

City of Cornwall – Recreation Master Plan Update

EMERGING DIRECTIONS

Prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, September 2020

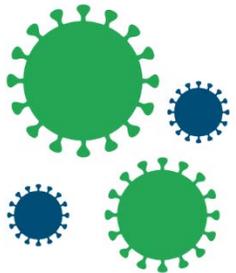
The Recreation Master Plan is currently under development. A public meeting will be held near the end of the planning process to present the Draft Master Plan and gather additional feedback.

For additional updates or to submit written comments, please visit the project website:
<https://www.cornwall.ca/en/play-here/recreation-master-plan-update.aspx>

The City of Cornwall Recreation Master Plan will provide a ten-year guide for enhancing recreation programs, facilities and parks. It builds on the Master Plan prepared in 2009, aligns with Council’s strategic priorities, and will be implemented in conjunction with the City’s Official Plan, Waterfront Plan, and related studies.

Public consultation is vital to this planning exercise. More than 1,500 households (representing over 4,500 residents) completed the community survey and 30 local organizations provided input on their needs and ideas to date. Additional opportunities for input on the draft Master Plan will be made available as the process unfolds.

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

	<p>1. Recreation and parks services are very important to Cornwall residents</p> <p>86% of survey respondents felt that parks and recreation services should be a high priority for Council. The survey also found high levels of satisfaction with recreation facility and park provision and maintenance; however, improvements are required to address aging infrastructure, gaps, and emerging needs.</p>
	<p>2. The pandemic has highlighted the vital role of parks and trails in staying active and connected</p> <p>Unstructured park and trail use has increased in Cornwall during the pandemic, a trend observed across Canada. A recent survey completed by Park People (parkpeople.ca) found that 82% of Canadians feel that parks have become more important to their mental health during COVID-19 and 70% found that their appreciation for parks and green spaces has increased during the pandemic. Long-term planning and strategic investment are vital to support the significant role that the parks, recreation and culture play in our personal, social, and economic recovery and revitalization.</p>



3. Demand is growing for unstructured activities for all ages

The survey found that the most popular activities in Cornwall (prior to the pandemic) are those that appeal to all ages and abilities, such as use of parks, enjoyment of the waterfront, walking/hiking, special events, cycling, swimming, and fitness. Year-round activities, washrooms, seating, and shade are just some of the items needed to support these activities. The Master Plan will explore these and other opportunities, such as expanding nature-based recreation and outdoor experiences at Guindon Park.



4. Affordable recreation opportunities are in demand

Free and low cost activities are popular in Cornwall, particularly for youth and older adults. Financial assistance programs are in place to assist with affordability. A user fee review should be completed in the short-term to ensure that rates remain fair and responsive to users and residents.



5. Many residents are not aware of the broad range of available activities

Less than half of survey respondents felt that they are well informed about local parks and recreation events and activities. In 2019, the City published its first Community Guide containing information on parks and recreation facilities and programs. A continued focus on marketing and promotion will help to keep residents active and informed.



6. Maintaining existing facilities is a priority over adding new ones

Before building new, residents generally support taking care of the parks and recreation facilities that we already have. This investment may take many forms, such as regular maintenance, barrier-free improvements, upgrading or modernizing existing amenities, or repurposing to other in-demand uses. Among the existing facilities that residents want to see improved include Cornwall's outdoor pools and splash pads, playgrounds and skate park. Enhancing the role of the Benson Centre as a regional activity hub for indoor and outdoor activities is another focus.



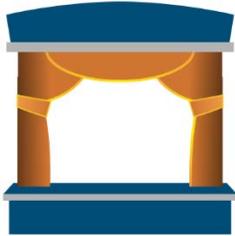
7. We need to be creative in accommodating emerging sports and activities

New and changing recreation interests create new opportunities to engage residents in innovative ways, but also place pressure on existing resources, parks and facilities. Flexibility in design and approach is required, and facilities that can accommodate multi-uses are desired. Activities that are emerging and vying for time at existing facilities (or in search of new spaces) include pickleball, turf sports, gymnasium sports, and off-leash dog areas.



8. Cornwall’s waterfront is its best asset and public use should be maximized

Residents support more uses and stronger connections to the City’s public waterfront lands, including Lamoureux Park, Kinsmen Soccer Fields, Pointe Maligne and Cornwall Canal. In 2019, the City updated its Waterfront Plan, which contains several recommendations related to Cornwall’s parks and recreation system. Continued study, external funding and partnerships will be required to realize much of this vision.



9. The new arts and culture centre will fill a long-time need

The proposed arts and culture centre is highly anticipated by local artists and artisans, performance groups, and residents seeking creative outlets – either as participants or spectators. Planning continues on the centre – the City’s first facility of this kind – which will inject further culture, economic activity, and development into the Central Business District.



10. Partnerships can be effective at leveraging resources and building capacity

The City works with many volunteers and community organizations to pool resources and maximize benefits to residents, such as recent initiatives with rowing and BMX clubs. By building capacity within the community, residents gain access to additional amenities and programs that may not otherwise be possible. Opportunities to enhance partnerships that address the priorities of the Master Plan should be explored.



11. The City needs to be proactive in order to maximize value for its residents

The Master Plan supports accessible and high quality recreation and parks services that enable residents of all ages to lead healthy, active lives. To achieve this, the City will employ evidence-based frameworks, policies and practices, and alternative funding models that allow for transparent decision-making and sound financial planning that keeps pace with needs. Together with guiding documents such as the City’s Strategic Plan, the Master Plan will help the City support the ongoing delivery of recreation services in a fiscally responsible manner.

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