchip surfacing with consideration to partially-accessible playground structures.
74. Develop a process and criteria to prioritize **playground replacement, relocation, and/or removal** to deal with the gap in replacement funding.
75. Consider adding **adult fitness equipment** to selected parks or pathways on a case-by-case basis. These opportunities should be supported by the local community and be in proximity to indoor spaces with access to washrooms.

Outdoor Courts

76. Prepare a **Tennis / Multi-use Court Strategy** to: validate future needs (up to eleven additional courts by 2039); identify gaps and potential locations; establish priorities for upgrades, replacement, removal, or repurposing; and, identify a business case and funding strategy to support court construction and renewal.
77. Evaluate **outdoor pickleball court** needs on a case-by-case basis, with a preference for locating them in areas with demonstrated demand. Opportunities to accommodate a pickleball complex of four or more courts (supported with amenities such as shade, washrooms, and nearby parking) should be explored further.
78. Resolve gaps in **outdoor basketball court** distribution (Central London, Oakridge, Medway, Westmount/Highland, and Byron) and consider basketball courts in parks within growing areas (a minimum of nine additional hoops will be required by 2039 to serve growth). Where appropriate, consideration should be given to multi-use court designs that can accommodate multiple sports and activities, such as basketball, ball hockey, ice skating, etc.
79. Where feasible, continue to encourage the development and operation of **neighbourhood outdoor ice rinks** (natural ice) where supported by community requests and volunteer efforts. Consider opportunities on a case-by-case basis to develop **boarded multi-use pads** that can be used for ball hockey and other activities in the summer and natural ice skating in the winter

Skate and Bike Parks

80. Update the **Outdoor Skateboard Park Implementation Strategy** to reflect preferred skate park typologies, needs, design standards (including lighting of City-wide skate parks), site selection criteria, and potential locations.
81. Identify suitable sites for the development of **two district-level skate parks** (Southwest London, Southeast London). Additional **neighbourhood-level skate parks** may be considered where there is demonstrated demand, a gap in service, and a suitable location that is locally supported. Locations and designs should be confirmed through consultation with youth, the skateboarding community, and local neighbourhoods.

Recommendations

82. Initiate a feasibility study involving community engagement, site selection, and design processes to confirm the need expressed for a dedicated **BMX and/or mountain bike park**.

Other Outdoor Sites and Amenities

83. Provide a balanced distribution of **off-leash dog parks**, including consideration of new parks in Northwest and Southwest London over the longer-term. Site-specific analysis, community consultation, and partnerships are required as securing suitable locations can be a challenge.

84. Develop a **tiered model of dog park designs** to enable options at the neighbourhood-level, particularly in areas of residential intensification. Opportunities to work with developers to provide amenity space for dog owners may also be considered.

85. Continue to support the **community garden program** and related initiatives (e.g., pollinator habitat, community kitchens, etc.) through strategies that encourage broad participation, as identified in the City's Urban Agriculture Strategy and Community Gardens Strategic Plan, an emphasis should be placed on community garden development in neighbourhoods.

86. Undertake a review of the **golf service delivery model and standards**, with a focus on affordable and inclusive golf opportunities. The review should consider the potential expansion of services that would encourage year-round use of clubhouse and/or courses.

87. Continue to update and implement the **Storybook Gardens Business Plan** to meet the changing needs and expectations of visitors, with the goal of supporting a unique programming environment that provides opportunities for children to build developmental assets and for families to foster connections.

88. Continue to refine practices and procedures that support the animation of parks and civic spaces through **special events**.

89. Develop a service standard for **seating areas** to support the City's efforts related to park and civic space design, active transportation, and complete streets.

7.4 Parks Planning and Design

Great parks provide spaces for active and passive recreation and are an essential part of modern, vibrant cities. Londoners are proud of the quality and variety of the city's parks system.

Demands for both organized (e.g., team sports) and unstructured (e.g., casual play) recreational activities are high in the City of London. The diversity of the population and a general movement towards unscheduled recreation will gradually create additional demand for unstructured activities, although not necessarily at the expense of organized play. As the city grows and changes, a focus will continue to be placed on improving existing parks to reflect community values, connecting people to parks and open spaces, and creating new opportunities to serve growth and emerging needs. Maintenance service levels should be reviewed regularly to ensure that funding is able to keep pace with community needs and growth.

This section identifies recommendations for parks planning, design, development, and management activities.

Parkland Supply and Acquisition

Parkland – By the Numbers

The amount of parkland that is available to residents is an important consideration as it represents the land base that contains the City's outdoor recreation and sport facilities. Parkland is also commonly acquired through the development process, purchase, or agreement; thus, an assessment of system-wide needs is necessary to set future directions. Formal acquisition targets are not set for "open space" as these lands require site-specific analyses.

The City presently manages 909 hectares (2,247 acres) of "**parkland**", including sites categorized as City-Wide Parks, District Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, Sports Parks, Urban Parks, Civic Spaces, and Facility Parks. In addition, 1,856 hectares (4,585 acres) are considered "open space", including sites categorized as Open Spaces, Environmentally Significant Areas, Golf Courses, and Woodlands. There continues to be a need for these park categories, which are further described in the London Plan and City of London Design Specification Manual.

The City currently owns approximately 220 parks and 200 open space parcels. Since the 2009 Strategic Master Plan was prepared, the City of London has expanded the size of its parks and open space network by more than 20%. London's municipal parkland and open space system – much of which is within the Thames River floodplain – accounts for 7% of the city's total land area.



The City's 909 hectares of municipal parkland represents a **service level of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 residents**. Like many communities, the city's per capita park supply is declining due to changes to the form of development, land supply, increased complexity and cost of acquisition, and competing funding priorities. A variety of strategies and tools are needed to build the parks system to sustain opportunities for outdoor leisure, recreation activities, sport, events, and community building.

On a city-wide basis, the current parkland supply is responsive to the needs of the public and stakeholders. Additional parks and outdoor recreation amenities will be required to serve London's growth, including parks in both developing neighbourhoods and intensification areas. To maintain the City's municipal parkland service level of 2.2 hectares per 1,000 residents, an **additional 168 hectares** of parkland will be required by 2039. This represents an average of about 8.5 hectares (21 acres) each year.

On its own, the legislated **parkland dedication requirements** of the Planning Act may not provide sufficient land to accommodate the full range of park requirements. To help achieve this target, the City should continue its approach toward parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu, in tandem with various acquisition tools and non-acquisition-based strategies. A mixture of new park development, park expansion and optimization, and partnerships will be required to maintain an increasingly diverse parks system.

As noted in Section 7.1, **acquisition** of opportunistic locations (e.g., surplus schools) offers promise for parkland deficient areas. In areas of intensification, policies and practices that support on-site parkland dedication and encourage front-end acquisition of parkland should be encouraged.

In addition to parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu, examples of contemporary **parkland funding and securement tools** include Section 37 (Planning Act) community benefits, land owner agreements, strata agreements, leases, land exchanges, conservation easements and land trusts, and privately-owned publicly accessible spaces. **Non-traditional public spaces** will play a greater future role in ensuring continued public access to green spaces and park-like places in higher density urban areas such as the Primary Transit Area.

While new subdivisions have traditionally been the source of new parks, these opportunities will be reduced over time as the focus of London's growth shifts inward. An emphasis should be placed on maximizing geographic accessibility across the city and achieving balanced provision of neighbourhood-level park types across all communities. The City's recent research on the impacts of intensification will be a resource in this regard.

Implementing the Vision for Parks

The London **Plan** (currently under appeal) has introduced a number of new parks and open space policies that reflect current regulations and respond to the city's evolving context. A process is also underway to update the City's parkland dedication by-law and other practices, procedures, and protocols. These policies and tools will be relied upon to guide the acquisition of parks and open space.

Park and Public Space Design

Access to quality parks is an important aspect of complete communities and allows people to spend more time in their neighbourhoods. While there will continue to be demand for traditional forms of parkland for recreation and sport, public spaces are increasingly being recognized for their contributions toward healthy communities, community greening, urban renewal, placemaking, public art and expression, and more. The City understands that a **wide range of public spaces** are needed to fill a variety of community roles and has responded to this through a robust parkland classification system and greater diversity in park designs and amenities.

The public consultation program identified a growing need to incorporate more **amenities** (e.g., seating, shade, washrooms, pathways, picnic areas, community gardens, pollinator habitat, etc.) that increase the usability of parks for older adults and residents of different ethnic backgrounds. London's Age Friendly London Action Plan contains several recommendations that will improve the park experience for people of all ages. Relatively modest investments can have dramatic improvements on parks and encourage participation and physical activity for everyone, regardless of age, gender, or income. For example, walking is the most popular activity and looped trails and pathways draw people of all ages into parks – including women and men, children, and older adults – which help to increase a sense of safety and community. These findings were supported by the City's 2018 Parks Observation Audit, which documented and measured usage with the parks system.

Neighbourhood parks are the most convenient park type in the city, accounting for more than one-third of London's municipal parkland. They are a critical resource for building a sense of community and social belonging, but many are underused because they may not contain the amenities sought by residents of all ages. Neighbourhood parks are best situated to accommodate growing demand for unstructured activities and casual uses, subject to available budget resources. A renewed focus on neighbourhood park design is recommended, in tandem with a thoughtful strategy to enhance comfort amenities, outdoor programming, and supervised activities to help people make use of the space. Small parks can make a big difference.

The **renewal** of existing parks and park infrastructure will become a greater concern over time and the allocation of resources needs to be examined in this light. In addition, opportunities to generate efficiencies through the use of new technologies, maintenance strategies, and community partnerships should be sought. For example, it is a goal of the City's 2014 Corporate Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan to reduce energy consumption in City of London parks through a review of lighting standards and technologies. The repurposing of redundant spaces can also bring new life to a park; however, some park features (e.g., off-leash dog parks, skateboard parks, trails, etc.) can be contentious due to perceived negative impacts or conflicting uses. This can create delays in site selection and park development, frustrating stakeholders and park users. The City should continue to engage residents early in the planning process and work with stakeholders to mitigate concerns.



Design Considerations for Parks and Public Spaces

Based on the foregoing, the City should continue to consider the following principles (at a minimum) in designing new and redeveloped parks and public spaces:

- a. Incorporate a blend of active and passive spaces and amenities encouraging physical activity, wellness, and informal use opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds;
- b. Consider the needs of a diverse and aging population through washrooms and access to potable water, seating (including benches with arms), shade (trees, shelters, shade sails, etc.), pathways, picnic areas and pavilions, bicycle racks, and needle bins in appropriate locations (note: some amenities may not be appropriate for all park types);
- c. Preserve and emphasize cultural and heritage environments, including interpretive content;
- d. Follow accessibility legislation (AODA) and guidelines to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- e. Apply CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles for enhanced safety and security;
- f. Apply winter city design principles to encourage usage throughout the year (e.g., maximizing exposure to sunshine, incorporating designs that block wind, appropriate use of lighting and colour, including infrastructure and comfort amenities that can be used during the winter, programming for winter activities, etc.);
- g. Promote designs that encourage sustainable maintenance practices;
- h. Incorporate native and drought resistant vegetative features that are biologically robust;
- i. Utilize materials that are robust, durable, and mindful of future maintenance requirements;
- j. Apply consistent signage and information about park contents, accessibility, etc.;
- k. Seek innovative and engaging initiatives that encourage naturalization and environmental stewardship, including opportunities for public education and access;
- l. Encourage public art and spaces for cultural expression; and,
- m. Promote active transportation connections and a linked open space system.



High quality and robust **civic spaces** – such as public squares, flex streets, and privately-owned public spaces – will also be required to sustain higher levels of use and provide space for events, gatherings, and activities. The City’s Downtown Plan (2015) directs London to “create civic spaces and park spaces, such as children’s play areas and urban dog parks, that provide neighbourhood amenities and appeal to a variety of age groups, lifestyles, and household compositions.” One way in which this is being achieved is through the creation of Dundas Place, a flex street that will be shared by pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists between Wellington Street and the Thames River.

To respond to growth that is increasingly inward and upward, the City must be creative with existing spaces and seek new ways of doing things as it has done with the Dundas Place flex street and Forks of the Thames. Some **future opportunities** may include (but will not be limited to):

- Promoting innovation and excellence in design;
- Enhancing or renewing existing parks, public spaces, and streetscapes (e.g., complete streets);
- Developing parks with urban qualities (civic parks, squares, etc.) that are built to higher design standards and that integrate multi-functional spaces;
- Improving connections (e.g., linear parks) and access to parks and facilities in nearby neighbourhoods;
- Making use of unconventional spaces (e.g., streets, cemeteries, greyfield sites, etc.) such as through partnerships, strata parks, shared streets, etc.;
- Utilization of the proposed community benefits charge (funding through Section 37 of the Planning Act);
- Integrating privately-owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS); and,
- Considering other forms of credits through negotiation with developers, such as land swaps or public realm improvements.



Recommendations

Parkland Acquisition

90. When planning for new parks have regard to the policies for parkland suitability, dedication, acquisition, and design contained in **the London Plan** and **Parkland Conveyance and Levy By-law**. Procedures and fee schedules should be reviewed on a regular basis.
91. Continue to acquire **active parkland** at the maximum applicable rate as permitted by the Planning Act, via the City's implementing policy documents. Seek to maintain the current city-wide target of **2.2 hectares of municipal parkland per 1,000** residents. Levels of supply will vary across the city; however, efforts should be made to balance the distribution of neighbourhood-level park types across all communities.
92. Continue to evaluate the acquisition of **open space lands** (e.g., woodlands, natural areas, etc.) on a case-by-case basis using criteria in the City's guiding documents. Hazard or open space lands will only be accepted as part of parkland dedication requirements at the City's discretion (at a substantially reduced rate in keeping with the Parkland Conveyance and Levy By-law), with the goal of supporting their long-term protection and management.
93. Employ a variety of **acquisition and non-acquisition-based strategies** to achieve the objectives of this Plan with a focus on growth areas and other areas of need.

Park and Public Space Design

94. Review and revise the City's **park design guidelines**, having regard to the design considerations identified in the Master Plan such as age friendly applications. Update standards relating (but not limited) to on- and off-street parking, general park lighting, washrooms, and gateway features provided by developers. Not all amenities will be appropriate for all park types.
95. Allocate a portion of space in appropriate park types for **passive recreation** to encourage park use by residents of all ages. Design and manage the interface between active and passive park areas to allow for sufficient separation.
96. Develop a strategy for the **renewal of Neighbourhood Parks** across the city, including funding amounts and sources. Emphasize projects that promote usage by people of all ages, such as the introduction of shade, seating, pathways, unprogrammed space, etc. (note: washrooms are not a viable service level in most Neighbourhood Parks).
97. Recognize the space surrounding **stormwater management (SWM) ponds** as community assets, where appropriate. In areas with parkland deficiencies, design and maintain the areas surrounding SWM ponds to allow for greater community use.
98. Continue to seek opportunities through the subdivision approval process to **accelerate park development**, including the use of developer built parks (under the direction and to the satisfaction of the City).
99. Continue to encourage community stakeholders and partners to invest in "**value-added**" **improvements** within the parks system. Projects must address neighbourhood and/or city-wide priorities and must conform to City standards.

Recommendations

100. Create **well-designed parks and public spaces** that are age friendly and embed opportunities for residents and visitors to play, learn, and connect.
101. Develop an implementation strategy for the establishment and management of **private-owned publicly accessible spaces** (POPS). Created by the development industry within higher density urban areas, POPS offer an opportunity to enhance the public realm through effective design and programming. They are not considered a replacement for municipal parkland or dedication requirements.
102. Engage in the **coordinated informed response** and other integrated responses and strategies aimed at improving the use, public safety, activities, and access of parks.

Section 8: RECREATION CAPACITY

This section contains analysis and recommendations relating to the following topics **service excellence**, **sport services**, and **partnerships**.

Goal 5: RECREATION CAPACITY

We will deliver exceptional parks, recreation, and sport services. This will be achieved through the use of effective and responsive practices, partnerships, innovation, leadership, and accountability at all levels.



Strategic Directions:

- a. Demonstrate leadership and service excellence in the management of quality parks, facilities, programs, and services.
- b. Adopt evidenced-based continuous improvement models in the delivery of service.
- c. Respond to a changing community through continued professional development and training.
- d. Seek out partnership and community relationship opportunities that maximize benefits to Londoners.
- e. Work with community partners to create a sustainable sport development model.
- f. Promote alignment between the Master Plan and other community strategies and initiatives.



8.1 Leading in Public Service

The City of London staff in Parks and Recreation and Neighbourhood, Children, and Fire Services have historically been leaders in striving for service excellence. This involves making a commitment to providing services at a higher standard through an integrated approach.

Figure 8: Service Excellence in the Delivery of Service

Leading in Public Service					
Culture of Innovation and Service Excellence	Resident-Driven Services	Staff Excellence	Quality Assurance Frameworks and Compliance	High Satisfaction and Utilization Levels	Performance Measures

Developing a Culture of Innovation and Service Excellence: One way to signal to an organization that a positive culture is important and that staff play a significant role in building a high performing public service is to define service excellence in a local context and continually build on its application.

Resident-Driven Services: The needs of residents are central to the success of the parks, recreation, and sport service delivery model in London. The development of this Master Plan has engaged the voice of residents – as do all ongoing efforts to develop and refine programs and services. The analysis of participation rates, satisfaction levels, and ad hoc groups to study key issues and under-represented resident populations are methods utilized to keep services nimble and reflective of current trends and the needs of all residents.

Staff Excellence: Engagement and empowerment allow staff to thrive in a supportive and innovative culture. Guiding principles and a strong departmental culture require discussion and clarification. While actions to support staff excellence are generally implied, occasional conversations with staff are necessary to provide opportunities to clarify expectations, identify needed training, and recognition of exceptional public service. A large portion of the staff who deliver these parks, recreation, and sport programs and services are casual or part-time and there is a challenge in continually engaging and supporting them as their terms and hours vary. Efforts are made during training and meeting opportunities to strengthen input and react to identified issues.

Quality Assurance Frameworks: Most of Ontario's municipalities offer or enable parks, recreation,

and sport opportunities through direct and indirect programming models. Residents should be able to anticipate an emphasis on quality assurance in service delivery. Providing services to hundreds of thousands of users requires standard policies and practices that not only ensure that legislative requirements are met, but also a level of assurance that customer service and quality standards are key service delivery drivers.

The two key phases of the quality assurance framework centre on: HIGH FIVE Quest 1 (to train relevant staff and volunteers and test policies, procedures, communications, and adherence to practices); and Quest 2 (a program assessment and improvement tool). London is involved in the HIGH FIVE quality assurance program, which ensures that children's programs are age-appropriate, meet safety and supervisory needs, are enjoyable, and offer some skill mastery. This quality assurance program has recently been extended to older adult programming (Active Aging).

High Utilization and Satisfaction Levels: Measuring excellence in the delivery of service is generally assessed by examining satisfaction levels and use of services, which are intentional approaches assessing effectiveness and gaps. Quantified data can support defining refined approaches based on satisfaction levels and/or utilization and participation rates in each program and service. Practitioners apply these quality standards as part of their regular attention to duty and consider new approaches as appropriate. The City of London takes a proactive approach in evaluating programs and services through program evaluations and conducting surveys to identify

strengths and gaps. Improving quality of service delivery continues to be required as the population changes and an annual review can place emphasis on areas where service improvements are needed.

Performance Measures: Measuring performance allows an organization to quantify various elements of service delivery to demonstrate if progress is being made toward intended outcomes. In a municipal setting there is a need to demonstrate to the public that the investment of tax dollars is allocated toward worthwhile ends and that these investments are utilized efficiently and effectively. This data provides the information needed to complete an analysis and to ensure that program decisions are knowledge-based. At a higher level (department or program) performance is measured by collecting data on inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness. These data can also be utilized to compare levels of service year-to-year and develop initiatives to demonstrate continued improvement. To assist with comparisons to other large municipalities, the City of London is a member of MBN Canada.

Costing and Pricing of Programs and Services: The Master Plan survey indicated that 80% of respondents feel that City programs are affordable. This is a positive indication that the City has been mindful of their costs and recovering a reasonable percentage of costs levied through user fees. Offering a balance of no fee/low fee programs enables universal access. The use of the Play Your Way financial assistance program ensures that all London residents can participate in recreation programs and pursuits without financial barriers. Nevertheless, a review of the both fee/rates and the Play Your Way program are appropriate to make sure that participation is maximized and that financial barriers are addressed.



Recommendations

Leading in Public Service

103. To inform program and service provision, increase collaborative efforts with community groups and volunteers by:
- Continuing to collect feedback from neighbourhood groups about programs and services they want to see and use this feedback to inform program decisions;
 - Working with new and partner organizations to fill gaps using a strength-based delivery approach (organizations that focus on different abilities, markets, etc.);
 - Identifying populations and neighbourhoods not currently accessing services and forming new program delivery relationships to jointly address those needs (e.g., targeted Leader in Training options, Indigenous program opportunities, etc.);
 - Building leadership capacity within the community to support local initiatives and create strong neighbourhoods;
 - Hosting regular forums with service providers and funders to identify and address potential improvements to customer service practices, the built environment, etc.; and,
 - Regularly communicating the Master Plan priorities to internal and external partners to improve coordination, alignment, and implementation.
104. Undertake a review of the effectiveness of the **Play Your Way financial assistance program** and **“Policy for waiving or reducing fees for use of city owned community centres and recreation facilities”**, including opportunities to simplify the process to register for programs and apply for subsidy.



8.2 Sport Services

London has a thriving sport community made up of self-governing sport organizations, the City, Tourism London, and the London Sport Council. The sport system works collaboratively to ensure that infrastructure and allocation of space can adequately meet the current and future needs of sport participants.

The London Sport Council has specific responsibilities to oversee the fundraising efforts for KidSport and to allocate these funds to enable sport participation of children from low-income backgrounds. Further, the Sport Council organizes and hosts the Sports Hall of Fame dinner to recognize sport excellence and volunteer recognition in London. Tourism London works with the City and other partners to attract and retain sport competitions. The City plays a distinct role in sport development in the community, including the development and maintenance of sport facility infrastructure, allocation of space to groups, and the promotion of physical activity and sport participation. Several requests for additional support to the sport sector have emerged since the last Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed. There is a need to **develop a Sport Policy and Plan** that articulates the City's role in supporting this sector and that outlines strategies to increase participation in sport through the a safe, supportive, and inclusive sport environments.

A strong local community sport system relies on role clarity, a league of volunteers and sport groups, promotion and communications, a continuum of sport opportunities, sound infrastructure, coordination, and celebration. London has been building a strong sport system over decades and continues to see the impressive benefit to residents, families, and the community.

London Sport Policy and Plan

The development of a successful Sport Policy and Plan relies on gaining an understanding of the needs, strengths, and challenges and mapping out a realistic and achievable course for the future. Creating performance measures and annual reporting around the goals of the Sport Policy and Plan will ensure that stakeholders and partners keep priorities in focus and continue to work cohesively toward the vision by each playing their part.



The Municipal Role in Sport Delivery

Municipalities are one of the largest investors in Canada's physical activity and sport infrastructure and are the owner/operators of most pools, quality sport fields, arenas, trail and bike systems, parks, and recreation centres. Parks and recreation departments provide or facilitate the introduction and delivery of sport programs for all age groups. The significance of the municipal role becomes even clearer when sport groups work together to define their contributions to the sport delivery system.

Local sport volunteer organizations look to municipalities as a primary partner along with provincial and national sport governing bodies. Municipalities are positioned to:

- Encourage active lifestyles through proactive introductory programming and indoor and outdoor facilities and open spaces;
- Develop policies and programs that emphasize accessibility to services whatever the age, gender, ability, or economic circumstances of the targeted participants;
- Facilitate discussions regarding safe, athlete-centred, and quality sport experiences;
- Bring partner organizations together to address community needs, assess the state of sport delivery, and monitor participation levels;
- Work directly with school boards and other institutions on joint venture development and common use of facilities agreements;
- Employ a variety of communication vehicles that promote active lifestyles, ensure a broad reach, and the ability to influence the general public; and,
- Measure the impact and outcomes that sport has on a community.

By placing a greater focus on promoting sport participation and active lifestyles, the City and stakeholders will enhance broader community goals around health and wellness. Bringing attention

to the importance of sport participation and other healthy behaviours allows community partners to plan more effectively and carry out actions that have an even greater impact on the community at large.

Sport Tourism and Economic Impact

The economic impact of sporting events is usually one of the drivers of municipal engagement in sport tourism as municipalities typically ensure the coordination and execution of funding, bid development, and facility allocation. London is no different with the development of bids through Tourism London and the involvement of the City regarding logistics and other supports. The City seeks to find balance in its commitment to develop community-serving multi-purpose facilities and the requirement for specialized facilities to meet the needs of elite-level sport tourism.

Tourism Spending

In a recent report (September 2018) issued by the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance (CSTA), it was stated that in 2017 the Canadian sport tourism industry reached \$6.8 billion in total consumer spending an increase of 0.5% from 2016.

“Canada has a stellar reputation for our expertise in hosting summer and winter sports, with excellent facilities, organizational abilities, welcoming volunteers and strong hosting program financial support from both federal and provincial levels” said Rick Traer, CSTA CEO. *“The data reflects the importance of sport tourism as a grassroots economic development initiative in communities across Canada and supports our #2 ranking as a Host Nation internationally.”* Ontario received the highest visitation share in Canada at 37%.

Recommendations

Sport Services

105. Host a forum with all sport providers and stakeholder groups to discuss the merits of developing a London Sport Agreement as a commitment to engage collectively to develop a Sport Policy and Sport Plan for the City of London.

8.3 Partnerships

Achieving More by Working Together

The City of London seeks partnerships to advance services and initiatives in the most effective manner. A partnership in a municipal setting can be described as an arrangement to where the costs, resources and risks of providing services are shared between the City and an alternate provider or stakeholder group. Working together to advance an objective allows the sharing of ideas, funding, and human resources.

Partnerships are key to creating a versatile range of parks, recreation, and sport services in London. They allow the City to leverage outside resources and maximize public funds, while meeting gaps and needs that are not traditionally within the City's mandate. Londoners have expressed a strong desire for more multi-sectoral partnerships that leverage resources, avoid duplication, accelerate innovation, and enhance user convenience.

The advantages of partnerships are many including cost containment, reduction of capital investments, specialized knowledge and possible initial start up investments. These advantages must be weighed against the ownership that the City sees as part of its core responsibilities. The risks must also be clear. All partnerships must be well structured and lead to efficiencies and effectiveness within the delivery of service. The same must be said of arrangements to work with other stakeholder groups to address key social issues within a City. While the risks are not as significant, the advantages of sharing resources offer more efficient means to the preferred outcome.

Partnerships have Helped London Create Community Destinations

The City actively supports opportunities to work with community groups, service providers, schools, and other levels of government to help fund parks, recreation, and sport projects with measurable impact. The Stoney Creek and Bostwick Community Centres are successful examples of this. Both facilities were built and managed in partnership with the City of London, YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, and London Public Libraries. They are municipal capital assets and serve as multi-functional community hubs that provide recreation and fitness programming through the YMCA, in addition to public library services. In neighbourhoods where the gathering places and programming space at City-owned sites are not achievable, stronger partnerships with the school boards, non-profit associations, private clubs, and other providers should be considered. Co-located facilities will be encouraged.

Another form of collaboration is the sponsorship, advertising, and naming rights program which is offered by the City to London. The programs provide an enhanced level of service through alternate funding mechanisms. The City has developed these programs and offers opportunities to the business community where there are likely benefits to residents in offering accessible programs and services and increasing visibility to businesses. Two such examples include the sponsorship of the Leader in Training Program by the Libro Credit Union and the sponsorship of free swim and skating opportunities by Tim Hortons. The opportunity to expand these programs will serve to provide greater parks, recreation, and sport activities for Londoners.

Working as a Collective with Other Providers and Municipalities

Communities in Ontario are building stronger relationships with other providers of parks, recreation, and sport services within their jurisdiction. This approach is imperative in a climate of increasing costs and declining resources. Results have proven to work toward common goals and address current social issues as well as to reduce duplication and share resources. “Integrated Service Delivery” is a term used to describe all related groups embracing a common vision and working together to realize better outcomes for the community.

Furthermore, approximately 78% of the London Census Metropolitan Area (which includes selected municipalities within the counties of Middlesex and Elgin) lives in the City of London. Many non-residents use parks, recreation, and sport services within the City of London, while some residents benefit from opportunities outside London. The proximity of other municipalities within the region provides an opportunity for partnerships in the delivery of parks, recreation, and sport.

While London does have relationships with many related providers and adjacent municipalities, more can be done to strengthen cohesiveness and positive community outcomes. Joint planning and coordination of assets provides residents with the best value for their tax dollars.



Recommendations

Partnerships

106. Expand and/or realign **strategic partnership opportunities** to further the directions of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan including (but not limited to) increasing physical activity, enhancing access for under-represented and diverse populations, increasing outdoor play duration, strengthening diversity and inclusion, and increasing capacity for older adults and youth. Be proactive in partnership development through regular communication and establishment of a **standardized framework and/or criteria** to simplify and expedite partnership outcomes (see Appendix B).
107. Utilize the **sponsorship, advertising, and naming rights program** to capture an increased level of alternate funding to enhance parks, recreation and sport facilities, programs, and services.
108. Collaborate with **school boards** to identify opportunities to maximize community access to existing sites and future park/school campuses.
109. Collaborate with **post-secondary institutions** to identify opportunities to maximize community access to existing and future sport facilities. Encourage opportunities to work together on the research and evaluation of community-based approaches to prevailing issues in service delivery.
110. Support **regional, provincial, and national initiatives** that increase support for information sharing, research, and data collection.

Section 9: IMPLEMENTATION & FINANCIAL PLANNING

Activation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is critical to its success. This requires coordinated efforts and a commitment from Council, staff, stakeholders, and the public. It is a strategic direction of this Master Plan to pursue a variety of funding options to implement the Plan. This section provides guidance on the Master Plan's implementation and high-level financial considerations.

9.1 Resourcing the Master Plan

The City's 2016-2019 Multi-Year Budget contains considerable detail regarding capital projects to be undertaken during this period, as well as expected future year projects (subject to change based on needs/priorities, funding availability, etc.). Development of the next multi-year budget was initiated in 2019 and will be linked to City Council's new Strategic Plan.

London's Multi-Year Budget

The current Multi-Year Budget contains approved capital spending of \$99.1 million for Parks, Recreation & Neighbourhood Services between 2016 and 2019, representing an **average of \$24.8 million per year**. Of this amount, 67% was attributed to growth-related projects, 35% to lifecycle projects, and 8% to service improvements. While the next multi-year budget exercise may result in different ratios, it is noted that the majority of the capital recommendations in this Master Plan are fully or partially growth-related.

London's parks, recreation, and sport capital projects are primarily funded from the following sources, some of which are held in reserve funds:

- a. Capital Levy and Debt Funding - Municipal taxation and other forms of debt funding accounts for the largest portion of the capital budget and are relatively stable and secure sources of funding as they are tax supported. The capital levy is primarily used for lifecycle renewal. Debt and/or the capital levy are primary used for projects

that cannot be fully funded by growth-related sources, such as facility replacements and the current 10% share of Development Charge funded projects. The City has instituted an internal debt financing cap through its financial planning.

- b. Development Charges - The Development Charges Act, 1997, currently allows the City to require payments from developers to help cover up to 90% of the growth-related parks and recreation infrastructure costs associated with development. This money can be used for parks/facility development and improvements, as well as the purchase of land for recreation facilities. It cannot be used for parkland acquisition.

Note: Through Bill 108, the Province is proposing significant changes to the Development Charges Act that will, among other items, render parks and recreation infrastructure ineligible for development charge funding. These growth-related costs will be addressed through a proposed community benefits charge to be implemented under Section 37 of the Planning Act.

- c. Special Levies (Municipal Accommodation Tax) - In 2018, the City instituted a municipal accommodation tax. Revenues are to be shared with Tourism London. While the use of the City's portion of revenue is unrestricted, it is intended to fund new and improved tourism infrastructure that will generate additional economic impact for London without impacting the City's tax levy. Some of the projects recommended in this Master Plan may be eligible for this funding, such as the incremental capital to "upscale" or enhance a recreational facility to make that facility viable for hosting a major event. Tourism London's portion of revenue will be used for tourism promotion and development, such as bidding on major sport, convention, music and culture events, funding, and developing festivals and events.
- d. Planning Act Section 42 (Cash-in-lieu) and Section 37/45 - Section 42 of the Planning Act allows the City to secure land and/or monies for park purposes from residential (5%) and commercial/industrial (2%) development projects. Where lands are unsuitable for parks, the City will collect cash-in-lieu that can be applied to parkland acquisition and development. Section 37 of the Planning Act allows increased density and height in a zoning bylaw in exchange for community benefits

through negotiations with developers. Section 45 of the Planning Act is similar, except that it deals with minor variances to the zoning bylaw through a Committee of Adjustment. These tools are designed to help address the impact of high-density residential development, but have been applied sparingly in London to date.

Note: Through Bill 108, the Province is proposing significant changes to the Planning Act that will, among other items, consolidate cash-in-lieu, bonusing provisions, and development charges under a proposed community benefits charge to be implemented under Section 37 of the Planning Act.

- e. Grants and External Contributions - Funding from Federal/Provincial governments and external contributions (e.g., donations, etc.) account for a small portion of the capital budget. These sources are unpredictable and variable.

Operating funds for programs, services, and facilities (existing or recommended under this Plan) are derived from several sources, including (but not limited to) municipal taxation and user fees. Parks, Recreation & Neighbourhood Services is the greatest contributor to user fee revenue in the City. An analysis of operating budget implications and partnership options should be undertaken prior to approving major capital projects and that sufficient annual operating funds would be allocated to any approved project.

The City will lean on its creativity and leadership to enable full implementation of this Plan. Financial processes and practices will support the maximization of available funds and be supplemented by other approaches, where possible. Approaches that are financially sustainable will be encouraged, such as partnerships that leverage assets and resources to provide the best value to residents, building cost-effective multi-use facilities rather than those designed for a single use, seeking senior government grants and fundraising, etc.

Over time, infrastructure will age and service expectations will rise, resulting in increased pressures on available funding. The City has readied itself to respond to a large portion of these needs by establishing proactive measures such as a disciplined reinvestment strategy supported by a robust asset management program, application of reserves and special levies (i.e., municipal accommodation tax). However, it has been noted that block funds for the renewal and replacement of some amenities (e.g., playgrounds, sport courts, etc.) are insufficient to keep pace with lifecycle requirements. As the greatest challenges will be those non-growth-related projects that protect the City's infrastructure, a continued commitment to sustainable and predictable funding is required.

This Master Plan is a Resource for Financial Planning

This Plan identifies the parks, recreation, and sport facilities and land (capital) needs of the City of London for the next ten years. The Plan should be used as a resource in developing the City's annual and multi-year budget documents, secondary plans, and related studies. Through implementation of the Plan, the City will take into consideration available capital and operating funding via available sources to identify potential budget shortfalls or overruns and areas for adjustment. On an annual basis, the City should reconcile the recommendations with its fiscal capacity and focus on the highest priority items.

Recommendations

Funding Tools and Practices

111. **Maximize available funding sources** through effective financial processes and practices. Where appropriate and consistent with municipal policies and priorities, consider **alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches** to achieve capital and operating cost recovery targets, such as (but not limited to) surcharges, fundraising, grants, sponsorships and naming rights, and various forms of collaboration to provide the best value to residents. Where appropriate, additional funding capacity may be used to **advance projects** from the list of unfunded items supported by this Master Plan.
112. Assess **operating budget implications** and partnership options prior to approving major capital projects.
113. Provide high priority and sufficient funding for **ongoing park and facility renewal and lifecycle requirements**, including but not limited to **bolstering block funds** for park amenities (e.g., play grounds, sport courts, comfort amenities, etc.).
114. Use this Master Plan as a **resource** in developing the City's annual and multi-year budget documents, growth-related funding strategies, secondary plans, and related studies.



9.2 Informing our Priorities

This section examines the priority of major capital projects recommended by the Master Plan (with “timing” generally being synonymous with “priority”, meaning that projects identified in earlier years should generally be higher priorities for the City). Decision-making frameworks and criteria identified in this Master Plan support informed and consistent facility planning over the long-term. Through implementation, the City will reconcile the Plan’s recommendations with its fiscal capacity and align growth-related needs with the development cycle.

Influencing Factors

Factors that may impact priorities to be adjusted include (in no particular order):

- 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.

This Master Plan supports continued investment to existing lines of business that demonstrate positive short- and long-term demand profiles. The goal is to work within the City’s Multi-Year Budget by implementing capital recommendations in a timeframe consistent with population growth and expected funding sources. Should additional funding become available, either sooner or in greater amounts, the guidelines in this section should be used to guide decisions about the use of this funding, with an intent to advance projects already identified or respond to growth-related needs. The introduction of new types of facilities that extend beyond traditional services would require further study.

- Community Development and Recreation Programs, Leadership, and Services: Community Investments and Planning, Programs, Sports Services, and Special Events;
- Recreation and Sport Facility Development: Indoor Facilities, Aquatics, Golf, and Storybook Gardens; and,
- Parks Development: Parks Planning and Design, and Outdoor Facilities.

The capital and operating requirements of each of these streams varies. For example, Recreation and Sport Facility Development requires funding for large projects such as community centres. By comparison, the capital funding needs of Community Development are smaller and more difficult to forecast as this area deals with initiatives such as capacity building that rely heavily on partner and volunteer resources. In addition, the majority of London’s parks encourage unstructured use by all and operating costs cannot be subsidised through user fees.

Investment across the full spectrum of capital requirements is required to achieve maximum benefit and to meet the widest range of community needs. However, when dealing with limited resources and deciding between competing projects, difficult decisions are necessary. The following tables identify the general priority order for major capital investments. These priorities have been created through an understanding of:

- a. Community needs (influenced by public and stakeholder input, current supplies, capacity, trends and best practices, alternate providers, etc.);
- b. Service outcomes (e.g., access, equity, participation, affordability, etc.);
- c. Cost impacts (operating and capital costs, partnership potential, etc.); and,
- d. Alignment with the strategic framework of this Master Plan (e.g., vision, goals, and strategic directions).

As priorities may change with time, it is important to re-evaluate on a regular basis and/or when new information becomes available.

Facility Planning is a Long-term Process

The Master Plan’s 20-year timeframe reflects the time needed to plan and execute major capital projects, a multi-year process that typically involves securing funding, engaging residents, acquiring land, developing partnerships, and meeting regulatory requirements, as well as park/facility design and construction. The implementation of specific capital projects recommended will require more detailed planning, which will include further public engagement and partnership development.

Major Capital Parks Projects (2020-2039)

Note: Excludes planned lifecycle projects.

RECREATION AND SPORT FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Major Capital Projects that can be achieved within the current capital forecast

SOUTHEAST MULTI-USE COMMUNITY CENTRE*

Capital budget allocated in 2019-2020. Site selection and acquisition required. Proposed components include twin ice pads (as a replacement for Farquharson Arena), large gymnasium, activity rooms, and multi-use space.

NORTHWEST MULTI-USE COMMUNITY CENTRE*

Draft Development Charges Background Study identifies capital in 2023. Site selection and acquisition required. Proposed components include an indoor pool, large gymnasium, activity rooms, and multi-use space.

NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY CENTRES*

Draft Development Charges Background Study identifies capital in 2025 for North London and in 2027 for Central London. Proposed components include large gymnasiums, activity rooms, and multi-use space.

Two additional growth-related centres are recommended between 2030-2039.

ARENA REPURPOSING*

Capital budget allocated in 2018 and 2019/20 for Silverwood and Farquharson Arenas.

*Funds are allocated to these projects, however, additional study is required to confirm through the MultiYear Budget Process.

Major Capital Projects that cannot be achieved within the current capital forecast

COMMUNITY CENTRE / FACILITY RENEWAL AND UPGRADES

Additional funds may be required to address major facility upgrades to enable full implementation of the Master Plan, such as the creation of welcoming and active community spaces.

CANADA GAMES AQUATIC CENTRE UPGRADES

Upgrades to Canada Games Aquatic Centre have been proposed to improve the facility's ability to host provincial, national, and/or international events.

COMMUNITY PROPOSALS

Unsolicited proposals for major capital projects – such as a curling facility and indoor track/field venue – are currently unfunded. Additional evaluation is required via the recommended partnership framework.

PARKS DEVELOPMENT

Major Capital Projects that can be achieved within the current capital forecast

PATHWAY AND TRAIL SYSTEM EXPANSION AND UPGRADES

Capital budget allocated in 2020/21 and 2024/25 to address additional links in the Thames Valley Parkway. Additional funding for pathway and trail expansion is allocated within the major open space network budget.

EXISTING PARK UPGRADES

Yearly capital funding identified for park upgrades at existing service levels for items such as benches and pathways in parks.

NEW PARK DEVELOPMENTS

New neighbourhood and district park development budgets are funding through the development process. Many amenities are funded through these budgets and are not individually identified.

Park Amenities and Features:

Growth-related projects included within the capital plan are identified below - these could be constructed in existing or in new park locations.

SPORTS FIELDS AND FIELDHOUSES

- Sports Field development will emphasize high quality ball diamonds, rectangular fields (including multi-sport artificial turf fields), cricket pitches, and fieldhouses in line with growth-related community needs.

PLAYGROUNDS

- Playgrounds are required in Medway and Central London, as well as growth areas.

SPRAY PADS

- Spray pads (5) are required in Foxfield Park, Riverbend Park, North London, and Southwest London (2).

SKATE AND BMX PARKS

- District-level Skate Parks (2) are required in Southwest and Southeast London; neighbourhood-level parks will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. One City-wide BMX Park is recommended (guided by further study).

OUTDOOR COURTS

- Tennis, Pickleball, and Multi-use/Basketball Court development and redevelopment funds are available within existing capital budgets.

OFF-LEASH DOG PARKS

- Off-leash Dog Parks (2) are required in Northwest and Southwest London; the capital budget includes funding for one dog park.

STORYBOOK GARDENS ENHANCEMENT

Capital budget allocated for multi-use pavilion and an additional feature (2022).

Major Capital Projects that cannot be achieved within the current capital forecast

URBAN CIVIC SPACES

A service standard for civic spaces is required to determine potential capital requirements.

PARK AMENITIES AND FEATURES - RENEWAL

Playground Renewal budgets are insufficient for the replacement of playgrounds in some City-wide and District Parks. Further budget is needed for park upgrades such as a pickleball complex and second recommended off-leash dog park.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK RENEWAL

Neighbourhood Parks may require additional funds to address renewal and upgrades needed to meet new service level standards.

COMMUNITY PROPOSALS

Unsolicited proposals for major capital projects – such as a soccer stadium – are currently unfunded. Additional evaluation is required via the recommended partnership framework.

STORYBOOK GARDENS

New attractions or enhancements to existing amenities.

ADDITIONAL PATHWAY AND TRAIL PROJECTS

Additional pathway and trail expansion budget is needed to address further gaps in the Thames Valley Parkway.

Major capital projects that are expected to be achieved within the funding levels anticipated by the City's capital forecast are identified and should be generally pursued prior to undertaking those projects that are "below the line" (i.e., that are currently unfunded and that may require non-

traditional funding approaches). Exceptions may be made where "unfunded" projects would not unduly affect the implementation and timing of necessary projects that are "above the line" (i.e., those that are anticipated to be funded within existing budget envelopes).

Recommendations

Informing our Choices

115. Ensure that planning for major capital projects includes meaningful **community engagement**, **feasibility studies** that validate building program and service requirements (informed by demographic and socio-economic data, local needs, recreation trends and preferences, etc.), and consideration of **potential partnerships**.
116. To assist in the evaluation of **unsolicited proposals** that propose new parks, recreation, or sport services/ facilities that have not traditionally been supported by the City, the City should require proponents to submit **business cases** (acceptable to the City). Initiatives that fully recover their direct and indirect costs may proceed more quickly if they are supported by the Master Plan.

9.3 Implementing the Master Plan

Implementation of this Master Plan will require leadership, commitment, resources, and sustained efforts. Success will also be dependent upon a collaborative effort led by the City and involving a variety of dedicated partners and service providers. Full implementation will require the pursuit of alternative funding and the establishment of various arrangements with community organizations, schools, developers, and other partners. It is also critical that the City regularly monitor and report progress on the Plan and its recommendations.

Capital and service planning can be a long-term process. The 20-year timeframe for this Master Plan reflects the time needed to plan and execute facility projects, a process that typically involves securing funding, engaging residents, acquiring land, developing partnerships and meeting regulatory requirements, as well as facility design and construction. Achieving the specific capital

projects recommended within this Plan will require **more detailed planning**, including further public engagement and partnership exploration.

Evidence-based **assessment tools and guidelines** – such as improved database management (permitting and registration data, prime and non-prime usage, etc.) and business intelligence tools (e.g., user profiles, quality of service checks, etc.) – are also needed to support new or enhanced projects and service levels.

Regular **monitoring, reporting, and updating of the Master Plan** and its recommendations is critical to ensuring that it remains community-responsive and fiscally-achievable. More formal updates are recommended approximately every five years (aligned with growth-related planning and funding strategies and/or the Multi-Year Budget). During the next Master Plan update, consideration may be given to working jointly with the **London Public Library** to evaluate and coordinate capital planning.



Recommendations

Implementing the Master Plan

117. Implement a system for the **regular monitoring** of the Master Plan, including the use of **evidence-based assessment tools and guidelines** to improve performance measurement and business intelligence. Opportunities to link the Master Plan to Council's Strategic Plan should also be sought.
118. Develop a **communications plan** following approval of the Master Plan to create awareness about its key messages and recommendations amongst residents and stakeholders. Implement a system for the **regular reporting** of the Master Plan, including an **annual update to the community** (e.g., report card).
119. Reassess the direction, priorities, and accomplishments of the Master Plan at approximately **five-year intervals** to inform growth-related planning and funding strategies and/or Multi-Year Budget.

Appendix A – Facility Mapping

Figure 9: Location of Municipal Parkland and Open Space, City of London (2019)

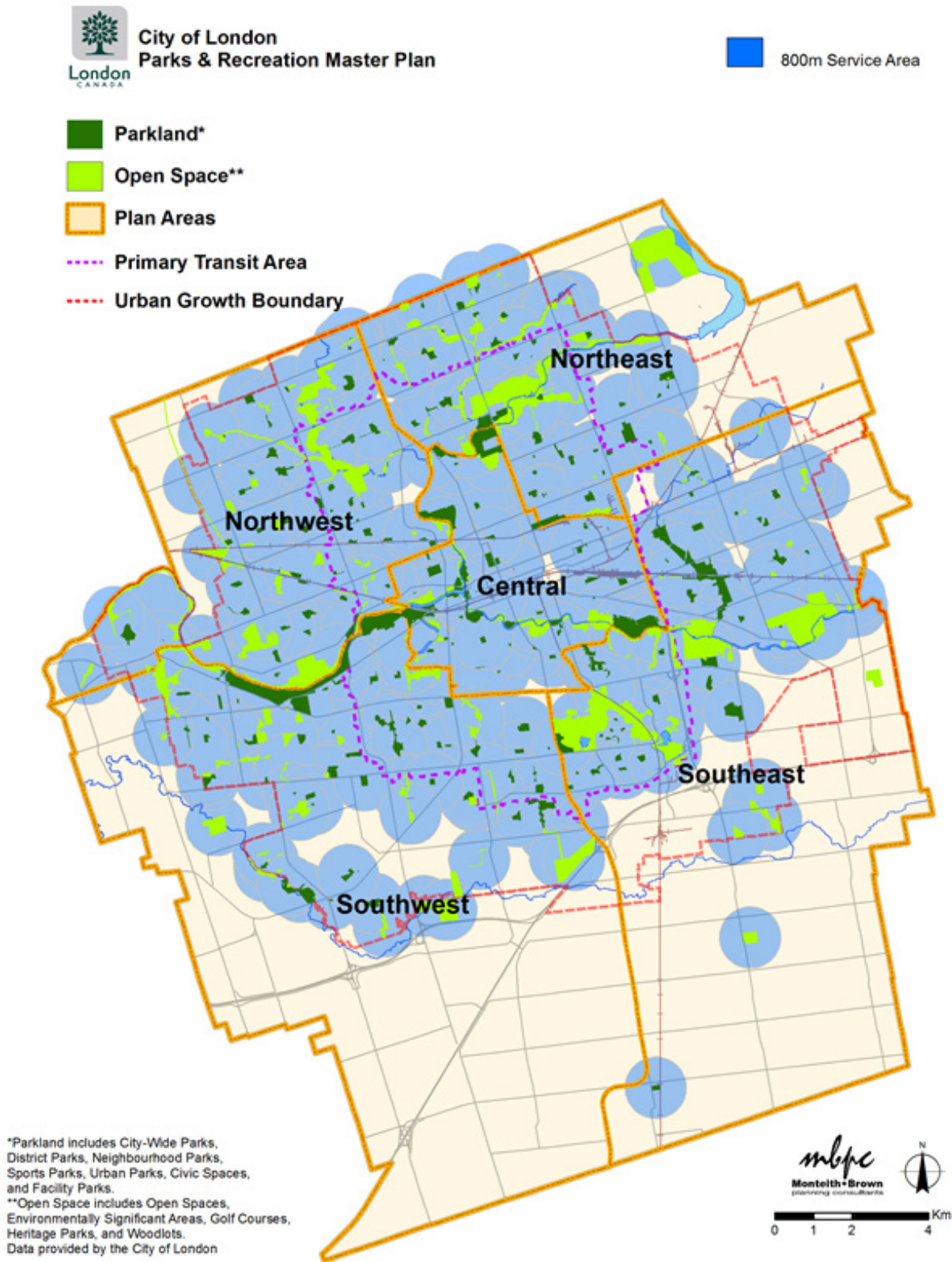
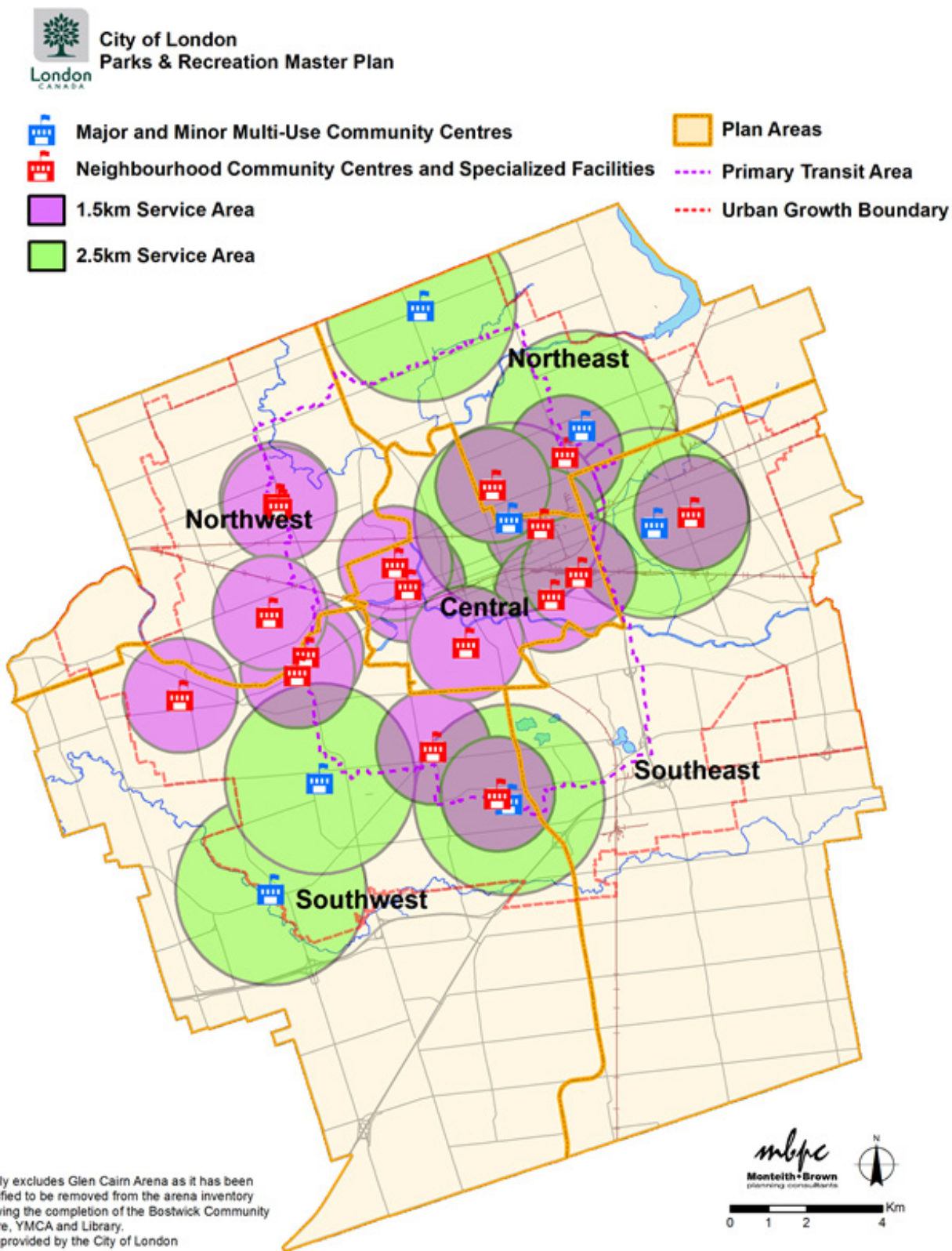


Figure 10: Location of Municipal Community Centres, City of London (2019)



Supply excludes Glen Cairn Arena as it has been identified to be removed from the arena inventory following the completion of the Bostwick Community Centre, YMCA and Library.
Data provided by the City of London

Figure 11: Location of Municipal Indoor Pools, City of London (2019)

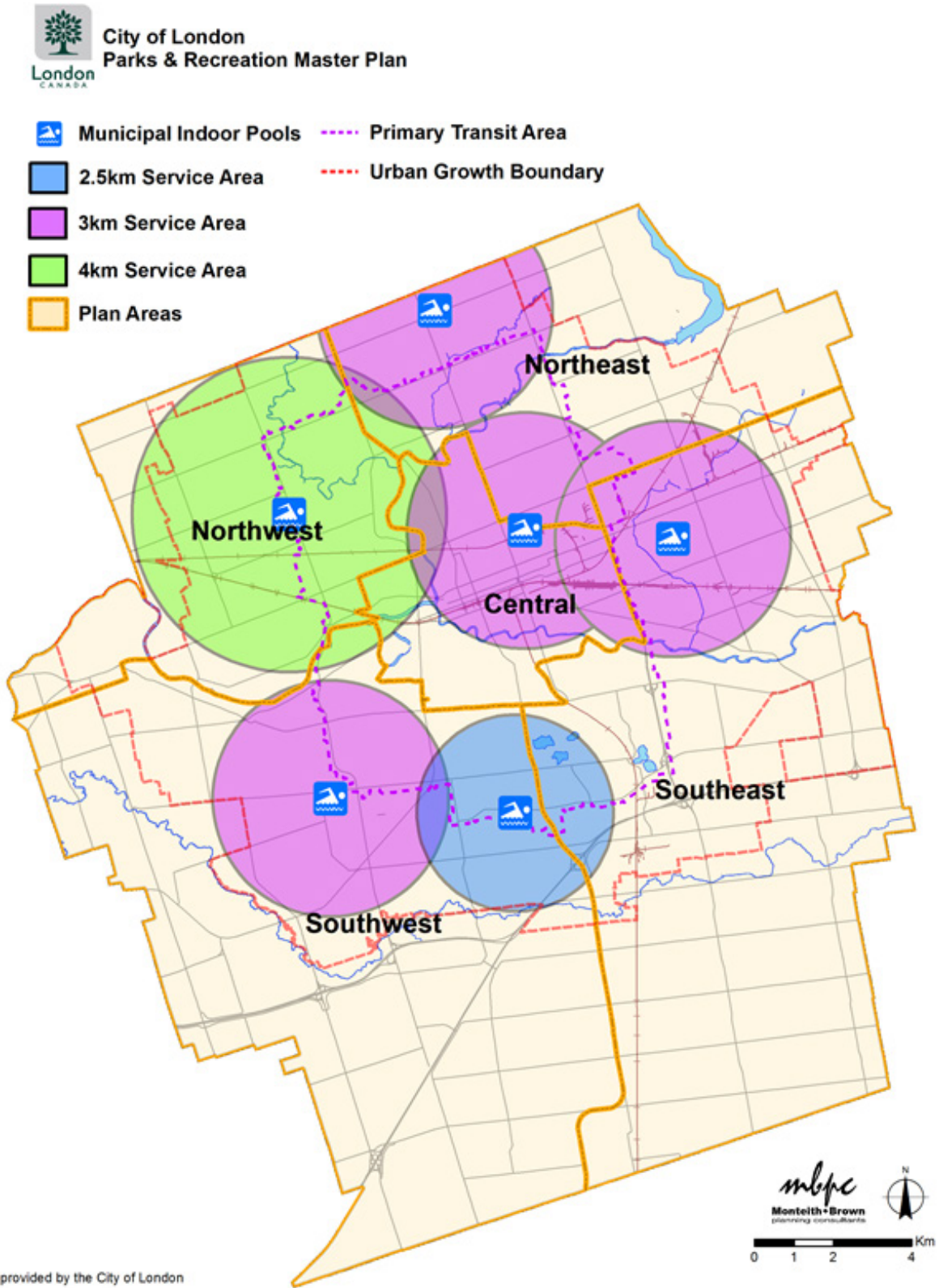


Figure 12: Location of Municipal Arenas, City of London (2019)

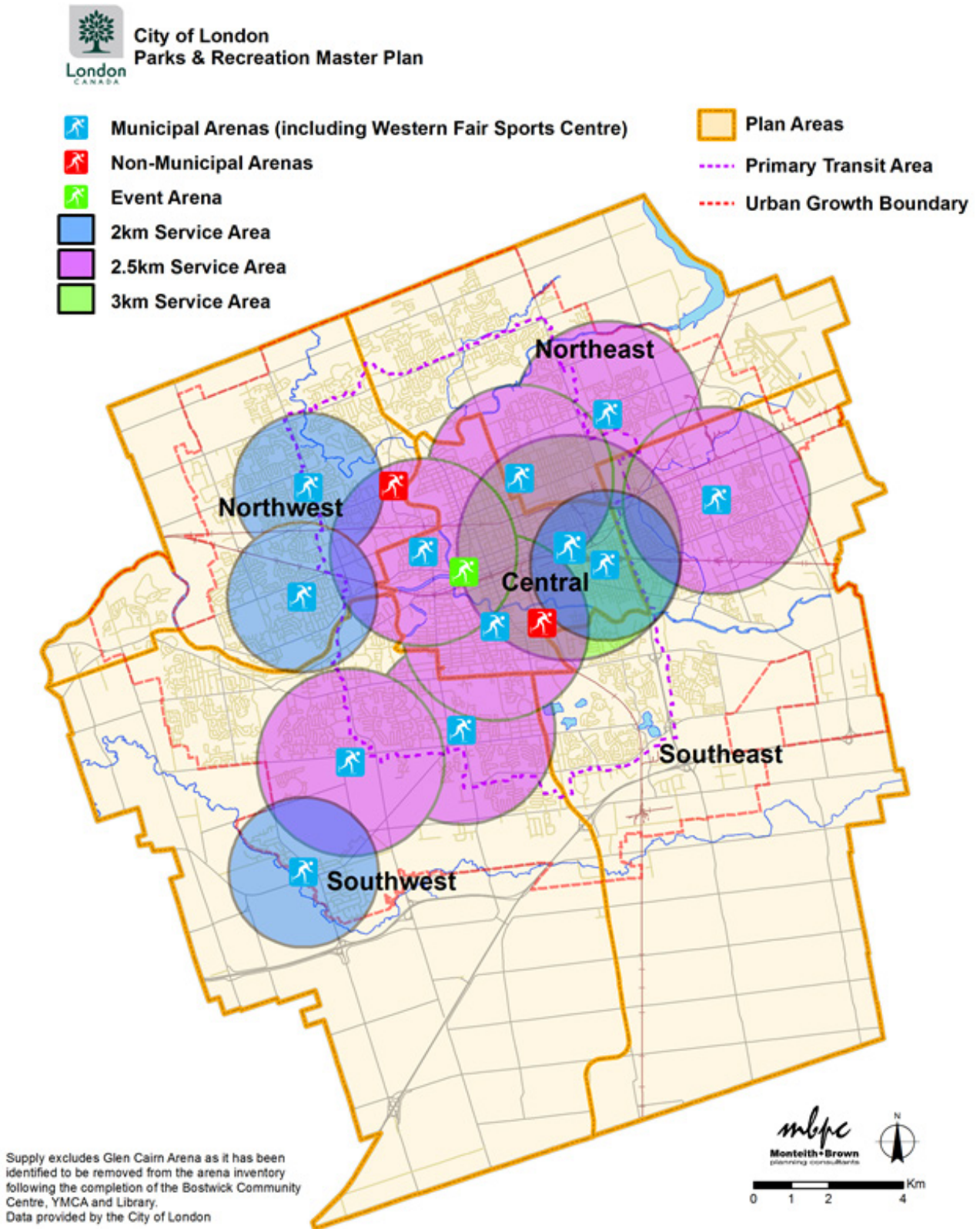
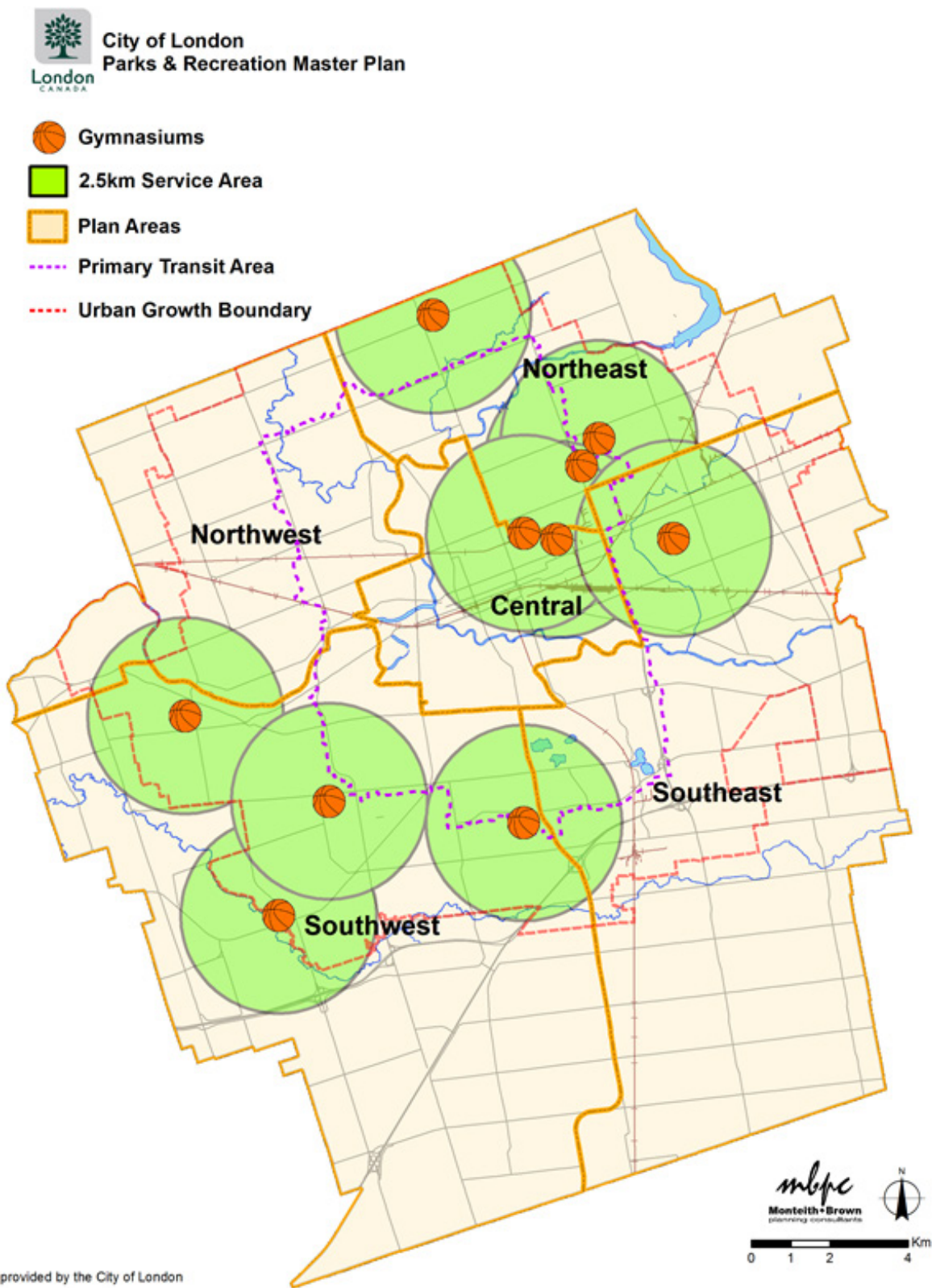


Figure 13: Location of Municipal Gymnasiums, City of London (2019)



Data provided by the City of London

Figure 14: Location of Municipal Outdoor Aquatic Facilities, City of London (2019)

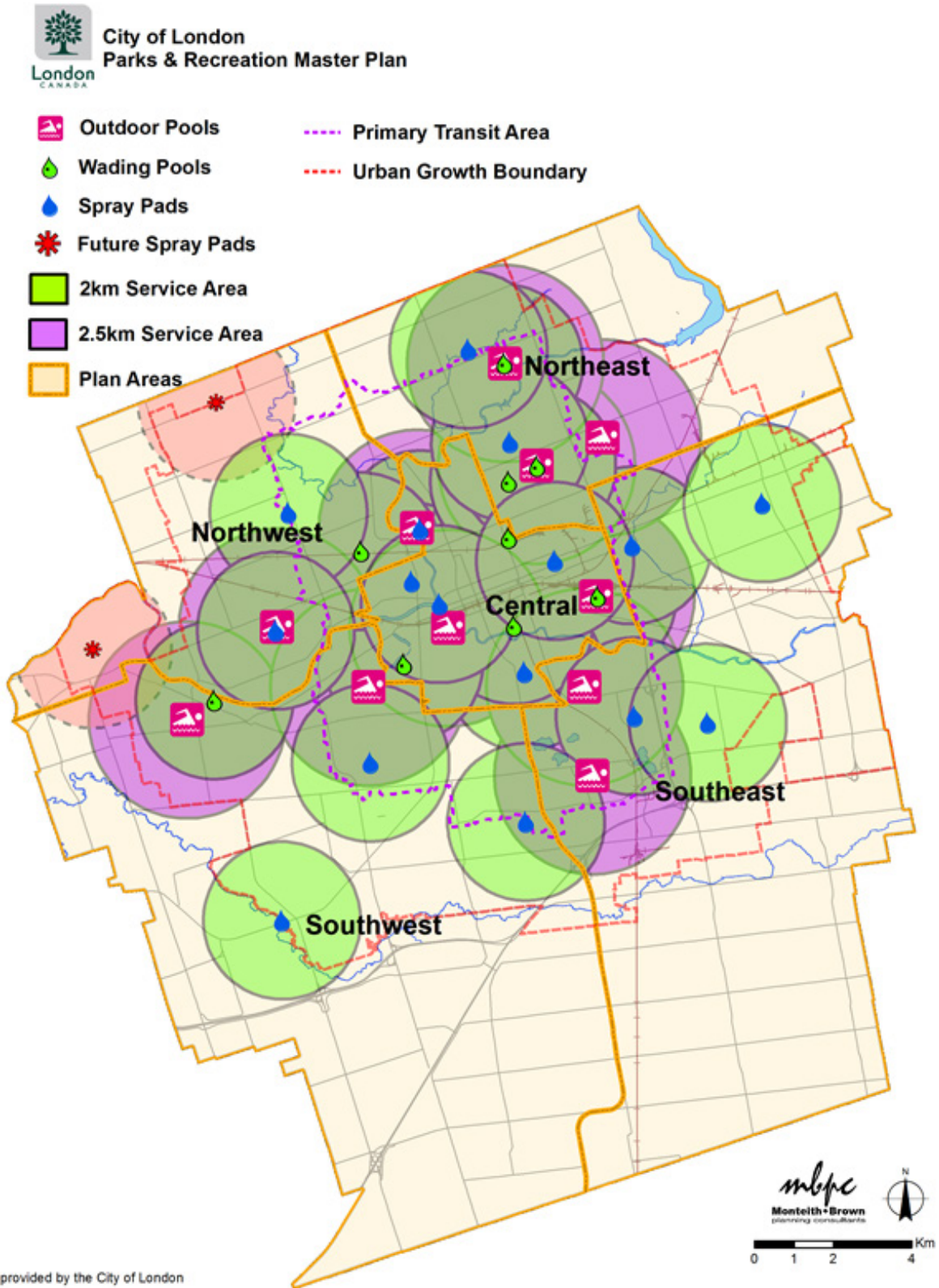


Figure 15: Location of Municipal Rectangular Sports Fields, City of London (2019)

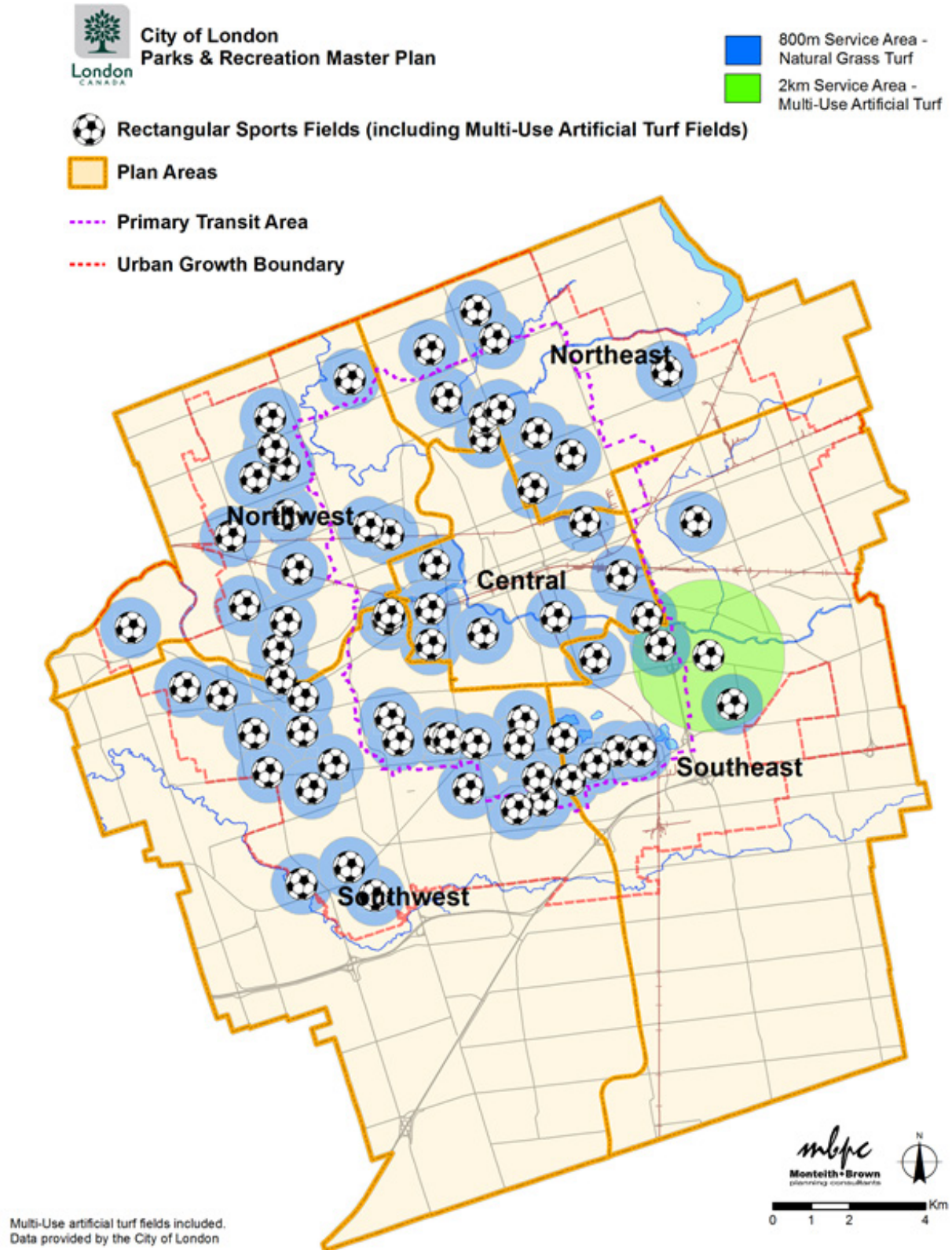


Figure 16: Location of Municipal Ball Diamonds, City of London (2019)

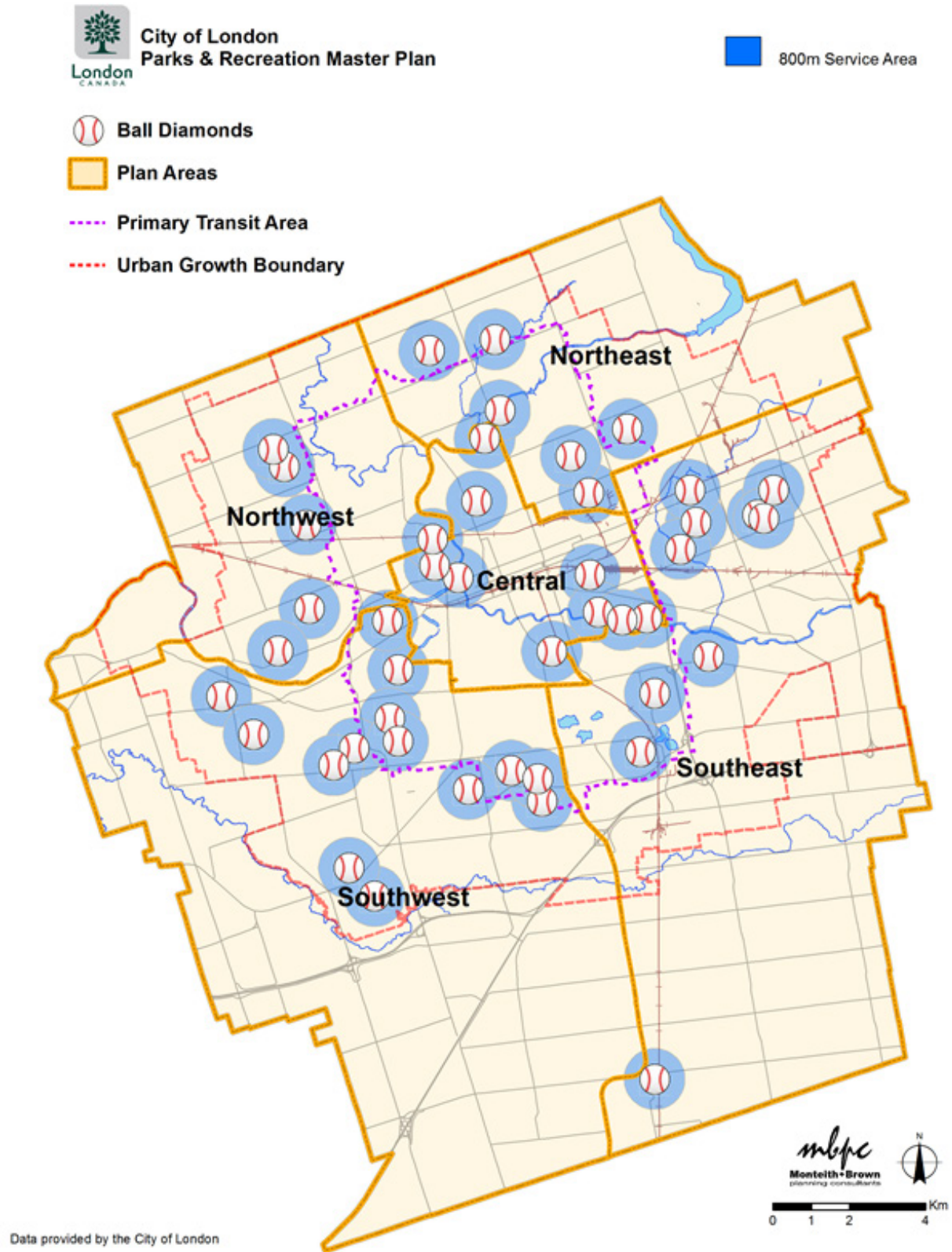


Figure 17: Location of Municipal Playgrounds, City of London (2019)

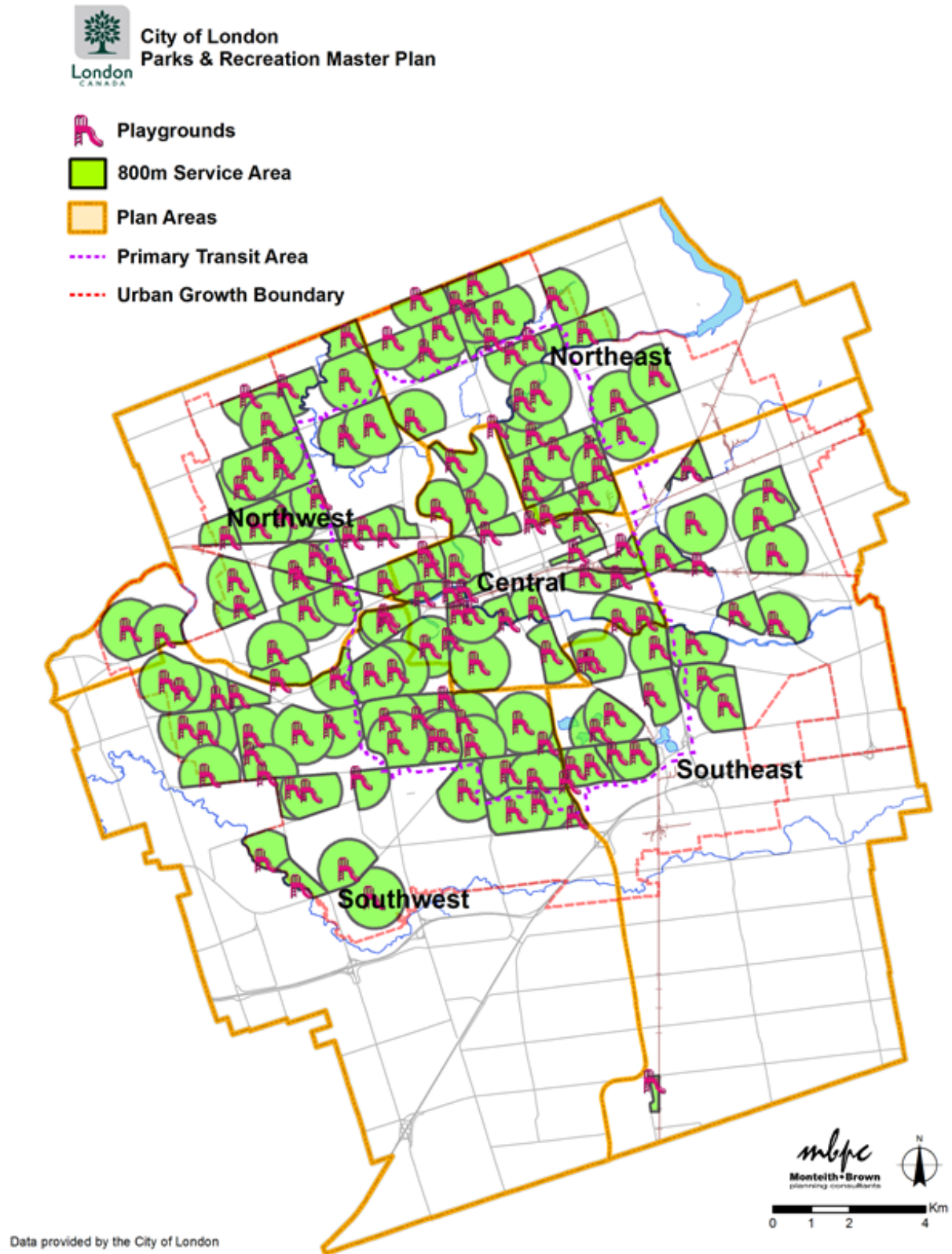
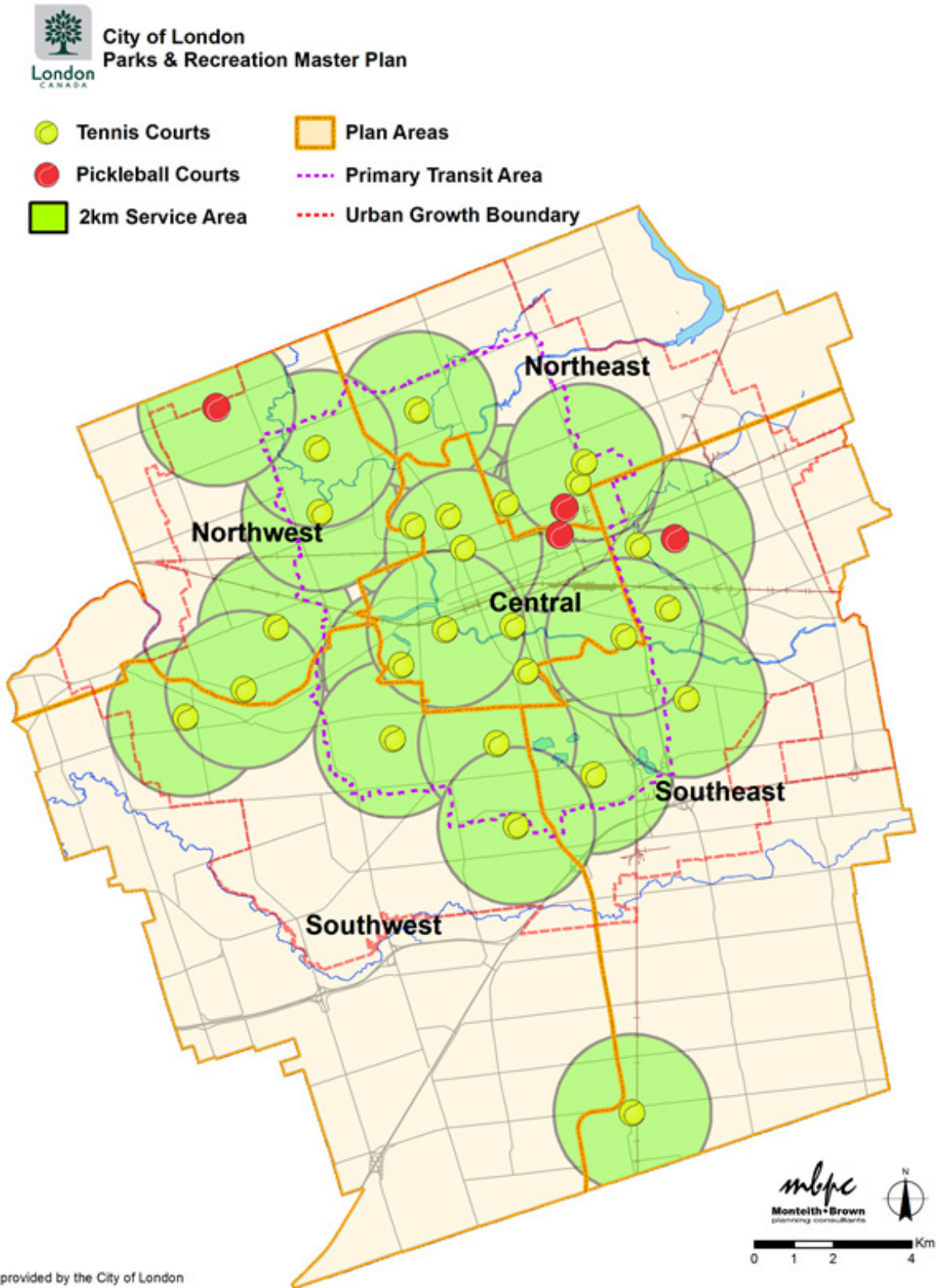


Figure 18: Location of Municipal Tennis Courts, City of London (2019)



Data provided by the City of London

Figure 19: Location of Municipal Basketball Courts and Multi-use Pads, City of London (2019)

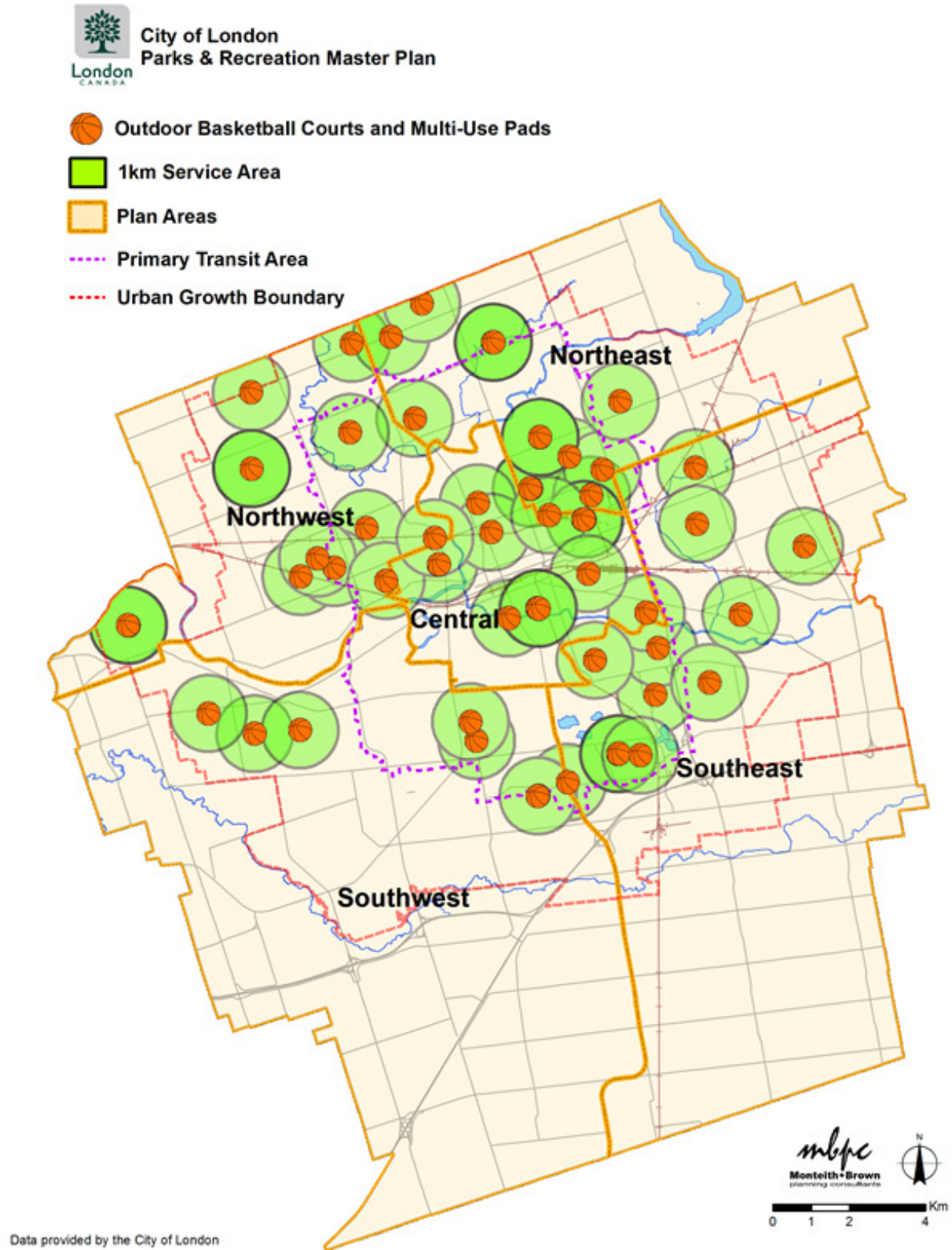


Figure 20: Location of Municipal Skate Parks, City of London (2019)

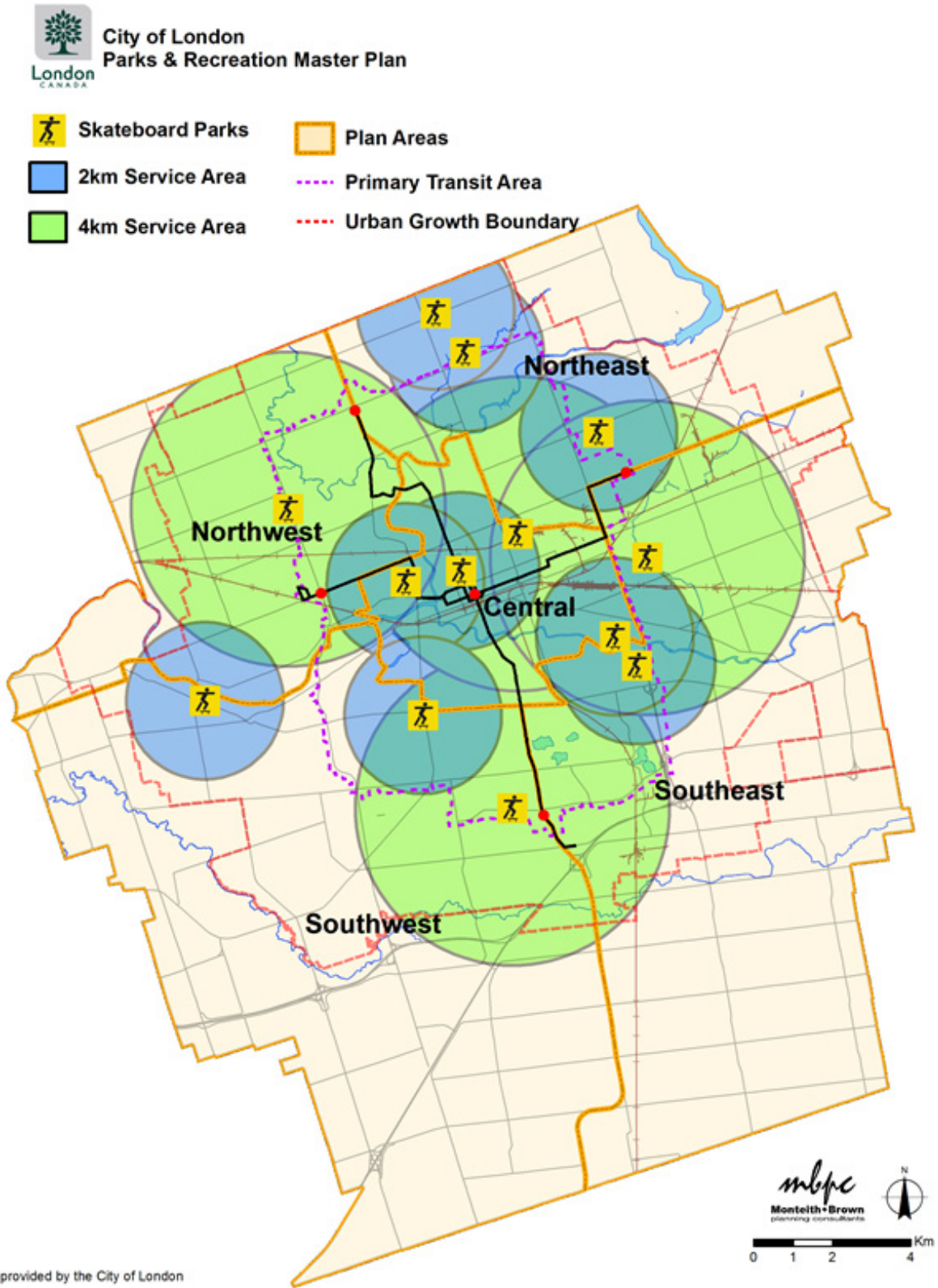
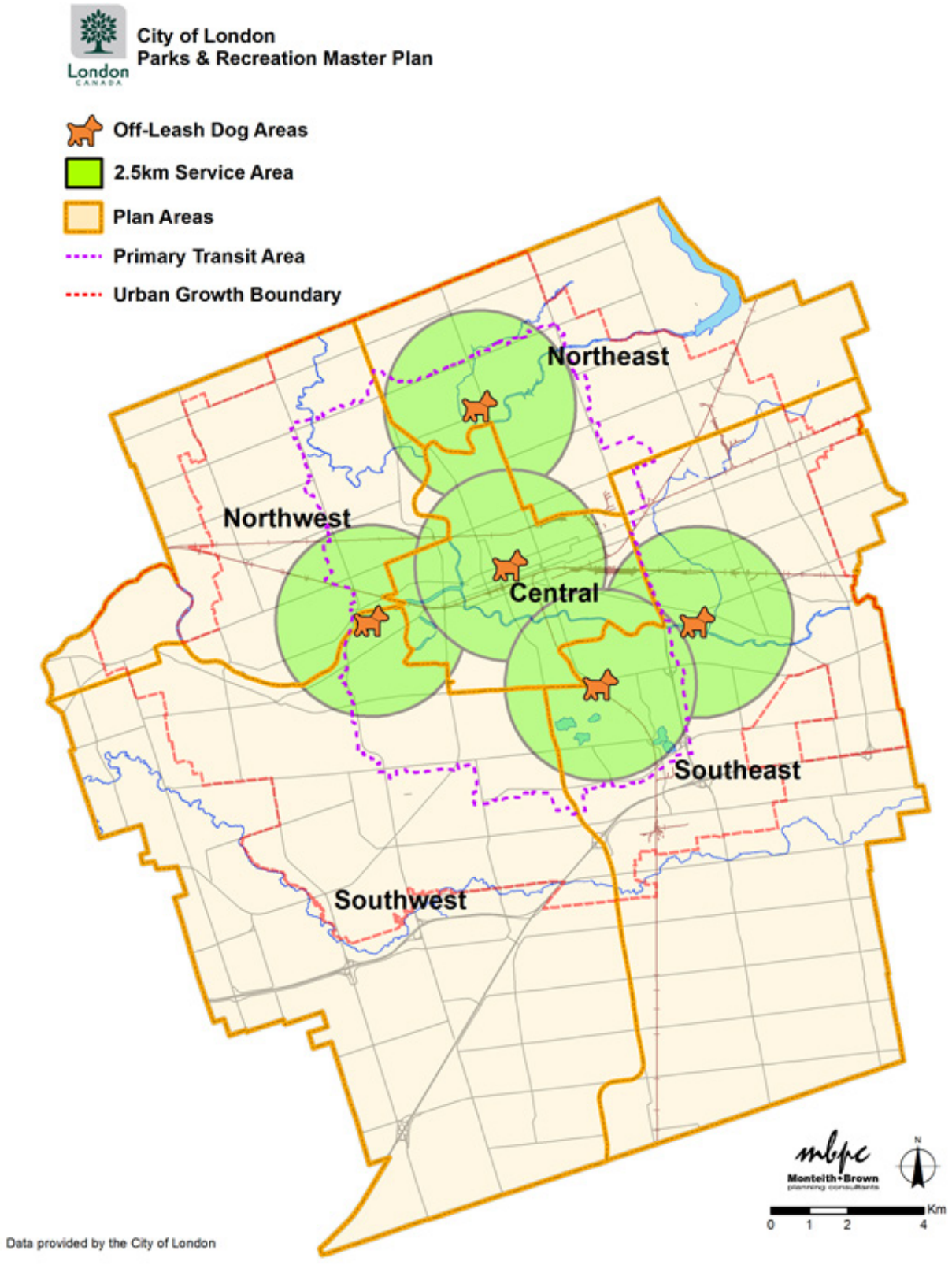
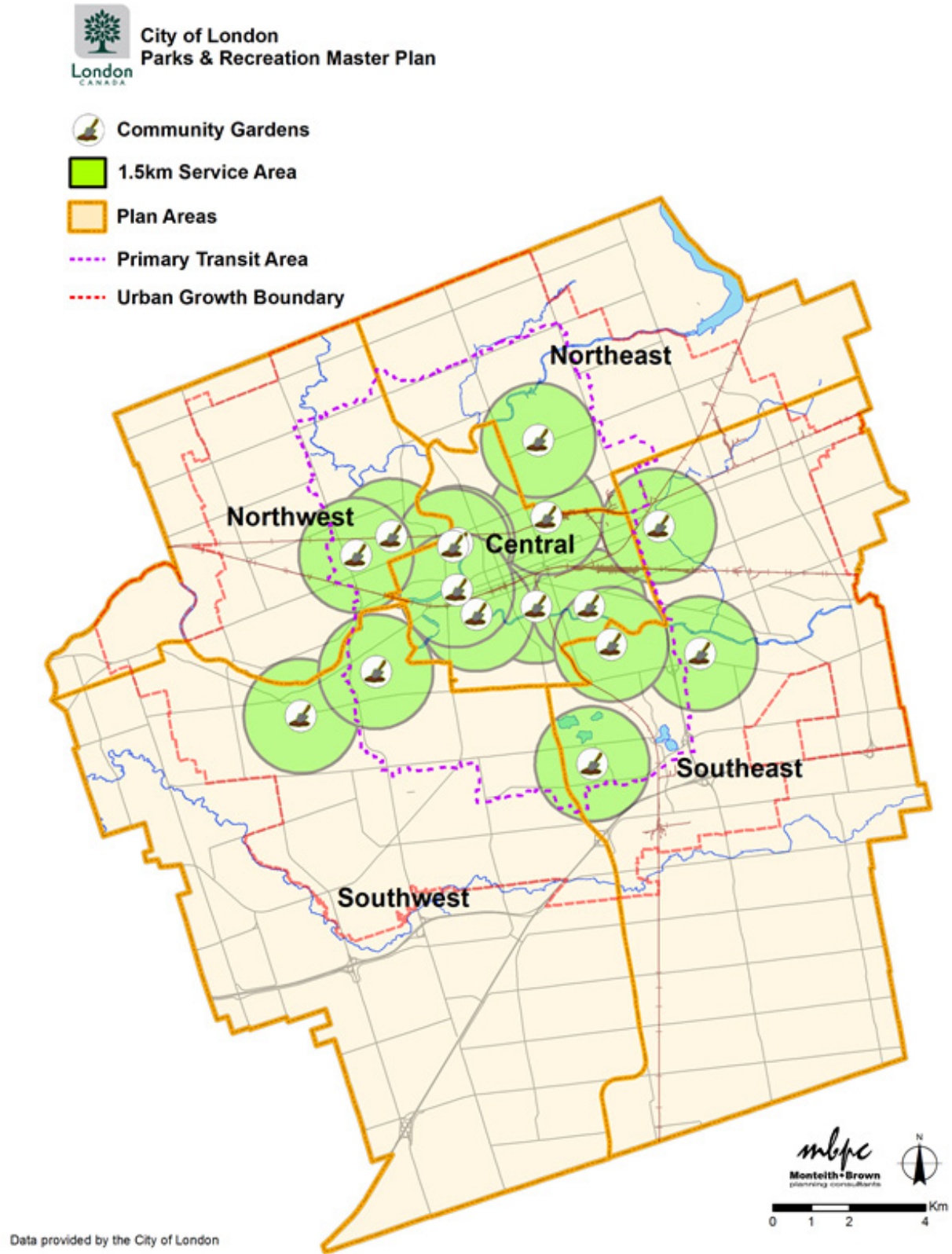


Figure 21: Location of Municipal Off-Leash Dog Areas, City of London (2019)



Data provided by the City of London

Figure 22: Location of Municipal Community Gardens, City of London (2019)



Appendix B – Types of Partnerships and Approaches to Evaluation

Many forms of partnerships may be considered by the City of London for managing services. The most prevalent is partnerships that advance specific social issues and broader goals, such as capital arrangement regarding facility development. Using the appropriate partnership arrangement or combination of options should be an informed choice.

A standardized partnership framework could set out why and how the City plans to work with others in fulfilling its mandate and the parameters for these relationships. The standardized partnership framework on the following page may be adapted by the City to evaluate potential partnerships and/or unsolicited proposals.

Partnership examples in a parks, recreation, and sport context include:

- a. Public/Public Partnerships – Service delivery and/or the joint work to address social issues with other publicly funded organizations.
- b. Public/Not for Profit Partnerships – Joint arrangements with non-profit organizations.
- c. Public/Private Partnerships – Joint arrangement where costs and risks are shared.
- d. Joint Service Delivery – A service provided by two parties, each contributing some resources.
- e. Service Contracts – The service provider manages a particular aspect of a municipal services. The requirements are specific and service levels are articulated in a service contract often predicated through a competitive process.
- f. Management Contract – The provider is accountable to manage all aspects of a municipal services. This may or may not include capital investment and is administered through a competitive process and a contract arrangement.
- g. Lease – A lease arrangement turns the responsibility and accountability for a municipal asset to service provider. A rental agreement is put in place with deliverables and compliance issues in exchange for payment to the municipality.

To be effective, partnerships must be strategic and work toward specific goals in the delivery of service. Specific to parks, recreation, and sport, partnerships are a way of including more residents in active and outdoor pursuits and expanding service delivery affordably.

Partnerships are currently assessed on a case-by-case basis and projects that increase access to public services and space for all are encouraged. Guidance is needed to establish a consistent and uniform municipal response to potential relationships with those wishing to partner with the City on facility development or program delivery.

Criteria	Yes	No	Response
Is the initiative consistent with the municipal mandate and service philosophy?	↓	→	Do not consider municipal involvement in the project.
Is there a municipal role to play in providing the program or service?	↓	→	Do not consider municipal involvement in the project.
Does the proposed service or initiative conform to municipal priorities and is it in operating and capital budget forecasts?	↓	→	Do not consider municipal involvement in the project.
Can requirements ensure compliance with the department's vision, mandate, values, strategic priorities and service standards?	↓	→	Either do not consider municipal involvement in the project or consider alternate forms of capital financing or ongoing funding sources.
Can financial risks be reasonably mitigated through an arrangement with the group(s)?	↓	→	Consider providing the service using a traditional municipal self-managed approach (direct delivery).
Are there suitably equipped and properly qualified organizations who can contribute or provide the service or program?	↓	→	Consider providing the service using a traditional municipal self-managed approach (direct delivery).
Can responsibility of the delivery of the service or program be assigned to another organization while mitigating all risks to the organization?	↓	→	Consider providing the service using a traditional municipal self-managed approach (direct delivery).
Is there consensus regarding the terms, conditions, standards of delivery and accountabilities?	↓	→	Issue a request for proposal or other procurement process specified by purchasing policies.
	↓	→	Negotiate a mutually acceptable operating agreement and monitoring of performance standards.
Establish a relationship with an outside entity to develop the facility or delivery the program or service and adopt a mutually agreeable monitoring system.			