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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report CDP-08-2024 Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – Presentation of Findings and Draft Recommendations by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants



For Consideration by Council in Committee on June 18, 2024

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### OBJECTIVE:

To receive Council endorsement for the results of the first two phases of the draft Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy, and to receive approval to complete the third phase of the project, including sharing the draft findings and recommendations with the public and providing the finalized Strategy to Council for approval by year-end.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-08-2024 Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – Presentation of Findings and Draft Recommendations by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants be received;
2. AND THAT the next steps to finalize the Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy, as outlined in report CDP-08-2024, including soliciting public feedback to the draft Strategy throughout the summer and early fall, be approved.

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**Reviewed and respectfully submitted by:** Mike Evers, MCIP, RPP, BES, General Manager, Community & Development Services

**Approved:** Cathy Case, Chief Administrative Officer

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

During the 2018-2022 term of Council, and again for the 2022-2026 term of Council, Haldimand County Council identified the development of a Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (CRFS) as a term of Council priority.

The objective of the CRFS is to provide a strategic plan—based on County growth projections, community requests, leisure trends and financial capacity—for determining major community and recreation facility needs and associated County investments for the next 20+ years.

A draft Strategy has been prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants (Monteith Brown) with the support of staff. The draft Strategy focuses on potential new facilities—and possibly re-purposing existing ones—for aquatics, sports, recreation, leisure, community wellness and arts and culture programming, and is intended to reflect the County’s commitment to providing these high-quality services in a fair, consistent and evidence-based manner.

Working with Monteith Brown, staff developed guiding principles and a three-phase approach to create the Strategy:

Phase 1: Background review, community consultation, needs assessment;

Phase 2: Locational assessment, preliminary facility concepts, business plan;

Phase 3: Finalization of the Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy.

At this time, staff and the consultants are presenting the results of the first two phases of the work and recommendations to complete Phase 3 before the end of the year. Subject to receiving Council's endorsement, the full draft Strategy will be released for public review and comment. This particular report does not require a Council decision on any specific recreational facilities. It is anticipated that the decision-making process will be in late fall of 2024.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Through past studies, stated Council priorities and community engagement, Haldimand County Council identified the need to expand the variety of community and recreation services it provides to residents, recognizing these opportunities contribute in a significant way to the County's social, economic and environmental priorities and are vital to individual and community wellness.

The purpose of a Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy—based on data and community consultation—is two-fold:

1. To examine public interest in major community/recreation facilities and activities given local trends (including growth projections and diverse leisure interests) and updated community input; and,
2. To provide Council with a series of prioritized facility provision options and realistic financial estimates to guide future decision-making, budgeting and the pursuit of third-party funding and partnership opportunities during the next 20+ years.

## **ANALYSIS:**

An evidence-based Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (CRFS) is an essential tool in the County's efforts to manage long-term, complex municipal needs and priorities. The CRFS will:

- Provide a clear vision and baseline supporting data for future development/redevelopment of community and recreation facilities and services;
- Outline options and impacts for implementation;
- Outline prioritization opportunities for initiatives, e.g. based on availability of funding, efficiencies associated with complementary projects, etc.;
- Allow the County to be 'ready' if major infrastructure or other funding opportunities become available; and,
- Provide information and data to communicate with residents and other internal/external stakeholders about the County's future goals with respect to community and recreation services.

## **The Consultants:**

Haldimand County worked with the consulting team of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants (lead), MJMA Architecture & Design and The JF Group in developing the CRFS.

London, Ontario-based Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, as one of Canada's leading parks and recreation planning and design teams, has completed hundreds of recreation studies across Canada, and its work spans smaller rural communities to the largest urban centre. Monteith Brown is already familiar with Haldimand County, having previously developed two key recreation documents that have guided County planning the past 15+ years: the 2006 Master Plan for Leisure Services and the 2009 Trails Master Plan.

MJMA Architecture & Design's 30+ years of experience are almost exclusively focused on multi-user facilities that include a diverse range of programming such as aquatics, high performance sport, community recreation, libraries, wellness/community gathering/meeting spaces, sports fields, courts and much more. The firm's design ethos is based on supporting maximum social and programming interaction across a wide demographic user group, and linking interior spaces with exterior landscaped parks and sports areas.

Established in 1981, The JF Group's expertise is in recreation and sport facility development, including business planning, feasibility analysis, organizational effectiveness, alternative service provision and cost-recovery strategies. Most recently, The JF Group completed an innovative project for the Canadian Parks & Recreation Association called ReImagine RREC (Renew, Retool, Engage and Contribute), a multi-phase COVID-19 recovery initiative for recreation, parks and community sport leaders.

### **The Process:**

The CRFS development process includes three phases; a summary of the results of the first two phases is outlined in this report. The first two phases have culminated in the development of a comprehensive draft Strategy with recommendations that span provision of soft services to the development of significant facility infrastructure.

If supported by Council, the project will move into phase three. The draft Strategy—which includes all the details and data summarized in this Council report—will be shared broadly with the public for feedback (including at a public information session) and the CRFS will be finalized for presentation to Council before the end of the year.

### **Phase 1: Background Review, Community Consultation, Needs Assessment**

The following guiding principles and value statements directed the development and proposed implementation of the CRFS as well as the County's future decision-making as it relates to the provision of major community and recreation facilities:

- Build a healthy and engaged community, foster active lifestyles and promote skill development;
- Provide inclusive, affordable and accessible recreational opportunities for all Haldimand residents, especially youth and seniors;
- Ensure that major facilities are multi-use, multi-generational, programmable year-round and responsive to the needs of our local communities;
- Foster and support partnerships that create synergies, leverage resources and allow the County to maintain core services; and,
- Make decisions that are financially responsible and sustainable for the County and its residents.

Presented to Council at the August 23, 2022 Council in Committee meeting, the consultants undertook a variety of community engagement initiatives. The interest and participation in the process was considerable including: 2,000 responses to a community survey, representing 7,000 residents; four public open houses; meetings with a Community Stakeholder Committee comprised of community leaders, County operating partners (halls, fields, parks, sports groups) and neighbouring communities (Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation); engagement workshops with Council Members and staff; and, a dedicated project web page and email for ongoing feedback opportunities.

Considerable research and data collection was also undertaken associated with demographics, growth projections, leisure trends and travel times to neighbouring markets for high-value community and recreation facilities. The following outlines the results of this work:

- Caledonia:** Largest concentrated population; greatest future growth potential; on average, more children, youth, families; most diverse population; greatest potential to support multi-use recreation facility.
- Cayuga:** Low population growth potential; strong opportunities for enhanced outdoor recreation, especially for youth.
- Dunnville:** Low population growth potential; greater concentrations of older adults and lower income households; strong opportunities for programming for older adults and intergenerational programming, the arts and culture.
- Hagersville:** With moderate population growth, it is forecasted to become Haldimand's second-largest community in the next two decades; mix of youth, families, seniors; County has committed to 'active living' approach with upcoming construction of Library + Active Living Centre facility.
- Small Urban (Jarvis, Townsend)/Rural Communities:**  
 Opportunities to revitalize existing County facilities to create programming 'close to home' (through partnerships or direct delivery) and invest in enhancements to active transportation (e.g. revitalization of Selkirk Waterfront Way, feasibility study to build trail between Jarvis and Townsend, etc.).

The key findings through Phase 1 were that resident needs and expectations are rising. This is a common expectation with a growing municipality. Community and recreation facilities and services are vital to the high quality of life that Haldimand County envisions for its residents, and are critical to supporting the County's continued growth and ability to attract business and tourism.

The draft Strategy prioritizes recommendations in nine areas:

1. **Programming** – To assist with the transition to new major community and recreation facilities, prepare a Community Programming Strategy to initiate the gradual and purposeful expansion of programming to core markets using available spaces (e.g. community halls, parks, schools, etc.) across all of Haldimand County. The draft Strategy should also explore opportunities to better utilize existing facilities including in rural communities and small urban centres.
2. **Indoor Swimming Pools** – Continue to monitor and evaluate the longer-term need for an indoor aquatics centre as a second phase of a proposed multi-use recreation centre in Caledonia, the County's largest community and future growth centre. Explore partnerships to support an indoor therapeutic pool in Dunnville that would complement other outdoor aquatic services offered and contemplated by the County.
3. **Outdoor Pools and Splash Pads** – Plan for the replacement of the Dunnville and Hagersville outdoor pools as they reach the end of their lifespan. Continue with plans to decommission the outdoor wading pool in Dunnville and install a splash pad. Continue working with community groups to develop plans to install a splash pad in Cayuga and Jarvis. Involve the community in the planning, design and fund-raising for these assets.
4. **Gymnasiums and Multi-Purpose Spaces** – Work with local school boards and other organizations (e.g. churches) to maximize municipal and community access for programming and group activities. Consider the provision of a gymnasium (or gymnasium-like spaces) and a minimum of two multi-purpose spaces as part of all future community/recreation centres.
5. **Fitness Spaces** – Consider the provision of fitness spaces—unstaffed, with no weight training equipment—at future community/recreation centres; examples include a conditioning room or fitness studio.
6. **Youth Spaces** – Consider the provision of multi-purpose space that can accommodate youth drop-in and programming at a future multi-use recreation centre in Caledonia. Consultation with the Youth Advisory Committee and the broader public is encouraged to suggest space components (e.g. lounge, study space, gaming area, table sports, music room, etc.). Investigate

opportunities to enhance youth recreation and socialization in smaller urban/rural centres and bring programming closer to this demographic.

7. **Older Adult and Seniors Spaces** – Establish dedicated space for older adults and seniors in Dunnville, potentially through a multi-functional future Community Wellness Centre expansion at the Dunnville Memorial Arena. The preliminary vision for this space includes a casual lounge with inviting amenities and activity space for fitness, games, meetings, classes and more. Options for broader community use of the space should be considered. Work with the Seniors Advisory Committee and the broader public to suggest space components. Investigate opportunities to enhance recreation and socialization for older adults and seniors in smaller urban/rural centres and bring programming closer to this demographic.
8. **Indoor Artificial Turf Fields** – Consider the installation of a domed turf-field (with perimeter walking track) within a future recreation centre in Caledonia. The financial sustainability of the project is significantly enhanced if the County partners with one of more major local user groups. Potential field requirements should be revalidated through the facility design process to ensure the space is adequately sized and programmed.
9. **Arts and Cultural Spaces** – Encourage local organizations to grow their programs and maximize use of existing spaces. Continue with the development of a Public Arts & Culture policy and explore the establishment of an arts and cultural hub in the County.

## **Phase 2: Locational Assessment, Preliminary Facility Concepts, Business Plans**

A key component of the draft Strategy is the identification of short- and long-term requirements for community and recreation facilities. Some facilities may be required to address growth-related needs, while others may respond to emerging demands.

An evidence-based framework about demonstrated needs and projected future requirements has been used to guide the decision-making about proposed capital projects. New facilities recommended in the draft Strategy have been assessed against the following factors, with those satisfying the greatest number of criteria being advanced as priority recommendations:

- Supported by the guiding principles and project goals (e.g. community benefits);
- Within municipal service mandate and not addressed by alternate providers;
- Supported by public and/or stakeholder input;
- Supported by trends and usage profiles (where applicable);
- Responds to an under-served target market (demographic indicators). Markets should be catchment-based and consider both local and regional populations;
- Addresses a geographic gap based on identified planning targets;
- Addresses forecasted population growth based on identified planning targets;
- Where the renewal or re-purposing of existing facilities is being considered, the facility is in poor condition and/or usage and appeal are highly limited;
- Aligns with complementary municipal strategies and initiatives; and
- Considers overall financial viability (e.g. available funding, partnerships, cost-sharing potential, value for money spent).

Below is a summary of the recommended facility options for consideration. The focus for the four urban centres (highlighted in blue) is intended to demonstrate opportunities to create ‘hubs’ for some speciality programming. In the end, all potential new and re-purposed facilities will be designed to be multi-functional and multi-use for maximum flexibility—including functionality that can respond to the needs/interests of all ages - over the lifespan of that facility:

<b>Caledonia</b>	<b>Dunnville</b>	<b>Cayuga</b>	<b>Hagersville</b>	<b>Small Urban/ Rural Areas</b>
“Recreation and Sports”	“Wellness and Seniors”	“Parks and Youth”	“Active Living”	“Active Transportation and Programming”
<p><b>Multi-Use Recreation Centre and Aquatics Centre</b> (Gateway site on Hwy. 6)</p> <p><b>P1 (core):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• double gym (divisible)</li> <li>• multi-purpose program room, activity lounge</li> <li>• indoor turf field (divisible); air supported dome</li> <li>• indoor walking track (perimeter of turf field)</li> <li>• small fitness/wellness centre</li> <li>• passive outdoor amenities (trails, picnic areas, playground, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>P2 (optional):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• indoor aquatic centre</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Wellness Centre</b> (at Dunnville Arena)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• single gym</li> <li>• lounge/social gathering space</li> <li>• small fitness, wellness studio</li> <li>• multi-purpose rooms</li> <li>• outdoor patio</li> </ul> <p><b>Outdoor Aquatics Hub</b> (Dunnville Lions Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new outdoor pool</li> <li>• new splash pad</li> </ul>	<p><b>Park Improvements</b> (various sites)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• skate park</li> <li>• multi-use court(s)</li> <li>• tennis court(s)</li> <li>• splash pad</li> <li>• and more</li> </ul>	<p><b>Library + Active Living Centre</b> (Grant Kett Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• approved by Council</li> <li>• construction start anticipated July 2024</li> <li>• gymnasium/hall</li> <li>• multi-use spaces</li> <li>• library</li> </ul> <p><b>Outdoor Pool Replacement</b> (Hagersville Park)</p>	<p><b>Active Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jarvis/Townsend trail feasibility implementation to be addressed as part of the Trails Master Plan Update</li> <li>• Selkirk Waterfront Way trail will be enhanced from Lake Erie to the pedestrian bridge</li> </ul> <p><b>Splash Pad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jarvis</li> </ul> <p><b>Programming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend additional study to identify opportunities to better utilize existing facilities, in collaboration with others, for close-to-home programming for residents</li> </ul>

**Next Steps:**

At this time, the County does not have sufficient financial reserves to implement all of the options presented in the draft Strategy. Moving forward, staff recommend the following:

- Consider the findings of the report—including a round of public information-sharing and gathering of feedback—to identify potential sequencing and target dates for initiation of the recommended projects. It is anticipated the implementation process will likely take a minimum of five years for each project;
- Return to Council for endorsement of any changes, if needed; final draft Strategy and Council report to be presented before end of 2024;

- Develop the community programming plan for the Hagersville Active Living Centre, which begins operations in 2025. This activity will be the first step in development of a County-wide Community Programming Strategy for the County (2025+);
- Prepare a financial strategy which leverages a range of funding sources required for the implementation of each project/initiative. The scope of the financial strategy will depend on the option(s) Council endorses (2025+); and,
- Begin to seek infrastructure funding and capital grants from government and non-government sources to assist with capital development costs (ongoing).

## FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The current report does not include any immediate budget implications at this time. However, it does outline a variety of facility recommendations—from the draft Strategy—that could impact future capital and operating budgets should Council approve these initiatives.

Staff have reviewed the new facility options developed by the consultant (and shared in the accompanying presentation to Council) and have prepared an overview of the potential future financial impacts—including capital construction, annual operating and annual capital replacement contributions—to the County. All numbers are based on current (2024) costs.

Table 1 identifies projects which are recommended for more immediate consideration given data, demographics, business modelling and community input.

Table 2 suggests consideration (beginning in 10+ years) of an optional future phase—indoor pool in Caledonia adjacent to the Multi-Use Recreation Centre—based on the analysis of data, demographics, business modelling and community input.

**Table 1: Anticipated Near-Term Projects**

<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>Total Capital Construction Cost (incl. soft costs)</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost (expense minus revenue)</b>	<b>Annual Capital Replacement Contribution (1.7%-2.5%/CIRC)</b>	<b>Total Annual Cost (incl. operating and capital replacement contribution)</b>
Caledonia – Multi-Use Recreation Centre (indoor turf, gymnasium, multi-use rooms)	\$29.43 million	\$176,000 to \$215,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.22%)	\$50,100 to \$73,600 (avg. levy impact = 0.07%)	\$226,100 to \$288,600 (avg. levy impact = 0.29%)
Dunnville – Community Wellness Centre (gymnasium, multi-use rooms)	\$17.73 million	\$225,000 to \$274,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.29%)	\$30,200 to \$44,300 (avg. levy impact = 0.04%)	\$255,200 to \$318,300 (avg. levy impact = 0.33%)

**Table 2: Anticipated Long Term Project**

<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>Total Capital Construction Cost (incl. soft costs)</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost (expense minus revenue)</b>	<b>Annual Capital Replacement Contribution (1.7%-2.5%/CIRC)</b>	<b>Total Annual Cost (incl. operating and capital replacement contribution)</b>
Caledonia – Indoor Aquatics Centre)	\$32.20 million	\$328,000 to \$401,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.42%)	\$54,800 to \$80,800 (avg. levy impact = 0.08%)	\$382,800 to \$481,800 (avg. levy impact = 0.50%)

\*CIRC is the Canadian Infrastructure Report Card, Informing the Future (2016), [canadianinfrastructure.ca](http://canadianinfrastructure.ca)

**STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:**

The Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (CRFS) development—led by consultants Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and their team in collaboration with staff from the Community Development & Partnerships Division—has been informed by broad and extensive community stakeholder (residents, current facility users, County operating partners, neighbouring Indigenous community partners, etc.) and staff input.

**REPORT IMPACTS:**

- Agreement: No
- By-law: No
- Budget Amendment: No
- Policy: No

**REFERENCES:**

1. [August 23, 2022 Presentation to Council – Phase 1 Report: Research, Consultation and Preliminary Options](#)

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants – Community and Recreation Facilities Strategy - Presentation