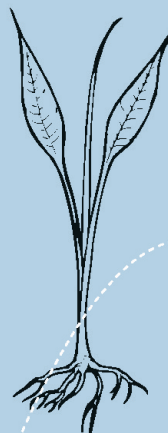


# MOUNT PEARL



*Final Report*  
**City of Mount Pearl Parks & Recreation Master Plan**  
Tract Consulting Inc. • Lorne Pike & Associates • PERC Ltd.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Throughout the creation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, many members of Mount Pearl City Council, the Parks and Recreation Department, community organizations and the general public brought tremendous insight, experience and knowledge to the process. We wish to acknowledge and thank everyone involved for their ongoing support and involvement in the development of this Plan.



## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

For many years, the City of Mount Pearl has been one of the fastest growing communities in eastern Canada. Ideally located beside the provincial capital of St. John's, Mount Pearl has enjoyed rapid growth as more and more families moved in to enjoy the natural setting, the strong range of services, and the convenience of living next to a major city.

Mount Pearl is particularly recognized for its unparalleled focus on sports and recreation facilities and programs, including its many open spaces and system of walking trails. However, given the City's limited space for growth, the City has found it increasingly necessary to make the best use of available space as it seeks to provide its residents with a full range of recreation facilities and programs.

Recognizing these challenges, the City of Mount Pearl requested the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The purpose of the Master Plan would be to:

- Provide long-range planning guidelines; and
- Assign priorities and strategies to meet needs, keeping in mind annual funding available for such services and facilities.

The Plan also includes a general community description and community profile that highlight the City's socio-economic features, which were used to guide the development and maintenance of present and future parks, recreation and cultural services and facilities. Guidelines and priorities were determined through an in-depth consultative process with City officials, the private and non-profit sectors, and the general population.

### **1.1 The Planning Process**

The approach used in the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Mount Pearl has been community driven and focused on the Master Plan goals provided by the City. These goals focus on four key areas:

1. Recreational facilities and programs
2. Parks and open spaces
3. Recreation and cultural programs
4. Departmental administrative structure and operations.

The approach also involved an understanding and assessment of the social, economic, ecological and cultural resources of the community, and the consequent effects of each on the above four areas.

Essentially, the Plan begins where the Mount Pearl Recreation Plan of 1984 ended. The 1984 Plan, then, was used as a background supporting document to the current Master Plan. In this way, we are not just creating a new Plan, but one that learns from and builds upon past recommendations – focusing on what had and had not been done to provide a practical document for the City, and specifically, for the Parks and Recreation Department.

The success of the Parks and Recreation Department will ultimately be in its ability to utilize the Master Plan's recommendations to develop strong partnerships with other agencies, private interests and community organizations. The Department must be the facilitator to continue to ensure even greater cooperation, less duplication, and to maximize benefits from limited financial resources.

To be successful, the Plan must also be flexible in how the recommendations are carried out. While the Plan has been designed to reflect developments over the next ten years, it must also be adaptable in that what we see as being critical today, may not, in the future, be seen as critical for a variety of reasons. These include currently unforeseen new opportunities that might present themselves to community organizations, and private sector development, availability of federal and provincial funding programs, changing trends in service delivery, and the costs to maintain what is recommended in the Master Plan. The ability of the City to respond to these “unforeseen” changes and opportunities will essentially mirror the overall success of the Plan.

As a result, this document ultimately serves as a guide that should be carefully considered and evaluated each year throughout the life of the Plan, particularly as long and short-term budget needs are addressed. Staff support will be critical, and they must “buy in” to and advocate recommendations proposed to achieve success. To ensure as much staff support as possible, it is recommended that an overall orientation to the document be provided to staff, once it is adopted by Council.

To compliment this orientation, a Master Plan Report Card should be developed for use by Department staff to initially evaluate the work they have performed each year. For example, the Report Card should address particular recommendations, what was actually developed or achieved, the results, the challenges that arose and were overcome, and the benefits of the development to the City. The collected information could be shared with City Council at the end of each operating year.



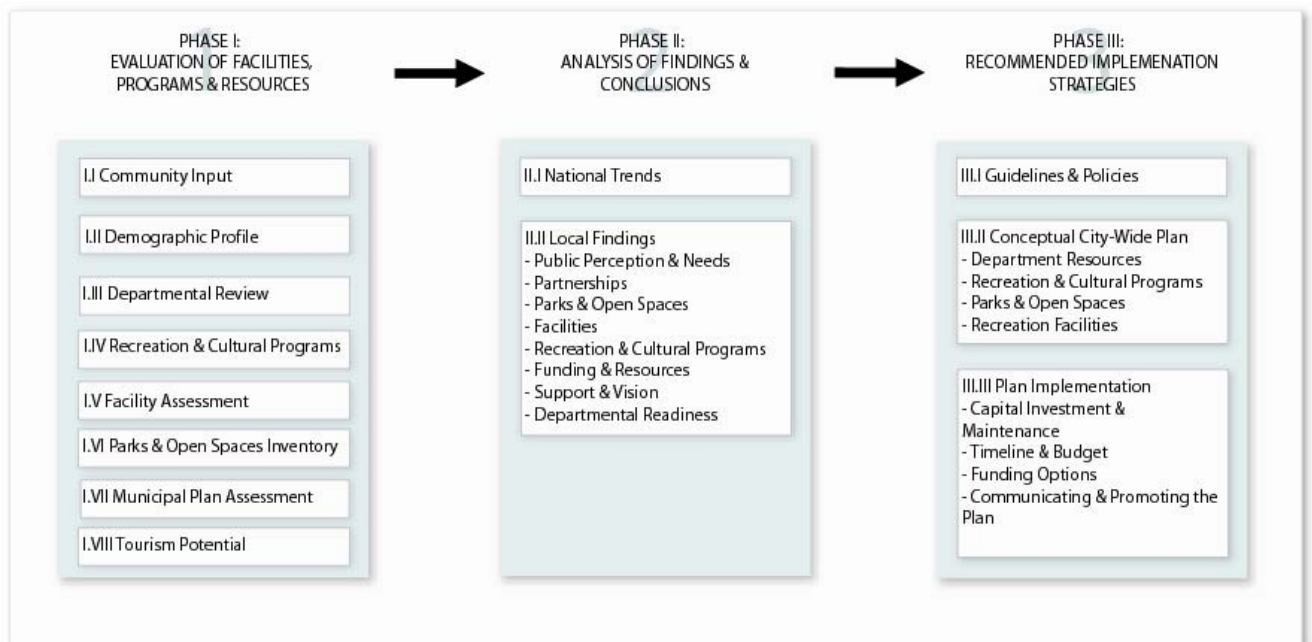
## 1.2 Approach to Recreation Planning

The Master Plan is designed to provide a framework for parks and recreation planning and development for the next ten years. To ensure that the final document would be appropriate, feasible and easily implemented, the Plan has been developed through three principle phases:

1. Evaluation of Facilities, Programs and Resources
2. Analysis of Findings and Conclusions
3. Recommended Implementation Strategies

Figure 1.1 highlights the key components that were involved throughout the development of the Master Plan.

**Figure 1.1: Master Plan Development Process Chart**



### ***Phase I: Evaluation of Facilities, Programs and Resources***

The first phase in the development of the Plan involved an in-depth assessment of all parks and open spaces, recreational facilities and programs offered in Mount Pearl. Through consultations with residents, the private sector, community groups and City staff, and through an extensive inventory of the City's physical recreation resources, eight general classes of information were analysed to inform proposed recommendations that would be developed throughout the Plan,

including: community input, demographic profile, departmental review, cultural and recreational programs, facility assessment, inventory of parks and open spaces, City of Mount Pearl municipal plan, and tourism potential.

### ***Phase II: Analysis of Findings and Conclusions***

Using the data collected throughout Phase I, an in-depth analysis was conducted to determine the most feasible approach to developing recommendations for the Master Plan. Consequently, this data was used to essentially cross-reference the physical parks and recreation needs of the City, with the parks and recreation needs of residents. As a result, this analysis and subsequent “matching” of needs, interests and trends has informed the development of proposed recommendations that are tailored to the City, its resources, and residents.

### ***Phase III: Recommended Implementation Strategies***

Once the assessment was complete, the needs of residents understood, and the physical resource needs identified, specific guidelines and policies were suggested that should be adopted by the City and the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure the Master Plan is successfully implemented.

Based on these policies, a physical plan that suggests how the parks and open space system should be developed is presented. The location of key facilities and specific programs that should be offered is also proposed.

An implementation plan suggesting a timeline for implementation, a rationale for the recommendations, the development priority, anticipated costs, and management resources required was developed. Additionally, the implementation plan suggests alternate sources of funding for the proposed developments, based on the estimated costs.

## **1.3 Summary of Plan Recommendations**

The recommendations proposed in the Plan have been designed to reflect the particular needs of both the City and its residents, as well as to incorporate the design principles developed as the basis of future parks and recreation development. Recommendations refer to development priority as low, medium or high, in which:

- *High Development Priority* represents those developments that should be the first developed out of the recommendation possibilities presented;

- *Medium Development Priority* represents proposed development following completion of high development recommendations; and,
- *Low Development Priority* represents proposed development pending that of medium or high recommendation.

It is important to recognize, however, that despite these categories for development priority, some suggested developments and proceed concurrently and will depend heavily on the availability of financial resources and input from funding and operating partners.

### 1.3.1 Key Development Recommendations

There are four *key development* recommendations that stem from the plan:

1. Establishment of the *Reid Lifestyle Centre* as the City's primary multi-purpose recreation, fitness and health facility. The Lifestyle Centre will physically link buildings currently on site to create a dynamic, multipurpose complex that offers a variety of recreational activities and programming for users of all ages. It will be designed to meet the needs of children, teenagers, adults, seniors, individuals and families. The Lifestyle Centre will provide amenities for aquatic, ice, gymnastics, and general health and fitness activities. In addition, it will provide space for business meetings and conventions, community events, health services (such as physiotherapy and chiropractic services), as well as incorporate viewing areas for spectators.
2. Redevelopment of the Smallwood Complex, providing additional soccer and softball fields, as well as incorporating a joint clubhouse for the sports associations. Key recommendations suggested at the site involve redesign of the current field layout to incorporate an additional soccer pitch, as well as the addition of a new softball field parallel to the current field on site. As a component of this building, an indoor training facility should be developed to accommodate indoor soccer or rugby training, softball, ball hockey, and could include an indoor walking and in-line skating track as well.
3. Given the amount of physical space that is available in key locations around Mount Pearl, this Plan suggests the development of six city parks at key locations throughout Mount Pearl: Power's Pond, St. David's, Centennial Square, Kinsmen, Branscombe's Pond, and Kenmount Park.
4. Development of a "looped" trail system encompassing the City that accommodates walkers, cyclists, and inline skaters, and is accessible to all residents. Trail system enhancements proposed for Mount Pearl involve three principle elements:

1. Widening current and future-developed trails to 4m to meet ideal national standards for cycling;
2. Development of a "looped" system that surrounds the entire City; and,
3. Incorporating pedestrian-activated crosswalks at key locations, and a pedestrian overpass where the T'Railway currently meets Commonwealth Avenue.

### **1.3.2 Recommendations Regarding Recreation and Cultural Programs**

With specific reference to recreation and cultural programming, it is the consultants' opinion that the Parks and Recreation Department is performing very well in most of the areas related to individual growth. There are, however, a number of areas that the Department may wish to focus on in the future, including seniors and active retirees, youth, and fitness and well-being.

#### **Seniors and Active Retirees**

Demographic information suggests that empty nesters and recent retirees will be a segment of the population that will continue to grow. Health and wellness trends demonstrate that this demographic group is generally active, and demands appropriate services. Traditional programming and marketing models do not work effectively to this segment – something in addition to the seasonal Leisure Guide is likely needed. The Department should take steps in the delivery of programs, and in the design of new facilities, to focus greater attention on the needs and interests of this segment of the population.

#### **Youth**

There are many opportunities in the community in which youth can participate. These activities are sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, local sport and cultural organizations, churches, the school system, the YM / YWCA, and others. It is the consultants' opinion that because of the diverse needs and interests of this age group – some are eager to participate in scheduled programs, while others prefer to engage in less formal activities – there is a continuing need (1) to ensure interaction and communication between agencies that provide services to youth, as well as among youth themselves, (2) to ensure that adequate facilities are in place to meet physical and social interests, and (3) to ensure that youth and other age groups have opportunities to interact with each other.

#### **Fitness and Well Being**

Canadians are increasingly aware that there is a concern regarding our general levels of fitness, particularly among younger people. Certainly, the Federal Government has taken an active role in bringing this to the attention of the general public, and many organizations, including the

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, are engaged in initiatives that are intended to address the concern. At the local level, perhaps as the number one priority, Mount Pearl should devote more of its resources toward effective marketing messages related to health and fitness, ensure that facilities are designed or re-designed to focus on this critical area, and engage in cooperative initiatives with local educators and local health officials. One area that should definitely be addressed is to ensure that recreation facilities, at the very least, offer a balance in terms of food alternatives.

### **1.3.3 Recommendations Regarding Departmental Structure**

Data collected during the evaluation phase of the study suggested that the Mount Pearl Parks and Recreation Department is constantly seeking new systems and techniques in order to improve the delivery of services to local residents. The consultants' support this thrust, and would refer to it as a need to "fine tune" the Department's services, as opposed to a major overhaul.

Part of that fine tuning process may require a re-structuring of the Department, in order to ensure that services continue to be well received by the public, and that new initiatives are addressed. In fact, a discussion paper has recently been prepared which includes a proposed re-structuring of the Department. The suggested re-alignment is presented in Section 4 of this report. In general, however, the re-alignment would result in three, rather than four, management personnel, who would report directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation. These positions would include a Parks Supervisor, a Manager of Facility Services and a Community Development Supervisor.

The concept of community development (which has involved the provision of several non-traditional services) has been assigned to a number of Parks and Recreation Departments in recent years, and is generally seen as an appropriate fit. As a result, the consultants propose that the title of the Parks and Recreation Department be changed to better reflect its vision and the services it will provide, pending realignment and implementation of the recommendations proposed in the Plan. It is therefore recommended that the department be renamed, "Parks and Community Services," as a more accurate representation of the services that the department will provide to Mount Pearl residents.

### **1.3.4 Recommendations Regarding Parks and Open Space Development**

In addition to the key development recommendations proposed throughout the Plan, recommendations for each general type of park or open space present in Mount Pearl have been suggested based on input received through the public consultation process and the physical

inventory performed on all of the City's parks and open spaces. Each of these recommendations is illustrated in Section 4 of the Master Plan through the use of fact sheets that summarize the principle elements involved in each recommendation, including the existing use of the space, any special considerations that must be recognized to pursue its development, the proposed use for the space, anticipated costs associated with the recommendation, site management, development priority (high, medium, or low) and potential sources of funding to establish the space as proposed.

## 1.4 Cost Estimates for Recommended Developments

Throughout the Master Plan, recommendations proposed in the Plan were categorized as having a high, medium, or low development priority. To illustrate the costs associated with developments at each stage of implementation, the tables below provide details of these costs. Additional information regarding costs, implementation and priorities for development can be found in Section 5.0 of this report.

**Table 1.1 Implementation Cost Estimates by Development Priority**

Development Priority	Recommendation	Cost
<b>High</b>	1. Manager, Facility Services	\$45,000 - \$55,000
	2. Implement Kenmount Park open space plan	\$300,000 - \$350,000
	3. Lifestyle Centre Design, Feasibility Analysis	\$25,000 - \$30,000
	4. Lifestyle Centre and Glacier development	\$13 - \$14 million
<b>Total High Priority Development Costs</b>		<b>\$15,000,000</b>
<b>Medium - High</b>	5. Smallwood Centre Design and Feasibility Analysis	\$20,000 - \$25,000
	6. Indoor dryland training facility (soccer, rugby, inline skating, ball hockey, etc.), soccer pitch, rugby/soccer practice field, new softball field.	\$3 - \$3.5 million
<b>Total Medium-High Priority Development Costs</b>		<b>\$3.5 - \$3.75 million</b>
<b>Medium</b>	7. St. David's City Park (including tennis court)	\$750,000 - \$1 million
	8. Sale of Park Place	TBA
	9. Redesign of Kinsmen City Park	\$14,500
	10. Develop Kinsmen Park	\$1 - \$1.5 million
	11. Branscombe's Pond City Park (design only)	\$14,500
	12. Schoolyard designs	\$25,000
	13. Naturalization program	\$50,000
<b>Total Medium Priority Development Costs</b>		<b>\$2.5 million</b>
<b>Low</b>	14. Master Trail System Plan	\$32,500
	15. Retrofit hard surface play areas, playgrounds and tot lots.	TBA
	16. Install pedestrian-activated crossings and overpass	TBA
	17. Install T'Railway	TBA
	18. Install completed looped walkway system	TBA
	19. Parkway: Lifestyle Centre to Smallwood, Centennial Square and St. David's,	TBA
<b>Total Low Priority Development Costs</b>		<b>\$50,000+</b>
<b>Total Cost Estimates for all Departments</b>		<b>\$19 million</b>



## 1.5 Organization of the Main Report

The City of Mount Pearl Parks and Recreation Master Plan is presented in the following sections:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1.0 Executive Summary  | ▪ Provides an overview of the Master Plan and the development process. It highlights the key goals and objectives of the plan, and summarizes proposed recommendations.   |
| 2.0 Planning Context   | ▪ Summarizes the socio-demographics and key recreation trends affecting the City of Mount Pearl. Introduces the consultation and inventory processes used to drive plan development and recommendations.  |
| 3.0 Evaluation of Current Facilities and Programs              | ▪ Based on the findings from the consultation and inventory process, this section provides an analysis of the results within the context of parks and recreation development in Mount Pearl. Also presents the recommendations stemming from the results, which suggest which developments, redevelopments or demolitions would be most feasible for the City given current service offerings and local trends. |
| 4.0 Recommendations  | ▪ Outlines key recommendations for parks and open spaces, recreational facilities, recreation and cultural programs, as well as the Parks and Recreation Departmental structure.  |
| 5.0 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Implementation and Budget | ▪ Describes the process for implementing recommendations and provides a timeline along which developments should occur. A detailed budget indicating costs associated with this implementation, development and maintenance of proposed parks, recreation spaces and facilities is also included.   |



## 2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

The City's growth and socio-demographic profile, leisure service trends, other relevant trends, and input from facility users and the general public defined the context for the Master Plan and its proposed recommendations. This section summarizes the various methods used to gauge that information, and highlights the key points that define the Plan's context.

### 2.1 Community Profile

The City of Mount Pearl is Newfoundland and Labrador's third city, with a population of approximately 25,000.<sup>1</sup> It sits on the western edge of the province's capital, St. John's, and is widely seen as a healthy city and a good place to live. In fact, Mount Pearl exceeds the provincial averages on almost all indicators of economy, education, health and well-being.

To develop an accurate portrayal, or profile, of the City, past and current demographic data was evaluated, and any implications related to trends and changes in the need for parks and recreation services were identified. These trends were used later in the planning process to guide the recommendations proposed.

A *Best Practices* review of selected municipalities across Canada was conducted, in search of innovative approaches and practices in place elsewhere that might prove of value in developing the recreational environment and resources of Mount Pearl. Furthermore, the issue of partnerships, in the development and management of municipal recreation programs, was examined -- understanding that more and more communities across Canada are working with private or non-profit groups to provide cultural and recreation programs and the operation of sport and recreation facilities.

Combined, this assessment informed the development of a "Community Profile," which identified such factors as:

- Population trends, demographic analysis and economic growth.
- Employment statistics and industrial health.
- School enrollment, shifts and trends.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2001 Census population for Mount Pearl was 25,170 — a decline of 1% since 1996. Over the same period, the provincial population declined by 7% (512,930 in 2001, down from 551,795).

### 2.1.1 Economic Indicators

- In 2000, personal income per capita in Mount Pearl was \$20,100. The provincial figure was \$17,000, and for Canada it was \$22,600.
- In 2000, after-tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$13,800 for Mount Pearl. For the province it was \$12,000.
- In 2000, the City's employment rate for ages 18 to 64 was 82%; the provincial rate was 74%.
- In 2000, half of the couple families in Mount Pearl had incomes of more than \$59,200, whereas across the province, half had incomes of more than \$43,100.
- In 2000, half of the lone-parent families in Mount Pearl had incomes under \$24,400, whereas across the province, half had less than \$19,000.
- The average value of a home in 2001 was \$113,172, while the provincial average was \$76,283.
- In 2001, 8% of the city's population received social assistance at some point during the year, whereas 14% did so at the provincial level.
- In 2000, 16% of the labour force in Mount Pearl collected Employment Insurance (EI) — less than half the provincial rate of 37%.
- The 2000 self-reliance ratio for Mount Pearl was 88%; the provincial was 78%.<sup>2</sup>
- Economic wellbeing in Mount Pearl is improving over time. In 2003, 2,360 people in the city collected EI at some point during the year, down from the 1992 figure of 4,180. Likewise, 730 children aged 0–17 were in families on social assistance in 2003, also down from 920 in 1991. These figures are especially encouraging since the population increased over that same time.

### 2.1.2 Education

According to the Statistics Canada 2001 Census:

- 80% of people 20 years of age and older in Mount Pearl had at least a high school diploma, compared to 60% of people in the province.
- About 17% of people in Mount Pearl aged 25–54 had a Bachelor's Degree or higher, compared to 13% in the province as a whole.
- 93% of people in Mount Pearl aged 25–29 had at least a high school diploma, compared to 79% province-wide and 85% for Canada.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a measure of the community's dependency on government transfers such as: Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, social assistance, etc. The higher the percentage of income that comes from transfers the lower the self-reliance ratio.

Overall, Mount Pearl's economic zone, 19 (also known as the *Capital Coast*), enjoyed a higher quality of life, slightly lower smoking rates, and higher rates of physical fitness than other areas across the province.

### **2.1.3 Population Growth**

To design and provide the most appropriate recreation services and programs within its means to Mount Pearl residents, it is necessary for the Parks and Recreation Department to first understand the population demographics and trends of the City. This knowledge further allows for appropriate planning and delivery of parks and recreation services within the Master Plan, and provides an additional consideration that may impact upon the success of the Plan's implementation of recommendations throughout the life of the Plan. In essence, it is necessary to understand *who* the people of Mount Pearl are, before being able to confidently recommend programs and services that meet their needs.

Information for this section was taken from Statistics Canada Census data from 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001. Table 2.1 on the following page highlights the population changes in Mount Pearl per age group, between 1996 and 2001, indicating the percentage change overall. As seen in the table, there is a general decline in the population among infants to those between 40 and 44 years. While the percentage decrease is relatively stable across all age groups, there is an average decline of approximately 15% among infants to teenagers (0 to 14 years), and among those aged 25 to 39 years. At the same time, however, the population of seniors and older adults in Mount Pearl is increasing, with a 56% increase in population of those aged 55 to 59 years, and an average 33% increase in the population of Mount Pearl residents aged 50 to 54, and 60 to 64, respectively.

**Table 2.1: Population Change in Mount Pearl, 1996–2001<sup>3</sup>**

	1996 Census			2001 Census			% Change		
<b>Ages</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total</b>
0-4	765	740	1505	665	655	1310	-14.4	-11.5	-13.0
5-9	1005	895	1900	780	750	1530	-22.4	-16.2	-19.5
10-14	1115	1061	2175	985	925	1915	-11.7	-12.7	-12.0
15-19	1135	1095	2230	1055	1050	2110	-7.0	-4.1	-5.4
20-24	1080	1080	2160	960	1060	2015	-11.1	-1.9	-6.7
25-29	960	1075	2035	845	890	1735	-12.0	-17.2	-14.7
30-34	1045	1205	2250	880	1015	1900	-15.8	-15.8	-15.6
35-39	1110	1205	2315	1025	1240	2260	-7.7	2.9	-2.4
40-44	1150	1280	2430	1065	1195	2260	-7.4	-6.6	-7
45-49	1035	1055	2090	1075	1190	2270	3.9	12.8	8.6
50-54	690	680	1370	925	940	1865	34.1	38.2	36.1
55-59	400	415	815	635	645	1275	58.8	55.4	56.4
60-64	290	290	580	380	390	770	31.0	34.5	32.8
65-69	205	280	485	275	270	550	34.1	-3.6	13.4
70-74	200	270	470	215	295	510	7.5	9.3	8.5
75-79	130	235	365	165	260	425	26.9	10.6	16.4
80-84	75	160	235	90	195	285	--	21.9	21.3
85-89	25	60	85	45	115	160	--	--	--
90+	10	25	35	5	40	45	--	--	--
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,440</b>	<b>13,080</b>	<b>25,520</b>	<b>12,065</b>	<b>13,105</b>	<b>25,170</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>-1.4%</b>

## 2.2 Current Recreation and Leisure Trends

This section identifies significant trends related to the development of parks and recreation facilities, to the delivery of recreational and cultural programs, and to the operation of those departments responsible. The information has been selected from a number of sources, which are identified in the References section at the end of this document. Local issues specific to parks and recreation that may have potential impact on the delivery of parks and recreation services in the City of Mount Pearl, have also been identified. Where possible, the potential application to the Mount Pearl Parks and Recreation Master Plan has also been suggested.

### 2.2.1 General Trends in Parks and Recreation

- Today, there is a general shift towards personal growth and improved quality of life that supports activities promoting an active lifestyle. For adults, this often focuses on individual

<sup>3</sup> 2001 population figures have been revised as of March, 2004 based on updated estimates from Statistics Canada. Figures may not add to total due to random rounding.

Source: Compiled by the Community Accounts Unit based on information provided from the Census of Population 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001, Statistics Canada.

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rather than team activities, as well as those activities that are more casual and, therefore, fit more easily into busy schedules that attempt to achieve an appropriate balance between work and home life.

- Increasingly, community recreation facilities are designed to serve as multi-purpose facilities. The trend today is a shift away from stand-alone, single-purpose facilities, to those that provide a variety of services and programs for all ages. Facilities that are flexible in both access and programming will be more appealing as they allow people to meet several needs in one location.
- The integration of health and recreation facilities is becoming increasingly common, such as in the case of a fitness club or gym with on-site physiotherapy or chiropractic clinics.
- Recreation facilities today are more frequently built as pleasing and aesthetically welcoming buildings, rather than as industrial spaces, to meet the need for a relaxing atmosphere.
- Today, facilities often include revenue-generating space for uses such as restaurants, snack bars, equipment retail outlets, etc.

## **2.2.2 Trends in Recreation and Cultural Programs**

The following trends have been identified as potentially having an impact on the planning, delivery and maintenance of recreation and cultural programs.

### ***Parks and Recreation Planning:***

Current Parks and Recreation Planning is focusing on a systems based approach to development that provides open spaces and programs for citizens, as well as stimulating tourism and special events, helping to attract new residents and enhance property values. As well, specific add-on plans are often created: Market Plans, Feasibility Studies, Business Planning, Resource Management and Greenway/Trail Planning.

### ***The Obesity Challenge:***

Health and Welfare Canada identifies obesity in our population as one of the key health challenges that will have drastic impacts on healthcare costs and community welfare. It is now recognized that parks and pathways are community design solutions that address both physical inactivity and obesity issues. A recent study in the United States found that people living near a park are twice as likely to be active as those who do not.

### ***Physical fitness:***

An estimated 25% of Canadian children are overweight. Two-thirds are not active enough for optimal development, and as a result, they become more inactive as they get older. Forty-two per cent (42%) of Canadian children never take part in organized sport, while 17% are sedentary and only take part in physical activity once per month, at best. Children aged 10 to 14 years are the principle group affected, as this is generally the age when the largest physical activity decline occurs.

Today, a number of programs exist to deal with obesity in youth that can be operated within a school program or modified for after school or drop-in programs. Evidently, parks and recreation service providers should play an active role in tailoring services to combat the obesity challenge.

### ***Volunteering:***

Fewer Canadians are volunteering each year, with approximately 27% recorded in 2000. However, those that do volunteer are spending more time doing so, with an average of 167 hours per year. Most volunteers (57%) are involved in organizing events or (41%) acting on unpaid boards or committees.

Newfoundland and Labrador, however, has more volunteers than any other province at 31%, and provincial volunteers contribute more hours than any other province as well. An estimated 26% of these volunteer hours are given in arts, culture and recreation fields.

A key to developing a successful volunteer network is to have the “best” volunteers come forward with their support, rather than having them solicited. For example, those who choose to volunteer on their own will typically spend up to 50% more time volunteering than those who are approached to volunteer.

### ***Organized Team Sport on the Decline:***

In Canada, the number of people involved in organized team sport is continually declining, while those involved in more casual individual activities, is increasing. For example, in Alberta inline skating is now more popular than many traditional team sports, including hockey. These trends suggest that the safest public investment may be in multipurpose facilities designed for non-competitive uses and a variety of activities, as well as trails, spectator facilities and drop-in areas.

***Recreo-tourism:***

The combination of parks and recreation facilities and programs to develop attractions and services that cater to the tourism market and promote extended stay to support economic development, is a growing trend across the country. This concept proved successful in Calgary's Olympic Park and Winter Boardwalk, and at "The Hub" in Moncton, New Brunswick. These developments, however, are generally capital intensive and combine residential and commercial activities.

***Community Gardening:***

Already very popular in Montreal and in our region in Pippy Park, St. John's, the concept behind this trend revolves around using vacant open spaces and, in some cases, parts of public parks, to promote public gardens. This has also shown to be a good way to join youth and senior citizens in programming, as youth offer labour support to the seniors who pass along gardening skills.

### **2.2.3 Trends: Parks and Open Spaces**

***Economic Benefits of Open Space:***

It is now recognized that there is an average increase of 20% in property values for homes abutting a park with active recreation areas; property values adjacent to passive parks are even higher. (This is why developers combine golf course with residential development.) Conversely, poor maintenance, design and landscaping of parks can also have a negative impact on property values. It has been proposed by some researchers that for every \$1 million a municipality receives in revenues for residential development, the communities have to expend \$1.1 million to service them.

***Acquiring Open Space:***

The decline of open space is a major problem caused by resource extraction and residential development. More and more negotiations are focused on land acquisition to ensure adequate and accessible open space with emphasis on access to water.

## **2.2.4 Local Trends: Recreational Facilities**

### ***Town of Portugal Cove/St. Phillips Recreational Needs Assessment in 2002***

Based on community feedback the Town identified a need for, in order of priority: gymnasium, swimming pool, ice rink, and a youth centre. The needs assessment recognized that swimming pools and ice rinks are very expensive to operate and are not likely to be used if not located within a 15-minute driving radius. The Outer Ring Road has made living in these communities very attractive and provides easy and quick access to St. John's, Mount Pearl and Paradise. Many of the Town's youth are currently taking part in ice hockey and swimming programs offered in St. John's, Conception Bay South and Mount Pearl. The community is growing fast, and has a younger population than Mount Pearl. The potential does exist to develop facilities for Mount Pearl residents that the residents of Portugal Cove/St. Phillips could access due to the close proximity to the City.

### ***City of St. John's – In need of soccer fields***

Currently, the biggest need in St. John's is for soccer fields, and the City is planning to build an additional five soccer pitches. This is not surprising, as research shows that soccer participation is on the rise in many communities across the country. The Canadian Soccer Association estimates that more than one million Canadians are active soccer players – exceeding the number of Canadians registered in hockey programs. The City also has a high demand for swimming classes, particularly in early age classes where classes are full. That being said none of the pools in St. John's are operating to full capacity.

### ***Provincial Sports Training Facility***

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador has recently released a Request for Expression of Interest for the development of a Provincial Sports Training Facility. This new provincial facility would replace the current Torbay facility and be developed through a public-private partnership. It would support the training for elite provincial athletes and host competitions, supporting the continued progress of recognized sport in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, the project has been put on hold by the current provincial government.

### ***Newfoundland and Labrador Science Centre***

The Newfoundland and Labrador Science Centre is currently looking to relocate, pending site and market assessments. The space for development is expected to be 30,000 square feet, and will

promote science education for youth. A *Site and Market Assessment* is currently underway to select the most appropriate site for the facility. Four sites are being considered: the Reid Centre in Mount Pearl, and Bowring Park and Pippy Park in St. John's.

## **2.3 Summary of Consultation Process**

A key element in developing an effective and relevant Plan was in having an accurate understanding of the recreation needs and wants of the people of Mount Pearl. This community input was gathered through four different processes: focus groups, a public meeting, a telephone survey, and interviews with City Council and staff. Consultation with Mount Pearl Residents was a critical component throughout the development of the Master Plan, as the primary goals of the Plan stem from its community-driven foundation. The following sections briefly describe each component of the public consultation process.

### **1. Focus Groups**

Through several meetings of the client and consultants, approximately 50 sports groups, community organizations, boards of management, businesses, schools, and churches were identified, covering the full spectrum of stakeholders in the City's parks and recreation facilities, programs and services. These stakeholders were then invited to participate through either an extensive series of focus groups over a period from April to September, 2004, or through written submissions.

### **2. Public Meeting**

On April 5, 2004, a public meeting was held at the Mount Pearl Track and Field building, to allow citizens to present their concerns directly to the consultants. The meeting was widely promoted through posters, radio and newspaper ads, and radio public service announcements.

### **3. Telephone Survey**

A telephone survey of Mount Pearl residents was conducted in May 2004. In total, 404 residents were interviewed, giving a statistical margin of error of +/-4.9%, 19 times out of 20.

### **4. Interviews with City Council and Staff**

Separate focus groups and interviews were held to gather detailed input from Mount Pearl's City Council, Department Heads, Parks and Recreation managers, outside workers, and facility staff. Overall, the consultation process was one of the most thorough ever conducted within any municipality in this province, and generated a body of findings that gave tangible direction in the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

## **2.4 Inventory and Assessment**

Starting from a base of the existing records and inventories of the City, a detailed inventory of all recreation programs, facilities, and infrastructure was developed and assessed to identify their current condition and potential for future development. Through the development of such an inventory, Mount Pearl's resources were recorded and mapped, identifying existing assets or infrastructure and categorizing potential resources. This process was divided into an evaluation of four aspects of parks and recreation services in Mount Pearl:

1. Parks and Open Spaces
2. Recreational Facilities
3. Recreational and Cultural Programs
4. Departmental Review

### **2.4.1 Parks and Open Spaces Inventory**

With the assistance of Department of Parks and Recreation staff, over 50 playgrounds and tot lots and nearly 30 sports fields were assessed to determine the basic amenities offered at each, as well as to evaluate the overall condition of each space from a design, landscape, and safety perspective.

The parks and open spaces inventory was divided into two main components: physical inventory assessment and conditional assessment. Although these components are referred to as separate units in this document, it is important to recognize that both were in fact carried out simultaneously throughout the inventory process, to ensure an efficient use of resources and to simplify the process. Using two separate evaluation forms, data was entered for each site and assembled in a Geographic Information System format that confirmed the characteristics and services offered at the park, such as the presences of trail connections, signage, or whether or not the space appeared well maintained, with little or no litter, a clearly-defined entryway and parking space for visitors.

The following sections identify each component of the inventory process, and provide details concerning the specific types of data collected in each evaluation.

#### ***1. Inventory and Assessment***

The inventory and assessment phase was used to first confirm where parks and open spaces were located in the City, and then to determine the services, amenities and qualities of the sites.

In particular, the inventory assessment evaluated the general area and specific location of parks and open spaces in the City, as well as the following:

- Parking;
- Washrooms;
- Seating;
- Turf condition;
- Trail connections; and,
- Signage (informational or directional).

At each site, these criteria were scored on an inventory form created in Microsoft Excel (see figure 2.1 below). Digital photographs of each park and recreational space were taken to accompany the inventory, serving to provide a visual reference of the facilities and services at each site. Furthermore, this photographic database of the sites can become an invaluable tool for the Parks and Recreation Department in determining maintenance issues and the future use of these parks within the City.

**Figure 2.1: Sample Inventory Data Form**

Field	Location	General Location	Parking	Seating	Washrooms	Nourishment	Turf Condition	Trail Connection	Signage	Condition
Easton Tennis Court	Easton Place/Smallwood Drive	Pearlgate	None	Benches	No	No	Poor	Yes	No	Poor
Gilham Tennis Court	Mortimore Drive	South	None	None	No	No	Fair	Yes	No	Fair
St. David's Tennis Complex	Ruth Avenue/First Street	Power's Pond	Asphalt	Wooden Bleachers	Yes	Yes	Good	No	Yes	Good
Admiralty Wood	Trafalgar Drive	South	None	Benches	No	No	Good	Yes	No	Fair
Edward's Place	Edward's Place	Power's Pond	None	None	No	No	Poor	Yes	No	Fair
Babb Crescent	Babb Crescent	Power's Pond	Asphalt	None	No	No	Fair	Yes	No	Fair
Westminster Tennis Courts	Westminster Drive	South	None	Benches	No	No	Fair	Yes	No	Fair

While the inventory evaluation is an informative and useful tool in the overall process of Master Plan development, it is important to acknowledge that the scores and data presented are neither weighted nor scientifically-based, and should therefore not be used outside the parameters of the Master Plan.

## 2. Conditional Assessment

As a secondary component of the inventory phase, a conditional assessment was performed to present a more in-depth look at the quality and condition of the parks and recreation spaces offered to residents of Mount Pearl. Particularly, this assessment evaluated if:

- The space appeared well-kept and maintained;
- The space had a clearly-defined entryway;
- There was well-defined parking on site;
- Signage (informational or directional) was present;
- There were garbage receptacles on site;
- There was little or no litter on the grounds;
- No safety hazards were present;
- The recreation equipment was in good condition.

Using a similar form as that used during the initial phase of the inventory (see Figure 2.2 below), each of the above-noted qualities was subjectively assessed and evaluated to determine the overall condition of each park or open space. Similarly, each park was evaluated overall as good, fair or poor – a score which resulted from totaling the number of these qualities or criteria that were recorded at the site. A total of up to three criteria resulted in the space being ranked as poor, four to six criteria translated as fair condition, and seven to nine criteria deemed a park to be in good condition.

**Figure 2.2: Sample Conditional Inventory Form**

SITE	Appear Well-Kept & Maintained	Buildings Strategically Located	Well-Landscaped	Clearly-Defined Entryway	Well-Defined Parking	Signage On Site	Garbage Receptacles	Little or No Litter	No Safety Hazards Present	Condition
Easton Tennis Court	No	N/A	No	No	N/A	No	No	No	No	Poor
St. David's Tennis Complex	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Good
Admiralty Wood	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fair
Edward's Place	No	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Yes	No	Yes	Fair
Babb Crescent	No	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fair
Westminster Tennis Courts	Yes	N/A	No	Yes	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fair

In total, the parks and open spaces inventory evaluated 51 playgrounds and tot lots, two beach volleyball courts, 9 multipurpose courts, 7 tennis courts, 5 soccer pitches, 1 rugby field, 4 softball fields, and 1 track and field complex.

## 2.4.2 Recreational Facilities

To understand the current conditions and identify any immediate challenges associated with the recreational facilities within Mount Pearl, an architect and structural engineer assessed the current major buildings. A report specific to their existing condition was prepared to identify any “red flags” that should be dealt with immediately. In turn, these reports informed the development of recommendations and strategies regarding facility development.

As community-developed and financed recreation facilities are capital-intensive with high maintenance costs, these resources have been assessed within the context of potential input from the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, support from schools and church groups and the potential to partner with neighboring communities in the provision of some facilities. All this information has helped develop a strategy to support access to high end recreation facilities by residents of the City.



The recreational facility inventory and assessment researched such factors as:

- facility standards and requirements;
- potential for facility upgrading and improvements;
- maintenance, and operating costs;
- facility policies and procedures; and
- current and future concession operations and their potential.

### **2.4.3 Recreation and Cultural Programs**

Assessment of the recreation and cultural programs involved an evaluation of the varied programs offered by the City, followed by suggestions for modifications or enhancements, new partnerships, and streamlining of communication media to achieve some economics of scale while supporting enhanced community services. Furthermore, the process involved researching such factors as:

- relevant trends across Newfoundland and Labrador, and the country;
- programs targeted to specific sectors such as youth, family, and seniors; and
- policies, fees and charges, delivery methods, processes and criteria for annual evaluations.

### **2.4.4 Department Administration**

As well as interview, meet with and talk to residents in the community, Parks and Recreation Department staff was also interviewed, and continuous dialogue was held with department heads, which provided valued input and support throughout the planning process.

Input gathered from staff and a review of the current parks and recreation guidelines combined with current trends, the physical resources, financial realities and community input to determine challenges faced by the Department and suggest modifications to the structure to address those challenges. Information from other successful Departments across Canada and parts of the United States was also obtained to evaluate best practices in department administration and operation. This process researched such factors as:

- the Department's role, organizational structure, staffing and inventory requirements;
- recreational delivery systems/services, and best practices comparative data;

- user fee systems and structures;
- the Department's image as seen by the general public;
- the role of Boards of Management and special committees, including a review of by-laws, policies, procedures, and agreements; and,
- areas of joint use opportunities.

## 2.5 Recreation Facility Standards

The following proposed standards for Parks and Recreation Facilities are adopted from the "Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Facility Standards" prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Sports and Fitness Division by the Lifestyle Information Network (1991). Interestingly, the Mount Pearl Recreation Plan prepared in 1983 used the same source as a benchmark for recreation facility standards.

These Standards are used to develop a benchmark for the target level of service offered by the City of Mount Pearl. The information is simply a framework that allows for the establishment of a benchmark for recreation facilities and associated activities that should be provided in Mount Pearl and are divided into local, neighbourhood, community and regional level recommendations. These standards then provide a check against facilities used in other areas. The information is combined with the resource assessment and the public consultations to arrive at the proposed recommendations suggested throughout the Master Plan.

### **General Standards for Open Space (with Park – School combinations)**

The standards that follow simply suggest the number of facilities proposed per the population base. These standards have been applied to current data to arrive at a potential number of facilities for the City of Mount Pearl. We then used the inventory data to compare what exists in the City with what the standards propose. Under regional facilities, gaps that might exist in the provision of recreational facilities on a regional level (20 miles radius) have been identified, to potentially identify opportunities that might warrant further future assessment.

### Average Open Space Standards across Canada

Area	Acres per 1000 population	Service radius	Size	Existing in Mount Pearl
Tot-lot (play lot or park lot)	.25 - .5	1/8 to ¼ mile (usually 1.4)	.6 to 2 acres, usually .5	0.25-0.5 acres/500 population
Parkette (vest pocket park)	.5	1/8 to ¼ miles	.6 to 1.0 acres, usually .5	0.5 acres/25,000 population
Neighbourhood Park (playground / local park / community park)	1 - 2	½ to 3 miles usually 1 mile	¼ to 20 acres usually 6 acres	1-2 acres/25,000 population
Community Park (playfield)	1 to 2 acres	½ to 3 miles usually 1 mile	4 to 100 acres, usually 8 to 25 acres	1-2 acres/25,000 population
City Park (municipal park / sub-regional park)	5	½ to 3 miles, usually 2 miles or ½ hour drive	25 to 200 acres, usually 100 acres	0
Regional Park	4 to 10	20 miles or 1 hour driving	25 to 1000 acres, usually 100 to 250 acres	0

### Standards for Neighbourhood Facilities (including schools)

Type of Field	Standard	Potential for Mount Pearl	Existing in Mount Pearl
Badminton (indoor)	One per 5000 population	5	4
Baseball field	One per 5000 population	5	5
Basketball court (outdoor)	One per 5000 population	5	9
Neighbourhood Centre	One per 5000 population	5	5
Gymnasium	One per 5000 population	5	4
Paved multi-use areas	One per 5000 population	5	9
Training or teaching facility	One per 5000 population	5	5
Natural ice outdoor rink	One per 5000 population	5	0
Type of Field	Standard	Potential for Mount Pearl	Existing in Mount Pearl
Soccer field	One per 5000 population	5	5
Softball regular	One per 5000 population	5	5
Tennis court	One per 5000 population	5	7
Volleyball court (beach)	One per 5000 population	5	2

### Standards for Community Facilities

Type of Field	Standard	Potential for Mount Pearl	Existing in Mount Pearl
Athletic field	1 per 20,000	1	2 (1 per 10,000)
Arena, artificial indoor ice area	1 per 20,000	1	2
Auditorium	1 per 20,000	1	4 (schools)
Bowling, pin bowling	One lane per 2500	10 lanes	
Lawn bowling	1 per 25,000	1	0
Community centre	1 per 25,000	1	5 (1 per 5,000)
Day centre	1 per 20,000 (for senior citizens)	1	1
Youth centre	1 per 20,000	1	0
Library	1 per 20,000	1	1
Indoor Pool	1 per 20,000	1	1
Outdoor pool	1 per 20,000	1	0
Rugby Field	1 per 20,000	1	1
Picnic area	1 acre for each 3-5,000 people	Approx. 5 acres	0
Soccer field	1 per 20,000	1	5 (1 per 4,000)
Softball, fastball	1 per 20,000	1	5 (1 per 4,000)
Squash court	1 per 20,000	1	0
Track and field	1 per 20,000	1	1

### Standards for Regional Facilities

*(20-mile radius, includes St. John's, Paradise, and CBS)*

Type of Field	Standard	Potential for Region	Existing in Region
Arboretum	1 per region	1	No
Art gallery	1 per region	1	Yes
Botanical garden	1 per region	1	Yes
Camping area	1 per 60,000	2	Yes
Resident Camp (serve 100 person per site, may be well removed from community)	1 per 40,000	3	Yes

Type of Field	Standard	Potential for Region	Existing in Region
Civic Centre	operated as private facility even when publicly owned	1	Yes
Nature centre	1 per region	1	No
Outdoor education centre	1 per region	1	No
Performance arts centre	1 per region	1	Yes
Curling rink	12 sheets per 25,000 pop	Approx. 50 sheets	Yes
Golf course	1 per region	1	Yes
Museum	One each per region (science or historical, built to grow with the population)	1	Yes
Scenic drive or parkway	link with integrated park system, combine with walkway system design to include lookouts or picnic areas	1	Yes (partial)
Cross-country skiing	link with integrated park system, combine with walkway system design to include lookouts or rest areas	1	Yes (partial)
Stadium	1 per 100,000	1	Yes
Hiking and cycling	1 system per region(links publicly owned open spaces)	1	Yes
Nature Trail	1 per region (used for teaching thru labeled flora and significant points of interest)	1	Yes
Riding trail	develop in conservation area, regional park or hydro r.o.w	1	No
Snowmobile trail	away from residential, need 100 acres or more of wooded trails	1	Yes (informal)

## **3.0 EVALUATION OF CURRENT FACILITIES & PROGRAMS**

This section of the report identifies the results that were obtained through the public consultation and inventory assessment processes. Findings presented in each section were later used to guide the development of recommendations, ensuring that developments proposed within the Plan are congruent with the needs of the public and the City, and with the current physical resources.

### **3.1 Analysis & Findings of Public Consultation: Public Perceptions**

#### **3.1.1 Public Meetings**

In April 2004 a public meeting was held at the Pearlgate Track and Field building, to allow citizens to present their views regarding parks and recreation directly to the consultants. The meeting was widely promoted through posters, radio and newspaper ads, and radio public service announcements.

Nineteen (19) people attended the meeting, seven of whom were teens or young adults. The following are some of the comments they made regarding facility needs, parks and open spaces, recreational programs, and the Parks & Recreation Department.

#### **1. Facility Needs**

The following are suggestions made in the meeting regarding new facilities needed in Mount Pearl:

- swimming pool;
- area for indoor racquet sports such as squash and indoor tennis courts;
- curling rink (the Smallwood Arena was suggested as a location);
- indoor running/walking track;
- regional training centre or sportsplex, with:
  - bigger weight room;
  - boxing ring;
  - martial arts;
  - multi-purpose spaces, and
  - flexible partitions to allow for expansion or contraction of various areas.

Throughout the public meeting, general comments were made regarding the new facility needs and the most appropriate means of developing such facilities to meet the needs of residents. For example, attendees suggested that perhaps the existing pool could be enhanced, rather than build a new one. Furthermore, concern was expressed regarding the issue of regionalization, as

those in attendance felt that the issue must be carefully considered in the planning of all new facilities.

Other general comments received in the public meeting were:

- A balance needs to be maintained between sport and other activities when planning, similar to the mix commonly seen at the YM-YWCA.
- Community agreements for the use of school facilities were also suggested.
- Concern was expressed that, even if the Smallwood Arena were to close, the total amount of ice in the City should not decrease.
- Registration for the swim programs in particular needs to be modernized, and could be Internet-based.

## ***2. Parks and Open Space***

With regard to parks and open spaces, attendees of the public meeting felt that more attention needs to be given to the maintenance and security of open spaces. They voiced the concern that even though snowmobiles and ATVs are not permitted on the walkways, it was said that they are often there anyway because the trails are not policed or the law enforced. Vandalism and loitering on the trails and in the tunnels were also major issues discussed, as were security in facility parking lots.

Suggested parks and open spaces needed in Mount Pearl were:

- An off-leash dog park or dog trail area;
- A skate park;
- An outdoor skate rink;
- A street hockey area;
- A BMX area (identified as a fast-growing sport);
- Basketball courts; and
- City-run, subsidized camps.
- It was suggested that youth should be involved in the planning of any facilities for young people, but plans must also consider the concerns of local residents.
- It was noted that many people from Mount Pearl now go all the way to the Quidi Vidi Dog Park.
- A dog park could benefit from the use of trees as wind breaks if located on a higher field.
- It was noted that, in some areas, skate parks have grown to youth parks, and that the concern arises not so much from the park itself as the lack of adequate enforcement. Oakville was mentioned as an example of proper enforcement levels in a youth park.

### **3. Recreational Programs**

There is a need for more adult-only programs, possibly for ages 20–40, in such things as martial arts or swimming lessons. These would be similar to current YM/YWCA offerings, but such programs are often only for young people or seniors. These programs might be offered in school gyms, if suitable schedules could be worked out. The concern was expressed that there is often not enough advance awareness of City programs or special events. Some skepticism was expressed that the concerns being presented at the meeting would not actually be heard or acted upon in the Master Plan. There was some frustration that the current pool schedule is set up for pre-teens more than competitors and adults. It was suggested that a new pool should have a pool floor that can be raised or lowered for various activities or events. It was suggested that “Maybe Mount Pearl should focus on something unique. We’ll never get an arts and culture centre.” This was due to the concern that we may be too close to St. John’s to get any major government funding.

### **4. Parks and Recreation Department**

The following are general comments received during the public meeting concerning the Parks & Recreation Department:

- People agreed that the City’s *Activity Guide* did an “excellent” job.
- Frustration was expressed that the Mount Pearl Police were not doing an adequate job of patrolling.
- The City’s website should have links to other sites for individual sport groups or activities, and that the City should offer support to those groups in setting up a site and possibly even offering them blocks of Web space for their sites.
- The registration process for all sports should be made available on the City’s Web site.
- The City should offer people the chance to be placed on an email list, so that they would automatically be sent notification of new programs, registration deadlines, and other news as it became available.
- More sports programs could be offered for adults or seniors once they have finished with many of the minor sports programs, possibly through stronger links with *Sport Newfoundland and Labrador*.
- *Master Games 2005*, to be held next year in Edmonton, Alberta, were suggested as a possible model for Mount Pearl to consider. A variation might be to have a range of activities that included more than just sports, perhaps bringing in crib, bridge, and other games.
- The City needs to offer camps that are more affordable than those commonly available now.
- The City could host some of the *Sport Kids* programs offered by various national or provincial sports organizations, which teach children the basics of their particular



sports. One example given was the traffic safety program offered by *Bicycle Newfoundland and Labrador*. It was noted that this association even has its own insurance for people taking part in the program.

### **3.1.2 Public Survey**

The telephone survey was an important step in the information-gathering process, allowing us to get detailed insights into how the people of Mount Pearl felt about the issues and future direction of the city's parks and recreation facilities, programs and services. It involved telephone interviews with 404 residents of Mount Pearl during May, 2004, giving us a margin of error of +/- 4.9%, 19 times out of 20. A sample of the survey used throughout this process can be found in Appendix X, at the end of this document.

The purpose of the survey was two-fold:

- To identify awareness, use, and ratings of satisfaction with current facilities.
- To identify perceived needs and potential financing for new facilities.

#### **3.1.2.1. Awareness of Existing "Facilities"**

The results showed that there is generally satisfaction with how the Department is informing residents about its programs and services. In particular, the Department's own brochures were seen to be the most effective means of promotion.

Feedback about the Department's print materials in particular was positive, with 98% saying they kept them informed either very well or well. Comments included statements that the brochures were accurate, freely available, and well updated, with an easy to use layout. Suggestions for additional communications include more advertising, inserts with other City mail, community channel, Internet (website and email), news stories, and school distribution. Interesting, although people spoke highly of the Department's promotional efforts, only 51% rated them as excellent, and only 11% as very good.

Given the high satisfaction already noted with the materials themselves, we can deduce from this that a greater range of promotional efforts might be ideal. For example, only 9% learned about City materials from newspapers, and only 5% from broadcast media, even though the percentages of the population using both those media are much, much higher. This suggests that ad presence in these media is generally not getting noticed. Of course, any decision in this area will have to be weighed against the considerable costs of mass media advertising.

### ***Use of existing facilities***

Mount Pearl's residents generally make good use of the city's existing facilities, particularly its walking trails. It is particularly of interest that the same number of people reported using the swimming pool and the Reid Centre. This is particularly impressive given the broad range of activities taking place at the Centre, balanced against what was widely seen as a small and outdated pool. If that pool can match the Reid Centre's draw, it shows significant potential user base for a more modern and pleasing pool.

### ***3.1.2.2. Assessing the Existing***

Municipal services of any sort are generally not known for drawing high satisfaction ratings from citizens. The fact that many of Mount Pearl's parks and recreation programs do generally score highly should not be overlooked. People are generally quite happy with the range of offerings, and show considerable patience and understanding for those that do not score so well. However, given the City's longstanding focus on being the best that it can, we can look at even small levels of dissatisfaction as potential areas for improvement, and moderate levels as pressing needs.

Mount Pearl's registration system was most often cited as a problem by respondents, with 22% of respondents rating it as either fair or poor. Many told horror stories of lining up in the rain at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning to be sure their children could get into the time slots they wanted. A common question asked in exasperation was why registration cannot yet be handled over the Internet.

The next highest point of concern came in the areas of program costs, with 19% rating their dissatisfaction as either fair or poor. Other points that should be noted came in the areas of program times and variety, and the condition of facilities.

Table 3.1.1 shows that there is generally a good level of satisfaction with maintenance of the City's outdoor and indoor facilities. On a separate question, while people generally felt satisfied with levels of maintenance, there was some dissatisfaction with upkeep of public places. About 10% were concerned about vandalism, garbage, and insufficient security.

**Table 3.1.1: "How well-maintained are recreational facilities?"**

Type of Facility	Excellent/Good	Fair/Poor	No Opinion
Outdoor facilities	82%	14%	4%
Indoor facilities	86	4	9

### 3.1.2.3. Need for New Facilities

Respondents were asked whether or not the city needed a list of new facilities, as shown in Table 2. They were then asked to rate the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> most needed. The ratings for 1<sup>st</sup> choice are shown in Table 3.1.2. By combining the ratings for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice we get a good prioritized list of identified needs, as presented in Figure 3.1.4.

**Table 3.1.2: “Do you think Mount Pearl needs a new...”**

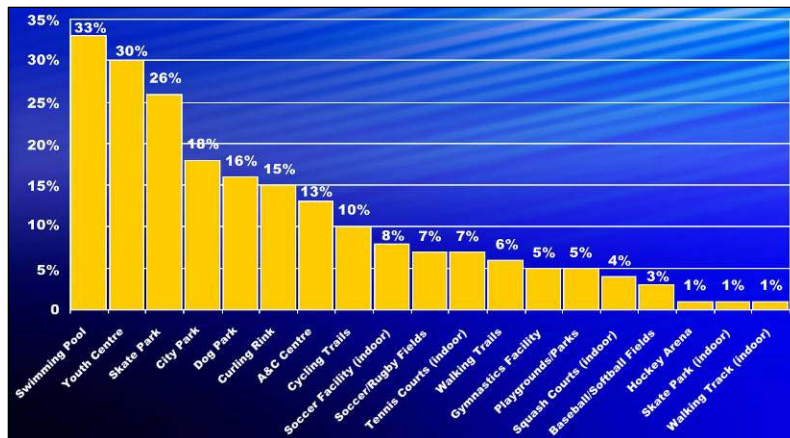
Facility	Rating
Youth centre	77%
Skateboard park	76
City park	64
Arts & Culture Centre	60
Swim pool (indoor)	58
Cycling trails	56
Curling rink	54
Dog park	54
Soccer facility (indoor)	49
Gymnastics facility	45
Tennis courts (indoor)	45
Squash courts	43
Playgrounds/parks	28
Soccer/Rugby fields	21
Walking trails	17
Ice arena	9

Some interpretation may be in order here to ensure everything is clearly understood. When people were just asked generally what items were needed, but were not asked to prioritize, five facilities (a youth centre, skate park, city park, and arts & culture centre) were all named more often than a swimming pool. However, when people were asked to prioritize the needs, the swimming pool was identified as the most pressing. We can deduce that while many things were seen as “*nice to have*,” the swimming pool was clearly more into the “*need to have*” category. In fact, as seen in Table 3.1.3, only two other items (the youth centre and skateboard park) had even one-third as much support as the swimming pool when people gave their first choice for the most needed facility. Significantly, the youth centre was consistently rated high as both a want and need, followed by the skateboard park, indicating strong support for an increased focus on young people.

**Table 3.1.3: “Most needed facility” (1<sup>st</sup> choice)**

Facility	Rating
Swim pool (indoor)	21
Youth centre	15
Skateboard park	9
City park	7
Dog park	7
Curling rink	6
Arts & Culture Centre	4
Cycling trails	3
Soccer facility (indoor)	3
Ball fields	2
Ice arena	1
Skateboard park (indoor)	1
Squash courts (indoor)	1
Walking track (indoor)	1
Walking trails	1

**Figure 3.1.1: “Most needed facility” (sum of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices)**



#### 3.2.1.4. Need for New Programs

Widespread support for teens was seen in calls for programs as well as facilities. Figure 5 shows that 61% of respondents felt that Mount Pearl needed new or improved programs for teens. Interestingly, the groups with the smallest perceived need for new programs were children and pre-schoolers, with only 38 and 31% respectively speaking up for these group. This indicates that people perceive a very separate and real gap in local support for teens as opposed to children.

In an open-ended question, respondents suggested a number of facilities and programs, including a well-lit and maintained skate park; indoor programs targeted at youth; a recreation centre targeted at youth; and facilities and programs for special needs children.

### 3.1.2.5 *Making It Happen*

Having identified some of the facilities and programs that the public wants, there is still the very real question of how residents want to see it all happen. Where should new facilities be built? Where should the City commit extra funding? How much are citizens willing to pay?

### **Regionalization**

The survey indicated that residents are clearly in favour of regional facilities... as long as those facilities are built in Mount Pearl. Some 78% of respondents were in favour of such a concept, but the level of support dropped to 49% if it was suggested that the facilities would be built in a neighbouring community. However, this particular question may have issues that were beyond the scope of this survey. Would residents feel different about a facility built on the border with Paradise, as opposed to on the border with St. John's? Would they be more in favour of the idea if they could see a considerable improvement in quality that regionalization might allow? Such factors should be explored before it is determined whether or not the public would support regional facilities.

### **Financing**

Almost two-thirds of residents saw indoor facilities as the most worthy cause for additional funding for the City. However, it is interesting to note that almost as many people felt parks or green spaces, or walking and cycling paths, were also deserving of more investment — even though they rated low as needed facilities, and were virtually never the first choice, as seen back in Table 3. Why the seeming conflict? Given the high level of support for a city park, and moderately high support for cycling paths, we feel that these rather than playgrounds or walking trails, were the key motivators most people had when then voted in favour of parks or green spaces. Table 4 shows the actual breakdown of where people felt additional money should be spent.

**Table 3.1.4: “Where should Mount Pearl commit extra funding?”**

Facility	Level of Support
Indoor facilities	64%
Parks/green spaces	62
Walking/cycling paths	61
Arts & Culture Centre	58
Sports fields	45

Perhaps no question cuts more to the core of whether or not someone really want something than the question, “How much are you willing to pay?” Figure 7 gives us the answer. The figures can be broken down into three separate groups — one third willing to pay \$1–25 per year in additional taxes; a little less than a third willing to pay \$26 or over per year in additional taxes; and slightly over one third who either do not want to pay extra taxes, or are undecided.

As a quick point of measurement, if we go with an increase of \$25 per year, which was said to be acceptable by 65% of respondents, and we assume an approximate number of 9,300 households in Mount Pearl, then the result would be an additional \$232,500 of tax revenue annually. Of course, taxation by mil rate makes actual calculations more difficult, but this allows us to approximate the potential additional tax revenue.

### **3.1.3 Interviews: City Council, Staff and Business Community**

In addition to the public meetings, telephone survey and focus groups conducted with the general public and special interest groups, interviews were also held with City of Mount Pearl staff and the business community. The following sections highlight the results of the interviews.

#### **3.1.3.1 Mayor & Council**

The most pressing facility need was seen to be a swimming pool, with an improved registration system as well. Other items considered included a curling rink (possibly at the Smallwood Arena), an arts centre, seniors centre, standalone youth centre, soccer clubhouse, a central multi-sport complex, and a convention/meeting centre

Council’s priorities for the Master Plan were to ensure it properly considered regionalization; maximized the use of all facilities, whether existing or new; and that we consider the needs of residents in all parts of the City. It was suggested that tourism in Mount Pearl needs to be further developed, and that the name “Parks and Recreation Department” should be changed to include some element of Community Services, Leisure, or Environment.

Council expressed particular interest in meeting the needs of Mount Pearl’s young people, and it was suggested that more research might be needed to better understand their needs. However, they also recognized that the Plan would have to address the needs of as many citizens and user groups as possible within the funds that would be available.

### **3.1.3.2 Department Heads**

As with virtually every group, the swimming pool was seen to be the main facility need. However, the question was raised as to whether or not there was “public appetite” to fund a pool. It was agreed that national standards should be explored to consider the population needed to sustain facilities, and should be considered in our decisions along with local input from users, community groups, and the general public. New and redesigned facilities should be site planned and environmentally wise, and use new technologies where possible. Location considerations such as those now apparent at St. David’s Field also need to be carefully explored. Competition with the private sector should also be considered before looking at expanded or new facilities.

Several agreed that seniors want a facility they can call their own.

It was noted that greater focus must be given to the area north of the Waterford River, and all new subdivisions such as Branscombe Pond, Pearlview and Mount Carson need to be much more interconnected through walkways and green areas. There was general agreement that there is generally not enough planning going into subdivisions, with developers often using steep or unusable areas for their allotment of green space in some neighbourhoods.

RV Parks and trailer parks were said to be a very high growth area with great potential for summer tourism, while snowmobile trails and winter tourism were considered promising for building visits in the winter months. It was felt that an assessment is needed of how good an investment Mount Pearl would be for a major hotel.

It was noted that no survey has ever done to test the perceived value of the City’s programs and whether or not there is any flexibility in user rates.

### **3.1.3.3 Parks and Recreation Senior Staff**

Many felt that there should be a stated operating policy to help balance day-to-day decisions on generating a profit while providing a service to the community. There should be a common understanding between staff, management and the City of what their profit/loss targets are at the end of each year. Perhaps the most often stated concern through all levels of the Department’s staffing is that the City does not provide adequate staff for daily operations and maintenance. There is definite need of a detailed review of the Department’s staffing requirements for all facilities and operations.

There was wide agreement that the swimming pool would be best attached to a multi-sport facility in the area of the Reid Centre. Key considerations for the swimming pool include larger dressing rooms, showers, and washroom facilities; an adequate spectator area; a modern filtration and water treatment system, with less chlorine; family change rooms (although careful consideration needs to be given of potential for abuse); a hot tub; sauna and steam rooms; a diving board (with

careful consideration given to safety and liability); more storage area; and an online registration system.

Key considerations for the Reid Centre include more storage and office space; spectator space for the gymnasium; and change and shower rooms for the fitness centre and gym separate from the children's washrooms for play programs or social events.

At the Glacier, it was noted that the biggest challenge is simply keeping up with so many groups wanting ice during the peak times. The Glacier's refrigeration system was originally chosen so that the facility could be expanded to accommodate two ice surfaces, and it could therefore handle the addition of a curling rink or second ice surface without replacement.

When hosting a full-ice event, the Glacier can seat approximately 1,000 people — roughly the same capacity as the Arts & Culture Centre. However, for concert seating it can handle up to 3,300 people, giving it a unique position between the Arts & Culture Centre and Mile One. The Glacier could ideally handle another four or five rentals in the summer months to boost its cash flow. There is some thought that they may have room to increase their rental fees, but this has not been fully explored.

The Glacier acknowledges that many groups feel the Smallwood Arena has a better ice surface, and speculates that that may be due to the concrete at the Glacier increases humidity and softens the ice.

It was recognized that a multi-sport facility in the area of the Glacier and Reid Centre held great appeal, but there was definite concern about parking, since the area is unable to comfortably handle parking on peak events.

Overall, several managers felt that seniors need a new centre, but there was agreement that Mount Pearl already had lots of programs for seniors, and needed to focus on more youth and adult programs.

Staff members consistently and enthusiastically stated that they “thank their lucky stars” for the Department and its focus on providing a high-quality range of services to the community, and a positive working environment for its employees. There was an exceptional level of respect at all levels for Ray Osmond, his interest in the staff and programs, and the entire Department overall as a very positive place to work. There is a communications paradox within the Department, however. Management is seen as being quite approachable and caring, and communications is encouraged, but the pace of activity is often a problem, with constant disruptions preventing “real” communication. Some staff members feel they are not truly heard.

There is a fairly widespread feeling that staff at all levels are not always well informed of city events and cancellations. Special offers or events have sometimes been publicized in the media, but staff were not aware of it until the public called to inquire or showed up. There was also



considerable frustration that meetings are often spent on “housekeeping” issues, with new items then being left to be resolved “on the run” or in hallway meetings. Long-term strategic planning issues are never adequately addressed in staff meetings. It was felt that an annual planning session or retreat, and a planning review of various programs, would deliver real value to the Department’s operations.

#### ***3.1.3.4 Parks and Recreation Sports Facility Staff***

##### ***Facilities***

##### **Swimming Pool**

Beyond any doubt, the swimming pool was the facility in Mount Pearl that consistently raised the most concerns. Looking at the building itself, the change rooms and shower facilities are seen as very inadequate. The location of the showers at change room exits to the pool create congestion, and people lining up for a shower or getting changed are easily visible from the pool and reception area. Lockers are also needed in the change rooms.

In the administrative area it was noted that there is no computer or cash register, and no storage room for supplies, even garbage. The pool’s parking lot was said to be unsafe, with poor visibility and frequent break-ins.

In the pool area, concerns included rusty water from the ceiling dripping onto the pool deck, and a lack of air exchange in change rooms. Mildew grows on the walls, and scum has sometimes started growing at the bottom of the pool. They noted that the pool was last drained in late 2002, and only twice in the past 5–7 years, and said that the water quality is not regularly tested.

Staff felt that Mount Pearl should ideally have a 50-metre pool, possibly in a multi-sport facility at the Reid Centre. They felt that *any* new pool would ideally also have a tot pool and hot pool. Other needed features include a bigger, non-slip concrete deck area, a water slide, saunas, a bigger observation area, family change rooms, and staff washrooms and staff change rooms with showers.

The registration process is universally seen as being very inadequate; it was suggested that people should be able to register for any programs or book any facilities over the Internet.

Staff feel that there is not enough staff to allow adequate processes to be in place at the pool. Lifeguards and other staff handle a wide range of duties from answering phones while on duty to unclogging toilets and performing maintenance. They would like to see a full-time staffperson for reception, and a separate maintenance person for the pool.

### **Reid Centre**

The Reid Centre lacks an observation area or bleachers in the gymnasium, making it difficult or impossible for spectators to be on hand during events. Several felt that the gymnasium walls should be expanded to allow proper bleachers to be installed. Others felt that a walking track should be put in place around the gym, or on a second level suspended from the ceiling to also serve as observation area.

There are visibility concerns in the change rooms, with clear hallway-to-showers and gym-to-showers lines of sight.

There is an ongoing problem with programs being cancelled to allow for special events and rentals being held in the gym.

There is concern that the Reid Centre's fitness room competes with private fitness clubs.

### **Youth Centre**

The Staff feel that the City's youth programs are not reaching the teens who most need them. At-risk teens don't take part in organized sports or fitness activities, and don't hang out at the Reid Centre as much as they once did.

There is also widespread concern that alcohol being sold in the same building as the youth centre – even though a security gate is closed between the two during such events – is not appropriate and creates potential for misuse.

#### ***3.1.3.5 Parks and Recreation Outside Maintenance Staff***

They noted that there are only two playgrounds in all of the Park Avenue area, while several existing playgrounds in the areas of Edwards Place, Jackman, Burgess, and Mortimore go underused.

They felt that there is an ongoing problem with there not being enough staff, so that grass seed and washroom facilities have been purchased by the City but go unused or uninstalled for years because of a lack of staff. Maintenance staff sometimes needs to leave assigned tasks to handle emergency clean-ups or to set up chairs and tables for special events. They recommend that a full-time maintenance position should be created solely for facilities, such as the swimming pool and Reid Centre. As with other groups, they felt that the City has not provided for adequate maintenance and staffing for their various building and facilities.

They recognized the contribution of volunteers groups such as Schlumberger, Scouts and Beavers in helping with clean-ups. However they suggested that care should be taken to ensure tasks that should be handled by City staff would not be downloaded to such groups.

Vandalism is an ongoing concern throughout the City, affecting playgrounds, walkways, buildings, and pedestrian bridges.

The equipment provided for maintenance was seen to generally be adequate, and overall they said the Department of Parks and Recreation generally provided them with everything they need to work well. They said that disagreements are usually resolved very well, and that it was a “pleasure” dealing with Ray and Gerard. However, they felt that communications between that Department and the Department of Public Works was not always clear, and could sometimes create confusion with work assignments.

#### **3.1.3.6 Boards of Management**

Kenmount Park Community Centre noted that many of its young people need to be given transportation and even lunches, because they simply are not getting them at home. The Y would like financial support to cover disadvantaged children and families. The Centre is seen as difficult to find, and is hoping for more signage.

Park Place is the only community centre in Mount Pearl to have a bar on site, and there was a suggestion that all facilities in Mount Pearl should have their own bar license for rentals. Park Place is seen as old and smoke-filled by some groups, particularly families and younger people.

Admiralty House feels they have great potential to serve as the Visitor Information Centre for the City. Their signage and presence on the City’s Web site have increased their visitor levels. Their rentals have been increasing, but they still are low on daytime rentals and school visits. Many feel the Glacier would be a better site for Sports Hall of Fame. Admiralty House feels they need more money for staffing, marketing and capital investments.

Overall, the Boards of Management for all facilities have a great deal of respect for the Department and its staff. However, staffing and upkeep are repeatedly seen as issues in almost all areas. The City is seen to be good at getting programs started, but most facilities feel there is not enough staff to properly maintain everything. It was also felt that a central registration or booking process for rental of all available City facilities would be more convenient for the public, and would raise the profile of lesser known facilities.

#### **3.1.3.7 Frosty Festival and City Days Committees**

##### ***Frosty Festival***

The Frosty Festival planning committee now starts each September to prepare for the February event, giving them a six-month planning period. They recommend starting in May, to get closer to a 10-month period, and are hoping to gain secretarial support during that time.

The mascot costume is locally made, and the Frosty Festival feels a second costume and operator are now needed to keep up with the pace.

The committee feels that a community-centre type of facility is needed, with both a theatre-style seating for 1,000 people, and a dinner or reception seating for 1,000 people. The reception hall area would ideally be a double gym with interlocking walls, similar to that of the Delta Hotel, to accommodate several small functions or one large. The new facility must have a suitable kitchen; the Reid Centre's current kitchen is completely unable to provide for a large event.

### ***City Days***

The City Days planning committee now starts each February or March to prepare for the event in August, giving them a planning period of 6–7 months. They recommend starting in December or January, to get closer to a 10-month period, and are hoping to gain secretarial support during that time.

City Days sees the need for an outdoor fairground, bigger than the current St. David's site, with a full list of amenities and services. They have some concerns with the track and field facility due to the higher winds in the area and the possibility of damage to the track even with a cover in place. It was also suggested that such a grounds could double as soccer/rugby/practice field when not in use for special events.

### ***Administration/General***

Both committees point out that, while the City may consider a secretary to be a big expense, the cost should be considered against the amount of time the City is already spending by having the City's staff involved so much. They also feel the City should have an office available for the committees to operate from as they plan each year's events.

### ***3.1.3.8 Business Community***

The business contacts felt there would be great advantage to having a multi-sport recreation complex, tying in two rinks, a gymnasium, gymnastics centre, swimming pool, curling rink, and walking area, plus room for offices and the Sports Hall of Fame. It was widely felt that Mount Pearl would be an ideal location for a provincial training centre. Several felt that the Provincial Training Centre in Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia was a solid example for us to consider.

An arts and culture centre was seen as being long overdue for Mount Pearl, with capacity for entertainment and conventions. It was widely agreed that "huge" potential exists for outdoor concerts, particularly a major family-oriented event in mid-August. Concerts during the Frosty Festival were also thought to have great potential, and that a good annual concert could become a "destination event."

It was agreed that the walkways along the Waterford River need more work, while walkways around the experimental farm need to be better policed with regard to ATVs. They stressed that sufficient funding has to be provided for long-term maintenance rather than simply for building but not properly maintaining and supporting.

Support was strong for a better youth centre, with a place to simply “hang out” and possibly play table tennis or pool, and for “extreme” sports that better target youth, such as snowboarding, skateboarding, and wall climbing.

It was recognized that the lack of accommodations in Mount Pearl remained a real issue. A hotel was widely seen as a very desirable addition.

### **3.1.4 Focus Groups & Interviews: Interest Groups**

Prior to the public survey, an intensive series of focus groups was held with virtually all user and public interest groups in Mount Pearl. This had given us some solid insights into the key needs and concerns related to the Department’s programs and services, and gave us a solid “close-up” view to balance the more general wishes of the public at large.

#### **3.1.4.1 Mount Pearl Sport Alliance**

##### ***Facilities***

The Sport Alliance stated its priorities as a swimming pool, possibly in a multi-purpose facility; a clubhouse/change room facility at the rugby field; and a shared clubhouse/meeting room to accommodate soccer and baseball at Smallwood. They pointed out that a proper gymnastics facility is also needed.

They noted that expansion of the Reid Centre should not be forgotten, stating that the facility is very well used but quite inadequate for the current demands placed upon it. The Alliance feels the Reid Centre could be expanded into a much larger community centre, complete with a youth area, meeting space, racquet courts, a double-wide gymnasium, and fitness area. Emphasis was given to the fact that appropriate meeting space and clubhouse facilities are vital to the success of the various sports organizations.

Mount Pearl has an excellent trail system, although the Alliance feels there are some concerns regarding safety that will hopefully be resolved in time. More staff and lighting are needed to provide adequate policing in the fight against vandalism.

The Alliance feels that the focus needs to be on the next 25 years in Mount Pearl and Paradise overall and there needs to be significant consultation between Paradise and Mount Pearl as their master plans are being developed. Possible cooperative ventures should be explored, and a solid effort made to avoid any unnecessary duplication of facilities or efforts.

### **3.1.4.2 Sports Groups – Ice Users**

#### **Mount Pearl Figure Skating Club**

The Figure Skating Club uses both Smallwood and Glacier; like most users, they feel that the ice quality is better at Smallwood, but that building is not as appealing as the Glacier.

The CanSkate (learn to skate) program is vital for skate clubs finances, but they don't get enough people willing to go to Smallwood to make CanSkate profitable there. As a result, they want to put more CanSkate time at the Glacier, and move competition from there to Smallwood. However, their figure skating harness is suspended from the ceiling at the Glacier, and can't be installed at Smallwood because of the construction there. Most of the competition time is at the Glacier – the harness is at the Glacier.

They are generally “pretty satisfied” with their situation, and feel that their biggest challenges or threats are keeping a stable volunteer base, and if Paradise were to open their own arena, it would deplete Mount Pearl's numbers.

They believe that if Smallwood could be upgraded aesthetically and made warmer, it would suffice quite well. They see the Gander rink as a good model to follow, with seating on both sides of the ice surface and a full indoor track on the second level, enhancing public exposure to their sport.

#### **Ice Users – Hockey**

The Mount Pearl Minor Hockey Association (MPMHA) says that getting ice time is not usually a serious issue, but says that there is “absolutely none” left over, and that they are concerned that the growing number of users from Paradise will soon make it difficult to get adequate ice time in Mount Pearl. They recently had to rent ice in the Goulds to finish a series because they could not get even one more hour in Mount Pearl.

The Junior Blades are usually have a waiting list of 10–12 who can't get in because of the limited ice time, and say they lose approximately 10% of their players each year because the games are so late. They believe they would have another 50–60 players if the times were earlier.

In order to get enough hours, the MPMHA and Men's League have both sometimes gotten ice time from Figure Skating. High school hockey teams also use both arenas, often in the afternoons, outside of the peak times.

The Minor Hockey Association feels there is “definitely” a need in Mount Pearl for one multi-sport complex with, among other things, two rinks, a gymnasium and pool.

### **The Glacier**

All users recognize the Glacier as “fantastic” and an “excellent facility,” well kept with good ice and good communications. However, it is felt that the PA system is garbled and not up to par for handling music during stops in play, or even just for announcements and sponsor credits, with people often complaining that they can’t hear.

They feel the viewing boxes are now the most underutilized space in the Glacier, and would like to have a Junior Blades office at the “far end” of the boxes, across from the corner viewing room. They now have one dressing room at the Glacier, and would use the office for storage and meetings.

The Junior Blades and Men’s League feel that the Glacier should have a marquee sign outside—preferably electronic but they feel even a lettered one would also be an improvement—to advertise games and special events.

Among other concerns are:

- They would like to have a gate at the Glacier that could be closed during games so that the teams going to and from the locker rooms wouldn’t mix together.
- They would like smoking at the entrances to be banned, and the ban properly enforced.
- The Men’s League say there has always been a “serious problem” with the showers at Glacier, saying the water is too cold and there is not enough pressure. They also feel that the Glacier dressing rooms are too cold.
- They note that the on-ice lights are not as bright during the men’s games, but do not know if other games have the same problem.

### **Smallwood Arena**

All the hockey leagues and teams feel that Smallwood’s ice quality is very good but, while the second-floor office has now been done up, the overall building is “an embarrassment.” The ceiling has fungus growing on it, and the insulation is falling down. The heaters in the change rooms sometimes don’t work, and the showers are dirty, cold and have little pressure, and the sound system “terrible” and very garbled. They also said that the parking lot at Smallwood is subject to heavy vandalism.

They noted that the door at the end of the ice opens in such a way that pucks can be shot straight into the main pedestrian area around the change room entrances, making it very dangerous to people walking past.

The MPMHA and Men’s League feel spending enough to do up Smallwood would be a waste, and that the City should put the money into a second ice surface at the Glacier instead, similar to Cole Harbour. They also feel that Smallwood would serve as a great curling sheet. The suggestion was also made that the Smallwood Arena would be good for a cultural or concert setting. However, the Junior Blades like Smallwood and its good ice despite all the faults, and

would like to see Smallwood saved. They note that the Smallwood ice is about 10' smaller than Glacier but say that this is not a problem.

The MPMHA, Junior Blades and Men's League all feel Mount Pearl could justify, and even "needs without question," three ice rinks for hockey and skating.

#### **3.1.4.3 Sports Groups – Indoor Users**

##### **Campia Gymnastics**

Campia has been located in the Unisource warehouse in Donovan's since 2000. This location gives them over 4,000 square feet of practice space, although the space is L-shaped and not conducive to a gym layout. It is hard to find and is less appealing for families, especially since there is no nearby bus route. Insurance costs are high at this location, and there is some problem with rodents.

Due to the lack of adequate space they need to move their equipment to a school gym for competitions, meaning several trips back and forth in a rented truck to transport their springfloor and heavy apparatus, and several hours for set-up and teardown at each location.

They feel an ideal facility would have 7,500–8,000 square feet of space, including an area for spectators. They feel a more central location would increase their membership and their ability to rent their space to other groups. They also expressed some frustration that their relationship with the City has become more distant since their move from the Reid Centre to Unisource.

Campia felt there was potential in having a gymnastics facility and swimming pool in the same complex, so that athletes from all sports could train in each facility for overall fitness and toning.

##### **Synchro**

They feel the current pool is inadequate, and say they need a 50-metre pool, with 25-metres being at least 1.75-metres deep. The change rooms are "grossly inadequate," with absolutely no plugs for hair dryers, which are essential to dry the hair gel used in competitions.

The current pool is not accessible for the physically disabled.

They need a room to be used for land drills; the party room they now use is not large enough, and often is dirty with a sticky floor from being used for parties. Office and storage space are also needed, as well as conference space for meetings and for judges during competitions.

They feel the Gander pool serves as an excellent model for a Mount Pearl pool, complete with windows for underwater viewing.

They say they are simply unable to host major events at this time, given the inadequate change rooms, not enough deck area, inadequate observation space, circuit breakers that trip repeatedly



at every competition, and the lack of a reliable sound system. They feel there should be an open public viewing area around the pool.

#### **Marlins Competitive Swim Club**

As with all groups using the pool, they felt there were serious inadequacies with the Mount Pearl pool. Beyond the concerns widely expressed, they said their sport needs a 50-metre pool, with 25-metres being at least 1.75-metres deep.

They say that to host a major competition, a 50m pool is required, although regional and provincial championships could be held in a state-of-the-art 25m pool. They also need an electronic touch system for use during competitions.

Getting more pool time is an ongoing concern, and during some practices they are limited to two lanes, so that tots can swim in the other lanes.

They say that drainage on the deck of the current Mount Pearl pool is “absolutely terrible.” A flow hole at one end of the pool allows drainage, but must be stuffed during competitions since it prevents swimmers from properly pushing off at the end of a lane.

They suggested that having the gymnastics facility and swimming pool in the same complex would allow the swimmers to improve their overall fitness and training regimen.

#### **Scarlet Dragons Society**

They say they would like to have four hours per week, and ideally would like 1,500–2,000 ft<sup>2</sup> with mirrored walls, a springfloor, and a 10–12 ft ceiling. They would also like to conduct adult classes.

They believe a good location needs to be accessible and visible, to expose different people to different activities.

#### **Youth Bowling**

They currently book lanes from a commercial bowling alley, Pearlgate Lanes. They feel this higher facility expense increases their costs from what other sports in Mount Pearl pay by using municipal facilities, and from bowling leagues pay in other municipalities where the city would own the bowling alley.

There is limited spectator space at the alley, as well as little office space and no storage. The lack of spectator space in particular prevents them from holding tournaments.

They suggest that, since YBC constitutes 20–25% of Pearlgate’s business, then the City should grant back to YBC 20–25% of the taxation income it receives from Pearlgate.

The Youth Bowling League would ideally like to see a new multi-sport complex built in Mount Pearl, with a bowling alley in the basement.

As with all groups, they felt there was real value in being seen by the public, saying it drives interest and recruitment. All groups also felt that they enjoyed very strong benefits from the Sport Alliance.

#### **3.1.4.4 Sports Groups – Field Users**

##### **Tennis**

Three of the seven St. David's courts were resurfaced four years ago, but showed major cracks again very soon.

Proximity to the softball field and to heavy traffic is seen as a major safety issue at St. David's.

The tennis clubhouse was completely paid for by the City, while the tennis lighting was 100% financed by the tennis club.

##### **Soccer**

There are currently 1,250 young people (49% girls and 51% boys) and 150 adults in soccer during the summer.

The soccer fields are generally in good condition, although they cannot be used until June because of excess water. By August they are then on fields and then all dried up in August

Soccer feels they need another outdoor field, with a smoother field, lights and a better two-storey clubhouse. The lack of available field time is the major issue facing soccer, with so many games scheduled that it is hard to get in any practice time.

An all-star prep program runs in schools on weekends throughout the off-season. Their fall and winter programs could benefit from an indoor facility, but they have not considered it to be their top priority.

Once the snow accumulates on the fields they are currently not able to get into the clubhouse, and therefore need to operate from their homes during the winter months.

##### **Softball**

The men like the current softball field at St. David's and would like to stay, but do recognize the safety issues, and also point out that if they did stay the facility would need additional parking, a higher fence, and a larger clubhouse with more meeting space.

While they do prefer to stay where they are, they are open to moving to Smallwood if necessary, but are concerned as to whether or not there is sufficient space there. They are also adamant that, if they do move, since they paid for their own existing clubhouse at St. David's, they would

want the City to cover the cost of a new clubhouse at Smallwood. The large score clock at St. David's would also need to be moved or replaced if they moved.

Whether they stay or move, softball says they need change rooms and would like more bleachers.

The ladies softball field is located at Squires Field, next to the swimming pool. While there are some safety concerns there as well with balls sometimes being fouled into the parking lot, it is not generally seen as being as serious an issue as it is at St. David's.

### **Baseball**

It is widely felt that a new baseball field is needed in Mount Pearl. They are now using a field in Paradise at night. Newer subdivisions north of Topsail Road have virtually no facilities or fields, and no new facilities have been built anywhere in Mount Pearl in the past 10 years or more.

The Pearlgate field has potential but needs more development.

Baseball has an indoor batting cage at the Reid Centre, but setting it up is a 20-minute process, and the Reid Centre is so busy that the cage is hardly ever used.

### **Rugby**

It is widely felt that Mount Pearl has one of the best rugby fields in Atlantic Canada.

Their sport is growing, and they feel they will soon need a second field or at least a designated training area — possibly even a half-field. Soccer and rugby use same field dimensions, making it possible to double up on facilities when a field is open. However, the usage level in both sports results in few openings.

Rugby's first priority is to have lighting on the field, although there is some concern that the extra use might damage the field. A shower and change facility is seen as their second-greatest need; they believe there is sufficient room for this by the current field. The club is prepared to assist in finances for these projects.

They suggested that a low-cost alternative to lighting their field might be to light a half-field sized practice area if they could get one, which would then free up more time for playing on the main field during daylight hours.

They requested a gate at each end of the field and in the middle to enable players to get the ball without having to climb the fences.

Rugby would like to have one Super league game every year in Mount Pearl, and they expect over 4,000 spectators would come to such a game. However, they would need bigger bleachers,

change rooms and showers facilities. Soccer suggested that they could bring bleachers from other fields around Mount Pearl for such an event.

#### **3.1.4.5 Churches, Schools, and Community Groups**

Schools and churches represent a valuable resource for any community's parks and recreation programs. They often offer an impressive resource base for gymnasium and program or meeting space. And they all offer a connecting point to thousands of young people in the schools, and large numbers of families and people of all ages in the churches. The potential to develop solid relationships of real benefit to everyone involved is quite significant.

##### **Schools**

Six of the City's nine schools replied, with many suggesting a number of opportunities for mutual support, and several offering use of their facilities when available.

When asked how the Department could assist each school:

- Morris Academy requested financial support for summer programs to students whose families are unable to pay, and maintenance support for their parking lots due to the heavy use of vehicles parking on our grounds.
- Mount Pearl Intermediate suggested that the Department could be more visible in the school in promoting its activities and programs.
- Newtown Elementary requested further development of the area around Newtown and St. Peter's schools, especially the wooded area between the schools.
- O'Donel High School suggested a police patrol of the green spaces and tunnel areas near that school.
- St. Peter's Elementary suggested the replacement of the playground that had been dismantled over the previous summer.

When asked how each school could assist the Department:

- Mount Pearl Intermediate said they would like to see more of their children active, and suggested that the department could possibly offer more programs at the classroom level.
- Newtown Elementary suggested the school could be used to host a summer camp.

Overall comments included the City should promote more cultural events, and placing less emphasis on sports and sport facilities; improved communication between the City and schools; and renewed efforts between the City, schools, neighbourhoods, and families regarding the wooded areas around many schools.

## **Churches**

Five of Mount Pearl's 12 churches replied – with several saying they would like to be more involved with the Department's efforts. They offer valuable ties to large numbers of families, although those that did respond were somewhat limited in the range of spaces they were able to offer. Churches were also widely interested in stronger ties with the Department.

When asked how the Department could assist each church:

- Anglican Church of the Ascension asked to be kept informed.
- Park Avenue Pentecostal said that an up-to-date list of parks in the area with contact/web site information would be helpful, and also suggested special group rates for church or community groups to City events.
- St. Peter's Parish welcomes dialogue on possible way of sharing resources.

When asked how each church could assist the Department:

- The Anglican Church of the Ascension invited the Department to "just ask."
- Park Avenue Pentecostal suggested they offered a volunteer base and the opportunity for the "promotion of different park venues."
- St. Peter's Parish said they "welcome dialogue on possible way of sharing resources."

Only one of the five churches said they had a "friendly and positive" relationship with the Department. The other five all classified it as "neutral" while some noted that they had no relationship at all with the Department.

## **Community Groups**

This was the only focus group to show a low level of response. Virtually every community group in Mount Pearl was asked by the Department of Parks and Recreation to attend, but only three showed up. As well, to the best of our knowledge, not one group contacted the City to ask if they could reschedule or make a paper submission.

The limited response was surprising, given the high level of involvement that the City usually sees from these groups. Possible causes for the low number might be the unfortunate coincidence that the scheduled Saturday in April ended up being the first hot weekend of the season, or the fact that these groups are often run by a small number of overworked volunteers. While caution should be exercised in drawing any conclusions from such a low response rate, there might be grounds to argue that the complacency could be construed as a high level of satisfaction with what the City is already doing.

### **Mount Pearl Seniors Independence Group (MPSIG)**

The Mount Pearl Senior Independence Group provides a very broad range of social, informational and health-related services to the seniors of Mount Pearl. They are a member of the Community Advisory Committee on Inclusion and the Caregiver Network, and also partner with the Seniors Resource Centre. They have asked to network with other groups to provide services in St. John's.

They regularly hold functions at Park Place, and also have office space in the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance area of the Glacier. However, they feel that Park Place is not an ideal location for their group, largely because of the smell of cigarette smoke in the building. They also find that their offices at the Glacier are not in a good location for seniors, particularly in light of the long staircase at the entrance, and would prefer to have their offices in a more accessible location so that they can set up a more permanent drop-in centre on site.

They recently did a door-to-door seniors survey, and are now completing a strategic plan for their services.

### **Brighter Futures**

The organization's basic premise is to give low-income babies an equal start. A key part of their work involves intervention with pregnant women through education and food supplements to prevent low birth weights in their babies. They face a constant need for food supplements.

The key challenges in Mount Pearl are that too many people need their services; they need a gym-sized space and there is just not enough room available at the Reid Centre. The Brighter Futures organization provides the necessary office space and staff; they just ask Mount Pearl for a dedicated space to run their programs, as they now have to set everything up and then take it all down again three times a week. They suggest that the City could facilitate discussions with schools and business to find suitable space.

They suggest that regular luncheons with likeminded organizations would help the various groups learn and assist with each other's needs. They hold a Planning Day once every 6–12 months, where each centre brings funding sources, politicians and parents together to “air and share.” They are currently developing a strategic plan for their future direction and growth.

### **Visions Employment**

Visions recognizes the vulnerability of young handicapped people as well as that of the parents and family. They have three full-time staff and have helped 50–60 people find employment, and feel they have given an economic benefit of \$500,000 to Mount Pearl.

They are a member of the Community Advisory Committee on Inclusion, and see good value in having sports and recreation groups catering to special needs.

The program is now “bursting at the seams” in Mount Pearl, due to the number of people in the City needing their services.

The group sees transportation and affordable housing as two key needs in the area, and recently had to move to Paradise to find a house with suitable access for the handicapped. They would like municipalities to help open federal doors for funding and support.

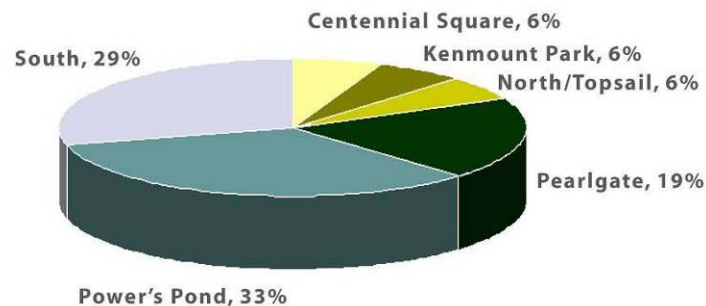
## 3.2 Analysis & Findings of Inventory Assessment: Recreation Services Offered

The following sections highlight the key findings resulting from the inventory process, and identify particular areas needing attention in each type of park or open space assessed. As a result, these findings will help guide the development of appropriate, feasible recommendations for parks and recreation planning in Mount Pearl, as they are designed with the current and projected needs of residents, the City, and the resources available to the Department.

### 3.2.1 Parks & Open Spaces

The inventory assessment evaluated 51 playgrounds and tot lots, two beach volleyball courts, 9 multipurpose courts, 7 tennis courts, 5 soccer pitches, 1 rugby field, 4 softball fields, and 1 track and field complex.

Combined, over 80% of all parks and open spaces are located south of Topsail Road. Of that 80%, 33% are located in Power's Pond, 29% in the extreme south of the City, and another 19% are located in the Pearlgate region. Furthermore, only 6% of all parks and open spaces were located in the Kenmount Park area, represented only through playgrounds/tot lots and multipurpose courts.



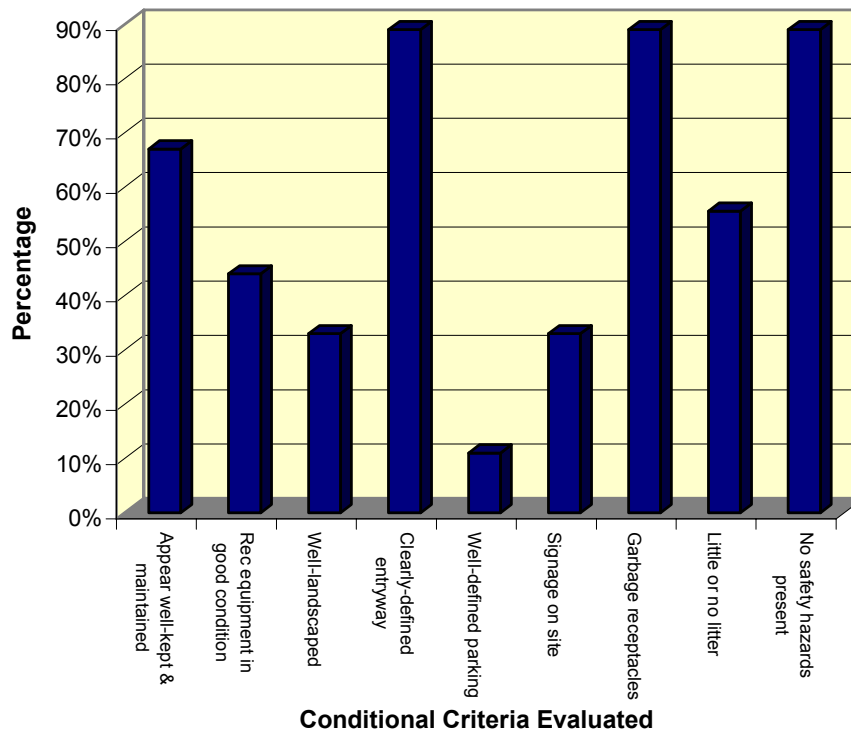
#### ***Multipurpose Courts***

Of the nine multipurpose courts assessed, all sites had seating available for patrons, a trail connection directly to the area, and all had fair to good turf condition. None of the courts had signage on site (directional or informational), or space for parking.

Results of the conditional assessment showed that multipurpose courts ranked well in terms of the maintenance criteria evaluated (appear well-kept and maintained, no safety hazards present, etc.), however, these spaces ranked much lower in terms of design and overall aesthetic appeal.

The chart below highlights these results.

**Figure 3.2.1: Conditional Assessment Summary of Multipurpose Courts**

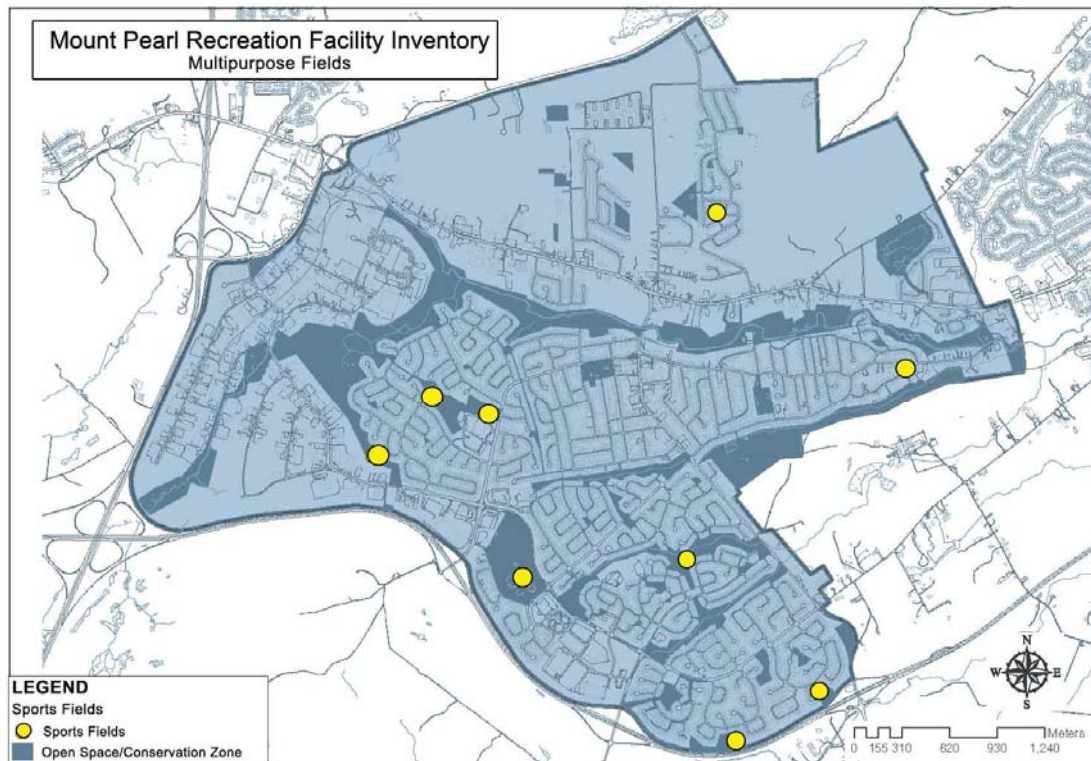


The previous chart indicates that while 90% of multipurpose courts have clearly-defined entryways, just over one-third of the spaces have signage on site. In addition, less than half (44%) of the courts showed recreation equipment in good condition – most often demonstrated through rusting basketball hoops, backboards and poles, as well as through missing basketball nets (the mesh itself). Oftentimes, the multipurpose courts were also decorated with excessive graffiti, another factor accounting for the decreased aesthetic appeal recorded.

It is important to recognize, however, that this was not the case with all multipurpose courts in the City. While there are some that are clearly in need of upgrading, there were those that, overall, ranked high in all criteria. One example of this is the multipurpose court located in Admiralty Wood, which is well-landscaped and pleasing from a design perspective. In addition, there was signage present on site, there was little or no litter, and the recreation equipment was in good condition.



**Figure 3.2.2: Multipurpose Court Locations**

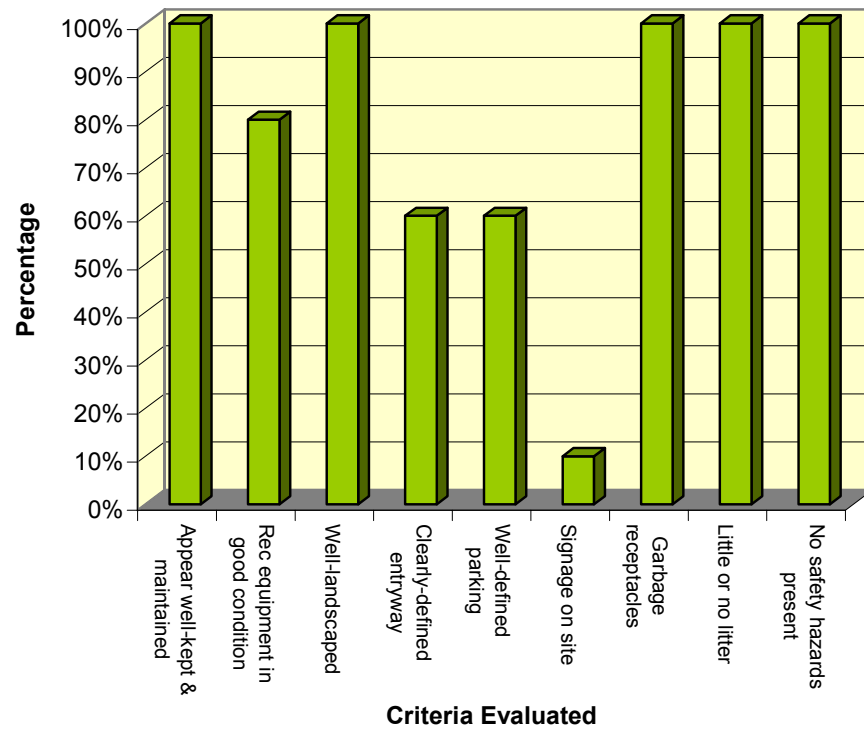


### ***Soccer Pitches***

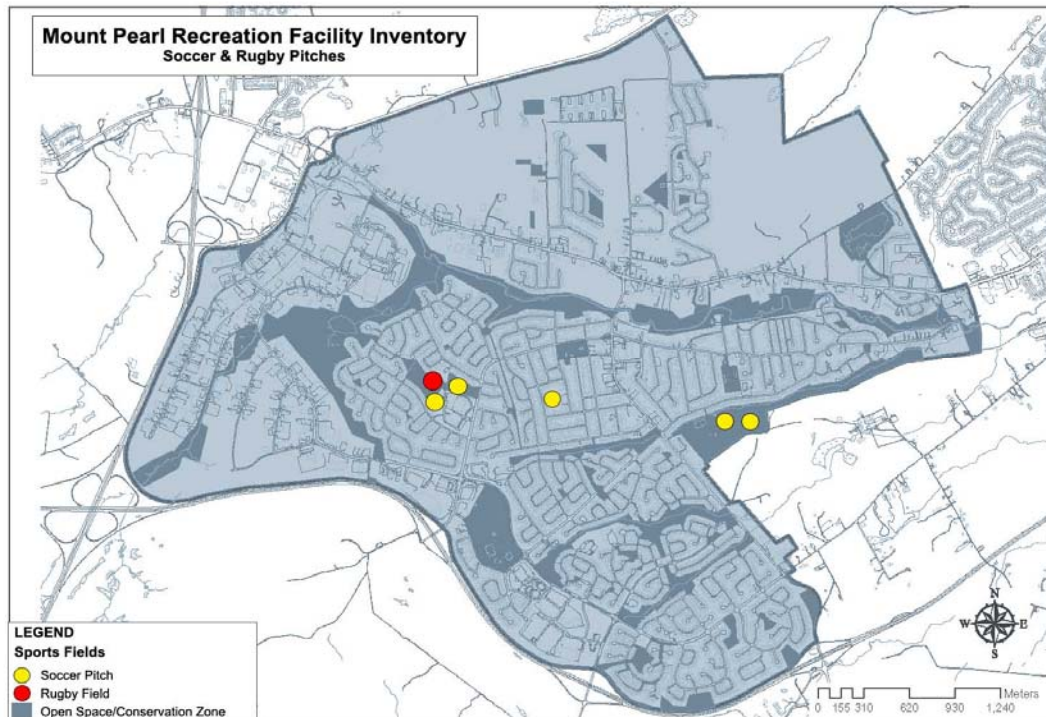
Throughout the inventory assessment, five soccer pitches were examined. Overall, all soccer pitches ranked highly against all criteria in the inventory evaluation form – with the exception of signage and the provision of nourishment, which were present at only 20% and 40% of pitches, respectively. Primarily, however, all other criteria were accounted for at at least 80% of pitches, with washrooms, parking, trail connections and fair to good turf condition at all soccer fields.

Results of the conditional assessment of soccer pitches showed that overall condition in terms of the criteria assessed, was ranked as “good”. All soccer pitches ranked high in terms of the maintenance criteria evaluated, with all sites appearing well-kept and maintained, well-landscaped, and having little or no litter. At the same time, however, just over half of the sites ranked had a clearly-defined entryway or well-defined parking. Furthermore, less than 10% of pitches visited had signage on site. The chart below highlights the results of the conditional assessment of soccer pitches.

**Figure 3.2.3: Conditional Inventory Assessment of Soccer Pitches**



**Figure 3.2.4: Soccer & Rugby Field Locations**

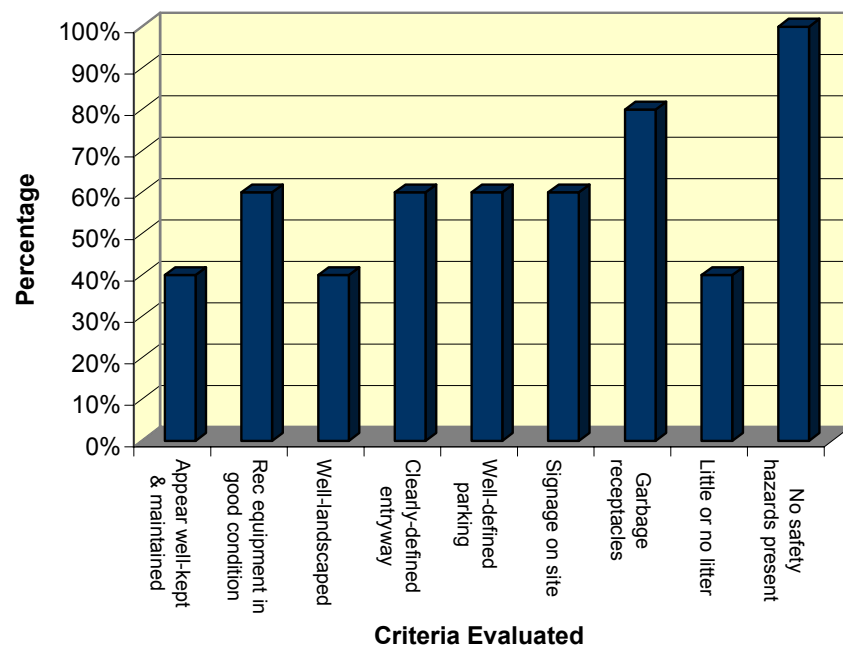


### Softball & Baseball Fields

Four softball and baseball fields were evaluated throughout the inventory assessment component of the process. Of those, 80% offered parking and seating to patrons, while only 60% of fields examined showed signage or trail connections on site, fair to good turf condition, or washrooms available. It was also noted that only one of the fields offered some form of nourishment that is available during games.

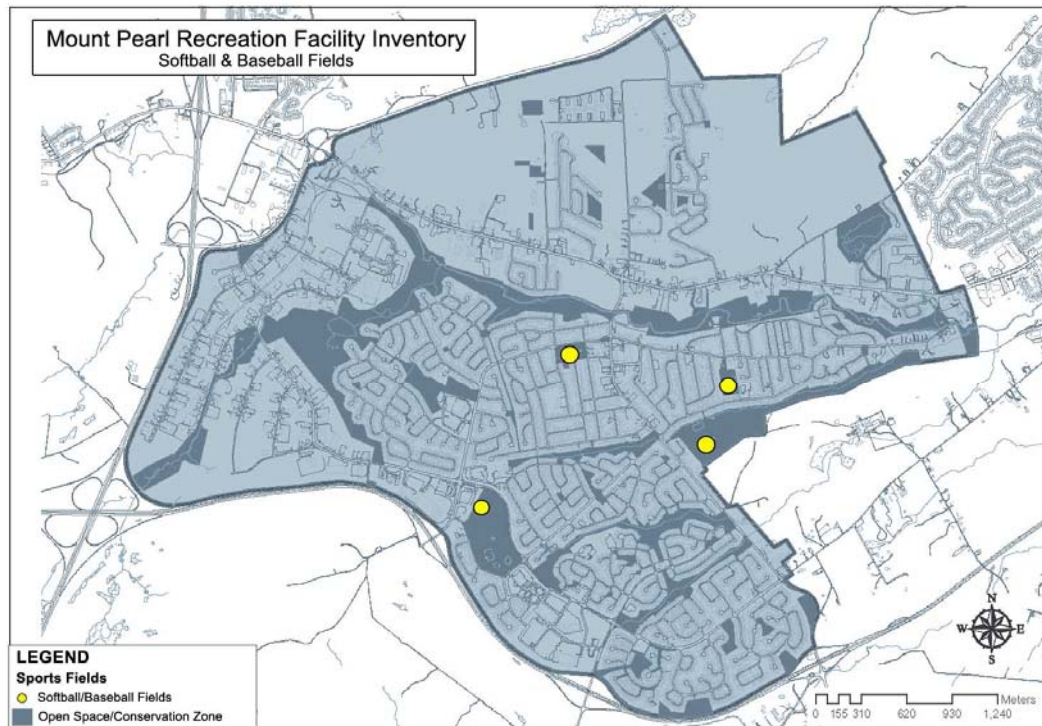
All softball and baseball fields assessed through the conditional inventory recorded no safety hazards on site. The fields, however, ranked lowest overall condition among all other types of parks and open recreational spaces evaluated, with only a small percentage of fields showing good aesthetic appeal, design and landscaping. The chart below illustrates the conditional assessment results of softball and baseball fields.

**Figure 3.2.5: Conditional Assessment of Softball & Baseball Fields**



From the graph above, it is evident that room for improvement is available at softball and baseball fields in the City. Just over half of the fields (approximately 60%) boasted recreation equipment that was in good condition, a clearly-defined entryway, well-defined parking, or signage on site. Furthermore, less than half (40%) appeared well-kept and maintained, well-landscaped, and showed little or no litter on the grounds.

**Figure 3.2.6: Softball & Baseball Field Locations**



At times, this lack of aesthetic appeal and design stemmed from the condition of dugouts and bleachers, which, in most cases, were visibly damaged and in a poor state of repair, and also heavily painted with graffiti. A further prevalent issue at softball and baseball fields concerned landscaping and litter. Grounds outside the baseball diamond and outfield itself often appeared overgrown with tall grass and weeds, causing the sites to appear ill-maintained. The amount of litter strewn against and around the bleacher and dugout areas heightened this pejorative image.

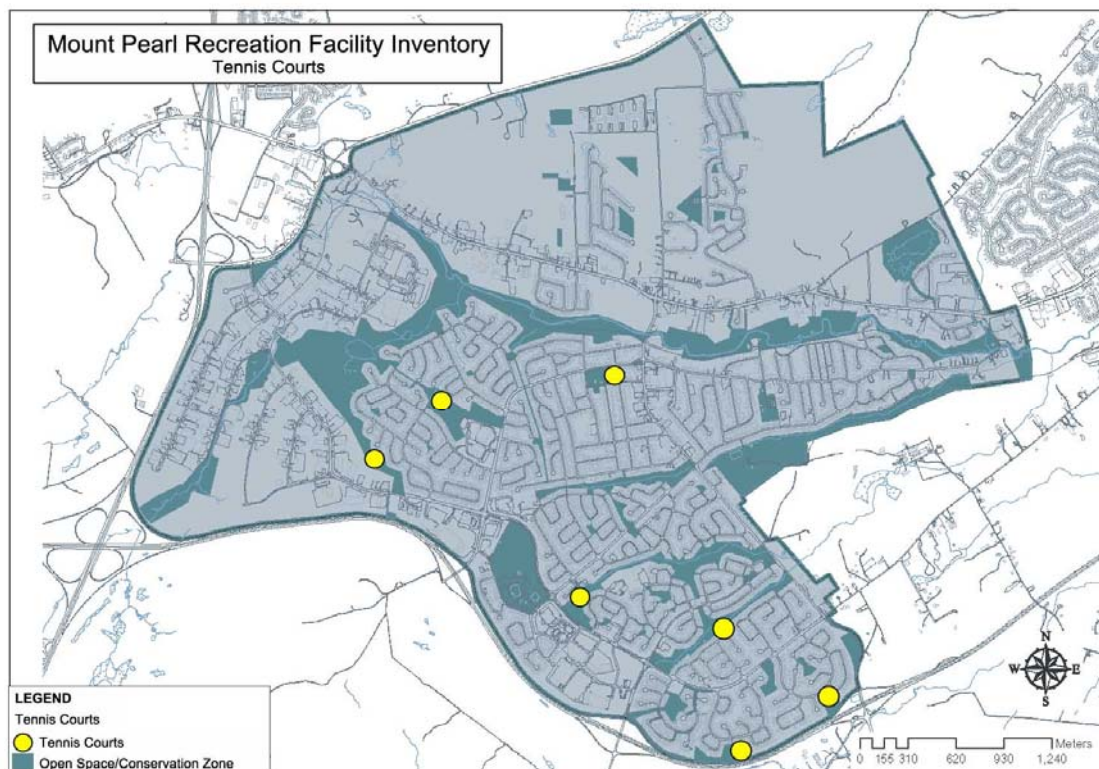
### ***Tennis Courts***

Results of the inventory assessment of tennis courts in Mount Pearl suggested that these recreational spaces – when compared with other recreational spaces in the City – require upgrading in quality and offering of provisions and services. For example, seating was available at only 57% of sites, parking at 29%, and washrooms, nourishment and signage at only 14% of sites. At the same time, however, 71% of the courts demonstrated fair to good turf condition, and 86% were connected to a nearby trail system.



The evaluation of tennis courts in the City also revealed that oftentimes, residents have been using the courts as spaces to play field hockey or shinny, rather than tennis. Through conversation with City officials and observation at the site, the tennis courts also prove to be most difficult to maintain on a regular basis, as nets are often taken down or removed, poles ripped from the ground, and the court itself being damaged extensively due to an unintended use other than it was designed for. Furthermore, this observation parallels findings from research on national recreational trends. A decline in personal interest in tennis has been occurring over the past five years, drastically juxtaposing the dramatic increase in popularity seen by the sport over a decade ago. Issues such as this will be critical in developing key recommendations for the Master Plan.

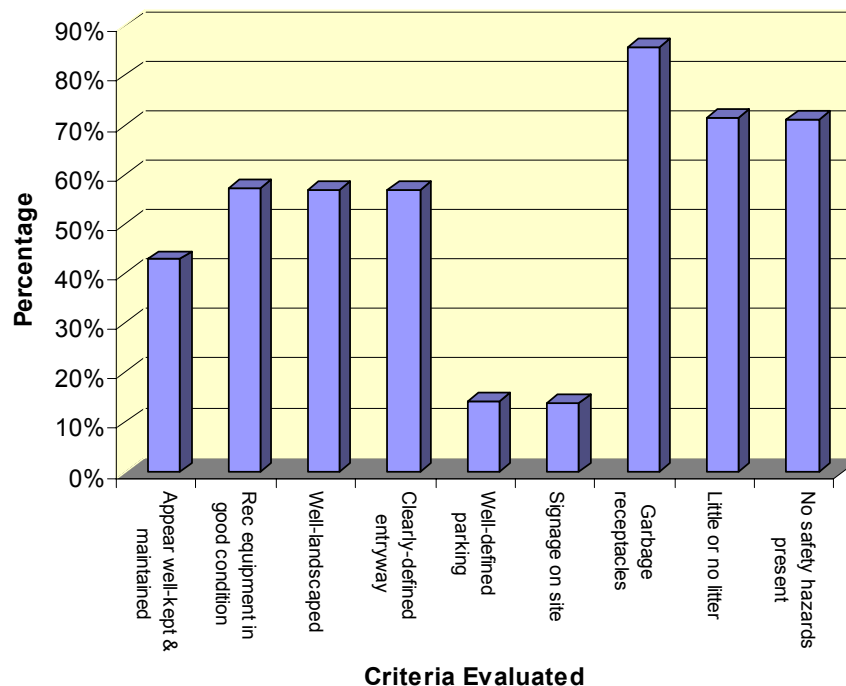
**Figure 3.2.7: Tennis Court Locations**



From the chart on the following page, the conditional assessment of tennis courts shows that only 43% appeared well-kept and maintained at the time of the visit, and at only 57% of sites did recreational equipment appear in good condition, the site appeared well-landscaped, had a clearly-defined entryway, or well-defined parking. While these results appear very negative, it is important to acknowledge that the courts that did appear in good condition (such as St. David's

Tennis Complex and the court located in Admiralty Wood), were in fact in excellent form, with well-designed landscaping, appeal and very good court condition. Clearly these issues will have to be addressed through recommendations and strategies presented in the Master Plan, as well as through future maintenance operations managed by the city.

**Figure 3.2.8: Conditional Assessment of Tennis Courts**



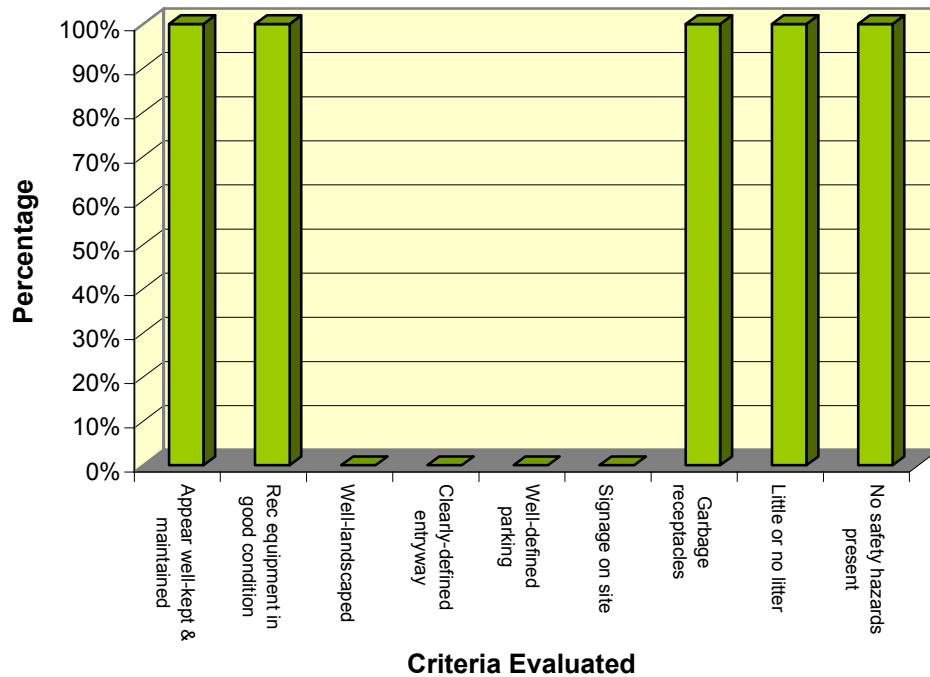
### ***Rugby Field***

Known for the quality playing field it offers rugby players, the rugby field on Ruth Avenue – while the only one in the City – scored high on the inventory assessment. Although there was no signage or nourishment offered at the site, the field met all other criteria evaluated in the first component of the assessment. Parking, seating, washrooms, trail connection and good turf condition were all recorded on the site, which is located next to Mount Pearl Senior High School.

While the rugby field achieved many of the desired criteria assessed in the inventory, results of the conditional assessment indicated some shortcomings of the site which could be improved. The field appeared to be well-kept and maintained with little or no litter and no safety hazards, however, overall the field did not appear well-landscaped, have signage on site to even indicate what it was, and the entryway and parking were situated haphazardly. Similar to softball and baseball fields, the bleachers were overgrown with tall grass and weeds, making it appear less

attractive than it could be. Furthermore, additional seating may be required in the future, as there is currently only one set of bleachers that spectators can use when attending matches.

**Figure 3.2.9: Conditional Assessment of Rugby Field**



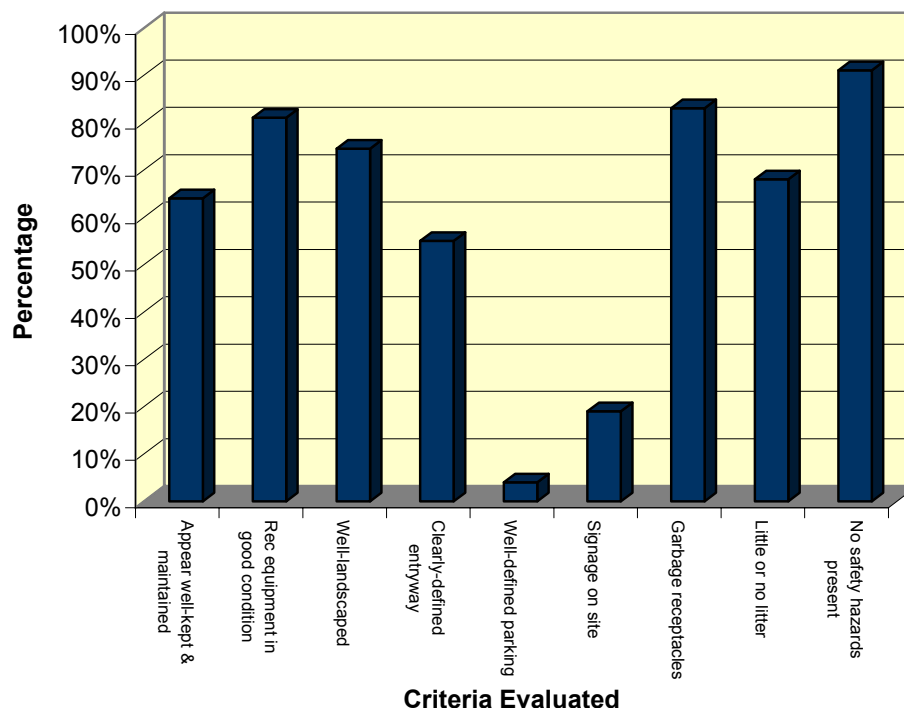
### ***Playgrounds & Tot Lots***

Throughout the inventory process, 51 playgrounds and tot lots were assessed across Mount Pearl. While some were clearly maintained more frequently than others, overall these spaces were in good condition and offered adequate services and equipment to residents of the City.

There were vast differences, however, in the percentage of the various services offered. For example, parking, washrooms and nourishment were available in less than 10% of spaces. Seating, on the other hand, was available at 90% of playgrounds and tot lots (primarily in the form of benches). In total, 65% of the sites were connected to a trail system, and just under half of those assessed reported fair to good turf condition. Just one-fifth (21%) of playgrounds and tot lots had signage on site.

As indicated in the graph on the following page, the overall condition of the playgrounds and tot lots in Mount Pearl is good, on average, but will room for some improvement. The majority of spaces were well-landscaped, had no safety hazards present, and 81% showed recreation equipment in good condition. At the same time, however, only 64% appeared well-kept and maintained, and 68% showed little or no litter.

**Figure 3.2.10: Conditional Assessment of Playgrounds & Tot Lots**

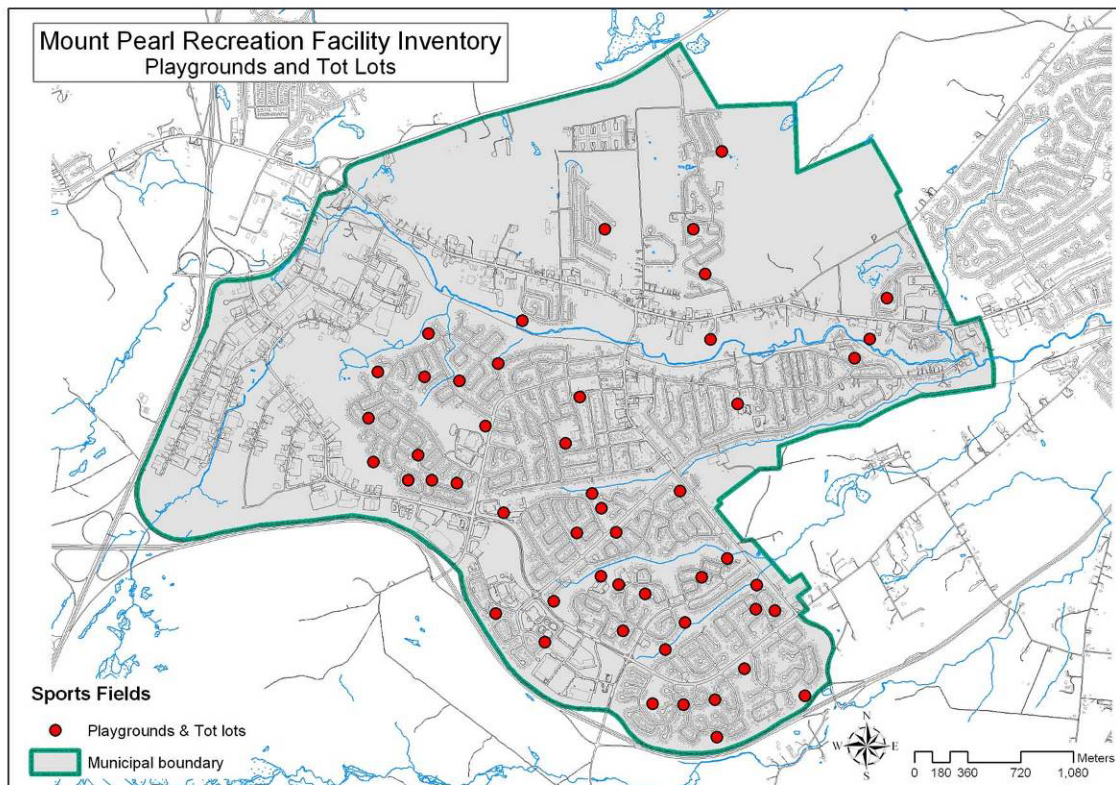


Lowest on the list of criteria evaluated were signage and well-defined parking, resulting in 19% and 4% of sites respectively. However, given the size, intended function and location of many of the playgrounds, it is not unrealistic to assume that parking would not be available at a small tot lot. However, for those tot lots that are somewhat hidden behind houses on streets, a small sign of some sort would also provide new users with a better sense of direction.

Further in-depth GIS analysis of the playgrounds and tot lots showed that no park space exceeded 1.5 acres, and in fact only one playground was more than 1 acre. At the same time, while some playgrounds are commonly referred to as City or municipal parks (such as Power's Pond Peace Park), there is in fact no regional or municipal park in the City over 5 acres. The map found on the following page indicates the playgrounds and tot lots within Mount Pearl sorted by size.



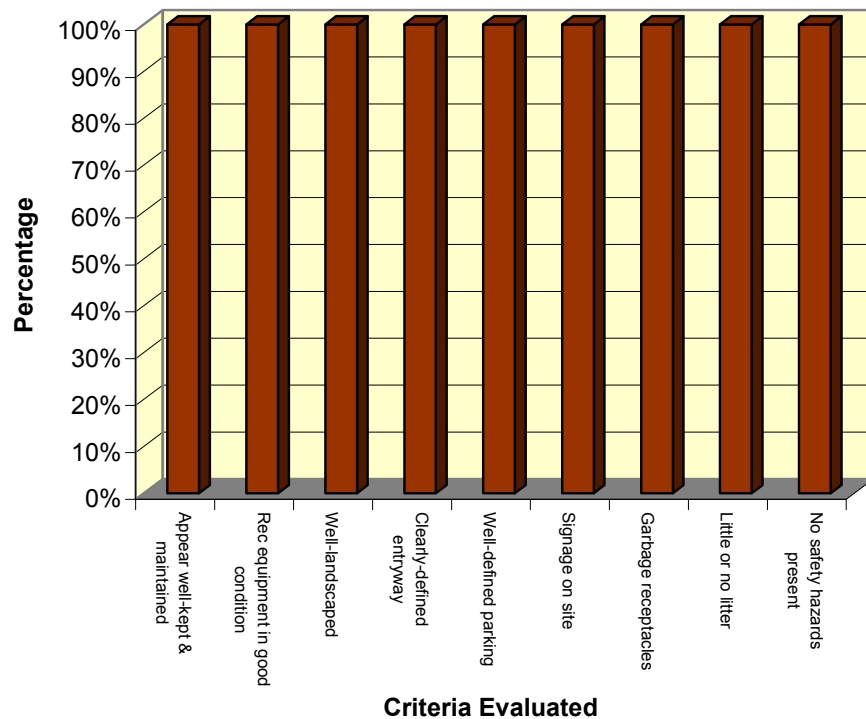
**Figure 3.2.11: Playground & Tot Lot Locations**



### ***Track & Field***

Pearlgate Track & Field Complex, the only one of its kind in Mount Pearl, was perhaps the highest-ranked recreational space throughout the inventory. All criteria assessed by the inventory assessment were achieved at the Complex, with the exception of a trail connection. Parking, plenty of seating, washrooms and nourishment were available for patrons and spectators, the track and grounds around the site were in excellent condition, and signage was clearly posted to inform visitors about the site.

**Figure 3.2.12: Conditional Assessment of Track & Field Site**

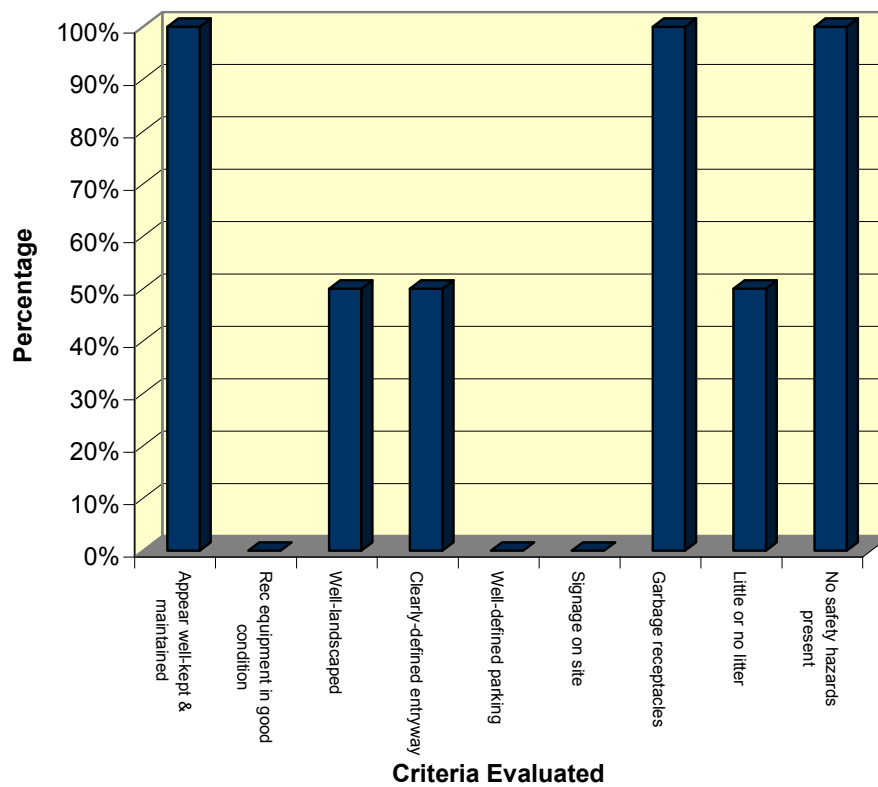


Like the inventory assessment, the results of the conditional assessment showed Pearlgate Track & Field as the highest-ranked recreational space offered by the City. All criteria evaluated by this assessment were achieved at the Complex; it appeared very well-kept and maintained with no litter on the grounds, recreation equipment was in good condition, the site was well- landscaped with a clearly-defined entryway and well-defined parking, there was adequate signage on site, and no safety hazards were present. As indicated through previous images and the chart below, Pearlgate Track & Field offers a high-quality, user-friendly environment to both patrons and event spectators.

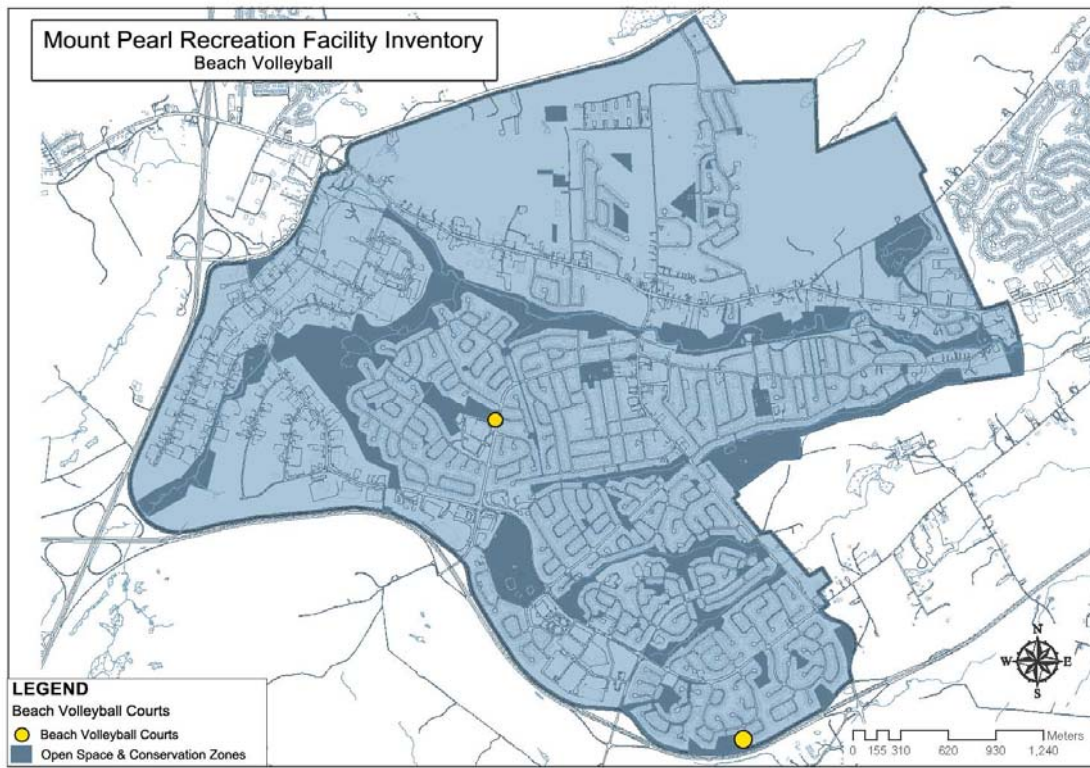
### ***Beach Volleyball Courts***

Throughout the inventory assessment, two beach volleyball courts were evaluated in Mount Pearl. Both courts ranked well in the conditional assessment; however several amenities, or criteria, were not met in the initial inventory assessment phase. Given the intended function and capacity of the courts, the lack of washrooms, nourishment or parking may not pose a problematic issue for the Parks & Recreation department.

**Figure 3.2.13: Conditional Assessment of Beach Volleyball Courts**



**Figure 3.2.14: Beach Volleyball Locations**



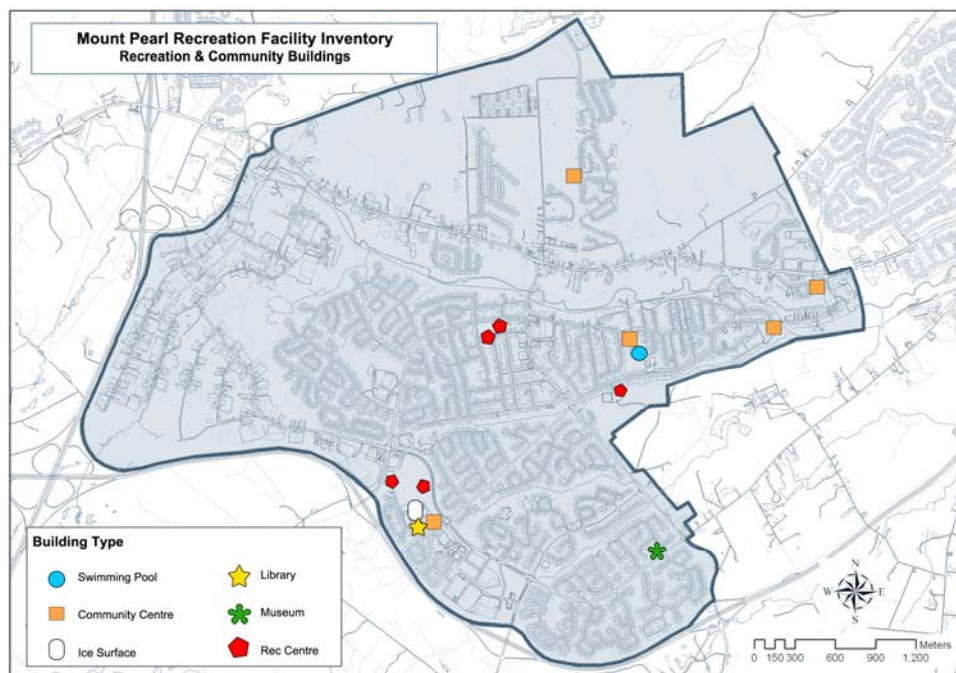
While both beach volleyball courts appeared well-kept and maintained in general, recreation equipment did not appear to be in good condition – as nets for both courts were missing at the time of the site visit. The Ruth Avenue court appeared well-landscaped with a clearly-defined entryway; however this site also appeared much littered. The Westminster court, while having no litter, was poorly landscaped and the terrain required leveling and repair. Neither parking nor signage was available at both sites, and no safety hazards were recorded on site. Of particular use to this type of facility would be a preventative and on-going maintenance program, which would eliminate the litter and mitigate the deteriorating condition of the landscape and recreational equipment, both of which delineate the overall aesthetic appeal of the sites to users and nearby residents.

### **3.2.2 Recreational Facilities**

To understand the current conditions and identify any immediate challenges, an architectural and structural assessment was performed on all recreational facilities in Mount Pearl. A report specific to their existing condition was prepared to identify any “red flags” that should be dealt with immediately. These reports informed the community input and helped to develop strategies

regarding future facility development proposed within the Master Plan. As community recreation facilities are often capital intensive and have high maintenance costs, these resources have been assessed within the context of potential input from the private sector, not-for-profit organizations, support from schools and church groups, and the potential to partner with neighboring communities in the provision of some facilities. Combined, this information has informed the development of a strategy that supports full community access to multidimensional, high quality recreation facilities by all residents. The map below illustrates the location of all recreational facilities in the City.

**Figure 3.2.15 Recreational Facility Locations**



### **3.2.2.1 Architectural Assessment: PHB Group Inc.**

The services of PHB Group Inc. were retained to undertake a building assessment of various municipal recreational complexes located in the City of Mount Pearl. The purpose of these preliminary assessments was to ascertain the general condition of each building in support of the primary activity, which was then used to inform the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

Buildings Reviewed:

- Reid Community Centre
- Mount Pearl Public Library
- Glacier Arena
- Smallwood Arena



Smallwood Soccer Complex  
Swimming Pool  
Park Place Community Centre  
St. David's Tennis Complex  
St. David's Softball Complex  
Admiralty House Museum & Archives  
Pearlgate Track & Field Building  
Kenmount Park Community Centre

## **Limitations**

The architectural assessment was preliminary only and is not intended to be comprehensive assessment. The comments and observations contained herein are limited to those of an architectural nature and therefore cannot be taken as an assessment of the structural, mechanical, or electrical systems.

Before any remedial action is taken to address any deficiency identified herein, a detailed review of the deficiency should first be undertaken to identify in detail exactly what appropriate action is needed.

## **Summary of Findings**

- In general most buildings are in very good condition, with only some building items requiring an increased level of routine and preventative maintenance.
- Some roofs are either approaching or have exceeded their useful life span and are therefore in need of replacing.
- While most buildings had attempts made to make them barrier free, only one building is totally successful, being Admiralty House. An example of an unsuccessful attempt is in one barrier free size toilet stall the door swings inward, preventing a person in a wheel chair from using the toilet, and yet all other aspects of the washroom are fully barrier free compliant.
- The Smallwood Arena's useful lifespan appears to have been exceeded. The building also has significant code deficiencies relating to exiting from upper floors. We recommend exiting issues be reviewed in detail immediately before these floors are occupied again.

- The Mt. Pearl Swimming Pool requires a higher level of routine and preventative maintenance. The pool also has limited capacity, so whenever this capacity is exceeded, the building will feel small and over crowded.
- We would recommend life safety studies be undertaken on buildings more than one storey above grade. Concerns exist regarding integrity of fire separations and properly rated exit stairs.

## **BUILDING REVIEW**

### **Reid Community Centre**

The Reid Community Centre was constructed in the 1980's. It is a one storey, steel framed, modern commercial grade building, clad in brick and metal siding.

#### Observations:

- The building does not have a sprinkler system.
- The building has a full-size gym that is in good to excellent condition. The space is equipped with acoustical baffles.
- Many interior partitions are constructed with CMU.
- While attempts have been made to make the building accessible the washrooms and showers are not barrier free compliant.
- The building is equipped with a small commercial kitchen that appears to be in excellent condition and well cleaned.
- Holes in partitions around the electrical room need to be fire stopped.
- The roof consists of pitch and gravel, with repairs scheduled for the near future. The roof is the original roof and users indicate there is a need for a new roof "big time".
- The building does not appear to have any mechanical ventilation, but the building is equipped with operable windows.
- The exterior metal siding has been damaged along the parking lot side of the building.
- The exterior of the building is in good condition but requires routine maintenance.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- Preventative maintenance program is required.
- New roof is required.
- A detailed assessment for the need for mechanical ventilation is recommended.

### **Mount Pearl Public Library**

The Library is a stand-alone building constructed in 1988. It is a one storey, steel framed, modern commercial grade building, clad in brick.

#### Observations:

- The building is not sprinklered.
- The interior partitions consist of a combination of CMU and gypsum board.
- The windows are operable.
- The building has a minimal mechanical ventilation system.
- There are signs of efflorescence on the face of exterior brick. Some brick need repainting.
- We were told the 4-ply built-up roof is original but there are minimal complaints about roof leaks.
- While users indicated a lack of space in some areas, the overall building size appears generous.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- Preventative maintenance program is required.

### **Glacier Arena**

The Glacier was constructed in 1992. It is a regional ice arena with public viewing stands, change rooms, canteen, and other support facilities.

The building is clad in split-face CMU and metal siding, both of which are in fairly good condition.

#### Observations:

- The building is sprinklered.
- The roof is original but there are few complaints of roof leaks.
- Public viewing is located on one side of the area while private boxes are located on the other side. The private boxes appear to be located too close to the edge of the ice surface for full visibility. The seating arrangement is also peculiar as it places people, who are sitting in private boxes, on display to the general public.
- Interior partitions are CMU construction.
- The building is equipped with barrier free compliant washrooms.
- The steps located in the seating area are not equipped with handrails.



- There is a problem with the rubber sports floor sticking to the concrete in the change room areas.
- One of the box seats has a raised floor, creating a hazardous condition due to the reduced height of the guard.
- The heating system produces uneven heat for the viewing public.
- When the overhead door for the Zamboni is opened, there is significant heat loss.
- The doors to the fire stairs have been removed.
- When the chair lift that services the private boxes is in use, it blocks use of the exit stair.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- The heating system should be assessed to determine if the issue of uneven heat can easily be addressed.
- The height of the guard in one of the private boxes should be immediately raised to meet code.
- The fire doors opening into the fire stairs should be reinstated immediately or the current configuration confirmed with the fire commissioner as being acceptable.
- The rubber flooring problems should be solved.
- Handrails should be installed on the stairs in the seating area.
- The problem of heat loss through the overhead door can easily be addressed with a forced-air curtain and a strip curtain.

#### **Smallwood Arena**

The Smallwood Arena is an enclosed ice rink, built in 1977.

#### Observations:

- The building is a steel “Quanza Hut”.
- The building appears to have been originally constructed with no insulation. At a latter date a layer of extruded polystyrene insulation was added overtop of the exterior roof panels and covered over with thin metal cladding. The metal cladding is deteriorating and bent and detached cladding was observed in areas. A reflective blanket is also suspended on the inside of the building.
- An overhead door is damaged.
- City staff advised us that the equipment is not more than 5 years old, except for dehumidifier.
- The building is not sprinklered.
- Changes in elevation in the floor slab and stair nosings are clearly identified as required by code.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor mezzanine consisting of a canteen / viewing room is greater than 10% of the area of the building footprint and therefore is considered a floor from a code perspective. Consequently the required fire separations between floors do not exist.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor mezzanine is not provided with two code compliant fire exits.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor mezzanine is also considered a floor and also does not have the required fire separations.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> floor mezzanine is served by an exterior fire escape, which is not equipped with code compliant guards, is located adjacent to unprotected windows in the building, and does not have the required intermediate stair landing. An internal stair that fails to comply with the requirements for a fire stair also serves the floor.
- City Staff expressed the opinion that the ice surface was exceptionally good. There were no signs of dislocated ice slabs.
- The building is not wheel chair accessible.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- The building has exceeded its useful life span.
- The building is not well insulated and therefore a significant energy penalty must be paid to condition the building's interior.
- There are significant upper floors exiting issues.
- PHB highly recommends that the fire commissioner immediately review the upper floors to confirm acceptable occupant loads and exit strategies, and that a comprehensive life safety assessment be undertaken for the building.

#### **Smallwood Arena Soccer Complex**

This is a small two storey seasonal building housing washrooms, change rooms, storage, and office/meeting spaces. It is approximately 1100 square feet in size per floor. We understand volunteers built the building.

#### Observations:

- The first floor exterior and interior walls are of CMU construction. The upper floor is of wood frame construction with vinyl siding cladding.
- The second floor has one exit located on the exterior of the building. Given the size of the building, this would be code compliant.
- The building is not wheel chair accessible.
- There are no ratings between floors.
- The building is not sprinklered.
- The building is not insulated and is not winterized.

- Staff present indicated that the building is functional too small.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- The built is a low-standard building and must be looked on in that light. It was also constructed as a seasonable building and should be operated as such.
- Unlike other similar recreational buildings in Mount Pearl, the building has little street appeal, but it also has little exposure beyond the immediate soccer pitch.
- PHB is not in the position to comment on its functional deficiencies except to note that users indicated it was too small for their needs.

### **Mount Pearl Swimming Pool**

The pool complex consists of a large swimming pool, change facilities, small office area, and viewing area. We understand the swimming pool was originally constructed as an outdoor pool in the 1960's and enclosed in the 1970's.

#### Observations

- The building is a steel frame building, main walls are non-bearing CMU, and the exterior is clad in metal siding. In a few locations the siding has deteriorated along the base of the building.
- The building is not sprinklered.
- While the ground floor appears to have been designed to accommodate people in wheel chairs, it does not comply with barrier free regulations.
- Building staff told us that there is no storage space, that the washrooms can easily become over crowded, and that the building can become very hot in the summer due to limited ventilation. Staff also complained that the lobby is cold in the winter.
- The second floor is serviced by one fire exit, consisting of an enclosed exit stair having some code compliance issues. The identification of the exit location should be improved. The second floor is also served by a stair that exits into the first floor lobby, but this configuration does not comply with the National Building Code requirements for "Exits through Lobbies".
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor mezzanine is more than 10% of the area of the building footprint and therefore must be considered a floor. As a floor it does not comply with the requirements for fire separations between floors.
- We were told by the staff the amount of deck space towards the shallow end of the pool is inadequate.
- We were told the building had a new roof installed 10-15 years ago, but it leaks, and the skylights leak. The roof is a ballasted EPDM variety.

- We were told there was minimal staff space and we observed an overcrowded staff locker room located immediately adjacent to the furnace / chlorine room, where chlorine smells were evident at the time.
- We observed paint flaking from the underside of the exposed roof deck over the pool.
- We noted handrails and guards on the public stairs leading to the second floor were not code compliant.
- We noted the exterior exit doors from the pool deck had become corroded and needed replacement. Doors also needed weather-stripping replaced.
- The furnace room appeared to have excessive amounts of heat and no ventilation.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- While the building is generally in a good state of repair, there are a number of items where maintenance and upgrading are needed, including painting, siding repairs, and roof repairs.
- Because the building was designed for a certain capacity and to avoid over crowding, the design capacity should not be exceeded. Alternatively, space problems could be reduced by a combination of reconfiguring existing space and adding new space.
- A detailed review of 2<sup>nd</sup> floor exiting is recommended.
- The heating and ventilation system should be adjusted to address concerns expressed.

#### **Park Place Community Centre**

This is a one-storey building, with a steel-framed first floor and wood-framing elsewhere, clad in vinyl siding. The Legion occupies one side of the building while the community centre occupies the other side. While both spaces have their own separate entrances, the two spaces have access to each other on the inside.

#### Observations

- The building is not sprinklered.
- The handrail configuration in the stairs is not code compliant.
- The building appears to have adequate code-compliant exits.
- The building is equipped with a barrier free lift but the main floor wheel chair washrooms are not barrier free compliant.
- There appears to be no rated fire separations between floors.
- The basement level is equipped with a kitchen containing a range but has no exhaust hood.
- Fire rated doors located at the base of the stairs are not equipped with the required latching hardware.

- The interior stairs leading down to the basement have threads narrower than that required by code.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- The stairs and handrails should be upgraded to be code compliant.
- The lack of an exhaust hood in the kitchen should be reviewed.

### **St. David's Tennis Complex**

This is a one-storey building, constructed in 1983. It has a wood frame and clad in brick with a shingled roof.

#### Observations

- There are some interior maintenance issues: painting, missing baseboards, soiled flooring.
- While there were attempts to make the building barrier free it is not barrier free compliant.
- The roof leaks in locations.
- The exterior rain trough has been torn off in areas.

#### Comments and Recommendations

- While the building is in good condition it requires maintenance.
- Portions of the building appear underutilized.

### **St. David's Softball Complex**

This is a one-storey building, constructed in the 1980's. It has a wood frame and clad in brick with a shingled roof.

#### Observations

- The building is generally in excellent condition.
- While there were attempts to make the building barrier free it is not barrier free compliant.

### **Admiralty House Museum and Archives**

This is a one-storey building that underwent major upgrading in the late 1990's. It is a wood frame building with wood clapboard exterior and a shingled roof.

#### Observations

- Of all the buildings reviewed this is the only building that appears to meet all the barrier free regulatory requirements.
- The building is in excellent condition.

### **Pearl Gate Track and Field House**

This is a two-storey building constructed in 1987. The building appears to be a combination of a wood and steel frame. It is clad on the first storey using split-face concrete block and on the upper floor with vinyl siding. There was no access to the second floor at the time of the review.

#### Observations

- The building is not sprinklered.
- The building does not comply with all the barrier free regulatory requirements.
- The building appears to be in excellent condition.

### **Kenmount Park Community Centre**

This is a one-storey commercial grade building constructed in the late 1990's early 2000's. While there was no access into the building at the time of the review, the age of the building and its exterior would suggest the building is in excellent condition.

#### ***3.2.2.2 Structural Assessment: Design Services Inc.***

To understand the current conditions and identify any immediate challenges associated with the recreational facilities within Mount Pearl, a structural engineer assessed the current major buildings. A report specific to their existing condition was prepared to identify any "red flags" that should be dealt with immediately. In turn, these reports informed the development of recommendations and strategies regarding facility development.

The recreational facility inventory and assessment researched such factors as:

- facility standards and requirements;
- potential for facility upgrading and improvements;
- maintenance, and operating costs;
- facility policies and procedures; and
- current and future concession operations and their potential.

The following is a summary of a cursory review of all recreation facility structures in Mount Pearl. The review is based on a walk-around inspection only. It does not include any analysis or in-depth on-site probing or drawing review.

## **BUILDING REVIEW**

### **Swimming Pool**

This facility was constructed in the early 1970's. The structure is a combination of structural steel and load-bearing masonry block. The pool area has full length steel joists spanning the building width while the two storey support areas have a combination of steel columns and load-bearing block. Overall, the building structure appears to be in reasonably good condition. However, there are a few items that should be given immediate and/or near future attention. These are:

- A diagonal crack in the north masonry wall at the northeast corner. This is not a heavily loaded wall and the crack is probably a result of thermal expansion. However, it is a significant part of the overall structure and should be repaired.
- Several roof steel joists over the pool area have large paint/rust scales hanging from the bottom chords. These should be checked to verify that the rusting is only minimal with no significant structural effects.
- The steel roof deck is corroded along the low end at the step in the building height over the pool. There is a significant hole through the deck in one area. The deck in this area should be thoroughly checked, especially at the step, and repaired accordingly.

The pool area of this building is conducive to expansion only in length at the north end. The support area would be difficult to expand in any direction.

### **Smallwood Arena**

This facility was constructed around 1977. It is a clear span arch type corrugated metal structure with a three level wood frame support area at the front end. These floors have sagged or settled throughout resulting in much unevenness in many areas. We understand that this matter has been professionally reviewed recently and therefore trust that these areas are structurally sound.

The main arch structure has several large dips over its length. It is difficult to say, by inspection, whether this condition is a result of sustained snow loads or if it was indeed constructed to that shape. However, there is no apparent evidence that the structure is or has undergone distress. There are two (2) items that probably should be reviewed in the near future to declare the structure sound and adequate. These are:

- The corrugated steel structure is supported by the concrete abutment type foundation on each side. It appears to be fully embedded into this concrete. Given the moisture conditions and structure shape, the ends could conceivably be subject to corrosion and thus weakening at the intersecting point with the concrete. This is a very significantly loaded part of the structure where any weakening could have serious effects.
- The snow load requirements of the National Building Code of Canada (NBCC) for circular shaped structures changed in the 1980 edition. It is very conceivable that this structure was not designed for these changes. Depending on wind/snow conditions, these later changes could have serious effects.
- This structure would only be conducive to expansion in its length.

### **Reid Community Centre**

This facility was constructed around the mid 1980's. The building consists of a structural steel frame with masonry block infill and combined brick/metal siding cladding. There is also a small mezzanine storage floor of wood frame construction. There are a few minor cracks in the masonry components and in the floor slabs. These defects appear to be the result of thermal movement and certainly not of any structural behavior. Overall, the building structure and associated components are in very good condition. This building should be very easily expanded.

### **Mount Pearl Public and Resource Library**

This facility was constructed around 1988. The building consists of a structural steel frame with masonry block infill and combined brick/metal siding cladding. There are a few minor cracks in



the masonry components and in the floor slabs. These defects appear to be the result of thermal movement and certainly not of any structural behavior. Overall, the building structure and associated components are in very good condition. This building should be very easily expanded.

### **Glacier Arena**

This facility was constructed around 1992. It is a pre-engineered building with combined structural steel and concrete mezzanines and bleachers. There are a few normal shrinkage cracks in the concrete floor slabs and concrete block throughout which are insignificant structurally. Otherwise, the structure is in excellent condition. It is adaptable to expansion but the extent would depend on the intent.

### **Pearlgate Track and Field Complex**

This facility was constructed around 1987. The structure is a combined structural steel and wood frame. There were no structural defects observed. The building is in excellent condition. Structurally, expansion should not be a problem.

### **Admiralty House Museum**

This is an early nineteen hundreds facility that was refurbished in 1997. It is a combined heavy timber and standard wood frame structure. It appears to be in excellent condition.

### **St. Andrew's Tennis Complex**

This facility was constructed around 1983. The building is basically a one storey wood frame structure with brick cladding. The slab on grade has a few minor cracks which are of no consequence. The building is in good condition. Expansion of this structure would not be too difficult.

### **St. David's Softball Complex**

This facility was also constructed around 1983. The building structure is similar to the tennis complex building. It too is in good condition.

### **Park Place Community Centre**

This facility was constructed around the late 1950's. The building has a main floor and full basement area. It has a combined wood and steel frame structure. The roof consists of wood trusses on steel beams and exterior wood walls. The main floor has long span steel joists on steel beams and concrete perimeter walls. The floor has vertical wood deck over the steel joists. There do not appear to be any sags or other unevenness in the floor in any area. The structure appears to be in good condition. This structure should be adaptable to extension in any area.

### **Kenmount Park Community Centre**

This facility was constructed in the early 1990's. It is a one storey wood frame building. It is in good condition throughout. The structure should be adaptable to extension in most areas.

### **Smallwood Soccer Hut**

This facility was constructed around 1981. It is a two storey building. The main level is a concrete slab on grade with load bearing concrete block. The second level consists of an all-wooden frame. There are several cracks in the main floor slab and concrete block. With the exception of one major block crack, the noted cracks are of no serious consequence. The one block crack of concern is in an interior wall which supports a lintel across a door opening. It should be corrected. There is also some unevenness in the second floor. Otherwise, the structure is in fair condition. Expansion in either direction should not be a problem.

## **3.2.3 Recreation and Cultural Programs**

Assessment of the recreation and cultural programs involved an evaluation of the varied programs offered by the City, followed by suggestions for modifications or enhancements, new partnerships, and streamlining of communication media to achieve some economics of scale while supporting enhanced community services. Furthermore, the process involved researching such factors as:

- relevant trends across Newfoundland & Labrador, and the country;
- programs targeted to specific sectors such as youth, family, and seniors; and
- policies, fees and charges, delivery methods, processes and criteria for annual evaluations.

The Parks and Recreation Department, in cooperation with a number of local organizations, provides a variety of programs and services to Mount Pearl residents. These opportunities are generally available for all ages and levels of ability, on a seasonal basis, and include courses, workshops, drop-in programs and special events.

The following provides an overview of the programs offered.

- **Arena Programs.** A variety of public skating programs, skating lessons and special events are available at the City's two arenas. Most of the programming occurs during the fall and winter months, but activities are also conducted during the spring and summer, when for the most part, the ice is out of the arenas.
- **Aquatic Programs.** Recreational swimming, swimming lessons, parent and tot programs, aquatic fitness programs, and special events are offered throughout the year. Interest in aquatic programming is quite high in the community, and expansion of programming is currently limited by the lack of space and amenities at the existing pool.
- **Recreation and Cultural Programs.** The Parks and Recreation Department provides a variety of introductory and more advanced programs in the arts, and offers numerous social activities, sports and outdoor recreation programs throughout the year.
- **Fitness Programs.** Interest in this area of programming has increased considerably in recent years. A number of health and fitness programs are available throughout the City, and staff members are aware that private organizations are also active in providing these opportunities to local residents.

The Department is conscious of the need to address the recreational needs and interests of the entire community, and is generally successful in this regard. As noted, later in the report, however, there are several areas in which the Department may wish to focus in the future. These include, in particular, the provision of opportunities for youth and seniors.

It should be noted that the Mount Pearl has been a leader in the country in identifying and establishing partnerships with local organizations. Examples of this include the Mount Pearl Sports Alliance, the Boys and Girls Club, the YM / YWCA, and of course, the myriad of other non-profit organizations, including minor hockey, figure skating, the local swim club and others.

The Sports Alliance, for example, has a very close working relationship with the City, and coordinates the delivery of a variety of services related, in particular, to youth sports. The support provided to the Alliance and other organizations allows them to undertake these initiatives, and allows the Department to focus on other areas of interest to local residents.

Although the City should assume responsibility for ensuring that a broad range of leisure opportunities are available in the community, it by no means requires that the Parks and

Recreation Department must organize and sponsor the delivery of all of these services. Rather, it means that the Department should:

- Review and evaluate existing leisure opportunities
- Coordinate the provision of leisure services by other service providers
- Assist, where feasible, in the promotion of leisure opportunities offered by other organizations
- Make available, within existing resources, facilities that can accommodate a variety of interests
- Deliver services directly that fill in the gaps left by other service providers

It is the consultants' opinion, that when a choice is available, the public sector (i.e. the City) should support other groups to provide services rather than offering the service itself.

There will, however, be instances in which, for reasons of participant cost, consistency and quality in programming, or a lack of interest among other potential partners, that the City will offer services directly. (Typically, aquatic programming is one of these areas.)

While the City has a role to play in the provision of these opportunities, it wisely deals with that responsibility through a balance of indirect programming (i.e. providing support to other groups who are interested in providing services) and direct programming (i.e. City sponsored programs). As mentioned above, the City appears to have recognized its role in this regard, and makes considerable effort to follow this approach in providing services.

### **3.2.4 Departmental Readiness**

As well as interview, meet with and talk to residents in the community, Parks and Recreation Department staff was also interviewed, and continuous dialogue was held with department heads, which provided valued input and support throughout the planning process.

Input gathered from staff and a review of the current parks and recreation guidelines combined with current trends, the physical resources, financial realities and community input to determine challenges faced by the Department and suggest modifications to the structure to address those challenges. Information from other successful Departments across Canada and parts of the United States was also obtained to evaluate best practices in department administration and operation. This process researched such factors as:

- the Department's role, organizational structure, staffing and inventory requirements;
- recreational delivery systems/services, and best practices comparative data;
- user fee systems and structures;
- the Department's image as seen by the general public;
- the role of Boards of Management and special committees, including a review of by-laws, policies, procedures, and agreements; and,
- areas of joint use opportunities.

As part of this research phase of the study, the consultants facilitated discussions with a number of staff groups within the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as with individual staff members. In addition, in order to ensure a thorough understanding of current operations, a number of key questions were asked related to the administration of the Department. The following topics were addressed.

- **Systems and Processes.** The consultants noted that the annual budget and current expenses are reviewed on a monthly basis, and that a more thorough analysis is undertaken at the half-year mark. In addition, staff makes comparisons to previous years' results and budget amounts, in order to highlight areas that need to be addressed. Reviews are also conducted of all satellite facilities where services are provided by non-profit organizations under lease agreements, and comparisons are also made, from time-to-time, with other municipalities.
- **Business Case Approach.** The Department has no formal structure or criteria for the implementation of a business case approach to offering programs and services. It does, however, monitor and evaluate the demands of existing users and facility patrons, and identifies the potential for ongoing and future enhancements based on community demographics and individual facility capacities. The Department would not deliver a service that was adequately and effectively accommodated within the private sector or another community organization. This approach is consistent with the information outlined in the consultants' analysis of recreation and cultural programming requirements.
- **Inclusiveness.** The Department has an all-inclusive philosophy in terms of the operation of facilities and the delivery of programs, and works closely with other agencies and organizations to ensure that no person is denied access to programs or facilities. The Department is responsible for screening individuals requiring assistance through its Healthy Communities Coordinator. All programs are regularly monitored to ensure accessibility.

- **Contracting Out.** The Department tries to ensure that the tasks traditionally performed by staff remain within their existing scope of work. Some services are contracted out if the service is not covered under the City's collective agreement.
- **Technology.** The Department is currently working with the City's Information Technology Manager to create a software program that provides access to registration via the internet, and provides staff with the ability to do facility booking from a centralized location. Technology is currently being used to monitor selected parking areas and indoor facilities. Should the City decide to act on recommendations related to recreation facilities, it is encourage that wherever possible efforts should be made to maximize the use of technology, including registration processes, facility booking, energy systems and the like.
- **Communications and Marketing.** The Department employs a full-time Marketing and Communications Supervisor, who is responsible for developing and maintaining an overall marketing strategy, and working with other organizations to ensure consistency and continuity with reference to marketing initiatives. It is suggested that the development of an overall Marketing Plan would be beneficial to the City.
- **Staff Evaluation.** At the present time there is no formal performance evaluation system in place, however, efforts are made to provide ongoing training to better equip all staff with the skills and knowledge to more effectively do their job and to work more effectively in a team environment. Funds have been increased in recent years for this purpose, and a formal staff evaluation program should be considered into the future.
- **Evaluation of Services/Customer Service.** Surveys and other evaluative processes have been used from time to time; however, the survey conducted as part of the Master Plan is the first to provide feedback on the Department's response to public needs. In addition, the City has undertaken survey research involving all Departments, and other, more focused surveys have been administered at a number of local facilities. It is suggested that a survey similar to the one conducted as part of the Master Plan be completed every 4 or 5 years, and that other techniques, including focus groups, and an annual report card, detailing the achievement of specific objectives, be initiated.
- **Role of the Department.** Elected officials and staff have a good understanding of the Department's role. Staff work closely with other Departments and recognize that municipal services are inter-dependent. Some future consideration should be given to expanding the Department's role as it relates to tourism and beautification – the promotion of the City would be the responsibility of the Economic Development Department.

- **User Fees.** User fees are reviewed annually during budget deliberation and in greater detail when reviewing individual programs. There are likely opportunities to increase fees in the future; however, the Department must always be aware of the public's ability and willingness to pay.
- **Fundraising and Sponsorships.** The Parks and Recreation Department's primary sources of revenue at municipal taxation, fees and charges (i.e. program revenue), followed by government grants and corporate sponsorships. Assistance is provided, where possible, to local non-profit organizations in terms of fund raising.

## PROGRAM SERVICES

It is the consultants' opinion that the City's system of recreation program delivery has been established to effectively address the needs and interests of Mount Pearl residents. This is seen in the results of the public survey, comments from various stakeholder groups, the variety of partnerships with local organizations, and informal observations of staff interacting with program participants.

It appears that customer satisfaction is a key priority for every employee, and that current goals and strategies have ensured consistency and clarity in guiding staff in their daily tasks.

Positions have been structured in such a way to provide management and supervisory personnel the opportunity to use their own style, strengths, talents and personalities in performing everyday work. In this way, they have responsibility for all aspects of their job, and the flexibility to establish and maintain programs and services within the general framework of the Department's overall Mission.

In situations like this, employees tend to perform at a high level, make decisions on their own, provide outstanding customer service, take initiative, adapt to change and perform high quality work. This further allows staff to understand their importance as individuals within the overall organization, and to be responsive to the public they serve, as they are able to act quickly in response to suggestions, requests and concerns.

In the end, this approach and organizational style has resulted in a delivery system in which staff are working together toward a quality, customer-focused operation.

## 4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Design and Planning Principles

Rather than present strict regulations for development that must be adhered to for successful implementation of the Master Plan, *design principles* have instead been produced. These principles are intended to guide decisions regarding parks and recreation development in Mount Pearl, and are designed to strategically support the goals and objectives of the Parks and Recreation Department of Mount Pearl. In addition, they strongly reflect current recreation trends, the specific needs of residents and facility users (as identified throughout the consultation phase of Master Plan development), as well as respect the financial and other resource concerns affecting operation of the Parks and Recreation Department as a whole.

In essence, the design principles have been used to guide the recommendations proposed in the Master Plan. Furthermore, these principles should guide decisions concerning parks, programming and recreation facility provision, management and financing. They represent a “best practice” concerning parks and recreation development, and – unless a strong case exists to prove otherwise – should be the basis of future parks and recreation planning within the City.

#### 4.1.1 Design Principles

##### **Principle 1: Essential Element**

*The City's parks and open spaces, recreation facilities and programs are essential elements that create a livable, dynamic and economically vibrant City.*

##### **Principle 2: Connected System**

*The City and region have an interconnected system of trails, parks and natural areas that are well protected and ecologically healthy. An integrated system of community recreation facilities serves all residents.*

##### **Principle 3: Inclusive and Accessible**

*All of Mount Pearl's residents have access to, feel safe and welcome in, and are equitably served by Portland's parks and open spaces, recreation facilities and programs.*

##### **Principle 4: Stewardship**

*Mount Pearl residents value and care for public spaces and resources, and are stewards for all the elements of the built and natural environment, sustaining them for future generations.*

##### **Principle 5: Intrinsic Value**

*Mount Pearl residents recognize and respect the intrinsic and intricate inter-relationships of all organisms with the environment.*



**Principle 6: Excellence**

*A full spectrum of diverse, high quality parks and open space, recreation facilities, and excellent programs bring fulfillment and growth to the lives of Mount Pearl residents.*

**Principle 7: Beauty and Innovation**

*Beautiful parks and public areas and innovative designs provide places for a wide variety of experience, ranging from quiet contemplation and relaxation to active recreation in all areas of the City.*

**Principle 8: Future Needs**

*Ample lands and facilities must be acquired and protected in public ownership to provide a wide variety of high quality parks and open space, recreation facilities and programs to meet current and future needs.*

**Principle 9: Civic Involvement**

*Residents and local organizations are involved and participate in the planning, development and programming of the City's parks and open spaces, recreation facilities and programs.*

## **4.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been identified as the key recommendations that should be implemented to realize the full potential of proposed developments within the Master Plan. They have been designed to reflect the particular needs of both the City and its residents, as well as to incorporate the design principles developed as the basis of future parks and recreation development in Mount Pearl.

The recommendations presented are based on the design principles and are related to departmental structure, culture and recreation programs, parks and open spaces, and recreational facilities. The recommendations briefly describe the management resources required, a priority for development, a brief description of the proposed use for the new recreational space or facility with rationales, anticipated costs of development, and in some instances, implementation tactics. It should be noted that the order in which recommendations have been presented in this report does not in any way reflect the development priority for the space.

Recommendations refer to development priority as low, medium or high, where:

- *Low Development Priority* represents proposed development pending that of medium or high recommendation;
- *Medium Development Priority* represents proposed development following completion of high development recommendations; and,

- *High Development Priority* represents those developments that should be the first developed out of recommendation possibilities presented.

In addition to the 35 recommendations proposed in the Plan, there are four *key development* recommendations that stem from the plan:

1. Establishment of the *Reid Lifestyle Centre* as the City's primary multi-purpose recreation, fitness and health facility.
2. Development of a "looped" trail system encompassing the City that accommodates walkers, cyclists, and inline skaters, and is accessible to all residents.
3. Redevelopment of the Smallwood Complex, providing additional soccer and softball fields, as well as incorporating a joint clubhouse for the sports associations.
4. Establish six city parks at key locations throughout Mount Pearl: Power's Pond, St. David's, Centennial Square, Kinsmen, Branscombe's Pond, and Kenmount Park.

#### 4.2.1 Key Development Recommendations

The following descriptions detail the proposed key development recommendations and outline the major components of each. A city-wide conceptual plan has been developed to illustrate the combination of all proposed recommendations and developments pending implementation of the Master Plan, which can be seen on page 90 of this document.

##### 1. *Reid Lifestyle Centre*

The proposed Reid Lifestyle Centre will encompass the buildings and facilities currently on site in the general area, including the Glacier Arena (with an additional ice surface), the Mount Pearl Public Library, the Reid Centre itself (with suggested improvements), and the Pearlgate Track and Field Complex. Additional developments proposed involve a new aquatic facility featuring a 25-metre pool and lazy river for more leisurely swim and aquatic fitness programs surrounding the pool. In addition, squash courts and an indoor walking track will be developed to accommodate the needs of residents, as stated throughout the consultation process of the Master Plan. Given the dynamic nature of the new Lifestyle Centre, it is also recommended that the Sports Hall of Fame *Community Parade of History* be incorporated in the design of the building to highlight the achievements of local athletes of all ages and sports. Particularly, this element should be situated in the entrance of the building – a prominent area where visitors can embrace the role that sport has played in their community upon entering the Centre.

Furthermore, the Lifestyle Centre will house a new 7000 ft<sup>2</sup> multipurpose/gymnastics facility, designed to accommodate specialized gymnastics training at various levels of difficulty, as well as provide space for other community programs such as martial arts. It is recommended that the indoor walking track previously mentioned be an element of this space. To help ensure the genuine multipurpose use of the new Lifestyle Centre, it is also suggested that a Youth Centre

with private entrance and access to a new skateboard park be developed, as well as a Senior's Resource Centre, designed to meet the needs of this growing demographic within Mount Pearl. A new community dog park and ball field could also be incorporated into the overall site planning for the Centre, as shown in the concept design sketch below.

The Lifestyle Centre will physically link buildings currently on site to create a dynamic, multipurpose complex that offers a variety of recreational activities and programming for users of all ages. It will be designed to meet the needs of children, teenagers, adults, seniors, individuals and families. The Lifestyle Centre will provide amenities for aquatic, ice, gymnastics, and general health and fitness activities. In addition, it will provide space for business meetings and conventions, community events, health services (such as physiotherapy and chiropractic services), as well as incorporate viewing areas for spectators.

Figure 4.1 Reid Lifestyle Centre Concept Design



The preliminary concept design for the Lifestyle Centre is shown above. While the drawing depicts the amenities and facilities that would be most appropriate for the site, it is important to recognize that recommendations are preliminary only, and should not be pursued without the appropriate feasibility and design studies for the buildings and the site. In this way, all issues affecting the development of the Centre - such as parking - can be properly addressed prior to design and construction.

As a means to ensure that proper operation, scheduling and offering of programs is available at the Reid Lifestyle Centre, it is recommended that the City explore the potential for joint management and development with outside organizations, such as the YMCA. While initial

assessments of joint management within municipal facilities across Canada shows positive outcomes for both management and facility users, it is recommended that this potential be explored further as a component of the feasibility study process for the development of the Lifestyle Centre.

## **2. Smallwood Complex**

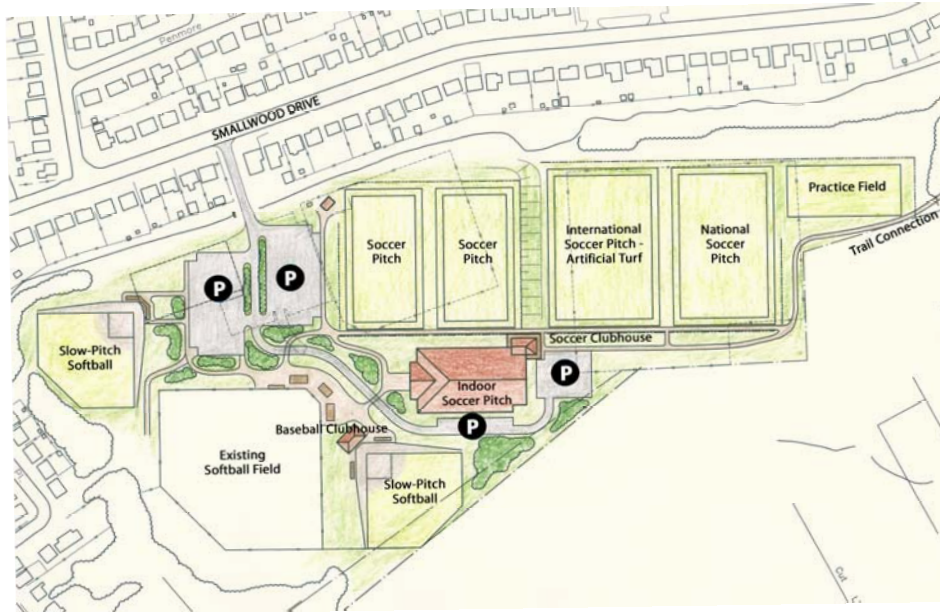
Given the current need for additional soccer pitches and softball fields within Mount Pearl, a primary recommendation of the Master Plan has been the redevelopment of the Smallwood Complex to accommodate such a need. Key recommendations suggested at the site involve redesign of the current field layout to incorporate an additional soccer pitch, as well as the addition of a new softball field parallel to current field on site.

As seen in the concept design on the following page, such a realignment of the layout will also allow for the construction of a new clubhouse to serve both soccer and softball associations in the City. High demand for such a facility was clearly and repeatedly expressed throughout the consultation process, and as such, has also been a key recommendation proposed given the feasibility of the development. As a component of this building, an indoor training facility should be developed to accommodate indoor soccer or rugby training, softball, ball hockey, and could include an indoor walking and in-line skating track as well. The development of such a facility will, however, involve the removal and demolition of the current Smallwood Arena, which, through facility assessments by structural engineers and architects, is the most feasible option for the Arena. A new ice surface built in the Glacier complex of the Reid Lifestyle Centre will be designed to meet the needs of current users and will thus not result in decreased availability of ice surfaces in the City.

In addition to the development of these playing fields, a further recommendation for this site is enhanced plantings and natural barriers to act as windbreaks surrounding the field, providing additional comfort to players, while drastically increasing the aesthetic appeal of the grounds. A redeveloped, repositioned and well-defined parking lot will also be added to allow for easy site access.

The concept design below is a preliminary sketch only, and it should be noted that suggested recommendations should not be carried out without further analysis. In addition, the developments proposed for the Smallwood site would involve the acquisition of lands currently owned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. Issues such as this must be investigated further prior to any of the developments suggested within this Master Plan.

Figure 4.2 Smallwood Complex Concept Design



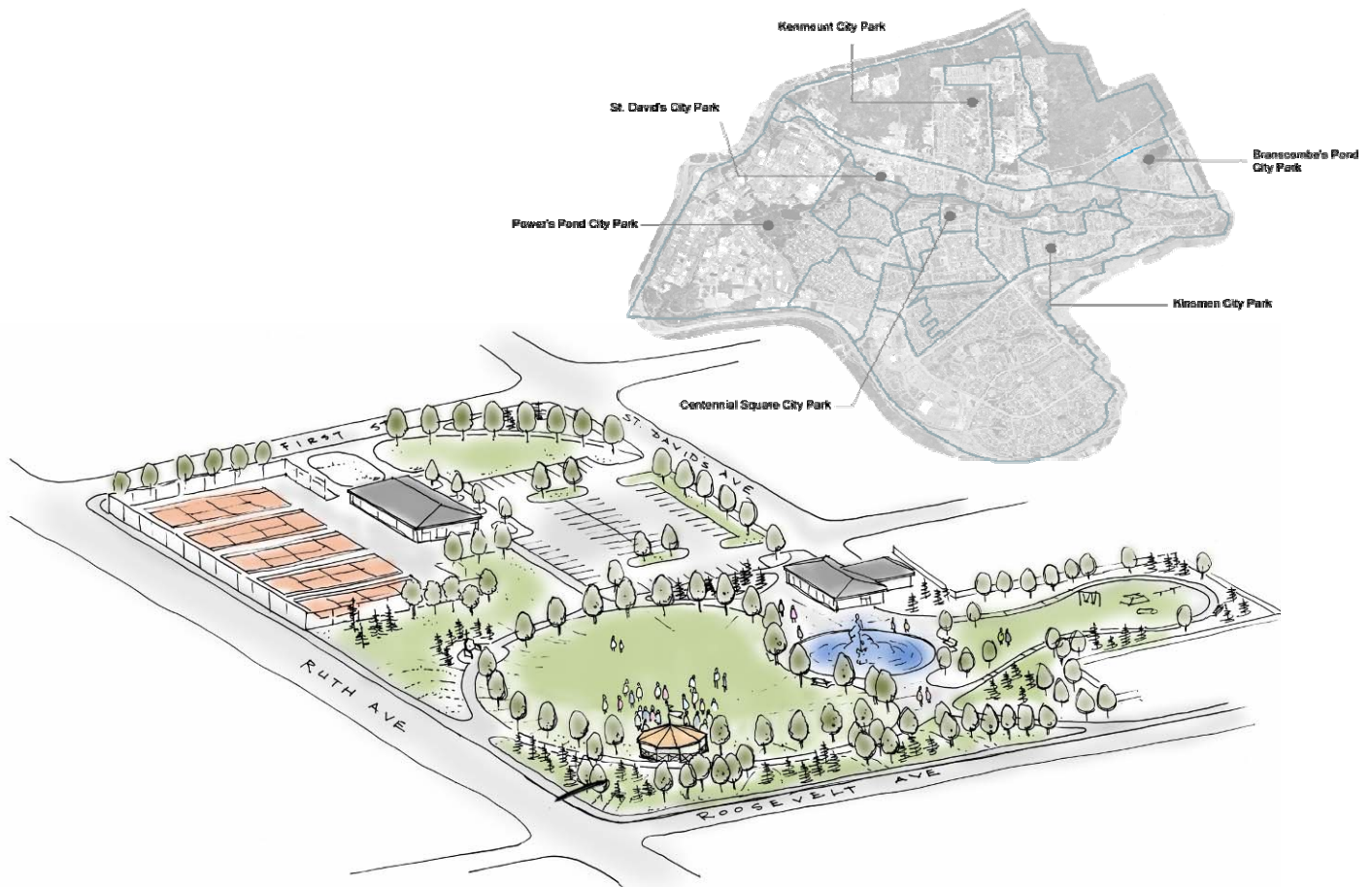
### 3. Establishment of City Parks

Currently, there are no parks within Mount Pearl classified as either a city or municipal park. Power's Pond Park, however, has the components, size and the facilities of a city park. It has been redeveloped as a part of the Grand Concourse walking system, boasts trails, a boathouse, pond, playground area and concessions. Given the amount of physical space that is available in key locations around Mount Pearl, this Plan suggests the development of an additional five city parks, which include locations at the following sites: St. David's Park, Centennial Square, Kenmount Park, Branscombe's Pond Park, and Kinsmen Park. A concept sketch of St. David's City Park is shown to illustrate the potential opportunities available to pursue through these developments. The sketch that follows is a preliminary concept for the design of St. David's City Park, to be used for illustrative purposes throughout this Plan.

In some cases, development of these city parks would involve the relocation of facilities and buildings currently on site. At St. David's, for example, it is recommended that the softball fields be relocated to the proposed Smallwood site. Furthermore, each site would require a separate design and development concept that is respectful of the surrounding landscape and grounds. The sketch on the following page is a preliminary concept for the design of St. David's City Park, and is used to illustrate the potential of the site.



Figure 4.3 Recommended City Park Locations and St. David's Park Concept



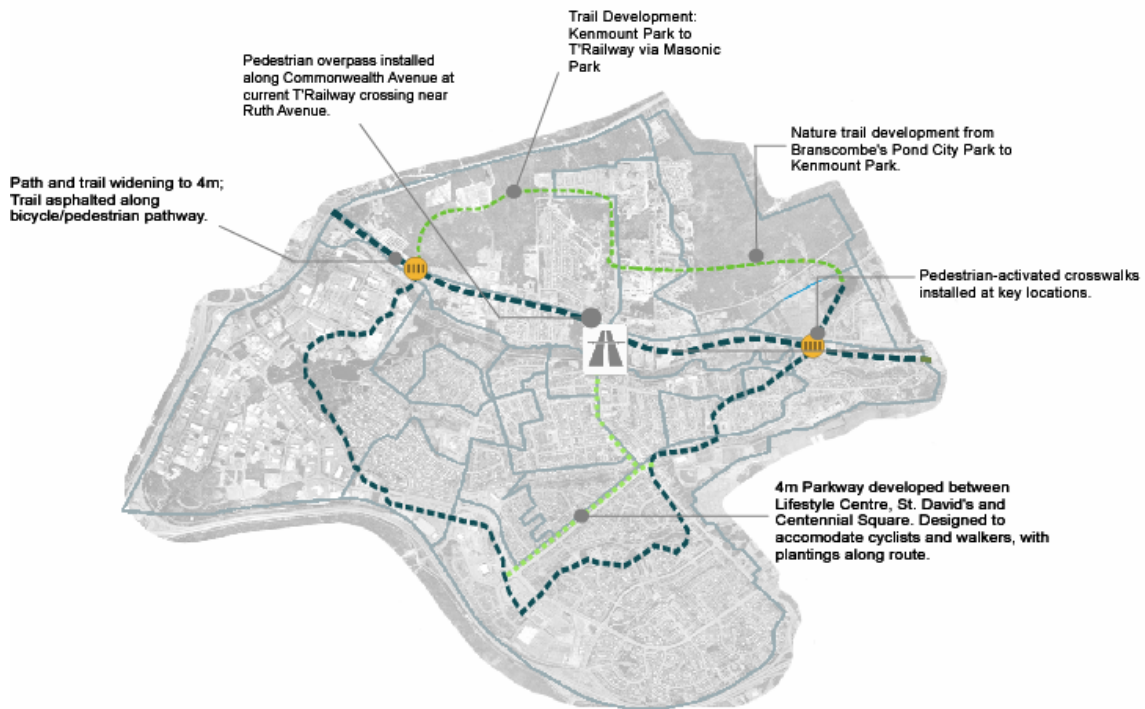
#### 4. Trail System

Trail system enhancements proposed for Mount Pearl involve three principle elements:

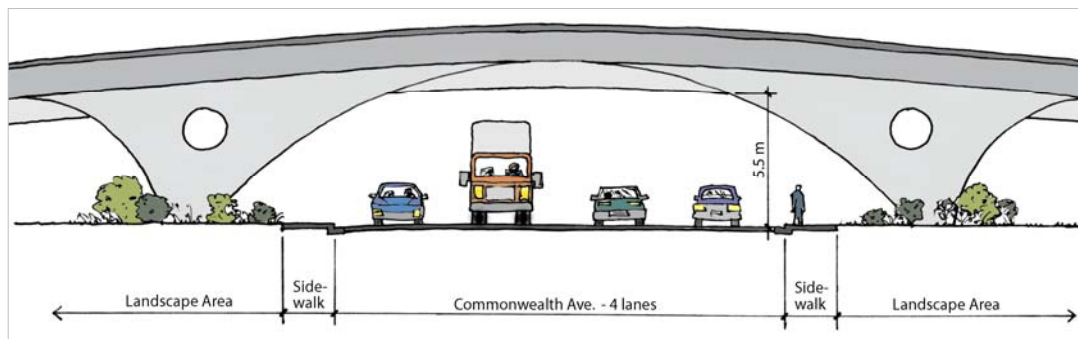
1. Widening current and future-developed trails to 4m to meet ideal national standards for cycling;
2. Development of a "looped" system that surrounds the entire City; and,
3. Incorporating pedestrian-activated crosswalks at key locations, and a pedestrian overpass where the T'Railway currently meets Commonwealth Avenue.

The illustration on the following page highlights the key recommendations proposed for the City of Mount Pearl Trail system. These developments are suggested as a means to enhance the City's current extensive trail system, and to help ensure that it serves the needs of all residents.

Figure 4.4 Recommended Trail Developments



Concept Sketch: Pedestrian Overpass at Commonwealth Avenue



*Concept Sketch: Proposed parkway connecting Lifestyle Centre, St. David's City Park and Centennial Square Park.*

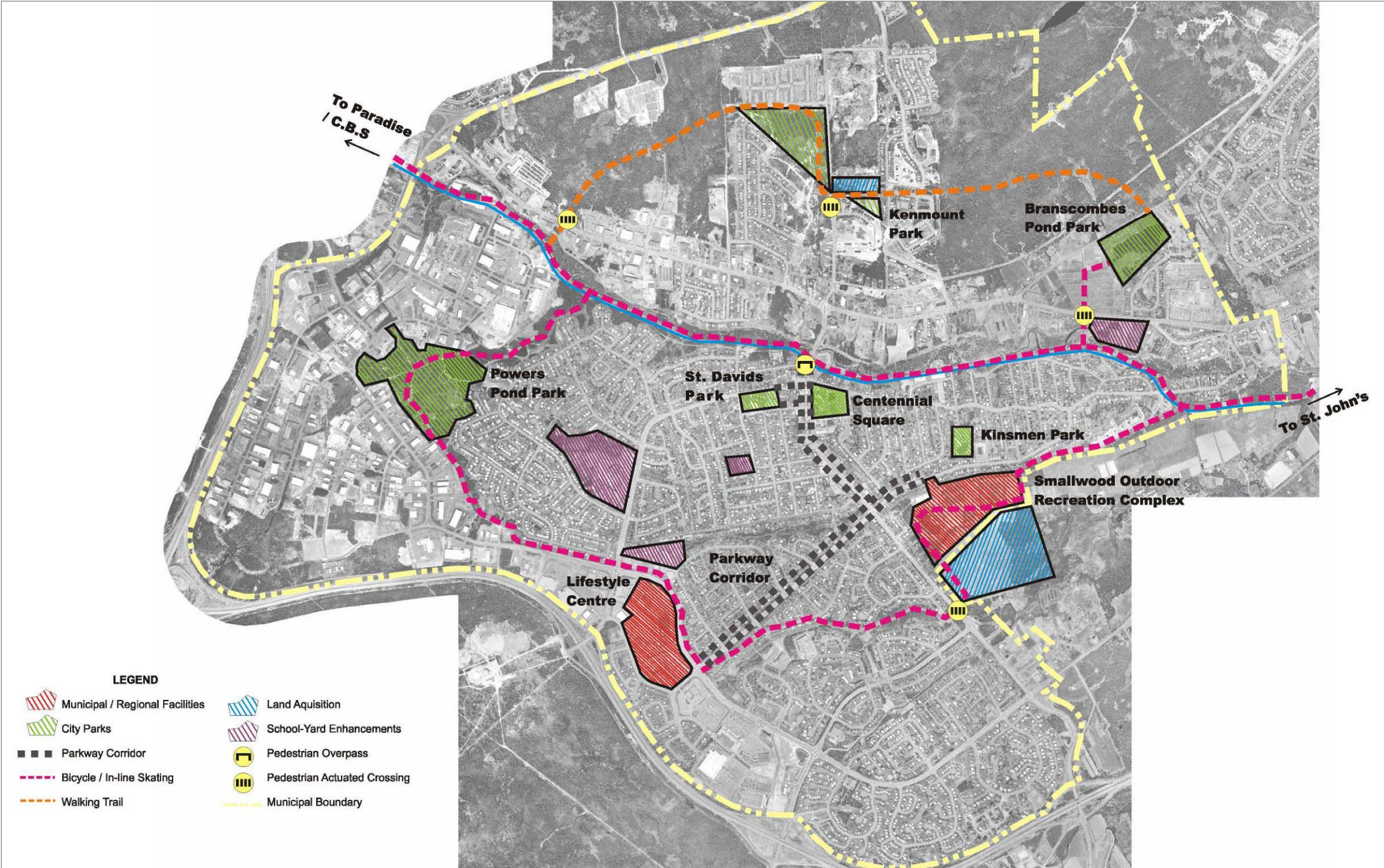


Suggested trail developments are proposed to occur through a series of seven phases of development:

1. T'Railway widening and asphalt.
2. Path widening to 4 metres throughout the City.
3. Path widening to schools and seniors facilities.
4. Installation of pedestrian overpass on Commonwealth Avenue.
5. Branscombe's Pond trail development.
6. Nature trail system development and link to Kenmount Park.
7. Kenmount Park link established to T'Railway via Masonic Park.



Figure 4.5 City-Wide Conceptual Plan





#### **4.2.2 Recommendations for the Parks and Recreation Department**

From the consultants' perspective, there is nothing wrong with the current structure of the Parks and Recreation Department. The structure has been in place for several years, and appears to be effective in terms of customer service, staff communication and efficiency.

In many communities, however, there has been an increasing emphasis on “community services” and “community development”, both of which are important municipal functions, and both of which require skill sets that many parks and recreation employees possess. It should be noted, also, that recreation itself, while covering a broad range of activities, can be neatly dealt with under the title of “community services”.

By changing the title of the Department, and to some extent the focus, the City would be formally recognizing the role that recreation provides in not only addressing the physical needs of Mount Pearl residents, but also, the many social needs that exist in every community.

Beyond that, the suggested structure has the potential to provide new opportunities for existing staff members, many of whom have worked for the City for a long period of time, and some of whom have been worked in the same capacity for several years. The opportunity to accept different responsibilities could well be energizing for the entire Department. In fact, it may be worth considering different positions for several current staff members that would take them out of their “comfort zone” and offer them new and different challenges.

The proposed structure should also result in more effective communications. It includes a number of managers, each reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation, and each being responsible for several staff members within a specific area of responsibilities. Over the long term, this could result in enhanced communication between the Department and the various organizations with which it works.

One of the positions in the new structure involves the Department's marketing activities. The *Community Development and Marketing Supervisor* is a key position, in that the work required ensures that Mount Pearl residents are not only aware of opportunities, but also, are encouraged by the information provided to attend various functions and to register in one or more activities.

There was mention during the data collection phase of the study that the Department had used a similar format for its seasonal brochures for a lengthy period of time, and that there may well be more “interesting” techniques could be used, and some that could focus more directly at specific target groups such as youth. This may well be true, and by taking advantage of the Best Practices information outlined earlier in the report, the Department should be able to identify a number of ways of enhancing the content of its promotional material.

In this regard, the consultants would refer the Department to the website of Township of Langley, British Columbia ([www.tol.bc.ca](http://www.tol.bc.ca)). The Township received an International Award recently, from the Learning Resources Network (LERN) for excellence in Leisure Guide design, and for its marketing and promotional initiatives.

As indicated, the proposed structure has considerable merit. Following its presentation to City Council, senior staff should convene a meeting, initially with all Department staff, followed by individuals who will be directly affected by the proposed changes. This could lead to further adjustments, but most important, would ensure that everyone has the opportunity to hear the rationale for the proposal, and to provide input into its implementation. The suggested re-alignment is presented in Figure 4.5 on the following page.

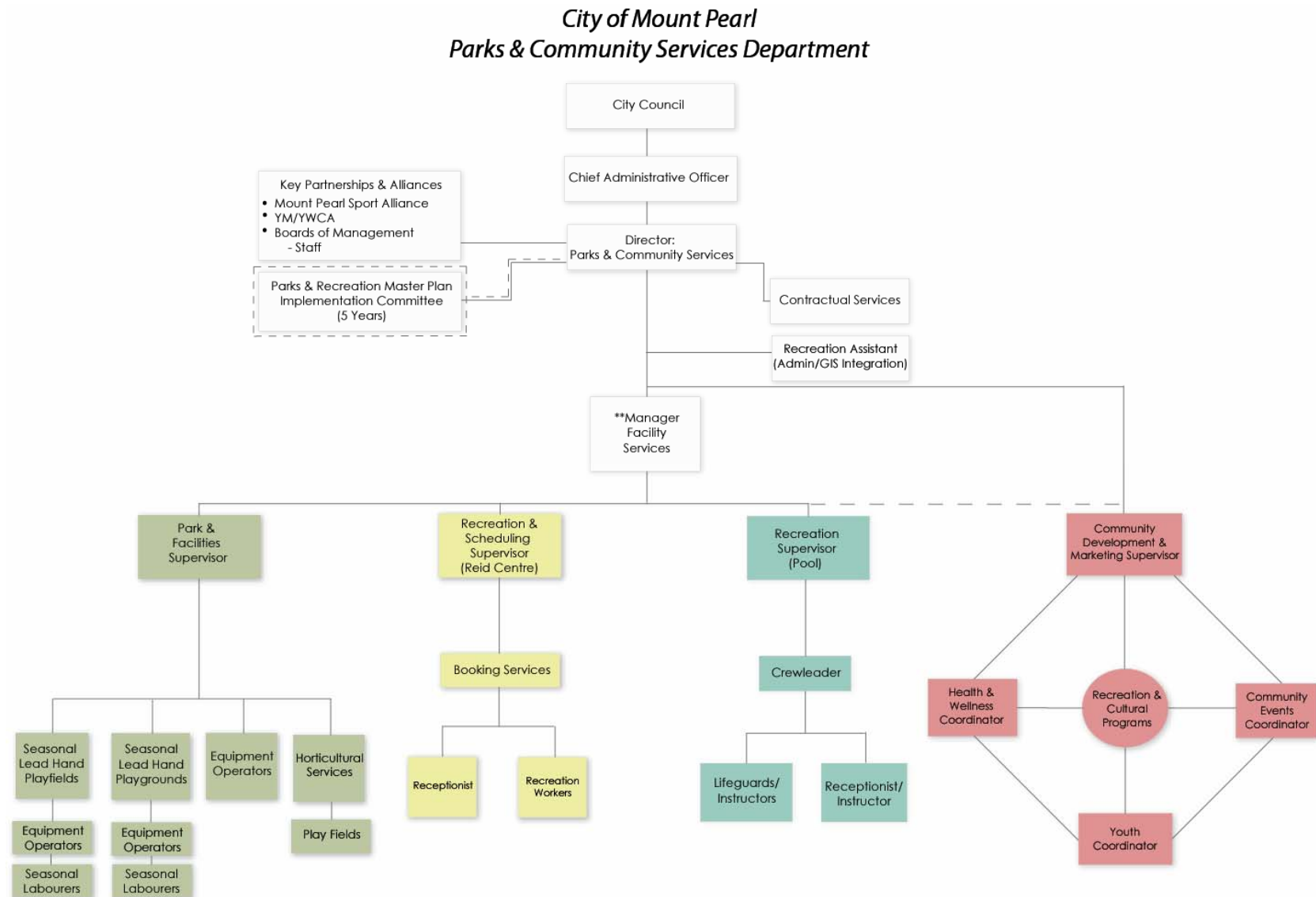
Essentially, the proposed management structure is based on the following principles:

- The Department is facing challenges and changes brought about by the information/communication age.
- The Department needs to re-think and update its operations in order to continue to grow and progress.
- The Department needs to adopt a more integrated management approach towards the consumer, staff, programs, services, facility operations and promotions.
- The Master Plan will provide a road map to guide the actions and budget of the Parks and Recreation Department for the next 5 to 10 years.

The re-alignment would result in five management personnel, who would report directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation. These positions would include a Manager of Facility Services, a Parks and Facilities Supervisor, a Recreation and Scheduling Supervisor (Reid Centre), a Recreation Supervisor (Pool), and the aforementioned Community Development and Marketing Supervisor.

The concept of community development (which has involved the provision of a number of non-traditional services) has been assigned to a number of Parks and Recreation Departments in recent years, and is generally seen as an appropriate fit. Certainly, the skills required are typically associated with those of parks and recreation practitioners.

**Figure 4.6 Proposed Realignment for Parks and Recreation Department**



*\*\*Manager Facility Services position instated pending outcomes and recommendations of the Reid Lifestyle Centre Feasibility Assessment.*

## PRIMARY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITIES
Director of Parks and Recreation	General administration Department management Relationships with community partners
Recreation Assistant	Policy development Staff communications Staff orientation Communication with public / community organizations Monitor and update GIS database Support to management staff
Parks and Facilities Supervisor	Parks and facilities maintenance Parks and facilities planning Parks development Community beautification
Community Development/ Marketing Supervisor	Health and wellness Youth Special events Volunteer initiatives Marketing and promotions
Manager Facility Services	Recreation scheduling Program registration Arenas Aquatic Centre Reid Community Centre Other facilities

It is the consultants' opinion that the Director should have primary responsibility for communicating with existing partners, and addressing concerns of those organizations, and for the development of new partnerships. In this regard, the Department, with the leadership of the Director should assume a leadership role, and facilitate one or more meetings each year, to address areas of mutual interest. (Please note: Communication between the Director and the City's partners would generally be "higher level", and would not eliminate the need for other staff in the Community Development section to work on a day-to-day basis with these organizations.

### 4.2.3 Recommendations for Recreation and Cultural Programs

As noted in the report, there are areas related to the delivery of recreation program services that should be addressed. These include the need to focus to a greater extent on the needs and interests of youth (particularly those between the age of 13 and 17), and the ever-increasing number of retirees, who in some cases, have much broader interests, and are much more active than previous generations of “seniors”.

Keeping abreast of trends in the field of parks and recreation is never an easy task. It requires a commitment from all levels of staff, and a willingness to go the extra distance in order to provide services that are not only “tried and true”, but to take risks in providing opportunities that are fresh and challenging.

There are several things that can be done to ensure that services remain relevant. The Department can:

- Organize staff workshops to discuss new and different services and programs that could be introduced to the City.
- Bring resource people to the community who have expertise in the area of trends.
- Attend regional, provincial, national and international workshops and conferences.
- Subscribe to services such as the Leisure Information Network and the Learning Resources Network (LERN).
- Develop a focus on the area of health and wellness – as reported regularly in the media, there is a major concern in our country regarding levels of fitness, and an increasing interest among senior levels of government in addressing this concern.
- Collaborate with existing and new partners in the identification of new program opportunities, but not at the expense of current successful operations.
- Work closely with current program participants through focus groups and workshops to identify new and better ways of doing things.
- Peruse popular magazines and periodicals – they always have information about new and different activities, many of which could be of interest to local residents.

The consultants also encourage the Department to become involved in a Best Practices Network in which Mount Pearl could contribute information, and learn from the experiences of other

Canadian communities. The consultants have identified a number of communities, from British Columbia to Ontario, that are similar in size to Mount Pearl, and have been selected because of the overall leadership they have exhibited in the delivery of parks and recreation services. The City could take a lead role in this regard, by being the first to share current information with these organizations, and to request information from the communities identified.

The consultants' research continues to identify key themes in terms of program services. These include partnerships, community development, an emphasis on the benefits of parks and recreation, and personal and community wellness. Specific areas that are currently "hot" include walking and cycling, outdoor pursuits, home landscaping and gardening, environmental learning and ecotourism, participation in cultural activities, and of course, informal, somewhat risky, individual youth activities.

Mount Pearl is clearly a leader in the area of partnerships. Relationships with non-profit groups are critical to the success of Parks and Recreation Departments, and the City has done an exceptional job of working in cooperation with a wide variety of organizations.

The consultants are particularly impressed with the relationship between the City and the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance. Many communities have experienced success in working with local Sports Councils, and many have encountered difficulties with this approach to service delivery. It is the consultants' opinion that the City should continue to work closely with the Alliance, and to support the Alliance in its role as an advocate on behalf of the sport community.

It should be noted, also, that the City should continue to work closely with local sport organizations to provide the best facilities possible, within available financial resources. These relationships are critical to the overall success of the Department's services, in part because the organizations play such an important voluntary role in working with hundreds of youngsters in encouraging their involvement in physical activity.

While relationships with sport organizations require constant attention, one of the most critical areas is always related to facilities – their availability, and their condition. This seems to be a constant concern in many communities, and a best practices review may well result in a variety of suggestions that could result in various improvements.

A key trend, in recent years, has involved the construction of all-weather fields, involving the use of synthetic materials. Essentially, these facilities can be used "year-round" because there are no drainage problems, and the condition of the "turf" is consistently good. Construction costs are high, however, while maintenance costs are generally low.

It may be in the City's interests to explore this type of "innovation" as a way of addressing one area of concern among minor and adult sport organizations. In suggesting this, it is not the consultants' intention to suggest that the expense of this type of installation should be borne solely by the City. Rather, it would seem appropriate to explore means in which the City, local

organizations, and possibly, the Provincial Government could work together to improve opportunities for sport and physical activity.

The following summarizes the suggested goals of the recreation and cultural programs delivered by the Parks and Recreation Department, and lists objectives that can be utilized to achieve those goals.

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>
1. To use leisure services to foster a sense of community.	<p>Encourage special events and celebrations.</p> <p>Support local groups.</p> <p>Facilitate spectator experiences at cultural and sporting events.</p> <p>Facilitate opportunities for social interaction.</p> <p>Protect natural resources.</p> <p>Beautify the community.</p> <p>Support family unity.</p> <p>Integrate generations and sub-groups.</p>
2. To use leisure services to foster individual growth.	<p>Promote fitness and well being</p> <p>Promote leisure opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pre-school aged children</li> <li>▪ Elementary school children</li> <li>▪ Youth</li> <li>▪ Adults</li> <li>▪ Seniors</li> </ul>
3. Interpret the environment.	
4. Educate individuals regarding leisure education.	
5. Foster adequate communication about leisure opportunities.	
6. Foster volunteerism.	

### **Recommendations:**

With specific reference to recreation and cultural programming, it is the consultants' opinion that the Parks and Recreation Department is performing very well in most of the areas related to individual growth. There are, however, a number of areas that the Department may wish to focus on in the future.



### **Seniors and Active Retirees**

Demographic information suggests that empty nesters and recent retirees will be a segment of the population that will continue to grow. Health and wellness trends demonstrate that this demographic group is generally active, and demands appropriate services. Traditional programming and marketing models do not work effectively to this segment – something in addition to the seasonal Leisure Guide is likely needed.

While the Department works closely with a number of seniors groups, it should be noted that the cohort includes people who may be in their 50's, all the way to those who are well over eighty. Some are very active, others engage in more passive activities. Most are interested in, and require social interaction.

The Department should take steps in the delivery of programs, and in the design of new facilities to focus greater attention on the needs and interests of this segment of the population.

### **Youth**

There are many opportunities in the community in which can participate. These activities are sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, local sport and cultural organizations, churches, the school system, the YM / YWCA, and others.

It is the consultants' opinion that because of the diverse needs and interests of this age group – some are eager to participate in scheduled programs, while others prefer to engage in less formal activities – there is a continuing need (1) to ensure interaction and communication between agencies that provide services to youth, as well as with youth themselves, (2) to ensure that adequate facilities are in place to meet physical and social interests, and (3) to ensure that youth and other age groups have opportunities to interact with each other.

The Department should take a lead role in committing (or re-committing) to this area of service.

### **Fitness and Well Being**

Canadians are increasingly aware that there is a concern regarding our general levels of fitness, particularly among younger people. Certainly, the Federal Government has taken an active role in bringing this to the attention of the general public, and many organizations, including the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, are engaged in initiatives that are intended to address the concern.

At the local level, perhaps as the number one priority, Mount Pearl should devote more of its resources toward effective marketing messages related to health and fitness, ensure that facilities are designed or re-designed to focus on this critical area, and engage in cooperative initiatives with local educators and local health officials. One area that should definitely be addressed is to ensure that recreation facilities, at the very least, offer a balance in terms of food alternatives.

As a general guideline, the City should:

- Modify and adopt the service objectives outlined.
- Strive to achieve the objectives in the most cost effective manner possible
- Prioritize the objectives on an annual basis, and assign resources accordingly
- Ensure the greatest amount of benefit at the least possible net cost to the taxpayer

## 4.2.4 Recommendations for Parks and Open Spaces

### 4.2.4.1 Multipurpose Courts

**Management:** City of Mount Pearl

**Recommendation:** Revitalize multipurpose courts through enhanced design, appeal and functionality.

**Rationale:** All courts should be re-designed to enhance roadside aesthetic appeal and functionality. Each should be signed and properly identified. We suggest that as the demographics of the community shift, so too might the use of these facilities.

**Development Priority:** Low, ongoing

<b>Anticipated Cost:</b>	Re-Design of Each Site	\$ 1,850
	Regrading and Planting	\$ 5,000
	Installation of Signage, Seating and Garbage Receptacle	<u>\$ 3,500</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,350</b>

#### 4.2.4.2 Soccer Pitches

**Recommendation:** Enhance landscaping elements and appeal of soccer pitches to increase aesthetics, functionality of game play, and ability to withstand the natural elements. In addition, all soccer pitches should be appropriately signed. Finally, sprinkler systems should be installed to reduce maintenance and increase water conservation efforts.

**Rationale:** The area surrounding most soccer pitches needs to be developed to enhance the aesthetic appeal. While all City-owned pitches have excellent surfaces the surrounds are generally in poor condition.

Some planting to screen the chain link fence the surrounds most pitches should be carried out. Consideration should be given to reducing the height of the fence surrounding the field to 4 feet. Four three-foot gaps should be left in the fence: one each directly behind the goalkeeper and one each at mid-point length-ways on the field. This is to facilitate access and the retrieval of the ball. As well, each site should be assessed and the opportunity to install a natural windbreak be explored. On select pitches, such as at Smallwood, more can be done to incorporate seating into the grade.

For all pitches we recommend that a sprinkler system be installed to reduce maintenance costs, save water and enhance the quality of the turf. The City should also explore the development of an artificial turf practice field at the Smallwood Complex, which can be used in inclement weather and to extend the outdoor practice season.

All soccer pitches should be appropriately signed.

**Development Priority:** Low (on-going)

**Anticipated Cost:**

- Irrigation System
- Signing
- Re-grading (where needed)
- Planting
- Naturalization (windbreaks)

#### 4.2.4.3 Softball and Baseball Fields

<b>Recommendation:</b>	Increase the number of softball fields in the City, perform enhancements to design and landscape, and integrate a preventative maintenance program to combat ongoing graffiti and general littering of softball fields in Mount Pearl.
<b>Rationale:</b>	<p>The City needs more pitches. The challenge is finding the space to accommodate the need. We are proposing that the St. David's Pitch be relocated to Smallwood Complex. This new pitch could be installed and the one at St. David's be removed after others have been developed. We are proposing that the field at Kinsmen Park be relocated and that additional pitches be installed at Smallwood, but this can only happen if the City is able to access lands currently proposed for housing development by NLHC and within the City of St. John's. However, there is a provincial development restriction on these lands as they fall within the Agricultural Land Freeze Zone. The development of recreational facilities, as proposed, might be acceptable under this zoning.</p> <p>While a decision regarding use for housing being made consideration might be given to installing two temporary softball fields on the former Sprung site with the support of the City of St. John's and the NLHC. These fields would have a backstop but no outfield fences.</p> <p>The City might also consider negotiating for use of fields with the City of St. John's at Cowan Heights or the Town of Paradise. Both of these fields are in close proximity to Mount Pearl.</p> <p>Alternatively, the City could light some additional fields so as to extend the playing time but this is expensive and can also be a nuisance to neighbors as a number of fields are within existing neighborhoods.</p> <p>Our inventory confirmed that the majority of pitches within the City lack in visual appeal and while the turf is in good condition, the surrounds are poorly kept. We are proposing that enhancements be carried out to better integrate these facilities into the landscape with plantings, screening of bleachers, signage where needed, and a general clean-up of sites.</p>

**Priority:** Medium – High (on-going)

**Anticipated Cost:** Facility by facility basis:

Re-design of Sites:	\$ 1,750
Re-grading:	\$ 2,200
Screening, Painting and General Clean-up:	<u>\$ 7,500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,450</b>

#### 4.2.4.4 Tennis Courts

**Recommendation:** Adaptive reuse should be considered for most tennis courts within Mount Pearl; however St. David's Tennis Club will remain the primary tennis venue in the City.

**Rationale:** St. David's will continue to be the premier tennis venue in the City. We propose, on a site by site basis, that all other sites be considered for adaptive re-use to ball hockey or additional basketball courts. If the future demographic of the neighbourhood is mainly adults and seniors then these sites should be converted into passive open spaces.

**Development Priority:** Low (on-going)

**Anticipated Cost:** On a site by site basis:

Convert from Tennis to Ball Hockey	\$2,500
Seating and Signage	\$1,850
Aesthetic Enhancements	<u>\$4,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,350</b>

#### 4.2.4.5 Playgrounds and Tot Lots

**Recommendation:** Develop four new municipal parks through the revitalization and enhancement of four existing or proposed parks, and develop current playgrounds to meet the needs of the population demographic of the immediate surrounding area.

**Rationale:** The City is blessed with numerous playgrounds and tot lots, generally within easy access to residents. As the demographic of the City is changing and the number of children is being reduced, and the adults

and seniors increasing, the re-design and re-use of these facilities has to be considered.

Our inventory has shown that the majority of residents are within 200 meters of a tot lot or playground and that many of these are connected to the extensive walkway system. For this reason, and to deal with the fitness challenge in our population we feel that as these open spaces are re-designed for adults, consideration should be given to making them, what we call adult playgrounds. These would become open spaces with apparatus installed to encourage adults to exercise, with particular emphasis on strength training. The sites would, of course, also be designed to include passive activities.

For now, we are proposing that all Playgrounds and Tot lots could use some enhancements and that these enhancements should bear in mind the future use of these open spaces.

As well, we have discovered that no municipal parks exist in Mount Pearl. While one could argue that Powers Pond fills this role this space is really a series of walks that surround a Pond that is linear in nature. Nowhere in the City do we find a City-park, such as say Bannerman, Bowring or Victoria Park in St. John's. Our public survey found that residents identify this as a need.

As noted earlier, for this reason we are proposing the developing of six city parks over the next number of years. It is important to note that two of these St. David's and Kinsmen Park, can only be successfully established with the removal and relocation of the softball pitches found at each site. The third City Park would be developed at Kenmount Park as proposed through the currently developed conceptual plan, and would serve as a park for the north side of the City. Remaining parks would be located at Centennial Square (currently being developed), Branscombe's Pond, and Power's Pond (as it currently exists).

For each of these parks a separate design is needed.

The current upgrading needed in many sites includes: new and better identification and directional signage, a connection to the pathway system, and enhanced landscaping.

**Development Priority:** Medium - High

<b>Anticipated Cost:</b>	Kenmount Park	\$350,000
	Kinsmen Park Design \$20,500 & Development	\$475,000
	Branscombe's Pond Park Design	\$ 18,500
	and Development	\$850,000
	St. David's (estimated \$750,000 to \$1 million)	<u>\$750,000</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,443,500</b>

#### 4.2.4.6 Trail System

**Recommendation:** Building upon Mount Pearl's extensive trail system, widen bicycle trails to meet the optimal 4m national standard, extend the trail system to create a "looped" bicycle/inline skating trail that encircles the City and is strategically linked to all major recreational facilities. Such development will enhance user safety through the development of pedestrian overpass links at Commonwealth Avenue and pedestrian-activated crosswalks at key areas affected by current trail disconnects.

**Rationale:** The existing trail system in Mount Pearl is extensive and is the envy of most Cities. The system has three main components:

1. The Newfoundland T'Railway runs east and west through the City and provides a recreation corridor that links to St. John in the east and Paradise, and beyond, to the west. The T'Railway is part of the Newfoundland T'Railway and the Grand Concourse Walkway system.
2. The Grand Concourse includes 120 km of walks throughout Mount Pearl, St. John's and Paradise and has three key walks within the City: the Arboretum walk (part of the Newfoundland T'Railway), Sunrise Trail and Admiralty Walk.
3. Mount Pearl pathways make up approximately 70 km of bikeways found predominantly on the south side of Topsail Road. Interestingly, our inventory found that, because of this extensive path network, almost all residents in the City are within a 5-10 minute walk of the paths that connect to all major recreational facilities in the City. Mount Pearl is the only municipality in the Province that has such an extensive network of asphalted bicycle paths.

We propose to further enhance this system by creating a dedicated recreation pathway loop around the City designed for walkers, bicycles and in-line skater. In-line skating is one of the fastest growing recreational activities in Canada – there are more in-line skaters in

Calgary then people ice skating. This is in large part because of the extensive pathway system found in the City. This loop would be asphalted and 4 meters wide.

The main spine of this system would be the Newfoundland T'Railway. We propose that the City of St. John's and the Town of Paradise be approached, and it be suggested that they also widen and asphalt the T'Railway thru their municipalities. This asphaltting and widening might be done in cooperation with the Grand Concourse Authority and the City of St. John's. The resulting asphalt corridor would prove to be both a tremendous recreational asset as well as becoming a tourism asset in its own right.

A key physical barrier that must be overcome occurs at Commonwealth Avenue where a walker/biker encounters four lanes of traffic and no safe crossing existing where the T'Railway and the street intersect. For this reason we are proposing that an overpass be constructed to create the needed safe link.

The pathway system would include key connections to major facilities in the City: Centennial Square, the Smallwood Complex and the proposed Leisure Centre. Secondary connections would focus on links to schools and the senior citizens home to encourage activity and deal with issues of inactivity and obesity. Also encouraged would be a future connection to private recreation facilities, such as Nubody's, which could promote the system as part of their fitness experience.

### *Walking Trails*

The grades found to the north of Topsail road make it difficult to suggest the extension of the bikeway system into this part of town. For this reason we are proposing that the bikeway system connect to Branscombe's Pond, but go no further north than this.

The current walking system should be extended from the Newfoundland T'Railway and cross (via a pedestrian-activated crossing light near Mary Queen of the World school) into the cemetery, and link to Branscombe's Pond. At Branscombe's Pond a walkway loop would be created and a future connection to the north with a crosswalk on Blackmarsh Road.

The new sub-division proposed for the north side of Blackmarsh Road and immediately opposite from the cemetery should have a dedicated pedestrian corridor allowing trail users into the treed area to the north.



The trail would use existing paths and open spaces to make a connection to Kenmount Park. From here a future connection would link with the Masonic Park and head west with a future link provide to the west that crosses Topsail Road east of the Kenmount Road overpass and reconnects with the T’Railway.

#### *Nature Trails*

There is a potential future opportunity to, through negotiation with the City of St. John’s, develop a trail that links into Kenmount Hill to the north, and via the Pitts Memorial Underpass to the south, connects into the southlands and beyond. Three trails can be used for walking, BMX biking and skiing. To confirm the viability of the proposed system, it is also proposed that a Concept Plan and Feasibility be conducted prior to any developments.

**Development Priority:** Concept Plan: High  
Development: Low (on-going)

**Anticipated Cost:** Concept Plan: **\$ 12,500**  
Installation: Phase 1: T’Railway Widening and Asphalt  
Phase II: Path Widening City of Mount Pearl  
Phase III: Path Widening Connections to School, Seniors and Centennial Square  
Phase IV: Overpass at Commonwealth Road  
Phase V: Crossing and development at Branscombe’s Pond  
Phase VI – Nature Trail & link to Kenmount Park  
Phase VII – Kenmount Park to T’Railway via Masonic Park

## 4.2.5 Recommendations for Recreational Facilities

### 4.2.5.1 Admiralty House Museum and Archives

**Management:** Volunteer Advisory Group

**Recommendation:** To become the Tourism Visitor Orientation Centre for the City. As a result, the City should enhance the visibility, promotion and function of Admiralty House through integration with a museum tour of the region, becoming the site for broadcasting Highway Advisory Radio (HAR), expanding to accommodate programmed activities, and incorporating new, adequate directional and international signage.

**Rationale:** Enhanced promotion as a museum and archives within the City and advertised through the NL Museum Association. Should become part of a museum tour of St. John's and Region that would include the Rooms and the Signal Hill Interpretative Centre. The site should also be cross-promoted with the future Lighthouse Tour of NL that features the Marconi Stations established at select lighthouse sites across the province, as well as at Admiralty House.

Site for broadcast of Highway Advisory Radio for the City. This would thematically link to its relevance as a wireless site during the World War II. The HAR radio should be also the means to promote the City to visiting tourists and should be supported by appropriate signage and integrated with the proposed directional signage system for the City.

The HAR radio provides a means to not just lure visitors to the City but also to promote City events to the local population, and surrounding communities. It provides the community, in essence, with its own radio station to promote upcoming events and activities. It could be cross-promoted with the Recreation Guide and your webpage.

Current parks maintenance facility should be relocated to Donovan's Industrial Park and the grounds expanded to accommodate programmed special events and passive recreation activities with an outdoor exhibit focused on communication. These suggested improvements would also enhance the appeal of Admiralty House as a place to take wedding photos and host other functions.

**Linkages:** Identified as a Walkway Junction in the Grand Concourse Authority Master Plan. Can be accessed via walkway and bicycle path. Roadside directional signage will direct highway visitors to the museum.

**Fees:** A small portion of the facility could be leased to an entrepreneur to establish a retail store focusing on Admiralty House related merchandise. Rooms currently rented for meetings.

**Development Priority:** Low

<b>Anticipated Cost:</b>	HAR Radio	\$ 75,000
	Relocate Maintenance Facility	\$175,000
	Design, and Install Landscape and Outdoor Exhibit	<u>\$150,000</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>

#### 4.2.5.2 Glacier Arena

**Management:** Boards of Management. Currently the office of the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance is located here. We are proposing that these offices be relocated to the proposed Reid Lifestyle Centre.

**Recommendation:** Expand to include additional ice surface, lounge, viewing area and restaurant, and become a key link within the Lifestyle Centre.

**Rationale:** The Glacier was designed with ice making equipment that has the capacity to handle the proposed extra ice rink. The arena would be expanded to include an additional ice surface that would be participation oriented. The facility would be physically linked to the proposed Lifestyle Centre.

Part of this development would include a redesign that would see an expanded lounge and viewing area with a small restaurant and pub. This doubling of the Glacier should only take place if the proposed closure of the Smallwood Arena as an ice hockey rink, is approved by the City.

**Linkages:** The Glacier would be accessible via the bicycle pathways and walking trails. The close proximity to Portugal Cove – St. Phillips, Paradise and the City of St. John's, particularly the Southlands and the Cowan Heights area means, this facility will be utilized extensively by residents from these areas and help serve regional hockey needs.

**Development Priority:** High, as a component of the proposed Lifestyle Centre.

**Anticipated Cost:** \$4 to \$5 million

**Funding Sources:** As per the Lifestyle Centre.

#### 4.2.5.3 Kenmount Park Community Centre

**Management:** YM-YWCA

**Recommendation:** Future expansion is recommended to meet the needs of the projected increase in population, and as a means to serve as the primary facility for Mount Pearl North.

**Rationale:** The Community Centre would be a centre piece for the proposed Kenmount City Park. We see the need for the future expansion of the facility to accommodate increased population in the area. This facility would service the neighborhood recreation needs of the north side of the city.

**Linkages:** The facility would be connected via walking paths and roads.

**Development Priority:** Low

**Anticipated Cost:** Assumes expanded by 5000 sq ft x \$150 / sq. ft. = **\$ 750,000**

#### 4.2.5.4 Mount Pearl Public and Resource Library

**Management:** City of Mount Pearl

**Recommendation:** Integrate the Library with the proposed Lifestyle Centre.

**Rationale:** The Library and Resource Centre would become a component of the proposed Lifestyle Centre and potentially be physically linked to that facility. The Library provides the opportunity to cross-promote physical activity with learning for all age groups.

**Linkages:** Connected via the walks and bicycle pathways. Cross promoted with other libraries around the Northeast Avalon and cross promoted with school and seniors homes in Mount Pearl.

**Development Priority:** High

**Anticipated Cost:** As a component of the Lifestyle Centre

#### 4.2.5.5 Park Place Community Centre

**Management:** Volunteer Board of Management

**Recommendation:** Release ownership of the City by selling the building with the intent to develop a senior's complex in the future.

**Rationale:** It is of the opinion of the consultant that this facility should be sold to private interests for the development of a senior's home. The capital monies raised from the sale could be put toward the development of the proposed St. David's Park.

The War Memorial currently on site would be redesigned to incorporate an appropriate sculpture. The Memorial would become the centre piece of St. David's Park. The Legionnaires could then meet in the current softball building at St. David's, which will be renovated as a component of the re-design and re-development of this new City Park. The cadets could then potentially meet at a local school.

To ensure the sale of the Park Place centre is in keeping with meeting the needs of the growing senior's community in the City, we propose that the City commission a consultant to prepare a Site and Building Concept. Potential private developers would offer bids to own and develop the land based on this City approved concept.

**Development Priority:** Medium

**Anticipated Cost:** Concept Plan: **\$7,500**

#### 4.2.5.6 Pearlgate Track and Field Complex

**Management:** Volunteer Board of Management

**Recommendation:** Enhance plantings and vegetation around track to reduce effects of wind on the site, and increase the variety of programmed activities and community events held at this location.

**Rationale:** Continue to promote as an international standard Track and Field Complex that can host provincial and national events. This excellent facility does not receive the degree of use that it should and more should be done to cross-promote the facility for other activities. It could be considered for a variety of community special events where large crowds gather to celebrate special activities. We see the opportunity to utilize the running track to compliment the indoor walking track proposed for the Lifestyle Centre.

Consideration might also be given to adding a paved 2m wide in-line skating track to the running track.

While the site does offer panoramic views of the City the area is consistently wind swept and this can have a negative impact on runners and other Track and Field events.

The site design around the facility and integration to the building could be improved. We propose that the facility could be removed and the building activities currently underway be integrated within the proposed Lifestyle Centre. We suggest that past efforts to vegetate the perimeter of the site continue in order to reduce wind load.

**Linkages:** Physically linked to the City pathways system.

**Development Priority:** Medium

<b>Anticipated Costs:</b>	Link to Pathways	\$22,000
	Planting and Naturalization	<u>\$35,000</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$57,000</b>

**Source of Funds:** Green Spots Naturalization Program, ECO Action  
City of Mount Pearl

#### 4.2.5.7 Reid Community Centre

**Management:** Currently Joint Boards of Management (we are proposing that the future management of the proposed Lifestyle Centre could be a partnership between the City of Mount Pearl, the YM-YWCA, the Department of Health and Community Services and the Mount Pearl Sport Alliance).

**Recommendation:** Become the “hub” of recreation services and facilities in Mount Pearl, while offering extensive, modern, high-quality facilities to patrons from the entire region. This new *Lifestyle Centre* will also provide an essential link to the City’s trail system (as proposed in this document), as this will in essence be one of the key arrival/departure points along the recommended 4m-wide asphalted pathway within the City.

**Rationale:** The current facilities would be expanded to include a new 25m indoor leisure pool, with a teaching pool, lazy river and larger whirlpool. The pool would have two sides open to the outside and a large outdoor deck. These sides could be opened and closed, depending on weather, but would add light and airiness to the space. We would propose a modernizing and expansion of the fitness component to compliment programs. The Lobby/Entrance/Social Area would be enhanced to support a sharing of office spaces between various organizations and make the facility welcoming and comfortable. A Flexible Multi-purpose Space would be included to accommodate meeting and other programmed activities. We also propose the addition of a Dedicated Gymnastics and Physiotherapy Space. The Centre would also offer a Senior’s Resource Centre.

The facility would be designed to focus on health and wellness and could include space for a private physiotherapy office. A Coffee Bar would overlook the pool and provide refreshment and healthy snacks. A Youth Centre, with its own separate access and linked to a new and expanded youth park would round out the development.

**Linkages:** Accessed via walkway and bicycle paths. Proposed parkway link from the site to the Smallwood Complex. Roadside signage on Trans Canada Highway, Pitts Memorial Drive and Cross-Town Arterial Directing visitor to the site.

**Fees:** User fees would be charged.

**Development Priority:** High

**Implementation:** We suggest that given the extensive nature of this development that a separate Feasibility Assessment and Site Development Plan be prepared that would confirm the physical space requirements of the proposed development in the form of a Concept Development and Preliminary Design, Attendance Projections, Management Options, Market Assessment and Financials (capital budget, operating budget and transition budget). This assessment would suggest a framework for a Memorandum of Understanding between those, such as the YM-YWCA, who might partner on the development and management of the proposed Lifestyle Centre.

<b>Anticipated Cost:</b>	Pool	\$5 to \$6 million
	Gym	\$1.5 million
	Proposed Feasibility Study:	\$25,000 – 30,000
	Other Spaces	<u>\$1.5 million</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9 to \$10 million</b>

**Source of Funding:** The ACOA Infrastructure Fund might provide up to 33% of the capital, 33% of the capital from the City and the remainder, potentially, raised by the YM-YWCA.

#### 4.2.5.8 St. David's Tennis and Softball Complexes

**Management:** City of Mount Pearl

**Recommendation:** St. David's become the site of one of the four municipal parks planned for the City, and as a result, the softball field be moved to the Smallwood Complex, while the current softball building would be integrated into the new park design. St. David's Tennis Club should remain as the primary tennis facility in the City.

**Rationale:** We are suggesting that St. David's become a new City Park with linkage to Centennial Square. The existing softball pitch would be relocated to the Smallwood Complex and the tennis courts would remain, as long as participation rates continue to be high. The Softball building would be integrated into a new design for the park.

**Linkages:** N/A

**Development Priority:** Medium



<b>Anticipated Cost:</b>	Move softball pitch to Smallwood	\$250,000
	Upgrade tennis courts	<u>\$100,000</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>

**Source of Funds:** City of Mount Pearl

#### 4.2.5.9 Smallwood Arena and Complex

**Management:** Volunteer Board of Management

**Recommendation:** Seek opportunity and permission to expand the site to accommodate future softball pitches. Smallwood Arena should be removed, as costs to revitalize the building to meet safety standards and the needs of residents will be extensive, outweighing the benefits of the intensive renovation that would be required.

**Rationale:** As a general comment, the entire site needs to be rationalized from a circulation and use perspective. Aesthetically it looks quite industrial and the landscape needs to be softened. Serious consideration should be given to finding a means to expand the facility to the south onto lands outside Mount Pearl and proposed for residential development.

The current complex would be expanded to accommodate the softball pitch to be relocated from St. David's. The City still has a need for another two softball fields. If access to these lands could be gained this would be the ideal place to put them. Currently, no land within the City is available for these needed facilities.

These facilities can only be re-located with the cooperation of the City of St. John's and the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, as a small parcel of their land will be needed to accommodate the relocated St. David's Field.

The lands in question are on City land and owned by the NLHC. As the lands will be disconnected from St. John's by the east-west arterial and are within a land freeze agricultural development zone, the City might be able to use lands for recreational purposes.

We also see the potential for the development of a temporary ball fields on the land in question. The field might be available to residents of both the City of St. John's and the City of Mount Pearl. This might be seen as

a temporary use that is discontinued should the housing on the site as proposed by NLHC be permitted.

The current Smallwood Arena could be closed and replaced by the proposed new ice surface at the Glacier. The arena would be retrofitted to become a dryland training centre with indoor soccer and rugby facilities, and a walking and in-line skating track. The surface could also be used for indoor softball and as a site to accommodate other dry floor activities. This proposed use would compliment the three outdoor soccer pitches on-site. Furthermore, an existing soccer pitch should be realigned to create a new field; the soccer hut would be removed and accommodated in the new Smallwood Complex. As well, a new artificial turf practice field for soccer and rugby should be installed. Lights would also be added to two fields to extend playing time.

**Linkages:** The arena would be connected via the pathways and proposed parkway to the Lifestyle Centre.

**Development Priority:** Medium

**Implementation:** We propose that a detailed Site Design be conducted on the current site to confirm the viability and costs of converting the current facility into an indoor activity facility and making the suggested recommendations to existing outdoor facilities.

**Anticipated Cost:** Site Plan: **\$20,000 - \$25,000**

#### 4.2.5.10 Swimming Pool

**Management:** City of Mount Pearl

**Recommendation:** Given the extensive costs that would be associated with renovation and/or expansion of the Pool to meet resident needs and safety standards, demolition is recommended for the swimming pool building. Aquatic services offered at the Pool would be transferred to the new Lifestyle Centre.

**Rationale:** It is the consultant's opinion that renovation costs would be excessive, and that the Mount Pearl Marlins and Mount Pearl Synchro Club would be moved to the new proposed Lifestyle Centre.

With the removal of the swimming pool the entire area would be re-designed to create one of the new City Parks proposed by the Master Plan: Kinsmen City Park.

**Linkages:** The park would be linked via sidewalks to the Smallwood Complex and the Newfoundland T'Railway.

**Development Priority:** High

**Anticipated Cost:** Demolition Costs

*\*Note: Proposed recommendation only feasible with the completion of the new pool at the proposed Lifestyle Centre.*

## 4.3 Additional Recommendations and Considerations

While the Master Plan has been designed to specifically plan the future development of parks and recreation facilities and programs for the City of Mount Pearl, to ensure a plan that is practical and can be implemented, it is necessary to look beyond specific parks or buildings, toward outside factors that can also have significant impact on the successful implementation of the Plan. The following recommendations, therefore, address such factors as they relate to parks and recreation service delivery in Mount Pearl. While these recommendations have not been defined as “key recommendations,” given the potential impact, they should be considered in the City’s future developments and strategic planning.

### 4.3.1 Integrated Soccer/Swimming Programming

Currently residents from the Cowan Heights area of the City are using facilities in MP. The potential exists to develop new facilities such as the pool to satisfy the demand for youth swimming. It might also be feasible integrate the soccer programs offered in Mount Pearl with users from the west end of the City.

### 4.3.2 Community Farming/Gardening

Located adjacent to the Goulds farming area and near the Federal Agricultural Farm, Mount Pearl could tie its community gardening efforts (as proposed) into this location, as this is also appropriate given the cultural history of Mount Pearl. With the aging population and the trend toward grow-your-own organic foods, this could become a popular activity.

#### **4.3.3 Volunteer Recruitment Program**

A volunteer recruitment and retention program developed by the City, perhaps in association with the Sport Alliance is a good investment.

#### **4.3.4 Annual Management Retreat**

It is suggested that the Department should consider an annual retreat involving management staff during which topics related to improved processes would be discussed.

#### **4.3.5 Utilization of Available Technologies**

Should the City decide to act on recommendations related to recreation facilities, it is suggested that wherever possible efforts should be made to maximize the use of technology, including registration processes, facility booking, energy systems and the like.

#### **4.3.6 Communications and Marketing Plan**

It is suggested that the development of an overall Marketing Plan would be beneficial to the City. Funds have been increased in recent years for this purpose, and thus, should be continued.

#### **4.3.7 Continued Public Consultation**

It is suggested that a survey similar to the one conducted as part of the Master Plan be completed every 4 or 5 years, and that other techniques, including focus groups, and an annual report card, detailing the achievement of specific objectives, be initiated.

#### **4.3.8 Event Tourism**

Today's tourism market is highly competitive with well-educated, sophisticated tourists traveling to our province. To develop strong destinations, a city, town or community must be able to offer unique experiences and continually expand its tourism efforts, based on existing tourism assets in the region. Mount Pearl is no exception. Already known as a city that promotes physical health and fitness, and as a, "City within a park," much potential exists for Mount Pearl to focus greater efforts on its tourism industry. Research into the needs and travel trends of the provincial and Avalon tourist should be a priority for the City in the future, as this will help identify any emerging opportunities that may exist.

As visitors continue to seek new experiences, event-based tourism has become recognized as the fastest-growing type of tourism in North America. Given the abundance of recreational facilities and open spaces throughout Mount Pearl, it is recommended that event-based tourism be explored further to assess the potential for various events, entertainment and sports venues as key tourism and economic generators for Mount Pearl in the future.

## 5.0 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET

The implementation section of the Mount Pearl Parks and Recreation Master Plan outlines the proposed overarching guidelines and policies related to the provision of recreation services in the City. The Conceptual City-wide Planning identifies proposed management initiatives and implementation strategies for the Plan. The *Implementation Plan* presented suggests capital investment and maintenance needs, and identifies costs and development priorities. The *Funding Options* and *Programs* section suggests various means that the City might consider to raise the capital and operating dollars needed to support the Plan, and provides a list of the funding programs that the Parks and Recreation Department can directly access to support components of the Plan. As it is critically important that the Plan is communicated and promoted to the general public and City staff, a section focused on how this might be approached has also been included.

This section is divided into the following sub-sections:

- Guidelines and Policies
- Conceptual City-wide Planning
  - Departmental Resources
  - Recreational and Cultural Programs
  - Parks and Open Spaces / Recreation Facilities
- Implementation Plan
  - Capital Investment and Maintenance
  - Development Priorities and Costs
  - Funding Options and Funding Programs
  - Communicating and Promoting the Plan

### 5.1 Guidelines and Policies

The following section identifies the key guidelines that should be used in implementing and managing the recommendations proposed in the Master Plan, and briefly describes what each guideline involves, from a parks and recreation planning and development perspective. It is suggested that these guidelines and policies be reflected in the City of Mount Pearl Municipal Plan.

**1. Ensure Mount Pearl's parks and recreation legacy for future generations.**

- Develop fully programmed, fully operational and well-maintained parks, facilities and programs that meet both current and future parks and recreation needs.
- Educate the public and local leaders about the value, benefits, conditions and needs of Mount Pearl's parks and recreation system.
- Coordinate planning, management, development, and funding of parks, natural resources, trails and recreation facilities with City and Regional planning efforts.
- Engage residents as stewards of Mount Pearl's parks and recreation system to help preserve the legacy for future generations.

**2. Provide a wide variety of high quality recreation services and opportunities for all residents.**

- Pursue all opportunities to provide park and recreation services.
- Provide a basic, developed neighbourhood park facility with a 10 to 15 minute walk (1/2 mile) of every Mount Pearl resident.
- Provide a community park facility within a 20 to 30 minute walk (1 mile) of every Mount Pearl resident.
- Maintain the current ratio of parkland to population.
- Develop a full-service, multi-purpose community centre – with two ice sheets, an aquatic/leisure centre, arts facilities, classroom, fitness and activity space to serve the entire community.
- Provide, in cooperation with other agencies and organizations, a full range of recreation and cultural programs.

**3. Preserve and protect Mount Pearl's natural resources to ensure a "City in a Park."**

- Acquire sufficient lands to protect existing resources.
- Protect, expand and restore interconnected ecosystems and wildlife corridors.

**4. Create an interconnected system of paths and walkways to make Mount Mount Pearl “Newfoundland’s Walking Capital”**

- Provide safe and convenient walkways, parks, natural areas and recreation facilities, and connect them to residential areas, civic institutions and businesses.
- Develop convenient access to major natural resource areas.

**5. Develop Parks and Recreation facilities and programs that promote the “City in a Park”.**

- Build public plazas and “green connections” in the City’s core, and along main streets.
- Integrate the parks, major community centre and trail system into local neighborhoods.
- Partner with other agencies, including the School District and others to provide maximum benefit to Mount Pearl residents.

## **5.2 Conceptual City-Wide Planning**

### **5.2.1 Department Administration**

#### *Goals*

- Enhance the value of the parks and recreation service to city residents by providing outstanding customer service, effective public information and strategic partnerships with community minded organizations.
- Play a central role in maintaining and enhancing the quality of community life by taking a customer driven, outcome oriented and collaborative approach to service delivery.

#### *Strategies*

- Realign the Parks and Recreation Department to accommodate three primary functions: parks, open space and trails, recreation facilities, and community development.

- Consider the development of a customer service plan and develop strategic marketing initiatives.
- In the completion of annual reports, the City should:
  - Include an indication of recovery rates and cost per capita for the Department, and for each of the major facilities.
  - Include a “report card” that addresses overall achievements for the previous year.
- Continue to research and develop technological services that will improve information management and customer service. Complete the on-going automation of the registration system and integrate that system with an updated webpage.
- Expand the current *Maintenance Inspection and Report* provided by the Grand Concourse Authority to the entire Parks and Open Space network.
- Using the Geographic Information System mapping and database developed in the Master Plan, begin the development of a GIS-based maintenance management system.
- Expand the role of the Department’s Administrative Assistant to include management of the GIS database developed to support the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Develop an overall marketing plan for the Department, addressing the needs and interests of different segments of the community.
- Begin repositioning the City of Mount Pearl “Parks and Recreation Department” to “Parks and Community Services”.
- Develop a Poster and promotional brochure to promote the Master Plan.
- Enhance the current design of the Activity Guides and website.
- Continue to review user fees and consider adjusting them on an annual basis.
- Formalize regional recreational development opportunities with border communities: St. John’s and the Town of Paradise.



## 5.2.2 Recreation and Cultural Programs

### *Goals*

- In partnership with various organizations, create recreation program experiences that support a healthy lifestyle, respond to the needs of the general community, and support the Departments core service values.
- Develop recreation programs to optimize the value of such programs, the value of the facilities as a community investment, and as a means to increase revenue capacity and cost recovery.
- Align recreation programming service with core program service areas to reflect community demographics, current trends and desired outcomes and benefits.

### *Strategies:*

- Initiate the development of a formal program to annually review and evaluate the provision of recreation programs provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Continue to work with and coordinate the provision of leisure service opportunities by other organizations.
- Assist related organizations in the promotion of leisure opportunities.
- Ensure the availability of recreation facilities to local organizations.
- Directly deliver services and programs only when other service providers are unable to do so.
- Place an emphasis on the development of programming strategies related to seniors and active retirees and youth.
- Place an emphasis on the development and promotion of programs and services related to health, fitness and well-being.
- Place greater emphasis on cooperative initiatives with local health services.

### 5.2.3 Parks and Open Spaces/Recreation Facilities

#### *Goals*

- Develop facilities to service the City at the neighbourhood level, enhance aging facilities and creating efficient designs. All new facilities should be state-of-the-art.
- Maintain, expand and continually enhance the linear park system in the City to ensure a diversified recreation experience.
- Develop vegetation management policies that focus on aesthetic appeal, naturalization, biodiversity, and reduced maintenance costs.
- Enhance cooperative use of school athletic fields and gymnasiums to provide the additional facilities needed to support current recreation program needs.

#### *Strategies*

- Proposed programming should drive design and, where appropriate, be designed for revenue generation and flexibility.
- Strive to maintain existing natural open space areas; current zoning on lands north of Topsail Road and above the 190 contour could be changed to Conservation Open Space.
- With the Grand Concourse Authority, develop a park naturalization program.
- Maximize the asset value of existing parks and open spaces through new development, re-design and an enhanced role in learning environments.
- Complete Master Plans for five new City Parks.
- Extend naturalized thoroughfares throughout the older part of the City into newly developed areas.
- Develop landscape design guidelines for all new commercial and residential developments.
- Propose an open space policy that requires all new developments to include landscape treatments at the concept development stage that integrate the development into the existing open space network.
- Provide improved outdoor recreation facilities to meet the specific athletic and fitness needs of the community. Priority being the Smallwood Complex and then the bicycle/in-line skating circuit.

- Access or acquire additional park land at both Kenmount Park and Smallwood Outdoor Recreation Complex.
- Develop a parkway corridor linking the Lifestyle Centre, Smallwood Complex and Centennial Square/St. David's Park.
- Install sculpture, beginning in the urban areas of the City at Centennial Square and the proposed St. David's Park.
- Develop a new Lifestyle Centre at the Reid Centre focusing on programs and facilities for all ages.
- Explore the development of a memorandum of understanding between the YM-YWCA for the capitalization, operation and programming of the Lifestyle Centre.
- Based on the potential tourism impacts of the proposed developments, explore potential funding opportunities through available federal funding programs.
- Assess the viability of locating the proposed new Newfoundland and Labrador Science Centre adjacent to the proposed Lifestyle Centre.
- Re-design playgrounds, tot lots and open spaces to maximize the availability and use of outdoor recreation spaces.
- Recreation facility improvements should be designed to support intensified use and support both passive and active recreation activities for youth and adults.
- Re-design hard surface play areas to enhance "roadside appeal" and to meet the changing recreation needs of the population.
- Continue to schedule the use of outdoor athletic fields to levels that do not degrade the facility.
- Develop a system-wide parks and open spaces signage system. Include highway signage to direct visitors to facilities.
- Develop an anti-vandalism program in cooperation with local schools, sports organizations and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. Intensify policing on walks and trails to discourage inappropriate, unsafe and destructive activities.
- Select facilities such as athletic fields should be upgraded to support intensified use through the addition of irrigation systems, synthetic turf, and enhanced lighting.

## 5.3 Master Plan Implementation

### 5.3.1 Capital Investment and Maintenance

For the Master Plan to be successfully implemented, consistent and adequate funds to support capital development and operational funding must be secured. The department must continue to be managed efficiently to get the most from its existing financial resources. Opportunities to leverage funds through community partnerships should be aggressively pursued. It is critical that sufficient fiscal and community partnership resources are available to sustain the delivery of quality park and recreation experiences that the community needs.

To support capital investment and maintenance:

1. Develop programs and facility operations to maximize revenue generation capabilities.
2. Develop dedicated funding streams to support preventative maintenance and capital improvements
3. Pursue opportunities for cooperative capital development and program delivery with neighbouring communities, schools and community agencies.

The *Funding Options* section outlines specific strategies the City might pursue with regard to accessing funds to support capital and operating costs. The Funding Programs section identifies various public and private programs that the City might access to further support capital investment and maintenance.

### 5.3.2 Development Priority and Costs

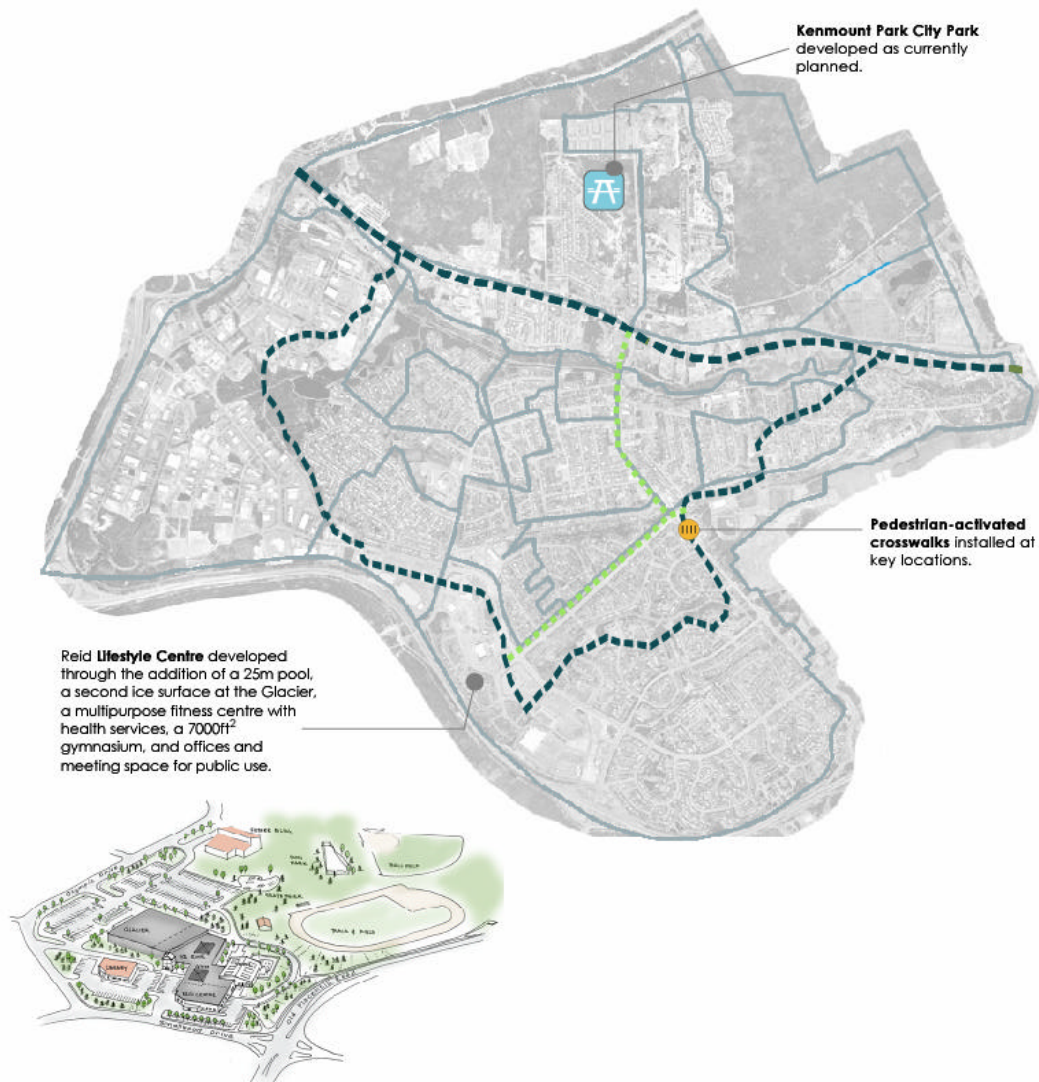
Recommendations proposed throughout the Master Plan were designed and categorized in terms of their development priority: low, medium or high.

- *Low Development Priority* represents proposed development pending that of medium or high recommendation;
- *Medium Development Priority* represents proposed development following completion of high development recommendations; and,
- *High Development Priority* represents those developments that should be the first developed out of recommendation possibilities presented.

The charts presented in the pages that follow have been developed to illustrate the recommendations, grouped based on the above-noted priority. Following the illustration, a table highlighting the anticipated costs associated with each recommendation or component of the development phase, has been included. It is important to recognize that the costs shown are preliminary estimates only, and are based on costs for 2004. Fluctuation or an increase in the cost estimates within the next ten years can be expected.

### 5.3.2.1 High Development Priority Recommendations

The illustration below indicates all recommendations classified as having a high development priority in the Master Plan. A summary of the cost estimates is also provided.

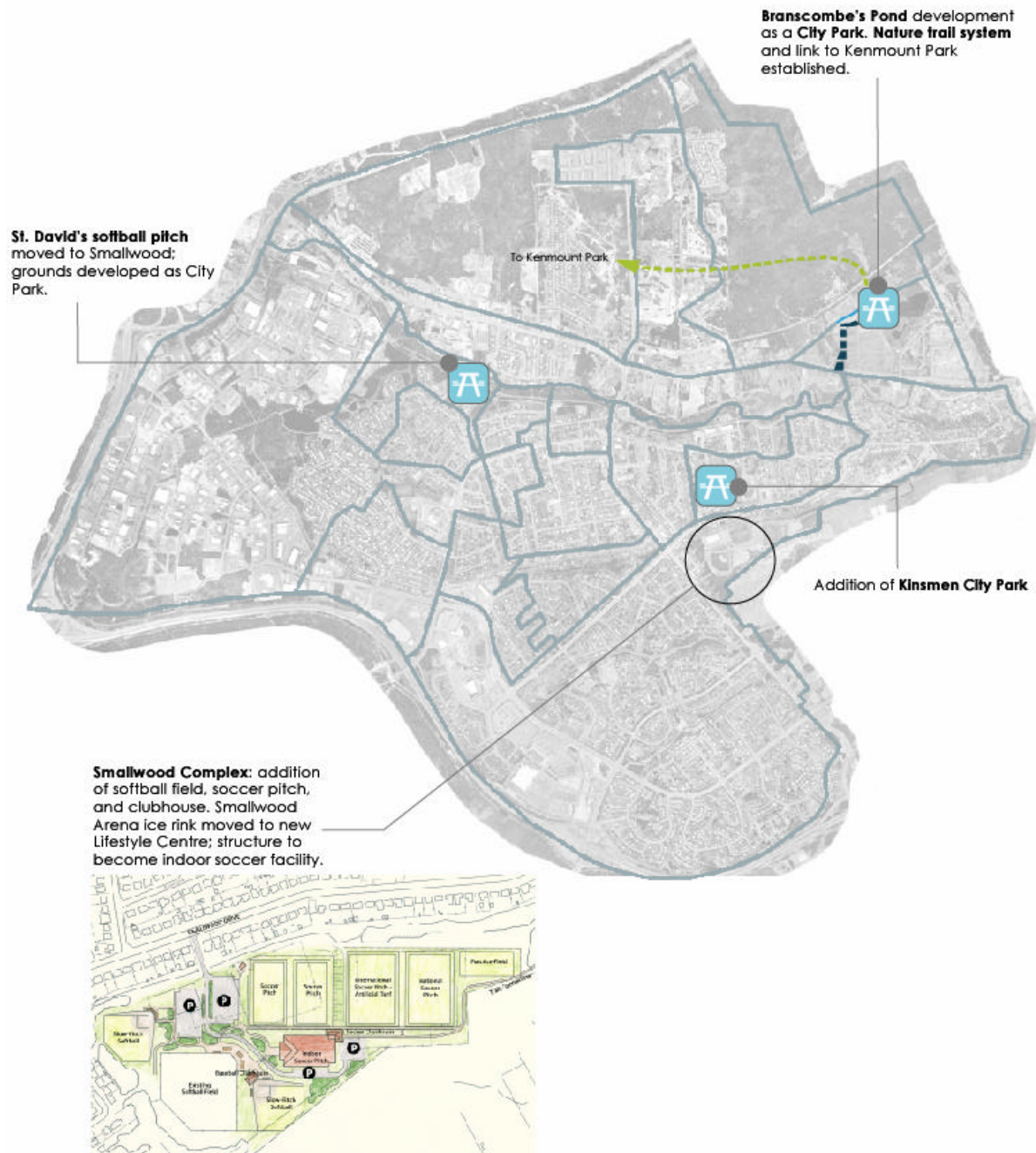


#### Cost Estimate for High Development Priority Recommendations:

Development Priority	Recommendation	Cost
High	1. Community Development Supervisor (hired)	\$35,000 - \$40,000
	2. Implement Kenmount Park open space plan	\$300,000 - \$350,000
	3. Lifestyle Centre Design, Feasibility Analysis	\$25,000 - \$30,000
	4. Lifestyle Centre and Glacier	\$13 - \$14 million
<b>Total High Priority Development</b>		<b>\$15,000,000</b>

### 5.3.2.2 Medium Development Priority Recommendations

The illustration below indicates all recommendations classified as having a medium development priority in the Master Plan. A summary of the cost estimates is also provided.



#### Cost Estimate for Medium Development Priority Recommendations:

Development Priority	Recommendation	Cost
Medium – High	5. Smallwood Centre Design & Feasibility Analysis	\$20,000 - \$25,000
	6. Indoor dryland training facility (soccer, rugby, inline skating, ball hockey, etc.), soccer pitch, rugby/soccer practice field, new softball field.	\$2 - \$2.5 million
<b>Total Medium – High Priority Development</b>		<b>\$2.5 - \$2.75 million</b>

Development Priority	Recommendation	Cost
Medium	7. St. David's City Park (including tennis court)	\$750,000 - \$1 million
	8. Sale of Park Place	TBA
	9. Redesign of Kinsmen City Park	\$14,500
	10. Develop Kinsmen City Park	\$1 - \$1.5 MILLION
	11. Branscombe's Pond City Park	\$14,500
	12. Schoolyard designs	\$25,000
	13. Naturalization program	\$50,000
<b>Total Medium Priority Development</b>		<b>\$2.5 MILLION</b>

#### 5.3.2.3 Low Development Priority Recommendations

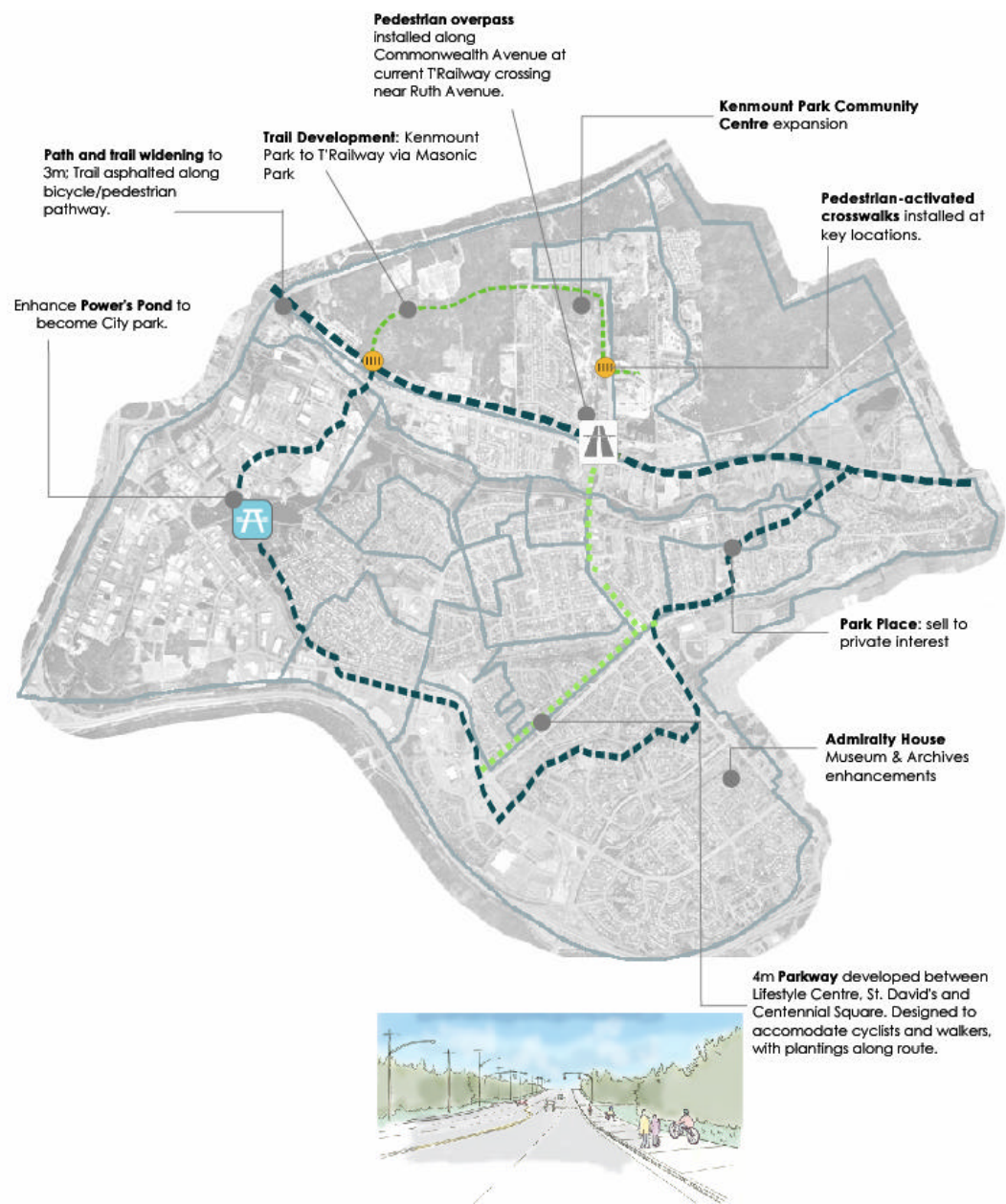
The illustration on the following page indicates all recommendations classified as having a medium development priority in the Master Plan. A summary of the cost estimates is also provided.

#### Cost Estimate for Low Development Priority Recommendations:

Development Priority	Recommendation	Cost
Low	14. Master Trail System Plan	\$32,500
	15. Retrofit hard surface play areas, playgrounds and tot lots.	TBA
	16. Install pedestrian activated crossings and overpass	TBA
	17. Install T'Railway	TBA
	18. Install completed looped walkway system	TBA
	19. Parkway: Lifestyle Centre – Smallwood – Centennial Square – St. David's	TBA
<b>Total Low Priority Development</b>		<b>\$50,000+</b>



*Low Development Priority Recommendations:*





### 5.3.3 Funding Options

One of the many challenges associated with the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Master Plan will be in accessing funds to support capital development, operations and maintenance. While a number of potential funding sources exist (see Funding Programs) the key to success will be the ability of the City to (in a fair and equitable way) generate the funds necessary to develop the proposed parks and recreation infrastructure prepared in the Master Plan.

With this in mind, a select number of funding options that we have explored are presented below. It is suggested that the City Planning Department review each option in detail and, in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department, make recommendations to Council on any of the options it feels warrants further serious consideration.

The information presented below has borrowed heavily from a report prepared for the Laidlaw Foundation entitled *Municipal Funding for Recreation* by Enid Slack, March 2003.

That report identified the following as options for financing municipal recreation operating, maintenance and capital expenditures:

- property taxes,
- special assessments,
- tax increment financing districts,
- dedicated revenues,
- user fees,
- intergovernmental transfers,
- borrowing; and,
- private sector participation.

Based on our initial assessment we suggest the following as worthy of consideration.

#### 5.3.3.1 Dedicated Revenues

Dedicated revenues are revenues that are collected by the City and directed specifically to projects such as the proposed Lifestyle Centre. These funds may be collected specifically for such capital projects, or they may be existing revenues that are directed to approved projects. Dedicated funds can be created through a number of different mechanisms such as guaranteed expenditure minimums and special tax levies.

Guaranteed expenditure minimums set a floor below which spending on recreation services or programs is not allowed to fall. The minimum could be a specific dollar amount, or it could be a percentage of funds that is allocated to recreation and community services. Based on our assessment, it is apparent that the

opportunity exists for Council to allocate more dedicated revenues to support both capital and operating, related to Parks and Recreation.

Essentially, a guaranteed minimum redirects existing revenue rather than creating additional revenues, the challenge here will be in finding the monies in existing budget line items and allocations.

Alternatively, special tax levies are used to increase existing taxes and the new revenues are earmarked for recreation and community services. Special taxes are created by the local governments and could be dedicated to implementing the recommendations in the Master Plan.

In the public survey conducted, one question asked residents about their willingness to pay additional taxes to support Parks and Recreation. Generally speaking the reaction was positive (based on a \$25/annum tax increase, Council could raise \$232,000 annually to support the recommended actions found in the Master Plan). Council should consider imposing such a tax levy to provide funds needed to implement the recommendation found in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Some examples of the use of dedicated funds, taken from the Laidlaw Foundation study include.

- Oakland (guaranteed expenditure minimum): Voters passed Measure K (the Kids First Initiative) in 1996. Measure K requires the city to set aside 2.5 percent of unrestricted general revenues in a children's fund for programs for children and youth. This measure generated \$5.2 million in 1998.
- Seattle (special tax levies): Voters passed the Families and Education Levy in 1990 and again in 1997 to support early child development, school-based student and family services, comprehensive student health services, and out-of-school time programs. Under this levy, a property tax rate was set at .23 per \$1,000 of assessment. The special tax levy is projected to generate \$70 million over seven years. Revenues fluctuate over time as property values change.
- Seattle: The City Charter requires that the City deposit 10 percent of City revenues from fines, penalties and licenses go to the Park Fund for operating expenditures. Seattle also has a Pro Parks Levy (by voter approval) to fund park improvements, acquisitions, building renovations, recreation programs and maintenance. The levy, which is set at \$0.35 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, is expected to bring in over \$198 million in revenues over the next eight years.

Dedicated revenues link the revenues generated by a particular tax with an expenditure on a particular activity.

Advantages:

- Taxpayers are generally more in favour of taxes when they know specifically what the revenues will be used for.

- Dedicated funds produce predictable and stable funds for recreation.
- Dedicated funds are protected from budget debates and trade-offs.
- Dedicated funds can be used to match public and private sector funding.

Disadvantages:

- Dedicated revenues may not generate sufficient revenue over time particularly if demand increases.
- Once dedicated funds are in place it might be difficult to increase funds for recreation from other sources.

### **5.3.3.2 User Fees**

As a result of the decline of provincial transfers to municipalities and decreasing tax revenues many municipalities have increased the use of user fees for recreation and culture over the last ten years.

In 2000, a study of 167 recreation departments by the Canadian Council on Social Development, in collaboration with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association found that:

- The vast majority charge user fees for at least some programs. A majority charged user fees for all programs. In most cases, user fees have risen over the last five years
- Most recreation departments charged user fees to all for aquatic programs but fewer charged children for after-school programs and drop-in youth programs.
- 85 per cent of respondents were trying to increase the financial accessibility to programs. Some offered subsidies to low-income families, generally the subsidy was capped and in some cases families were offered a fixed fee per child per year. Some also offered programs free of charge, such as learn-to-swim.

As well as increasing tax revenues some economists argue that user fees are important to municipal finance because they ensure that governments do what people want and are willing to pay for; the main economic rationale being not to produce revenue but economic efficiency because:

1. They provide information to the public sector about how much users are willing to pay for a specific service.

2. They ensure citizens value what the public sector provides, even if at a marginal cost.

Alternatively, not charging at all can result in over-consumption and over crowding that might signal to some that government should provide even more of this under-priced service.

The most important general public concern about user fees is that they might restrict access for some in the community. If low income families cannot afford to pay user fees they will not use the service.

It should be recognized as well that other barriers to recreation programs exists, the biggest one being transportation. Others would include family/parental support, social/cultural factors, equipment, lack of facilities, awareness and lack of volunteers.

Some have concluded that where a subsidy is appropriate it should be given to the users and not the suppliers of the service. These demand subsidies relate to the consumption of the user. Some options to consider include “lifeline” pricing where everyone has access to an initial basic quantity of service at low price or no charge, such as swimming or programs for youth or some variant of the “smart card” where all users obtain access to the service by a card but low-income users are given an initial credit on the cards.

#### **5.3.3.3 Intergovernmental Transfers**

These are transfers where a senior level of government transfers funds to a local municipality, when municipalities have inadequate revenues to meet expenditure needs a fiscal imbalance exists. The government deals with this imbalance by increasing sources of revenue to local government in the form of grants.

Municipal government can strengthen their case for intergovernmental transfers if they can identify an externality, where benefits of services in the City of Mount Pearl spill over into neighbouring municipalities. We feel that such a case can be made in Mount Pearl and that the west end of St. John's, the southlands in particular, and the City of Paradise would benefit from the development of such facilities as the propose Lifestyle Centre and the Smallwood Complex.

One way to provide the City with the incentive to provide more resources and create the externality, or benefit, to neighbouring communities is to transfer from a senior level of government, funds to cover part of the cost of providing this service.

In the case of Mount Pearl the case can be made to the federal and provincial government that the facilities and programs they offer are providing a service to the neighbouring communities identified. In this way government does not have to provide additional capital and operating dollars to neighbouring communities, that would in effect result in a duplication of services i.e., do we need a swimming pool in Paradise or Southlands if the City of Mount Pearl has one that is accessible?

#### **5.3.3.4 Borrowing**

Mount Pearl can borrow to pay for a portion of the major capital public works proposed in the Master Plan. Repayment of the borrowed funds comes from operating revenues such as user fees and property taxes.

Municipalities can only borrow to make capital expenditures and this often makes sense particularly if the amount of capital needed can be reduced with the support of intergovernmental transfers. The borrowing allows the municipality to synchronize the costs and benefits of the infrastructure over time. This means that those who benefit from the facility – users and taxpayers – also pay the costs over the lifespan of the facility. Generally, borrowing is more equitable and efficient when those who are paying for the services are enjoying the benefits.

The main disadvantage is that future revenues are dedicated to debt reduction and not available for other uses. It is very important that borrowing decisions are strategic and planned and that debt charges are not such as to constrain the fiscal flexibility of the City.

According to Ploeg (2001), “a city completely free of debt should not be the ultimate goal of a fiscal policy, regardless of how well it plays with the public. This is especially the case if the fiscal trade-off is an under funded stock of capital assets and infrastructure.”

The Province of Ontario is looking at a means to reduce municipal borrowing costs by introducing legislation that will allow municipalities to issue tax-exempt “opportunity” bonds. These bonds offer the investor an income tax exemption on interest earned on the bonds. This allows municipalities to access financing at a lower interest rate and would reduce borrowing costs. The City might consider approaching the provincial government on this issue.

#### **5.3.3.5 Partnerships**

The involvement of the private or community-based sector in the provision of infrastructure or services can take many forms:

*Operate:* The private sector operates the facility for a fee. The public sector retains responsibility for capital costs.

*Lease/Purchase and Operate:* The private firm leases/purchases the facility from the public sector, operates the facility and charges user fees.

*Lease/Purchase, Build and Operate:* This arrangement is similar to lease/purchase and operate except that the private sector firm would be required to build or develop a new facility, or enlarge or renovate an existing facility and then operate it for a number of years.

*Build:* This is a turnkey partnership in which the private sector is paid a fixed fee to build a facility according to government specifications and turns the facility over to the public sector when it is completed.

*Build/Operate/Transfer:* The private sector develops and builds the required infrastructure, operates the facility for a specified period of time, and then transfers it back to the municipality.

*Build and Operate:* The private sector builds and operates the facility and is responsible for capital financing. The operation is regulated and controlled by the private sector.

*Build and Transfer:* The private sector builds the infrastructure and then transfers ownership to the public sector.

With the approval of the Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs communities can exempt private companies from municipal taxes, provide assistance through grants and low-interest loans, provide lending guarantees, and provide the services of municipal employees. The private sector can lease the facility back to the City or operate the facility.

A main advantage of this arrangement is that it relieves the municipality of the upfront capital costs and can enable needed infrastructure to be built when funding is constrained. As the municipality does not have to borrow, they incur no debt. Ancillary uses such as retail can be accommodated within facilities to provide another source of revenue.

The success of this arrangement depends on how the contractual arrangements are structured and how the risks are shared. Municipalities must ensure their goals are being met.

## **Conclusion**

A major contributing factor to the decline in recreation facilities and expenditures in municipalities is the fiscal situation in many municipalities. The result is that overall financial operating expenditures on recreation and culture are declining and recreation infrastructure is deteriorating.

Just as the Parks and Recreation Plan established long term goals for the provision of parks and recreation services, so to must the City of Mount Pearl develop a strategic plan for the financing of recreation programs and infrastructure. There is really no single program or strategy that we might suggest the City use to meet your capital and operating needs. The City will probably need to use a combination of sources to meet the long-term requirements for municipal recreation as identified in the Master Plan.

## 5.4 Funding Programs

To support the developments outlined in the Master Plan will require a substantial financial investment. Obviously, the City of Mount Pearl does not have means to undertake the work on its own. Fortunately, funding opportunities do exist to assist the City financially with capital development projects. The funding agencies, however, will not cover future maintenance costs; these will require ongoing dedicated funding support from the City.

When undertaking public works of the scale suggested in the Master Plan it is important that the proponent is well organized to deal with the administrative requirements. The funding agencies will allow a percentage of the monies they allocate to be used for project administration. To help ensure financial support in subsequent years it is quite important that the projects are completed within the allotted schedule and budget.

The first task is to prepare and submit an application for funding to support the projects. Preparing an application can take time unless staff is solely dedicated to its completion. Once the application is made they are solely responsible for tracking the file with the funding agencies. Funds are generally allocated to a specific project(s) within that capital year. That means the City will have to apply for funds on an annual basis. If you have not already, then you should develop a reputation with the funding agencies of completing projects professionally: on-time and on-budget and of high quality.

We propose that the City make a presentation of the Master Plan to the funding agencies and outline the Plans benefits. Confirm with them general support for the work and identify the projects you hope to complete with their support within the next, and subsequent, calendar year(s).

A number of funding programs are available from the federal and provincial governments. Generally the infrastructure funds will come from ACOA and HRDC. The ACOA funds offer the greatest flexibility. They provide for capital, labour and outside services (contractors and consultants). Most programs require a 20% contribution from the proponent. Often this percentage comes from HRDC labour funding programs. HRDC funds generally support personnel but they might allow a percentage of overhead funds. We propose that these two agencies can be the key funding partners who will help undertake some projects.

Many other funding agencies exist that can assist. We provide a partial list below, with a brief description of the program. The province also has a number of programs that will provide labour funds, but generally at much lower wages.

**Table 5.1 Funding sources and programs available.**

FUNDING SOURCE/ PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<p><b>Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)</b>  <a href="http://www.acoa.ca/e/index.shtml">www.acoa.ca/e/index.shtml</a></p>	<p><b>Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will provide up to 80% of project costs (labour and capital). Potentially the key source of funds for this project</li> </ul> <p><b>Business Development Program (BDP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will provide up to 75% of project costs. Directed specifically at business development oriented projects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announced in 2003 to support smaller scale municipal infrastructure projects that improve the quality of life, sustainable development and economic opportunities, particularly of smaller communities.</li> <li>The MRIF will be cost-shared, with the Government of Canada contributing, on average, one-third of total project eligible costs. Provinces and municipalities will contribute the remainder. In recognition of the unique circumstances of the First Nations and the Territories, where many communities have no tax base, the Government of Canada may contribute more than one-third.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Resources and Skills Development Canada</b>  <a href="http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/home.shtml">www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/home.shtml</a></p>	<p><b>Targeted Wage Subsidy (TWS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour funding program. Pays for 40% of the wages for up to 72 weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Job Creation Partnership (JCP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A top-up labour funding program for those on employment insurance or eligible for benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>Summer Career Placement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program to retain summer students for seasonal work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Department of the Environment</b>  <a href="http://www.ns.ec.gc.ca/community/funding.html">www.ns.ec.gc.ca/community/funding.html</a></p>	<p><b>Eco-Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a number of programs that might be applicable. Eco-action will fund a broad range of projects and has recently been revamped as per the Koyoto Accord</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Resources and Employment, Newfoundland and Labrador</b></p>	<p><b>Graduate Employment Program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide 50% of the wages for up to 52 weeks</li> </ul>



<b>FUNDING SOURCE/ PROGRAM</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<a href="http://www.gov.nf.ca/hre/publications/pdf/grad_emp.pdf">www.gov.nf.ca/hre/publications/pdf/grad_emp.pdf</a>	for recent graduates.
<b>Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs</b> <a href="http://www.18.hrdc.gc.ca/programs/jobcreation/desc.asp">www.18.hrdc.gc.ca/programs/jobcreation/desc.asp</a>	<b>Job Creation Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provides funding support to hire displaced workers. Usually workers must be eligible for, or be on, social assistance.</li> </ul>
<b>Newfoundland Council of Industry Associations</b> no web site found, email: <a href="mailto:pye@nfld.com">pye@nfld.com</a>	<b>Professional Youth Experience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Will provide up to 50% of the labour costs for new graduates from technical schools, colleges and universities. Program also covers some training and software purchases.</li> </ul>
<b>Canada Trust</b> <a href="http://www.tdcanadatrust.com/index.jsp">www.tdcanadatrust.com/index.jsp</a> <a href="http://www.td.com/fe">www.td.com/fe</a>	<b>Friends of the Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Has an environmental funding program that will provide capital to soft community based/ environmental projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Memorial University of Newfoundland</b>	<b>Small Enterprise Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Will provide up to 50% of the cost of cooperative work term students.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Services Council</b> <a href="http://www.envision.ca/templates/aboutcsc.asp">www.envision.ca/templates/aboutcsc.asp</a> <a href="http://www.envision.ca/templates/cscprograms.asp">www.envision.ca/templates/cscprograms.asp</a>	<b>Student Work and Service Programs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provides support for volunteer agencies in the form of training and assistance with fund raising.</li> </ul>
<b>Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador</b> <a href="http://www.conservationcoprs.nf.ca">www.conservationcoprs.nf.ca</a> <a href="http://www.conservationcorps.nf.ca/html/green_team.htm">www.conservationcorps.nf.ca/html/green_team.htm</a>	<b>Green Teams</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It supports the efforts of communities, corporate patrons, governments and individuals to improve the natural and cultural environment of our province. It also provides meaningful training and work experience to young people.</li> </ul>
<b>Heritage Canada, Financial Support Programs</b> <a href="http://www.pch.gc.ca/pc-ch/financ/index_e.cfm">http://www.pch.gc.ca/pc-ch/financ/index_e.cfm</a>	<b>Cultural Spaces Program</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A number of these programs might have potential. We suggest that Parks Canada in some way should support the applications for funds.</li> <li>■ The Program supports the improvement, renovation and construction of arts and heritage facilities and the acquisition of specialized equipment, as well as conducting feasibility studies.</li> </ul>

### **Non - Traditional Funding Partners:**

It is important that the City dedicate significant resources to acquiring the funding support needed to implement the Plan. It is much better if a means can be found to “come to the table with something”. A number of opportunities exist to raise leveraging capital funds to support the monies coming from the funding agencies.

## **5.5 Communicating and Promoting the Plan**

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends an approach to responding to parks and recreation needs that is proactive and financially responsible for the Parks and Recreation Department. The vision of the Department is to:

To achieve this vision, support the goals of this Plan and ensure that the City’s new approach to parks and recreation planning and development is understood by residents, partners and businesses, the Plan must be widely communicated. Communication of this Plan can incorporate a variety of methods and media including brochures, use of the City website, press releases, and public meetings.

Throughout the initial phase in the development of the Master Plan, consultations and extensive communication was carried out with residents, special interest groups, the private sector, and City Staff. As a result, this Plan has been designed to best represent the needs and input of the community and the City, as recommendations are proposed and implementation guidelines are suggested. It is essential that such communication with the community continue throughout the life of the Master Plan.

To communicate the key elements of the Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Department should produce and distribute brochures that provide a brief overview of recommendations and next steps with regard to the Plan. The brochure should be created with the general public in mind – in other words, it should be graphically attractive, easily understood and free of technical jargon. This brochure could be created as a standalone brochure that is distributed to residents via mail or that is available at City Hall, could be used as an insert in the City’s recreation guides, and could be posted on the City’s web site. In addition, the Plan itself should be available in several formats through the City’s website, to ensure the greatest potential number of residents with Internet access can retrieve the document if desired.

Given the participatory approach that was used in the development of the Master Plan, another means by which the City can communicate the key components of the Plan would be through a general public meeting. Public consultation was an integral element in developing the plan; it could again be a very effective, personal way to communicate to residents that their needs have been incorporated in the recommendations proposed, that the Plan has been designed to accommodate their recreational interests.



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<i>Recreational Facilities:</i>	Includes all indoor community, leisure and recreational facilities within Mount Pearl, such as the Glacier, the Pool, Park Place, and the Kenmount Park Community Centre.
<i>Parks &amp; Open Spaces:</i>	Includes all outdoor recreation, leisure and sports fields, parks, tot lots, and trail networks in Mount Pearl, such as the Smallwood Soccer Fields, Power's Pond Park, and the T'Railway sections running through the City.
<i>Recreation &amp; Cultural Programs:</i>	Any program operating out of recreational facilities or parks and open spaces owned and maintained by the City of Mount Pearl's Parks & Recreation Department and its partners in the community. This would include such programs as the Pool's aquatic programs, hockey, soccer, summer camps, senior's programming, and programs operating out of the Kenmount Park Community Centre.
<i>Key Development Recommendations:</i>	Recommendations suggested to the Parks & Recreation Department throughout the Master Plan that are viewed as having the most impact and necessity for the City.
<i>High Priority Developments:</i>	Recommendations suggested in the Master Plan as a response to the most immediate needs and conditions of parks and open spaces, recreational facilities, and recreation and cultural programs, within the context of the entire City of Mount Pearl. In addition, high priority developments are recommended as the first facilities, parks or programs to be developed throughout the implementation of the Master Plan.
<i>Medium Priority Developments:</i>	Recommendations suggested in the Master Plan as a response to the moderate needs and conditions of parks and open spaces, recreational facilities, and recreation and cultural programs, within the context of the entire City of Mount Pearl. In addition, it is recommended that medium priority developments be established following high priority developments presented in the Master Plan.
<i>Low Priority Developments:</i>	Recommendations suggested in the Master Plan in response to the least immediate needs and conditions of parks and open spaces, recreational facilities, and recreation and cultural programs, within the context of the entire City of Mount Pearl. In addition, it is recommended that low priority developments be the final facilities, parks or programs developed throughout the implementation of the Master Plan.