

## SECTION 9: OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT

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This section contains an assessment of outdoor recreation facility needs extending to 2031, when the City's population is forecasted to reach 416,600 people. The analysis generally adheres to the methodology established in the 2008 ATMP and has been influenced by public input, City initiatives, emerging trends, and new demographic data.

### 9.1 Recreational Trails

Vaughan's trails system consists of two core municipal trails (Humber Trail and Bartley Smith Greenway), as well as trails falling under the purview of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA).

Compared to many other municipalities, the breadth of Vaughan's recreational trail system (Class 1 multi-use pathways) is limited. In general, the City's trails generally follow the river valleys (which run north-south); however, east-west links are less common. Movement of pedestrians and cyclists across major barriers (such as highways, valleys, etc.) is also a challenge.

In Vaughan, trail planning is directed by the *Transportation Master Plan (2012)*, which included some updates to the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (2007)*. Specifically, the *Transportation Master Plan* promotes the benefits of active transportation and identifies recommendations to expand the pedestrian and bicycle network, particularly in areas of new development and intensification. To assist in prioritizing trail development projects, *Green Directions Vaughan (2009)* recommends that an implementation strategy for the pedestrian and bicycle network be developed. The development of a Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Strategy that identifies operational and capital improvements for on and off-road routes, building off recent Master Plans, is recommended.

Walking, hiking, and cycling opportunities appeal to a wide range of ages and abilities – 88% of Vaughan households have at least one member that participated in walking for leisure in the past twelve months, while 53% have participated in cycling/biking. Trails, and the free and self-scheduled access that they provide, are a vital component of any parks system. Market and trend research consistently indicate that interest and participation in unstructured, self-scheduled activities is rising and that, as a result, trails are in high demand and should be a top priority.

This finding is reflected in Vaughan, where the household survey found that trails and pathways are important to 76% of households in Vaughan, but only 54% are satisfied with existing assets. This indicates that the City is not meeting expectations in this area and improvements are necessary. In fact, the engagement program yielded several requests for more trail development and improved connectivity. Both nature trails (67%) and paved multi-use trails (63%) received considerable support for additional public spending through the household survey. Suggestions were also received for improved signage, mapping, and promotion of recreational trails (including level of difficulty and available amenities, such as parking, washrooms, seating, etc.) in Vaughan as some felt that awareness of existing resources is quite low.

The *Healthyork Community Profile (2010)* found that an overwhelming number of schools in Vaughan are not accessible by paths and trails. In developing future trails and linkages, efforts should continue to

be made to connect the pathway system to “destinations” (e.g., community centres, parks, schools, transit hubs, employment and commercial areas, etc.) in order to increase the functional usage of pathways. Nearly one-half of Vaughan’s parks and open space users visit these spaces for the purposes of walking or hiking.

Several of Vaughan’s trail networks are contained within lands owned and/or operated by the TRCA. These trails are highly valued by local residents and are an important asset in achieving a connected City-wide and Region-wide pedestrian network. Trail development and maintenance is not part of the core mandate for conservation authorities in Ontario; however, most have well developed trail systems that are well used, which in turn creates a need for enhanced maintenance. Through the engagement process, the TRCA has indicated that it would welcome discussions with the City to extend trail management agreements to additional trails on TRCA land (some agreements are already in place). Given the importance of these trails to local residents, and the fact that they are within the public realm, it is recommended that the City of Vaughan continue to explore mutually beneficial options for addressing trail maintenance concerns with the TRCA.

The City should use all available tools to expand and develop its trail and linked open space system. For instance, section 51(25)(b) of the *Planning Act* permits municipalities to require the conveyance of pedestrian and bicycle pathways as part of subdivision applications; this is over and above the parkland dedication amounts permitted under the Act.

Recreational Trails	Recommendations
45.	Develop a <b>Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Strategy</b> that identifies operational and capital improvements for on and off-road routes. The strategy should take into account City and Region initiatives such as the 2012 <i>Transportation Master Plan</i> and 2007 <i>Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan</i> .
46.	Seek opportunities to create a <b>linked network of recreational trails</b> through the integration of woodlots, open spaces, and parks, as well as <b>loop trails</b> within parks and open spaces.
47.	Work with the TRCA and other partners to undertake a risk assessment and explore options for addressing <b>maintenance</b> of public trails.
48.	Improve the quality and quantity of <b>signage, mapping, and promotion</b> of recreational trails in Vaughan.
49.	Utilize 51(25)(b) of the <i>Planning Act</i> to require the <b>conveyance of pedestrian and bicycle pathways</b> as part of subdivision applications.

## 9.2 Soccer Fields

Soccer Fields		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
131 (143 ULE*)	132 (144 ULE*)	1 : 58 registered youth participants	1 : 60 registered youth participants
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supply includes permitted school fields (39), as well as fields (7) developed in partnership with the Ontario Soccer Association</li> <li>• excluded are “mini mini” fields (36)</li> <li>• the 2008 field count cannot be validated as several non-permitted school fields may have been included; inventory accuracy has since improved</li> </ul>			

\*fields are shown in “unlit equivalent units” (ULE), where one lit field equals 1.5 unlit fields and one artificial turf field equals 2.0 unlit fields

There are a total of 132 soccer fields allocated by the City of Vaughan: 79 mini fields (for 5 or 7-a-side play), 6 intermediate fields (for 9-a-side play) and 47 senior fields (for 11-a-side play). Of the 47 senior fields, 27 are unlit, 16 are lit, and 4 are lit artificial turf (note: these include fields under construction in 2013, such as the artificial turf field at Concord Thornhill Regional Park). This inventory includes 39 fields on school property that are permitted by the City (as of 2012), as well as fields developed in partnership with the Ontario Soccer Association at Vaughan Grove Sports Park. To retain consistency with the 2008 ATMP, “mini mini” fields have been excluded from this count due to their small size and restricted range of use, although many may be capable of accommodating 3 or 5-a-side play.

In total 20 fields have been developed with lights. To reflect the extended play opportunities that lit fields offer, the analysis illustrates each lit field as being the equivalent of 1.5 unlit fields and each lighted artificial turf as being equivalent of 2.0 unlit fields. Therefore, the theoretical supply of soccer fields is considered to be 144 (unlit equivalents – ULE).

Groups have indicated that City fields are typically preferred over school fields as the latter does not receive the same level of maintenance – school fields represent 27% of the current inventory. Where possible, the City may wish to reduce its reliance on school fields over time (but not completely, as these fields remain valuable community assets that should be maximized).

On the whole, there is only modest variation in the per capita soccer field supplies across the entire City. Kleinburg and Woodbridge both have higher than average supplies, while the Vellore area has the fewest fields per capita.

**Table 14: Current Distribution of Soccer Fields by Community (2013)**

Community	Soccer Fields – Unlit Equivalent Units (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level (2013 – Estimated)
Carrville	21.0	1 : 2,422
Kleinburg/Nashville	10.5	1 : 1,149
Maple	27.5	1 : 2,147
Thornhill/Concord	28.0	1 : 2,463
Vellore	12.5	1 : 3,100
Woodbridge	44.5	1 : 1,782
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>1 : 2,161</b>

Notes: Supply includes permitted school fields and excludes “mini mini” fields.  
Fields are shown in “unlit equivalent units”, where one lit field equals 1.5 unlit fields and one artificial turf field equals 2.0 unlit fields

Data from the Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) indicates that registration in organized outdoor soccer has levelled off after years of substantial growth – in fact, outdoor soccer registration peaked in 2007 in Ontario and declined by 4% to 2011. Conversely, registration in the York Region Soccer Association (which includes Vaughan) has grown year after year, largely due to strong population growth in the area. It is notable, however, that this growth in York Region has slowed in recent years (an average of 2% per year between 2007 and 2011).

The OSA data also illustrates some of the changes affecting the game of soccer. As the sport becomes more strongly embedded in our culture, the demand for competitive streams increases. Across Ontario, competitive registration grew by 9% between 2007 and 2011, while recreational registration declined by 5%. Further declines in recreational play would have a noticeable impact as recreational players currently outnumber competitive players 8 to 1. Furthermore, the demand for adult soccer is on the rise. Across Ontario, adult registration grew by 11% between 2007 and 2011, while youth registration declined by 7%. Further declines in youth play would have a noticeable impact as youth players currently outnumber adult players 5 to 1.

While these provincial trends offer a broad perspective of the state of soccer, the sport remains quite popular in Vaughan, which is home to both the Ontario Soccer Association and Canadian Soccer Association. 34% of local households have at least one member that has participated in outdoor soccer in the past 12 months. Despite provincial declines, youth soccer in Vaughan increased by approximately 25% to 30% between 2007 and 2012, suggesting strong local growth.

**Table 15: Youth Soccer Registration, City of Vaughan (2012)**

Organization	2012
Glen Shields Futbol Club	1,112
Kleinburg Soccer Club	1,329
Vaughan Soccer Club	3,181
Woodbridge Soccer Club	3,565
S/R JCC Chai Sports – Soccer	604
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,791</b>

includes waitlist data; excludes adult registrants  
Source: City of Vaughan, Recreation and Culture Department (2013).

As of 2012, there were 9,791 youth players registered in five youth soccer associations within Vaughan (including those on wait lists). This translates into a 16% participation rate amongst residents age 5 to 19. There are also several soccer academies, schools, and leagues (many year-round) that operate out of private fields and facilities in the City, further bolstering this figure. Lastly, although accurate registration data is not available, adult soccer represents a significant portion of soccer demand in Vaughan (estimated to be about one-sixth of all players, based on provincial averages). Soccer fields are also in high demand from sports such as football, rugby, and lacrosse.

When questioned about additional spending for recreation facilities, 56% of households supported additional funding for outdoor soccer fields (ranking soccer fields 12<sup>th</sup> out of 23 facility types). This modest demand indicates that there is some room for improvement. Input from local soccer clubs suggests that the quality of fields (e.g., dimensions, lighting, irrigation, etc.) is the most significant issue, with a particular lack of mini and intermediate size fields.

For structured activities that have accurate registration data, a participant-based provision target is recommended over a per capita target. A youth-based target is recommended because the City has access to reliable youth registration data (but not so for adult organizations) and because the focus of municipal prime time hours, as per the City’s facility allocation policy, is on youth-based community service organizations. The recommended provision target will continue to allow for a range of users on municipal fields, including adults, in keeping with the terms of the City’s allocation process. Should the youth to adult ratio change dramatically, the recommended provision target should be re-examined.

With 144 fields (unlit equivalents) at present and 9,791 registered youth players, there is an average of 68 players per field. Moving forward, a provision target of 1 soccer field (unlit equivalent) per 60 registered youth participants is recommended for Vaughan, a slight change from the 2008 target. Due to community expectations in Vaughan, this target is more aggressive than that applied by many other communities in the GTA, which typically try to provide fields at a rate of 80 to 100 youth players.

**Table 16: Forecasted Demand for Outdoor Soccer Fields, 2013-2021**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2031</b>
Estimated Youth Participants	9,841	10,276	10,920
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 soccer field per 60 registered youth participants</i>		
Required Soccer Fields (unlit equivalents)	164	171	182
Existing Soccer Fields (unlit equivalents)	144		
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(38)</b>

The projection indicates a deficit of 20 soccer fields at present and a long-term need for 38 additional fields by 2031 (unlit equivalents), for a total of 182 fields. This represents a small decrease from the projection in the 2008 ATMP, which has been brought about by a change in the age cohort forecast – the age 5 to 19 group is anticipated to only grow by 11% (despite the overall population growing by approximately 34%). This finding is indicative of an aging population and, unless adult soccer is able to make-up the difference (not just in terms of total registration, but also hours used), the per capita soccer utilization rate will decline.

It is anticipated that the City will be able to accommodate most (if not all) of the 38 required fields within future park projects, most notably North Maple Regional Park (Block 20) and district parks within Blocks 18, 29, 35W (employment), 40S, and 59 (employment). Many future neighbourhood parks will allow for mini field construction, which should be a focus in under-served areas such as Vellore. The growing supply of schools will also offer opportunities for field permitting (with a focus on higher quality fields).

Another major challenge will be providing fields that are of a quality that meets changing needs. For example, there is growing demand for artificial turf fields, as well as 9v9 fields (which represents a new dimension for the City). For the 2013 season, the Canadian Soccer Association has introduced a **Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) model** that aims to develop skills and confidence amongst all of its players, both recreational and competitive. With LTPD has come the requirement for new field sizes, including 3v3 (3-a-side) fields for U6 players, 5v5 (5-a-side) fields for U7/8 players, 7v7 (7-a-side) fields for U9/10 players, 9v9 (9-a-side) fields for U11/12 players, and 11v11 (11-a-side) fields for U13+ players. Through the use of temporary nets and lines, several smaller field templates can be installed on larger fields to make the best use of existing fields.

Artificial turf provides extended seasonal play (and in most types of weather), requires less maintenance and field rest, generates increased revenues, and provides durable and flexible playing surface that can be used for a variety of sports. As a result, each lit turf field (they should only be constructed with lights) is equivalent to two unlit fields in terms of usage potential, which can be particularly valuable in areas where land is in short supply. However, artificial turf fields are also more costly to construct, which creates challenges in relation to conventional funding mechanisms. As a result, some communities are seeking partnerships with local soccer clubs to bridge the funding gap. In Vaughan, these types of partnership are already being formed (e.g., local clubs have contributed to improvements to Sonoma Heights Community Park).

The City should work with local soccer associations to assess the functionality of existing fields in an effort to alter their dimensions to meet current and emerging LTPD. In select circumstances, the redevelopment of under-utilized ball diamonds may also present a viable solution for some of the smaller field templates. Monitoring of usage levels and further study may be required to determine the extent to which these options will be possible.

Soccer Fields	Recommendations
50. Develop <b>38 additional fields by 2031</b> (these are unlit equivalent fields, where every lit field is equal to 1.5 unlit fields and every outdoor artificial turf field is equal to 2.0 unlit fields). Future field development will require a range of sizes that meet or exceed the minimum LTPD requirements, to be developed throughout the City. Full size lit artificial turf fields should also be considered where warranted. To the greatest extent possible, new fields should be clustered together to form multi-field complexes.	
51. Identify opportunities to <b>adjust the dimensions of existing fields</b> to meet current and emerging requirements (e.g., minis, 9v9 fields, etc.). The redevelopment of under-utilized ball diamonds may also present an option for some of the smaller field templates.	

### 9.3 Ball Diamonds

Ball Diamonds		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
72 (85 ULE*)	59 (71 ULE*)	1 : 34 registered youth participants	1 : 50 registered youth participants
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the accuracy of the 2008 field count is questionable as several non-permitted school fields may have been included; inventory accuracy has since improved</li> <li>• some lower quality diamonds have been removed from the active inventory</li> </ul>			

\* diamonds are shown in “unlit equivalent units – ULE”, where one lit diamond is equal to 1.5 unlit diamonds

There are a total of 59 ball diamonds in the City of Vaughan, including 6 t-ball, 25 junior unlit, 4 senior unlit, and 24 senior lit diamonds. To account for extended play opportunities provided by lit facilities, each lit diamond is considered to be equivalent to 1.5 unlit fields. Therefore, the theoretical supply of ball diamonds is considered to be 71 fields. Of the 59 unlit equivalent fields, 5 are on school grounds and 4 are utilized through a community partnership at Vaughan Grove Sports Park.

The number of ball diamonds has declined slightly since the 2008 ATMP was developed. This is partially a result of improved inventory tracking, but also due to some diamonds being removed from the inventory. As shown in the following table, Vellore and Carrville – the City’s two newest communities – have the lowest per capita ball diamond supplies.

**Table 17: Current Distribution of Ball Diamonds by Community**

Community	Ball Diamonds – Unlit Equivalents (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level (2013 – Estimated)
Carrville	8.5	1 : 5,984
Kleinburg/Nashville	2.5	1 : 4,827
Maple	13.5	1 : 4,374
Thornhill/Concord	22.5	1 : 3,065
Vellore	4.5	1 : 8,611
Woodbridge	19.5	1 : 4,066
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>1 : 4,383</b>

Notes: Supply includes permitted school fields.

Diamond are shown in “unlit equivalent units”, where one lit diamond equals 1.5 unlit diamonds

In addition to the supply of diamonds from community to community, the quality of ball diamonds also varies widely. The City of Vaughan has very few multi-diamond sites, which impedes tournament hosting. Furthermore, while some ball organizations may be experiencing a surplus of supply, others have noted latent demand for additional diamonds of particular size and amenity. Several organizations have expressed through the public engagement program a need for **appropriately sized and outfitted**

**ball diamonds for adults** (primarily slo-pitch, but also hardball); desired amenities include field lighting, protective netting in the outfield, parking, and permanent washrooms. Some have suggested the development of a centralized complex suitable for tournaments. 43% of Vaughan’s households support additional spending for baseball/softball diamonds, placing diamonds on the lower end of the range (16<sup>th</sup> out of 23 facility types).

Registration data from the City of Vaughan indicates that there were approximately 2,435 youth players registered in ball sports for the 2012 season (including those on waitlists) – this represents a 2% increase over 2007 figures.

The current youth ball participation rate (ages 5 to 19) is recorded at 4%. This indicates a slight downward trend in youth participation (as the youth population has increased since 2007), but is generally consistent with what is being seen in several larger urban communities. Given this trend, coupled with slower proportional growth in the youth age cohort in Vaughan, it is hard to predict anything other than a stable demand for youth ball into the future.

**Table 18: Youth Baseball Registration, City of Vaughan (2012)**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>2012</b>
City of Vaughan Baseball	1,243
Glen Shields Baseball	n/a
Thornhill Baseball	882
Woodbridge Minor Softball	161
S/R JCC Chai Sports (Baseball)	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,435</b>

*includes waitlist data; excludes adult registration*

*Source: City of Vaughan, Recreation and Culture Department (2013).*

Registration data for adult ball groups – which are considerable users of ball diamonds – is not recorded by the City. 14% of Vaughan’s households contain at least one member that has participated in softball or baseball in the past 12 months. In 2011, the Census recorded 86,063 dwellings occupied by usual residents; 14% of this figure is 12,050. Assuming that each of these households only include one member that participates and also that this figure represents those participating in organized leagues in Vaughan, this would mean that the participant ratio in Vaughan is approximately 5 adult players to every 1 youth player. Unlike soccer, baseball is a sport that is played more by adults than youth in today’s day and age.

Across the province, adult participation in slo-pitch and softball is believed to be increasing generally at the same rate as population growth, but may flatten as the population ages. The longer-term outlook is not as strong, as fewer people are taking up the sport as children, making it more unlikely that they would do so as adults. Monitoring of both youth and adult registration levels will assist in identifying the appropriate future allocation of resources.

A youth-based target is recommended because the City has access to reliable youth registration data (but not so for adult organizations) and because the focus of municipal prime time hours, as per the City’s facility allocation policy, is on youth-based community service organizations. The recommended provision target will continue to allow for a range of users on municipal fields, including adults, in

keeping with the terms of the City’s allocation process. Should the youth to adult ratio change dramatically, the recommended provision target should be re-examined.

The City is presently providing diamonds at a level of one diamond (unlit equivalent) per 34 youth players. Generally, ball diamonds are provided around a target level of one diamond per 50-100 registered youth players, depending on the degree of adult ball participation. Given the proportionally high rate of adult players in Vaughan, a target at the low end of this range is recommended, which will still enable appropriate access and usage by adult ball organizations and tournaments. Even still, application of this target (one diamond per 50 youth registered players) yields a substantial surplus in the number of ball diamonds in Vaughan.

**Table 19: Forecasted Demand for Ball Diamonds, 2013-2021**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2031</b>
Estimated Youth Participants	2,460	2,569	2,730
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 ball diamond per 50 registered youth participants</i>		
Required Ball Diamonds (unlit equivalents)	49	51	55
Existing Ball Diamonds (unlit equivalents)	71		
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	22	20	16

The analysis suggests that 49 ball diamonds (of an appropriate quality and design for organized use) are required to meet local needs at present, growing to a total of 55 diamonds by 2031. Given the extent of the current surplus (22 diamonds at present and 16 projected to 2031), it is recommended that the City continue to assess opportunities to convert lower-quality, under-utilized junior or t-ball diamonds into other facilities or spaces that are in demand, such as soccer fields (5v5, 7v7, or 9v9), skateboard parks, picnic/open space, off-leash dog zones, etc. Park-specific assessments and consultation with user groups would have to be undertaken to determine which diamonds would be the best candidates for removal.

Participation and demographic trends suggest that the demand for slo-pitch is relatively high at present, but is not likely to increase at a rate consistent with the City’s overall population. Furthermore, relative to overall population growth, declines have been seen in youth ball. As a result, there is a need for modest investment in the adult diamond inventory, but monitoring of participation will assist in identifying longer-term needs. Adding lighting to diamonds increases capacity and could be viewed as a growth-related expense (e.g., Sonoma Heights Community Park), although it is noted that most of the City’s senior fields already have lights. Other fields may require expansion or other upgrades to address the needs of the adult ball community. The City should undertake an assessment of existing fields to determine the feasibility of upgrading up to four junior and/or senior fields to meet adult slo-pitch requirements in the short-term; where lighting may not be feasible due to adjacent residential development, field expansion and netting may be considered.

Given that the opportunities to upgrade existing fields are likely limited, new fields are required to serve current demand for adult ball. The City’s long-term park development plan identifies possibilities for diamond development at a new District Park in Vellore (Block 40S) in 2014, as well as longer-term possibilities at North Maple Regional Park (Block 20) and a future district park in Block 35W. Limited

opportunities may also exist for single unlit fields in neighbourhood parks. Consideration should also be given to diamond development at one of the new District Parks in the shorter-term. Multi-field development is preferred and all new diamonds should be suitable for adult play, with lights provided wherever possible (e.g., in Regional and District Parks).

Ball Diamonds	<i>Recommendations</i>
52.	Assess existing fields to determine the feasibility of <b>expanding up to four junior and/or senior fields</b> to meet adult slo-pitch requirements in the short-term.
53.	In addition to those projects identified in the City’s park development capital plan, consider options for <b>developing adult ball diamonds</b> (possibly as part of the Block 18 District Park). Multi-field development is preferred and all new diamonds should be suitable for adult play, with lights provided in Regional and District Parks.
54.	Explore opportunities to <b>convert or repurpose underutilized and low quality junior or t-ball diamonds</b> to other uses (e.g., skateboard parks, soccer fields, passive space, dog parks etc.), especially when undertaking park renewal projects and/or when searching for land to accommodate other needed facilities. Consultation with local ball organizations throughout this process is recommended.

#### 9.4 Other Sports Fields (Cricket, Football, Rugby, Lacrosse, etc.)

Although football, lacrosse, rugby, hockey, and cricket are niche sports with substantially lower participation rates than soccer, there is evidence of some growing demand for these sports in communities across Ontario. The following is a brief profile of these field sports in Vaughan:

- Football – there were 168 players registered with the Vaughan Football Club in 2012 (additional youth play at the high school level)
- Rugby – there were 93 total players registered with the Vaughan Yeoman Rugby Club in 2012
- Lacrosse – there were 187 lacrosse players registered in 2012/13; while they play on arena floors, they also practice outdoors on soccer fields
- Field Hockey – offered through high schools
- Cricket – presently offered through regional associations; indoor cricket practice lanes are offered at the Dufferin Clark Community Centre on the indoor bocce courts

Presently, some City fields are used for these sports (e.g., artificial turf field at Sonoma Heights Community Park, a practice field for cricket at Patricia Kemp Community Centre), but the primary providers are secondary school sites, private schools, and adjacent municipalities.

**Football, field hockey, lacrosse and rugby** are activities that share two common traits: (1) they have generally small – but growing – participation bases; and (2) they can all utilize the same field, with some design and operational adjustments. For example, because of the turf damage that can be caused by football and rugby, conflicts with other sports may occur. The preferred solution is to redirect football and rugby usage to fields that are: (a) artificial; or (b) shared with other sports that are not as concerned with field conditions (e.g., rugby).

When these field needs are viewed collectively, there is sufficient demand for the development of one or more shared multi-use fields. Additional multi-use fields (possibly with artificial turf) should be provided to accommodate these various activities. This approach would allow for football and rugby groups using soccer fields to be redirected to purpose-built fields. Most importantly, the provision of multi-purpose fields will assist in growing the sports of lacrosse, field hockey, rugby, and football at the youth level. Soccer may also be accommodated at multi-use fields, but through an allocation process that provides priority access to other sports organizations.

Multi-purpose fields, in theory, are capable of accommodating any field sport requiring a large flat turf surface (natural or artificial turf), such as football, rugby, field hockey, lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, and soccer. In order to accommodate a wide range of sporting activities the field must be as large as the largest use criteria, which would be football at approximately 70 metres by 140 metres (230 feet by 460 feet). The primary challenge with multi-purpose fields is in allocating time amongst the various users (e.g., how is priority determined?); however, many of these sports play in different seasons (e.g., lacrosse runs from April to May, field hockey from May to July, and football plays August to October), making it easier to schedule the fields. Other issues may include different field wear patterns and the resultant impact upon field quality, as well as various field dimensions and supporting facility requirements.

The City's parks development capital plan calls for a multi-use field at Agostino Park and the proposed North Maple Regional Park (the latter would be lit and potentially artificial turf). These remain appropriate directions for the City to pursue and should assist with gauging longer term demand. Existing and planned artificial turf fields (at City parks and schools) may also assist in meeting needs.

Conversely, a properly designed **cricket field** consists of a large circular or oval-shaped grassy ground. There are no fixed dimensions for the field but its diameter can be as large as 150 metres, which requires an oval piece of land approximately 2 hectares (5 acres) in size. A cricket field is about twice the size of a rectangular sports field and two such fields situated side-by-side can be used for cricket if they have the proper slope. In Ontario, cricket is played primarily by adults, although many clubs have had success in building youth programs.

It is difficult to gauge demand for cricket as there is currently no proper pitch on which to play in Vaughan (a practice field is provided in Thornhill). While local cricket players are largely served by regional associations (which mainly play on pitches in King, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, and Markham), interest has been expressed by an organization for the development of a proper cricket ground in Vaughan. It is possible that the lack of pitches is constraining participation in cricket, making it difficult to develop the sport in the community.

Across Ontario, cricket is increasing in popularity as a result of immigration of residents from areas with cricketing backgrounds (e.g., Caribbean, East Indian, Pakistani, West Indian, etc.). Immigrants from these countries have brought with them a passion for the game and a desire for facilities at which to participate and maintain their traditions. Vaughan's multi-ethnic composition is a good fit for the sport.

The sport is developing a stronger presence in many communities, causing municipalities to re-evaluate cricket's priority related to other, more traditional activities. While not all communities in the GTA have dedicated pitches, Mississauga, Markham and Brampton are currently providing them at a collective ratio of approximately 1 per 75,000 population.

Current plans call for the development of a cricket pitch at the North Maple Regional Park and district park planned for Block 35W; however, these projects are likely several years off. A shorter-term opportunity may be to develop a cricket pitch at the Dufferin Reservoir, a site that was previously used for cricket (and soccer); the Reservoir is owned by the City of Toronto and is currently under construction, likely pushing any field development off until 2016. Future cricket fields may be designed to also host other sports (such as soccer) without unduly affecting the quality of the cricket experience.

<b>Other Sports Fields</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
55. Continue with plans to develop <b>multi-use fields</b> (football, rugby, lacrosse, etc.) at Agostino Park and the proposed North Maple Regional Park.	
56. Seek to develop a proper <b>cricket pitch</b> at the Dufferin Reservoir in the short-term (requires agreement with the City of Toronto). Continue with longer-term plans to develop cricket pitches at the proposed North Maple Regional Park, and potentially the District Park planned for Block 35W.	

## 9.5 Tennis & Basketball Courts

<b>Tennis Courts</b>		<b>Inventory</b>	
<b>Municipal Supply</b>		<b>Provision Levels</b>	
<b>2008</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Recommended Target</b>
124 (72 lit, 52 unlit)	126 (69 lit, 57 unlit)	1 : 2,470	1 : 5,000 in new areas only

<b>Basketball Courts</b>		<b>Inventory</b>	
<b>Municipal Supply</b>		<b>Provision Levels</b>	
<b>2008</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Recommended Target</b>
83 (including 19 play courts)	84 (including 13 play courts)	1 : 495 youth (ages 10-19)	1 : 500 youth (ages 10-19) in new areas only

The City maintains a supply of 126 tennis courts (57 of which are lit) and a supply of 84 basketball courts (13 of which are play courts also capable of accommodating ball hockey and/or winter skating). In addition to municipal courts, most schools provide basketball hoops and some private clubs/schools provide tennis courts. Vaughan's tennis court and basketball court provision ratios are among the highest amongst benchmarked communities in the GTA, suggesting a high level of service. These two facility types are considered together as they use similar facility footprints.

In terms of tennis court distribution, Maple has the lowest per capita supply in the City (for basketball courts as well), while Thornhill and Woodbridge have the most generous provision levels.

**Table 20: Current Distribution of Municipal Tennis and Basketball Courts by Community**

Community	Tennis Courts (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level (2013 – Estimated)	Basketball Courts* (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level, ages 10-19 (2011)
Carrville	12	1 : 4,238	11	1 : 515
Kleinburg/Nashville	3	1 : 4,022	2	1 : 425
Maple	9	1 : 6,561	12	1 : 812
Thornhill/Concord	45	1 : 1,532	20	1 : 463
Vellore	12	1 : 3,229	8	1 : 615
Woodbridge	45	1 : 1,762	31	1 : 341
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>1 : 2,470</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>1 : 495</b>

\*Basketball courts includes play courts

Tennis courts are inclusive facilities that accommodate most age groups and a variety of skill levels. Interest in tennis has varied considerably in the past, but a passionate base of players remains and has been buoyed by growing diversity in some communities. Research indicates that the Baby Boom demographic may be taking up the sport in greater numbers, resulting in a small boost in participation. This suggests that growing interest in tennis could be sustained, at least in the short-term. Benchmarking from several communities reveals that:

- Most municipalities are building only a very small number of tennis courts.
- Generally, new courts being developed are located in district-level parks and are being built in groupings of two or more. This lends itself to greater use, potential club development, better instructional opportunities and it also provides opportunities for future redevelopment to multi-purpose facilities.
- Many under-utilized courts are being converted into multi-purpose pads that can accommodate ball hockey, basketball, etc.

In examining the supply of tennis courts, a distribution analysis was undertaken using a 2-kilometre radius. The City's tennis courts are well distributed, with no significant gaps in any residential areas. It is notable, however, that there are no municipal tennis courts in blocks 18 or 40; planned district park developments are likely to rectify these deficiencies.

The 2008 ATMP found that the tennis court supply was sufficient for established areas, but that new court development should be considered in new communities at a rate of 1 court per 5,000 residents. This remains a reasonable target and suggests that new court development (up to 25 new courts in total) will be required in the growing communities of Carrville, Vellore, Maple, Kleinburg, and VMC. Pending site specific assessments, it is anticipated that most new growth in Thornhill and Woodbridge should be adequately served by existing facilities, making these areas a low priority for tennis court development. There is value in co-locating multiple courts at one location to facilitate both club and community use, with a focus on district parks and larger neighbourhood parks.

Input from the public engagement program suggests that the quantity of tennis courts in Vaughan is generally adequate (aside from the noted gaps); however, in some cases the quality needs to be improved. Although the City has a priority listing of tennis court improvements and undertakes repairs as funding allows, the backlog of deferred maintenance on City tennis courts is growing. To supplement the lifecycle assessments and to help the City in prioritizing improvements, it is recommended that an

“observation project” be undertaken to document usage of unscheduled and casual use park amenities, such as tennis courts, basketball courts, bocce courts, waterplay facilities, skate parks, playgrounds, etc. This observation project would require periodic visits to several parks at various times and days of the week. This information will allow for a better understanding of who is using which parks, which amenities, and when, thereby providing the City with justification for facility re-purposing, repair, and/or expansion.

Basketball is a popular sport amongst teens and outdoor courts provide opportunities for unstructured play, particularly as they are easily incorporated into neighbourhood-level parks, thus allowing easy access (by foot or bicycle). In fact, basketball ranks behind only soccer in terms of number of teens (ages 12-17) participating across Canada (ahead of hockey, football, tennis, golf, and baseball).

A distribution analysis of basketball courts was undertaken using a 1-kilometre radius (reflective of their neighbourhood level of service). The City’s basketball courts are well distributed, with the only significant gap being in Block 40, an area that is currently developing and for which several parks are planned.

Given that outdoor basketball courts appeal mostly to youth, the provision target should be correlated with the size of this age group rather than the population as a whole (where data exists). The 2008 ATMP recommended a target of one basketball court per 500 youth ages 10 to 19 in new communities, as existing residents are generally well served. This finding still holds true. The latest age cohort population forecasts anticipate growth of approximately 5,000 youth (ages 10 to 19) by 2031. If the majority of these teens live in newer communities, up to ten new outdoor basketball courts will be required over the next twenty years within neighbourhood parks; to account for geographic distribution this figure should be increased to 15 total courts, City-wide by 2031. This is considerably less than anticipated in the 2008 ATMP due to the revised population projections that are reflective of an aging population.

The 15 recommended basketball courts should be located in new growth communities, with a focus on those attracting families and those that are 1-kilometre away from an existing City court. As a result, all communities, with the possible exception of Woodbridge, are anticipated to need at least one new basketball court by 2031. Single court sites are preferred over multi-court designs. Half courts are generally preferred for neighbourhood parks, while full courts are more appropriate for district and regional parks.

Tennis & Basketball Courts	Recommendations
57.	Undertake an “ <b>observation project</b> ” to document usage and assist in prioritizing opportunities for the re-purposing, repair, and/or expansion of unscheduled and casual use park amenities, such as tennis courts, basketball courts, bocce courts, waterplay facilities, skate parks, playgrounds, etc.
58.	Develop up to <b>25 new tennis courts</b> in growing residential communities (Carrville, Vellore, Maple, Kleinburg, and VMC) to meet the 2031 projections, using a target of 1 tennis court per 5,000 residents as a guideline. Single court park designs should be avoided.

Tennis & Basketball Courts	<i>Recommendations</i>
<p>59. Develop up to <b>15 new basketball courts and/or play courts</b> in growing residential communities (Carrville, Vellore, Maple, Kleinburg, and VMC) to meet the 2031 projections, using a target of 1 basketball court per 500 teens (ages 10-19) and a 1-kilometre service radius as guidelines.</p>	

## 9.6 Skateboard Parks and Skate Zones

Skateboard Parks and Skate Zones			<i>Inventory</i>
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
1	7 (including 6 Skate Zones)	1 : 5,937 youth (ages 10-19)	1 : 3,000 youth (ages 10-19)

The City of Vaughan currently has 7 parks with skateboard features, including 1 “skateboard park” and 6 “skate zones” (including one under construction in 2013). The City has had considerable success in implementing a City-wide skate park strategy as each of the City’s skate zones has been constructed since the 2008 ATMP. As a result, Vaughan’s skate park provision ratio is among the highest amongst benchmarked communities in the GTA.

Skateboarding has demonstrated sustained longevity and is a mainstream pursuit among children, youth, and to a lesser extent, young adults. The unstructured, unscheduled, and low cost nature of the sport also adds to its appeal. Skate parks also help to fill a void in youth recreational activity and, while female participation in field sports is increasing, males are not as drawn to traditional sports as they once were. Many skateboarders take up the activity at a young age and continue into adulthood, albeit at a different pace and intensity. Despite the low level of community support expressed through the household survey, skateboard parks and are valuable asset of a modern parks system and should continue to be provided in response to youth needs.

Most large communities are moving toward a skate park provision strategy that involves a small number of larger City-serving facilities, combined with a series of smaller local-level parks. In keeping with this trend, it is recommended that the City continue to utilize a two-tier skate park classification system.

- Major skateboard parks should be located in regional and district parks and should serve all skill levels; they should generally be 10,000 to 20,000ft<sup>2</sup> in size. The design of these facilities should be conducted in consultation with local youth and facility users in order to ensure that they respond to current trends and interests of local users. They may also be designed to accommodate trick cycling.
- Minor skate zones are smaller in size (up to 3,000ft<sup>2</sup>) and are intended to be walk-to facilities focusing on introductory skills for beginners or younger children. They may be located in neighbourhood parks, subject to consultation with adjacent land-owners.

The majority of Vaughan’s skate zones have been built at the upper end of the suggested range (3,000 to 4,000 square feet); it is recommended that future skate zones be built slightly smaller (2,000 to 3,000 square feet) to promote usage by beginner and intermediate skateboards. More advanced skateboarders should be encouraged to travel to larger skateboard parks, something that will become more acceptable as the City increases its supply of these facilities.

The only communities with skateboard parks and zones are Carrville and Vellore. As a result, the Woodbridge, Thornhill, Maple, and Kleinburg areas are most deficient in terms of skateboard facilities. This is particularly concerning for skate zones, which are intended to be local-level facilities aimed at serving younger children.

**Table 21: Current Distribution of Skateboard Parks and Skate Zones by Community**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Skate Parks &amp; Zones (2013)</b>	<b>Per Capita Provision Level, ages 10-19 (2011)</b>
Carrville	4	1 : 1,416
Kleinburg/Nashville	0	--
Maple	0	--
Thornhill/Concord	0	--
Vellore*	3	1 : 1,640
Woodbridge	0	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1 : 5,937</b>

\* Vellore contains the City’s only skateboard park

The 2008 ATMP recommended a provision target of one skateboard park for every 7,500 youth (ages 10-19); this guideline was intended to apply to the larger skateboard parks and not skate zones. Given the City’s success in implementing its skate zone strategy, this target should be adjusted – the provision of one skateboard park or skate zone for every 3,000 youth (ages 10-19) is now recommended. The City should continue to provide more local skate zones than larger skateboard parks, targeting a ratio of approximately 3 to 1.

**Table 22: Forecasted Demand for Skateboard Parks & Skate Zones, 2013-2021**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2031</b>
Total Youth Population (10-19)	41,559	43,742	45,502
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 per 3,000 youth (ages 10-19)</i>		
Required Major Skate Parks/Zones	14	15	15
Existing Major Skate Parks/Zones	7		
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(8)</b>

Application of the modified provision target suggests that there is a need for eight additional skateboard parks or skate zones by 2031. With slow growth in the youth cohort, most of these facilities are needed in the short term in order to serve existing populations and to address geographic gaps.

To meet this target, approximately three additional larger skateboard parks are recommended, along with five additional skate zones. Potential locations for skateboard parks include Concord Thornhill Regional Park, North Maple Regional Park, and another site west of Highway 400 – this would greatly improve the geographic distribution of these parks in the City. Skate zones may be provided in district

or neighbourhood parks, and should be considered for growing areas that are under-served (e.g., Woodbridge) and/or growing (e.g., Kleinburg, northwest Vellore, VMC). To encourage a reasonable distribution of skate parks, additional skate zones may be provided over and above the recommended target, but no two such facilities should generally be located within 1.5 kilometres of each other.

The identification of proper sites for skate parks and zones can be challenging as there is a need to mitigate noise and deter inappropriate behaviours at these facilities. The following are some of the more substantial considerations:

- Space is very important in that the park should be sufficiently sized to provide a large buffer area from neighbouring properties as well as having enough space to construct the facility without displacing or crowding other users. Because skate parks tend to attract older children and teens, skate facilities should not be placed directly adjacent to playgrounds or waterplay facilities.
- Visibility is critical to protect the users while they are participating, as well as allowing neighbours and police to monitor activity at the facilities at all hours. Security lighting is also critical to support visibility, but full lighting of the facility is not recommended so as not to encourage after-hours usage.
- Access to transportation, especially transit, allows users to travel to a location and will maximize the use of the facility.
- For larger skateboard parks, parking must be in place to support users who would travel by car and access to washrooms and water fountains is encouraged.
- Unsupervised skate parks with signs that post rules and the risks associated with the park's use provide more protection from liability than supervised facilities, and are more cost efficient to operate.
- Lights, seats, observation areas, public transportation, and consultation with skaters (both in the design and ongoing operation) are requirements for a successful skate park. The more input skaters have in a park's creation and management, the better they take care of it.

Distancing skate parks in isolated locations is not the answer. Locations adjacent to recreation centres or within district parks provide many of these required elements, including access to other activities, and are generally preferred as potential sites for new skateboard parks.

<b>Skateboard Parks and Skate Zones</b>	<i>Recommendations</i>
60.	Develop <b>three additional (major) skateboard parks</b> by 2031, with a focus on developing most of these in the short-term. Potential locations include Concord Thornhill Regional Park, North Maple Regional Park, and another site west of Highway 400.
61.	Develop <b>five or more additional (minor) skate zones</b> by 2031, with a focus on developing most of these in the short to medium-term. Skate zones may be considered for areas that are under-served (e.g., Woodbridge) and/or growing (e.g., Kleinburg, northwest Vellore, VMC), with consideration being given to equitable distribution.
62.	<b>Engage</b> local youth and the skateboarding community when designing skateboard parks.

## 9.7 Outdoor Aquatics

Waterplay Facilities			Inventory
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
16	17	1 : 18,306 (total pop.) 1 : 2,244 (ages 0-9)	1 per residential block
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply is supplemented by 1 outdoor swimming pool and 1 wading pool in Thornhill (at the same location)</li> <li>• 2008 ATMP listed the supply as 18 waterplay facilities, however, one facility was part of a proposed park that has yet to be built and one was built in 2010 as part of the North Thornhill District Park</li> </ul>			

The City maintains 1 outdoor swimming pool, 1 outdoor wading pool and 17 waterplay facilities (i.e., spray or splash pads).

Trends in municipal service delivery suggest that investment in outdoor pool construction is giving way to the provision of more cost-effective waterplay templates. While citizens have come to expect outdoor pools as a traditional municipal responsibility, outdoor pools require significant financial outlays in construction, maintenance and operation; furthermore, they are generally open for no more than two-and-a-half months of the year. Wading pools are also not seen as being cost-efficient or beneficial to a large proportion of families because of the more limited age range they serve and the substantial operating costs (including lifeguarding). Waterplay facilities, on the other hand, generally require a lower capital investment, are more cost efficient to operate, and can be used by a wider range of ages. 66% of household survey respondents supported additional funding for waterplay facilities, ranking them 6<sup>th</sup> out of 23 facility types.

The 2008 ATMP introduced two potential measures for waterplay provision: one was tied to population (1 per 2,000 children age 0-9), while another was linked to geographic distribution (1 per residential block). Given the core demographic of these features and that many residents prefer to walk to them, an equitable distribution of waterplay facilities is vital to creating walkable and complete communities. As such, it is recommended that the City strive to achieve a target of one waterplay facility per full residential block; for more sparsely populated blocks, the City should provide waterplays at their discretion. Given current and forecasted development patterns, this is likely to result in a requirement for approximately 30 or ore waterplay facilities by 2031.

Presently, the communities of Maple, Woodbridge and Thornhill are relatively well served by existing waterplay facilities, although there are gaps. Notably, there are presently no waterplay facilities in Kleinburg, while Carrville and Vellore each have below average supplies, which is particularly concerning given their more youthful profiles. As shown in the following table, a review of current supplies and development forecasts indicates that waterplay facilities will be required in Carrville, Kleinburg, Maple, Thornhill, and Vellore in the short to medium-term (timing for some may be development dependent). All areas (with the exception of Carrville) are likely to require waterplay facility development in the medium to long term in order to satisfy the distributional target. In addition, waterplays may be situated in future District Parks in employment areas to support the mix of park functions.

**Table 23: Waterplay Facility Provision Strategy**

Community	Existing Waterplay Facilities (2013)*	Short to Medium-term Gap (Block #)	Medium to Long-term Gap (Block #)
Carrville	1	11, 12, 18	
Kleinburg/Nashville	0	61	60, 55 or 62
Maple	5	32E	27, 20
Thornhill/Concord	3	1	22S
Vellore	1	32W, 40	41
VMC	0		29N
Woodbridge	7		44
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5 to 8</b>

\* Excludes wading pool and outdoor pool in Thornhill

For smaller gaps and/or more sparsely populated blocks, the City may provide waterplay facilities at their discretion.

Timing and scale of residential development should be monitored to determine impact on waterplay provision.

It has been the City's practice to provide waterplay facilities in District Parks (to make use of supporting infrastructure); however, not all City blocks have this park type. In gap areas without district parks, including areas of intensification, smaller non-traditional waterplay features may be considered.

The Thornhill outdoor pool is well used and appreciated by the community. The City should perform minimal lifecycle investments to this outdoor pool to extend its lifespan as long as possible. Should major capital repairs or replacements be required, the City should engage the public to determine future strategies (e.g., renewal or replacement with other facilities, such as waterplay). New additions to the City's wading or outdoor pool inventory are not recommended.

Outdoor Aquatics	<i>Recommendations</i>
63.	Develop approximately <b>13 additional waterplay facilities</b> by 2031, guided by a target of one facility per full residential block. Waterplays are typically designed for district parks, but smaller non-traditional waterplay features may be considered for gap areas without this park type.
64.	Perform minimal lifecycle investments to the <b>Thornhill outdoor pool</b> to extend its lifespan as long as possible. Public engagement and renewal/replacement strategies should be explored prior to undertaking major capital repairs or replacements to the pool.

## 9.8 Playgrounds

Playgrounds (# of locations)		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
147 sites (252 apparatuses)	159 sites (293 apparatuses)	1 : 1,957 (total pop.) 1 : 240 (ages 0-9)	within 500-metres of urban residential areas, unobstructed

*Note: Supply excludes school playgrounds*

There are approximately 293 playground installations (140 of which are considered junior and 153 considered senior) at 159 municipal parks. The most favourable per capita supplies (based on children ages 0-9) are in Kleinburg and Thornhill, while Vellore and Carrville – the City’s two youngest, but still developing communities – have the lowest supply on a per child basis.

**Table 24: Current Distribution of Municipal Playground Apparatuses by Community**

Community	Playground Sites (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level, ages 0-9 (2011)
Carrville	24	1 : 351
Kleinburg/Nashville	5	1 : 125
Maple	31	1 : 260
Thornhill/Concord	39	1 : 147
Vellore	17	1 : 407
Woodbridge	43	1 : 193
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>1 : 240</b>

Playgrounds are a basic element of mostly all active parks in the City of Vaughan. The household survey found that, of those who have used Vaughan’s parks and open spaces in the past 12 months, 26% use them for their playgrounds.

Playgrounds are neighbourhood-level facilities that are best situated in walking distance to residential areas. For this reason, provision is best determined by geographic distribution rather than a population-based target; it is recommended that the City provide a playground within 500-metres (roughly a five to ten minute walk time) of all built-up residential areas. The service radius should be unobstructed by major barriers such as waterways/ ravines, railway lines, highways, etc.

Using the City’s current inventory, an analysis of playground distribution in existing urban areas was undertaken to identify geographic gaps. Based on this analysis, the city has excellent geographic coverage, with the only substantial gap being located in Block 38 (Woodbridge). The mapping shows some other areas to be partially deficient (e.g., Blocks 11, 40, and 61); however, development is currently occurring in these areas and playground installation is likely to follow shortly.

The City designs its playgrounds to include a minimum of 50% accessible features through consideration of surfacing (rubber and wood fiber mulch), ramps, transfer platforms, and other components. This

approach is consistent with the recently released *AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards* and should continue to be a leading practice for the City.

Lastly, the City has recently begun to introduce outdoor fitness stations into their parks – currently at two locations (with one additional site under construction and one planned for later in 2013). This equipment provides “free of charge” opportunities for teens, adults, and older adults to improve their physical activity levels, with a focus on mobility, flexibility, and strength training. This equipment has been well received in the City, and future installations should be considered in areas with older age profiles and multi-ethnic compositions, such as Thornhill and Woodbridge. Outdoor fitness stations are a local-level facility to the same extent as playgrounds, but one to two such installations in each of Vaughan’s seven communities should be a long-term goal.

<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
65.	Provide <b>playgrounds within 500-metres</b> of all residences within urbanized neighbourhoods, unobstructed by major pedestrian impediments such as highways, major arterial roads, railway corridors, waterways, valleys, etc. Achieving this target requires existing gaps in playground distribution to be addressed and for new communities to be planned with distribution in mind.
66.	Install one to two <b>outdoor fitness stations</b> in each of Vaughan’s seven communities by 2031, with a focus on providing them in areas with older age profiles and multi-ethnic compositions.

## 9.9 Off-Leash Dog Parks

<b>Off-Leash Dog Parks</b>			<b>Inventory</b>
<b>Municipal Supply</b>		<b>Provision Levels</b>	
<b>2008</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Recommended Target</b>
0	1	1 : 311,200	One in each quadrant of the City

The City’s first and only off-leash dog park was built since the 2008 ATMP and is located at Concord-Thornhill Regional Park. This dog park was established as a pilot project and has proven to be successful.

Dedicated off-leash areas provide pet owners with the opportunity to exercise and socialize their dogs in a controlled area; these parks also facilitate interaction between pet owners bringing about social and physical activity benefits to residents. Off leash parks have proven to be quite successful in many municipalities, with larger urban areas often having several such facilities.

Through the public engagement program, Vaughan residents were supportive of developing additional dog parks in other areas of Vaughan (including to the west and north). The household survey respondents also found a dog park to be the second most common thing that would encourage Vaughan residents to use Vaughan’s parks and open spaces more often.

The Vaughan DOG (Dog Owners Group) estimates that up to 76,000 Vaughan residents own a dog. This group is supportive of additional dog parks and is willing to consider shared use of sports fields if the cost is too much to establish a dedicated park. While some municipalities have instituted by-laws to establish off-leash “zones” that serve as dog parks during the day and soccer/ball diamond during the evening, this approach can cause substantial conflicts stemming from awareness, enforcement, and maintenance concerns. As a result, off-leash dog areas are generally best suited as dedicated parks rather than zones within parks.

The establishment of additional dedicated off-leash dog parks is recommended for Vaughan. Many municipalities require that their dog parks be managed by an affiliated organization in order to act as park stewards, which should be a consideration for any future parks in the City. Off-leash parks should also be located away from residential areas and schools, which can make finding a suitable location challenging. The City’s Off Leash Area Working Committee worked for several years to find and evaluate sites and was involved with the implementation of the facility at Concord-Thornhill Regional Park.

To improve accessibility, it is recommended that off-leash parks be developed to serve each quadrant of the City. As a result, new primary parks will be required in the Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest. In the longer-term, District Parks are anticipated within employment areas in Block 35 (could be capable of serving both the northeast and northwest) and Block 59 (southwest) – given that these parks are unlikely to be adjacent to residential areas, these may be suitable locations for dog parks. Unfortunately, the demand for a second dog park is more immediate than these two district parks will allow. If an appropriate City-owned site is not currently available, consideration should be given to establishing an interim solution, such as a dog park on vacant lands slated for longer-term development; ideally this site should be located west of Highway 400. Establishing any temporary land use requires that appropriate approvals, agreements, and awareness programs be put in place.

To supplement the system of larger off-leash parks and to promote “complete communities”, the City may consider a model that encourages smaller, more localized off-leash areas in closer proximity to residential communities and higher density areas. Such facilities should be located near trail systems and other community connectors.

<b>Off-Leash Dog Parks</b>	<i>Recommendations</i>
67.	Develop a <b>second off-leash dog park</b> in an area west of Highway 400 in the short-term. Sponsorship from an affiliated organization is recommended to assist with park management.
68.	Develop off-leash dog parks in the <b>District Parks proposed for Blocks 35 and 59</b> (both are in employment areas).
69.	Explore options for establishing <b>smaller, more localized off-leash areas</b> in closer proximity to residential communities and higher density areas. These secondary facilities would be in addition to the larger primary off-leash parks recommended for each quadrant of the City.

## 9.10 Outdoor Artificial Skating Rinks

Outdoor Artificial Skating Rinks			Inventory
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
6	5	1 : 62,240	At least one in each of the City's seven communities
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• since the 2008 ATMP, an artificial rink has been removed from Glen Shields Activity Centre</li> <li>• 2008 ATMP listed the supply as 9 artificial rinks, however, three facilities were part of proposed parks that were yet to be built</li> <li>• supply excludes natural rinks, which may be established on outdoor basketball courts or play courts</li> </ul>			

The City offers 5 artificial outdoor ice rinks, each located at community centres to make use of shared change rooms, washrooms, parking, and other amenities. The artificial surfaces all employ ice refrigeration systems to mitigate the impacts of warmer weather throughout the winter. In addition, the City has a neighbourhood rink program whereby residents are allowed to flooding selected basketball courts to create a natural skating surface; uptake of this program can vary from year to year.

The 2008 ATMP recommended that the outdoor rink at Glen Shields Activity Centre be removed and possibly replaced with a skate park and/or basketball court, given that there was another outdoor rink at the nearby Dufferin Clark Community Centre. The Glen Shields rink has since sustained significant fire damage and the City has decided to rebuild portions of the building, but the ice plant will not be replaced, thereby eliminating this artificial rink from the inventory.

Historically, Canadians have had an affinity for outdoor skating rinks and there is a substantial demand in the GTA for these facilities. Unfortunately, with warming temperatures observed in recent years, natural outdoor rinks are becoming less effective as they are severely impacted by weather conditions, and considering the limited operating season, they are generally a higher cost service. Uncertain weather conditions have greatly contributed to the provision of artificial outdoor ice rinks. Although artificial rinks are typically able to operate for a longer season, their costs can be substantially higher than those of natural rinks.

Outdoor skating is a popular activity in Vaughan, with 30% of households participating in the past 12 months. Furthermore, the public engagement program yielded requests for more outdoor skating rinks, with a preference for rectangular rinks capable of accommodating shinny. 65% of households support additional funding for outdoor skating rinks, ranking them 7<sup>th</sup> out of 23 facility types.

**Table 25: Current Distribution of Municipal Outdoor Rinks by Community**

Community	Outdoor Rinks (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level (2013 – Estimated)
Carrville	0	--
Kleinburg/Nashville	0	--
Maple	0	--
Thornhill/Concord	2	1 : 34,481
Vellore	1	1 : 38,751
Woodbridge	2	1 : 39,645
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1 : 62,240</b>

There are presently no artificial outdoor skating rinks in northeast Vaughan (Maple, Carrville) and only one north of Langstaff Road (in Vellore). As put forward in the 2008 ATMP, it is recommended that the City ensure the provision of one artificial ice rink in each of the seven communities identified in this Plan; in some communities, more than one rink could be required to meet needs. To meet this target, rinks will be required in Maple (proposed for the North Maple Regional Park and/or City Hall), Carrville (possibly at the Block 11 District Park or MacMillan Farm), Kleinburg/Nashville (location to be determined), and VMC (at the proposed District Park). Natural rinks on play courts may also be considered where there is likely to be community support for their maintenance.

As mentioned earlier, artificial rinks are ideally suited at municipal sites (district parks) containing arena facilities (or other civic facilities), which maximizes ice maintenance operations and/or ancillary support buildings. Depending on their designs, in the spring/summer/fall, the rinks can be used for outdoor ball hockey or other activities.

Outdoor Skating Rinks	Recommendations
70.	Develop a total of <b>4 to 5 outdoor artificial rinks</b> , to be located in Maple (North Maple Regional Park and/or City Hall), Carrville (possibly at the Block 11 District Park or MacMillan Farm), Kleinburg/Nashville (location to be determined), and VMC (proposed District Park).
71.	<b>Play courts</b> may be considered where there is community support for maintenance of the winter natural rink and there is a need for outdoor basketball opportunities.

### 9.11 Outdoor Bocce

Outdoor Bocce		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
64 (40 lit, 24 unlit)	64 (50 lit, 14 unlit)	1 : 4,863 (total pop.) 1 : 562 (ages 65+)	n/a

The City of Vaughan has 64 outdoor bocce courts, with 50 of the courts being lit facilities; this translates to the highest per capita provision in the GTA, and one court for every 562 residents ages 65 and over. Vaughan also has a substantial supply of high quality indoor bocce facilities that accommodate year-round usage.

As shown below, most of the City’s outdoor bocce courts are in older areas of Vaughan (Woodbridge, Thornhill, and Maple), all of which have substantial Italian populations.

**Table 26: Current Distribution of Outdoor Bocce Courts by Community**

<b>Community</b>	<b>Outdoor Bocce Courts (2013)</b>	<b>Per Capita Provision Level, ages 65+ (2011)</b>
Carrville	0	--
Kleinburg/Nashville	0	--
Maple	11	1 : 509
Thornhill/Concord	11	1 : 863
Vellore	3	1 : 703
Woodbridge	39	1 : 308
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1 : 562</b>

As discussed under the indoor bocce facility section, bocce is a sport has traditionally been played by older Italian men. Given that Vaughan is becoming a diverse community and that bocce is generally not being taken up by younger generations, there is no justification to provide additional courts. The City should continue to monitor usage levels and club support to determine if there is support for removing surplus bocce courts, similar to what has been proposed for the outdoor courts at Fr. Ermanno Bulfon District Park. Future spending on outdoor bocce courts received very little public support through the household survey, ranking it 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 23 facility types.

Many of Vaughan’s outdoor bocce courts are under-utilized and some are being used for alternative uses on an ad hoc basis (e.g., dog runs). Given current usage profiles and trends, no additional outdoor bocce courts are recommended during the planning period to 2031.

<b>Outdoor Bocce</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
72.	Track usage of outdoor bocce courts to determine if any can be <b>declared surplus and/or re-purposed</b> for other recreational requirements. Continue with plans to re-purpose outdoor bocce courts at <b>Fr. Ermanno Bulfon District Park</b> .

## 9.12 Community Food Gardens

Community gardens and orchards – land that is planted and gardened by a group of community members – are becoming increasingly common in urban areas. These gardens encourage social interaction, horticultural education, and food security, amongst other benefits. Furthermore, given the current economic downturn, there is an increasing interest in locally grown food, and gardening is a popular pastime for people of many ethnic backgrounds. As the City’s residential areas intensify, it is

anticipated that there will be additional demand for community gardens, particular in higher density areas.

Community gardens can be administered by a municipality, a local organization, an interested group of citizens. Schools and churches are excellent locations for community gardens as they promote social interaction and community building, and often attract involvement from volunteers and local businesses.

Currently, the City's Parks and Forestry Operations Department has a process in place whereby garden users are required to sign a letter of understanding and garden rules document. The Department also has a set of criteria for selecting suitable garden locations. Once a site is confirmed, the groups designate a Community Garden Coordinator who is the main contact with the Parks and Forestry Operations Department. There are also several organizations that are able to assist in advising, sponsoring, or maintaining community gardens in Vaughan, including the York Region Food Network and Toronto Community Garden Network. The TRCA is also placing a greater emphasis on community gardens and local agriculture.

There are presently five known community gardens/ co-operatives in the City, three of which involve municipal participation:

- Growing to Give Garden – Thornhill (City Fire and Rescue Station; two-year pilot project)
- Sugarbush Heritage Park – Thornhill (City park)
- Michael Cranny House – Maple (City owned heritage property)
- Carrville Community Garden – Carrville (private school)
- Kavanah Community Garden – Carrville (Jewish Centre)

The City's Community Sustainability Plan and Official Plan are supportive of opportunities for urban agriculture and community gardens. Section 7.4.1.4 of the Official Plan contains policies allowing and encouraging community gardens as part of the private outdoor amenity space requirements for new development (including roof-top gardens), as well as investigating the use of parks and public open spaces for gardening and community agriculture (and prioritizing the identification of opportunities for community gardens in park spaces). The household survey also found modest demand for community food gardens (particularly west of Highway 400).

Existing community gardens have proven successful and additional sites are anticipated for the future. To establish a framework for the City's participation in future community garden programs, and to provide guidance to local groups wishing to establish gardens and orchards, it is recommended that the City develop a policy to define its role in their provision and/or management.

Community Food Gardens	Recommendations
73. Develop a <b>policy</b> to encourage the establishment of additional community gardens and orchards, to define the City's role in their provision and/or management, and to further refine existing procedures and selection criteria.	

### 9.13 Picnic Areas

There are approximately 18 permitted picnic areas within the City of Vaughan’s parks system, and many more on lands managed by agencies (e.g., TRCA) and community associations. The capacity of picnic areas varies, but most include shelters, tables, and other amenities that are supportive of family and community gatherings.

Given rising interest in unstructured activities, coupled with the City’s multi-ethnic composition, the demand for picnic areas in Vaughan is substantial. Research indicates that newcomers to Canada are frequent users of parks as they are an ideal location for social gatherings and picnics, which are often a chosen activity for larger, multi-generational immigrant families. Of those that have used Vaughan’s parks and open spaces in the past 12 months, 13% visit them for picnics. Vaughan residents have expressed a strong desire for more rentable pavilions and picnic shelters in parks.

Picnic areas are best provided in District and Regional Parks that can sustain the high level of use, but may also be suitable in some other park types. Typically, users of picnic areas and shelters are seeking proximity to washrooms, waterplay facilities, playgrounds, and unstructured play fields. Demand is greatest for larger picnic areas, particularly on weekends. With multi-unit housing and smaller backyards becoming more commonplace in Vaughan, demand for picnic areas is expected to increase further. Vaughan should consider the establishment of new picnic sites through future park development (or redevelopment of existing park sites), including at North Maple Regional Park and MacMillan Farm.

Picnic Areas	<i>Recommendations</i>
74.	As opportunities permit, establish additional <b>picnic sites</b> (with appropriate ancillary amenities, e.g., picnic shelters, washrooms, parking, playground, open space, etc.) to accommodate the growing demand for larger outdoor gathering spaces in Vaughan. This may include North Maple Regional Park, MacMillan Farm, and/or other future or existing parks (e.g., Rainbow Creek Park in Woodbridge).