



CHAPTER 4 – STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



The parks and outdoor recreation master plan for the City of Windsor recognizes that the current infrastructure of parks and open spaces are valuable resources to be expanded upon. Their cultural and natural value has much to offer the citizens of Windsor and visitors alike. While opportunities to expand may become evident in the next 20 years, the priority of this master plan is to emphasize and enhance the current parkland supply, to make it better for people experience the city's open spaces and *REDISCOVER OUR PARKS*.

In this chapter, the main focus of the plan is defined through the guiding principles and the strategic directions that drive those principals.

GOALS

Goals are established to provide guidance on directions that will be taken to meet needs of the community. The goals are more specific than the guiding principles and are highlighted under each of the sections in Strategic Directions. While some recommendations have been cited earlier in this master plan, more specific recommendations pertaining to each of the guiding principles and their specific goal are made in this chapter. Generic goals for the Strategic Directions are as follows:

- TO PROMOTE THE RICH LEGACY OF THE CITY PARKS THROUGH MARKETING OF PARKS AND PROGRAMMING OF SPECIAL EVENTS, AND TO COMMEMORATE THE EVENTS THAT HAVE HELPED ESTABLISH OUR PARKS SYSTEM FOR ALL TO REDISCOVER.
- TO CONTINUE WITH ON-GOING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 1989 CULTURE AND RECREATION MASTER. PLAN
- TO PROVIDE BETTER MARKETING OF PARKS TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC.
- TO CONTINUE AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PROVIDE RECREATION AND PARKLAND BASED ON THE RECREATIONAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, BY MAINTAINING REGULAR INTERACTION BETWEEN PARKS AND RECREATION AND THE COMMUNITY.

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1: To recognize and respond to the needs of a diverse population of citizens, making parks that are accessible for all people, all ages and those with special needs.

While this master plan promotes the need to encourage people to *Rediscover Our Parks*, it does not neglect its primary purpose to provide recreational open space and activity for children, youthⁱ, seniorsⁱⁱ, and special populationsⁱⁱⁱ. Focus groups in the public consultation process targeted these populations. While it was established that, in general, there is diversity and recreational programming throughout the current greenway system, it was also determined that there were deficiencies in providing recreational choices for specific populations. Realizing that there is always room for improvement, open-ended questions asked how to improve the parks, and make them more “user-friendly” for four targeted populations; Children, Youth, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities.

With AODA and FADS guidelines, the City has been responsible to ensure that parks and recreation facilities are accessible and allows inclusion for all, whether to play, relax, walk or experience the natural settings that our parks offer. One of the challenges in improving accessibility is determining where to focus resources.

By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

– United Nations Sustainable Development Goal^{iv}



RECOMMENDATION:

- *Place added focus on the construction of any park amenity or recreational paths within City Parks to comply with "PART IV.1 DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES STANDARDS (ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005."*



Figure 4-1: People walking along the riverfront trail

CHILDREN

Activity for children focuses around the play experience. Traditional park development practice for the provision of playgrounds, especially water play such as splash pads are still regarded as the most popular methods to provide recreation. Innovation or natural play, as well as access to natural areas and wildlife are emerging as desired types of recreation for children. This can be attributed to a growing concern for the environment as it has been a contemporary issue in the media.

PLAYGROUNDS

Since 1989, the overall number of parks with playgrounds in the system has increased to a total of 146. Generally, the size of the playground is related to the size and role of the park. As a best practice, the Parks Department installs play equipment to the suit the classification, size and number of children in the area. The City of Windsor Parks Department adopted the CSA standard in 1990 for the installation, maintenance and inspection of children's playgrounds. The AODA ACT passed in 2005 impacts the development of children's play spaces in terms of accessibility, public consultation and the built environment. Starting in January of 2016 all newly constructed and redeveloped play spaces must comply with the standard. In order to comply with this legislation, since 2012 Council has provided capital funding for the installation of accessible playgrounds across the city with a goal to provide 2 units per Ward (or 1 per Planning District) for a total of 20 units. Currently there are 14 accessible playgrounds units with 6 additional units to be constructed by the end of 2017.

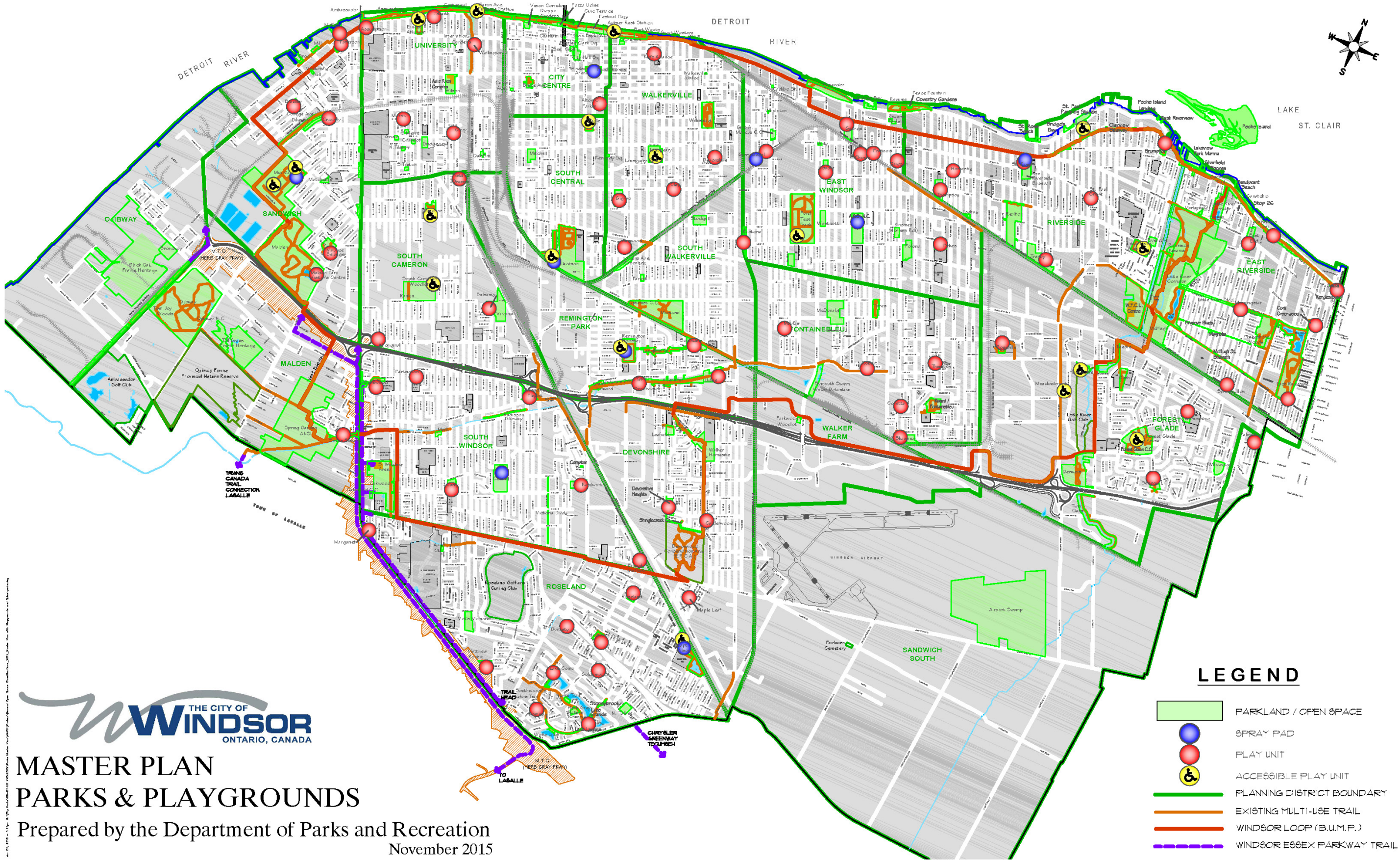
In 2013 a Playground Audit was completed. Due to life cycling the report recommends that 76 playgrounds will need to be replaced over the next 6 years. The report identifies that the current capital budget cannot maintain such an aggressive replacement schedule and therefore makes recommendations for replacement of 53 units over 10 years.

Rubber surfacing is the preferred surface for playgrounds in the AODA, however engineered wood fibre is also a consideration where appropriate. A lifecycle program for parks of different use intensity will be necessary to ensure that playgrounds meet the CSA and AODA guidelines throughout the course of their use. Parks in higher use areas will likely be more prone to wear than those in less active areas.

As an alternative, natural areas are a recent trend and are being installed in some municipalities. Even though the features are sourced and designed from a combination of manufactured, natural materials and landforms, the natural playgrounds must comply with the CSA-Z614 and AODA standards.



Figure 4-2: Children enjoying a playground



MASTER PLAN PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS

Prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation
November 2015

LEGEND

- PARKLAND / OPEN SPACE
- SPRAY PAD
- PLAY UNIT
- ♿ ACCESSIBLE PLAY UNIT
- PLANNING DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- EXISTING MULTI-USE TRAIL
- WINDSOR LOOP (B.U.M.P.)
- WINDSOR ESSEX PARKWAY TRAIL

Figure 4-3: Distribution of Playgrounds and Splashpads



Figure 4-4: Spray pad at Captain Wilson Park

SPLASH PADS

There are currently eight splash pads located throughout the city with another to be installed in the western half of Jackson Park in 2016. (see City of Windsor Recreation Inventory in Chapter 2- Parkland Supply) Parks Department has identified a need for 5 additional splash pads to locate in areas where there is a need and an availability of water, and preferably accessible washrooms. The proposed sites are:

- **Forest Glade (Forest Glade Arena and Community Centre)**
- **Sandpoint Beach**
- **McDougall Park**
- **Wilson Park (Adie Knox Sports Complex)**
- **Ford Test Track Park**

With the climate change, the need for such facilities is an important amenity to be considered, especially with the intensity of heat Windsor experiences in the summer months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Implement playground replacement strategy as per Council direction B40-2015 based on the "Playground Audit".*
- *Establish pilot sites for non-traditional natural play elements and environments to establish uniqueness and to align with emerging trends.*

YOUTH

Recreational activity preferred by youth involves higher energy and often more risk to the users. Sports courts (i.e. Basketball, Tennis, Volleyball etc) and skateboard parks remain the top items desired by this population. It is also fair to mention that this demographic also finds multi-use trails for walking and cycling important as well. This is shared with other populations and will be further discussed in later strategic directions.

While it is obvious to discuss active recreation, youth also have responded with the desire for more social and passive activity areas in parks to sit, read and socialize with friends. While this can be seen by some as a problematic, it does offer the full user needs to be addressed.

Though currently no outdoor exercise equipment is installed in city parks, youth (as well as others) have identified this recreational resource as an opportune way to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. Many communities have been installing modern exercise equipment in recent years, with varying degrees of success. The more popular exercise areas are in high-use sites and locations where groups of adults or seniors can use the equipment as part of organized programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Work with neighbourhood communities including area youth and seniors to determine their specific interests in recreation activities, play, exercise and programming for designing park amenities at the inception of any park redevelopment plan.*
- *Collaborate with all School Boards to determine where efforts and resources can be aligned to provide recreation facilities in both parks and school grounds to accommodate the needs of the community.*
- *Incorporate outdoor exercise fitness stations along multi-use trails in parks where appropriate to maintain healthy activity for all.*
- *Review and develop designated areas in parks for skateboarding facilities throughout the city.*

“The provision of recreational facilities for youth has many benefits. The most obvious benefits relate to the social and physical opportunities in an outdoor setting that have the potential to draw youth to engage in physically and mentally healthy pursuits as an alternative to screen time. There are numerous other benefits such as development of social and physical skills, fostering a sense of community, stress management and crime reduction,”

Source: West Vancouver Parks Master Plan

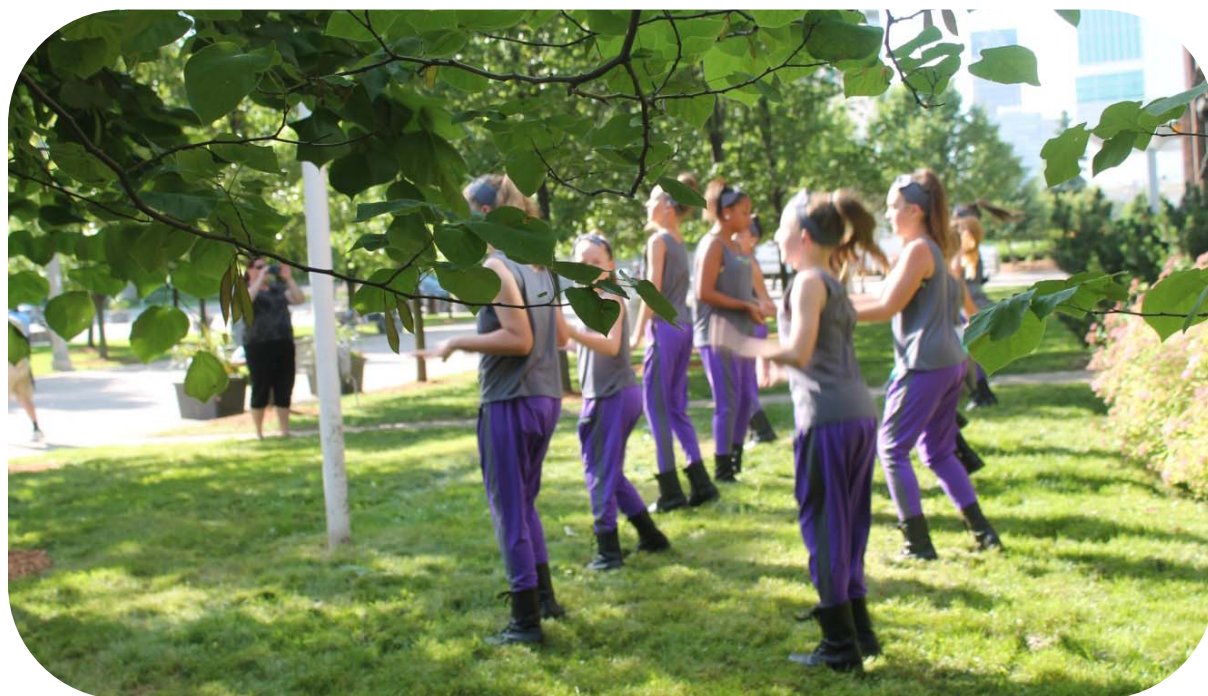


Figure 4-5: Exercising in Dieppe Park (left)

Figure 4-6: Family Strolls in Dieppe Park (right)

SENIORS

Through the consultation process it was determined that the main areas of concern for seniors were:

- **Areas to sit (such as benches and picnic tables)**
- **Paved sidewalks and multi-use trails**
- **Trees or shelters for shade**
- **Outdoor fitness equipment and age appropriate outdoor recreational programming**
- **Flower gardens and access to nature**
- **Access to washrooms facilities**

AGE FRIENDLY WINDSOR ACTION PLAN (2014-2017)

Evolving out of the World Health Organization's (WHO) concept of Global Age-friendly Cities, the *Age-friendly Windsor Action Plan* from 2005, recognized that the general population in Windsor is aging with currently over one-third of the residents over 50. The study also recognizes the city's growing cultural diversity will only add to the aging population. This Action Plan outlines recommendations from WHO to help integrate age-friendly services into the city's outdoor spaces, with respect to establishing and maintaining clean and obstruction-free accessible pathways of appropriate width, sufficient seating in parks and along trails, separated bike and pedestrian facilities, safe and well illuminated environments, easily read signage, and sufficient public restrooms. Socially the document recognizes that city parks can offer a variety of participation levels for seniors to gather, socialize and conduct healthy outdoor activities, through active and passive recreation.

Areas of improvement for outdoor public spaces as reported in the document are:

- Poor Pedestrian Safety
- Lack of accessibility
- Snow removal
- Inadequate signage
- Safety
- Lack of Public washrooms
- Litter, graffiti
- No sidewalks in some neighbourhoods



Figure 4-7: Senior painting at Willistead Park

The report also summarized three desired OUTCOMES related to outdoor spaces and buildings that would contribute to an Age-friendly Windsor.

- An attractive, vibrant city that is enjoyed by all residents and is inviting to new prospective residents.
- A city that encourages and facilitates walkability and active transportation. (examples: walking, cycling, and other non-motorized methods of transport)
- A city that prominently identifies its' age-friendly features for the benefits of residents and visitors

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Focus on recreational activities and facilities for the aging population.*
- *Adopt the "Age-friendly Windsor Action Plan" recommendations into the parks standards including:*
 - *Establish Wi-Fi hot spots in parks where appropriate.*
 - *Promote age-friendly design in parks to ensure that pedestrian access is safe and universal.*
 - *Provide pathways into parks for seniors and those with mobility issues to access.*
 - *Review and identify current park washroom locations and their existing infrastructure to determine where washroom facilities need to be upgraded and new facilities located for future development (ie: Within Regional or Community Parks).*
 - *To identify locations for wheelchair charging stations*
- *To protect and enhance access to floral displays at Coventry Gardens, Dieppe Park and Jackson Park as our premier floriculture and horticultural display parks.*

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In 2005 the Province passed the AODA which legislates that all municipal public buildings are to be made accessible by 2010 and all municipal outdoor public spaces to comply with the Act by 2016. The City of Windsor, in recognition of this legislation, has adopted several supporting documents to this regulation and is actively transforming its parks to make them accessible for persons with disabilities, as well as the aged. AODA Legislation impacts the development of any public space in terms of accessibility, public consultation and the built environment.

CITY OF WINDSOR ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS (F.A.D.S.) (2006)

As in many other Ontario cities, Windsor established an Accessibility Advisory Committee to enact standards for barrier-free design for built environments. Standards for accessible outdoor public space is covered in the document including; appropriate sidewalk widths, acceptable types of surfaces, minimum standards for maintenance (i.e. tree branching heights), slopes, pedestrian transitional areas, appropriate characteristics for plant material near sidewalks, placement and dimensions of suitable site furniture, as well as outdoor ramps, steps, parking, and public washroom facilities.

In consultation with the Windsor Accessibility Officer, the parks master plan was able to discuss specific concerns with members of the WAAC. It is fair to say that an aging population results in age-related disabilities. But disabilities are prevalent in all ages and demographics.

During the public consultation process it was identified that the main issue for persons with disabilities

- **Paved walkways and Multi-use Trails**
- **Connectivity and better Accessibility to parks and facilities**
- **Places to sit or picnic**
- **Specialized Playground and Exercise Equipment**
- **Accessible Washrooms**
- **Access to Nature and Trees for Shade**

Also identified as an issue is tables being moved by other park users into the primary line of pedestrian traffic. This is especially of concern for individuals with visual impairments, as it creates an obstacle in a location where they do not expect one.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Prepare a 'Redevelopment Plan' in collaboration with the City's Accessibilities Officer to assess the condition and compliance of municipal park pathways, trails as well as beach and riverfront access from an AODA perspective in all parks.*
- *Collaborate with Transportation Planning to review the "B.U.M.P." To provide recreational pathways and trails that promote continued linkages across the city and connections with surrounding municipalities.*
- *Continue the Community Living Mentorship Partnership program to provide opportunities for meaningful work experience for persons with disabilities.*

Provincial AODA legislation *requires municipalities to provide accessible parks by 2016 in compliance with PART IV.1 DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES STANDARDS (ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT)*

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.*

DIVERSITY

Windsor-Essex is an important immigration destination in Ontario. Many newcomers to the Windsor Essex region have relocated here from original residences in other parts of Canada. The 2011 census indicates that 21.4% of residents in the region were born outside of Canada and approximately one-quarter of those arrived in the area prior to 1971. Though there is no data for 1981, there has been a consistent percentage of new Canadians arriving in the Windsor Essex Region each decade.

To foster inclusivity, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan team led by the Parks Department, with the assistance of the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership, sought feedback from the newcomers and immigrant communities through presentations and surveys conducted in English, French, Arabic, Chinese (n.o.s.) and Spanish; the five main languages of the communities presently immigrating to the area. Interpreters were on-hand to ensure language barriers were addressed. When asked about 'Opportunities for use of Public Space and Recreational Facilities', newcomers found the downtown area (primarily the riverfront parks) most accessible, while the more suburban areas, felt isolated from various social services and leisure facilities and amenities. Newcomers expressed the fact that the city offers many public parks and open spaces, however cited a lack of adequate transit routes to access the downtown riverfront parks which are favoured.

All groups cited that the need for shade, especially from trees is an important feature for parks. Health factors related to climate change and the adverse effects of excessive UV exposure are the driving forces behind this growing concern. While this is important to be mentioned as a common theme to all of the demographics, the specifics of this objective will be further discussed in subsequent Strategic Directions.

ENHANCING THE WELCOMING CAPACITY OF WINDSOR ESSEX 2014

The study was provided six benchmarks of the Windsor Essex 'Characteristics of a Welcoming Community'; two of which pertained directly to the outdoor urban environment and public open space.

- Opportunities for Social Engagement, and
- Opportunities for the use of public space and recreational facilities.

Though the diversity of the new-comers to the area is widely varied including ethno-racial histories, age, occupational status, etcetera, the study was able to conclude that a sense of exclusion was a common theme among newcomers and immigrants alike. The study also cited that "Social engagement among newcomers was relatively narrow and limited, as are the opportunities to use public space and recreational facilities." Though public spaces are well used by immigrant communities, their financial means, differing social practices, and stereotyped perceptions by others present barriers to creating a welcoming environment. The study concluded this benchmark area with a recommendation for more immigrant involvement in the planning and decision making process associated with public space, transportation and leisure activities.

Immigration Profile of Windsor Essex

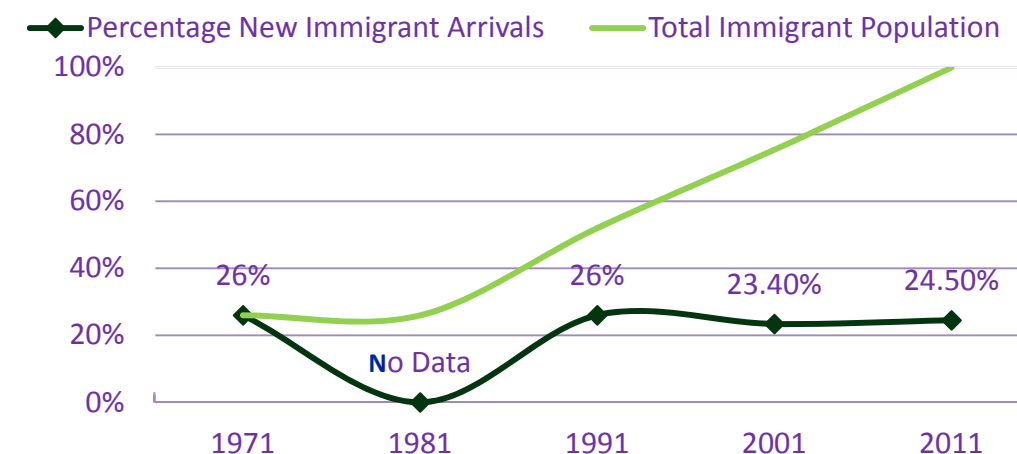


Figure 4-8: Immigration Profile of Windsor

RECOMMENDATION:

- Provide ongoing consultation with immigrant communities to determine their needs.
- Provide First Nations' consultation on any natural lands and naturalization processes or display garden commemorating heritage of indigenous peoples of the area as required by the "Provincial Policy Statement 2014".

COMMUNICATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2: Building parks and recreational solutions through open and transparent communication for the whole community.

City will encourage community participation in parks from design to operations, through continued community engagement and appropriate partnerships to help promote strength-based quality recreation facilities for public use.

During the public consultation process, interest in public involvement in partnerships, volunteerism, and adopt-a-park programs was sought. Not only does such community involvement provide public input in parks and facilities, it also contributes to the sustainability, as people then take on some of the direct ownership of the park. Programs such as the "Friends of the Park" are beneficial in the success of that particular park from both a financial and marketing aspect. Responses to such participation were overwhelmingly positive. There are challenges and responsibilities associated with volunteer programs. Volunteers want meaningful work, and with many organizations seeking volunteer support, it is difficult to attract volunteers if they do not feel that their contributions are valuable and acknowledged. It takes effort to organize the work of volunteers and to provide them with the capacity to undertake tasks.

Community groups and established non-governmental agencies have opportunities to access funding for park and environmental improvements. Partnering with the community and organizations can leverage funds from different sources to reduce the burden of park development and improvements (see Appendix 'U').

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *As continuous community involvement plays a key role in the longevity of parks, encourage the establishment of "Adopt-a-Park" partnerships with community organizations and groups to assist in the sustainability of parks.*
- *Encourage and facilitate support for volunteer efforts in park stewardship and outdoor recreation activities such as; park restoration and renewal opportunities.*
- *Encourage the establishment of partnerships with private and community organizations as sponsors to access alternate funding sources including:*
 - *Agencies*
 - *Boards*
 - *Committees, and*
 - *Friends Groups*
- *Help promote parks and trails as destinations, through sponsorship of park development, park stewardships and outdoor recreation activities.*
- *Establish partnerships with the organized sports community to assist the City of Windsor in providing the best sports opportunities available in the region.*
- *Maintain the "Recreation Activity Guide" and use multiple types of communication and social media to promote recreational opportunities in parks and outdoor recreation areas.*
- *To provide better marketing of parks through various media formats to engage the public.*

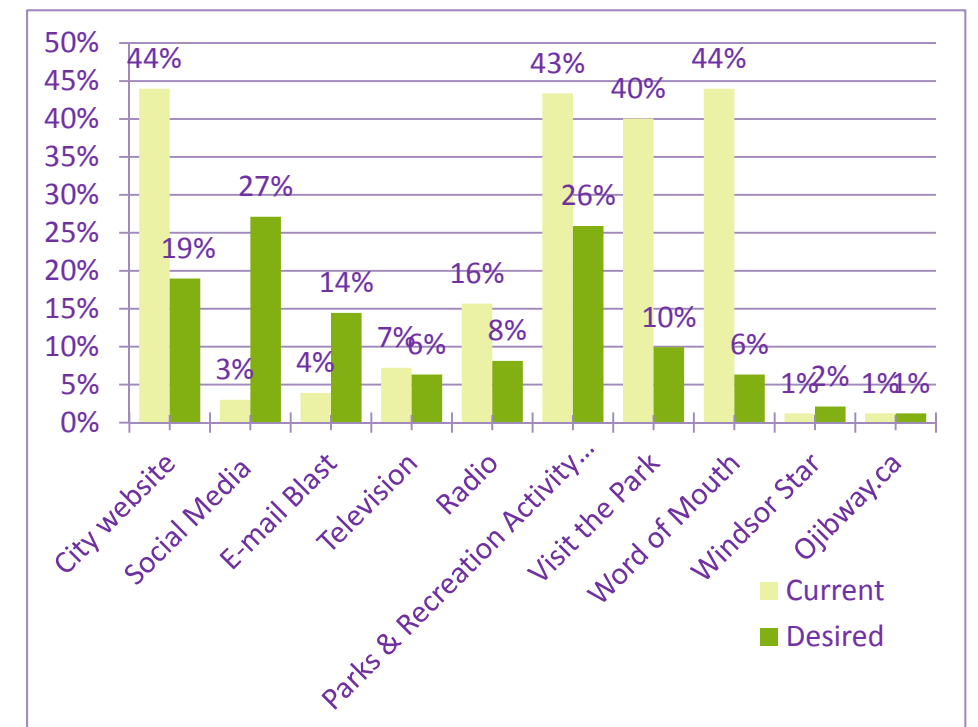


Figure 4-9: Changing directions for receiving parks and recreation programming

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3: To create a complete parks system that responds to the environmental well-being of our communities, as well as providing recreational experiences that promote healthy active living.

The City will continue to strive to provide accessible and regular recreational opportunities that support active and healthy living for all users of all ages and demographics, by adapting to current health concerns; especially climate change, in order to build healthier communities and environments for parks and recreation trail users.

During the public consultation process healthy lifestyles and well-being were identified as key elements to increased park use. The majority of respondents concurred with the statistical information presented in the Benefits of Parks section of this report, that Parks and Green Spaces in the City contribute to a healthy lifestyle. The five primary items that were identified as healthy benefits that should be in parks were:

- **Drinking fountains to fill up re-usable water bottles. (77%)**
- **Walking Trails and pathways. (74%)**
- **Trees for Shade and better air quality. (73%)**
- **Bike routes and better park connections. (66%)**
- **Shelters for gathering spaces, picnics and outdoor concerts within parks. (59%)**

When asked “What parks or recreational amenities would you like to see more of, that promote a Healthy Lifestyle?” The highest responses were:

PASSIVE & SELF-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

While there were many responses as varied as the community is diverse, passive & self-directed recreational activities were twice as popular than their active /organized sports counterparts. The three top activities were as follows:

- **Community gardens**
- **Outdoor fitness equipment**
- **Access to natural or wildlife areas.**

The current trend in popularity of these three items in many Ontario municipalities is on an increase due to the awareness of healthy environments. Further investigation into these three areas may be beneficial to assess capacity and appropriate locations in the city’s greenway system.

ACTIVE & ORGANIZED SPORTING ACTIVITIES

While the majority of people indicate that self-directed recreation activity is more popular than organized sporting activity, it is important to note that this trend is very cyclical. Of organized recreational activity the following top three activities in their order of preference was identified as:

- **Swimming**
- **Soccer**
- **Some form of Baseball including Softball, Little League, and Hard Ball**



In 2011, the Ontario Society of Physical Activity Promoters in Public Health (OSPAPPH) identified access to recreation and literature on physical fitness and wellness as key priorities for their health units. In their report entitled *Key Messages and Policy Recommendations for Access to Recreation*, the following statistics pertaining to parkland development were identified to provide right of access to recreation in neighbourhoods:

- *Having access to recreation and participating in recreational programs supports social inclusion, increases self-esteem, and boosts physical and mental health.^v*
- *Community design has a significant impact on an individual's ability to be physically active.^{vi}*
- *Studies show that access to parks is positively associated with regular physical activity.^{vii}*
- *Having access to recreational opportunities can help Ontarians meet the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines.*
- *Communities designed to support unstructured physical activity through walking and cycling not only benefits residents, but contributes to the local economy by supporting tourism.^{viii}*

MUNICIPALITIES NEED TO CREATE ENVIRONMENTS THAT REMOVE BARRIERS TO RECREATION AND ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. MUNICIPALITIES CAN ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Developing comprehensive policies around affordable access to recreation for all residents. This includes access to programs, facilities and green spaces.
- Designing communities to support physical activity by including easy access to recreation facilities, sidewalks, trails, cycling paths and parks.
- Implementing shared-use agreements for facilities and shared maintenance costs to sustain access to recreation in their communities.
- Allocating and ensuring a certain percentage of their budget goes to improving access to recreation for all of their residents.
- Seeking out partnerships with other recreation providers and community groups working toward access to recreation.

(source OSPAPPH as found in *Key Messages and Policy Recommendations for Access to Recreation*)

GREEN CITY: WHY NATURE MATTERS TO HEALTH – AN EVIDENCE REVIEW

In 2015, the Toronto Public Health Unit in collaboration with the GTA Conservation Authority prepared a literature review pertaining to public green space related health benefits. Cited were 106 studies published since 2008.

Of those studies nearly 78% found statistical evidence that the parkland and outdoor recreational open space, had a direct and positive relationship with at least one aspect personal health and wellness, including areas of mental and physical health.

The main conclusions of the review identified the following:

- *Green space improves physical health, mental health and wellbeing of urban residents.*
- *Frequent access to nearby green space is important, especially for children.*
- *Nearby green space may provide added benefit in low-income neighbourhoods.*
- *Green space that is perceived as unsafe and poorly maintained does not provide health benefits.^{ix}*

SHADE STUDY

As follow-up to the City of Windsor's 2007 Environmental Master Plan, (see Appendix 'D-3') a series of supplementary studies were completed including a shade audit in 2013*, as well as a shade inventory of all city Parks (see Appendix 'D-4'). The study takes into consideration the current conditions of the vegetation within the City of Windsor especially in Parks and Playgrounds, and how they mitigate the potential effects of predicted climate change and the urban heat island effect. Recognizing that even without climate change Windsor's climate experiences extremes, the report recommended increase vegetation in city parks, primarily in the form of trees to help mitigate the effects of UV by providing shade for users. The report also recommended that a Thermal Comfort Inventory of all parks be completed to determine a course of action based on the need and type of park use.

A study conducted in 2009-2010 by Carol Moogk-Soulis for the Windsor Essex Community Health Unit and the Riverside Optimist Club identified public open spaces in the urban environments of Windsor and other developed areas having higher temperatures than those in outlying areas of the county. Using Landsat 7 satellite mapping to produce heat imagery, the research found that public spaces in urban environments void of trees were far hotter in the summer months than in those which had tree cover. Air temperatures near the surface were hotter to upwards of 20 degrees Celsius; the area where children traditionally play.

In 2014, the Parks Department conducted an inventory of the tree cover in all City Parks. On average city parks have a tree cover of 24.8 percent. Regional parks fared the best with 30% tree cover, partly due to the natural heritage sites of Peche Island and the Ojibway Complex which had 75.3% and higher in all six sites that comprise these two areas. Without the natural heritage sites Regional Parks including the Riverfront have a small tree cover of 16.5%. Community Parks were recorded as 22.2% and Neighbourhood Parks were recorded at 24.2% tree cover.

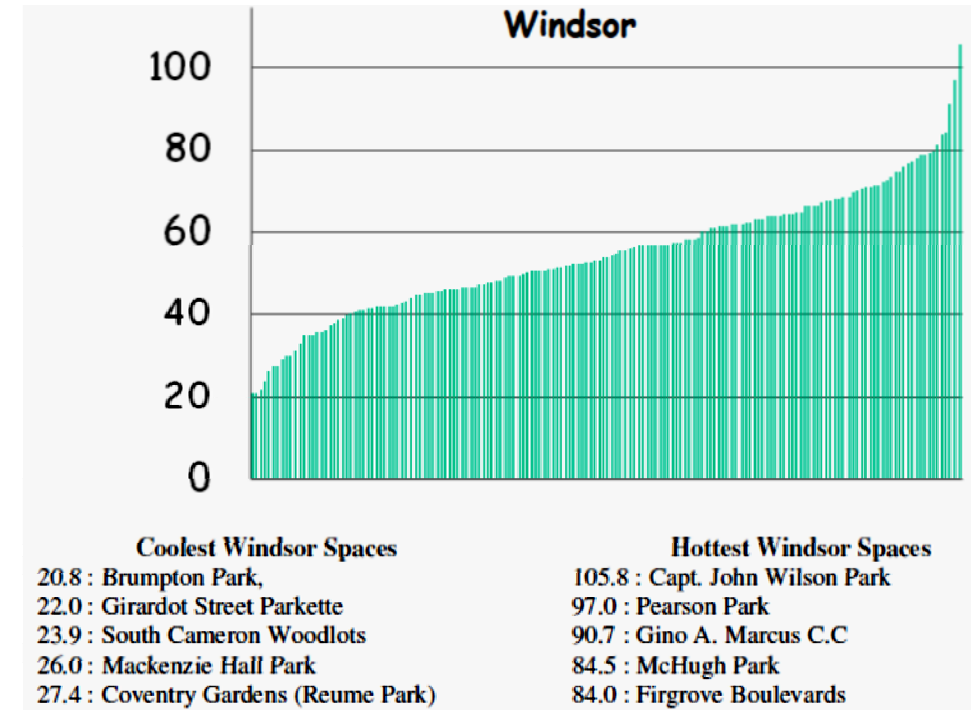


Figure 4-10: Windsor public spaces average surface temperature (degrees Celsius)

Figure 4-12: Stop 26 Park - Sandpoint Beach (Left)

Figure 4-11: Little River Corridor walkway lined with trees



"Trees are the most effective at reducing temperatures and providing shade" vii

BLUE FLAG BEACHES

Blue Flag is a highly respected and recognized international eco-label. Blue Flags are awarded to beaches and marinas that meet strict criteria for water quality, environmental education, environmental management, and safety and services.

Blue Flags are flying at 25 beaches and six marinas in Canada. Blue Flag not only embraces the World Health Organizations mandate to provide clean and environmentally sustainable beachfront, it requires that the beaches offer a tourism service as well to meet the objectives of the World Tourism Organization. (see Appendix 'P')

SANDPOINT BEACH

Located at the eastern end of the city along Riverside Drive, Sandpoint Beach offers bathers and sun-worshippers the only natural beach in the city for people to engage in beach-related activity. While Sandpoint Beach is a 2 hectare (5 acre) parcel of land, combined with Ganatchio Park and Stop26 Beach, these three parks stretch across 460 metres (1500 feet) of the western end of Lake St Clair. Recreational activities provided at these sites include; lifeguard-supervised swimming, windsurfing and kayak / canoeing, playground and concessions.

While the site is a natural recreation resource, the three parks also offer much cultural significance as well. Stop 26 Park is named after the electric streetcar transfer station between Windsor and the Town of Tecumseh. Ganatchio Park is a result of funding partnerships from the Province, Windsor -St Clair Rotary and the City, as well as historically reported to be the launching site of First Nation's Chief Pontiac to cross to Peche Island for native ritual and strategic reasons.

With the recommendations outlined in other sections of the Strategic Directions, the potential is there to establish Sandpoint as a Blue Flag beach. Environmentally, the shallowness of Lake St. Clair has created the greatest challenge with respect to water quality. Through concerted efforts with neighbouring municipalities, ERCA and other federal and international Great Lakes agencies, this may still be accomplished.

Blue Flag Standards

Water Quality

The Blue Flag program requires that beaches achieve excellent bathing water quality. Blue Flag beaches undergo regular water quality sampling measured against national standards and legislation.

Environmental Management

Dedicated beach management committees are set up at Blue Flag sites to conduct environmental audits of the site and its facilities. The committee is also responsible for ensuring that beach habitat is protected and managed sustainably.

Environmental Education

Educational activities that promote sustainability are an important part of the Blue Flag program. Environmental education activities can range from educational signage to training workshops for municipal staff.

Safety and Services

Blue Flag sites are required to be safe and accessible for all ages and for people with disabilities. Lifeguards or lifesaving and first aid equipment must also be available at the Blue Flag beach. Emergency and safety measures must be implemented.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Recreational activities for active healthy living should focus on self-guided opportunities through the promotion of fitness stations and park design.*
- *Work with the Windsor/Essex Community Garden Collective and other interested partners to provide opportunities for community gardens where there is demand at selected sites within the city as per the "Community Gardens Policy" in order to:*
 - a) Promote sustainability through urban agricultural projects,*
 - b) Education of sustainable gardening practices*
 - c) Establish demonstration gardens and other forms of urban agriculture.*
- *Provide equal opportunity access to natural areas and experience of wildlife throughout the city based on the "AODA".*
- *Access to drinking water be provided in select, highly active Community and Regional Open Spaces within the Parks Greenway System.*
- *Determine shade targets through Forestry and Environmental Services as a follow-up to the Shade Audit for all parks in the Parks Greenway System as well as rights-of-ways in order to provide healthy shaded access throughout the city and help offset the impact of climate change.*
- *Prepare redevelopment plans for Sandpoint Beach to accommodate the needs of the community and establish it as a "Blue Flag Beach".*

Figure 4-13: Sandpoint Beach Visitor Centre

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4 To create and maintain parks and recreational opportunities in an environmentally responsible manner, to ensure their longevity for future generations.

By investing in parks as long-term infrastructure, the City, through sustainable environmental stewardship initiatives of its natural heritage resources, can continue to provide high-quality recreational programming to all its residents and visitors.

Major development in the City of Windsor will assuredly occur in the Sandwich South Planning District over the next 20 years and beyond. This area holds a great opportunity for the construction of a parkland greenbelt in the southern half of the city to connect the eastern and western parcels of the Greenway System. Unlike the riverfront where land that is not already designated parkland is built up with residential and industrial property, Sandwich South is primarily agricultural and holds potential for development of an uninterrupted link.

In a recent study on the impact of Public Health and Urban Sprawl in Ontario, prepared by the Environmental Health Committee, Ontario College of Family Physicians, it was identified that Controlled Growth Plans (i.e. Secondary Plans) with ample greenspace remaining for public health concerns will help to offset the impact of development in former agricultural areas. The Planning Department of the City Windsor has been formulating a secondary plan for the Sandwich South Planning District, which includes the development of a significant greenbelt of passive and active public recreational open space, to facilitate these health concerns. The report concludes that, *".. results of current studies clearly indicate that serious public health problems will continue to escalate unless decisive and immediate action is taken to control urban sprawl and preserve sufficient greenspace, improve air quality, and protect water sources."*

BLUE DOT MOVEMENT

Following a request from the Windsor-Essex Youth Advisory Committee, on August 24, 2015 the City of Windsor through Council Resolution joined 30 other Canadian municipalities by passing declarations in support of the right to a healthy environment as per the David Suzuki Foundation's "Blue Dot Movement". (see Appendix 'O')

The Blue Dot Movement encourages individuals and municipalities to recognize the right to healthy environments for citizens. A key factor in sustaining healthy communities is to ensure:

- That land development occurs in a sustainable manner.
- Provision of water and air quality.
- Measures to counteract climate change.
- Protection of wildlife habitat and biodiversity in urban populations.
- Protection of parkland and green spaces, through park creation and preservation of natural spaces.
- Access to nature for children.

Each of these sustainability objectives of the Blue Dot Movement can be fulfilled through the careful management of our parks.

"Protecting our right to a healthy environment — today, and for our children's children — is clearly an idea whose time has come."
 – Blue Dot Movement



Figure 4-14: Nest of Birds at Ojibway Nature Centre



WINDSOR'S OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTINUOUS ECOLOGICALLY DIVERSE THRESHOLD (BIODIVERSITY GATEWAY)

In highly developed and agricultural regions like Windsor - Essex County, habitats and ecosystems have become fragmented and isolated. It is observed that isolated habitats generally decline in the diversity of species within them, and see decline in the genetic health of individual species within them, ultimately leading to the failure and disappearance of critical populations and ecological function.

There is a lot of emphasis from Municipal, Provincial and Federal planning considerations for creating connectivity and linkage for the natural environment. These planning initiatives create corridors which serve many goals including supporting species diversity, ecological function, aesthetics, passive and active recreation. All of this translates to improved human and environmental health and well being.



Figure 4-15: Proposed Biodiversity Gateway

The City of Windsor has several unique opportunities to begin the consideration of creating a continuous corridor, a threshold, surrounding the City from Detroit River Brighton Beach to Detroit River-Peche Island, by connecting existing significant habitats, prairie, savannah, forest, river valley land, and swamp wetlands. Much of this opportunity is already in place with existing parkland (Little River corridor), the Herb Gray Parkway and the Ojibway / Spring Garden Complex.

This is an opportunity supporting our unique ecological and biologically diverse heritage, but also to positively improve the overall image of Windsor as the most biologically diverse municipality in Canada.

Recommendation: Look at opportunities to leverage corridor from the Objway Shores Complex, Herb Grey Parkway trail habitat network, Upper Little River Stormwater Management Plan, the Airport provincially significant wetland swamp complex and the Little River flood plain, to create a natural and recreational corridor encompassing the entire City from extreme east to west. This corridor would potentially connect to existing trail networks like the Ganatchio Trail and the Chrysler Greenway.

Acquire property, natural heritage feature parcels, and linear storm water management opportunities, which will add to the overall City of Windsor park holdings and contribute to a linear regional park network. The City of Windsor Official Plan through the Sandwich South Secondary Plan supports a natural link corridor incorporating the Little River watershed with ultimate connection to the Herb Grey Parkway trail network.

Figure 4-16: Natural trail in Ojibway Forest

OJIBWAY NATURE COMPLEX

The largest collection of natural parkland in Windsor is located in the western end of the city, collectively known as the Ojibway Nature Complex consisting of the following sites:

- Black Oak Heritage & Broadway Park
- Tom Joy Woods & Ojibway Nature Park
- Tall Grass Prairie Heritage Park
- Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve
- Spring Garden ANSI & Seven Sisters Park
- Oakwood Nature Reserve
- St Clair Prairie E.S.A.

In total area the complex covers over 325 hectares of oak savannah (Carolinian Forest), tallgrass prairie, and wetlands. Once completed, the newly constructed Right Honorable Herb Gray Parkway, as well as part of Turkey Creek which flows from the



Grand Marais Drain in Windsor through the Spring Garden ANSI to LaSalle and finally to the Detroit River, will contribute approximately 120 additional hectares to this area of natural and reclaimed naturalized parkland for nature-oriented recreational purposes.

Figure 4-18: Raptor education at Ojibway Nature Centre (top)



Figure 4-17: Children learning at Ojibway Park Pond (bottom)

BLACK OAK HERITAGE PARK AND ADJACENT UNDEVELOPED LANDS

Black Oak Heritage Park and the adjacent undeveloped lands have biological, archaeological, and historical importance. This environmentally significant area is an integral part of the Ojibway Prairie Complex because it provides ecological linkage to the Detroit River. Virtually all of the area is within the Ojibway Prairie Remnants Area of Natural and Scientific Interest. This area houses Black Oak Savanna, one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America, Provincially Significant Wetlands, numerous Species at Risk, and contributes to the genetic diversity of important organisms.

The park and surrounding lands have a rich cultural as well as natural heritage. Early explorers reported the presence of Huron First Nation corn fields along this part of the river. By 1749, the French had settled here, their fields replacing those of the Hurons. Their farmsteads represent the first major European farming community in Southern Ontario.

Today the vegetation of Black Oak Heritage Park and surrounding lands is made up of a variety of oak savanna and oak woodland species. The former farm lands now provide open sandy areas which offer tallgrass prairie habitat restoration opportunities. Additionally these areas may act as sites for local Species at Risk transplants protecting the genetic diversity of these flora and fauna.

This natural area aids in the reduction of air and noise pollution from the heavy industrialization of Zug Island and also provides filtration from runoff entering into the Detroit River.

Black Oak Heritage Park with its natural beauty will be the first impression of visitors entering our city using the new Gordie Howe Border Crossing.

Other benefits:

- Strengthens the biodiversity of our region.
- Provides a visual barrier from industrial disease.
- In 2014 and 2015, new species to Canada were discovered here.
- Home of *Cerceris fumipennis*, a solitary ground-nesting wasp used as biosurveillance for Emerald Ash borer.

UNESCO: Biosphere reserves are ecologically significant regions that promote sustainability and conservation by engaging all community stakeholders. Recognized by UNESCO, they support research, share the resulting knowledge broadly and inform policy-makers. Biosphere reserves address one of the most challenging issues we face today: how to maintain the health of natural systems while meeting needs of communities?

PECHE ISLAND

Deeply rooted in history, it has been speculated that Peche Island was once used as a strategic military outpost during the early settlement period of the area, however no strong evidence has been found to support that claim. The first most significant occupation of the property was by Hiram Walker in 1883. During that time it had been recorded that much of the island was cultivated for the Walker farm and the vegetation that exists today is a result of that period or from volunteer plants that have migrated to the island by birds, wind or floated ashore.

Though once a Provincial Park, the island was purchased by the City of Windsor in 1999 in order to preserve this natural heritage site. Today the island boasts its biodiversity of **vegetation types and wildlife habitats; many of which are unique to the island within the Essex County Region.**

Though not readily accessible to the public outside of small craft sailing vessels and organized naturalist trips, Peche Island needs to be managed as a Natural Park, with recreational facilities being of secondary nature to the primary focus of the habitat preservation. ERCA has indicated strong support for this endeavour as well as assistance in managing the processes involved.

LITTLE RIVER CORRIDOR

Before it was straightened and walled in, the Little River flowed through what is now the eastern end of Windsor. The current park encompasses the old channel, consisting of a naturalized path that links the southeastern suburban neighbourhoods to Lake St Clair and the Detroit River, along the Ganatchio Trail.

Naturalization efforts started in 1990 through various community organizations, along with the City of Windsor and ERCA. It contains many types of natural parkland including: small streams, a large hill for tobogganing and mountain biking, a few open areas, and many large wooded areas that provide habitat for wildlife, especially birds, including the Bald Eagle. The park is a popular destination, along with its neighbouring park, Sandpoint Beach.

The Little River Corridor and the Little River Boulevard linear trail provide a natural connection between several east end parks including:

- Sandpoint Beach
- Ganatchio Trail
- Lakeshore Woods Park
- East Riverside Park and Blue Heron Lake
- East End Park
- Little River Acres Park
- WFCU & McHugh Parkland
- Bush, Teedie and Hawthorne Parks
- Little River Golf Club
- Derwent Park, and
- Twin Oaks Park

Once developed, the Sandwich South Lands can provide a further extension of this natural corridor to the Airport Swamp Woodlots and beyond to connect up to the newly constructed naturalized parkland and trails of the Right Honourable Herb Gray Parkway. (Hwy #401).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- To protect and promote existing natural areas and provide connections where available.
- To promote naturalization where warranted to create buffers and connections to natural areas in consultation with the community.
- Identify and review parks or portions of parks for naturalization and establish appropriate management strategies with public consultation.
- Collaborate with ERCA to provide performance and management strategies for all natural parks and naturalized areas including:
 - a) Fish habitat along riverfront lands
 - b) Watershed management areas
 - c) Prairies
 - d) Woodlots
- Create a performance and management plan to determine high priority natural park such as:
 - Peche Island
 - Spring Garden ANSI
 - Ojibway Nature Complex
 - The Airport Swamp Woodlots
- Prepare standards for the establishment of urban wildlife habitat to:
 - a) Accommodate expansion of the natural areas to help facilitate better management of species at risk, habitat for urban wildlife and opportunity for nature related recreation for people.
 - b) Establish a protocol for succession control in managed natural and naturalized areas to deter the establishment of exotic and aggressive naturally invasive species.
 - c) Place a high priority on sustainability and ecological integrity in managing vegetation, using native plants where possible, especially for restoration of disturbed areas, and naturalization projects.
- To identify drainage issues in the Parks Greenway System and areas where flooding is an issue for residents to determine if strategies promoted by the "Environmental Master Plan" (such as Low-Impact-Design and green infrastructure) can be used to accommodate storm water to help mitigate flooding.
- Protect the quality of life for future generations; establish an "Urban Forestry Management Plan" for the Parks Greenway System and public right-of-ways by conducting a full tree inventory of all city-owned trees and return to the industry standard through maintenance and funding to ensure that our urban forest remains sustainable.
- Naturalize underutilized parks (in whole or part) or those with poor drainage to enhance biodiversity while addressing level of service.
- Establish a 'Policy for 'No Mow' Areas'.
- Work with other civic departments to revise "Parking Lot By-Law" to allow 'Low-Impact-Design' in parks to reduce storm water impacts.
- Revisit the "Official Plan" with the Planning Department to offer green infrastructure bonuses for parkland development in subdivisions (especially in Sandwich South Planning District).
- Continue active involvement with the Planning Department in the development of the "Sandwich South Secondary Plan" to ensure that Parks and Recreational spaces are established to promote physical connectivity for pedestrian and active transportation through an ecologically diverse 'Biodiversity Gateway' by extending Little River Corridor to the Herb Grey Parkway and the Ojibway Nature Complex.
- That The City of Windsor coordinate a stewardship project with ERCA in order to secure Priority Natural Significant Lands such as Ojibway Shores, Sandwich South Planning District and any other opportunities where natural features exist to improve the natural heritage system in the City.
- Apply under criteria ix and x of the nomination process of UNESCO to establish the Ojibway Nature Complex of parks as a 'UNESCO Heritage Site', through the assistance of the Friends of Ojibway Prairie and ERCA, based on the universal natural significance of the properties.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #5: To provide different types of parks and recreational experiences distributed evenly throughout the city.

The current two classification system for city parks is limited in establishing appropriate level of service for the diversity of parks which are found in Windsor. There are several avenues to consider when restructuring the current parks classification structure. Having only 2 classifications has led to some ambiguity in what constitutes different levels of service operationally. It is therefore important to consider a reclassification that is based on:

- Size
- Use patterns
- Demand
- Natural resources of the park

In response to the changing demographics and needs, the City will continue to adapt by making parks diverse, unique and accessible through equitable distribution of parks, trails and recreation programming for different outdoor uses and users. By expanding the natural system of parks to address community desire, climate change, and sustainability it is possible to provide appropriate service in each of the different park classifications and sub-classifications.

Rediscover Our Parks has drawn from the current Official Plan and the responses citizens have made as to how they use their parks. Park diversity already exists and by expanding the classification system, it is felt that this will help draw people into parks by making them aware of the differences.

It is proposed that a new classification refer to the greater classification as Open Spaces to align more closely with the Official Plan. While Neighbourhood Open Space shall be maintained as a classification, the Parks Department has always recognized operational differences between Community and Regional Open Space. Community open spaces are generally situated to serve the residents within a Planning District while Regional Open Spaces serve users for the larger city-wide or tourism-oriented population. The Official Plan also identifies Natural Heritage Sites and Recreationways as significantly different and specialized parkland. These have been added as separate classifications to address the different operational management and level of public service which they will require. (See Figure 4-19: New Parks Classification Organizational Chart).

Under each of the new classifications are several sub-classifications. It is recognized that while there are traditional public spaces within the City's parkland supply, the other public open spaces held the Province and other governmental agencies, as well as private open spaces can be extended under each of the proposed classifications. This will assist in Official Plan designation and zoning where future development may be considered. (See Appendix 'Q' for detailed list of parks by proposed classification)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Adopt the re-classification of parks as outlined in this master plan and update the "City of Windsor's Official Plan".*
- *Update the "Official Plan" to make certain that any new infrastructure, utilities and services abutting parkland is coordinated through the Parks Department to ensure appropriate service to parks.*
- *Prepare a 'Manual of Park Design Standards' for:*
 - *Each classification and sub-classification*
 - *Standard design details (eg. amenities, pathways, plant materials and field layouts)*
 - *Specifications, and*
 - *Compliance with "AODA"*
- *Identify the key parks that would serve as community hubs..*

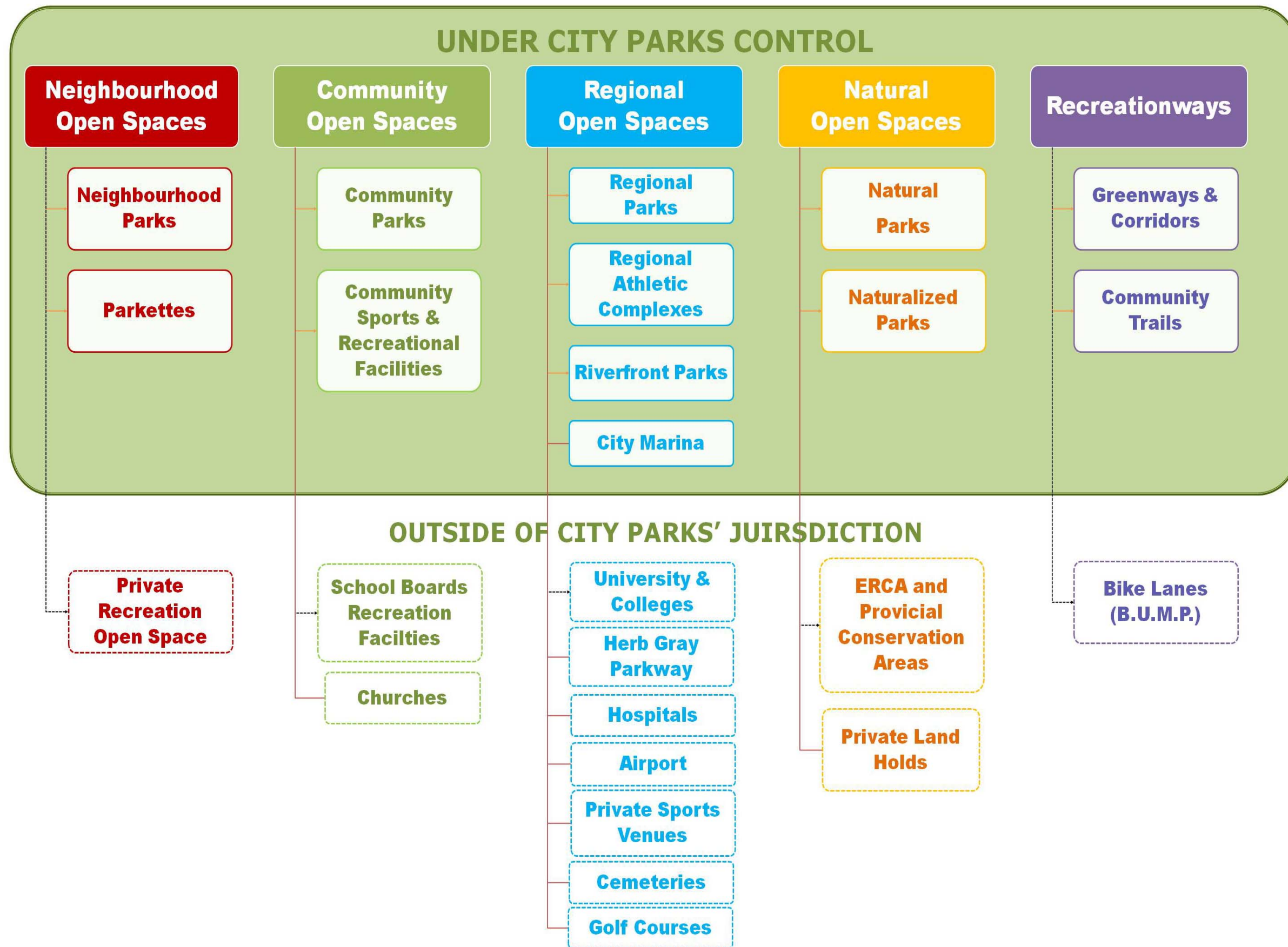


Figure 4-19: New Parks Classification Organizational Chart



OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS / LEGEND

■ NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACE	■ REGIONAL OPEN SPACE
■ COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE	■ RECREATIONWAY OPEN SPACE
■ NATURAL OPEN SPACE	■ GOVERNMENT / OTHER OPEN SPACE
— PLANNING DISTRICT BOUNDARY	— EXISTING MULTI-USE TRAIL
— WINDSOR LOOP (B.U.M.P.)	— WINDSOR ESSEX PARKWAY TRAIL


THE CITY OF WINDSOR
 ONTARIO, CANADA
MASTER PLAN
PARK CLASSIFICATIONS
 Prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation
 November 2015

Figure 4-20: New Parkland Classification

NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACE

The focus of Neighbourhood open spaces is to provide the local residents with an area in which to engage in outdoor leisure activity. It should provide areas in which to walk, sit, play and engage in unorganized sporting activities. Neighbourhood open spaces will have a residential appeal whether situated in the urban core or suburbs. Under this classification are two sub-classifications

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

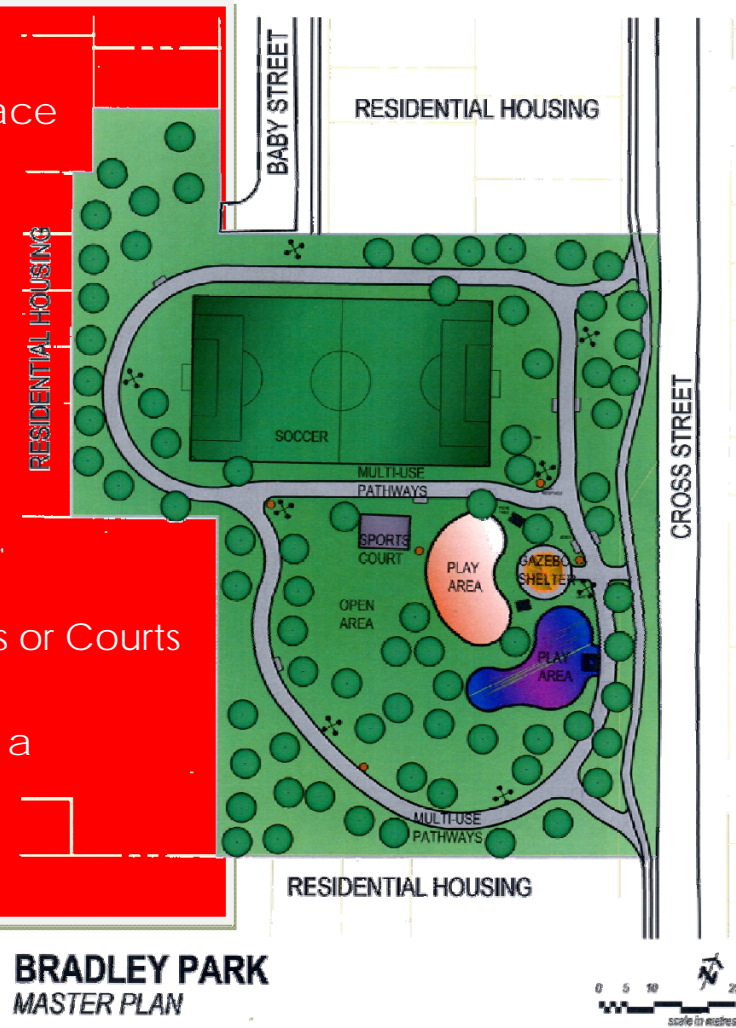
- Parks that serve Local residences within a 0.8km (1/2 miles) radius and provide passive recreation and leisure opportunities, open space, trees, and may include pathways, small playgrounds, benches and picnic tables.
- Where warranted, neighbourhood parks may also include enhancements such as a non-programmed sports field or picnic shelters for residential use.
- **Suggested Size: not less than 2ha to 8ha** (5 to 20 acres)

Base Amenities

- Grassed Green open space
- Sidewalks
- Benches
- Trees
- Play Area
- Park Signage

Enhanced Amenities

- Picnic tables and Picnic Shelters
- Unorganized Sports Fields or Courts
- Splashpads
- Site specific amenities of a cultural or natural character



BRADLEY PARK
MASTER PLAN



Figure 4-21: Neighbourhood Park - Morningstar Park

PARKETTES

- Civic spaces in various locations across the city, primarily within the downtown core and business areas, passive in nature with seating, lighting, and often exhibit public art and monuments.
- **Suggested Size: Under 2ha** (5 acres)

Base Amenities

- Hard Open space
- Sidewalks
- Benches
- Shade created by trees or a structure
- Park Signage

Enhanced Amenities

- Picnic tables and Picnic Shelters
- Site specific amenities of a cultural or natural character
- Seasonal displays



Figure 4-22: Parkette - Charles Clark Square

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACE

The focus of Community recreational open spaces is to provide outdoor leisurely activity, including some organized recreational activity to a broader and more diverse catchment area. There are two main sub-classifications of Community Open Spaces.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community Parks resemble Neighbourhood Parks with the exception that they are larger, offering a broader selection of recreational activity. In the survey it was determined that people would be open to the notion of consolidation of services provided those services benefitted the greater community as a whole, and access to and from was improved upon. Stronger concentration of service at Community Parks can help to address that need.

- **Community parks shall be developed for the enjoyment of a diverse population and provide opportunities for all types of recreation, social and cultural activities.**
- These large scale parks provide a broad range of amenities such as splash pads, picnic shelters and accessible playgrounds and sports fields.
- They also include the base services of a Neighbourhood Park, but serve a greater catchment area.
- **Suggested Size: minimum 8ha (20 acres)**

COMMUNITY SPORTS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

While there is a need for community based athletic recreation, it is not always practical to provide a full regional facility to accommodate organized sports needs in all communities. Community Sports & Recreational Facilities addresses that need. Having a focus on sporting activity, the level of service in such parks would be intensified to ensure that the fields are always in a condition suitable to the type of sport that is intended to be played upon them.

- Large scale parks provide opportunities for organized sporting activities and rental purposes.
- These facilities will have multiple fields programmed for various recreational outdoor sports activities such as soccer or baseball.
- These sites will include parking for various modes of active transportation.
- May also have a community centre, library, outdoor pool, skatepark or other facilities.
- **Suggested Size: 2 TO 8 ha (5 to 20 acres)**

All Community Open Spaces provide the same base amenities of:

- Grassed Green open space
- Sidewalks
- Benches
- Trees
- Accessible Play Equipment
- Park Signage
- Lighting
- Multi-use trails
- Picnic tables and Picnic Shelters
- Parking Lot

Enhanced Amenities for all Community Open Spaces

- Recreation /Community Centre
- Library
- Washrooms
- Organized Sports Fields or Courts
- Arenas
- Outdoor Pools
- Splashpads
- Skatepark / Skatespot
- Community Gardens
- Site specific amenities of a cultural or natural character
- Commemorative Installations
- Dog Parks

Community Sports and Recreation Facilities will have multiple organized sports fields and/or courts as a basic amenity in addition to those found in a Community Park



Figure 4-24: Garry Dugal Splash Pad

Figure 4-23: Community Park - Captain Wilson Park

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE

The focus of Regional Open Spaces is to provide outdoor leisurely activity for the greater Windsor area, as well as provide a draw from outside the City. These recreational facilities and parks will be able to accommodate large gatherings and festivals. They demand a level of service that will always showcase the City of Windsor in a positive manner, including maintenance, service, types of activities, and overall establish a unique character that is not found anywhere else in the city, or possibly the Essex County region. In this classification there are three sub-classifications.

REGIONAL PARKS

- Regional Parks vary in scale and attract users from all across the city and surrounding areas.
- May include amenities such as band shelters, washrooms facilities, arboreta, etc.
- That significant draw provides opportunities for economic benefits (i.e. carnivals, festivals, art shows, or other special events).
- These parks may also offer a more cultural and/or tourist attraction
- They also include the base services of a Neighbourhood Park, but serve a greater catchment area.
- **Suggested Size:** Varies

REGIONAL ATHLETIC COMPLEXES

- These larger scale parks provide venues for formal sporting activities for both league games and rental purposes; especially tournaments having a greater regional draw.
- They may include several types of activities or primarily focus on one sporting activity such as soccer or baseball, and may include interior or exterior sports/recreation facilities.
- Facilities at these complexes require parking for various modes of active transportation (i.e. cars, buses, cyclists and pedestrians in large numbers).
- May offer year-round operations.
- **Suggested Size: 10ha** (min 25 acres)

RIVERFRONT PARKS

- Acting as the City of Windsor's primary showcase for events and festivals, Riverfront Parks provide opportunities not available in any other parks in the city, by connecting users with direct access to the Detroit River and/or Lake St Clair.
- Typically linear in sections that have the characteristics defined in other parks sub-classifications

Location based: North of Riverside Drive

All Regional Open Spaces provide the same Base Amenities as Neighborhood and Community Open Spaces as well as:

- Shade Structures
- Parking Lot with Bus Access
- Washrooms
- Amenities with draws for the greater city or tourism

Enhanced Amenities for Regional Parks

- Specific elements that cater to demographic uses
- Amenities of a scale that will not fit within a Neighborhood or Community Open Space

Enhanced Amenities for Regional Athletic Complexes

- Sports fields
- Arenas

Enhanced Amenities for Riverfront Parks

- Marinas
- Water-related recreational activity
- Items identified in the Central Riverfront Implementation Plan



Figure 4-25: Regional Park - Jackson War Memorial



Figure 4-26: Riverfront Park



Figure 4-27: Regional Athletic Complex – MicMac Park



Figure 4-28: Regional Park - Willstead Park

NATURAL OPEN SPACE

The City currently has approximately 655 hectares of natural and naturalized parkland within the greenway system, inclusive of municipally and provincially owned public open space, with roughly 90% being indigenous environments. These parks are primarily located in the far eastern and far western ends of the city, with a scattering of smaller vestiges of natural forest being preserved throughout the south central areas of the City.

NATURAL PARKS

While the Official Plan identifies these as Natural Heritage Areas, Natural Parks are those which have been preserved in their natural state that can be historically documented as indigenous to the site. These areas provide ecological function through wetlands, tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, Carolinian or riparian forest, or riverbank floodplain.

- Amenities/Facilities are often limited to ones that allow for the connection and/or enjoyment of nature in a way that protects the natural features.
- **Suggested Size:** Varies based on extent of natural area.

Base Amenities

- Designated & managed indigenous environmental significance in collaboration with ERCA and other Legislated Policies
- Signage
- Trees
- Trash & Recycle facilities

Enhanced Amenities

- Trails (preferably bark or other natural material)
- Restricted Lighting where used for security purposes
- Benches
- Interpretational panels & kiosks
- Nature observation areas
- Guided Tour

NATURALIZED AREAS

Naturalized Areas are those which have been, or have potential to be, remediated primarily with indigenous species to enhance the biodiversity of the area. Low Impact Design practices may be employed to assist traditional urban infrastructure to create the naturalized effect.

- **Suggested Size:** Varies, based on extent of naturalized area.



Figure 4-29: Naturalized Park - Blue Heron Park

Base Amenities

- Managed environments in collaboration with ERCA or other Community Stewardship group through Legislated Policies
- Signage
- Trees
- Trash & Recycle facilities
- Low Impact Design methods to manage storm water

Enhanced Amenities

- Paved Trails
- Restricted Lighting
- Benches
- Interpretational panels
- Nature observation areas



Figure 4-30: Natural Park - Deer at Ojibway Nature Centre

RECREATIONWAYS

According to the Official Plan, a **Recreationway** is a planned network of multi-use pedestrian and cycling trails, designed to serve recreational movements. Recreationways complement and connect with the Greenway System, with other areas of the city and neighbouring communities. New development proposals and infrastructure undertakings are to include extensions and improvements to Recreationways concurrently with other transportation infrastructure in new developments.

GREENWAYS & CORRIDORS

- These year-round Multi-use Linear Trails serve active recreational purposes such as cycling, jogging as well as casual pedestrian strolling at the regional scale. Linking parks together, they also provide an opportunity to transit through the city by alternative modes of transportation other than automobiles.
- Benches and other amenities are strategically located along these trails where suited.
- Trailheads and Markers to be located in appropriate positions,



Figure 4-31: Clairview Bikeway

COMMUNITY TRAILS

- These Linear Trails serve connectors for cyclist, joggers and pedestrians to parks from neighbourhoods as well as from parks to the greater Greenway or Corridor trails.
- Benches and other amenities may also be located along trails where suited.
- Trails Markers to be located in appropriate positions.
- Trails will not be serviced year-round.
- Minimum width: 9.1m (30 feet)



Figure 4-32: Blue Heron Lake Trail

CONNECTIVITY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #6: Parks and trails shall continue to play an important role in the city parks system, ensuring that the linkages to and from parks, as well as between parks remain accessible and serve the greater Windsor community.

Parks trails are to continue to play an important role in the city parks system, ensuring that the linkages to and from parks, as well as between parks remain accessible and serve the greater Windsor community. The community has a very high level of interest in trails. While the public consultation phase resulted in a desire for an improved trails system, it is important to note that key issues include:

- **Lack of connectivity**
- **Lack of pathways in parks**
- **Quality of trails in some areas were poor**

According to the City of Windsor Official Plan all Recreational Open Spaces are to be interconnected and linked through a greater Greenway System. The current Riverfront Parks in the Downtown Core, as well as those in various locations throughout the city (i.e. Ojibway Complex, Little River Corridor and Ganatchio Trail) create the beginnings of a fully linked Greenway. In addition the new constructed Herb Gray Parkway parklands and trails will establish a spine of interconnected parks along Highway #401. The ultimate goal for the city would be to physically connect as many parks as possible to provide an uninterrupted greenbelt to allow users to travel through the city within parkland without impediments from vehicular traffic. (see Sustainability Section in the Strategic Directions)

Similar to the legislation from 2005 that designated that the Golden Horseshoe communities (including Toronto) establish a Greenbelt^{xi} to ensure a sustainable environment for agriculture, while helping to curb urban sprawl, Council along with the local Provincial Government, should investigate the option for similar legislation to assist in the formal establishment of a "greenbelt" through the Sandwich South Lands to connect eastern and western parks with the City of Windsor Greenway System

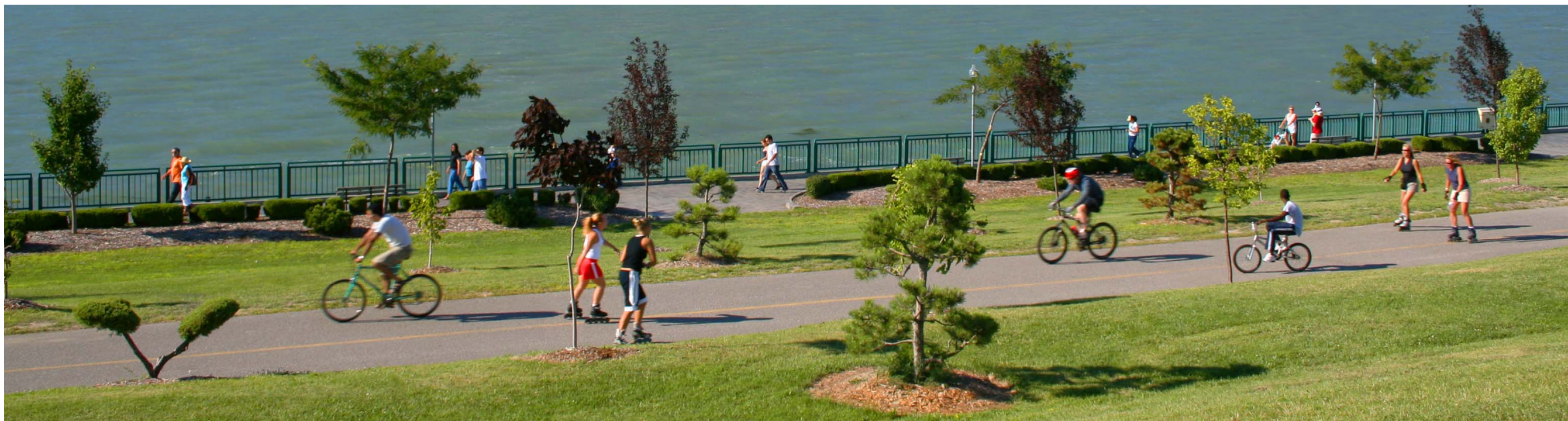


Figure 4-33:
Riverfront
Parkway Trail

GREENWAY SYSTEM AND B.U.M.P.

While the BUMP and Windsor Loop are adopted concepts for the City to ensure that there is appropriate cycling opportunities throughout the city, it is important to assure that all opportunities to incorporate cycling facilities associated with parks is investigated to achieve the best and scenic routes through the city parkland.

Though adopted in principle and while sections have been completed, the B.U.M.P. and the Windsor Loop are far from being completed in their entirety. As new opportunities arise through infrastructure development, subdivision planning, and expansion into Sandwich South, there is a need to secure parcels of land that will accommodate the goals and objectives of linking the east and west ends of the city through an interconnected bike route; preferably through a parkland.

The public consultation process strongly identified that the community holds trails for walking and cycling in high regard. The need for better connectivity to trails as well as between various open spaces was also valued as the most important amenity in the future of parks. Trails provide alternate and active transportation opportunities for all residents to commute to desired destinations as well as provide a leisurely means to exercise either individually or in groups. Most significantly trails and greenways provide access to the riverfront and other trail-based recreation found through the city.

The city has many popular trails including the Grand Marais Trail, Little River Corridor, Ganatchio and Clairview Trails and the Riverfront Trails. A lack of connectivity between these trails is one of the greatest challenges. Another deficiency in the trail system identified in the public consultation was the lack of a formal trail connection from the South Windsor Planning District to the urban core and the Riverfront. Currently, through BUMP those connections rely heavily on the existing road infrastructure.

The newly installed Herb Gray Parkway, has also recognized this need and has provided an extensive network of trails for pedestrians and cyclists to commute through the parkway providing a physical connection between the City of Windsor and the Town of LaSalle.

TRAIL TYPES

The types of trails currently employed by the city are varied in size and construction depending on the environment and use patterns.



Multi-use Trail – There is roughly 130km of multi-use trails actively in use in the city. Primarily they are found in areas of high-use and more commonly along the riverfront. These trails are paved for accessibility and are traditionally wide enough for bi-directional traffic. They can be separated from other trail uses where needed. These trails will be outfitted with amenities such as benches to provide rest areas for those with limited mobility.

Walking Trail – Walking trails are primarily neighbourhood-scale connections throughout the greenway system and often found within parks. In general they are paved with a hard-surface and accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The minimum width of walking trails is designed to comply with the AODA standards to accommodate two wheelchairs to pass easily and often wide enough for a parks service vehicle to access if necessary. These trails will be outfitted with amenities such as benches to provide rest areas for those with limited mobility.



Nature Trail – Nature trails are found only within areas that have natural conservation and rehabilitation activities occurring in them. Primarily these trails are used for hiking and walking for access to nature-related recreation. Nature trails vary widely in character based on the ecological sensitivity of location in which they are developed.

Boardwalk – Boardwalks are limited to areas such as natural areas, shorelines or ecologically sensitive areas where it is ideal to be elevated above grade to comply with AODA requirements.

Bridges – Where necessary, bridges provide connections over water courses, steep terrain, or heavily used roadways to complete trail linkages.

Typically following the road network are a component of routes which are included in B.U.M.P. and the Windsor Loop to complete trails where public land is not available. In an effort to help people *Rediscover Our Parks* these routes are defined in the master plan as key connections that should be completed during future transportation planning.



- **Sidewalks** – Running parallel to right-of-ways to offer safe access and connectivity.
- **Wide Shoulder** – Though not ideal, these pedestrian and cyclist routes are shared paved right-of-ways separated from vehicle traffic by a painted shoulder line. These are only to be used in extreme situations where conventional trail types are not possible due to physical limitations.
- **Cycling Lanes** – Marked cycling lanes provide dedicated routes for bicycles as part of road design or upgrades as directed by BUMP. Though full width bike lanes are desired, where road widths are limited the use of sharrows may be used. Sharrows are widened vehicle lanes that have painted markings indicating that the road is to be shared with cyclists.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Identify, prioritize and establish new trails to improve connectivity throughout the city.*
- *Collaborate with Transportation Planning to update the "B.U.M.P." to promote trail connections for neighbourhoods.*
- *To review opportunities to provide cyclists with safe routes through or adjacent to parkland instead of along major traffic routes.*
- *To review and discuss options with the railways on routes which may be abandoned in the future to provide opportunities for recreational multi use-trails and commuter cyclists.*
- *Strengthen all north-south connections to the Detroit River.*
- *Work with and establish partnerships to obtain formal access for the development of recreational trails where appropriate on non-city owned lands, e.g., Devonwood, utility corridors and private land parcels.*
- *Include environmental considerations in the planning of major new trails through natural areas, and design trails to minimize environmental impacts.*
- *Develop trail heads and staging areas with the appropriate amenities for users including; wayfinding and interpretation.*
- *Amend the "Adopt-a-Park Policy" to include an 'Adopt-a-Trail' Program.*
- *Prepare and "Adopt-a-Trail" management plan that builds upon methods used in other jurisdictions' best practice models.*
- *Update design standards on well used trails through areas with high environmental values to keep people on trails and to protect the resources.*

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #7: Parks facilities and recreational programming in the city shall provide safe, clean, and attractive environments for all users.

Parks provide immediate opportunities for society to enjoy the great outdoors in a safe and economical manner. Enhancing our public spaces through parkland development and improvement provides civic investment in ensuring that residents can maintain an enjoyable quality of life.

Parks embrace the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design also known as (CPTED principles) for all parkland developed in the city ensuring public safety is paramount. Parks works closely with Windsor Police when developing and designing City parks to ensure CEPTED best design practices are being met. CEPTED has three main principles:

- Natural surveillance
- Natural access, control
- Territorial reinforcement

CPTED is a proactive design philosophy built around a core set of principles that is based on the belief that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, as well as an improvement in the quality of life.

Potential CPTED benefits include:

- *productive use of space*
- *improved function and/or profit*
- *reduced exposure to fear, crime, loss and liability*
- *partnerships and problem solving*
- *improved quality of life, and*
- *major cost savings.*

Studies show that the development of safe, quality neighbourhoods include the opportunity for residents to access public green space and parkland amenities in order to promote healthy lifestyles. A number of items are incorporated into park design to make users feel more secure in their surroundings; they include:

- Lighting
- Clear sight lines through the park
- Pathways wide enough for service vehicles and police to patrol and monitor parks
- Emergency call/distress buttons
- Trees and shrubs that are limbed up to maintain clear sight lines
- More than one access and egress in and out of facilities
- Signage

Through the public consultation process it was identified that people generally feel safe in city parks. However, where improvement to safety was considered, the use of lighting and emergency call buttons are favoured by most people who completed the surveys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Work with the Police Services to communicate and implement "CPTED" principles in parks to increase levels of safety while addressing a balance between aesthetic and environmental considerations.*
- *Establish a 'Policy for Park and Trail Lighting'.*
- *Establish a 'Policy for Emergency Call Buttons' within parks and along trails.*
- *Develop a 'Parkland Encroachment Policy and Procedure' to enforce and educate the public regarding encroachment into city parks and open space.*

EFFICIENCY

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #8: To successfully develop, maintain and enhance parks and recreation facilities in a balanced cost effective manner.

Parks planning, development, and recreation programming will endeavour towards successful outcomes that recognize the need for balance between local and regional amenities distributed suitably throughout the city, to ensure that residents and visitors have affordable or financially cost-effective and readily accessible parks and open spaces that are usable. Through public consultation it was determined that citizens would support some level of service reduction in parks by consolidation of services, provided that parks were maintained to an acceptable standard of cleanliness. This by no means meant that parks would be closed and sold; indicating that parks with higher use would be fitted with a variety of activities.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

The budget process consists of an examination of operations to determine any new initiatives, modifications, or service level changes projected to impact the budget. The City operates on a January 1 to December 31 fiscal year and a one-year Operating Budget cycle and a five-year Capital Budget cycle; the first year is approved by City Council, and the next four years as an adopted plan, but is subject to approval annually. The budget process begins in the summer, with extensive staff time spent on budget preparation in August, September and October. Administration submits a recommended budget to City Council and Council reviews and approves the Budgets in December. Over the past decade, the City of Windsor has been faced with decreasing revenues and increasing costs. Consequently, each year, there is much discussion about the elimination or reduction of services across the city, and Parks is no exception.

The Parks Department consists of Parks Operations, Parks Design & Development, Horticulture and Forestry Divisions. The Parks Department is overseen by an Executive Director and each Division has a Manager that reports to the Executive Director. Parks has 90 full-time employees and approximately 100 summer students and seasonal employees.

PARKS DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT FUNDING SOURCES

Parks Design & Development is responsible for the short and long-term planning of the City Parks, capital projects, infrastructure improvements, and the development of park policies. The Parks Department Budget may include the following funding sources:

- **General Operating Fund: Fund 001 supports Parks**
- **Dedicated Reserves:**

Parkland Acquisition Fund - Revenue results from the sale of parkland as well as Development Charges which were established to receive developer contribution revenue. This Fund is used to purchase new parkland within the City limits. Developer parkland dedications and cash in lieu of dedication have provided much of the neighbourhood parkland for many years. The policy of requesting that developers provide parkland as part of the infrastructure to support new neighbourhoods, has helped the park system keep pace with development in the City.

- **Capital Expenditure Reserve Fund** - Revenue is generated through a millage levy that is then used to support capital projects.
- **Internal Pay-As-You-Go Fund** - These funds are comprised of PYG from the Operating Budget and PYG from the Debt Reduction Policy. There are no set restrictions for the use of these funds.
- **Federal Gas Tax** - Monies received from the federal government relating to the federal gas tax. There are restrictions on how this money can be spent.
- **Subsidies and Grants:** Provincial/Federal Government, one-time funding initiatives, and also Third Party Recoveries.
- **Levies:**

- **Partnerships and/or Volunteerism:** Partnerships can help defray project costs and increase visibility of programs and events throughout the community as well as create potential new sources of revenue. These types of revenue sources are infrequent, and typically are for a specific purpose. Funds received that were generated for a named project must be used only for that specific project. For example, in 2015 the City worked with a third-party volunteer group that raised funds for the Great Flag Project.

PARKS, HORTICULTURE, FORESTRY AND NATURAL AREAS OPERATING BUDGET FUNDING SOURCES

The Parks Operations division is responsible for the day to day operations and maintenance of the City's 209 Parks, 1 playground units, sports fields, 125.7 km of trails, a cemetery, equipment maintenance, 400 vacant/transitional lots and roadside ditch mowing. During the winter months, the Parks Operations staff provides Winter Control of sidewalks, trails and parking lots throughout the City. The Horticulture division operates the Lanspeary Greenhouses where they grow in excess of 50,000 specialty plants, purchase 200,000 annuals, grow 15,000 perennials, our nursery houses contain 10,000 trees and shrubs, and plant 70,000 tulips in 300,000 sq. ft. of floral displays that are maintained within the City parks, as well as 1000 hanging baskets and 500 portable planters. The Forestry division is responsible for the City's 70,000 boulevard trees including trimming, removal and planting. The Natural Areas division operates a Nature Centre that provides programs for public attendance. This division is also responsible for overseeing 1158 hectares of Natural Parkland within the City.

The Operating Budget may include the following funding sources:

- **Fund 001 – General Fund:** The General Fund is the major source for financing the City's routine operations. The largest source of revenue for the General Fund is property tax. A small portion of the overall City General Fund revenue is from sources other than local property taxes. This Fund supports core parks maintenance functions such as infrastructure maintenance, mowing and snow removal.
- **Subsidies and Grants**
- **External recoveries:** These recoveries are based on work performed. For example, Parks recovers from the Board of Education for maintenance costs relating to the Windsor Stadium. This revenue completely offsets the cost of providing the service.
- **User Fees:** Parks charges user fees on a per use basis for programs at the Ojibway Nature Centre. This revenue helps to offset the cost of providing the programming. Memorials for specific tree plantings and park benches have allowed improvements that may not otherwise be funded. User Fees will continue to be evaluated as part of the annual budget process to make sure competitive fees are being charged, but that they also remain affordable for residents.
- **Sports-field Improvements Reserve Fund:** Established to help finance the costs of improvements to sports facilities.
- **Tree Planting Reserve Account:** These are tree contributions for new homes and subdivisions. It is also used to charge tree planting expenses for these properties or to issue refunds to homeowners who plant their own trees.
- **Riverfront Brick Reserve Account:** All revenues after expenses relevant to the memorial brick program reside in this account. Accumulated net proceeds are transferred to the Riverfront Development capital project each year.

FUTURE FUNDING

The aging infrastructure within the Parks has resulted in an increased demand for parks facilities improvements and services at a time when operating budgets are being reduced, tax revenue is decreasing, and fixed operating costs are increasing. Through the dedicated Parkland Acquisition Reserve, the City has been able to acquire land for dedicated park and open space uses. However, the cost of developing and maintaining parkland is reaching a point where traditional funding means (i.e., property taxes, fees, etc.) are potentially no longer able to completely support the current and future needs of the park system.

Development of a Green Levy should be carefully considered. The replacement costs of the playgrounds to meet AODA Accessibility Standards and to bring the Park amenities up to community expectations are beyond the annual capital budget dollars available to Parks. In addition to future levy conversations, Parks will continue to explore all funding options to insure the continuing vitality of the parks system and provision of services, amenities, and programming for the entire community.

DISPOSITION AND ACQUISITIONS

In the dynamic review of parkland needed city wide, it is reasonable to suspect that many areas of the City would have adequate, surplus, or deficient parkland coverage. The guiding criteria as evaluated in other areas of this plan is to provide a parks area to residents ratio (hectares of parkland per 1000 residents) and that residents live within .8 kilometre of a park.

As one might suspect the City core is generally park and open space deficient, as an area of greatest population and development density. The acquisition of parkland within the City core is challenged by the availability of adequate unoccupied space and relatively high value for property. In previous reports and strategic concepts to fund parkland space was the consideration of sale of parks considered to be surplus. It is noted that the disposition of any parkland requires public notice as specified in the Official Plan, Disposition of Parkland, clause 6.7.3.15 (e).

Aside from a consideration of parkland ratio to population or number of parks in close proximity, a park being considered surplus should also be evaluated for its ability to serve other strategic corporate goals, such as

- Whether that park space could contribute to natural or recreational connectivity.
- Is it able to support strategies identified for responding to global climatic change or urban heat island effect, or
- Would it support green infrastructure, soft engineering or dealing with storm water management.

"The best available evidence indicates that greenspace is an essential part of human health."

As previously discussed, based on the current economic outlooks and growth projections, the population of the city is not projected to increase significantly within the next 20 years. In such a time, land costs are generally low and provide an opportune time in which to plan for future growth beyond the 20 year life of this master plan.

PARKLAND ACQUISITION

As in the previous Culture and Recreation Master Plan the issue of acquisition of lands is still a concern. Several planning districts demonstrate deficiencies. With the current extent of developed lands within the city, it is difficult to resolve those deficiencies. However, the city should investigate and consider any opportunity that may arise to alleviate any deficiency in order to achieve the minimum standard of public open space throughout each planning district and ward.

PLANNING ACT

This Master Plan recommends that when there is an opportunity, Council should strongly endorse acquisition of land for the use of recreational parkland on the premise of establishing healthy and sustainable communities with the city. Through the Provincial Planning Act (see Appendix 'R'), any development within the city of Windsor is subject to Parkland Conveyance in land at a rate of 2% for commercial and industrial lands and 5% for all others zoning designations. Alternatively the act also states that where residential development is taking place, the City can acquire land at a rate of 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units.

ALTERNATE METHODS FOR PARKLAND ACQUISITION

In addition to the acquisition techniques found in the Planning Act, other methods in which the city can acquire land to meet the need for public open space are:

- **Cash-in-lieu** - when land is not available or not of benefit to the City's parkland purposes, the Planning Act allows for cash-in-lieu as Parkland Conveyance. This is a generally accepted practice as a condition with minor development such as consent items or rezoning items.
- **Municipal designation** - designation of other municipal lands a Parkland.
- **Donation** – Often land is bequeathed or vested for various reasons.
- **Disposition of School Board Property** – This method is ideal for wards and districts with deficiencies identified in the Parkland Supply Chapter. Many of the properties which the school boards own falls under the Private Recreation and Open Space Classification of the Official Plan. Often the property abuts existing Public Recreational Open Space. Any opportunity to expand public open space, especially in the urban core, should be strongly considered and acted upon.
- **Lease Agreements** – land which may be leased from another public agency such as schools or brownfields for a period of time, as a temporary gap-fill in areas of parkland deficiency, until such time that land may become available for permanent parkland development
- **Shared Use / Management Agreements** – often with schools boards or other public sector agencies where there is an opportunity for amalgamated services or those which are similar in nature.
- **Land Exchange** - The Planning Act does provide for the exchange of lands between the municipality and the private sector or another public agency for the purpose of parkland development if warranted. This becomes beneficial where there is a deficiency in one area of the city and a surplus in an area where the city may own undeveloped or underutilized land zoned as Green District.
- **Property Tax Arrears** – Unfortunately owners do at times fail to pay taxes and thus the property is made available for sale in tax arrears. Occasionally these properties lie adjacent to existing parkland or a potential link between parks. More often, they are not usable as parkland due to size or location, but are ideal for infill development by the private sector. Where the land is not usable for parkland purposes, the land should be made available to the private sector and the price should reflect the appropriate Parkland Conveyance fees as established by the Planning Act to help offset parkland development. These types of properties may also be beneficial in Land Exchange deals between the City and either the private or other public agency, where they are beneficial to the City's interests in expanding the greenway system.
- **Road easements** – during infrastructure development of roadways, often land is acquired from abutting properties to expand the width of the right-of-way to accommodate the traffic. In areas where bicycling facilities are identified by the B.U.M.P., acquisition of parkland to accommodate both cycling and pedestrian recreational activity should be sought.

The City should investigate without prejudice any and all opportunities to acquire lands suitable for parkland development.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Review and update the 2012 park disposition list.*
- *That in areas of deficient park open space a strategy be developed to identify and acquire property suitable for the parkland.*
- *Investigate opportunity to acquire lands from school boards, railways or other underutilized sites in the city for parks purposes as they become available to offset areas which demonstrate a deficiency in parkland.*
- *Actively explore alternative funding mechanisms such as sponsorships from businesses, individual donors, partnerships, grants and gifting can be made directly for parkland purposes.*
- *To encourage donation (i.e. bequeathing, estate settlements, in-trusts) of land for parks purposes based on the "Donation Policy (M20-2013)".*

CONSOLIDATION OF SPORT RECREATIONAL FIELDS

The presence of baseball diamonds and soccer pitches in neighbourhood and community parks is fairly common, and in many instances is one of the contributing assets making up the collective identity of the community. Fields and pitches once used for unorganized play have evolved into facilities for a high level of organized play, with supporting infrastructure.

Some communities have held onto sports venues which continue to serve high level sport recreational needs, where others like west or central Windsor have experienced consolidation into regional park sports complexes (MicMac Park, Ford Test Track).

The trend now in the re-development of neighbourhood and community parks is the removal of out of use, formally maintained fields, replaced with paved trails, shade structures, playgrounds, benches, trees, and open turf areas facilitating unorganized sport play.

The consolidation of sports fields into single parks supports a much higher level of service provided by the Parks Department by creating greater efficiency in staffing and equipment resources. There is an economy of scale recognized with regional sports parks. This is perhaps now a greater need in east Windsor and can be expected as a future consideration for the development of the Sandwich South Secondary Planning Area



Figure 4-34: Consolidated soccer fields at Ford Test Track

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *That the Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments undertake a "Sports Needs Analysis" in conjunction with community and sports facilities users looking at consolidation opportunities more immediately for the east end of Windsor and ultimately city wide.*
- *Review and develop designated areas in parks for skateboarding facilities throughout the city.*
- *Review and develop designated areas in parks for spraypads throughout the city.*
- *Review and develop a sport court strategy for the whole city to determine appropriate locations.*
- *Review and develop an outdoor swimming facilities strategy to ensure adequate access for all users.*

MANAGEMENT PLANS

The public consultation universally identified a general satisfaction with park maintenance. In focus groups, access to washroom facilities and routine waste and recycling removal were identified as areas for improvement. It is a challenge to manage expectations in relation to maintenance. In some cases, there are public concerns about lack of grooming, yet this is contrary to desires for more naturalized landscapes. Generally, operations staff are appreciated for their efforts in the parks.

Parks operations maintenance standards are neither formalized nor documented. Maintenance standards provide clear expectations to the public and staff. Standards also support budgeting and scheduling of maintenance, and provide clarity about the purpose and use of resources. With standards in place, the implications of making park design changes are better understood.

The park classifications can be used as a tool for establishing maintenance standards. Generally maintenance levels correlate with park classifications (e.g., regional open spaces receive more maintenance than community open spaces, and onwards down the hierarchy). Of course, the setting and facilities are also factors. Forested areas require less maintenance than groomed areas even if they are in other park designations. Sport fields and other facilities have specific maintenance requirements.

With 209 parks in the city's inventory, several of which have aging infrastructure, combined with a changing demographic profile for more individual, self-directed and passive recreation types, management plans are necessary. Deterioration of the infrastructure that has occurred in some of the older parks makes maintenance particularly challenging. Many washrooms, walkways, play areas, courts and other infrastructure are at or beyond their expected lifespan.

One of the components of park management is caring for the infrastructure within parks. There is a wide variety of infrastructure, including buildings, structures, recreation amenities, roads, trails, walkways, site furniture, and utilities. Through the assistance of Asset Management, establishment of a database that documents the age and condition of all park infrastructure should be created.

Parks operations staff has many responsibilities in relation to park maintenance, many of which take place year-round. These responsibilities include:

- Maintenance of washrooms outdoors and indoors.
- Inspection and maintenance of park infrastructure, including playgrounds, sport fields, courts, shelters, fences, signs, tables, benches, utilities, sidewalks/paths, parking lots
- Caring for trees, shrubs and garden beds, including planting, cultivation, fertilizing, watering/irrigation system management, trimming, pruning, weeding, edging, pest and disease control through forestry and horticultural staff.
- Turf maintenance, including aerating, fertilizing, turf repair, topdressing, mowing, trimming, and watering.
- Trail maintenance, including repair, drainage works, relocation, restoration, brush clearing.
- Event set-up and take-down.
- Vandalism repair and replacement.
- Litter and garbage removal from all areas.



Figure 4-35: City Horticulture staff tending the beds on the Riverfront

Management plans are essential to ensure that the appropriate level of service expected by the community is achieved and that parks are sustainable with the economic outlook over the next 20 years. The following is list of parks which need a management plan or where the existing management plan requires updating:

MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIRED

- Peche Island
- Optimist - Memorial Woodlot
- Lakeshore woods
- Lanspeary Park
- South Cameron Woodlots
- Sandpoint Beach including the consolidation of Stop 26 and Ganatchio Park
- Grand Marais Trail including a consolidation of the abutting neighbourhood parks
- Oakwood Park
- Herb Gray Natural Area
- Windsor Raceway buffer lands
- Sandwich/Ojibway Parkway

UPDATES

- Ford Test Track
- Willistead Manor Park
- Jackson Park
- MicMac Park
- Malden Recreation Park
- East Riverside / Blue Heron Park
- Waterfront Parks (excluding the C.R.I.P. lands)
- Entire Ojibway Nature Complex
 - Ojibway Park (including Tom Joy Woods)
 - Tallgrass Prairie Nature Reserve (including Spring Garden ANSII)
 - Black Oak Heritage Park (including Broadway Park)

NEW PARKS

- Airport Swamp Woodlots
- Virginia Park
- Little River Corridor expansion into Sandwich South
- Biodiversity Gateway

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Adopt a policy with Asset Management that establishes level of service for the maintenance and operation of parks.*
- *Establish a 'Management Plan' for each city park and open space.*
- *To develop 'Park Design Standards', and adoption of policies to improve and reduce maintenance costs, while achieving an aesthetically pleasing environment for each park type.*
- *To standardize park maintenance and level of service, as well as lifecycle costing by formalizing Parks Operations inspection and management standards as "C.I.T.E. "based on:*
 - *Classification and location of the park – setting, ranging from very natural to urban.*
 - *Infrastructure – type, age, condition, replacement cycle.*
 - *Type and amount of use – numbers of people, demographics served, times of highest use.*
 - *Environmental characteristics – sensitivity of vegetation and wildlife, amount of shade from trees provided.*
- *Review the current City Forestry's Tree Nursery and determine its needs and identify an appropriate location in order for forestry to maintain an acceptable level of service and a reliable source for Carolinian tree species as well as boulevard trees.*
- *Establish and adopt an ongoing GIS referenced AutoCAD based data inventory in collaboration with Asset Management and Geomatics of all park assets including the purchase of computerized digital systems and equipment as needed to capture assets within the park system.*
- *Establish a labeling protocol for interpretation and communication of the horticultural and biodiversity of the plant material found in select premier natural and horticultural parks.*
- *Review the "Parks Bylaw" for updates on a five-year basis.*

EXPERIENCE

STRATEGIC DIRECTION #9: To provide vibrant and memorable community spaces which foster a positive and unique sense of place.

Whether the small neighbourhood parks, or the broad regional attractions, or along the waterfront, city parks are to provide a sense of place through a variety of high quality, innovative environments that foster a vibrant community to achieve a positive memorable experience for their users. From the public consultation process it was determined that people prefer some level of variety in parks to enhance their experience (see Appendix M).

With a great diversity in park types found in the city it is difficult to layout a single design standard to accommodate every park. Currently, the parks range from highly manicured horticultural landscape treatments in urban regional parks such as Jackson Park and along the CRIP and other riverfront properties, to informal natural areas and forested areas of Ojibway Nature Complex and Little River Corridor. Depending on the park type and its surroundings the level of maintenance is a critical consideration in park design, since maintenance costs over time are usually greater than initial development costs.

PARK IDENTITY

Amenities located within parks, including buildings, structures, and recreational features offer uniqueness to a park's character. Due to their popularity and manufactured design, playgrounds have become a theme generating amenity in parks over the recent past. While this is only one method to convey unique characteristics of a park there are other amenities that are generally characteristic of a park.

Built infrastructure such as washrooms and shelters are a challenge for parks operations. The public consultation identified a greater desire for such facilities especially upgrading the existing washrooms in parks to accommodate accessibility requirements as listed in AODA. Such amenities are costly to maintain and locating a washroom in every park would not be achievable operationally. High-use parks such as those with organized outdoor sports facilities and regional open spaces should be a priority. Where any new washroom facility is to be considered, it should be incorporated in to another building to economize infrastructure.

Picnic facilities are popular, particularly for large family gatherings. City parks have a number of very well used picnic areas. The public consultation process has identified that picnicking appears to be on an increase. Location of new facilities will need to be carefully considered to avert any misuse or underuse which could lead to an undesirable condition. Besides the regular maintenance there is the issue of vandalism and graffiti. Evidence has shown where higher quality amenities are installed in the city, there has been more respect for the elements. Appeal and use is also driven by the uniqueness and aesthetic quality of a space. This should be a direction by which all new picnic shelters should strive to deliver to the community to help establish a sense of place to be in a park.

A shared identity is a key factor in making people sense that they belong to a larger plan. Signage in the city parks is currently eclectic with some dating back to a period before the last Culture and Recreation Master Plan (1989). In the public consultation it was found that participants referred to a specific by several different names, by a key element in the park, as a collective (such as the riverfront). There were often times where people could not name the park but identified it by the street it was on. Providing a standard park signage program to replace the collection of existing signs should be a priority. The provision of a uniform park sign at the main entries to parks will help neighbourhoods feel that the park matters. Though establishing a consistent park designation signage may seem counteractive to establishing a unique experience, there are elements of parks that a larger corporation needs to provide standardization.

Standardization of some park amenities such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and internal signage are necessary to establish efficiency in parks operations. Regional Parks often have been identified as such due to a particular cultural character or significant location within the city and warrant a special treatment which is unique to the park.

ADOPT-A-PARK

Regular activity creates a presence that can deter negative activity, as there are eyes on the park. Where established neighbourhood groups, who assist in the development or provide programmed events in a given park, it creates a sense of ownership on the park. Such organizations are often called "The Friends of ..." or "... Residents Association". In areas of the city where community gardens have been established, there is a constant presence which in itself is self-policing. They also provide for an opportunity for children and youth to interact with seniors and people of diverse cultures and experience, allowing for a constant and stimulating educational element in parks.

Where adopt-a-park, resident associations or interest groups such as the Community Garden Collective or BIA's have been established, involvement with the city departments (i.e. Planning or Parks) is routine and provides a forum for discussion and foresight for the park or streetscape. When planning and designing park amenities in these sponsored parks, the city typically holds public open houses to gather ideas and work with the community to achieve a desirable outcome. This process is very important and is appreciated by residents.

Working with community groups in parks establishes:

- *Best Practices for development, and affords members with the whole notion of life-cycling of developed amenities such as playgrounds, benches, etc.*
- *Safety and security through the principles of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).*
- *Awareness of specific demographic requirements of a community such as cultural, disabilities, age of residents, and general interests.*



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Establish Neighbourhood Parks and a stronger community focus by providing opportunities for social gathering and a sense of pride in the community.*
- *Park design to be in character with the type of park, its location and setting and operational management practices.*
- *Establish a 'Policy and Procedures for Public Consultation' when soliciting any development in parks.*
- *That park development include areas of open turf where appropriate, to facilitate unorganized sport play.*
- *Review outdoor picnic facilities to ensure appropriate distribution throughout the city..*

Figure 4-36: Youth group cleaning the statues along the river



SPORT FIELDS AND COURTS

Organized sport fields and courts are fundamentally important components of parks; integral to the whole civic Greenway System. Sports venues have their specific goals and user needs. The uses are more directly associated with the programming offered through the Recreation and Culture Department and their design is regulated through the sport organizations that sponsor them. Sport fields, because of their intense use, structured system of programming, and specific types of maintenance, require a more specialized focus than simply a review of what is offered and where a sports field is needed. Development of a Sports User Needs Study as a companion document to the Parks and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan is essential to fully assess the sports recreational needs of the city.

Public consultation identified users of organized sports facilities are concentrated in specific areas and represent a specific demographic of the community. Several studies have been completed with respect to sports needs for the county. Depending on the data used, differing results and directions have been tabulated. Organized sports groups recognize that the facilities which are required are legacy development and cooperation between the City of Windsor, the Windsor/ Essex Sports Council and other municipalities is essential to ensure that current and future sports facilities are sustainable and offer venues for a realistic demand.

Aside from sports fields like baseball, soccer, rugby and disc sports, the City of Windsor and other Essex County municipalities also have a wide variety of sports courts. The demand for tennis is demonstrating and increase in popularity in the more suburban areas while basketball is being requested more in the city centre. Jackson Park and Central Park offer hubs for tennis in the city but there is no official concentration of other court sports. In some areas it may be feasible to multi-purpose courts with opportunities for a variety of users, including seasonal uses where demand may be present. Such organized programming facilitates an increase in the public experience of these facilities and provides appeal to a broader range of users from all age groups and demographics.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Undertake a 'Feasibility Study' in collaboration with the Windsor-Essex Sports Organizations to determine the needs for:*

- Artificial sports fields*
- Sports dome*

Figure 4-37: Cricket in Jackson Park

MACKENZIE HALL

Located in one of the most historic areas of Windsor, Mackenzie Hall is a living link between our colourful legal past and our artistic present. Originally a courthouse and jail, Mackenzie Hall is now a cultural centre for the City of Windsor, with performing arts space, theatre, art galleries, meeting facilities and a ballroom for private rentals and special events.

Constructed of limestone in the classic revival style, Mackenzie Hall is administered by Parks and Recreation. Concerts, art exhibits, puppet shows, theatre, social events, day and overnight trips, poetry readings, folk music sing-alongs, children's performances and other cultural events are offered. A variety of leisure and recreation workshops, classes and programs that emphasize arts and culture for all age groups are available.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Work collaboratively with Local Organizations such as horticulturalist and artist groups to help promote, educate and enhance the public's experience when visiting parks. (for example: guided tours, workshops and interpretation)*



Figure 4-38: Mackenzie Hall Facade (top)

Figure 4-39: Mackenzie Hall Park and shelter (bottom)

WILLISTEAD

Willistead Park was the first Heritage Site designation in Windsor, under the Ontario Heritage Act, through a By-law passed by Council on January 12, 1976. The designation was revised with By-law No. 149-2012 on October 15, 2012, to include building and property features. The Windsor Heritage Committee advises Council on any proposed changes to the property.

The manor and ancillary buildings were designed and built by renowned American Architect, Albert Kahn under commission from Edward Chandler Walker, eldest son of Hiram Walker, who had founded Walkerville at the turn of the 1900's. The parksite is result of the estate becoming public lands after Chandler died and his wife Mary bequeathed the property to Town of Walkerville.

Of note are several elements including, a portico from the former residence in Detroit, and the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Fountain, designed by Albert Kahn. These artifacts were relocated to the in an effort to save these heritage artifacts and the cultural history of the Walkerville community. The ornamental ironwork fences and stone pillared gates which still encompass the property today were designed by Architects Stahl Kinsey & Chapman in 1914.

In an effort maintain the cultural heritage aspect of the property; the site hosts an annual 'Art in the Park' which attracts people from all over province.

Recent improvements to the park include walkways to allow for better accessibility and restoration of the tree canopy to over 400 trees with 125 different cultivars; making the park an opportune site for an urban arboretum. On December 9, 2014, Parks department presented opportunities for the rehabilitation of the parksite, including the four gateways, the parterre garden and the Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain, as well as proposal to establish an arboretum. The results of the open house were very positive.

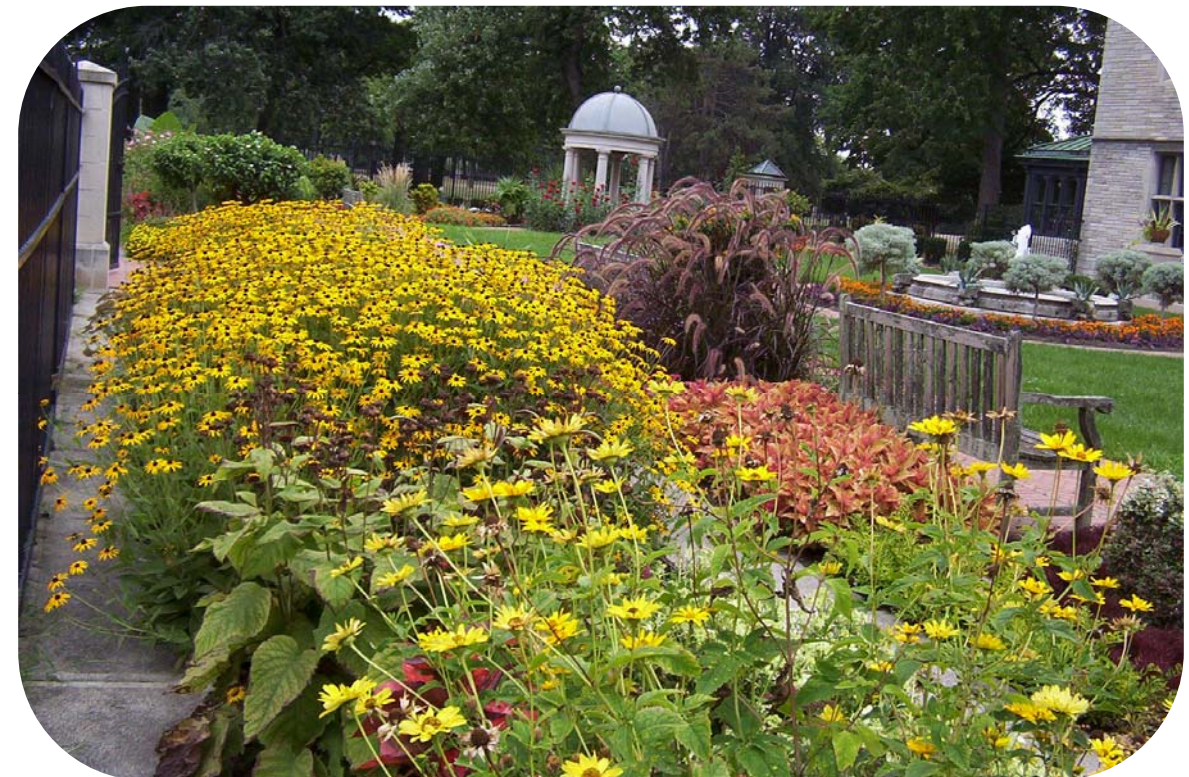
RECOMMENDATION:

- *Implement the restoration, rehabilitation and conservation proposals for Willistead Park, of:*
 - a) *the Parks Gates and Perimeter fencing.*
 - b) *the South Parterre Garden.*
 - c) *the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Fountain.*
 - d) *an Urban Arboretum.*
- in a phased approach as per the park concept plan.*

Figure 4-41: Parterre Garden at south of side of Willistead Manor (right)



Figure 4-40: Paul Martin Gardens at Willistead Park (left)



JACKSON PARK

Though built during the Great Depression of the 1930's, Jackson Park, named after the Mayor of that time, is a showcase of manicured gardens, memorials, and commemorative areas for many of the city's diverse multi-cultural community, as well as the original sports facilities for baseball, lawn bowling, and tennis, once the Windsor Jockey Club race track was removed from the site.

The sunken gardens and main gates at the corner of Ouellette Avenue and Tecumseh Road East were original features that have been preserved and rehabilitated over the parks lifespan.

In the mid- 1900's, Jackson was the premier park for events and festivals. On the eastern end of the park is the 1959 grandstand, which is now on the Windsor Essex County Board of Education property and is still used as a football field. A bandstand, that was re-erected at the same time is no longer used for its original purpose of providing entertainment, however, is in a condition which could allow it to be restored or repurposed.

Current park maintenance operations are situated immediately south of Jackson Park. The current greenhouse operations at Lanspeary Park grow and provide the plant material which is extensively used at Jackson Park. For efficiency of service the greenhouse operations could be relocated to Jackson Park. This move would allow the public to experience the growing operations more readily, and would provide an opportunity for people to engage in regularly scheduled horticultural programming in an appropriate venue, with a display greenhouse incorporated into the scheme. In 2008 the Parks Department prepared a master plan for the park which considered this proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Amalgamate Parks Forestry and Horticultural Operations to centralize parks services at Jackson Park to:*
 - a) *Relocate of the City's Greenhouses from Lanspeary Park to Jackson Park.*
 - b) *Create a true 'Botanic Garden'.*
 - c) *Investigate and develop a Display Greenhouse for year-round demonstration and horticultural programs.*
 - d) *Investigate the potential collaboration with Schools Boards and the Community Garden Collective for horticultural training at the facility.*
 - e) *Formalize an 'Urban Arboreatum'.*
 - f) *Provide year-round interest with activity through a 'Festive Winter Lights Display' and an outdoor 'Skating Rink'.*
 - g) *Update the "Jackson Park Master Plan".*



Figure 4-42: Proposed Jackson Park Redevelopment Concept Plan



Figure 4-43: Floral display at Jackson Park

RIVERFRONT

The City's riverfront is a valuable recreational and tourism resource. While the design and development of the central parks have been consolidated into the CRIP, the riverfront parks which lie outside of that area offer a great value to the community as well. With parkland dispersed along the riverfront there is an opportunity to provide more variety of waterfront-based activity stretching along the riverfront. As the *Rediscover Our Parks* mandate is to draw people into the parks, we need to provide amenities such as benches, washrooms, designated fishing areas, as well as trees for shade, so people can enjoy relaxing by the riverfront.

With spectacular views from our water front parks, especially in the eastern half of the city towards Belle Isle, vistas from within the riverfront parks need to be capitalized upon as a treasured asset. While riverfront parks in the western half are also desired, the view immediately across from these parks is of an industrialized nature, and trees will help to channel views away from this development towards the more positive views of, the Ambassador Bridge and the downtown Skyline of Detroit.

As the public consultation has identified these parks as the most favoured and well used, we should celebrate these assets by:

- Protecting them for all to use.
- Enhancing them with amenities and programmed events.
- Strategically ensuring access to the riverfront.
- Access to the water and shorelines where possible.

This should be the direction for the future of the riverfront parks, to ensure that people are able to *Rediscover Our Parks*.

Aside from the large tourist ships that dock occasionally along Dieppe Park, Lakeview Marina and park is the City's only small craft boating access along the riverfront. Sandpoint Beach offers non-motorized boating activity access to Lake St Clair. The City needs to encourage more activity along the riverfronts to help promote water-based recreation. Incorporation of water-taxis and ferry service between the core and the outer limits of the city will also help

to provide a vibrant waterfront while capitalizing on the city's motto of the 'River and Land Sustain Us'. It is not just to bring people to riverfront that is important, but to make them stay there and interact with it. As mentioned in the public surveys, the concerts in Reaume Park and at the Festival Plaza are very popular, and there is a desire for more of that, as well as food vendors to be included in these parks.

CENTRAL RIVERFRONT LANDS

The riverfront parks which line the Detroit River stretching from the foot of the Ambassador Bridge, through to the Hiram Walker's Distilleries in the east are the result of many years of forward thinking by previous Councils. Referred to as the Central Riverfront Implementation Plan (CRIP) area, these parks exhibit several installations of artifacts interpreting the rich cultural heritage of Windsor; sculptures, memorials and commemorative markers outlining the history and events of the area.

Parks found along the CRIP from west to east are:

- Ambassador
- Assumption
- Centennial
- Caron Avenue Pumping Station
- Dieppe Gardens
- Piazza Udin
- C.N.R. Park
- Festival Plaza
- Aylmer Rest station
- Bert Weeks Memorial Gardens
- Great western Park.

Along the walkway connecting Ambassador, Assumption and Centennial Parks is the *Windsor Sculpture Park*, sponsored by the Louis Odette family and the P & L Odette Foundation. The sculpture garden is a primary attraction for visitors along the riverfront and has been the recipient of many awards for its innovative concept.

One of the original parks found in the CRIP is Dieppe Gardens. It is a premier tourist attraction, with its ornamental gardens, views of the Detroit Skyline, its monuments and plaques commemorating military conflicts, as well as original settlement of la Petite Cote (now Windsor) of 1749. Through the course of a year, the site is the premier docking site for naval vessels, cruise ships, and tall ship regattas that tour the Great Lakes; providing opportunity for public viewing.



Figure 4-44: Sculpture Park along the Riverfront

REAUME PARK AND COVENTRY GARDENS

Located further east along the Detroit River at the intersection of Pillette Road is Reaume Park and Coventry Gardens. Bequeathed to the former Town of East Windsor by the estate of Joseph Reaume, the park was enlarged in 1975 to include the Coventry Gardens half purchased from the Glengarda Ursuline Convent and the Windsor Harbour commission.

A showplace and tourist attraction on the banks of the Detroit River, Coventry Garden was designed for relaxation and recreation, and as a place of civic pride. It features the Peace Fountain, the only international floating fountain in the world, which can propel water 70 feet in the air and displays a light show.

Each year, thousands of visitors enjoy the brilliant flowers displayed at Coventry Garden, and the patios serve as unique staging areas for concerts and other events during the summer.



Figure 4-45: Charlie Brookes Memorial Peace Fountain

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Protect and increase access to and along the Riverfront Parks.*
- *Identify popular marine-based recreation areas within city parks and establish 'Marine-based Recreation Design Guidelines' that meet the needs of the community to provide access for non-motorized water-based activities, e.g., boating, paddle boarding, kayaking, swimming, walking, sitting, and picnicking.*
- *Identify popular fishing areas along Riverfront Parks and establish 'Recreational Fishing Design Guidelines' that meet the needs of the community.*
- *Ensure that the phased development projects are carried out as per the "Central Riverfront Implementation Plan 2001" taking into consideration the "2014 Public Consultation Update Report".*
- *Work with Recreation and Culture for the management of sculptures found along the riverfront, as per the "Maintenance Management Manual".*
- *Undertake a study to replace the 'Charlie Brookes Memorial Peace Fountain' at Reaume Park for redevelopment options in consultation with the community.*



Figure 4-46: Coventry Gardens Horticultural Display

SPECIAL USE AREAS

There are special areas within the City's Greenway System of parks and trails where special attention must be given in terms of going forward for the next 20 years. As we endeavor to promote the use of all parks, we cannot forget the parks that are held in high regard to the citizens of Windsor and those who come to visit.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Though special events are a function of the Recreation and Culture Department, they generally occur in public open spaces within the city. While the community in general supports these activities, there are physical impacts to parks that need to be considered, as well economic development benefits that may be capitalized on by parks. The Special Events Policy addresses management and fees related to all special events in parks. The policy is working well; staff handle all aspects of event management, and collaborate with Parks and other departments as required.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Identify the impacts of special events on our parks and work in collaboration with Special Events Coordinators to determine appropriate locations.*

COMMERCIAL USES OF PARK LANDS

The character of city parks makes them very desirable for commercial activities. Establishment of commercial entities in parks has always been met with much debate especially along the riverfront parks. Currently, agreements for commercial operations have been provided for including:

- Food vending
- Weddings
- Filming
- Organized sports tournaments
- Farmers markets
- Picnic shelter rentals
- Parking
- Tourist related activities
- Other special events with commercial aspects to them

Commercial use within parks is currently being managed by different departments in the city; primarily under Recreation and Culture and Legal Services, Real Estate & Risk Management.

Public parks are intended for the benefit of everyone. It is assumed that access to them should be unimpeded by commercial operations, yet due to the nature of some commercial entities and events, restricted access can become a challenge. Parks are

also very expensive to maintain, and municipal resources are always stretched. Through carefully executed agreements, it has been possible to allow revenue generating commercial entities to operate in parks while maintaining access for all. Conflicts arise only when access to or through parks is greatly interrupted.

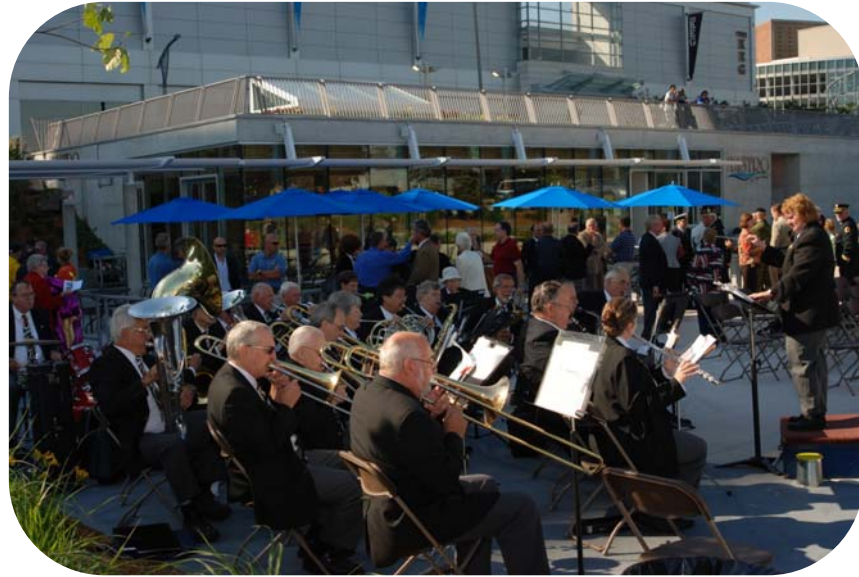
Other municipal jurisdictions have successfully implemented measures to allow for revenue generating activities without greatly disrupting the main directive of free and equal access. Such measures of revenue generating include:

- Pay parking,
- User fees for enhanced park services^{xii}

Commercial and other park uses are regulated by the Parks Bylaw. The current bylaw is over 10 years old and is currently being reviewed for an update.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Investigate the addition of park infrastructure that would support special events as potential revenue generators. (examples: special displays at a botanic garden, or long-term event in a park)*
- *Create a 'Policy on Weddings in Parks' in collaboration with Recreation and Culture including specified locations and fees.*



DOG PARKS

Dog activities in parks, whether simply for walking or in a dog park setting, is one aspect of parks that has varying views. In the public consultation, views in open responses were strong either way. Those who own dogs generally want more off-leash opportunities, and some residents are concerned about inappropriate behaviour by some dogs and their owners.

Dog parks are very limited in Windsor. While there is demand for these facilities there is currently only four off-leash dog parks in the city at:

- Broadway Park
- Optimist Memorial Park
- Remington Booster Park
- Ford Test Track (north end off Seminole)

There are currently no dog parks in the city's east end or south of E.C.Row Expressway. The current experience is that dog parks / or off-leash area management is a formidable challenge for parks operations. Many other municipal jurisdictions have examples of what is best, which may be considered for future development of dog parks in the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Determine locations within Community Open Spaces and Regional Open Space to establish dog parks.*
- *Evaluate the environmental impacts of dogs in parks and work with stakeholders to establish 'Policies and Procedures for Off-Leash Dog Parks'.*
- *Create a 'Dog Park Information Package' downloadable from the City's website.*

Figure 4-47: Event at the Bistro in Dieppe Park (top)

Figure 4-48: Wedding at Malden Park Shelter (middle)

Figure 4-49: Dog Park at Optimist Memorial Park (bottom)

URBAN AGRICULTURE & COMMUNITY GARDENS

The City of Windsor recognizes the vibrant local food system in our community, including the drastic increase in the demand for community gardens and farmers markets in recent years. Community gardens are an important tool for the development of healthy communities and quality of life improvement for residents. People can grow healthy and nutritious food while having a positive impact on the environment.

There are several existing community gardens throughout the city. Additional sites have been predetermined as suitable and should be considered when groups present themselves in areas for the establishment of community gardens. There is a desire by some school boards to offer community garden plots in various locations in the city to promote urban agriculture to youth. School boards, in collaboration with the Community Garden Collective and Parks Staff, can assist in the educational process of these facilities to all users. Where schools may not have the appropriate locations on site, it may provide an opportunity for a coordinated effort between the city, the school board and the collective to provide it in a nearby park identified on the list to encourage more use and public activity in our parks.

COMMUNITY GARDENS ON MUNICIPAL PROPERTY POLICY (2014)

A community garden generally occurs when land is used for the growing of fruits, vegetables or flowers collectively by a group of people for non-commercial purposes. The land may have both individual plots for individual produce consumption, as well as community plots where produce is donated to the community through food banks. Community gardens can occur on publically or privately owned lands, and are usually managed collectively by a not-for-profit group or organization.

Operating a successful garden requires a dedicated group of individuals who cooperatively maintain the garden by watering, weeding, harvesting, and donating the produce as required. A community garden can be located almost anywhere a willing group of individuals live.

- ✓ *Benefits of a Community Garden:*
- ✓ *Provide a source of healthy, fresh food for the community;*
- ✓ *Enhance habitat for bees, birds and other animals;*
- ✓ *Foster community spirit and interaction;*
- ✓ *Limit the use of pesticides and manufactured fertilizer;*
- ✓ *Create a thriving neighbourhood gathering place;*
- ✓ *Increase the absorption of storm water into the ground;*
- ✓ *Provide education to the community about growing food.*

The Community Gardens on Municipal Property Policy provides a structure and process for community gardens on City-owned property. The Parks Department has provided a list of parks recommended for community gardens. This list will continue to be updated as more City of Windsor properties, including parks, become more suitable for community gardens. Parks were evaluated based on access to water, parking, a community centre or school, as well as being the appropriate size to accommodate a community garden.



REVIEW AND UPDATES

In an effort to maintain relevance, to guide parks development and operations over the next 20-years, Rediscover Our Parks will need to be reviewed and updated regularly. It is recommended that this be completed on a 5-year basis to track progress, reassess priorities should opportunities arise, or changes in the demographics or economy of the city are experienced through the course of the master plan's lifespan. Public consultation should be sought to track the level of satisfaction with the progress, the achievements and new directions when they may emerge.

Progress is to be reported to Council on a five year basis to help define annual and five year operating and capital budgets. Revised budgets will need to reflect the Parks Master Plan Action Plan as amended by the regular review process.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Complete an update to "Rediscover Our Parks" on a 5-year basis to:*
 - a) *Track progress.*
 - b) *Reassess priorities should opportunities arise.*
 - c) *Address trends, changing demographics, or the economy of the city.*

END NOTES

ⁱ **Youth** are often a neglected age group with special needs that are not being addressed in the current delivery system

ⁱⁱ **Seniors** are the most rapidly growing demographic which is becoming more physically active within the city as per the most recent Census data.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Special Populations** are those vulnerable segments of the population including, but not limited to, persons with disabilities, the homeless, immigrants, single parents and low income households

^{iv} Maddox, D., An explicitly urban Sustainable Development Goal has been adopted by the UN (#11). Now what? Where could it go wrong? Retrieved from <http://www.thenatureofcities.com/2015/12/08/>.

^v Coakley, J., & Donnelly, P. A new way of thinking? Towards a vision of social inclusion: The Role of Recreation in Promoting Social Inclusion. Canadian Council on Social Development. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsd.ca/subsites/inclusion/bp/pd.htm>

^{vi} Williams, M and Wright, M. (2007, Jan. 11). The impact of the built environment on the health of the population: A review of the review literature. Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

^{vii} Bell JF, Wilson JS, and Liu GC.(2008). Neighborhood greenness and 2-year changes in body mass index of children and youth.American Journal of Preventative Medicine, 35(6), 547-53.

^{viii} R. Blair, B. Demopoulos, N. Eddy, A. Fritzel, K. Forster, D. Laidlaw, T. Litman, H. Maddox. (2012). Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning: A Guide to Best Practices. Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 4. Retrieved from <http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/events-resources/resources/pedestrian-and-bicycle-planning-guide-best-practices>

^{ix} Toronto Public Health. (2015). Green City: Why nature matters to health – An evidence Review. Toronto, Ontario (pg 22)

^x Blanchard, s., City of Windsor: *Improving Thermal Comfort in Windsor, ON; Assessing Urban Parks and Playgrounds*, (2013)

^{xi} **Greenbelt Act, S.O. 2005, CHAPTER 1**

^{xii} Metro Vancouver has been investigating opportunities related to "enhanced park services" to expand the range of outdoor recreation opportunities while generating non-tax revenue streams. Enhanced park services are defined as value-added services or facilities provided for a fee, involving individual or group exclusive use, or services requiring additional capital and operation resources beyond basic park services. Enhanced services may be provided commercially through a business agreement with the private or non-profit sectors. Examples of this type of revenue generation include: rental of picnic shelters or areas for private events, rental or leasing of buildings to non-profit or commercial groups (sometimes as joint ventures), food services, rental of equipment (such as canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, bicycles, event tents), commercial activities or services (such as zip-lines, dog washing), charging for the use of parks for filming or commercial classes (such as fitness, scuba, bike tours, dog obedience classes), and smartphone applications.