



## B. Recreation Service Delivery Assessment

The Recreation Service Delivery Review is intended to provide guidance to the Town of Milton and stakeholders as to the emphasis that needs to be taken over the next five years in providing/enabling a broad range of recreation and active choices for all residents. The approach to service delivery is as important as the services provided to ensure that the Town is working effectively with like partners and maximizing community resources.

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## Introduction

### Overview

The Recreation Service Delivery Review is intended to provide guidance to the Town of Milton and stakeholders as to the emphasis that needs to be taken over the next five years in providing/enabling a broad range of recreation and active choices for all residents. The approach to service delivery is as important as the services provided to ensure that the Town is working effectively with like partners and maximizing community resources. The critical questions that are addressed in the Service Delivery assessment include:

- a) What are the programs and services that are currently provided by the Town and how well are they utilized?
- b) Specific requests from the Town to address:
  - Strengths, challenges and opportunities in the delivery of service
  - Gaps in programming and overlap with other community providers
  - Community engagement methods
  - Community development model
  - A review of the Departmental name
  - A review of the performance metrics
- c) Can more efforts be made to ensure that every citizen can participate regardless of age, ability or background?
- d) What has the public and stakeholders suggested in terms of improvements throughout the planning process?
- e) What are the recommended service delivery actions over the next five years and how can these be developed in a timely and effective manner?

### Appendix B Layout

The service review section follows a sequence of information that leads to and defends a summary list of recommendations to be implemented over the course of the next five years. The key result areas have been identified through research and the input from the public and staff in terms of what initiatives will impact improved service delivery and increased participation in recreation in Milton.

Overview	The scope and focus of each sub-section will be described by way of an introduction to the subject matter
Goal	A goal statement will set direction for the duration of the Community Services Master Plan horizon
Milton’s Approach	A description as to how Milton Community Services Department is currently delivering services and an indication of any gaps in the service delivery approach.
Summary of Inputs	A brief description of the salient inputs into the subject area from the community engagement process completed to inform the Master Plan update.
Promising Practices	An overview of practices in other municipalities and jurisdictions that can inform or provide some additional inspiration
Recommendations	Specific recommendations that will serve to increase participation and create efficiencies in recreation service delivery over the next 5 years.

A concluding section suggests a performance measures metric to ensure that staff and related stakeholders are accountable for moving toward the same vision. The performance measures will allow staff to quantify the results of their work to Council and the public to either demonstrate that their efforts have been effective or require some modification as the plan progresses.

**Service Review Methodology**

The C.S.M.P. Update has taken a thorough approach to the service review and has included an examination of the current delivery methodologies, program range and participation levels, a review of current trends and leading practices in the delivery of recreation services, an engagement process that involved community meetings, interviews and staff workshops and a review of statistical and evaluative data provided by the Town. The development of suggested actions and subsequent recommendations is the result of community engagement, consultation and research. The focus is on areas within the delivery of recreation services that could use greater emphasis in order to reach more residents and to inspire them to get active and engaged more often. The subsequent recommendations will assist in the setting of priorities, management and administration of the Town’s recreation programs in continuing to meet the needs of the residents of Milton.

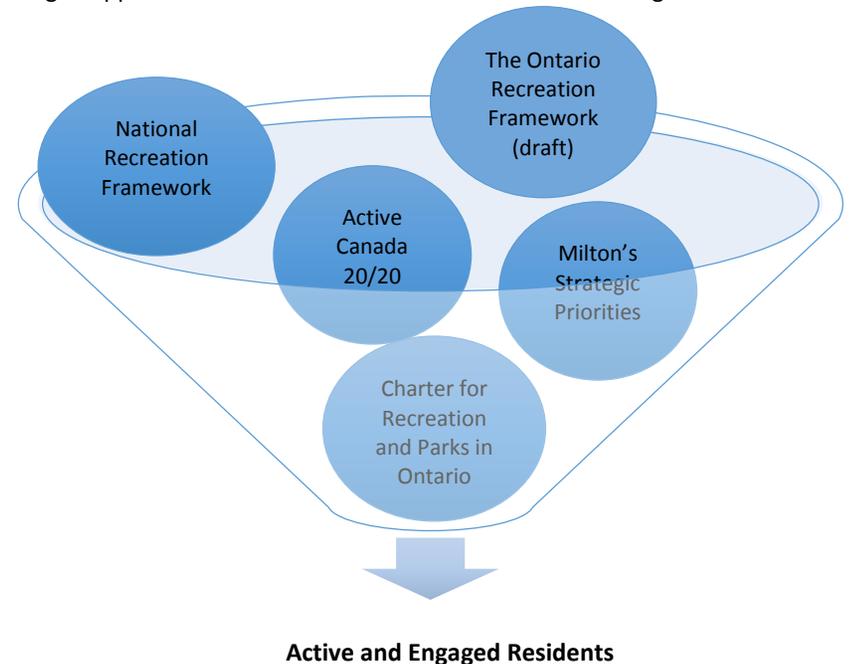
### Alignment with National, Provincial and Municipal Priorities

**National, Provincial & Local Initiatives**

In setting the context for the C.S.M.P. Update, it is important to understand the current focus of other levels of government with respect to recreation and active lifestyles and how these other agencies can provide knowledge support within the Milton context. There is clear alignment within the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government in supporting healthy and active lifestyles for Milton residents. In recent years the development of key policy and supportive documents have included the creation of:

- The recently approved Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015 – Pathways to Wellness – to synthesize nation-wide priorities in building a healthy and active nation;
- Active Canada 20/20 Plan to encourage greater physical activity and healthy eating for all Canadians;
- The Ontario Recreation Framework (draft) which will be reviewed as Ontario considers an Action Plan to align with the Framework for Recreation in Canada; and articulates the key principles of providing quality recreation experiences and community infrastructure and design; and the Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario developed by Parks and Recreation Ontario; and,
- The continued refinement of Destiny Milton 3 in supporting a socially, economic and environmentally sustainable community.

All of these policies and strategic initiatives emphasize the importance of healthy and active lifestyles in Milton and provide intelligence, guidance and support to the community and individual resident alike.



The following table describes the key priorities and principles of these seminal policy documents in informing the update of Milton’s Community Services Department Master Plan.

Supporting Initiative	Relevant Priorities, Principles and/or Goals
Milton’s Strategic Plan (Destiny Milton 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A responsible cost-effective and accountable local government</li> <li>○ Well managed growth, well planned spaces</li> <li>○ A safe, liveable, healthy community</li> <li>○ A diverse and sustainable community</li> <li>○ A thriving natural environment that is valued community asset to be protected, maintained and enjoyed</li> </ul>
A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015	Goals include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Active Living</li> <li>b) Inclusion and Access</li> <li>c) Connecting People and Nature</li> <li>d) Supportive Environments</li> <li>e) Recreation Capacity</li> </ul>
Draft Provincial Recreation Statement (under review)	Key principles are described as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Quality of Life</li> <li>○ Equitable Access</li> <li>○ Active, Healthy Communities</li> <li>○ Valuing Places for Play</li> <li>○ Collaborative Efforts</li> <li>○ Evidenced-Based Decision Making</li> </ul>
Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario	Key principles are very much aligned with national priorities and effective strategies in Ontario: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Participation – safe, affordable and quality recreation programs</li> <li>○ Active Living – physically active in organized and informal activities</li> <li>○ Access to Nature and the Outdoors – experiences in nature and access to open spaces</li> <li>○ Enriching Experiences – experience arts, culture, heritage, sport and recreation</li> <li>○ Welcoming and Inclusive Communities – inclusive efforts to engage citizens and build strong communities</li> <li>○ Engagement – being engaged in the planning of recreation and parks and the ability to volunteer</li> </ul>

Supporting Initiative	Relevant Priorities, Principles and/or Goals
Active Canada 20/20 - National Physical Activity Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Adopt evidence-based strategies that target the <u>whole population</u>, as well as specific population subgroups, particularly those facing the greatest barriers;</li> <li>○ Embrace an <u>equity approach</u> aimed at reducing social and health inequalities and disparities of access to physical activity;</li> <li>○ Address <u>the environmental, social and individual</u> determinants of physical inactivity;</li> <li>○ To achieve the <u>greatest impact</u> through building on current evidence and sustainable partnerships</li> <li>○ <u>Build capacity</u> and support training in research, practice, policy, evaluation and surveillance;</li> <li>○ Use a <u>life-stage approach</u> by addressing the needs of children, youth, families, adults and older adults;</li> <li>○ Advocate to decision makers and the general community for an increase in <u>political commitment to and resources</u> for physical activity;</li> <li>○ <u>Design for inclusion</u> and adapt strategies to accommodate varying local needs, cultures, contexts and resources; and</li> <li>○ Facilitate <u>healthy personal choices</u> by making the physically active choice the easy choice.</li> </ul>



### Key Result Areas

The following key result areas required to focus efforts over the next five years come from a combination of public and staff input, the changing demographics, potential partnerships, and efficiencies. As will be presented over subsequent pages, the three key focus areas include:

1. Program and Service Priorities
2. Diversity and Inclusion
3. Connecting Communities and Neighbourhoods

Note that partnerships and fitness services are also considered key result areas but are presented in separate Appendices.

## Key Result Area One – Programs and Service Priorities

### Overview

Increasing participation in quality recreational pursuits is the key focus of all recreation and sport staff and volunteers within a community. The benefits of active and engaged lifestyles are well documented and are critical to individual and community health. All efforts must be made toward this one vision. Facilitating and enabling recreation services is a complex undertaking, a broad range of infrastructure is based on the services that the public feels is critical to their needs, opportunities must include something for all residents and messaging and awareness efforts must be compelling enough to inspire more residents to lead active lifestyles.

Participation in recreation does not fall solely to the municipality and efforts cannot be effective unless they are collectively aligned and focussed on one vision. Community engagement, building community capacity, sharing limited resources and working better together for the public good are the common elements that bind government and stakeholder groups. Residents look to the municipality to provide an understanding of current demographics, future growth patterns, trends and the leadership to address provision directly and through partnerships. The quality of life, building sustainable communities and ensuring each resident has the right to engage in an active life falls within Milton's commonly stated priorities.

Milton offers the public a full range of recreation and sport opportunities for all age groups and abilities. Refinements are made to the program and service offerings mix considering participant input, registration statistics, satisfaction levels, trends, social issues and indications of pent up demands or declining enrollment. Three main types of opportunities exist for all age groups; directly offered registered programs, drop in and casual opportunities where a participant can attend a facilitated opportunity such as an art workshop and membership based activities such as the Milton Senior's Centre and fitness.



The review and analysis of the recreation programs and services included the following.

- The Service Delivery Model and varying approaches to engage residents in recreation and sport
- The blend of engagement options for residents (casual use of amenities, registered programs, drop-in opportunities, memberships)
- The broad level of choices for all age ranges and abilities
- Promotion and Communications
- Participation levels
- Use of recreation and sport facilities
- How critical social issues such as inactivity and drowning prevention are addressed
- General trends and promising practices
- Satisfaction levels
- Volunteerism
- Recommendations are based on the application of Milton’s approach to industry standards, strengths, challenges and opportunities in the delivery of service
- Gaps in programming and overlap with other community providers
- Community engagement methods
- Community development model
- A review of the departmental name
- A review of the performance metrics

The findings of the service review reflect a mature department that is run by well informed and engaged staff and volunteers. The engagement process to support the master planning process found a high level of satisfaction with services, a commendable level of customer service and a sincere responsiveness to community needs. Staff are cognizant of the benefits of engaging in recreational pursuits and the ability of recreation to address some societal issues such as inactivity, inclusion of underrepresented residents and creating efficiencies through partnerships. Recreation is a complex system of addressing the varying recreation, sport and facility needs of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. The review process has garnered suggested recommendations to continue efforts in some areas and for improvement in others. It is felt that the residents of Milton will be better served through the implementation of these recommendations.

Goal Statement	<b>To inspire all residents and work toward greater participation in quality recreational opportunities.</b>
Milton’s Approach	A summary of the findings and input is offered in the following table to capture the key discoveries and opportunities that lie before the Community Services Department.

Program and Service Focus	Input and Findings	Opportunities
<b>Programs and Service Priorities</b>		
Children and Outdoor Play Experiences	A new term coined “Nature Deficit Disorder” by Richard Louv, 2008 describes the fact that children are not outside often enough to benefit from what outdoor play offers which is skill mastery, physical activity, imagination, problem solving and enjoyment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Including nature interpretation in summer playground programs.</li> <li>- Promotional campaign on the benefits of outdoor play on child development.</li> <li>- Meeting with a coalition of community partners interested in Outdoor Play to better incorporate the principles and concepts.</li> </ul>
Inactivity and Obesity	<p>ParticipAction has stated that the national goal is to increase physical activity levels of every Canadian by the year 2020 (Active Canada 20/20 Plan). Currently 85% of Canadian adults and 93% of children and youth do not achieve the minimum amount of physical activity to ensure long-term good health and well-being (Source ActiveCanada 20/20 Physical Activity Strategy).</p> <p>One effective method of getting more children engaged in physical activity and sports is to expose them to a variety of activities and sports without having to commit to a full season of one sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued implementation and review of the Milton Physical Activity Plan “Move More Milton” to ensure that residents are benefitting from most recent strategies and research.</li> <li>- Consider the development of a program that introduces children, youth and adults to a variety of sports in order to promote future engagement in one or more sports or activities.</li> </ul>
Learn to Swim	The Department promotes the Lifesaving Society’s “Swim to Survive” program through the local school system and has engaged an average of 450 students in the program each year for the last two years. This program is of particular importance as there is a growing number of newcomers to Canada in Milton and there is a growing number of newcomers in Canada that are involved in accidents in and around water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuing to work with schools and newcomers to highlight the importance of being safe in and around water in Ontario, and increase the number of Milton residents that can swim and survive in and around water.</li> </ul>
Pre-School Programs and Casual Opportunities	Involving and exposing pre-school children to recreation and sports opportunities can set a healthy pattern for life. Quality and enjoyable opportunities need to be offered at times and on days where parents and caregivers are able to bring children to the programs. Full-day kindergarten is offered during times when some parents and caregivers could attend during these school hours. A look to convenient times in the late afternoon, early evening and weekends would solidify this important and early engagement in recreational opportunities for pre-school children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review pre-school offerings /opportunities as well as times for programs and casual opportunities to ensure that they reflect current needs of this age group.</li> </ul>
Anticipated Expanded Needs for After School Opportunities	56% of Milton residents commute to other communities for work, coupled with the growth in population will require the expansion of full day kindergarten; the need for greater numbers of after-school opportunities is anticipated as a result of these factors. Currently the Town partners with other providers to offer approximately 50 participants throughout the school year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convening forums with the Boards of Education, not-for-profit and for-profit afterschool care providers to discuss the capacity, unmet demands, expansion plans, potential locations, partnerships and a sustainable after school care system.</li> </ul>

Program and Service Focus	Input and Findings	Opportunities
Focus on Families	<p>Recreation and sport engagement benefits family cohesion and health related outcomes. Healthy and vibrant communities are built on addressing the needs of and strengthening the family unit in its various forms. There are many casual opportunities for families in Milton however packaging the benefits with the opportunities as well as incentives to encourage families to play together would go a long way in increasing participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a promotional plan and incentives for families in order to increase family participation in recreational and sporting pursuits.</li> </ul>
Activity Preferences of Diverse Populations	<p>Community engagement efforts as well as promising practices seen in other jurisdictions indicate that including activities that appeal to diverse populations is one way of reaching out to more residents as part of the program/service mix. A fusion of activities will serve to teach newcomers of traditionally Canadian experiences as well as to offer new opportunities to residents.</p> <p>Discussions with respect to training and professional development efforts will be key in ensuring that staff and volunteers have the tools to be inclusive and engaging.</p> <p>See sub-section on Diversity and Inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a mechanism to engage diverse populations in Milton by initiating discussions on the current program and service mix, locations, pent up demands and the development of new program opportunities.</li> </ul>
Older Adult Strategy and Opportunities for Pre-Retirement Females	<p>Milton’s current Older Adult Strategy speaks to expanding programs and supports to increase participation in recreational pursuits.</p> <p>The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS) has completed research to indicate that there is a need to engage pre-retired and retired women in active lifestyles including learning to play sports. They have developed 25 pilot programs across Canada to determine the value and partnerships that can be developed in this area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage and convene focus groups with pre-retirement aged females.</li> <li>- Supporting and facilitating community social media models whereby women convene meetings to discuss and lead self-directed opportunities.</li> </ul>
Youth Engagement	<p>The Milton Youth Advisory Committee serves to represent the voice of youth in the development and delivery of recreation services in Milton. The committee, staff and volunteers organize youth events and provide advice on programs, and work to ensure that Milton remains a Youth Friendly community. Input has been garnered to support the development of youth arts, and continue to self-determine and deliver on youth priorities using the existing engagement approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While there are a variety of opportunities for youth engagement, the Department should continue to support/initiate engagement initiatives as it believes further work can be done in this area.</li> </ul>

Program and Service Focus	Input and Findings	Opportunities
Special Events	<p>Special events appeal to the public at large and bring an opportunity to build community pride and cohesion. The Community Services Department provides events directly and supports community organizations in orchestrating their own events. Many communities are evaluating their capacity to increase the number of events or even respond to the current annual event schedule. Trends suggest that communities are beginning to work collectively with other agencies to blend and showcase varying age cohorts and community opportunities. The City of Mississauga has combined forces over the last few years with cultural institutions and libraries to highlight youth contributions to arts and culture. A week long special event was held at varying venues to both engage youth and highlight these contributions to the general public. Other communities are looking at their role in supporting special events to increase capacity and this review would be appropriate in Milton as well.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the Community Service’s Department role and level of service in the provision of special events including the costs to support staff driven and community driven events.</li> <li>- Define a base level of service and explore cost recovery options for enhanced service levels</li> <li>- Consider the types of special events being offered and look to fill any gaps through building community capacity and partnering with complementary organizations and institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Priorities</b>		
Departmental Name	<p>The Community Services Department was originally designed to include Public Works and Transit; subsequently the latter two portfolios were shifted to the Engineering Services Department in 2003, at the same time as Culture was added to the Community Services portfolio. The current functions include the delivery of parks, recreation and cultural services. A comparison to municipal departments including like functions lists departments as: Recreation and Culture; Parks, Recreation and Culture; Leisure Services and Community Services. While there was no clear indication of dissatisfaction with the current departmental name, it was suggested to call the department by the services it provides to ensure that its functions are plainly understood, especially to newcomers with English as a second language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider changing the name of the Community Services Department to the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture or a combination thereof.</li> </ul>
Communications and Awareness	<p>Some concerns were identified in the community consultation process and in the Community Profile study that require a review of how programs and services are promoted. While these concerns were not reflective of the majority of respondents; some work should be done to better understand how messaging best reaches the audience it intends to engage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a communications strategy that respects how varying segments of the population prefer to hear about and become engaged in program and service opportunities.</li> <li>- A Communications Audit was recently undertaken and thus the Town should proceed with recommendations as per the Audit.</li> </ul>

Program and Service Focus	Input and Findings	Opportunities
Technology	<p>Suggestions centred on the development of an Application that would promote upcoming opportunities and allow residents to register from their phone device. The use of iPads was suggested to increase the efficiency of field work, improve customer satisfaction and evaluation activities, and capturing directions real-time from meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study the impacts and efficiencies that technology can bring to the use of services and efficiencies of in-house operations.</li> </ul>
Duplication and Cross Marketing of Municipal and Library Services Program Offerings	<p>A review of program offerings by Milton Public Library and Recreation Services revealed some minor duplications. While this is not excessive, at this point a clear delineation of program scope should be determined for both departments so as to avoid duplication of resources (staff, public space and funding) in the future. Further offering similar programs may reduce participation in each of these classes while paying full fare for instructors and equipment. Recreation program offerings should reflect the departmental mandate which includes introduction to cultural experiences, physical activity, play, casual /drop in activities, social engagement, aquatics, learn to swim, fitness wellness, physical activity, sports and general interest type activities. The Library system centres its priorities on literacy, the love of reading, newcomer assimilation, social engagement, research and the provision of identified resources for borrowing.</p> <p>There are also opportunities for the two services to work with greater synergy whereby each promotes and supports each other's services and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarify the mandates, priorities and respective program offerings of Recreation and the Milton Public Library system resources to align more closely and maximize participation.</li> <li>- Identify opportunities to cross-promote priorities, programs and initiatives.</li> <li>- Rationalizing the optimal use of tax-based support for programs and services between the Community Services Department and the Milton Public Library.</li> </ul>
Volunteerism	<p>Volunteerism is increasing to support the delivery of the department's recreation services. Residents can apply online, in person or by mail and staff will counsel residents on where their best fit might be. 492 residents volunteered a total of 23,298 hours in 2014 which equals the equivalent of approximately 13 full time staff equivalents in hours.</p> <p>Retaining the number of volunteers after the Pan Am games will require a plan and a method of capitalizing on the anticipated level of commitment before and during after the games.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a Volunteer Strategy to maximize volunteerism in the delivery of recreation services.</li> </ul>
Sports Alliance	<p>From certain consultations, there was an indication that some sports groups would like to consider the formation of a local sport alliance body in the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Town Staff should continue to work closely with sport organizations to receive input relating to facility and service needs, and monitor the need to develop a community-led sport alliance body.</li> </ul>

## **Children & Youth**

### The Importance of Outdoor Play

In recent decades with the concern for safety and with a greater number of parents in the workforce; casual outdoor play opportunities have decreased for children. The old adage “come home when the street lights come on” no longer exists for the most part. Children in previous generations could use their neighbourhood as a large playground where they made up games and discovered nature on their own by engaging in daily unstructured play. Research is demonstrating the relationship between access to greenspace and outdoor experiences with higher levels of mental health. The health benefits from a physical activity standpoint and child development have been lost to a certain extent. Many communities are embracing the importance of outdoor play from a child development perspective, are informing parents of the benefits and are expanding these opportunities.

The City of Toronto developed the Children’s Teaching Garden in High Park in 2000. The site is facilitated and children can come with their families at any time to help plant the garden, cook and sample recipes with natural ingredients, learn about the eco-system, composting and organic growing. A summer camp emphasizes all of these outdoor opportunities and enhances children’s outdoor learning and experiences.

### Service Level Agreements with Third Party Providers

Many municipal service providers are developing service level agreements/contracts with third party providers to provide recreation services in areas within the municipality. Often grants are used to provide some funding to offset costs. There is a cost avoidance advantage and a recognition that the full responsibility for the provision of services does not rest solely with the municipality.

### After-School Programming

After the Bell is a school-based after school program that allows for an affordable seamless day for children 5-12 years of age until 6:00 p.m. The program is High Five accredited and is offered in 27 locations throughout Durham Region. The program aims to promote outcomes in social and emotional well-being, pro-social behaviours, engagement in learning, physical wellbeing, and school and community connectedness.

### Youth Leadership

“Rebel 14” in Mississauga is a collaboration between the Library System, Culture and Recreation groups to celebrate National Youth, Library and Culture Weeks. The City hosts city wide events while youth are encouraged and supported in hosting their own events in schools and publically funded spaces. Over 200 events are being facilitated throughout the first week of May. This is an excellent example of gaining momentum and reach through collaboration between recreation, libraries and culture.

### Physical Activity

Active Canada 20/20: A Physical Activity Strategy and Change Agenda for Canada was developed by ParticipAction and Federal, Provincial and Territorial stakeholders. The plan details the impacts of sedentary lifestyles and addresses ways to improve on the 85% percent of Canadian adults and 93% of Canadian children and youth who do not obtain the minimum level of physical activity necessary to sustain a healthy lifestyle.

As a means to ensure that continued emphasis is placed on addressing inactivity, Active Canada 20/20 is based the following guiding principles and promotes their consideration:

1. Adopt evidence-based strategies that target the whole population, as well as specific population sub-groups, particularly those facing the greatest barriers;
2. Embrace an equity approach aimed at reducing social and health inequalities and disparities of access to physical activity;
3. Address the environmental, social and individual determinants of physical inactivity;
4. To achieve the greatest impact:
  - a) Value, invest in and build on current evidence informed locally, regionally and nationally
  - b) Implement sustainable partnerships across sectors and between all levels of government
5. Build capacity and support training in research, practice, policy, evaluation and surveillance;
6. Use a life-stage approach by addressing the needs of children, youth, families, adults and older adults;
7. Advocate to decision makers and the general community for an increase in political commitment to and resources for physical activity;
8. Design for inclusion and adapt strategies to accommodate varying local needs, cultures, contexts and resources; and
9. Facilitate healthy personal choices by making the physically active choice the easy choice.

The Strategy was discussed at a national forum held in New Brunswick in 2013 and nationwide committees are currently developing action plans. The plan encourages local levels of government and related disciplines to keep the spotlight on increasing activity levels and reducing screen time by working together and adopting an aligned approach to Active Canada 20/20 principles.

#### Province of Ontario – Ontario Healthy Kids Panel

In an effort to reduce childhood obesity, the Province of Ontario convened the Healthy Kids panel to develop a strategy on continued efforts to attain healthy weights. The panel was made up of 18 related experts and organizations that could recommend evidenced based methodologies of influence the environment in which children perceive food consumption. The panel developed the strategy entitled *No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy*. The overall goal in Ontario is to reduce childhood obesity by 20% in 5 years. This is an aggressive goal and all community partners must play their part in its achievement. The 3 key focus areas and some related actions in the strategy include:

1. Start all Kids on the Path to Health through education and support to mothers;
2. Change the Food Environment through supporting local food distribution, universal school nutrition, and the marketing of low nutrient foods and guidelines for food and beverages where children play and learn; and
3. Create Health Communities through social marketing efforts, the use of schools in influencing eating habits.

While the role of a recreation department is to increase physical activity and not necessarily promote healthier eating habits, in many instances these efforts go hand in hand Public Health and other community partners in terms of creating one vision and each partner playing their part.

### **Older Adults**

#### Age Friendly Cities – World Health Organization

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) supports the World Health Organization movement toward Age Friendly Communities. This initiative is in response to the wave of older adults that may require special consideration in the design of communities and the delivery of programs and services. The hope is that older adults will enjoy supportive physical and social environments and thus allow them to enjoy greater autonomy and independence. PHAC provides supports to organizations through webinars, interactive dialogue and the sharing of best practices.

The City of Ottawa offers and enables a wide range of choices for older adults and seniors programs and services. Efforts to segment programs to address varying age cohort needs and programs are segmented into Adults, Older Adults and seniors and demonstrate a response to differing needs according to age ranges. All adults over 50 years are offered a 10% reduction in registration costs and related fees. This percentage reduction is much lower than many municipalities in Ontario whose reductions range from 30 to 50%.

The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) organizes the Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together (SMART) Program. It relies on partnerships and volunteerism to increase the number of sustainable programs and opportunities available to older adults in intensely populated areas within communities. VON has developed and implemented a sustainable program for older adults that is funded by the United Way and is delivered by community volunteers. The VON develops focus groups in high rise condominiums and apartments predominantly populated by older adults to determine their active interests. Volunteers are trained and supported in providing recreation and fitness programs for older adults for a nominal fee to cover equipment and refreshment costs. These programs have shown success in over 91 communities and an opportunities to partner exist to provide local and low cost opportunities.

Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS) has a purpose to support and enable women in pursuing sport and active lifestyles and keeping women actively engaged in building community capacity. The CAAWS' 55 to 70+ Project for "Young Senior" Women is a recent initiative aimed at keeping the young senior female engaged in sport and physical activity. 35 pilot projects are currently underway to enhance opportunities in soccer, pickleball, Nordic pole walking, synchronized skating and many other active opportunities. The projects seek to develop and support sustainable models where women are trained to lead and promote active opportunities in concert with community partners such as municipalities.

#### Planning and Strategizing for Older Adult Needs

The Town of Milton is part of an emerging nation-wide trend to comprehensively evaluate, plan and prioritize how it will meet the needs of the 55+ population through a formal strategic planning process. Milton's Older Adult Strategy (OAS), prepared in 2012, serves as a long-term planning framework to assist the Town in responding to the current and future recreation needs of the adult population who are on the verge of retirement or are already enjoying it. With over 40 recommendations pertaining to programming, facilities, fees, staffing and volunteers, partnerships, and outreach, the OAS guides the Town in meeting the current and future needs of its older adults.

### Segmenting Activities by Older Adult Age Cohorts

Municipalities and recreation service providers are finding that older adults, those over the age of 55 years old have varying recreational interests and needs. Those just entering this age cohort are more interested in maintaining an active lifestyle and are not necessarily interested in joining a senior's centre just yet. Many participants continue to register in adult programs and services. There is however a need to socialize and connect with people within their own age range where common interests are the basis in forming new friendships. Mississauga is pursuing ways and means of identifying and enabling activities per age cohorts within the older adult and segmenting these opportunities in order to foster social engagement.

### Social Networking Opportunities for Older Adults

Social networking websites are emerging to prompt older adults to engage in local recreational activities. Activities are generally self-determined and organized. Collingwood Ontario boasts a social networking opportunity for women called "Social Sisters". Each week women meet at a local coffee house to socialize and get to know one another. Women organized groups based on their self-interests and include a movie group, a hiking and walking club, and an epicurean group amongst others. Groups will form and evolve as members develop new groups. In Durham Region, there is a site called "Meet Up" and this site lists all of the member driven opportunities for recreational pursuits including a friendly and non-competitive women's golf group, activities for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning (LGBTQ) community and pursuits for each and both genders. Municipalities could go a long way in enabling these groups, whether by assisting in their development, providing social media development assistance, providing instructors and or public spaces. Enabling residents to self-identify and manage recreational activities can only add to the myriad of choices available to Milton residents.

### Action Plans

- B1. Develop a promotional campaign surrounding the importance and benefits of outdoor play with interested community partners, including integrating the interpretation of nature and natural outdoor experiences into the summer playground program.
- B2. Review Milton's Physical Activity Plan to incorporate any recent federal and provincial initiatives and evidenced based approaches.
- B3. Continue to explore opportunities to augment the number of affordable instructional programs that allow residents to learn the fundamentals of a variety of sports.
- B4. Review pre-school offerings /opportunities as well as times for programs and casual opportunities to ensure that they reflect current needs of this age group.
- B5. Work with community partners to increase the number of affordable after school opportunities for children and youth.
- B6. Review the Community Service's Department role and level of service in the provision of special events including the costs to support staff driven and community driven events. Define a base level of service and explore cost recovery options for enhanced service levels.
- B7. Consider the types of special events being offered and look to fill any gaps through building community capacity and partnering with complementary organizations and institutions.



- B8. Develop a promotional plan and incentives for families in order to increase family participation in recreational and sporting pursuits.
- B9. Utilize the information and recommendations contained within the Town of Milton Older Adult Strategy to guide service delivery for older adults, particularly those that are synergistic with the Community Services Master Plan Update's five year timeline.
- B10. Convene a forum of pre-retired adults to discuss recreation service provision, volunteerism and the use of social media in supporting networking opportunities and in self-determining opportunities.
- B11. Consider changing the name of the Community Services Department to Parks, Recreation and Culture in order to reflect the services provided.
- B12. Use the information garnered throughout the master planning process and 2013 Community Profile survey to refresh the Community Services Department's Communications and Marketing Strategy.
- B13. Complete a study in the use of technology to increase departmental efficiencies (through use of social media, market analytics software, registration and utilization databases, etc.) and make recreation programs and services more accessible to the public.
- B14. Strengthen synergies with Milton Public Library to more closely align programs, cross promote programs, use public spaces more effectively, and work collaboratively on community driven priorities.
- B15. Continue to strengthen the Town's volunteer program and provide appropriate leadership supports to organizations that utilize volunteers.

## Key Result Area Two - Diversity and Inclusion

### Overview

Traditional thinking about diversity within the provision of recreation services has centred on cultural diversity, essentially resident newcomers with a mother tongue other than English and in terms of inclusion, residents with disabilities. Within the last decade more municipalities have broadened their thinking and actions to include significantly underrepresented groups including women, the lesbian, gay, transgendered, bisexual and questioning community (LGBTQ), persons from low income backgrounds and those with mental health issues at a minimum. Recreation departments utilizing a business-like approach to the delivery of service see these diverse groups as markets and a way to increase participation in recreation services. They are therefore taking varying approaches to include diverse groups and are realizing an increase in participation as a result.

There is a need to be sensitive to varying preferences in developing appropriate programs and activities, and a common perception prevails that the influx of newcomers will generate considerable demands for new types of non-traditional programs. While this is true to a certain extent, it is important to realize that newcomers will also be looking to participate in traditional activities as they assimilate into Canadian culture. Specific efforts need to be made to include diverse populations in traditional Canadian programs and sports as well as to offer services that support various cultures' and communities, and introduce all residents to these activities. Recreation delivery is beginning to witness a fusion of activities reflecting the makeup of the respective municipality.

Communities, agencies as well as the business sector are broadening their definition of diversity to include all groups that are under-represented or marginalized as a result of their backgrounds and/or abilities. The principle of equitable access to recreation services is strengthened by identifying groups that may require different approaches to feeling included. Often building a relationship with representative groups and key leaders within a given social community is the first step in understanding needs and the capacity of the group to independently deliver. Joint efforts are developed based on what assistance can be offered by the municipality and what can be accomplished by working together.

Greater efforts are being made to educate, train and enable staff, volunteers and residents to ensure that everyone is welcome in a recreation delivery system and that all residents are entitled to barrier free access. The term "Cultural Competency" is used to capture a broader notion of diversity and expand on what varying groups require in terms of inclusive services. Efforts are also made to have a staff / volunteer mix that is representative of the community they serve; this is done in an effort to ensure that centres and services are more welcoming and visitors see themselves in the delivery system.

One approach does not fit all and needs vary within segments of the population. One theme is common and that is to meet the requirement that all residents feel welcome, that they belong and that they see themselves as an integral part of the community.



<p>Goal Statement</p>	<p><b>Recreation is for all residents; Milton will continue to work to include and enable participation by underrepresented segments of the population</b></p>
<p>Milton's Approach</p>	<p>Milton places an emphasis on being inclusive in terms of encouraging dialogue and removing barriers to participation for many residents experiencing challenges. The first page of the Milton Community Services Guide welcomes residents in predominant languages and further encourages them to engage through the Halton Multi-Cultural Council. Further the guide well states Milton's commitment to including all residents regardless of their background.</p> <p><u>Persons with Disabilities</u> Residents with disabilities are encouraged to join a class or drop in opportunity of their choice and/or register for an ICAN –Integrated Care for Assisted Needs – program or opportunity. Support workers are welcome to attend programs and drop in opportunities at no fee.</p> <p><u>Girls and Women</u> Milton offers program specifically for girls and women to ensure that there are no barriers to their participation. Year round programs such as Girl Power, summer camps and swimming lessons serve to empower females to learn and master new skills, build self-esteem and lead active and healthy lifestyles.</p> <p><u>Newcomers</u> The Town of Milton has a partnership with the Halton Multicultural Council to support residents and newcomers in their endeavours to be engaged in community life. The Council provides guidance to newcomers on what is available in terms of recreational opportunities, financial assistance mechanisms if required and translation. This relationship has proved invaluable to both parties as they support Milton's newcomers.</p> <p><u>Persons with Low Incomes</u> Milton has a recreation access policy that promotes affordable access to recreational opportunities for all residents regardless of income. There are five funding agencies that provide financial assistance to Milton residents. The Town provides \$200.00 per year to qualifying residents while Canadian Tire Jumpstart, KidSport, the Region of Halton and President's Choice Children's Charity are other mechanisms to minimize the number of residents being excluded from recreation and sport.</p>
<p>Summary of Inputs</p>	<p><b>Related Intelligence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipated growth within Milton of 47,000 residents over the course of the master plan horizon will require focussed efforts with respect to diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>• The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) indicates 29% or 24,700 of the Milton population are immigrants and first generation residents.</li> <li>• The NHS also indicates that 5,865 Milton residents are considered to have a low income background.</li> <li>• Census data indicates that 13.5% of Ontario residents live with a disability. This could equal approximately 11,600 residents in Milton. With the population aging the percentage is projected to increase.</li> </ul>

- Registrations for persons with disabilities in the ICAN programs has increased by 23%, registrations have increased from 355 in 2012 to 436 in 2013.
- The number of residents receiving assistive funding to participate in recreation has increased from 270 residents in 2012 to 486 residents in 2013 or by 80%

#### **Trends**

- The instatement of external and internal diversity advisory committees that aid in program/service development and departmental diversity initiatives;
- Extensive training for staff and volunteers and the strengthening of community relationships;
- Efforts to ensure that staff and volunteers reflect the diverse make-up of the community;
- The development of Safe and Positive Spaces in Community Centres and Public Spaces to welcome the LGBTQ community.
- Refinement of municipal grant criteria to include program and group development to serve diverse populations.
- The development of programs within the recreation program mix to include non-traditional opportunities and introductory courses for typical Canadian opportunities.

#### **Stakeholder Input**

Stakeholders indicated during the engagement process the continued need exists to support diverse populations in accessing services and that although there is some participation by underrepresented groups, more can be done to increase the numbers participating.

Staff indicated that additional knowledge, training and supports would further their work to ensure that all underrepresented populations have access to recreation services

#### **Promising Practices**

##### Cultural Competency

The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition has developed resource materials and a tool kit entitled Inclusive Community Organizations – A Tool Kit to assist communities and organizations in becoming more culturally competent. The resources provide the rationale for reaching out equitably to participants and clients and enables an organization to assess its current ability to serve diverse clients and begin to develop a strategy to better respond to the community.

##### Program Mix

The Town of Ajax has approached the diversity of its community by offering a blend of traditional and non-traditional recreation opportunities within the program mix. The Town's recreation program guide provides program opportunities that are reflective of the cultural diversity of the community to invite residents to enjoy new non-traditional experiences and ensure that there are adequate introductory program offerings of traditional Canadian sports and recreational pursuits. Some non-traditional programs include Bollywood and Bharathanatyam (South Asian) dancing, Ajax Cricketers, Young Chefs (international cuisine). Ajax's Recreation & Culture Department also partnered with the Durham Region Board of Education in hosting the

first LGBTQ prom in the region of Durham. Aquatics staff utilize the promotional information developed by the Lifesaving Society produced in predominant languages to encourage newcomers to learn to swim.

#### Diversity Leadership

The Royal Bank of Canada sees the strategic advantage in reaching out to diverse markets from a business perspective. The bank maintains the support of a Diversity Council that meets quarterly to review the status and the respective results of diversity initiatives. The Bank of Montreal holds staff accountable for progress on diversity goals and includes a “Diversity Scorecard” in employee assessments. Proctor and Gamble has developed and implemented an assessment tool that allows employees to have input on how well their managers are creating and supporting a diverse and inclusive workplace. All employees in these corporations complete diversity training and network groups are engaged to discuss and propose diversity programs.

#### The Equity Lens

The City of Toronto developed an “Equity Lens” which is a simple tool that assists staff to be more inclusive as they review the effectiveness of existing policies/programs and develop new ones. The lens poses these three questions and staff are to address these queries and be accountable as programs and services are developed and/or reviewed.

1. How did you identify the barriers faced by diverse groups and assess the impact of the policy/program on them? What diverse groups are impacted by the identified barriers?
2. How did you reduce or remove the barriers? What changes have you made to the policy/program so that the diverse groups will benefit from the policy/program?
3. How do you measure the results of the policy/program to see if it works to benefit diverse groups?

#### Safe Spaces

The LGBTQ community often experience exclusionary behaviours. The introduction of “Safe Spaces” is one way of welcoming this community to public places. Safe Spaces was developed by Safe Spaces Canada whereby signage on the front door of a community space indicates that staff have been trained in reducing homophobic gestures and slurs, and in creating welcoming environments.

Positive Spaces: The Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants developed the Positive Spaces Initiative through Citizen and Immigration Canada to denote public spaces that are safe for and welcoming to the LGBTQ community. Signage similar to the Pride flag denotes that the space is positive for the LGBTQ population.

#### Singing Out: Toronto’s LGBTQ Choir

Singing Out is a 100 member choir that is for the most part self-funded although the organization is beginning to apply for and receive provincial and municipal funding. The choir provides an opportunity for LGBTQ residents to meet others, enjoy singing and develop their abilities within a choir setting. The organization uses community spaces to rehearse and perform and 3 performances are offered annually at a minimum. Members have indicated that their sense of belonging has increased significantly since joining the choir

## Action Plans

- B16. Endeavour to engage and encourage persons from diverse cultural backgrounds to participate more actively in recreation and cultural activities in Milton through:
- Coordinating efforts to create dialogue with cultural group leaders and key opinion leaders from diverse populations to discuss traditional and non-traditional recreation needs in providing services that are representative of the broadening recreation market.
  - Introducing non-traditional recreation and sport programs that reflect the recreational preferences of Milton's diverse populations, while concurrently providing more introductory programming to introduce traditional Canadian recreation and sport experiences.
  - Ensuring that all Town of Milton staff are trained to create welcoming environments for diverse populations.
  - Creating a staff centred Diversity Team within Community Services to ensure that the development of programs and services respects the diversity of Milton, and further that there is an open internal culture that is supportive and welcoming to diverse staff, volunteers and participants.
  - Developing a framework (principles and methodologies) to include residents from a broad range of diverse backgrounds. Include an "Equity Lens" that ensures inclusive language and approaches in the development and delivery of recreation services. The lens/checklist will be used to identify and remove barriers as programs and services are planned, executed and evaluated.
- B17. Ensure that all recreation centres and facilities are considered Safe and/or Positive Spaces with the required training and identification to enable staff and volunteers to foster inclusive and welcoming places for all residents.
- B18. The composition of staff, volunteers and advisory committee members should reflect the Milton Community.
- B19. Facilitate opportunities for residents to participate in no cost and low cost programs, to ensure that the recreation system remains open and accessible to all residents. Where there are fee based programs that might be cost prohibitive, extend efforts to consider the following:
- Provide information to Halton Region Social Services staff on the Access Policy and local recreation and sport opportunities, and work with them to develop any further streamlining for those in financial need;
  - Continue to address other barriers such as transportation and equipment in enabling programs for residents;
  - Consider a policy that requires recreation and sport groups that use subsidized Town spaces to offer community outreach and subsidized/no cost registration for residents of low income backgrounds; and
  - Expand on the number of opportunities for low income children and youth through corporate sponsorship opportunities.
- B20. Build upon the number of relationships with groups that provide services to persons with disabilities and therapeutic services, in order to enable a seamless system and barrier free access to recreation and sport pursuits. Continue to provide one point of contact for residents with disabilities to receive the needed supports and advice in order to access and benefit from participation in recreation.
- B21. Continue to develop partnerships in reaching more residents with disabilities, quantify participation numbers on an annual basis, and monitor the effectiveness of inclusion policies, practices and program offerings.

## Key Result Area Three – Connecting Communities and Neighbourhoods

### Overview

One of the major concerns residents often express in rapidly developing communities, such as Milton, is the loss of the small town or neighbourhood feel. There is often a sense of loss for what existed for existing residents. Newcomers are also assimilating into a new community and may not have the time to concern themselves with many other initiatives other than to look after the welfare of their own family until they are settled. Creating a sense of belonging and the sense that residents feel empowered to address or have input into local concerns brings residents together and builds social connectedness. Staff recognize that community design, housing intensification, socio-economics, assimilation and commuter times are some of the considerations in the ability and capacity of neighbours within neighbourhoods to become engaged; however efforts have proven successful in other jurisdictions.

The trend to better understand localized recreation needs and strengthen neighbourhood capacity has been gaining momentum in municipalities in Ontario within the last 10 years. The purpose from a recreation service provision perspective is to animate neighbourhoods, increase recreational activity as well as to work with groups to self-determine and organize their own local activities. This approach is proving increasing local opportunities through empowered groups and providing opportunities for social interaction given the number of working families. Staff work with community leaders to create a dialogue and assist residents to discuss and create opportunities for social connection and address community issues. The end goal is to create a greater sense of belonging, empowerment, pride and cohesion within local neighbourhoods. Strategies are typically at varying degrees of maturity and results are evident in the increasing percentage of residents that engage to address local issues and volunteer to develop events.

Municipalities are starting to think of their community centres differently. Augmenting the services that are provided, the centres are developing welcoming and social spaces to prompt discussions, ideas and connect residents. Municipalities and school boards are experiencing the merits of making community spaces and/or local schools into community hubs or central meeting places for the neighbourhood. Inspiring results are occurring whereby residents are providing and implementing the solution to neighbourhood issues with great ownership.

#### **Strengthening Neighbourhoods and Creating Community Hubs**

The purpose from a recreation service provision perspective is to animate neighbourhoods and increase recreational activity as well as to work with groups to self-determine and organize their own neighbourhood based activities. This approach goes a long way in increasing local opportunities through empowered groups and providing opportunities for social interaction given the number of working families that commute. Staff work with community leaders to create a dialogue and assist residents to discuss and create opportunities for social interaction and address community issues. The end goal is to create a greater sense of belonging, empowerment, pride and cohesion within local neighbourhoods. The strategies are at varying degrees of maturity and results are evident in the increasing percentage of residents that engage with their neighbours to address local issues and volunteer to develop neighbourhood events. As part of initiatives to strengthen neighbourhoods, municipalities are making each of their community centres or local schools community hubs or central meeting places for the neighbourhood. Inspiring results are occurring whereby residents are providing and implementing the solution with great ownership.

#### **Building Capacity through Community Development and Volunteerism**

Municipal recreation departments are faced with increasing demands to provide quality, accessible services in spite of budget pressures, reductions in traditional forms of funding, and changes in the way resources are allocated. The trend is for innovative departments to seek out community

development and partnership opportunities as well as augment services through the use of volunteers. These combined approaches provide better choices with fewer burdens to the taxpayer than trying to provide all services lead by the municipality.

### **Community Development**

Community development initiatives and approaches continue to be a mainstay of municipal recreation departments in Ontario. Efforts of staff to spend time in the community to have meaningful dialogue with residents is the preliminary stage in engagement and forming fruitful relationships. Community development staff begin to share the responsibility with the community in articulating and especially addressing issues and shortfalls in the delivery of service. The role of the recreation staff is to begin the conversation, provide research, other like community connections, assist with group development if that is required and generally to facilitate and empower individuals and groups over time. Some municipalities only facilitate other groups in providing recreational opportunities while most municipalities continue to provide programs and services directly with a blend of community driven opportunities. It is clear that a greater number of programs and opportunities can be provided through a blend of directly and community driven (indirect) programs and services.

Common guiding principles serve as neighbourhoods and communities of interests are strengthened.

1. There is recognition that neighbourhoods have differing needs and strategies will differ accordingly.
2. There is commitment by the municipality to assist resident groups develop and gain the skills to address their own neighbourhood issues over time.
3. Resources are allocated equitably according to neighbourhood needs and stages of development; often at risk neighbourhoods are given priority in terms of resource allocation.
4. The primary focus in a supportive neighbourhood centres on security, safety, trust, engagement and a sense of belonging.
5. Service agencies and organizations work together to address common issues in neighbourhoods and effectively share resources.
6. Neighbourhood central meeting places or community hubs provide residents with a place to learn about community resources, socialize, be active and communicate with each other.
7. Communications and recognition play a role in promoting, acknowledging and increasing strengthened neighbourhood practices.
8. The role of staff within community centres becomes more of facilitator and community builder.

Building partnerships, strong community relationships and strengthening volunteerism is the key to expanding recreational opportunities in intensified and growth areas. Most large cities in Ontario have taken this approach as it tends to provide greater participation, engage the community in taking ownership for local issues, and promotes the sharing of resources. Many innovative and sustainable approaches are evident as a result of community engagement initiatives combined with direct offerings of recreation programs and services.

Goal  
Statement

**To increase the provision of local recreational programs and opportunities through efforts to engage residents at the neighbourhood level and build volunteer capacity**

Community Engagement Framework

The suggested ten-step process describes a municipally-led community engagement framework to determine and address ways and means of providing meaningful recreational opportunities in an intensified neighbourhood. This model can also be offered to community driven engagement efforts as well and provides guidance to both parties. Pending the level of engagement and sense of urgency, this process could take as few as 4- 6 months and as long a time as 2-3 years to fully implement. Often a pressing community issue will lead to a greater sense of urgency and pressure to act more expediently.

<p>1. Gather Intelligence on the Neighbourhood and /or Service Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the following at a minimum:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Population and expected growth</li> <li>○ Immigration and mother tongue</li> <li>○ Income levels</li> <li>○ Crime rates</li> <li>○ Lone parent families</li> <li>○ Age cohorts and resulting recreation opportunities</li> <li>○ Social issues</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Map community physical assets such as schools, community centres, settlement service centres, faith based facilities and other useful spaces.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Inventory Community Groups and Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a stakeholder listing of all community and sport groups, schools, settlement services, Early Years Centres, along with initiatives through Regional Social Services and schools at a minimum.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Communications and Co-Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a meeting of service agencies to share priority issues and plans for the neighbourhood / service area and communicate the purpose of the exercise. Seek out co-leadership opportunities with agency and non-profit groups.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Outline the Current Recreational Opportunities and Current Uptake from the Neighbourhood (registrations, drop-in and casual opportunities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly develop a full profile of public, non-profit, faith-based and private recreation, fitness and sport-based offerings and participation levels by age groupings. Determine the current penetration rate of all recreation programs and services.</li> <li>• Program visitations will offer a feel for participation levels and if there are adequate opportunities or gaps in service. Casual conversations often serve to identify any provision gaps from a preliminary perspective.</li> </ul>
<p>5. Focus Groups with Residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss gaps in recreation opportunities, barriers to participation and what types of activities would be attractive to residents. Identify opportunities for volunteerism and/or to offer leadership training.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Identify Leaders and Early Adaptors in the Neighbourhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is addressing recreation, sport, cultural, social and health issues? Identify the community leaders that are connected and can bring momentum to relevant community initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Begin the Conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host a forum of stakeholders to share the information gathered to date, and discuss priorities and areas where some or all of the groups/agencies could work together to better serve the neighbourhood. Identify potential corporate and other sources of funding. Gain agreement and follow up with a draft plan and or proposal. Ensure that the options address barriers to participation in a diverse community.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Resourcing Initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out funding sources, services in-kind from the agencies themselves and the potential of start-up grants and corporate funding/sponsorship.</li> <li>• Consider developing service level agreements with non-profit agencies to deliver the program/ initiative after completing a cost/benefit analysis.</li> </ul>
<p>9. Program Development and Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set clear goals and potential outcomes in the development of the community driven initiative. Discuss how neighbourhood capacity could be strengthened in order for the program to be self-directed and delivered in the future.</li> </ul>
<p>10. Implementation and Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, promotion, communications, launch, monitoring and an annual evaluation are all actions that will ensure the ongoing sustainability of efforts to expand and address gaps in service.</li> </ul>

### Milton's Approach

Milton is cognizant of the makeup of the various neighbourhoods and assists in their development through providing support for local events and initiatives. The municipal grant program provides support to groups to provide programs and services that align with the Town's strategic priorities. All community groups have an opportunity to advertise in the Community Services Guide and have their contact information in the community group section. Staff provide advice to groups to enable them to form, develop governance structures and access grants and facility spaces. Milton is supportive of community groups and provides all of the supports needed to succeed in providing community driven recreation and sport opportunities.

A more proactive approach will result in increased capacity and the ability to serve more residents with a broader range of choices. As Milton continues to grow efforts to support local and community driven provision of recreation and sport pursuits will become critical. This method is efficient, sustainable, builds capacity and community pride and cohesion. It requires effort on staff part to continually determine gaps, work collaboratively with partners and be flexible in the changing needs of Milton.

### Summary of Inputs

Participants in the community engagement exercise spoke to the merits of the Town leading an initiative toward more localized and neighbourhood based delivery/enabling of recreation services. Having a central place to go for neighbours was seen as a way to connect people, get people more engaged in what was available and determine what might increase engagement in healthy lifestyles.

Discussions with staff showed support for determining which programs should be standardized and allowing community centres and community hubs to determine and address more neighbourhood based responses to local issues.

### Promising Practices

In response to a growing and diverse population, the Town of Ajax developed a Strong Neighbourhood Strategy to include and strengthen a sense of belonging by all residents. The strategy was developed with full inclusion by community residents and diverse stakeholders. Representatives from agencies and neighbourhood associations offered input and are assisting in the implementation of the plan. Initiatives include base funding for local initiatives through the Social Infrastructure Fund, annual neighbourhood barbeques, an increase to the Neighbourhood Watch Program and partnerships with social agencies to strengthen services in at risk neighbourhoods.

The Town of Whitby has 4 major recreation centres where recreation programs and camps are offered and these facilities are augmented by the use of 11 local schools sites. These school sites are called community schools and come under the purview of local citizen based boards that serve to program, register and supervise neighbourhood programs. All programs are promoted in the Town's program guide and registered through a central system. Any surplus funds are allocated by the boards to neighbourhood events and projects. One board in particular hosts a neighbourhood fireworks display each Canada day for the community with their surplus program revenues. This model is efficient in that it enables neighbourhood programming, walk to programs and camps and maximizes the use of publically funded spaces.

In Chandler, Arizona the development and support given to neighbourhood associations comes through the Neighbourhood Support Office. Neighbourhoods are required to register their neighbourhood association and that entitles them to:

- Free neighbourhood website
- Promotion of events
- Recognition of volunteers and leaders
- Social media 101 – a course on the use of social media

- Access to grants (\$5,000 once every 5 years)
- Quarterly newsletters
- Neighbourhood Mediation “Solve It”
- Access to the Leadership Centre

The City of London, Ontario completed a Strong Neighbourhood Strategy and has since worked with the neighbourhoods to turn community centres and schools into neighbourhood hubs. Efforts have been made to create social spaces and have room for neighbourhood discussions and socialization for all age groups. As a result some initiatives have included community gardens on community centre properties, cooking classes to utilize the produce from the gardens, food and diaper banks in community centres, neighbourhood luncheons, empowered community organizations and a marked increase in neighbourhood based programs and volunteerism.

Dufferin Grove Park in the City of Toronto is an internationally recognized community asset and exhibits an innovative approach to maximizing limited community resources for the public good. The park and rink house is situated in a densely populated, mixed use area with residents from varying socio-economic backgrounds. The community hub is managed by the “Friends of Dufferin Grove Park” and the asset consists of a rink house, outdoor artificial rink, a communal brick oven, a rustic outdoor amphitheatre, community garden plots, picnic areas, a splash pad, sport fields and playground. The rink house has become a central magnet for the neighbourhood and offers year round baking and baked goods for sale, weekly community dinners, the brick oven is used in the summer for Friday Night communal pizza night (\$2.50 for a family pizza kit), a garden club and many neighbourhood driven programs and services including a collection of donated skates for those that do not have or cannot afford skates. A neighbourhood managed website facilitates discussion to communicate with each other about park issues and the potential for new programs and services. There is no formalized governance model in place and the residents prefer it that way.

Thornccliffe Park is a neighbourhood in Toronto that was designed for 12,000 residents and now houses 30,000 residents of which 98% live in high rise and midrise developments. 87% of the residents are newcomers with probable settlement and language challenges. 72% of the population is under the age of 14 years. The very small local but central park is bordered by a mall, 2 schools (20 all-day kindergarten classes) and a small community centre. The Thornccliffe neighbourhood Office, City staff and the Thornccliffe Women’s Committee work as a collective to address critical social issues. Sharing resources and working toward a vision of a better quality of life has resulted in new equipment and opportunities through fundraising. Community engagement efforts over the years, understanding priorities and maximizing all available resources has been the key to providing recreation in intensified and growing neighbourhoods.

Action Plans

- B22. Reference the community engagement framework in strengthening localized service delivery and assess the staff capacity as one tool to implement a more focussed approach as Milton continues to grow in population and diversity.
- B23. Convene a forum of service agencies (i.e. all related government, non-profit, and volunteer organizations) within Milton to determine localized priorities and commonalities in order to look for efficiencies and resource sharing opportunities, and to reference the Province of Ontario "Community Hub" framework.

- B24. Investigate ways in which the organizational capacity of local groups and institutions could be strengthened. Professional development workshops and seminars in partnership with local businesses, Halton Region or other community stakeholders could be developed and offered to non-profit community organizations and individual volunteers and workers.
- B25. Provide training to staff in the community engagement framework.
- B26. Provide training to staff in creating community hubs within Town-owned and public facilities and spaces.
- B27. Prioritize efforts in neighbourhoods where supports are most needed.
- B28. Review the municipal decision-making framework for the allocation of grants provided to organizations delivering community recreation and cultural services.

## Performance Metrics for Recreation Services

Measuring performance in any endeavour can bring substantial benefits to any organization – not for profit, private sector or government - in the form of greater efficiencies, effectiveness and accountability. Measuring performance against identified targets and directions involves the ongoing process of ascertaining how well, or how poorly, a program, service or initiative is being delivered. It involves the continuous collection of data and analysis on the progress made towards achieving pre-established goals or outcomes. Performance indicators, or measures, are developed as standards for assessing the extent to which these goals or outcomes are achieved, alongside already established expectations of desired levels of performance. While it is useful to benchmark against other like sized organizations with similar populations and mandates; not all factors are the same and is not meaningful data in all cases. Measuring an organization against itself year over year often provides the most meaningful information.

The Community Services Department measures various results of its work to ensure that efforts are achieving the articulated priorities and includes:

- Monthly and annual budget actuals against budget targets;
- Fitness memberships and retention rates;
- Program statistics including the:
  - Number of programs, classes and penetration rates year over year in each age group (adult, pre-school, child, etc.)
  - Number of registrants' and penetration rates year over year in each discipline (arts, general interest, active living, etc.)
  - Number of unique clients in each age group (actual vs targets)
  - Number of unique clients by gender year over year in each age group; and
  - Membership/participation numbers for drop-in and casual opportunities;
- Prime and non-prime usage of facilities;
- Satisfaction levels in programs and facility rentals.

These measures keep staff focussed in being accountable for maximizing the use of publically funded programs and community spaces. In the context of the Community Services Master Plan Update, a performance measurement framework is being suggested as an effective tool for monitoring, capturing, and reporting

information on the key result areas and goals identified in the master plan update. The hope is that Town managers, Council, and other related committees and/or bodies, will use the performance management information to evaluate how well the priorities in the plan are being addressed and as to whether any modifications need to be made over the course of the plan horizon.

Incorporating diversity and community development measures into the Town’s annual performance evaluation would enhance efforts to reach out to the community and increase engagement and participation. Providing results to staff, Council and volunteers will help to reinforce a culture that values and celebrates collaboration and accomplishments as recreation supports many Town-wide and corporate priorities.

**Table 2: Suggested Performance Measures for the C.S.M.P. Update**

Key Result Area	Performance Measures – Comparison Year to Year
Programs and Service Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Capacity and fill rates of all programs and facilities</li> <li>2. Number of residents registered in learn to swim and swim to survive programs</li> <li>3. Number of residents in active recreation programs and related drop-in casual opportunities</li> <li>4. Number of children engaged in after-school programming opportunities</li> <li>5. Number of media impressions promoting outdoor play</li> <li>6. Number of engaged youth in recreational and sport pursuits</li> <li>7. Number of older adults engaged in recreation and sports pursuits</li> <li>8. Overall satisfaction levels of residents per program and service area</li> </ol>
Diversity and Inclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Number of programs and participants in programs offered to promote diversity and inclusion</li> <li>10. Number of diverse groups working in partnership with the Town and results</li> <li>11. Number of disciplines (aquatics, fitness, programs, culture etc.) engaged in inclusive efforts and respective results</li> <li>12. Satisfaction levels of diverse groups in working with the Town to increase participation</li> </ol>
Community and Neighbourhood Connections	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Number of neighbourhood programs/initiatives and resulting participation</li> <li>14. Number of community groups supporting recreation and sports and resulting participation</li> <li>15. Number of volunteers/ discipline and annual hours in full-time equivalents</li> <li>16. Number of community hubs supported by the Town in whole or in part</li> </ol>
Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Number of partnerships and participation in recreation programs and services</li> <li>18. Estimated cost avoidance as a result of partnerships (capital and operating)</li> </ol>
Fitness Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19. Number of fitness members</li> <li>20. Retention of existing members</li> <li>21. Member satisfaction per centre and as a whole discipline</li> </ol>