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# HALDIMAND COUNTY

## Report CDP-18-2024 Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – Presentation of Final Report and Draft Recommendations

For Consideration by Council in Committee on December 10, 2024

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### OBJECTIVE:

To receive Council approval for the final Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy, prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Inc., and associated staff recommendations.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CDP-18-2024 Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – Presentation of Final Report and Draft Recommendations be received;
2. AND THAT the Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy, attached to Report CDP-18-2024, be approved;
3. AND THAT the recommendations associated with implementation and next steps, as outlined in Report CDP-18-2024, be approved.

**Prepared by:** Katrina Schmitz, Manager, Community Development & Partnerships Division

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

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

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The formation of a long-range strategic plan for the development of community and recreation facilities and associated programming has been a Council priority for the past two terms of Council (its undertaking having been delayed during the pandemic).

The presentation of the evidence-based final Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (CRFS) (Attachment 1) is the culmination of a two-year process—working with Monteith Brown Planning Consultants—which included extensive research and data collection, community consultation, locational assessment and business planning.

At this time, Council is asked to approve the final CRFS as a guideline for future service delivery and studies and to inform future capital and operating budget proposals and development charges updates. Council is also asked to approve the recommended implementation plan and next steps identified within Report CDP-18-2024.

### BACKGROUND:

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

While the project was delayed due to the pandemic and associated limitations for public engagement and facilitation, the County engaged Monteith Brown Planning Consultants in late 2021 and began the process to create an evidence-based strategic plan for determining major community recreation facility needs and associated County investments for the next 20+ years.

The development of the plan included three phases:

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.

In August 2022, the consultants made a presentation to Council outlining the outcomes of the first phase of work. The key findings of the initial work were that resident needs and expectations were rising, which was not unexpected in a growing municipality. Council support of that stage of the work led to the initiation of the next several phases which included location assessments, business plans, further public consultation and development of a final draft strategy.

In June 2024, through staff Report CDP-08-2024, the draft CRFS—based on County growth projections, community engagement and input, leisure trends and best practices and financial capacity—was presented. Following approval of the Council report, staff were directed to undertake a final round of public information-sharing to solicit feedback before finalizing the Strategy before end of year 2024. With the public information-sharing now complete, and that effort leading to positive feedback in support of the Strategy, staff are now presenting the final CRFS for Council's consideration.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The following guiding principles and value statements guided the development and proposed implementation of the Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (CRFS) as well as the County's future decision-making:

- 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.

Following the June 24, 2024 Council in Committee meeting and presentation, staff and the consultant undertook a final round of public information sessions about the draft CRFS and created an online questionnaire which was available until September 20. Sixteen comments were received online (from nine respondents) and twenty participants joined two in-person sessions; the feedback was as follows:

- The focus on health and wellness investments was well received;
- Support was expressed for an indoor pool and activity spaces (e.g. for pickleball) but opinions differed on locations;
- There was great interest in more trails and trail improvements; and
- Perspectives were highly localized, but the study seems to have something for everyone.

Upon completion of the public information-sharing and feedback efforts, the CRFS was finalized. The final Strategy remains unchanged from that which was presented to Council in June of this year, with the results now forming the basis for the implementation plan being recommended by staff.

## Next Steps:

Nine general recommendations were identified in the CRFS as well as two phases of potential new facility development in Caledonia (indoor turf, gymnasium, indoor pool) and Dunnville (gymnasium, wellness centre, seniors' spaces). The general recommendations are as follows:

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 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 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.

The impacts and opportunities associated with these are outlined in the section below. Of particular note, the approval of the Strategy as a whole does not immediately or explicitly bind Council to a particular project, service or investment. Rather, the Strategy will serve as a road map with evidence-supported guidelines that can be used to inform future decisions on major capital projects, service delivery, programs and staffing initiatives.

## FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (and Report CDP-18-2024) does not include any immediate budget impacts at this time. However, it does outline a variety of recommendations which could impact future capital and operating budgets should Council approve these initiatives.

Staff have reviewed the general recommendations in the CRFS—including options for new facilities—developed by the consultant, and the associated financial impacts. These fall into two categories: recommendations/activities which are feasible for short-term implementation (5-10 years) and recommendations/activities which should be reassessed for consideration in the longer term (10-20 years).

**Table 1: Five to Ten Year Plan (note: recommendation #'s in Details column correspond to those listed in the 'Next Steps' section above)**

Proposed Project	Details	Budget Impacts
Community Programming Strategy	<p>Recommendation #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assist with transition to community use of new facilities (including Hagersville ALC) and examine programming opportunities in existing underutilized spaces (halls, schools, parks)</li> <li>Includes review of all user fees for County programming</li> </ul>	<p>2025: \$100,000 in operating budget for consultant to assess community interests, capacities, partnership opportunities</p> <p>2026: Strategy recommendations to be considered (capital and/or operating)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation costs for strategy recommendations would be in addition to the costs noted above</li> </ul>
Public Arts & Culture Strategy	<p>Recommendation #9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Already in progress; final report to be presented to Council in Q1 2025</li> <li>Process will likely introduce opportunities for programs, commissions, installations and/or partnerships which may require future provision of resources</li> </ul>	<p>2025: To be determined through Q1 2025 report to Council</p>
Hagersville Active Living Centre	<p>Recommendations #4, 5, 6, 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anticipated opening Q4 2025</li> <li>County's first year-round indoor recreation facility, including County-delivered programming</li> </ul>	<p>2025: Staffing and operating costs have been included in 2025 draft operating budget</p> <p>2026: Adjustments as needed</p>

Proposed Project	Details	Budget Impacts
Outdoor Pools	Recommendation #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement of Dunnville, Hagersville pools already identified in capital budget</li> </ul>	2026: Dunnville consultation and engineering in capital budget 2027: Dunnville construction; Hagersville consultation and engineering 2028: Hagersville construction
Outdoor Splash Pads	Recommendation #3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dunnville: Identify potential funding sources to jump-start community fund-raising and construction plans</li> <li>• Cayuga: CDP staff have been meeting with community group to develop CPP proposal</li> <li>• Jarvis: CDP staff have had preliminary discussion with community groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all splash pad projects are considered and approved through the County’s Community Partnership Program (CPP)</li> </ul>
Identify Potential Existing County Facilities for Programming	Recommendations #1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop engagement/consultation plan with Community Halls groups</li> <li>• Identify third parties which might collaborate with County to offer programming</li> </ul>	2025: CDP staff to determine most suitable Halls for recreation, wellness, cultural programming and engage and consult with Halls Boards. Identify third parties/other agencies with which to collaborate on service delivery 2026: Include potential capital costs to renovate Halls as necessary and identify staffing needs

**Table 2: Ten to Twenty Year Plan**

The total estimated costs (in 2024 dollars) for a proposed Multi-Use Recreation Centre in Caledonia and Dunnville Community Wellness Centre are outlined below. The Caledonia project has been broken into two phases – phase 1 being the indoor turf/gymnasium/multi-use rooms and phase 2 being a separate indoor aquatics centre. These figures include capital (construction), debt payment (assuming construction is fully financed), annual operating subsidy and annual capital replacement contribution.

Council is not being asked to approve these projects for construction at this time. In fact, staff are recommending against such given the following:

- These projects are not currently reflected in the County’s Development Charges (DC) Background Study and thus are not factored into the DC rates in effect meaning that the County does not currently have the ability to utilize Development Charges to fund these projects;
- Construction of one facility would require significant levels of debt financing which would push the County beyond its current debt capacity limit of 10%;
- A number of other significant capital projects are currently in the analysis stage (e.g. new roads yard, Caledonia employment lands, financial plan related to the County’s Asset Management Plan, Fire Master Plan) and all such projects need to be considered as a whole in terms of priority and feasibility;

- Based on the County’s current Asset Management Plan, there is a significant annual funding shortfall to maintain/replace existing infrastructure, let alone fund new unbudgeted infrastructure;
- Council approved a Comprehensive Long-Term financial strategy as part of the current Term of Council priorities. The intent of this strategy is to include all anticipated operating and infrastructure needs in one comprehensive plan to develop a long-term financial strategy to meet Council’s objectives. The costs presented in this report will be incorporated into the strategy, which will also evaluate the impact on: annual tax levies, balance of reserve/reserve funds, Development Charges and debt capacity. This strategy will be initiated in 2025 and completed before the end of this Term of Council.

Should construction of the recreation assets be considered in the future, a variety of funding sources may be required to support the proposed facilities including: increased tax levy/contributions to reserves, development charges, fund-raising, grants and more. In addition, minimum population thresholds need to be met – for the indoor aquatics centre, in particular – for project viability and in order to give serious consideration to project advancement.

Depending on what is built and how it is funded, the annual tax levy implications could range from a low of **1.23%** (Dunnville build only) to a high of **5.25%** (if all three facilities are built). This is in addition to the overall budgetary increases seen each year. It is also important to note that the figures below were calculated based on revenue assumptions from user fees that would be necessary.

<b>Proposed Project</b>	<b>Total Capital Construction Cost (incl. soft costs)</b>	<b>Annual Debt Financing Payments (20 years)</b>	<b>Annual Operating Cost (expense minus revenue)</b>	<b>Annual Capital Replacement Contribution (0.85%-1.7%-CIRC*)</b>	<b>Total Annual Estimated Costs</b>
Caledonia Multi-Use Recreation Centre (indoor turf, gymnasium, multi-use rooms) – Recommendations #4 to #6, #8	\$29.43 million	\$1,075,000 (levy impact = 1.25%)	\$176,000 to \$215,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.23%)	\$337,000 to \$445,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.46%)	\$1,588,000 to \$1,745,000 (avg. levy impact = 1.94%)
Dunnville Community Wellness Centre (gymnasium, multi-use rooms) – Recommendations #4 to #7	\$17.73 million	\$648,000 (levy impact = 0.75%)	\$225,000 to \$274,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.29%)	\$110,300 to \$220,600 (avg. levy impact = 0.19%)	\$983,300 to \$1,142,600 (avg. levy impact = 1.23%)
Caledonia Indoor Aquatics Centre – Recommendation #2	\$32.20 million	\$1,177,000 (levy impact = 1.37%)	\$328,000 to \$401,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.42%)	\$164,000 to \$327,000 (avg. levy impact = 0.29%)	\$1,669,000 to \$1,905,000 (avg. levy impact = 2.08%)

\*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 Monteith Brown Planning Consultants and its team in collaboration with staff from the Community Development & Partnerships Division (CDP)—has been informed by extensive community engagement with a broad range of stakeholders.

The current report to Council has been developed by CDP staff in consultation with Finance staff.

## **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.](#)
2. [June 18, 2024 Presentation to Council – Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy Final Draft.](#)
3. [June 18, 2024 Report to Council – CDP-08-2024 Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – Presentation of Findings and Draft Recommendations by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants.](#)

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – Final Report.
2. Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy – December 10, 2024 Presentation to Council.