



Active Together Master Plan

Parks, Recreation & Libraries

2013 Review & Update



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Limitations

This report was prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. for the account of the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Public Libraries. This report contains recommendations intended to maintain and/or enhance the local quality of life through the provision of community-responsive parks, recreation, and library facilities. The assessments contained herein are based on several inputs, including demographic indicators, activity trends, facility provision principles, and priorities identified by the public, community groups, and internal stakeholders. The material in this report reflects the Consultant's best judgment in light of the information available to it at the time of preparation and is subject to change based on further analysis. Using a variety of techniques – including additional public engagement, where appropriate – the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Public Libraries will continually assess options, costs, and risks for implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Purpose & Approach

This 2013 Active Together Master Plan (ATMP) represents a review and update to the 2008 ATMP, which was the City's first long-range planning study for parks, recreation, and library facilities. The purpose of this ATMP is to identify current needs and future facility provision strategies, consistent with the City of Vaughan's commitment to providing safe, accessible, and community-responsive parks and facilities that appeal to a wide range of interests and abilities. Given that Vaughan is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, timely short and long-range planning is critical to ensuring that facility provision properly coincides with development.

It is the intent that the ATMP will guide planning for parks, recreation, and library facilities until the City's ultimate build-out, with a primary focus on the next eight to ten years; a five-year update undertaken in collaboration with the City's Development Changes Study is recommended. The integrated nature of planning recognizes that other processes are also involved and the ATMP builds upon Vaughan's foundational documents, including Vaughan Vision 2020, Green Directions Vaughan, and the City's new Official Plan.

The development of this Plan followed a process similar to that employed for the 2008 ATMP, including an analysis of demographic data and forecasts, activity and facility provision trends, and an extensive public engagement program consisting of:

- Public Information Sessions and participation in the Youth Forum
- Random sample household telephone survey
- User group survey and targeted consultation (Sports Congress)
- Interviews with key community agencies and stakeholders
- Ongoing consultation with the Library Board, City officials, and staff

Based on a series of guiding principles (see Section 6), a comprehensive needs assessment for parks, recreation, and library facilities was also prepared, including verification of the provision targets that were established in the 2008 ATMP. The last phase of the project involved the development of an implementation strategy that established priorities, timing, and other considerations for the sustainable provision of parks and facilities.

Arts and cultural facilities, which were included within the scope of the 2008 ATMP, are not addressed in this Update as the City prepared a separate *Creative Together Plan* in 2010. The 2008 ATMP also included a *Physical Activity Strategy* that provides direction to the provision, coordination, and marketing of physical activity programs and services; this Strategy remains in effect. Lastly, although the focus is on physical infrastructure, there are some high-level directions relating to programming as a result of their inherent relationship with facilities and parks; a detailed review of programming and service delivery is beyond the scope of the ATMP.

B. Key Drivers

Since the 2008 ATMP was prepared, the City has continued to invest in its parks, recreation, and library infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing population, which has been estimated at 311,200 (as of December 31, 2012). Recent accomplishments are numerous and include (but are not limited to) the following:

- North Thornhill Community Centre in Block 10 (2010)
- Fitness Centre at Vellore Village Community Centre (2013)
- Several recreation and library facility enhancements (e.g., accessibility)
- New skate zones, waterplay facility, off leash dog park, sports fields, and other outdoor amenities
- Acquisition of North Maple Regional Park, MacMillan Farm, and several other park properties
- Establishment of policies for facility allocation and financial assistance (RecAssist)

Planning is also underway for several new parks (including the 80-hectare North Maple Regional Park), libraries at the Civic Centre and North Thornhill Community Centre, improvements to Fr. Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre, and the future development of a community centre in Block 11. Future investments in Vaughan's parks, recreation, and library facilities are supported by increasing usage of existing assets and anticipated population growth across all age groups, including youth and older adults.

Through the public engagement program, it is evident that residents and organizations are pleased with the major strides the City has made in recent years, but are eager for these improvements to continue. Given the City's new Official Plan and policies for growth, there is a particular urgency to define infrastructure requirements in intensifying and emerging communities (e.g., Vaughan Metropolitan Centre) to ensure that sufficient land is set aside, funding is allocated, and that partnerships can be established.

C. Key Themes

The 2013 Active Together Master Plan contains over 90 recommendations intended to guide municipal and community investment in parks, recreation, and library facilities. Some of the key themes of the Plan include:

- establishing a preferred strategy for the provision and distribution of parks, recreation, and library facilities, in concert with other providers where appropriate
- improving the equitable distribution of recreation and library facilities through the promotion of smaller community-based neighbourhood hubs and library branches, to complement the system of larger multi-use community centres and resource libraries
- ensuring that appropriately located sites are secured for required future parks and facilities
- upgrading older facilities and parks to meet evolving community needs, particularly those within or near areas of residential intensification

- recognizing the impact that a growing – but aging and increasingly diverse – population will have on facility and park usage and design requirements
- finding the proper balance between providing spaces to be used for structured sport activities (e.g., arenas, sports fields, etc.) and spaces for less formal, self-scheduled activities (e.g., picnic areas, trails, fitness centres, skateboard parks, off-leash dog areas, etc.)
- focusing on meeting provision targets at a City-wide level (e.g., 2.2 hectares of active parkland per 1,000 residents) and undertaking community-specific assessments to identify opportunities and strategies
- policy considerations for the acquisition, design, and development/redevelopment of parkland; a parkland acquisition strategy has been recommended to identify options and potential priority properties
- expanding the local system of pedestrian and bicycle pathways, trails, and routes through ongoing coordinated planning strategies

D. ATMP Implementation

Each recommendation, along with a preferred timing and priority, is listed on the following pages; their supporting rationale can be found throughout the Plan. Preliminary cost estimates have also been estimated and are contained in Section 11, with the recognition that parks, recreation and libraries cannot and should not operate at full cost recovery levels. Successful implementation will be dependent upon variety of factors including (but not limited to) funding, partnerships, land availability, and ongoing community engagement. It is expected that the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Public Libraries will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the capital budget process.

The timing of the capital projects proposed in this Active Together Master Plan is based on ideal circumstances (considering projected population targets) and recognizes the need for phased implementation. Where possible, this timing has been coordinated with the preparation of the City's long-term capital forecast and Development Charges Background Study. Timing of implementation will be dependent on several factors, including population growth, funding, land availability, and partnerships. In many cases, proposed timeframes are linked to the population forecasts approved by the Region of York; should growth be slowed or accelerated, the timing of implementation may require adjustment. Furthermore, the proposed timing may not align with the City's funding capacities as time goes by; should funding levels not be sufficient, it is possible that some projects will have to be deferred to later years. As part of the annual budget process, this Plan will be reviewed to identify areas where the availability of resources may affect the timing of facility development.

Each recommendation within this ATMP has been assigned a preferred timeframe for initiation:

- Short-term (1-4 years) – 2013 to 2016
- Medium-term (5-9 years) – 2017 to 2021
- Longer-term (10+ years) – 2022 to 2031

Each recommendation within this ATMP has also been assigned a priority level: High, Medium, or Low. Priority has been determined based on an assessment of need, as identified throughout the ATMP process (including public engagement, trend and demographic analysis, assessments of facilities, parks, programs, etc.). All recommendations are important and, if properly implemented, will benefit parks, recreation, and library services within Vaughan. In the event that a recommendation is not implemented within the proposed timeframe, it may become a higher priority and hence be upgraded to a shorter time frame. For this reason and others, it is important that the City regularly monitor and update the ATMP and its recommendations. Determining priorities is an exercise that should be revisited each year prior to the capital and operating budget development exercise.

The City's resources are finite and, therefore, cannot afford to do everything that the community desires; this is one of the primary reasons for undertaking the Active Together Master Plan in the first place. Although the City of Vaughan may be challenged in providing the appropriate financial resources to meet the provision targets recommended in this Plan, the City has an obligation to make every reasonable effort to implement these strategies through a variety of appropriate and acceptable means.

Note: The recommendations are numbered according to the order in which they are presented in the body of the Active Together Master Plan; they are not intended to be sequential.

Table ES-1: Parkland Recommendations (see Section 7)

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Parkland Classification and Types	1. Continue to ensure consistency between Vaughan's Official Plan, Secondary Plans, and this Active Together Master Plan. Where applicable, the evaluation of parkland and facility requirements relative to development applications should reference the findings, targets, and recommendations of this Plan. Furthermore, parkland requirements should be stated and evaluated using per capita measures, where possible.	●	●	●	High
	2. Develop an urban parkland hierarchy and conveyance policy that serves as an appropriate, equitable, consistent, and transparent framework for parkland dedication in higher density areas. Policies should take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● parkland dedication amounts and alternative provision rates (e.g., 1 ha : 300 units); ● smaller and more urban park types, along with minimum park sizes; ● policies for strata parks (built on a development site, over top of a structure), with a view towards ensuring appropriate legal agreements and public access; ● policies for private amenity space; these may be accepted at the discretion of the City, but should not result in full parkland dedication credit; ● guiding principles for private sector involvement in park operation (e.g., cafes, markets, etc.); policies should seek to maximize public access, affordability, and municipal accountability; and ● alternative funding, maintenance, and management strategies. 	●			High
Active Parkland Supply	3. Integrate the municipal parks and community facility inventory into a GIS-based system in order to improve research, future planning, asset management, and coordination. A formal updating mechanism will be required to keep this database current.	●			Medium
Active Parkland Needs and Acquisition	4. Acquire active parkland at the maximum applicable rate as permitted by the Planning Act and the City's implementing documents, with the goal of maintaining a City-wide supply of 2.2 hectares of active parkland per 1000 residents. The City may utilize different community-specific targets that are representative of local supply and demand factors.	●	●	●	High
	5. If deemed necessary by the City, developers may be required to provide additional parks and recreational amenities in areas of intensification (or indoor space in lieu of parkland), in addition to the prescribed parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu. This may be achieved by area-specific subdivision / condominium agreements or other implementing mechanisms, such as bonus as per Section 37 of the Planning Act.	●	●	●	Medium

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Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Active Parkland Needs and Acquisition (continued)	6. Continue to require parkland conveyance within employment areas in order to create public spaces that attract and serve businesses and their employees.	●	●	●	Medium
	7. Do not accept undevelopable Open Space lands (e.g., stormwater management ponds, woodlots, valley lands, floodplains, hazard lands, etc.) as part of the parkland dedication requirement (i.e., no credit should be applied). Where appropriate, the City may assume these lands through voluntary dedication or easement. Trails and connections may be dedicated through 51(25)(b) of the <i>Planning Act</i> .	●	●	●	High
	8. Develop a Parkland Acquisition Strategy to identify alternative parkland provision mechanisms and potential priority properties for acquisition, with a focus on under-served areas and larger district and regional park types.	●			High
	9. Where appropriate, use cash-in-lieu to offset the total cost of renewing and revitalizing existing parks intended to serve areas of residential intensification.	●	●	●	Medium
Park Renewal and Redevelopment	10. Promote appropriate community and public-private partnerships in the municipal parks system in order to leverage additional resources, expedite development, and improve accessibility. Partnerships and creative approaches for park maintenance in areas of higher density may be required (e.g., adopt-a-park).	●	●	●	Medium
	11. In designing parks , continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> incorporate spaces and amenities encouraging physical activity, wellness, and informal use opportunities; consider the needs of a diverse and aging population through the provision of washrooms, seating, shade, drinking fountains, pathways, and picnic areas; follow accessibility legislation and guidelines to accommodate persons with disabilities; apply CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles; promote designs that encourage sustainable maintenance practices; incorporate native and drought resistant vegetative features; utilize materials that are robust, durable, and mindful of future maintenance requirements; seek innovative and engaging initiatives that encourage environmental stewardship (e.g., recycling bins); encourage public art; and encourage active transportation connections and a linked open space system. 	●	●	●	High

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Parkland Design Considerations (continued)	12. Continue to encourage the development of joint and/or shared community sites, such as schools, community centres, libraries, and parks.	●	●	●	High

Table ES-2: Indoor Recreation Facility Recommendations (see Section 8)

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Community Centres	13. Pursue the timely development of a major community centre in the Carrville area (Block 11). Construction is currently recommended for 2015-16.	●			High
	14. In the short-term, acquire land for a major community centre in Block 41 to serve growth in the City's north end, including the Vellore area. Construction is currently recommended for 2017-18.	●	●		High
	15. In the short-term, acquire land (or negotiate) to develop a major community centre in Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This facility is likely to be part of a high rise development, the timing of which should coincide with other construction activities in the area. Timing of construction will depend on a number of factors, but is currently recommended around the year 2021.	●	●		High
	16. Expand the City's facility provision model to include neighbourhood hubs to fill distribution gaps in emerging areas undergoing substantial population renewal/growth. Neighbourhood hubs require a minimum population threshold of 8,000 people and should focus on multi-use activity spaces, such as gymnasiums and meeting rooms (generally provided at a rate of 1.5 square feet per capita). Neighbourhood hubs may take several forms, but should be in accessible and prominent locations that reinforce their "public" image. Such indoor space may be constructed by the City or by developers, potentially in lieu of part of the required parkland conveyance or through bonusing provisions within Section 37 of the Planning Act.		●	●	Medium
	17. Secure a site for the establishment a neighbourhood hub in the Kleinburg/Nashville area in the short-term; a location capable of serving the existing village and residential growth anticipated for Blocks 61 and 62 is preferred. Pending further study, the neighbourhood hub may include amenities such as a gymnasium, fitness studio, activity rooms, meeting rooms, and possibly a larger library branch to replace the existing Kleinburg branch. Construction in the 2016-2019 timeframe is recommended based on current population forecasts.	●	●		High

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Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Community Centres (continued)	18. Consider the need for a neighbourhood hub in Block 27 (north Maple) in the longer-term (2023 or beyond), subject to residential development in this area.			●	Medium
	19. Consider the need for a neighbourhood hub in the Vaughan Mills (east of Highway 400) in the longer-term (2023 or beyond), subject to residential redevelopment in this area.			●	Medium
	20. Develop a business plan to identify and assess options for community centre operational models that involve: (1) greater coordination between Recreation & Culture and Vaughan Public Libraries; and (2) the creation of full service centres that provide a wider variety of community services beyond recreation.	●			Medium
	21. Within its community facilities, including neighbourhood hubs, the City may provide office and/or program space for third-party tenants that are aligned with the municipal mandate and where surplus space exists, where public benefits can be achieved, and where supported by the City's partnership framework.	●	●	●	Low
	22. Community centre renewal and expansion must become a greater priority for the City over time, with direction from asset management plans, accessibility plans, and community needs. Demand will be greatest for facilities with mounting lifecycle requirements and those in proximity to areas of residential intensification (e.g., Fr. Ermanno Bulfon, Garnet A. Williams, and Dufferin Clark Community Centres).	●	●	●	High
	23. Explore options for installing electronic roadside signage and providing public access to a free wireless network (WiFi) at municipal community centres. WiFi is currently available at all VPL branches and City Hall.	●			Medium
Arenas	24. Pursue partnerships with community agencies and the development sector in areas with below average access to municipal community centres.	●	●	●	Medium
	25. Develop a twin pad arena to the major community centre proposed for Block 11 (Carrville) in 2015/16. Once this facility opens, Maple Arena should be closed and a re-purposing study should be undertaken to determine a future uses.	●			Medium
	26. Develop a twin pad arena as a second phase to the proposed community centre in Vellore (Block 41), beyond the year 2022. Pending further study, Memorial Arena may also come off-line at this time.			●	Medium

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Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Indoor Aquatics	27. Include an indoor aquatic facility as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017/18.		●		High
	28. Include an indoor aquatic facility as part of the major community centre proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre around the year 2021.		●		High
	29. Pending further study, should Woodbridge Pool be removed from service, consideration should be given to shifting its programming to nearby pools, including the one proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The therapeutic pool component of Woodbridge Pool should remain open.		●	●	●
Age-specific Activity Spaces (Youth, Older Adults)	30. Continue to accommodate age-specific activities (e.g., pre-school, youth, older adults, etc.) in major community centres and neighbourhood hubs through a focus on flexible multi-use spaces . Dedicated spaces may also be provided, but should only be provided where justified by demand and operational requirements.	●	●	●	High
	31. Make Vaughan an “age-friendly” city recognized by the World Health Organization. This will require an action plan for ensuring that municipal policies, services, and infrastructure enable people of all ages – particularly older adults – to be active in their community.	●	●		Medium
Fitness Centres / Active Living Spaces	32. Review options for stand-alone / storefront older adult centres that are suffering from declining membership and utilization. New stand-alone older adult centres are not recommended.	●			Medium
	33. Include an equipment-based fitness centre as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017/18.		●		High
	34. Include an equipment-based fitness centre as part of the major community centre proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre around the year 2021.		●		High
Fitness Centres / Active Living Spaces	35. Ensure that all municipal fitness centres have sufficient studio / multi-use activity rooms to accommodate the growing demand for health and wellness programs. Expansions or reconfigurations to existing facilities may be required to address shortfalls.	●	●	●	High
	36. Continue to develop innovative and engaging fitness and active living programming that responds to the needs of the growing and evolving population.		●	●	Medium

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Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Gymnasiums	37. Include a gymnasium as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 11 in 2015/16.	●			High
	38. Include a gymnasium as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017/18.		●		High
	39. Include a gymnasium as part of the major community centre proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre around the year 2021.		●		High
	40. Consider designing gymnasiums as part of proposed neighbourhood hubs (e.g., Kleinburg, Block 27/North Maple, Vaughan Mills, etc.).		●	●	High
Indoor Bocce	41. Continue to seek and facilitate reliable access to school board gymnasiums through joint use agreements.	●	●	●	High
	42. No additional indoor bocce courts are recommended at this time. Monitoring of usage and membership trends at existing facilities is recommended.	●	●	●	Low
Other Indoor Recreational Spaces	43. In evaluating municipal involvement in specialized indoor facilities and/or unsolicited proposals , consider the seven questions from the Council-approved Program Review framework and require proponents to prepare comprehensive business plans (completed to the City's satisfaction) to enable the evaluation.	●	●	●	High
	44. Consider low risk municipal participation in a community partnership for a seasonal indoor tennis facility (air-supported structure) that maximizes use of an outdoor court complex. Such a project would require a favourable assessment through the Program Review framework and appropriate partnership agreements.	●			Low

Table ES-3: Outdoor Recreation Facility Recommendations (See Section 9)

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Recreational Trails	45. Develop a Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Strategy 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> .	●			High
	46. Seek opportunities to create a linked network of recreational trails through the integration of woodlots, open spaces, and parks, as well as loop trails within parks and open spaces.	●	●	●	High
	47. Work with the TRCA and other partners to undertake a risk assessment and explore options for addressing maintenance of public trails.	●			Medium
	48. Improve the quality and quantity of signage, mapping, and promotion of recreational trails in Vaughan.	●	●	●	High
	49. Utilize 51(25)(b) of the <i>Planning Act</i> to require the conveyance of pedestrian and bicycle pathways as part of subdivision applications.	●	●	●	High
Soccer Fields	50. Develop 38 additional fields by 2031 (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.	●	●	●	High
	51. Identify opportunities to adjust the dimensions of existing fields 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.	●			High
Ball Diamonds	52. Assess existing fields to determine the feasibility of expanding up to four junior and/or senior fields to meet adult slo-pitch requirements in the short-term.	●			High
	53. In addition to those projects identified in the City's park development capital plan, consider options for developing adult ball diamonds (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.	●	●		Medium

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Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Ball Diamonds (continued)	54. Explore opportunities to convert or repurpose underutilized and low quality junior or t-ball diamonds 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.	●	●	●	Medium
Other Sports Fields	55. Continue with plans to develop multi-use fields (football, rugby, lacrosse, etc.) at Agostino Park and the proposed North Maple Regional Park.	●	●		High
	56. Seek to develop a proper cricket pitch 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.	●	●	●	Medium
Tennis & Basketball Courts (outdoor)	57. Undertake an “ observation project ” 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.	●			Medium
	58. Develop up to 25 new tennis courts 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.	●	●	●	Medium
	59. Develop up to 15 new basketball courts and/or play courts 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.	●	●	●	Medium
Skateboard Parks and Skate Zones	60. Develop three additional (major) skateboard parks 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.	●	●		High
	61. Develop five or more additional (minor) skate zones 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 underserved (e.g., Woodbridge) and/or growing (e.g., Kleinburg, northwest Vellore, VMC), with consideration being given to equitable distribution.	●	●	●	High
	62. Engage local youth and the skateboarding community when designing skateboard parks.	●	●	●	High

ACTIVE TOGETHER MASTER PLAN
Parks, Recreation & Libraries

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Outdoor Aquatics	63. Develop approximately 13 additional waterplay facilities 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.	●	●	●	High
	64. Perform minimal lifecycle investments to the Thornhill outdoor pool 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.	●	●	●	Low
Playgrounds	65. Provide playgrounds within 500-metres 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.	●	●	●	High
	66. Install one to two outdoor fitness stations 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.	●	●	●	Medium
Off-Leash Dog Parks	67. Develop a second off-leash dog park in an area west of Highway 400 in the short-term. Sponsorship from an affiliated organization is recommended to assist with park management.	●			High
	68. Develop off-leash dog parks in the District Parks proposed for Blocks 35 and 59 (both are in employment areas).		●	●	Medium
Outdoor Skating Rinks	69. Explore options for establishing smaller, more localized off-leash areas 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.		●	●	Medium
	70. Develop a total of 4 to 5 outdoor artificial rinks , 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).	●	●	●	Medium
Outdoor Bocce	71. Play courts may be considered where there is community support for maintenance of the winter natural rink and there is a need for outdoor basketball opportunities.	●	●	●	Medium
	72. Track usage of outdoor bocce courts to determine if any can be declared surplus and/or re-purposed for other recreational requirements. Continue with plans to re-purpose outdoor bocce courts at Fr. Ermanno Bulfon District Park .	●			Low

ACTIVE TOGETHER MASTER PLAN
Parks, Recreation & Libraries

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Community Food Gardens	73. Develop a policy 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.	●			High
Picnic Areas	74. As opportunities permit, establish additional picnic sites (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).	●	●	●	High

Table ES-4: Library Facility Recommendations (see Section 10)

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Library Facilities	75. Giving consideration to the recommendations of this Active Together Master Plan, refresh the Library's Facilities Development Plan , with a continued focus on accessibility, equity, integration with other civic facilities, flexible design, and customer service.	●			High
	76. Continue to develop a Library Branch in the North Thornhill Community Centre in 2013-14.	●			High
	77. Continue with plans to develop a Resource Library at the Civic Centre in 2014-15.	●			High
	78. Develop a Library Branch at the Vellore Village Community Centre in 2014-15.	●			High
	79. Undertake a study in 2015-16 (once the Civic Centre Resource Library has been open for a period of time) to determine future uses for the Maple Library .	●			Medium
	80. Develop a Library Branch in the community centre proposed for Block 11 in 2016-17.	●	●		High
	81. Develop a Library Branch in the community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017-18.		●		High
	82. In 2013-14, seek to secure land/space for a Resource Library in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre . Timing of construction will depend on a number of factors, but is currently recommended around the year 2021.	●	●		High

ACTIVE TOGETHER MASTER PLAN
Parks, Recreation & Libraries

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Library Facilities (continued)	83. Explore opportunities to relocate the Kleinburg Library to create a larger Library Branch (possible co-location with a neighbourhood hub) beyond 2021.			●	High
	84. Explore opportunities to develop a Library Branch in the neighbourhood hub proposed for the Vaughan Mills area beyond 2026.			●	High
	85. Address future service gaps with the development of 2 to 3 Library Branches beyond 2026 (e.g., Block 27, etc.).			●	High

Table ES-5: Active Together Master Plan Implementation Recommendations (see Section 11)

Subject Area	Recommendation	Proposed Timing			Priority
		2013-16	2017-21	2022-31	
Implementation & Financial Considerations	86. As a general principle, encourage partnerships and sponsorships in the provision and delivery of facilities and services, in keeping with the framework outlined in the Council-approved Program Review and other municipal policies, as amended from time to time.	●	●	●	High
	87. Where appropriate and consistent with municipal policies and priorities, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches to achieve capital and operating cost recovery levels, such as (but not limited to) surcharges, fundraising, grants, Section 37 bonusing, and various forms of collaboration. The Recreation User Fee Surcharge recommended in the City's 2012 <i>Long-Range Financial Master Plan</i> is a good example of an alternative funding approach intended to offset infrastructure maintenance and/or replacement.	●	●	●	High
	88. Review the status of the Active Together Master Plan and priority projects as part of the City's annual business planning/budgeting process.	●	●	●	High
Monitoring & Updating	89. Conduct feasibility studies, business plans, site assessments, and/or public engagement prior to developing or expanding major parks, recreation, and library facilities to ensure that the project is aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capacities.	●	●	●	High
	90. Implement a system for the regular monitoring and reporting of the Active Together Master Plan, including participation rates and other performance measures.	●	●	●	High
	91. Undertake a comprehensive five-year review of the 2013 Active Together Master Plan in 2018, in collaboration with the 5-year Development Charges Study.		●		High

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVE TOGETHER MASTER PLAN

Parks, recreation, and libraries are essential to the individual wellbeing of the City's residents and the cohesive development of Vaughan's communities. They are fundamental building blocks in advancing the overall quality of life in Vaughan and their maintenance, improvement, and enhancement is a primary objective of the City's long-range planning.

In November 2008, the City of Vaughan approved the Active Together Master Plan (ATMP), the goal of which was to *"provide an action plan that leads to the development of future municipal parks, facilities and services in a responsible manner."* The 2008 ATMP was designed to be a living document that would be able to adapt to changes within the dynamic City of Vaughan. Although the Plan contained a long-term projection of needs, it was recommended that it be reviewed every five years and updated as necessary. Due to the significant growth in Vaughan, changes in planning and land use policies, the City's progress in the development of new facilities, and shifts in community needs, the time has come to review and update the 2008 ATMP.

The primary objective of this Active Together Master Plan Review & Update is to reassess and make recommendations on facility and park requirements for the next eight to ten years, taking into account the changes that have occurred in Vaughan since the approval of the 2008 Plan. However, this is not simply an administrative task – this Plan does not just look at what has been done in the past and build upon existing standards of provision, it recognizes the ways that Vaughan is evolving and, where necessary, makes adjustments to respond to changing needs within a sustainable framework. In this regard, the 2013 ATMP builds upon Vaughan's guiding documents, including Vaughan Vision 2020, Green Directions Vaughan, and the City's new Official Plan.

The 2008 Active Together Master Plan has served the community well; however, much has changed in the time since the Plan was approved, including (but not limited to):

- continued growth and development – the City remains one of the fastest growing communities in Canada;
- approval of a new Official Plan and new directions for growth; for example, the City is planning for several higher density development areas (e.g., Vaughan Metropolitan Centre), which is exerting pressure on existing and proposed parkland and recreational amenities;
- changing demographics, particularly related to ethnicity, socio-economics, and aging;
- the preparation of the Creative Together Cultural Plan for Vaughan;
- the development of a new community centre (North Thornhill) and expansion of several fitness centres, along with the planning for new libraries; despite the City's success with its multi-use facility model, there is increasing interest in neighbourhood-level facilities;
- significant land acquisitions, such as North Maple Regional Park and MacMillan Farm;
- reconsideration of the Library's Facilities Development Plan and the impact of technology;

- continued expansion of recreation and library programs and services, as well as increasing expectations from residents in terms of quality customer service;
- emerging interest in activities such as off-leash dog walking, indoor tennis, rugby, football, picnic areas, etc., as well as an increasing emphasis on health, wellness and active living; and
- there is also an ever-pressing need for “sustainable” plans with planning strategies that seek a balance between budget resources and service provision, recognizing that parks, recreation and libraries cannot and should not operate at full cost recovery levels.

1.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

The City of Vaughan is a cosmopolitan urban centre located in the Region of York, centrally placed within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The City is bounded by the City of Brampton and Town of Caledon to the west, the Township of King to the north, the Towns of Markham and Richmond Hill to the east, and the City of Toronto to the south. Provincial Highways 400, 407, and 427 – as well as several regional roads and public transit – connect Vaughan to the rest of the GTA and other major urban centres across Ontario. The City is firmly establishing itself as the gateway for economic activity in the Greater Toronto Area.

In the past 20 years, Vaughan has experienced unprecedented growth in its residential, industrial, and commercial sectors. Much of its appeal is due to low taxes, a readily available labour force, and access to major transportation routes. In fact, among municipalities with over 100,000 residents, Vaughan was the second fastest growing Canadian city between 2006 and 2011¹. For the purposes of this ATMP, the current (as of December 31, 2012) population is estimated at 311,200².

Figure 1: The City of Vaughan in the Region of York



Given the City’s impressive and continued growth, there is an urgency to define infrastructure requirements in intensifying and emerging communities to ensure that sufficient land is set aside, funding is allocated, and that partnerships can be established.

¹ Statistics Canada. 2012. Population and dwelling counts, for Canada and census subdivisions (municipalities) with 5,000-plus population, 2011 and 2006 censuses (table). Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables. 2011 Census.

² York Region Population Estimate. York Region Office of the CAO, Long Range Planning Branch. December 31, 2012.

1.3 ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

This Active Together Master Plan addresses short and long-term parks and facility requirements for the City of Vaughan. In doing so, it will help guide the work plans of several municipal departments and Vaughan Public Libraries; a brief description of each is provided below (source: 2011 Department Business Plans & Budget Summaries):

The Recreation and Culture Department is responsible for the provision of leisure opportunities, offering a full range of recreation services and amenities including, but not limited to, indoor aquatics, arenas, fitness centres, gymnasiums, bocce courts, and activity rooms. Leisure opportunities are also enhanced by a variety of cultural services such as arts and cultural events and exhibitions. The Department provides several engaging recreation and culture programs that are provided by a team of staff, volunteers, and community partners as outlined in the seasonal Vaughan Recreation Guide. Furthermore, the Recreation and Culture Department provides a number of events that celebrates and enhances Vaughan's sense of community, such as Winterfest, Concerts in the Park, and Canada Day, recognize community volunteers through the Volunteer Recognition Awards, and other fundraising events.

The Building and Facilities Department oversees the planning, design, and construction, as well as the operation and maintenance of all City of Vaughan owned buildings. This includes community centres, heritage buildings, fire stations, and libraries.

The Parks & Forestry Operations Department is committed to providing quality, safe and functional parks, sports fields, playscapes, and open space trail facilities that meet the outdoor recreational needs of the community. This includes but is not limited to grass cutting, maintenance of playscapes, and floral displays throughout the City.

The Parks Development Department administers and provides innovative planning, design and construction of all municipal parks, playgrounds and open space systems throughout the City of Vaughan.

Vaughan Public Libraries provide a valuable service to the residents of Vaughan, reaching out to people of all ages to promote learning and community education. More importantly, the Libraries are centres of community activity. By participating in a wide variety of innovative programs and services, residents can become more involved in community life and explore the rich cultural and social diversity that makes Vaughan such a great city to live in. Vaughan Public Libraries has kept pace with the changes in Vaughan growing alongside the City, with two resource libraries, five branches and a website equipped to meet the needs of our diverse community.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

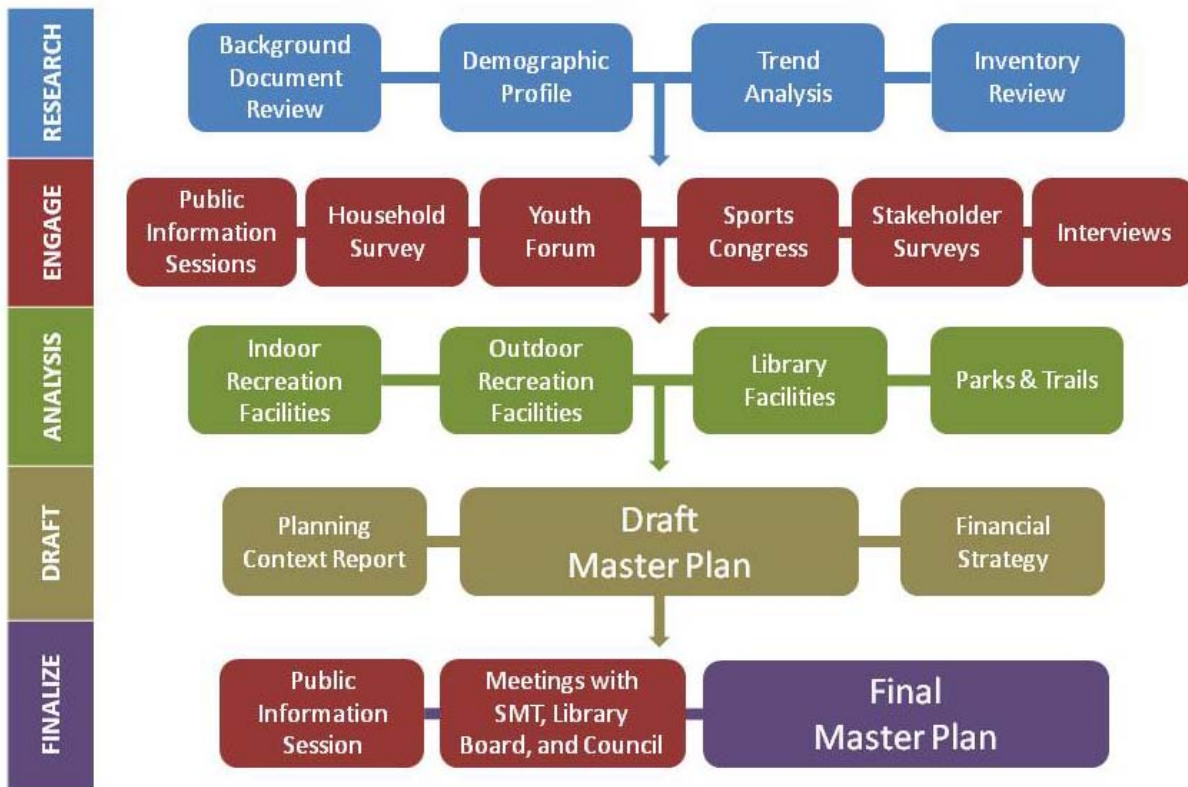
The 2013 Active Together Master Plan builds upon the previous plan with a renewed emphasis on the sustainable provision of parks, recreation, and library facilities. Specifically, the following tasks have been completed:

- the per capita facility and park supplies have been updated, along with key population characteristics;

- trends and local participation data have been reviewed within the Vaughan context;
- key municipal reports and planning documents (including the new Official Plan and various secondary plans, Vaughan Vision 2020, Green Directions Vaughan, Long Range Financial Plan, Development Charges Background Study, Creative Together Plan, Accessibility Plan, etc.) have been assessed, as have best practices from other municipalities;
- the facility provision targets from the previous ATMP have been reassessed and adjusted where necessary;
- recommendations from the 2008 Plan have been reviewed and updated to reflect current circumstances and needs, with a focus on new strategies to address emerging issues; and
- user groups, stakeholders, the general public, and municipal officials and staff have been extensively engaged in the identification of issues, community needs, and future strategies.

The following graphic outlines the considerable research, analysis, and engagement undertaken as part of this Active Together Master Plan.

Figure 2: Planning Process for the ATMP Review & Update



It bears noting that arts and cultural services and facilities are not directly addressed within this 2013 ATMP as the City prepared a separate *Creative Together Plan* in 2010. Furthermore, the City continues to implement the *Physical Activity Strategy* that was contained in the 2008 ATMP; notwithstanding this 2013 ATMP, the 2008 *Physical Activity Strategy* remains in effect. Similar to the 2008 ATMP, there are instances where the Update contains guidance and/or high level recommendations relating to programming as a result of the inherent relationship with facilities and parks. A detailed review of programming and service delivery is beyond the scope of the ATMP.

1.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The 2013 Active Together Master Plan is organized as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
Provides an overview of the purpose and scope of the Active Together Master Plan.
- Section 2: Background Review
Identifies foundational reports and documents completed since the 2008 Active Together Master Plan, including a status update of key recommendations from the previous plan.
- Section 3: Community Profile
Contains an overview of the City's socio-demographic characteristics, population projections, and their relevance to the Active Together Master Plan.
- Section 4: Public Engagement
Examines public and stakeholder input relative to the current state of parks, recreation, and library facilities and services in the City, as well as future needs, opportunities, and challenges.
- Section 5: Activity Trends and Best Practices
Identifies major activity, park/facility provision, and service delivery trends for consideration in Vaughan.
- Section 6: Guiding Principles & Methodology
Identifies key considerations for the City and Library when designing, funding, constructing, and operating parks, recreation, and library facilities. Also discusses the methodology behind assessing facility and parkland needs, as well as notes about the municipal inventory.
- Section 7: Parkland Assessment
Evaluates the municipal parkland system and accompanying policy framework and identifies future requirements based on factors such as public input, provision targets, and geographic distribution.
- Section 8: Indoor Recreation Facility Assessment
Examines the current supply of indoor recreation facilities and identifies future requirements based on factors such as public input, provision targets, and geographic distribution.
- Section 9: Outdoor Recreation Facility Assessment
Examines the current supply of outdoor recreation facilities and identifies future requirements based on factors such as public input, provision targets, and geographic distribution.
- Section 10: Library Facility Assessment
Examines the current supply of public library facilities and identifies future requirements based on factors such as public input, provision targets, and geographic distribution.
- Section 11: Active Together Master Plan Implementation
Identifies key resource implications of implementing the Plan, along with a process for monitoring and updating the ATMP.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND REVIEW

Municipal, regional, and provincial planning documents and research reports relevant to the 2013 Active Together Master Plan have been reviewed to provide contextual information. This section discusses the 2008 Active Together Master Plan in particular detail and also briefly examines other documents that may provide guidance to the 2013 ATMP. A more detailed summary of these documents and their relevance to the Plan is contained within [Appendix A](#).

2.1 2008 ACTIVE TOGETHER MASTER PLAN – IMPLEMENTATION & ACHIEVEMENTS

The previous City of Vaughan *Active Together Master Plan* was approved by City Council in November 2008. This plan is “an integrated long-term strategy that guides planning for parks, recreation, culture and library facilities and services until the City’s ultimate build-out.” The 2008 ATMP provided support for the Official Plan and Development Charges background studies and is the foundation upon which this Active Together Master Plan Review and Update is based.

The City and Vaughan Public Libraries have accomplished much since the 2008 Active Together Master Plan was approved, including (but not limited to) the following:

Indoor Recreation Facilities & Libraries

- The **North Thornhill Community Centre** and **District Park** (Block 10) opened in 2010. The community centre contains an indoor pool, fitness centre, gymnasium, youth room, multi-use rooms, etc.
- Enhancements were made to the provision of municipal fitness facilities: (1) a cycling room was added to the **Al Palladini Community Centre**; (2) the **Vellore Village Community Centre** fitness centre addition was completed; and (3) an expansion to the **Fr. Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre** fitness centre is currently being planned.
- The **Maple Arena** was refurbished including (but not limited to) retrofitting of the bowling lanes. In addition, retrofitting of the **Al Palladini and Garnet A. Williams Community Centre Arenas** was also completed (made possible with Infrastructure Stimulus Funding). Accessibility improvements (e.g., customer service counters, doors, etc.) were made at several facilities.
- In 2011, nets were added to two of the four lanes bocce lanes at the Dufferin Clark Community Centre to develop the City’s first set of **indoor cricket practice lanes**. The nets can be raised; allowing for dual-purpose play for bocce and cricket with minimal impact to the current users.
- The City has acquired land for the proposed **Block 11 Community Centre and Library**. The 2008 ATMP also recommended the acquisition of land for future community centres in Block 40/41/42, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, and the Long Term Residential Growth Area. Planning for the proposed community centre and library in the **Vaughan Metropolitan Centre** area has recently been initiated.
- The 2008 ATMP recommended an aggressive library building programme to help keep pace with population growth and resident expectations. The RFP for the design of the proposed **Civic Centre Resource Library** was recently approved by Council, with construction anticipated in

2014. In addition, Vaughan Public Libraries anticipated construction of a **library branch at the North Thornhill Community Centre**, to begin in 2013. The 2008 ATMP also recommended library branch development as part of the community centres proposed for Block 40/41/42, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, and the Long Term Residential Growth Area (two separate locations).

- Vaughan Public Libraries has created and/or expanded teen spaces at two libraries, made accessibility improvements to the **Kleinburg Library**, and refurbished **Bathurst Clark Resource Library** to improve accessibility and enhance customer service.

Parkland & Park Amenities

- As part of the new City of Vaughan Official Plan, a new **parkland classification hierarchy and park typology** was established, adding “Public Square”.
- The City has continued to acquire strategically-located active/passive parkland, including (but not limited to) **North Maple Regional Park** (including recently issuing an Expression of Interest for a public-private partnership), **MacMillan Farm**, surplus school board land on **Confederation Parkway**, and many new neighbourhood parks (most notably in the **Carrville** area, which was identified as a priority in the 2008 ATMP). The City anticipates preparing a Parkland/Greenland Acquisition Strategy in the near future to ensure acquisition of adequate land base for outdoor recreation.
- A **waterplay facility** was developed in North Thornhill District Park (Block 10). Several new “**skate zones**” have been designed and implemented. In addition, the City’s first **Off Leash Area** was completed as a pilot project in 2009 within Concord Thornhill Regional Park.
- **Artificial turf soccer fields** were developed at Sonoma Heights Community Park and McNaughton Park. An artificial turf soccer field is currently under construction at Concord Thornhill Regional Park and a minimum of one planned for at North Maple Regional Park.
- Several **9v9 soccer fields** have recently been converted from mini/senior fields to assist local soccer clubs in addressing the new requirements brought about by the Long Term Play Development Model.
- The City continues to make the implementation of key **trails and off-road pathways** as articulated in the City’s 2007 *Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan* (and the 2012 *Transportation Master Plan*) a high priority. Funding is allocated annually for the creation of pedestrian corridors and additional connections.
- In 2011, the City of Vaughan entered into a partnership agreement with York Region and the TRCA to manage **Baker Woods**, now part of Sugarbush Heritage Park. Baker Woods has international, provincial, and municipal natural heritage protection designations, which preserves Vaughan’s oldest woodlot, dating back to 1816.
- Construction of **outdoor fitness equipment** at Jack Pine and Jersey Creek Park with one currently under construction at Village Green.

Service Delivery

- Since 2008, a number of key studies aligned with the Official Plan Review and Vaughan Vision 2020 strategic initiatives were prepared in the area of **arts and culture**. These studies included: Creative Together Cultural Plan for Vaughan; Diversity Strategy; Art Gallery Feasibility Study; Pierre Berton Discovery Centre Feasibility Study; and Built, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Landscape Studies. Most of these studies are now in the implementation stage, however, some action items are reliant on funding for implementation. In addition, the City continues to expand its arts and culture programs at the City Playhouse Theatre and other sites.
- The 2008 ATMP contained a *Physical Activity Strategy* aimed at fostering higher levels of physical activity by Vaughan residents. Implementation of the **Active Together Physical Activity Strategy** continues to be a high priority for the City and has led to the creation of several new programs, events, initiatives, and partnerships aimed at increasing the physical activity levels of Vaughan residents.
- The City established the **RecAssist Subsidy Program** in 2009. RecAssist subsidizes the cost of recreation and culture programs for low income individuals and families in Vaughan through fundraised dollars and is administered by the Recreation and Culture Department. The City also partners with the Vaughan Community Health Centre to provide programming for low income residents.
- In 2011, the City formed the annual **Vaughan Sports Congress** to provide an opportunity for sports organizations to gather and provide input on existing facilities and future sporting needs. The annual Sports Congress was held in October 2012 to solicit input for the Active Together Master Plan Review and Update.
- The City established the **Youth Forum** in 2010, an annual event that brings youth from local schools together to educate and inform. This event was held most recently in November 2012 and was utilized to gather input to be considered as part of the Active Together Master Plan Review and Update.
- The City updated its **Community Service Organization (CSO) Policy** and **Fair Play, Facility Allocation Policy**. The CSO Policy establishes the benefits becoming a recognized CSO including, but not limited to, higher allocation priority, staff support, fundraising, and subsidized rates. The Facility Allocation Policy establishes the process for allocating, distributing, and administering the use of City-owned facilities to ensure that allocation is fair, transparent, consistent, and equitable. Priority is typically given to the City, followed by CSOs, residents, commercial groups, and non-residents.
- The **Older Adult Guidelines** were updated in May 2011.
- The City initiated a corporate-wide **Program Review** to examine the City's programs and services and validate their alignment with the City's vision, respect for taxpayer's dollars and community interest.
- Additional innovations were introduced including, but not limited to, **performance measure-based report cards** and **community outreach brochures**.

2.2 OTHER DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

A number of other documents provided by the City and/or available on the City's website were reviewed by the Consultant during Phase 1 of the 2013 ATMP, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Planning Legislation & Documents: Ontario Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, York Region Official Plan, City of Vaughan Official Plan
- Corporate Documents & Policies: Strategic Plan, Green Directions Vaughan, City of Vaughan Citizen Survey, Development Charges Background Study, Accessibility Plan, Partnership Policy, Facility Allocation Policy, Program Review, Social Services Study
- Parks & Trails: Cash-in-lieu of Parkland Dedication for High Density Residential Development, Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Study, York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan
- Libraries: Vaughan Public Libraries Strategic Plan and Position Papers, User Analysis, various guidelines and best practices
- Other Reports: Diversity – Vaughan's Greatest Asset, Creative Together – A Cultural Plan for the City of Vaughan, Youth in Action, Living in York Region

A summary of these documents and their relevance to the 2013 Active Together Master Plan is contained within Appendix A.

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY PROFILE

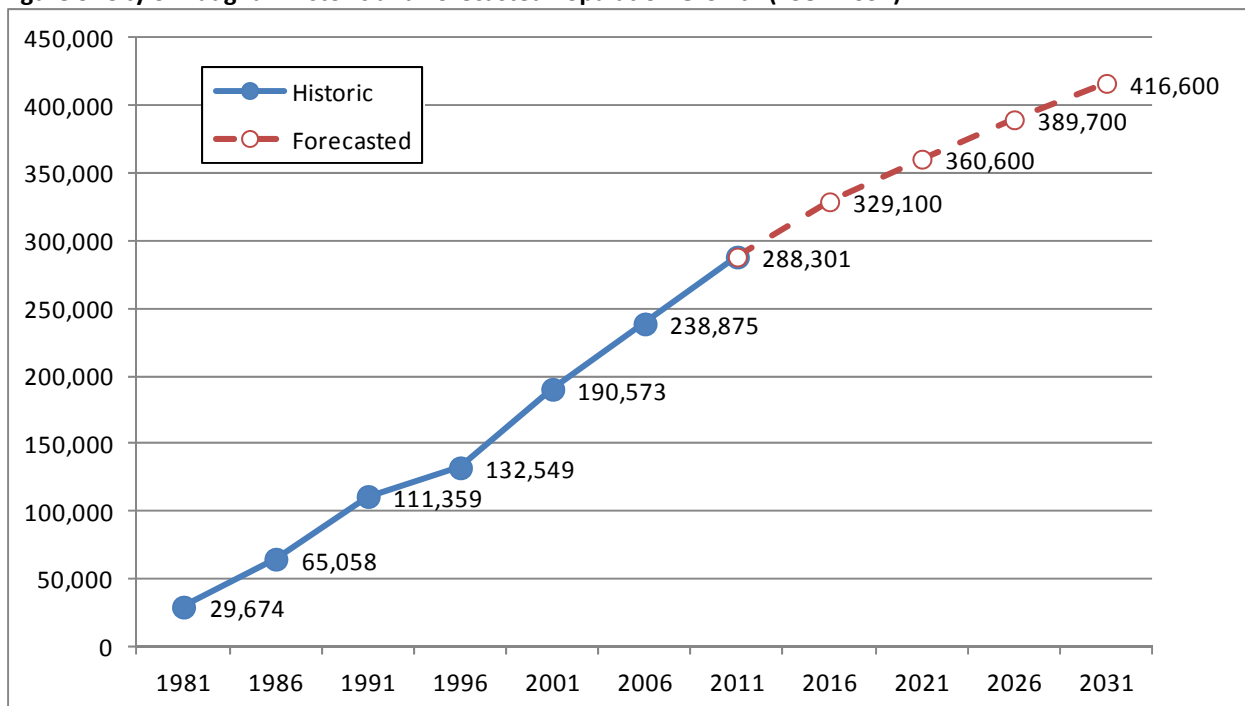
This section contains an overview of demographic characteristics which are applicable to the analysis of Vaughan’s parks, recreation, and library facilities. Identifying who lives in Vaughan and how this community profile will differ in the future is essential to understanding and responding to local needs.

Note: While the 2011 Census collected information regarding population and household composition, changes made to the census-taking, combined with the timing of data releases, means that data on income, education, ethnicity, or place of work is not currently available. In these cases, 2006 Census data has been referenced.

3.1 HISTORIC AND FORECASTED POPULATION FIGURES

The City has seen rapid growth in the last thirty years, growing ten-fold between 1981 and 2011. The following figure illustrates that Vaughan has consistently experienced rapid growth since 1981 and it is anticipated that this level of growth will continue to 2031 (albeit at a somewhat slower rate), reaching a population of 416,600 according to the 2010 Vaughan Official Plan. At present, the forecasts only extend to 2031, making longer-term planning difficult. As of December 31, 2012, the Region of York estimates the City of Vaughan’s population to be approximately 311,200.

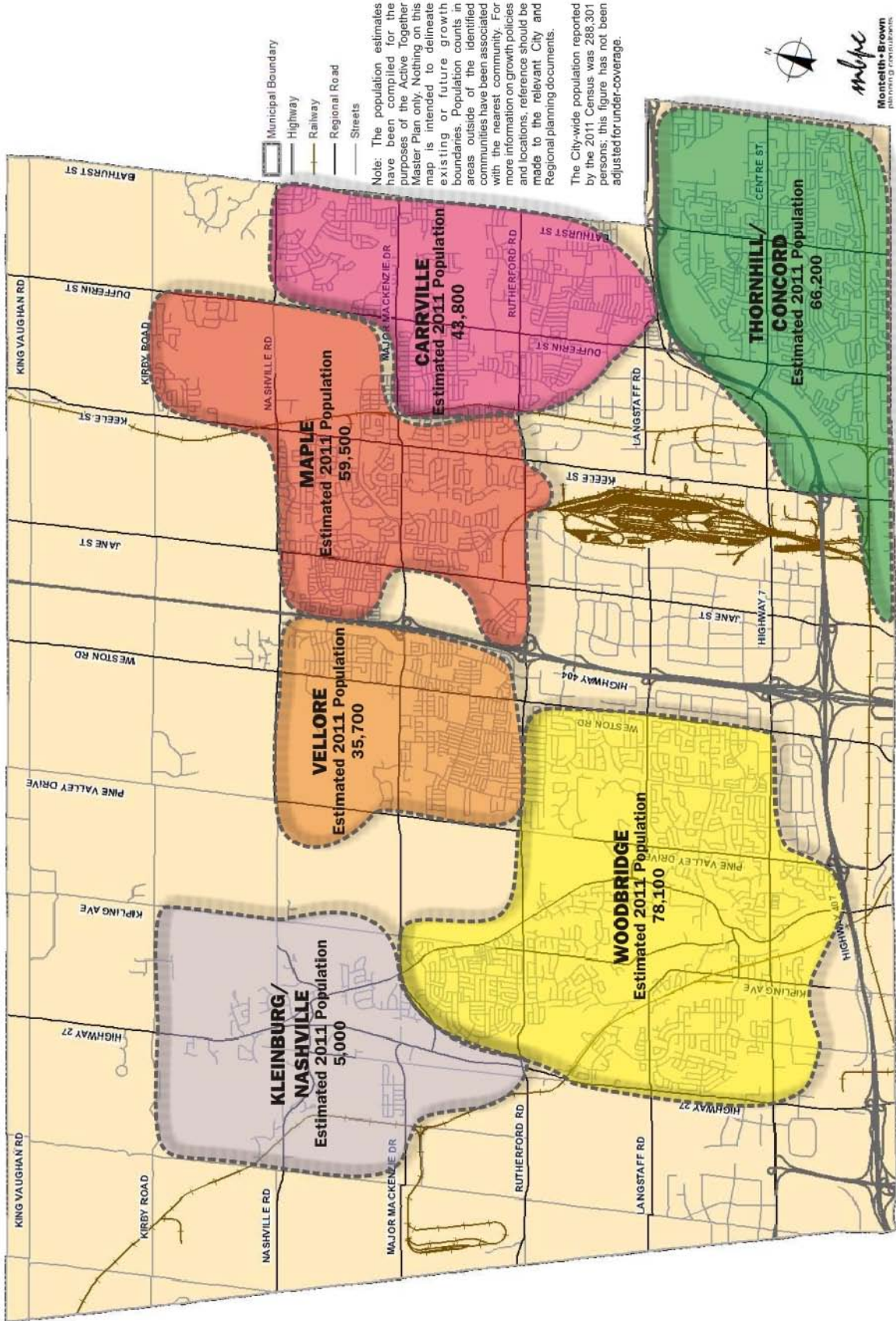
Figure 3: City of Vaughan Historic and Forecasted Population Growth (1981-2031)



Sources: 1981 to 2011 – Statistics Canada Census Data; 2016 to 2026 – York Region (2012); 2031 – City of Vaughan Official Plan

For the purposes of the 2013 ATMP, Vaughan has been divided into six communities, as seen on **Map 1** on the following page; note: this map is not intended to depict current or future growth boundaries.

Map 1: 2011 Population by Community
(Persons living outside of the identified communities have been associated with the nearest community)



Source: Region of York, 2012; Dissemination Area Boundary File, 2011 Census; Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-169-X; Statistics Canada, 2012; Census Profile, 2011 Census; Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24 2012.

Current forecasts suggest that Vaughan is expected to grow by 105,400 persons between 2013 and 2031. To one degree or another, this growth will be accommodated in all areas of the City, both through greenfield development and infill/intensification. Increases in compact dwelling types (e.g., apartments) and overall densities are expected. Vaughan's Official Plan (2010) has identified a number of corridors and mixed-use centres that will accommodate a 45% intensification target. This increase in compact dwelling types will have implications on the provision of municipal parks, recreation, and library facilities. Vaughan will continue to experience facility pressures, particularly in areas of intensification, coupled with the limited passive and active pursuits as higher densities are achieved, while recognizing that residents may have more access to private communal facilities in intensification areas.

The matter of when and where growth will occur is a complex issue. The City's Official Plan³ (2010) provides considerable direction in this regard; however, the precise details of development will be determined through secondary plans and site-specific applications over time. To date, several secondary plans have been completed (e.g., Vaughan Metropolitan Centre), while others are currently being prepared and some are yet to be initiated.

Map 2 on the following page illustrates the general location of Vaughan's existing communities, along with current and potential future residential growth areas (note: nothing on this map is intended to delineate existing or future growth boundaries). This information has been compiled from the 2010 Official Plan and information provided by the City's Policy Planning Department. The purpose of this map is to illustrate at a high level the general areas where future growth may occur, so that future needs can be identified through this Active Together Master Plan.

Specifically, Map 2 identifies areas of current growth, potential future greenfield development, and residential intensification areas. Additional residential growth may occur outside of the areas identified on the map; however, this growth is likely to be of a lower magnitude. Note that areas of predominantly employment growth are not shown on the map.

Much of the City's **ongoing development** was approved under OPA 600 or a pre-existing secondary plan, and is made up of primarily residential development organized around local centres. These include:

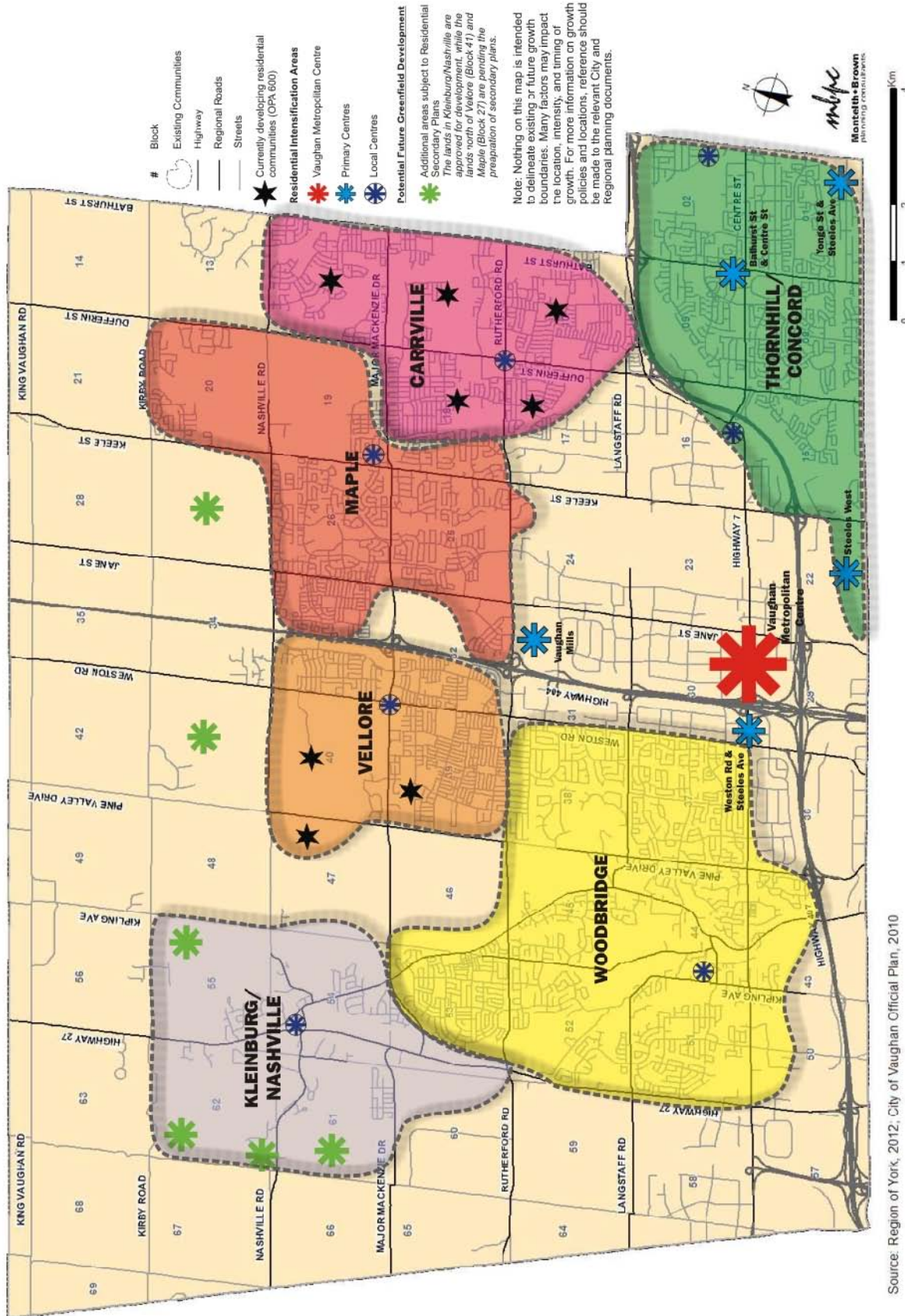
- Carrville – Blocks 10, 11, 12, 17, and 18
- Vellore – Blocks 33 West, 39, 40, and 47
- Kleinburg – Block 61 (Nashville Heights)

Vaughan's **New Community Areas** – i.e., areas of future residential growth as defined in the Vaughan Official Plan (2010) – are located in the following areas and will be the subject of secondary plans. They are to be planned as complete communities.

- Block 27 – North of the existing Maple community
- Block 41 – North of the Vellore community

³ The City of Vaughan Official Plan was adopted by Council in September 2010, modified and endorsed by Regional Council in June 2012, and subsequently appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Map 2: Current and Potential Future Residential Growth Areas



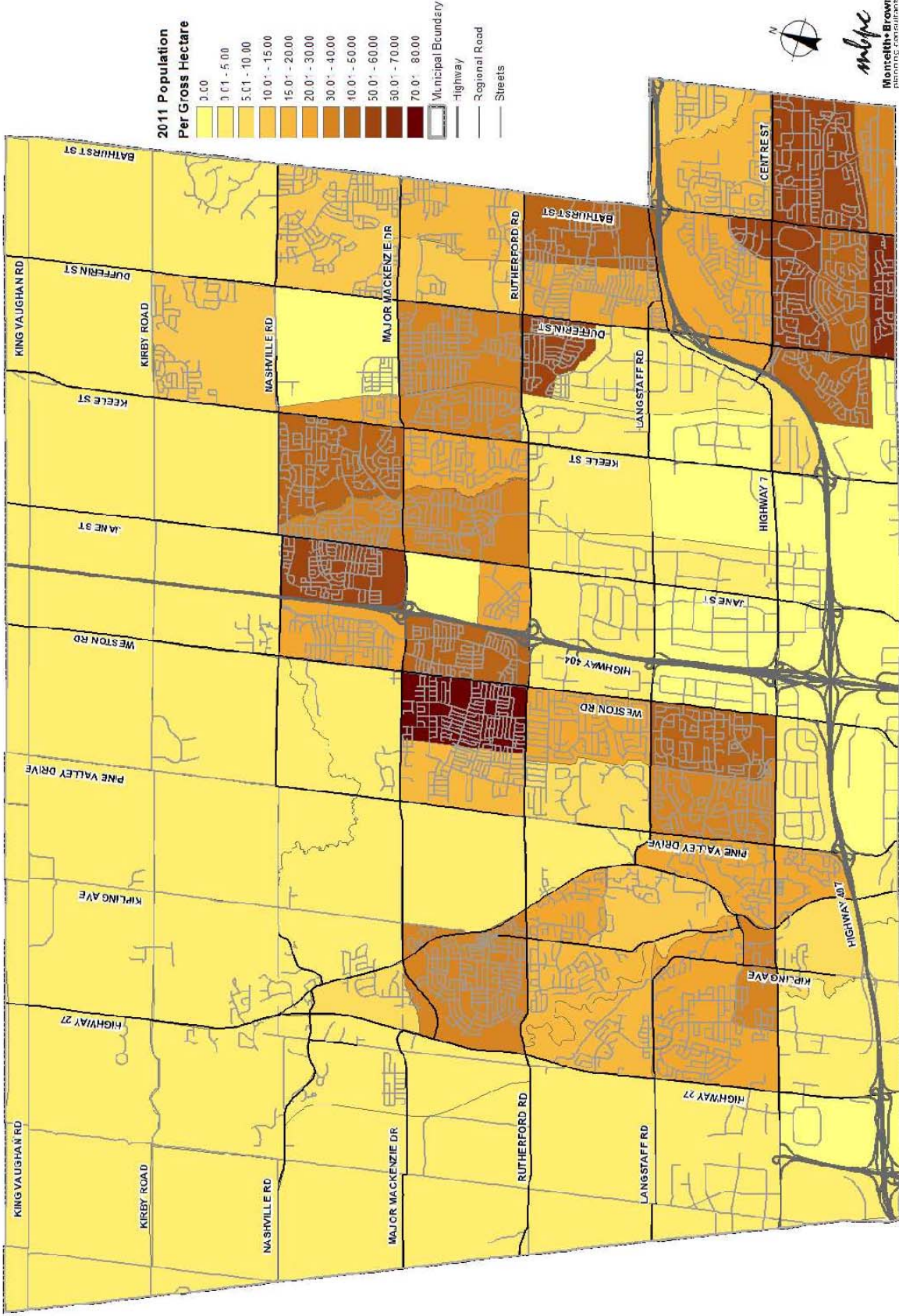
The Vaughan Official Plan (2010) also provides for a new secondary plan, which will take residential development to the northern boundaries of the original Kleinburg-Nashville Community Plan. This will permit the development of parts of Blocks 62 (Nashville Village and the Huntington Road Community) and Block 55 (the Kipling Avenue Community). This plan, the North Kleinburg-Nashville Secondary Plan, was adopted by Vaughan Council in September 2010 and has been approved by the Ontario Municipal Board.

Intensification areas will be the primary locations for the accommodation of Vaughan's 45% intensification target. They consist of a hierarchy of mixed-use centres, including:

- The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC), which will accommodate a wide range of residential, office, retail, cultural and civic uses and become the City's downtown. The VMC will be the location of the tallest buildings and most intense concentration of development. The VMC Secondary Plan was adopted by Council in September 2010 and has been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).
- Primary Centres will be locations for predominantly mixed-use high and mid-rise buildings that will be built as compact, pedestrian friendly, transit supportive and complete communities. Primary Centres that include residential development are as follows:
 - *Yonge St.-Steeles Ave. Intersection*: Currently subject to the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan, adopted by Council in September 2010. Currently appealed to the OMB.
 - *Vaughan Mills Centre*: The Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan study is currently being prepared.
 - *Weston Road and Highway 7 (west of Highway No. 400)*: The preparation of a secondary plan for this area is planned.
 - *Steeles West*: Approved under Official Plan Amendment No. 620.
 - *Bathurst St. and Centre St. (Promenade)*: Subject to a future secondary plan study.
- Local Centres will provide the mixed-use focus for their respective communities at a lower scale and more limited range of uses. There is at least one such centre in each Vaughan community. Similarly, the map identifies a number of areas that may be subject to site-specific plans for residential development.
- Additional mixed-use residential and/or employment intensification will also be examined along Primary Intensification Corridors (not shown on Map 2), including Regional Corridors (e.g., Highway 7/Centre Street and Yonge Street) and local corridors (e.g., Jane Street and Major Mackenzie Drive). Two examples currently underway are the Centre Street Study in Thornhill and the Maple GO Secondary Plan study on the north side of Major Mackenzie Drive in Maple.

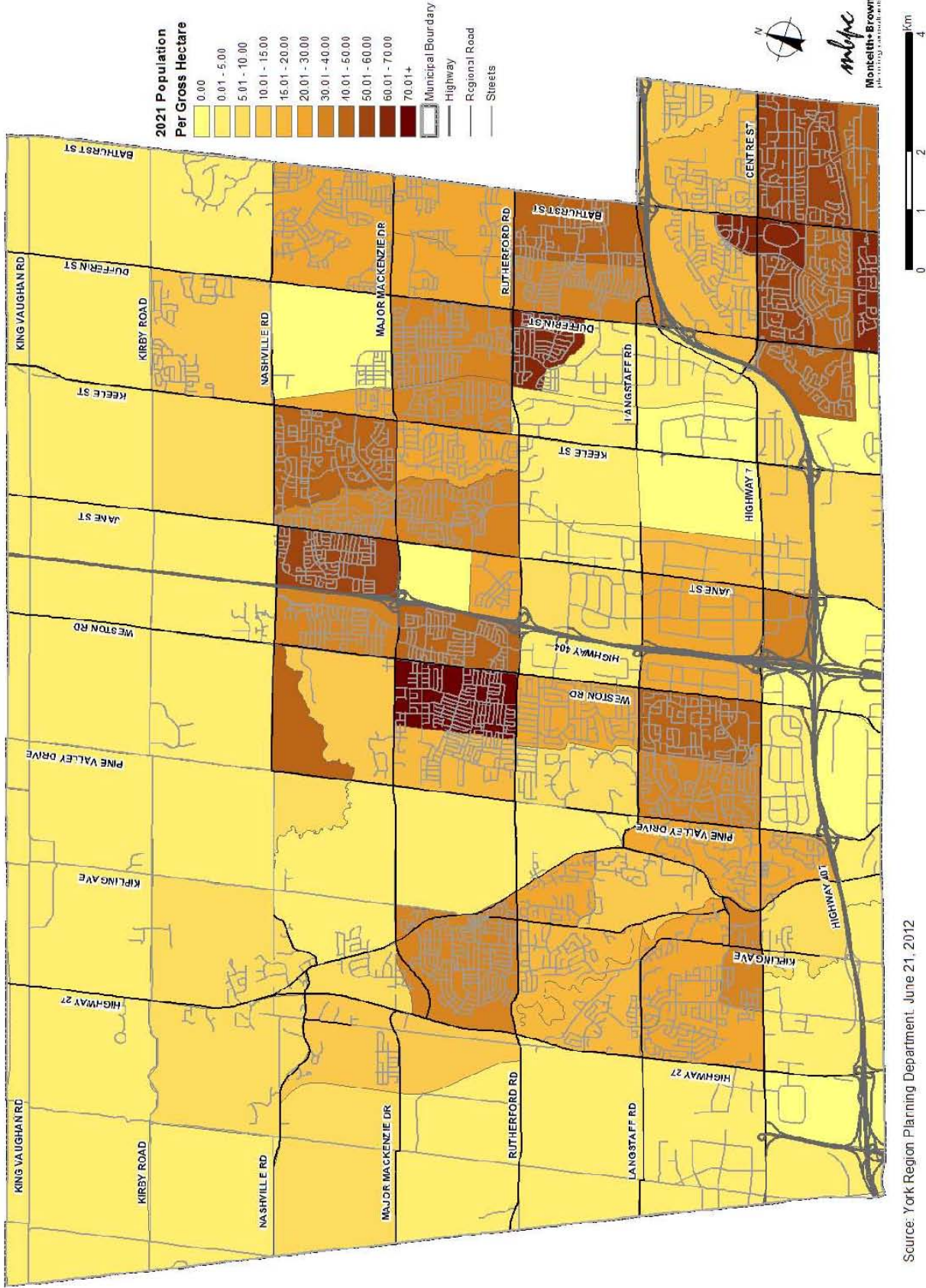
To help quantify when and where growth may occur, population forecasts generated by the Region of York have been examined. These forecasts were created for the benefit of the Region's Official Plan (2010) and represent one possible growth scenario. While they are aligned (at a regional level) to the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, they have not been adjusted to account for 2011 Census data. These forecasts will be used in concert with other demand factors, such as geographic distribution and participation trends, to assist in the identification of long-term infrastructure requirements within the context of this Plan. The unique characteristics of the centres (i.e., VMC, Primary Centres, and Local Centres) will also need to be taken into consideration, such as total population, density and demographics in arriving at the appropriate mix of services. **Maps 3, 4, and 5** illustrate population by gross density based on the Region of York's traffic zone forecasts for 2011, 2021, and 2031.

Map 3: 2011 Population Per Gross Hectare



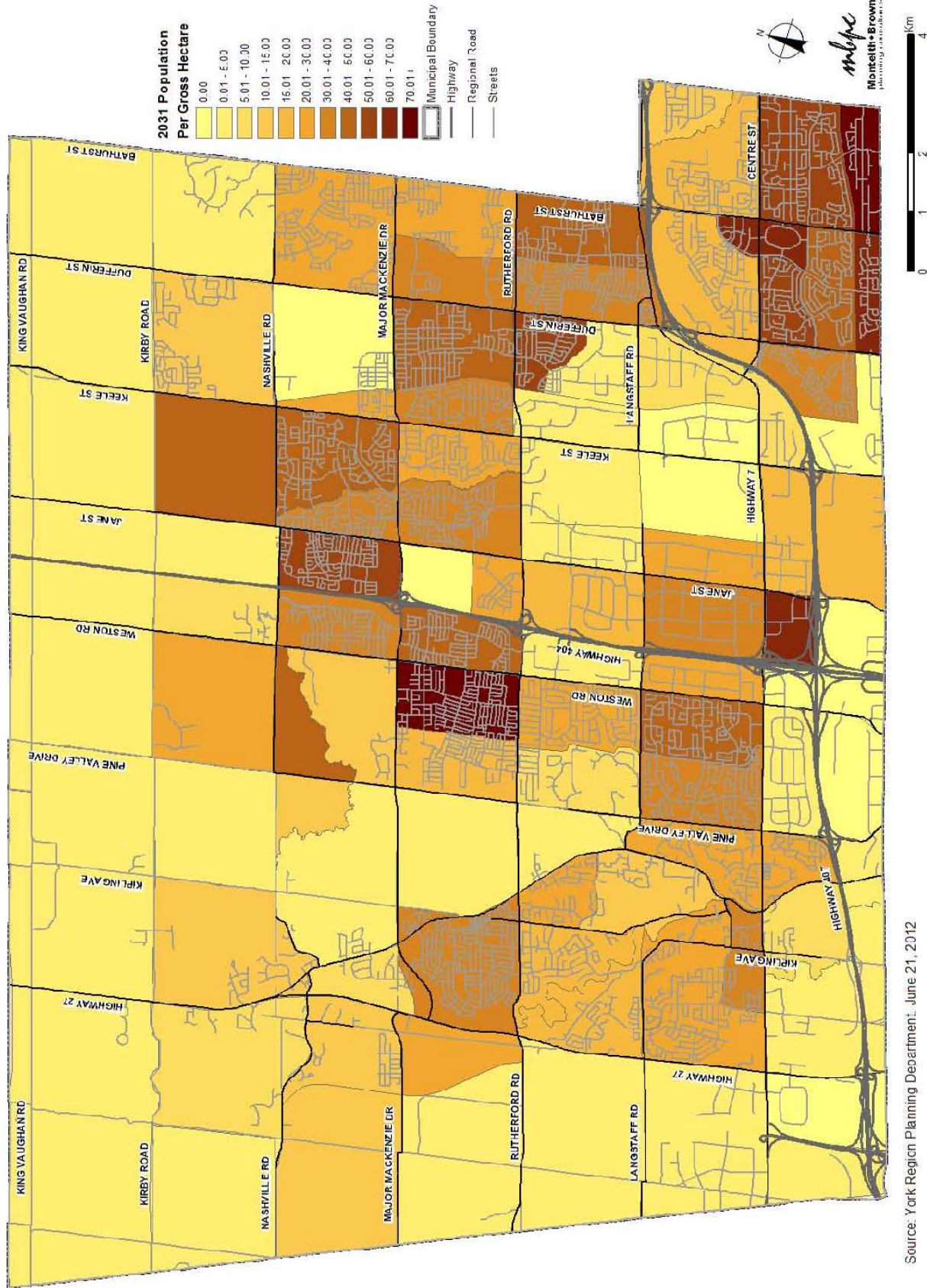
Source: York Region Planning Department, June 21, 2012

Map 4: 2021 Population Per Gross Hectare



Source: York Region Planning Department. June 21, 2012

Map 5: 2031 Population Per Gross Hectare



The community-specific population projections used in this Plan are based on the most recent traffic zone forecasts provided by the Region of York; they have been updated from the dataset contained in the 2008 ATMP. While these forecasts are consistent with Vaughan’s citywide targets to the year 2031, the location and timing of growth is more uncertain and will be impacted by a variety of factors including market conditions, availability of services, the outcomes of a number of secondary plans, ongoing appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board, and future development applications.

Although a detailed assessment of growth patterns is beyond the scope of this project, these area-specific forecasts were reviewed against the City’s “Where and How to Grow” report (June 2009); this report was used as background for the new Vaughan Official Plan and subsequent secondary plans, and thus provides a filter through which to evaluate the Region of York traffic zone forecasts. In comparing the various datasets, as well as major development applications approved since the growth forecasts were derived, it is apparent that **the population target for the Thornhill/Concord area is underestimated** and that a higher figure is warranted. Continued monitoring of planning and development approvals and other influencing factors will be necessary to properly plan for parks, recreation, and library infrastructure.

The following table illustrates the 2011 Census population for each community, as well as their 2021 and 2031 forecasted populations.

Table 1: Population Forecasts by Community, 2011-2031

	2011		2021		2031		Population Change (2011-2031)
	Population (Census)	% of City-wide Pop.	Population (Forecast)	% of City-wide Pop.	Population (Forecast)	% of City-wide Pop.	
Carrville	43,800	15%	59,700	17%	65,800	16%	22,000
Kleinburg/Nashville	5,000	2%	20,500	6%	24,900	6%	19,900
Maple <i>(see Note 1 below)</i>	59,500	21%	61,700	17%	75,300	18%	15,800
Thornhill/Concord <i>(see Note 2 below)</i>	66,200	23%	73,800	20%	84,700	20%	18,500
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre	--	--	17,800	5%	28,100	7%	28,100
Vellore <i>(see Note 3 below)</i>	35,700	12%	47,400	13%	58,700	14%	23,000
Woodbridge	78,100	27%	79,600	22%	79,100	19%	1,000
Total	288,300	100%	360,400	100%	416,600	100%	128,300

Sources: 2011 data – Statistics Canada (Census Profile, 2011 Census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE, Ottawa, Released October 24 2012); 2021 and 2031 data – York Region (2012)

Notes:

1. For the purpose of this study, Maple includes the Block 27 New Community Area.
2. Should residential intensification targets be realized in Thornhill/Concord, this area could experience additional growth over and above the forecasts in the following table.
3. For the purpose of this study, Vellore includes the Block 41 New Community Area.
4. These population estimates have been compiled for the purposes of this Active Together Master Plan only. Population counts in areas outside of the identified communities have been associated with the nearest community; as such, no “rural” or “employment area” population has been recorded. These figures have not been adjusted for under-coverage. Totals may not add due to rounding.

All communities are expected to grow by 2031. Most notably, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is forecasted to grow by approximately 28,100 people (note: the population target established in the VMC secondary plan is 25,000 residents). Vellore (23,000), Carrville (22,000), Kleinburg/Nashville (19,900), Thornhill/Concord (18,500+), and Maple (15,800) are also expected to accommodate considerable population growth. Woodbridge is forecasted for more modest growth (1,000 persons).

Brief Profiles of Vaughan's Communities

While each of the City's new residential communities and intensification areas may have particular parks, recreation, and/or library requirements, grouping them into larger communities allows for their needs to be evaluated from a broader perspective, with more detailed and area-specific analyses to be undertaken at the appropriate time, such as when preparing secondary plans or at the time of the 5-year Official Plan Review. Based on Census data and information presented in this section, a brief profile of each of the six communities has been developed.

Carrville

Carrville is a new residential development area that currently had a 2011 estimated population of 43,800. This is one of the youngest communities in Vaughan given that it is popular among young families. As of 2011, approximately 63% of the population was under the age of 39. Generally speaking, residents of Carrville have higher incomes and are well educated. This community also has a notable visible minority population, particularly residents of South Asian descent.

This area includes ongoing residential development in Blocks 10, 11, 12, 17 and 18, as well as future growth in the Carrville Local Centre. The 2031 forecast estimates a population of 65,800.

Kleinburg/Nashville

Note: Kleinburg has been combined with the newly developing residential area of Nashville (Block 61) for the purposes of this plan.

The Village of Kleinburg is one of the oldest communities in Vaughan and has a proud heritage. Kleinburg is a generally small residential area (estimated 2011 population of 5,000) that is bordered by rural areas and somewhat isolated, but is seeing modest growth in some surrounding areas, including Nashville Heights to the south. The area contains a mix of a high proportion of households with larger families as well as older residents, many of whom are either single or two-person households. Residents in this area are also characterized as having higher levels of income and education. The York Catholic District School Board is proposing a new elementary school (2015) in this area due to growth. Past research has indicated that outdoor recreation activities and trails are highly valued by Kleinburg residents; in fact, building on this is one of the goals of the Kleinburg Economic Development Strategy (2011).

This area includes future residential development in Blocks 55, 61, and 62, as well as the Historic Kleinburg Village Local Centre. The 2031 forecast estimates a population of 24,900.

Maple

The community of Maple (2011 estimated population of 59,500) has experienced rapid growth over the last decade with residential expansion, which has attracted many young families to the community. As a result, Maple is one of Vaughan's younger communities but is beginning to mature. As of 2011, approximately 55% of the population was under the age of 39. Like the Carrville area, Maple residents generally have higher levels of income and are well educated. Maple is also becoming more ethnically diverse, with South Asian descent representing the largest minority group, followed by Black and Southeast Asian.

This area includes future residential development in the Vaughan Mills Primary Centre and Historic Maple Village Local Centre, as well as Block 27 (subject to secondary plan approval). The 2031 forecast estimates a population of 75,300.

Thornhill/Concord

Note: Thornhill has been combined with the largely industrial and commercial area of Concord for the purposes of this plan.

Thornhill/Concord (2011 estimated population of 66,200) is the City's most densely populated area accounting for almost 23% of the City's inhabitants. Thornhill/Concord is the oldest community in Vaughan and its population is aging. As of 2011, 54% of the population was over the age of 40. Due to this maturing population, the York Catholic District School Board indicates that Thornhill is experiencing declining student enrolment. Residents in Thornhill/Concord generally have higher levels of income and are highly educated. Thornhill/Concord is also one of the most ethnically diverse communities in Vaughan, largely represented by Chinese, South Asian, and Filipino descent.

This area includes future residential development in the Bathurst St. & Centre St., Yonge St. & Steeles Ave., and Steeles West Primary Centres, as well as the Concord and Historic Thornhill Village Local Centres. The 2031 forecast estimates a population of 84,700. As mentioned earlier, potential mid- and high-rise residential intensification could adjust this target significantly upward.

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)

From the Vaughan Official Plan: "The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre will become the City's downtown. It will be a place of regional importance centred on the planned subway station at Highway 7 and Millway Avenue. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is a strategic location for the concentration of the highest densities and widest mix of uses in the City, allowing it to become a multi-faceted and dynamic place to live, work, shop and play, attracting activity throughout the day."

This area includes future residential development in portions of Blocks 22, 23, 29, and 30 (Highway 7, east of Highway 400). The VMC has only a nominal population at present and is forecasted to grow to 28,100 persons by 2031 according to the Region's projections. The VMC Secondary Plan indicates that the area The VMC boundary area is intended to accommodate a minimum of 12,000 residential units (approximately 25,000 people) by 2031.

Vellore

In 2011, the Vellore area had an estimated population of 35,700 and continues to experience significant growth. Vellore is one of Vaughan's youngest communities. It is estimated that approximately 64% of Vellore's residents are under the age of 39. Similar to the communities of Carrville and Maple, Vellore is popular among young families. As a result, the York Catholic District School Board is proposing to develop two new schools (2013 and 2014) in this area to accommodate future demand. Vellore residents generally have higher incomes and are well educated. This area can also be characterized as having a high visible minority population, including residents of South Asian descent.

This area includes ongoing residential development in Blocks 33 West, 39, 40, and 47, as well as future residential development in the Vellore Local Centre and Block 41 (subject to secondary plan approval). The 2031 forecast estimates a population of 58,700.

Woodbridge

Woodbridge is Vaughan's largest community with an estimated 2011 population of 78,100. This community is generally aging. The estimated 2011 population suggests that approximately 52% of the population is over the age of 40, and it is anticipated that this aging trend will continue. Due to this maturing population, some schools in the southern portion of this community are experiencing declining enrolment. Similar to other communities in Vaughan, residents in Woodbridge are generally well educated with higher levels of income. This community also has a large Italian population, but like other areas of Vaughan, it is quickly becoming more culturally diverse, with a large visible minority group of South Asian descent, particularly in new residential areas.

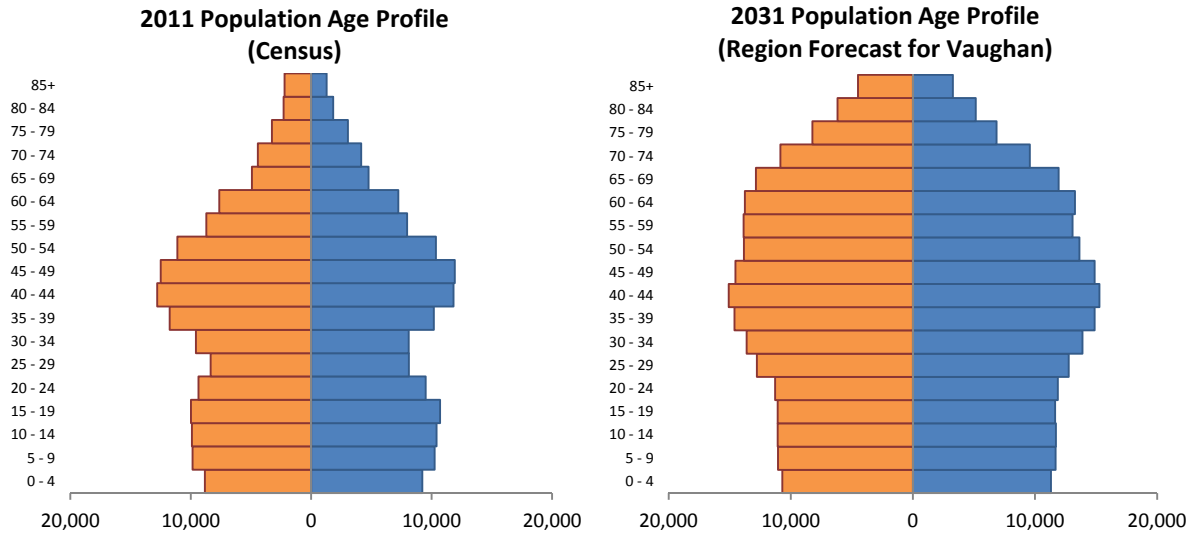
This area includes future residential development in the Weston Rd. & Highway 7 Primary Centre (Highway 7, west of Highway 400) and Historic Woodbridge Village Local Centre. The 2031 forecast estimates a population of 79,100.

3.2 AGE COMPOSITION

The age composition of a community can be a useful indicator of the types of services that will be demanded in that community. For example, communities with a higher proportion of children and youth typically have a higher demand for more active forms of recreation such as soccer or waterplay, while communities with a higher proportion of older adults often have a higher demand for more passive activities such as low impact fitness and lifelong learning opportunities.

According to the 2011 Census, Vaughan's median age is 37.9 years, which is slightly younger than the Region's median age of 39.3 and the Provincial median age of 40.4. Despite its younger profile, Vaughan's population is aging as a whole, with the median age increasing by two years since the 2006 Census (35.9 years).

Figure 4: Vaughan Population Pyramids; 2011 and 2031



Source: Statistics Canada (2011); York Region (2012)

The following table identifies the City’s 2011 age breakdown by major age category, along with projections for 2021 and 2031. For 2011, Census data was used while the Region’s forecasts were used for 2021 and 2031. It bears noting that the Census data is under-counted (the current population estimate is 311,200) and that the Region’s forecasts were created without the benefit of 2011 Census data, which may affect the population modelling.

Table 2: Population Forecasts by Age Group, 2011 to 2031

Age Group	2011		2021		2031		Growth (2011-2031)	
	Census	%	Forecast	%	Forecast	%		
0 to 19	79,100	27%	84,300	23%	90,200	22%	11,100	14%
20 to 34	53,000	18%	72,100	20%	76,200	18%	23,200	44%
35 to 49	70,900	25%	78,600	22%	89,300	21%	18,300	26%
50 to 59	38,100	13%	52,000	14%	54,400	13%	16,300	43%
60+	47,100	16%	73,400	20%	106,400	26%	59,300	126%
Total	288,300	100%	360,400	100%	416,600	100%	128,300	44%

Sources: Statistics Canada (2011 Census); York Region (2012)
Totals may not add due to rounding

This data suggests that all age cohorts will see positive growth to the year 2031. Continued population growth will result in increased pressures and demands across all age groups, particularly in areas of intensification and where young families are attracted to live.

The 2011 age profile for Vaughan illustrates 70% of the City’s population is currently under the age of 50. However, as the baby boomer generation (now age 49 to 67) ages, the median age in the City is expected to rise. To illustrate this, the number of older adults (age 60+) in Vaughan is forecasted to more than double by 2031, growing from 47,100 persons in 2011 (representing 16% of the population) to 106,400 persons in 2031 (representing 26% of the population). Nevertheless, although the City’s

population profile is changing over the next twenty years, all age groups are anticipated to experience growth. The ‘greying’ of the population is a common demographic trend that is being observed across Canada, and Vaughan’s population can be expected to continue to age throughout the foreseeable future. As a result, Vaughan may experience slightly greater demand and pressures for facilities, programs, and services for older adults and seniors.

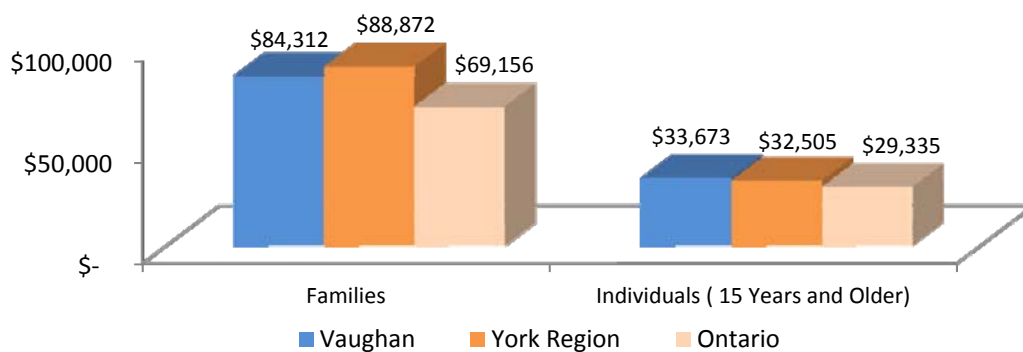
Conversely, slower growth (14%) is forecasted for the 0 to 19 age group. As a proportion of the population, the 0 to 19 age group is anticipated to decline from 28% to 22% between 2011 and 2031. However, there is evidence that growth in younger cohorts may be stronger than what is currently forecasted – 2011 Census data indicates that the number of children ages 0 to 4 across Canada increased by 11% since 2006, which is the most significant growth in this category since the baby boom following the Second World War. This is due to an increase in fertility rates and the baby boom echo being of prime child-bearing age. Continued monitoring of population forecasts is recommended.

3.3 HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Income can also influence participation in parks, recreation and library activities. Research indicates that, generally speaking, high levels of income tend to correlate with higher levels of participation in leisure activities. The City offers a RecAssist program, which provides financial assistance subsidies to those living under the Low Income Cut Off (LICO).

As illustrated in the following graphic, the 2006 Census reported that the median income in Vaughan was \$84,312 for all census families, considerably higher compared to the province, but lower compared to the Region. Individual household earnings in Vaughan were generally on par with the Region, and again higher than the Province. Based solely on income alone, this could indirectly infer that general participation rates in Vaughan are higher compared to the Province, but marginally lower compared to the Region of York as a whole.

Figure 5: Median income in 2005



Source: Statistics Canada (2006 Census)

The cost of living is also higher in Vaughan. According to York Region, in 2010, the average price of a new and resale detached dwelling in Vaughan for is \$621,175 and \$551,881, respectively, considerably higher than the regional average of \$566,110 and \$551,811, respectively.⁴ The average monthly rent for

⁴ York Region. Living in York Region: Our community check-up. Context indicators workbook. 2011

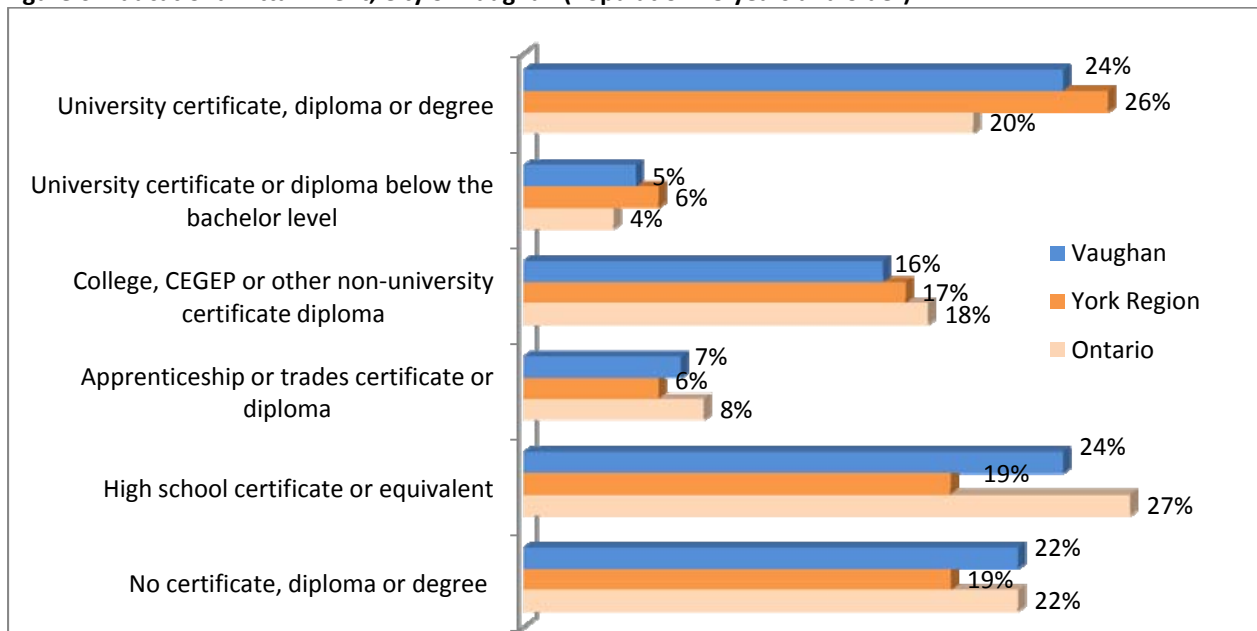
an apartment in Vaughan in 2010 was \$1,144, \$76 and \$164 more than the regional and provincial averages, respectively.⁵ Despite these challenges, Vaughan has a lower proportion of lower income residents (11%) compared to the Region (13%) and the Province (14%).

Furthermore, York Region’s Vital Signs suggest that the increasing gap between the rich and the poor is impacting individuals and community prosperity, which in turn, can negatively affect residents’ level of participation in parks, recreation, and library pursuits. Affordable parks, recreation, and library opportunities is a critical consideration in order to engage households with financial barriers through the provision of low to no-fee activities and programs.

3.4 EDUCATION

The level of education can also impact participation rates, with many studies correlating higher participation levels with higher degrees of education (e.g., generally, the greater the level of educational attainment, the more likely they are to participate in recreational and library activities). Among those age 15 years or older, Vaughan generally shares the same level of education as the province, but lower than the Region (2006 Census data). Vaughan has a higher proportion of university educated residents (29%) compared to the Province (24%), but lower than the Region (32%). Solely based on education attainment alone, it can be expected that residents of the broader Region of York are more likely to participate in parks, recreation and library activities compared to Vaughan residents.

Figure 6: Educational Attainment, City of Vaughan (Population 15 years and older)



Source: Statistics Canada (2006 Census)

⁵ Ibid

3.5 IMMIGRATION, ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE

According to the 2006 Census, nearly 45% of Vaughan's population is represented by immigrants, many of whom are of Italian, Jewish, and Eastern European descent. This figure is growing – research undertaken for the Vaughan Public Libraries Strategic Plan 2012-2015 suggests the foreign-born population may now account for 53% of Vaughan residents and could increase to 60% by 2015. Based on estimates from the 2011 National Household Survey⁶, the City (46%) has a higher percentage of immigrants than the Region (45%) and considerably more than the Province (29%). Approximately 51% of immigrants arrived before 1991, 26% arrived between 1991 and 2000, and 23% arrived between 2001 and 2011.

Estimates from the 2011 National Household Survey⁷ indicate that 31% of Vaughan's population are also visible minorities, lower than the regional average (43%), but greater than the provincial average (26%). This visible minority population is largely represented by residents of South Asian descent (31%), followed by Chinese (15%). Based on the immigration trends observed throughout the GTA, it is anticipated that the proportion of immigrants will continue to increase, particularly from countries such as Russia, India, and Ukraine⁸, given that immigrants are attracted to areas with established ethnic communities, families, and social ties. This strong level of ethnic diversity influences demand for non-traditional programs, services, and activities, encouraging an integrated social support system immigrant groups typically seek.

Recently released data from the 2011 Census indicates that 46% of residents reported that their mother tongue is English. Approximately 54% of residents' mother tongue is a non-official language. These proportions are similar to the reporting from the 2006 Census. The most common non-official mother tongue is Italian (28%), followed by Russian (13%), and Chinese/Cantonese (6%). The 2011 Census also reported that English is the most common language spoken at home (66%), while 26% speak a non-official language. The most common non-official language spoken at home is Italian (19%), followed by Russian (17%), and Chinese/Cantonese (8%). As a result, the increasing diversity among languages will continue to drive the need for a variety of multi-lingual services, staff, and materials.

3.6 PLACE OF WORK AND MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

The 2006 Census reported that 126,365 residents (15 years or older) were employed, representing over 53% of the 2006 population. This proportion is shared with the Region and is slightly higher than the provincial average (51%).

Despite being a significant employment centre in its own right, the City of Vaughan has a large commuter population, with 54% of the employment base working in other communities in York Region, throughout the GTA, and the province. Nearly 29% of the workforce work in Vaughan, and the remaining 17% work at home, have no fixed work address, or work outside of Canada. Conversely, many non-residents are also employed within Vaughan, which may impact local facilities and parks. This large commuter base has a noteworthy impact on the provision of parks, recreation, and library facilities,

⁶ The National Household Survey was a voluntary, self-administered survey conducted for the first time in 2011 as a replacement for the long census questionnaire. Due to the survey methodology, the City of Vaughan data has a non-response rate of 23.2%, which may affect data quality.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Public Interest Strategy & Communications. Vaughan Profiles. Toronto: Public Interest Strategy & Communications. 2009.

particularly with respect to greater demands for 'prime-time' activities as well as those that can be self-scheduled depending on one's availability.

Given that over half of employed residents work in surrounding communities, Vaughan is an auto-oriented community where nearly 88% of the workforce travels by private vehicle to work as a driver or passenger. As of 2006, less than 10% of the workforce travelled by public transportation and the remaining 2% travelled on foot, bicycle, or other mode of transportation. The provision of high quality infrastructure such as sidewalks and cycle lanes is key to encouraging non-motorized alternatives to transportation to reduce traffic congestion and promote a healthy, active lifestyle. According to York Region's Context indicators (2011), 42% of Vaughan's streets have sidewalks, slightly lower than the Regional average (46%). At the time, Vaughan was also recognized to have a total of 36 kilometres of cycle lanes, of which 28 kilometres were located in urban areas. The City continues to work to expand its trails and active transportation systems through implementation of pedestrian and bicycle network strategies and the updated Transportation Master Plan.

SECTION 4: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

4.1 OVERVIEW

The public and stakeholder engagement process includes various strategies to work with Vaughan residents and key internal and external stakeholders (e.g., community organizations, staff and Council) to determine needs, preferences, emerging trends, opportunities to remove barriers to participation, and to define priorities for implementation.

The keys to successful engagement are achieving broad community involvement and consensus in the formulation of key strategies. The 2013 ATMP's engagement approach was geared to achieve this result. Specifically, the following internal and external efforts were undertaken:

- 1) A communications plan and awareness strategy was developed consisting of content to be posted on Vaughan's website, posters displayed in public buildings, etc.
- 2) External interviews were undertaken with key informants, including the Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative (SAVI) and other agencies and community organizations to learn more about issues affecting local participation and service/facility provision.
- 3) Internal interviews were undertaken with the Mayor, Councillors, Library Board, and Senior Management Teams to better understand City-wide initiatives, dynamics, and priorities.
- 4) An online stakeholder group survey was launched to solicit information regarding activities, facility usage, and future needs of groups in Vaughan.
- 5) Two public information sessions were held in October 2012 to inform interested members of the public about the Active Together Master Plan and solicit broad-based input. Another public information session was held in April 2013 to solicit input on the draft Plan.
- 6) The Consultant participated in both the Sports Congress and Youth Forum as a way to engage local sports organizations and area youth in planning for the future of parks, recreation, and libraries in Vaughan.
- 7) A random sample telephone survey of Vaughan households was completed in October 2012 to collect statistically significant data on the attitudes of respondents towards various aspects of parks, recreation and library activities, usage, facilities, opinions, and priorities. The survey data is representative of the City as a whole; the sample is not significant on a ward-basis. Despite its prominent description in this Plan, it should be noted that the household survey is one of several inputs into the Plan and should not be considered in isolation of other factors and engagement processes.
- 8) Regular meetings have been held with the Technical Committee, providing opportunities for multi-departmental staff to provide input into the process.

Each engagement technique offers a unique perspective to the ATMP and the results must be weighed against other inputs such as trends, demographics, and the Consultant's experience when assessing current and future needs.

This section provides a summary of each of the engagement methods employed and a synopsis of the input received. **It bears noting that the results represent the interests of the groups and individuals involved and may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the greater public and/or the Consultant.**

4.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS

As part of the engagement program during the first phase of the 2013 ATMP, the Consultant led two public input sessions that were advertised broadly within the community: (1) October 11 at the Vellore Village Community Centre; and (2) October 23 at the North Thornhill Community Centre. Both sessions had between approximately 12 and 20 attendees, consisting largely of residents unaffiliated with any particular organization.

The purpose of the sessions was to gather preliminary input from residents and organizations pertaining to this Plan. The meetings included a brief presentation by the Consultant describing the purpose and scope of the 2013 ATMP, along with key drivers and other contextual information. A discussion period followed, with a list of semi-structured questions to help guide the conversation. The notes from the meetings can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Following preparation of the Draft Plan, a public information session was held on April 29, 2013 to offer the community an opportunity to review the proposed updates to the ATMP. Input from this session influenced the final ATMP. The notes from this meeting can also be found in [Appendix B](#).

4.3 SPORTS CONGRESS

Through the City of Vaughan's second annual Sports Congress, community sports organizations were invited to provide input into the Active Together Master Plan. This event was held at the Vaughan Civic Centre on October 24, 2012; approximately 40 individuals representing several organizations were in attendance.

The session offered Vaughan community sports organization representatives the opportunity to provide input on existing and future sporting facility needs. Topics discussed included trends in sport participation; changes facing sports groups; levels of satisfaction with the facility and park supply, and the City's role in helping sports groups meet the needs of residents.

Input received through this session has been considered as part of the next phase of the ATMP's analysis. The notes from this event are contained in [Appendix C](#).

4.4 YOUTH FORUM

A Youth Forum was on November 26, 2012 to gather input and feedback from Vaughan's youth demographic. The Forum, which was highly successful and attended by approximately 70 students from different high schools around Vaughan, involved a number of youth-oriented presentations and engaging activities designed to provide youth with a voice in identifying needs in Vaughan.

This event provided an opportunity for youth to provide input for the 2013 Active Together Master Plan given that the youth market is often underrepresented, but also makeup the largest core user group of parks, recreation services and libraries. A brief presentation was given to introduce the ATMP, followed by group discussions focused around four key questions regarding participation barriers, improvements to parks, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, and libraries.

Input received through this session has been considered as part of the next phase of the Plan's analysis. The notes from this event can be found in [Appendix D](#).

4.5 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

To assist in the preparation of the 2013 Active Together Master Plan, a household telephone survey of residents of Vaughan was conducted in October 2012. The survey was administered to a random sample of residents from all communities within the City and is considered to be representative of the population. A total of 407 surveys were completed, yielding a confidence interval of $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level (i.e., the survey provides for an accuracy of $\pm 4.9\%$, 19 times out of 20). Although representative of Vaughan's residents, the survey did not specifically target those that participate in recreation or library activities, nor was the survey weighted to ensure proportionate representation from all areas of the City. To qualify, respondents were required to be 16 years of age or older and reside in the City of Vaughan. The survey was conducted in English only; language was noted as a barrier for 3% of all numbers dialed and 8% of all live contacts. Please note that responses and graphical illustrations reflect the opinions of only those participating in the household survey. Detailed responses can be found in [Appendix E](#).

The survey collected information on the attitudes of respondents towards various aspects of parks, recreation and library activities, usage, facilities, opinions, and priorities. This subsection summarizes the principal findings of the household survey and highlights significant differences between key variables. The results of the household survey undertaken as part of the City's 2008 Active Together Master Plan are also compared with the results of this survey, with significant differences discussed herein. In addition, the Consultant has undertaken Master Plans for several municipalities with similar characteristics in recent years; where significant, comparisons are made with results from Richmond Hill and Markham to provide the City with some benchmarking data.

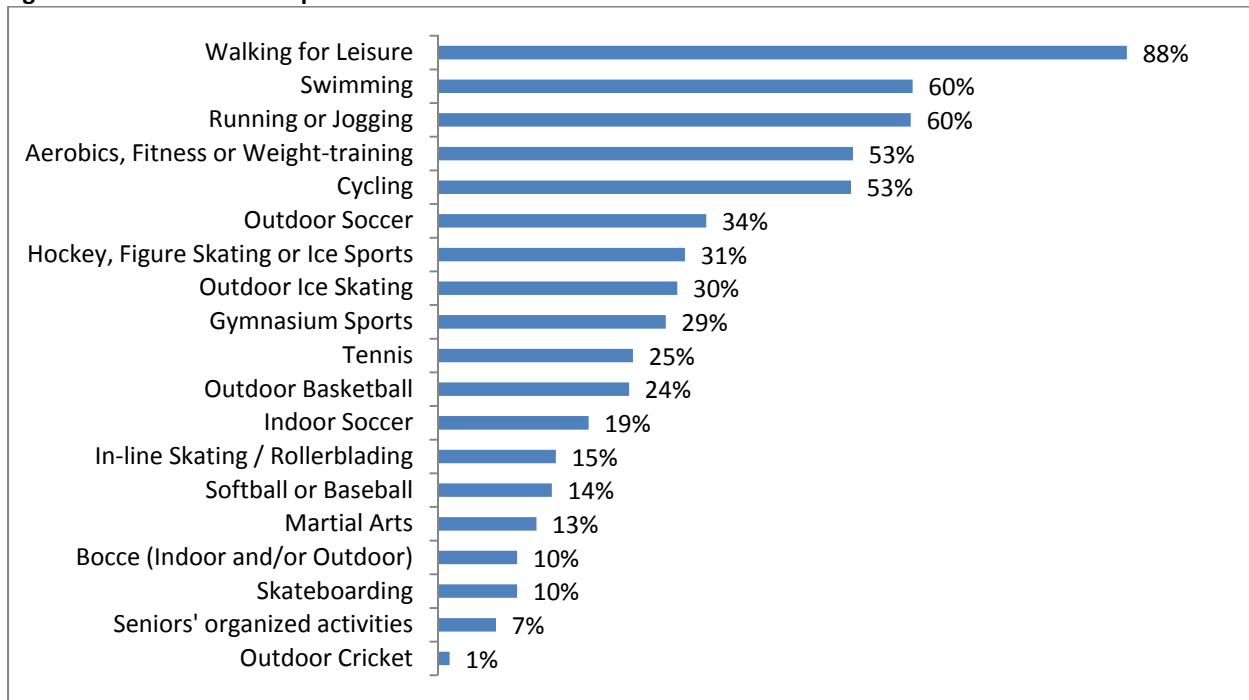
In 2012 a Citizen Survey was conducted on behalf of the City by Ipsos Reid to achieve a number of objectives including, but not limited to, identifying top-of-mind issues, impressions of quality of life, and perceptions of City services. Similar questions were asked by Ipsos Reid relating towards services directly impacting the Active Together Master Plan including recreation and fitness programs and facilities, parks and greenspace, and local public libraries. No statistically significant differences in the findings were identified between the Household Survey and Ipsos Reid Citizen Survey, suggesting that the City is doing a good job in the delivery of these key services.

Household Participation in Recreation Activities

Respondents were asked to indicate whether their households have participated in various recreation and leisure programs in the past twelve months. The response format is *yes* or *no*; all activities are listed in the following figure.

As in other communities within which the Consultant has undertaken this type of market research, *walking for leisure* (88%) is ranked as the most popular activity. *Swimming* (60%) and *running or jogging* (60%) tied as the second most popular activity, followed by *aerobics, fitness or weight-training* (53%) and *cycling* (53%). It is worth noting that the top 5 most popular activities are generally undertaken as drop-in or spontaneous activities that are flexibly scheduled, which has become a common trend throughout Ontario. Since the 2008 Active Together Master Plan, participation by Vaughan residents in these activities (with the exception of swimming) have each increased by 8% or more (significant at the 90% confidence level). It is also interesting to note that outdoor soccer is the most common team sport (34%), followed closely by hockey/figure skating/ice activities (31%).

Figure 7: Household Participation in Selected Parks and Recreation Activities – Past 12 Months



Note: Activities not listed (e.g., football, rugby, dance, gymnastics, golf, etc.) were not specifically asked, but were recorded when mentioned.

Cross-tabulation analysis indicates that:

- Respondents 40 years of age and under, households with children, and households with total annual incomes over \$100,000 are more likely to have participated in parks and recreation activities than those without children and those that have incomes of less than \$100,000.
- Respondents living in western Vaughan (versus those living in eastern Vaughan, with Highway 400 as the divide) and those who identify a primary language other than English and/or reported any secondary language are more likely than others to report household participation in *indoor soccer, outdoor soccer, or bocce*.

- Those households that have used a Community Centre operated by the City of Vaughan in the past twelve months and who have also used all three of the Vaughan offerings tested (community centres, parks/open spaces, and libraries) are typically more likely to say that they or someone from their household has participated in the range of tested activities in the past twelve months (with a few exceptions: walking for leisure; skateboarding; outdoor cricket; bocce; martial arts; and seniors' organized activities).

It is also noteworthy that, when compared with findings from Richmond Hill, residents of Vaughan are significantly more likely to have participated in *aerobics, fitness or weight-training, running or jogging, and cycling*. When compared with Markham, Vaughan's residents are significantly more likely to have participated in *walking for leisure, running or jogging, cycling, outdoor ice skating, and bocce*. Each of these activities is generally undertaken through drop-in participation, which is on-trend with the shift towards unscheduled recreation that better suits the busy lifestyles led by many Canadians.

Barriers to Participation in Parks and Recreation Activities

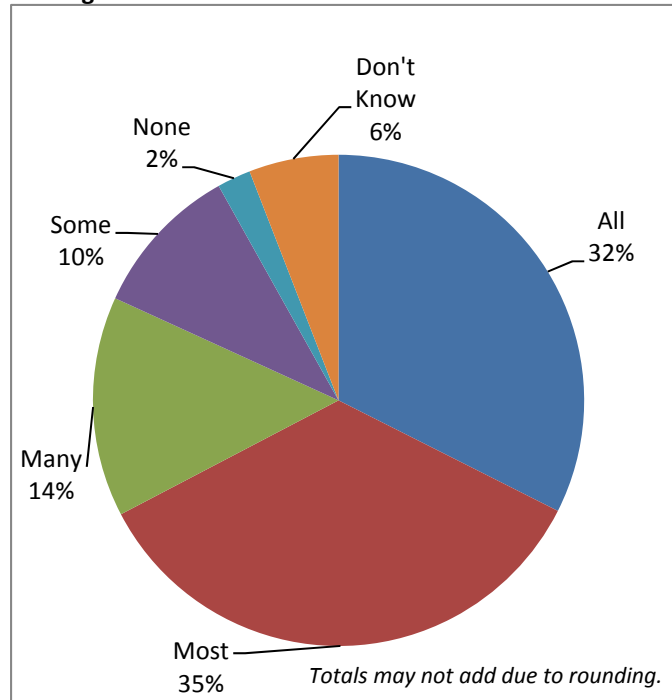
To gain an understanding of barriers to participation, respondents were asked whether they and members of their household are able to participate in parks and recreational activities as often as they would like. 65% reported that they are able to participate as often as they would like (14% higher than the data collected for the 2008 Active Together Master Plan), 34% are not. For those that are not able to participate as often as they would like, the most common reasons were: *lack of personal time / too busy* (83%); *lack of desired facilities or programs* (9%), and *health problems / disability / age* (7%). While it may be a barrier to some, the lack of facilities is not a primary deterrent to the participation of Vaughan's residents in recreational activities. Rather, busy lifestyles are impacting the way in which residents access recreation opportunities, creating greater interest in drop-in activities as opposed to scheduled courses, classes, and leagues.

The percentage of respondents that identified a lack of facilities or programs as a barrier decreased between the 2008 and 2012 Active Together Master Plan surveys, with 18% fewer households identifying this as a barrier to participating within Vaughan in 2012. This may indicate that new program opportunities and facilities (e.g., North Thornhill Community Centre) that the City is now providing are filling previously identified gaps for community members.

Respondents that are ages 61+ are more likely than others to identify *health problems / disability / age* as a reason for why they are unable to participate in recreation activities as often as they would like. Households with total annual incomes over \$100,000 are more likely to identify *lack of personal time / too busy* as a reason why they are unable to participate in recreation activities as often as they would like.

Each respondent was asked what percentage of their household's parks and recreation needs are met within the City of Vaughan. 32% reported that *all* of their needs are met within the City, 35% reported *most*, 14% reported *many*, 10% reported *some*, and 2% reported that *none* of their parks and recreational needs are met within the City. Overall, respondents seem to be participating in the majority of their recreation within Vaughan, suggesting that the City is providing a wide range of opportunities that meet many of the needs of its residents.

Figure 8: Percentage of Parks and Recreation Needs Met in Vaughan



Households with total annual incomes over \$100,000 are more likely to report that *all* of their recreation needs are met within the City of Vaughan. Males, respondents 40 years of age or under, those living in households with four or more people and households with children are more likely than others to report that *most* of their household's recreational needs are met within Vaughan.

With respect to activities in which respondents participate outside of the City, the responses that received 10 or more mentions were: *hockey (7% of subset)*, *cycling (7%)*, *swimming (7%)*, *going to the gym / weight training (6%)*, *walking (6%)*, *soccer (5%)*, *skiing (4%)*, and *ice skating (4%)*.

The most common reasons given for participating in recreation activities outside of the City include: *facility / program is not available in the area at the preferred time (9% of the subset)*, *closer to work or school (8%)*, *facility / program is not available in the area (8%)*, *connected to the other community / used to live there (8%)*, and *for location / gym (8%)*.

When asked if there are any recreation programs that the respondent and their household would like to see offered that are not currently available in Vaughan, 27% replied *yes*. Of these, there were 23 unique responses, including *swimming (16% of the subset)*, *dance / Zumba classes (10%)*, *ice skating / hockey (8%)*, *senior activities (7%)*, and *volleyball (7%)*.

Assessment of Recreation and Parks Opportunities and Facilities

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with recreational opportunities in Vaughan for four specific age groups. Given the targeted age ranges, a substantial proportion of respondents that could not offer an opinion on this topic. The following data focuses on those who offered an opinion on their level of satisfaction (i.e., percentages have been adjusted to remove the 'don't know' responses):

- children ages 0 to 12 (77% satisfaction, 17% neutral, 6% dissatisfaction);
- teens ages 13 to 17 (69% satisfaction, 19% neutral, 12% dissatisfaction);
- adults under the age of 60 (67% satisfaction, 25% neutral, 8% dissatisfaction); and
- older adults age 60 years and over (57% satisfaction, 27% neutral, 16% dissatisfaction).

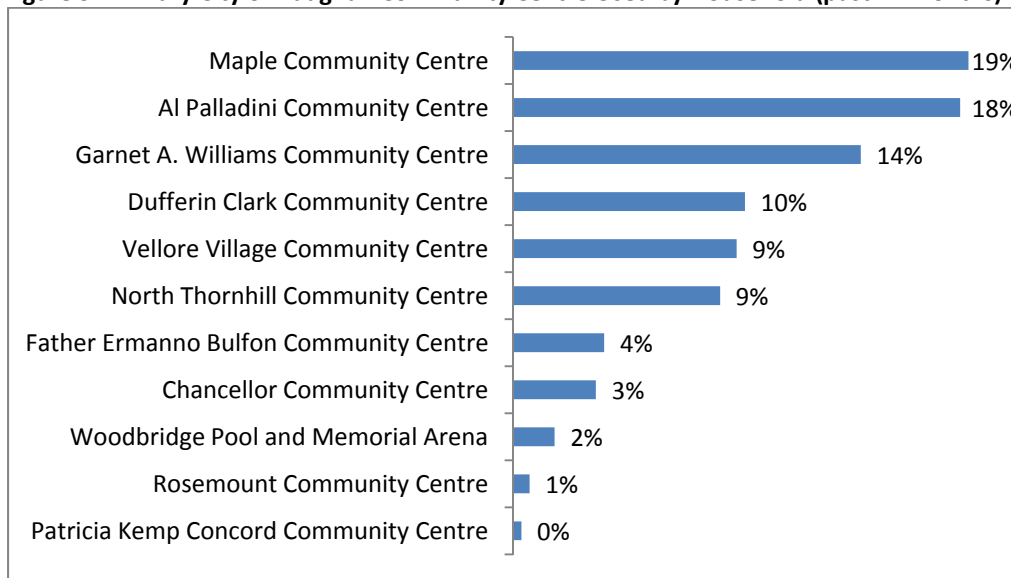
Although the age ranges are slightly different for the 2008 Active Together Master Plan survey, the levels of satisfaction for children, youth and adults all increased in 2012; ratings for older adults remained about the same. It should be noted that in most communities within which the Consultant has undertaken similar research, opportunities for older adults generally rank second highest behind those for children, and youth opportunities nearly always rank the lowest. Although most expectations are being met, the findings suggest that the largest gap in recreation opportunities may be for the older adult population.

Those more likely than others to say they are satisfied with the recreational opportunities for youth in Vaughan include: those living in Western Vaughan, those in households with four or more people and those with children in the household. Households with four or more people, those with children in the household, and respondents 40 years of age and under are more likely to report satisfaction with recreational opportunities for adults. Households without children in the household and respondents 61+ years of age are more likely to report satisfaction with recreation opportunities for older adults.

In order to gain an understanding of facility usage, respondents were asked whether their household has used a municipal community centre within the past 12 months; 72% responded *yes*. Households with children and those with total annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more are more likely than those without children and with incomes of less than \$100,000 to report use of a municipal community centre.

As a follow-up question, those that replied *yes* were asked which community centre their household uses most often. Maple Community Centre (19%) and Al Palladini Community Centre (18%) are the two facilities most often visited by respondents.

Figure 9: Primary City of Vaughan Community Centre Used by Household (past 12 months)



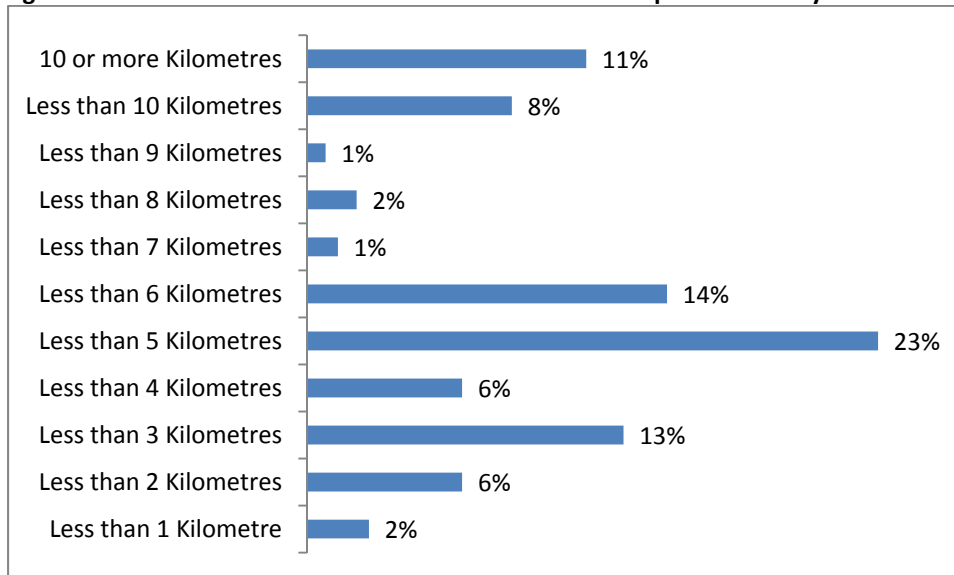
'Don't know' responses not shown.

Not surprisingly, location is a key differentiating variable regarding the community centre that a household uses most often (given the proximity of the centre to a respondent's residence in either western or eastern Vaughan).

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) what would encourage them and other members of their households to use municipal community centres more often, of which the following reasons received more than 10 mentions: variety of programs (17% of the sample), better prices / free (15%), better schedule / hours (14%), more free time (7%), availability (4%), better location (4%), more activities for kids (3%), more information (3%), and swimming (3%). These findings suggest that residents are seeking variety and affordability in their recreation opportunities. Respondents 61+ years of age are more likely than others to say that ‘nothing’ would encourage their households to use City of Vaughan community centres more often.

In addition to providing feedback on facilities used, respondents were asked to indicate a reasonable maximum number of kilometres that a resident of Vaughan should have to travel to use a municipal community centre. 50% indicated that this distance should be less than 5 kilometres; 13% did not respond.

Figure 10: Reasonable Maximum Travel Distance to Municipal Community Centres



'Don't know' responses not shown.

With respect to parks, respondents were asked whether members of their household have used any Vaughan parks or open spaces within the past 12 months; 82% replied yes. Households with children are more likely than those without children to report using a Vaughan park or open space within the past twelve months. Respondents ages 61+ and those without children living in the household are more likely than others to report not using a Vaughan park or open space within the past twelve months.

Through an open-ended question, respondents were asked to identify the activities in which they participate while visiting Vaughan’s parks or open spaces. Activities receiving 10 or more mentions include: *walking* (46% of the subset), *playground* (26%), *soccer* (14%), *picnics* (13%), *running / jogging* (8%), *cycling* (8%), *baseball* (4%), *tennis* (4%), *water play* (4%), *walking the dog* (4%), *just to get outside* (4%), *relaxation* (4%), and *basketball* (3%). Respondents from households that do not have children and those age 61 and older are more likely to report use of parks for walking and households with children are more likely to report using parks for the playgrounds. In addition, respondents that have lived in Vaughan for less than 10 years are more likely to use playgrounds at the parks, and households with children and those in western Vaughan are more likely to use parks and open space for soccer.

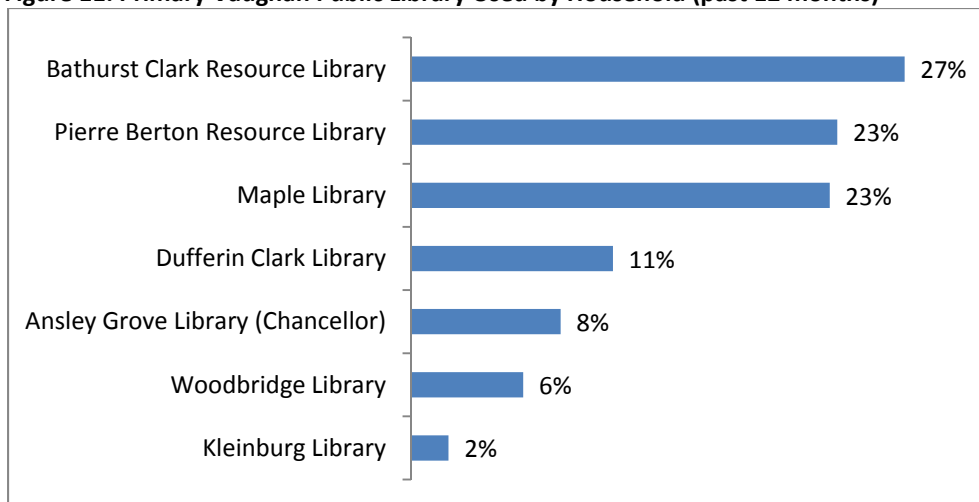
Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) what would encourage them and other members of their households to use Vaughan’s parks and open spaces more often, of which the following reasons received more than 10 mentions: variety of programs (10% of the subset); dog park / trail (7%); better maintenance / updates (7%); cleaner facilities / extra garbage bins (6%); better location (5%); more free time (5%); more open / picnic spaces (4%); more activities for kids (4%); swimming (4%); and more parks / playgrounds (4%). These findings suggest that residents are seeking variety and certain specific facility types (e.g., dog park, open space, playgrounds, etc.) at their parks, as well as increased comfort amenities.

Assessment of Library Opportunities and Facilities

In order to gain an understanding of library usage, respondents were asked whether their household have used Vaughan Public Libraries within the past 12 months; 72% responded *yes*. Survey respondents from households with children and those with total annual household incomes of \$100,000 or more are more likely than those without children and with incomes of less than \$100,000 to report use of a public library.

As a follow-up question, those that replied *yes* were asked which library branch their household uses most often. Bathurst Clark Resource Library (23%), Pierre Berton Resource Library (19%), and Maple Library (19%) are the most well used libraries. Respondents age 61 and over and households without children are more likely than those with children to identify the *Bathurst Clark Resource Library* as the branch their household uses most often.

Figure 11: Primary Vaughan Public Library Used by Household (past 12 months)



'Don't know' responses not shown.

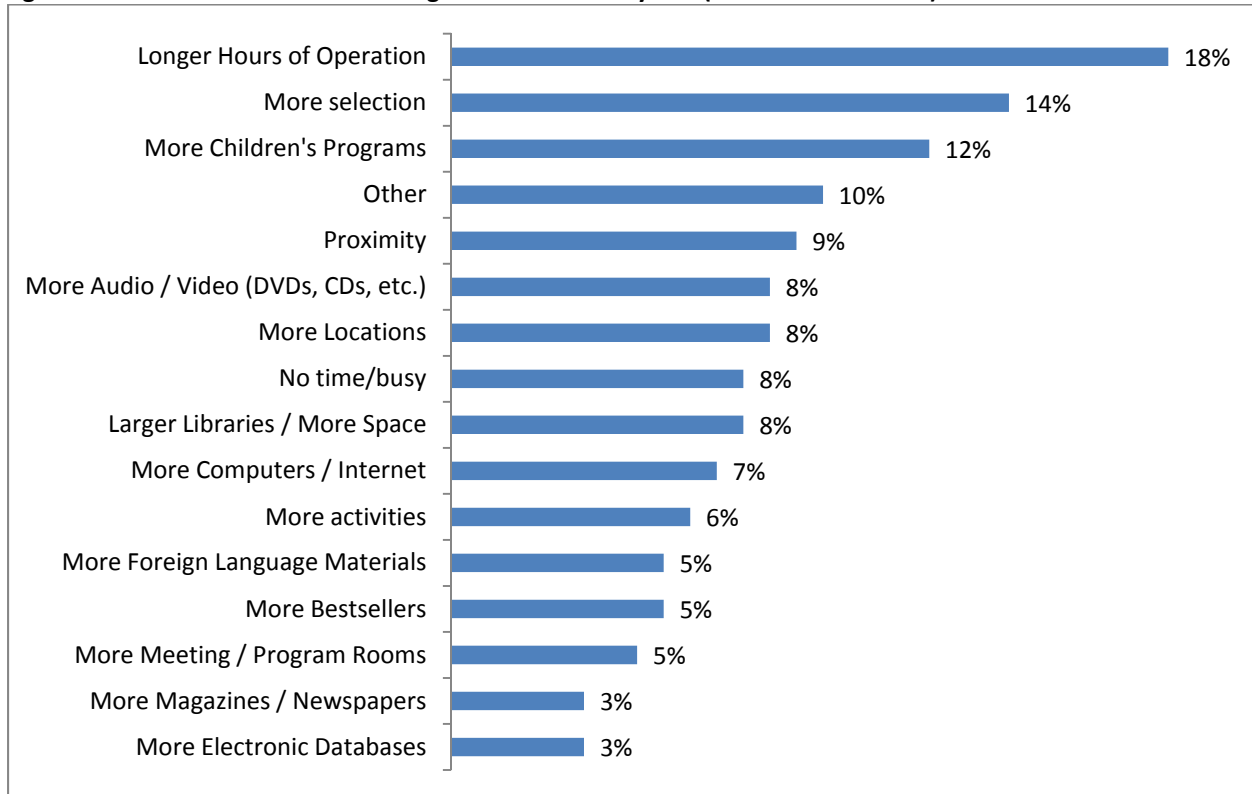
Not surprisingly, *location* is a key differentiating variable regarding the public library that a household uses most often — given the proximity of the library to a respondent’s residence in either ‘western’ or ‘eastern’ Vaughan.

Respondents that reported using Vaughan Public Libraries within the past 12 months were asked what their household uses the library for, with the following responses receiving more than 10 mentions (open-ended responses): *read or borrow books / e-books* (70% of subset); *study / do research* (30%); *borrow DVDs or Blu Ray* (15%); *borrow CDs or audio tapes* (4%); and *use the internet / computers /*

wireless connection (4%). Households without children are more likely than those with children to identify *read or borrow books / e-books* as something for which they use the library. In addition, respondents in households with four or more people living in them and that have children are more likely to identify *studying / do research* as something for which they use the library.

When asked through an open-ended question what would encourage respondents and members of their household to use Vaughan Public Libraries more, the responses that received 10 or more mentions include: *longer hours of operation (13% of subset)*, *more selection (10%)*, *more children’s programs (8%)*, *proximity (6%)*, *more locations (6%)*, *more audio / video (6%)*, *larger libraries / more space (6%)*, *no time / busy (6%)*, and *more computers / internet (5%)*.

Figure 12: Factors that Would Encourage Increased Library Use (5 or more mentions)

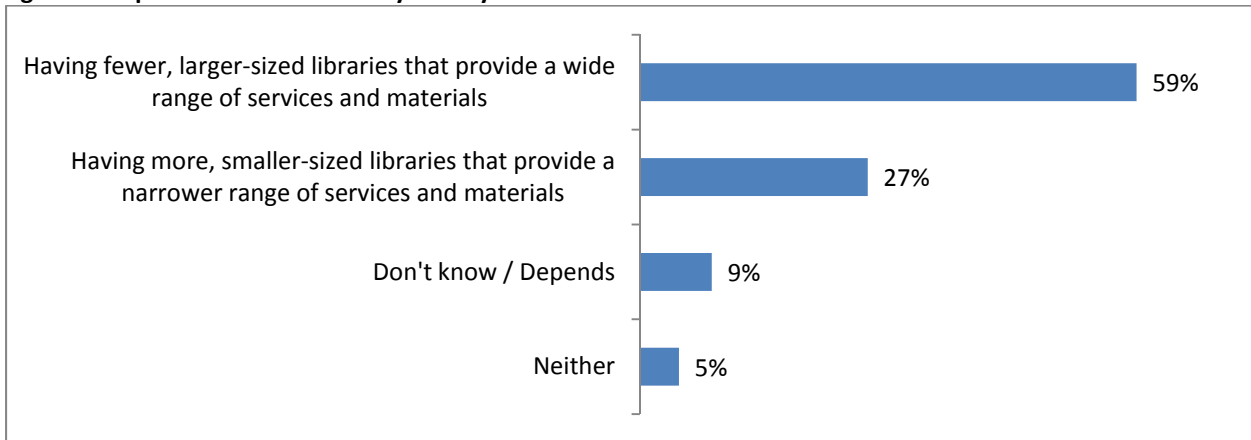


'Don't know' responses not shown.

In order to assess the preferred library facility model, respondents were asked whether they prefer having “fewer, larger-sized libraries that provide a wide range of services and materials” or “more, smaller-sized libraries that provide a narrower range of services or materials”. Respondents favour larger libraries, with 59% selecting this option. 27% of respondents prefer smaller libraries, 5% responded *neither*, and 9% responded *don't know / depends*.

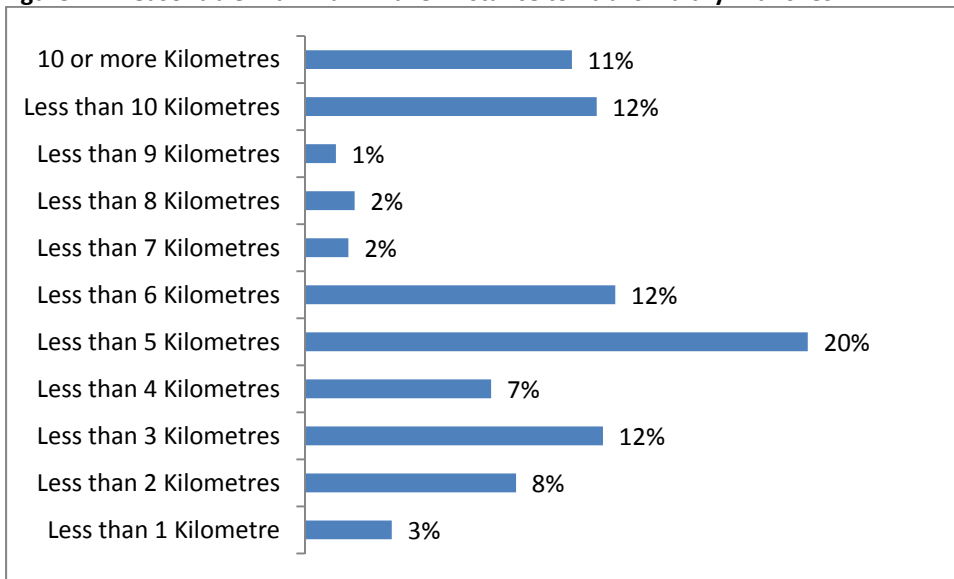
Respondents 40 years of age and under are more likely than others to indicate a preference for having “fewer, larger-sized libraries that provide a wide range of services and materials”. In addition, respondents 61 years of age and older are more likely than others to indicate a preference for *having more, smaller-sized libraries that provide a narrower range of services and materials* (those in this same age group are also more likely to say they *don't know* when asked for a preference between the two options).

Figure 13: Opinions on Public Library Facility Model



Respondents were asked to indicate a reasonable maximum number of kilometres that a resident of Vaughan should have to travel to use a public library. Just like the similar question asked for community centres, 50% feel that this distance should be less than 5 kilometres; 10% did not respond. There was no significant difference of opinion between the travel distance to public libraries versus community centres.

Figure 14: Reasonable Maximum Travel Distance to Public Library Branches



'Don't know' responses not shown.

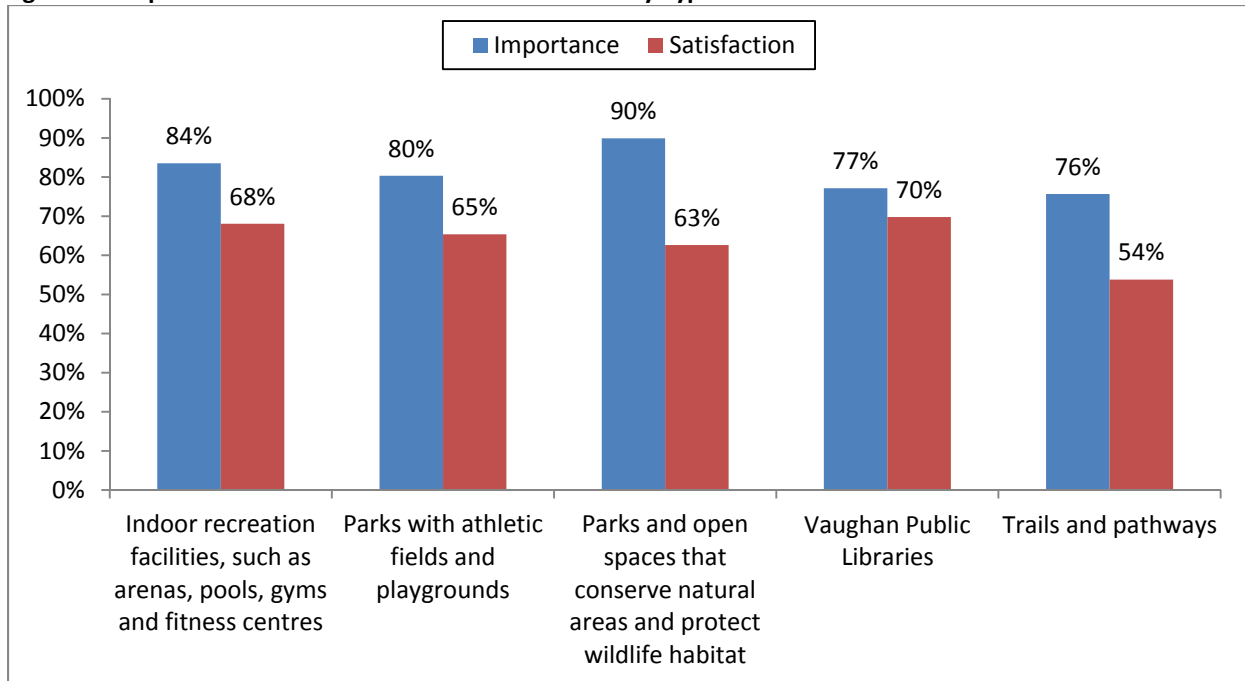
Respondents 61+ years of age and those with total annual household incomes of \$100,000 or less are more likely than others to identify a distance of less than four kilometres as a reasonable maximum to travel to use a Vaughan public library. Respondents 40 years of age and under are more likely than others to identify a distance of six kilometres or more as a reasonable maximum to travel to use a Vaughan public library.

Assessments of “Facility Types” and Spending Priorities

Respondents were asked to rate how important certain **facility types** are to their household and their level of satisfaction with those within Vaughan.

The following graph illustrates the levels of importance and satisfaction that respondents place of various **facility types**. In all cases, the importance rating is higher than the satisfaction rating.

Figure 15: Importance and Satisfaction of Selected “Facility Types”



The net importance/satisfaction differential for each **facility type** is shown below. The larger the differential, the larger the gap in resident expectations versus what the City is currently providing. Based on this data, Vaughan residents place a higher priority on improving ‘parks and open spaces that conserve natural areas and protect wildlife habitat’ and ‘trails and pathways’.

- -27% for *parks and open spaces that conserve natural areas and protect wildlife habitat*
- -21% for *trails and pathways*
- -16% for *indoor recreation facilities, such as arenas, pools, gyms and fitness centres*
- -15% for *parks with athletic fields and playgrounds*
- -7% for *Vaughan Public Libraries*

Since the 2008 Active Together Master Plan survey, the importance placed on each **facility type** has increased amongst Vaughan’s residents. With respect to the 2012 survey, those who place a higher level of importance to each of the Vaughan offerings tested are more likely than others to also cite a higher level of satisfaction with the same offering. In addition, those who cite higher levels of satisfaction with each of the five **facility types** are more likely than others to also express higher levels of satisfaction with the recreational opportunities in the City of Vaughan for various age groups identified earlier in the survey (children, youth, adults under 60, and older adults aged 60+). These findings suggest that parks, recreation facilities, and libraries are playing an increasingly important role

in the lives of Vaughan residents, who are, in turn, progressively more appreciative of the City's offerings.

Respondents 40 years of age and under, households with children, those who live in western Vaughan, and those who have lived in Vaughan for less than ten years are more likely to ascribe higher levels of importance to *indoor recreation facilities* and *parks with athletic fields and playgrounds* than those without children, those that live in other areas of the City, and those who have lived in Vaughan for more than ten years. Respondents more likely than others to ascribe a lower level of importance to both *indoor recreation facilities* and *parks with athletic fields and playgrounds* include: those 61+ years of age; those in households with three or fewer people; and those in households with no children. There is only one notable consistent demographic difference in responses — those 61+ years of age are more likely than others to cite a higher level of satisfaction with all of the Vaughan offerings tested.

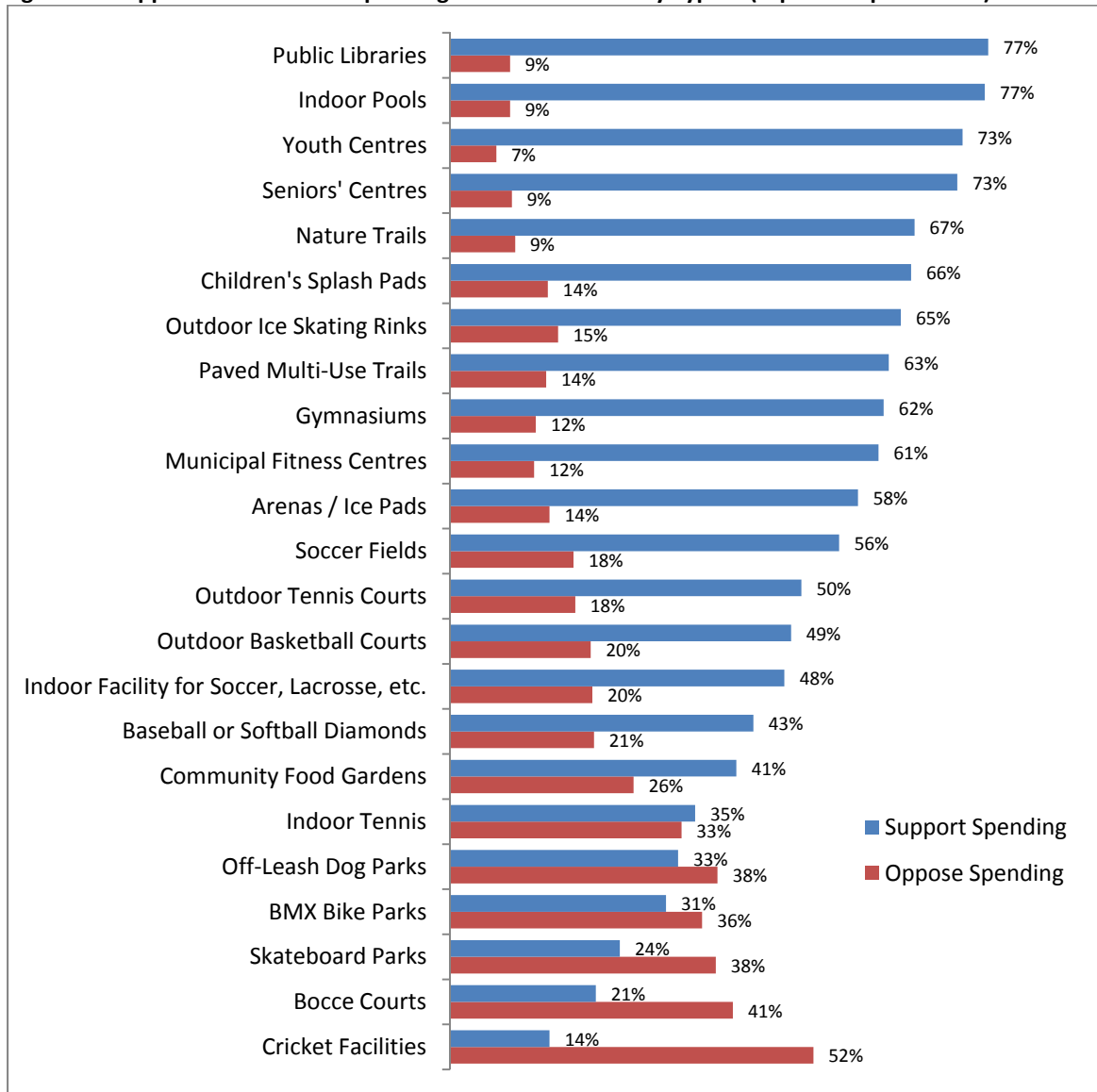
To assess more specifically where respondents felt municipal resources should be allocated, they were asked to what degree they oppose or support spending additional public funds on a variety of **facility types**. This question utilized a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant *strongly oppose* and 5 meant *strongly support*.

As shown in the following graph, the **facility types** that received the most support for additional spending were:

- *public libraries* (77% support, 14% neutral or don't know, 9% oppose);
- *indoor pools* (77% support, 14% neutral or don't know, 9% oppose);
- *youth centres* (73% support, 20% neutral or don't know, 7% oppose);
- *seniors' centres* (73% support, 18% neutral or don't know, 9% oppose);
- *nature trails* (67% support, 24% neutral or don't know, 9% oppose);
- *children's splash pads* (66% support, 20% neutral or don't know, 14% oppose);
- *outdoor ice skating rinks* (65% support, 20% neutral or don't know, 15% oppose);
- *paved multi-use trails* (63% support, 23% neutral or don't know, 14% oppose);
- *gymnasiums* (62% support, 26% neutral or don't know, 12% oppose); and
- *municipal fitness centres* (61% support, 27% neutral or don't know, 12% oppose).

Households with children are more likely than those without children to support spending additional public funds on *arenas / ice pads*, *children's splash pads*, *gymnasiums*, *indoor pools*, *outdoor ice skating rinks*, *outdoor basketball courts*, and *soccer fields*. In addition, households with annual incomes less than \$100,000 are less likely to support spending additional public funds on various facilities than those with incomes greater than \$100,000. Respondents that live in western Vaughan are more likely than others to support additional spending on *bocce courts*, *community food gardens*, and *soccer fields*. Respondents that have used a Vaughan public library are more likely to support spending on public libraries than those that have not; similarly, respondents that have used a Vaughan park or open space within the past 12 months are more likely to support additional public spending on *paved multi-use trails* and *nature trails*.

Figure 16: Support for Additional Spending on Selected “Facility Types” (top 2 on 5-point scale)

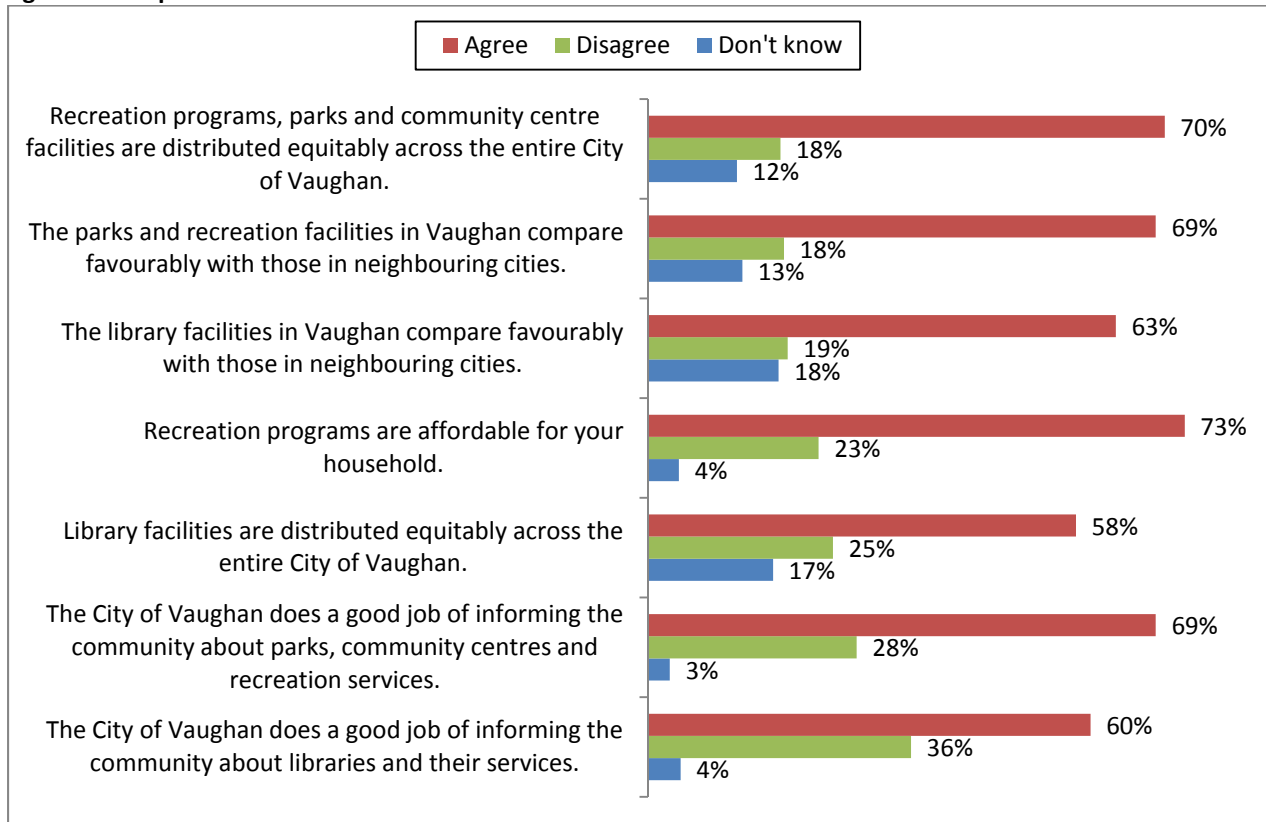


Note: Facilities not listed (e.g., football and rugby fields, outdoor pools, etc.) were not specifically asked, but were recorded when mentioned.

Opinion Statements

To inform the ATMP and related initiatives, another query dealt with specific statements regarding municipal communication with the community, affordability, distribution of programs and facilities, and quality of facilities. Respondents were read seven statements, to which they were asked to respond on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 was *strongly agree* and 4 was *strongly disagree*. The percentage of respondents who answered that they *agree* or *strongly agree* (represented by a response of 1 or 2 out of 4) with each statement is listed in the following figure.

Figure 17: Responses to Statements



Respondents with total annual household incomes of over \$100,000 and those from households that have used a Vaughan Community Centre in the past twelve months are more likely than others to agree that recreation programs are affordable.

Respondents 40 years of age and younger and those who have lived in Vaughan for less than ten years are more likely to disagree with the statement that the City *does a good job of informing the community about parks, community centres and recreation services*.

With respect to libraries, respondents from households that have used a Vaughan library in the past twelve months are more likely than those who have not to agree with the statements that *library facilities are distributed equitably across the entire City of Vaughan* and *the City of Vaughan does a good job of informing the community about libraries and their services*. Respondents living in western Vaughan are more likely to disagree with the statement that *library facilities are distributed equitably across the entire City of Vaughan*, suggesting that there may be greater gaps in geographic distribution in this area of the City.

General Points of Interest

One-half of respondents (50%) report that they or someone in their household have made use of all three of the Vaughan offerings tested within the past twelve months: *community centres, parks/open spaces and libraries*. Those who have used any one of these are more likely than others to have also used another.

Respondents from households who have used all three Vaughan offerings in the past 12 months are more likely than others to be: 40 years of age or younger, from households with four or more members, to have children in the household 19 years of age or younger, and from households with total annual incomes of over \$100,000. Conversely, respondents from households who have not used all three Vaughan offerings in the past 12 months are more likely than others to be: 61+ years of age, from households with three or fewer members, to not have children in the household 19 years of age or younger, and from households with total annual incomes of \$100,000 or less.

Demographic Profile of Household Survey Respondents

The average household size in Vaughan is 3.3 people according to the 2011 Census. The survey average is 3.62 people per household. The household composition by age group is generally representative of the population, with slightly greater participation from households with children and youth.

The median age of respondents is 48.5 years; note, those under the age of 16 were not eligible to respond to the survey.

Respondents were asked how long they have lived in Vaughan, with the following results:

- 10 years or more – 72%;
- 5 to 9.9 years – 18%;
- 1 to 4.9 years – 8%;
- Less than 1 year – 1%; and
- Refused – 1%

Respondents were asked to provide the first three digits of their postal code in order to identify in which community they live, with the following percentages reported. Although the data was not weighted, the proportions are closely representative of area household counts.

- L4J (Thornhill) – 27%;
- L6A (Maple) – 25%;
- L4L (Woodbridge) – 20%;
- L4H (Woodbridge) – 16%;
- L4K (Concord) – 8%;
- L0J (Kleinburg) – 2%; and
- Other – 1%.

Although the survey was conducted in English only, respondents were asked to indicate the primary and secondary languages spoken within their household. English is the most common primary language spoken (80%) and over a dozen other languages combined for the remaining 19%; Italian (3%) and Russian (2%) were the only other primary languages that received greater than 1% of the responses. 36% of households did not speak a second language. Percentages of second language prevalence are as follows:

- Italian (25%);
- English (18%);
- French (5%);
- Hebrew (3%); and
- Portuguese (2%).

Residents were asked about their household income. The breakdown of responses from those that chose to respond (62% of the sample; “don’t know” responses removed) is as follows:

- 53% of household incomes are over \$100,000;
- 18% are between \$80,000 and \$100,000;
- 11% are between \$60,000 and \$79,000;
- 9% are between \$40,000 and \$59,000; and
- 9% are under \$40,000.

58% of respondents are female; 42% are male.

4.6 STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

In addition to targeted consultation through the Sports Congress, community stakeholder groups were involved early in the process through a questionnaire. In September 2012, the questionnaire was distributed by email to all key organizations and facility/park users known to the City (e.g., sports and community organizations, senior groups, clubs, etc.). Copies were also made available at the Sports Congress and follow-up correspondence was sent to key non-responding groups.

The purpose of the stakeholder survey was to solicit information regarding:

- the activities of each group and the facilities and/or parks they use,
- the type and level of demand for their service(s) and/or program(s);
- recommendations for improving coordination with the City; and
- any perceived deficiencies, future needs, trends in participation levels, partnership potential, willingness to expand role, etc.

A total of 17 completed surveys were received back by the mid-November 2012 deadline, representing 9 sports groups, 5 community groups, and 3 social/cultural interests:

- Canadian Federation of University Women – Vaughan;
- City of Vaughan Baseball Association
- Girl Guides of Canada, Ontario Council;
- Glen Shields Futbol Club, Inc.;
- Hendon Park Sports Association;
- Humber River Shakespeare Company;
- Kleinburg Book Chats;
- Overseas Cricket Club;
- SantaFest in Maple;
- The Olive Branch for Children;
- Thornhill Park Tennis Club;
- Thornhill Slo-Pitch;
- Vaughan Girls Hockey;
- Vaughan In Action Community Program, Inc.;
- Vaughan Slo-Pitch;
- York Occasional Teachers’ Bargaining Unit;
- Vaughan World Series Slo-Pitch League (VWSSL); and
- One unidentified organization.

Although these organizations represent a wide variety of interests and expressed a broad range of needs, several key themes emerged across a number of groups:

- Facility rentals pose two distinct concerns – one is the perceived lack of equality regarding field allocation (particularly with respect to ball diamonds) and the other is the cost to rent space, specifically the fitness room and gym;
- A lack of adequate facilities was raised as an issue by the sport organizations –
 - City of Vaughan Baseball Association, Hendon Park Sports Association, Thornhill Slo-Pitch, Vaughan Slo-Pitch, and Vaughan World Series Slo-Pitch League expressed desire for appropriately sized ball diamonds for adults with protective netting in the outfield, parking and permanent washrooms, as well as a centralized complex suitable for tournaments;
 - Glen Shields Futbol Club reported a lack of sufficient soccer fields, with the need for high quality and irrigated senior, 9 versus 9, and mini fields;
 - Overseas Cricket Club reported a need for a proper cricket pitch within Vaughan;
 - Thornhill Park Tennis Club would like a winter tennis bubble;
- Organizations seem to be generally satisfied with the quality and maintenance of the City’s indoor facilities;
- There is a need for greater publicity regarding parks, recreation, and library opportunities; and
- Utilization of partnerships was mentioned as a method by which services could be delivered and funding of facilities could be pursued.

Other points of interest:

- The majority of the organizations (13 of 17) expect to grow over the next 3 to 5 years;
- The median size of the organizations is 500 participants, with the range being from 20 to over 30,000 participants in 2012;
- The organizations collectively serve all ages, with the majority serving adults over the age of 18;
- 12 of the 17 organizations report serving the entire City of Vaughan; and
- Many organizations make use of municipal and private facilities in King City, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, and Toronto.

Detailed responses can be found in [Appendix F](#).

4.7 INTERNAL CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

In order to provide an opportunity for in-depth and candid discussions regarding community priorities, participation trends, facility needs, potential partnerships, etc., several key stakeholder interviews and meetings were conducted (in-person and by telephone). Input gathered through the interviews and meetings was considered as part of the study's development. Key external and internal stakeholders providing input into the ATMP include:

- Mayor and Members of City Council
- Vaughan Public Library Board
- Seniors Association of Vaughan Initiative (SAVI)
- York Region District School Board
- York Catholic District School Board
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)
- Vaughan Community Health Care
- Welcome Centre Immigrant Services – Vaughan
- Senior Management (City and Library)
- Accessibility Advisory Committee (City staff representative)
- Key staff from various City Departments (Recreation and Culture, Building and Facilities, Parks Development, Parks and Forestry Operations, Legal / Real Estate, Policy Planning, Urban Planning, Budgeting & Finance, Reserves and Investment)

SECTION 5: ACTIVITY TRENDS AND BEST PRACTICES

This section summarizes the major trends and best practices affecting parks, recreation and library facilities in Vaughan. The identification and monitoring of existing and emerging trends is essential for effective planning of Vaughan's community services and facilities. To its credit, Vaughan is a leading edge municipality and is already implementing many of the best practices identified herein.

5.1 TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION

Lack of Free Time

A lack of free time has traditionally been the number one barrier to participation for both youth and adults, largely due to busy lifestyles and a number of socio-economic circumstances such as dual-income households, commuting, lone-parent families, and low income households. In the household survey conducted for the 2013 Active Together Master Plan, 28% of households identified that the lack of personal time as the number one barrier to participating in recreation activities. Statistics Canada (2006) also revealed that 54% of Vaughan's workforce is employed other municipalities in York Region or beyond. Coupling cross-municipal commuting with shift and weekend work bolsters the need to enhance access community facilities, services, and programs by providing extended or flexible operating hours and promoting drop-in or unstructured opportunities.

Similarly, the changing face of the 'traditional' Canadian family, with more lone-parent families, is putting significant time pressures and constraints on community services. This is an important consideration as the 2011 Statistics Canada Census reports that 12% of all census families in Vaughan are lone-parent families, an increase of one percent from the 2006 Census.

Communities across the GTA and beyond are often faced with the challenge of overcoming this barrier from a service delivery perspective by evolving programs to provide more convenient and flexible opportunities to participate. Communities are extending hours of operation to allow people to participate at times that are most suited to their needs. Providing more unstructured and self-scheduled opportunities may also bolster participation as people are generally more likely to participate if activities are of a casual or drop-in nature.

Physical Inactivity

While physical inactivity is closely linked to the lack of free time, today's digital age is filled with sedentary activities, resulting in continued concerns regarding physical inactivity. Physical inactivity is most prevalent among youth and children and can lead to significantly increased risk of threatening cardiac events and obesity. The latest research reveals that the average adult can spend approximately 80% of their daily lives sitting and sleeping, particularly those who sit all day at work.¹ According to a Canadian Health Measures Survey, children and youth spend an average of nearly 9 hours a day in sedentary pursuits, a majority of which is dedicated to screen time. Adults have been reported to spend

¹ Picard, A. [Why the sedentary life is killing us](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-the-sedentary-life-is-killing-us/article4613704/). 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-the-sedentary-life-is-killing-us/article4613704/>

an average of 10 hours per day in sedentary pursuits, suggesting that the level of physical inactivity increases with age.²

Between 2000 and 2010, the Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute found that participation declined in outdoor play, unorganized and organized physical activities and sports among children.³ The World Health Organization suggests that children and youth should spend a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to rigorous activity per day; however less than 10% attain this level of activity⁴, suggesting infrequent levels of physical activity.^{5,6}

As of 2011, 52% of York Region residents age 12 years and older were classified as physically inactive; this level has fluctuated between 47% in 2003 and 55% in 2010. Inactivity levels are traditionally highest amongst the 35 to 44 age group, although the 65+ and 45 to 64 age groups are not far behind.⁷ One of the goals of Vaughan's Physical Activity Strategy (2008) was to increase the physical activity levels of Vaughan residents by 10% by the year 2020 – optimism remains, but the community still has considerable work to do to reach this goal.

Other cases of physical inactivity among youth are linked to physically inactive parents. The role of the parent is an influential factor in determining a child's level of physical activity as they are typically the decision maker and guide for their child's daily lives, including how much time is spent in sedentary activities.⁸ As a result, children and youth are more likely to participate in physical activities if they are encouraged by their parents, suggesting that opportunities exist to engage the entire family to being more physically active.

Providing additional parks and recreation opportunities and incentives to encourage physical activities may help address these issues among physical inactivity across all age groups. Incentives and opportunities provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care such as the Active 2010 Strategy may assist in stimulating a variety of physical activities. Coupling initiatives such as this with the parks and recreation programs and services offered by the City, which endeavour to bolster physical activity levels, could be effective in promoting healthy lifestyles. The following are just some of the initiatives that Vaughan has undertaken as part of its 'Active Together' Physical Activity Strategy:

- School partnerships – Healthy schools program, Walk to School, etc.
- Live Right Now – Vaughan residents to lose 100,000 lbs
- "On Your Mark" – youth physical activity and health program
- "Pause To Play Week" – turn off the screens
- Vaughan Mills "Healthy Strides" walking program

² Rachel C., Didier G., Ian J., Cora C., Janine Clarke, & Mark T. Physical activity of Canadian children and youth: Accelerometer results from the 2007 and 2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011001/article/11397-eng.htm>

³ Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute. Children's active pursuits during the after school period. 2010 Physical Activity Monitor: Facts and Figures. 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.cflri.ca/media/node/922/files/PAM%202010%20Bulletin%204%20-%20Active%20Pursuits%20EN.pdf>

⁴ World Health Organization. Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health. 2010. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_recommendations/en/

⁵ Rachel C. & Didier G. Daily patterns of physical activity among Canadians. 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2012002/article/11649-eng.htm>

⁶ Picard, A. Why the sedentary life is killing us. 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-the-sedentary-life-is-killing-us/article4613704/>

⁷ Statistics Canada. Canadian Community Health Survey. Table 105-0501.

⁸ Zecevic et al. Parental influence on young children's physical activity. 2010.

Aging Population

Many members of the 'Baby Boomer' demographic (generally between the ages of 48 and 66) are reaching retirement age, contributing to a significant 'greying' of the population and placing greater demand for activities aimed at older adults and seniors. Similar to other municipalities throughout Ontario, Vaughan's population is aging with 16% of the City's population being over the age of 60 (as of 2011), an increase from 14% recorded in the 2006 Census. These generations are shifting away from traditional seniors' activities towards more active recreation, seeking quality wellness and healthy living opportunities. The 'new senior' will typically be wealthier and more physically active than those in previous generations.

The 'New Retirement Survey' of older adults prepared by Merrill Lynch contained findings that impact the facilitation and provision of services to older adults in the future. Findings of the survey indicate changing expectations and perspectives of aging that remain relevant today.

- Many baby boomers intend to keep working after retirement age, possibly through part-time work or launching new careers.
- Older adults will live longer and continue to pursue active activities.
- There will be a strong balance between work and personal time, and only a small percentage never plans to work again.
- Boomers are moving to put others first (e.g., family, community, etc.) instead of themselves (they were previously coined as the 'ME' generation). This change in attitude may be tapped for an increase in volunteerism.
- Men want to relax more and spend more time with their spouse.
- Women see retirement as providing more time for career development, community involvement, and personal growth.⁹

Today's baby boomers are more prepared for retirement from a financial perspective than previous generations. Vaughan's community profile indicates that residents are generally wealthier compared to the Provincial median; however, at the same time, the cost of living in Vaughan is considerably higher as evidenced by the average cost of home ownership.¹⁰ As a result, affordable drop-in programs and discounts/subsidies for those who have an inability to pay due to lower income levels ensures that these groups (some of which may be older adults) have access to parks and recreation programs and services.

Specific considerations in addressing the delivery of leisure services for older adults may include:

- An increase in the use of adult opportunities and services by older adults.
- Continued input into program offerings through the use of a seniors program advisory committee and opportunities for input through focus groups.
- Actively engaging and including the older adult population in the delivery of services.
- Recognizing that the percentage of persons with disabilities will increase over time as the population ages and that physical accessibility for all programs and services will become more critical for older adults.
- Considering park amenities such as shade, water, seating, and accessible washrooms.
- Increased daytime use of community centres and other recreation facilities.

⁹ Merrill Lynch, Harris interactive, Dychtwald, K. PhD. The new retirement survey, 2005.

¹⁰ CMHC. Housing Now – Greater Toronto Area. 2011.

With evidence of an aging population observed in Vaughan, a greater demand for services for this age group is anticipated to occur. As a result, Vaughan will likely experience growing demand and requests for active activities (fitness and sports) and personal interest activities (day trips and education) for older adults. Since the growing older adult and senior segments of the population are generally wealthier and more mobile compared to the past, they will seek quality services and will be willing to travel further to access them. Demand is also likely to increase for passive and less rigorous recreation activities that promote socialization and community cohesiveness. Activities for Vaughan's older adults (ages 60 and over) range from active pursuits including, but not limited to, aquafit, badminton, and low-impact aerobics to less rigorous, passive activities such as painting and computer lessons. It is also important to recognize that neighbourhoods may "turn over" as younger households occupy areas vacated by seniors; thus monitoring neighbourhood demographics is critical in the long-term planning of parks and recreation facilities.

Focus on Youth

Youth between the ages 10 to 19 represent approximately 14% of Vaughan's population (2011). Youth are a key age group in the delivery of services and the City should continue to ensure that they are well served and have opportunities for physical activity and self development. In servicing and building capacity for youth, it must be realized that this age group has varied interests and engaging youth must use different resources and approaches. The most successful approaches result from face to face interaction with youth to form relationships of trust. Youth engagement has been shown to have positive effects on self-esteem; physical activity; school performance; and commitment to friends, families, and communities. These and other benefits were identified in the City's 2008 Youth in Action report.

Providing flexible opportunities to participate is also an increasing trend that is not only observed among youth. Recreation activities typically compete with other time commitments such as homework, part-time jobs, and socializing with friends, leaving limited availability for structured recreation activities. As a result, self-structured and drop-in programs provide recreation opportunities that fit their schedule. Vaughan provides these opportunities through a number of youth spaces at community centres throughout the City; these spaces provide a variety of drop-in programs and activities, or a place for youth to hang out. Vaughan Public Libraries also provide youth-oriented reading areas supported by reading materials and programs that promote literacy and social interaction.

Youth are commonly unable to participate in extracurricular activities due to financial barriers, particularly when it comes to participating in sports which require high financial commitment. As a result, municipalities are encouraged to provide affordable opportunities to engage youth in households with lower incomes. Time and again, participation levels are found to be lower among youth living in low income households. Some municipalities are responding to these needs through providing subsidized recreation programs, while it is recognized that some municipalities view their role as a 'provider' and others are the 'facilitator'. Communities, including Vaughan, have taken strides in providing affordable drop-in programs as well as through the RecAssist program, which provides financial assistance subsidies to those living under the Low Income Cut Off (LICO). Other assistance programs are also available through the Canadian Tire Jumpstart program or Ontario Works, to name a few.

Obesity among all Age Groups

As previously mentioned, today's digital age is filled with sedentary activities and physical inactivity – a growing trend notably prevalent among youth and children. A recent report on obesity completed by the Public Health Agency of Canada found that nearly 6% of children ages (2-5) and 9% of children (ages 6-17) in Canada are obese. The risk of obesity increases with age where nearly one in four Canadian adults are considered to be obese, while over 60% of all Canadians are obese or overweight.¹¹ As of 2011, 48% of York Region residents age 12 years and older were classified as overweight or obese; this level has been as low as 41% in 2008, but the 2011 level is the highest recorded since at least 2003. Of this amount, 32% were classified as overweight and 16% as obese in 2011.¹²

Obesity has come to be known as the “new smoking”, where many Canadians are leading unhealthy lifestyles, resulting in more cases of heart disease, stress on bones and joints, diabetes, blood clots, cancer, and other weight-related health problems. Encouraging local level governments to promote a healthy lifestyle and recreation opportunities and to provide parkland and programs are ways of combat obesity. Many communities have also been taking steps towards promoting healthy lifestyles, such as encouraging recreation and physical activities, as well as establishing trails to link destinations, encouraging the community to utilize alternative forms of transportation and reducing the reliance on automobiles.

Other widespread initiatives have recently been undertaken to promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and physical activity to reduce obesity.¹³ For example, the Province has been removing junk foods and vending machines in high school cafeterias to reduce the risk of obesity among youth, one of the most vulnerable age groups. Municipalities and communities such as Vaughan have been taking steps towards combating obesity and promoting healthy lifestyles. Such initiatives include encouraging parks and recreation activities through an abundant range of facilities, programs and services found in the Vaughan's Recreation Guides, as well as establishing a network of active transportation routes resulting from the City's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan to link destinations and promote alternative modes of transportation not only for recreation, but daily commuting. Other Vaughan-specific initiatives were listed earlier under “Physical Inactivity”.

Economic Influences on Participation

Past studies have shown that a household's level of income is proportional to participation in recreation activities, especially in organized team sports given the high cost to participate. Across Canada, 62% of individuals living in households with incomes of less than \$20,000 are considered inactive.¹⁴ The Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute found that nearly 40% of children among households earning over \$100,000 are involved in organized physical activities and sports, whereas only 21% of children are involved in these pursuits in households earning less than \$50,000. There are generally high participation levels in outdoor play across all income groups, the highest among households earning between \$50,000 and \$80,000 (71%).

¹¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. *Obesity in Canada*. 2011. Retrieved from http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/products/Obesity_in_canada_2011_en.pdf

¹² Statistics Canada. *Canadian Community Health Survey*. Table 105-0501.

¹³ Mario W, Michele H., and Emily M. *We are fat. So what's Ontario doing about it?* Toronto Star, Health Zone. June 17, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.healthzone.ca/health/dietfitness/diet/article/1010968--we-are-fat-so-what-s-ontario-doing-about-it>

¹⁴ Act Now BC. *Why don't people participate?* Physical activity strategy. 2011. Retrieved from http://www.physicalactivitystrategy.ca/pdfs/Why_Dont_People_Participate.pdf

Another survey on sport participation in relation to income finds that 68% of children from households with the highest income bracket are enrolled in sports, compared to 44% of children in the lowest income bracket.¹⁵ A household's level of income can become a significant barrier to participation in recreation pursuits due to the cost of participating in recreation activities. This is especially problematic among young, lone-parent, or economically disadvantaged households as older, established or high-earning households typically have more disposable income to spend on parks and recreation pursuits.

Statistics Canada identified that between 1980 and 2005, the top 20% of Canadian full-time earners saw median earnings rise by 16.4%, contrasted by the bottom 20% where median earnings fell by 20.6%, suggesting an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. Median earnings by the middle 20% remained constant.¹⁶ Communities are, therefore, facing increasing pressures to provide more affordable programs and subsidies to promote participation among all user groups as well as offering "no fee" opportunities.

The term 'working poor' has been put forward in recent years to describe the financial situation of many Canadians who have a job but do not have any additional funds beyond paying for life necessities. Cases of obesity are also more commonly found among residents with lower socio-economic status (14%), compared to residents with higher incomes (11%),¹⁷ reinforcing the need to provide opportunities for parks and recreation activities to lower-income households. An analysis of Vaughan's 2006 community profile indicates that Vaughan has a lower proportion of low income households (11%) compared to the Region (13%) and the Province (14%). Nevertheless, continuing to explore other partnership opportunities with the non-profit and private sectors will ensure that those with financial barriers are engaged and have access to various parks, recreation, and library opportunities.

To provide equal opportunities across all income groups, a number of policies, procedures, and programs have been established to remove income-related barriers to participation. In 2010, Parks and Recreation Ontario released a guide of best practices in delivering recreational opportunities to engage low-income families. This guide identifies a series of practices in communities throughout the GTA and surrounding area which focuses around five key themes:

1. Community partnerships and inter-sectoral collaboration help ensure a holistic approach that maximizes resources and increases access to recreational, social and educational programming.
2. Funding partnerships are key, as many practices are dependent on additional funding to ensure financial viability and long-term sustainability.
3. Fee subsidy programs that minimize or eliminate user fees, transportation costs and equipment costs enable low-income families to access recreational programs that they would otherwise not be able to afford.
4. A written access policy that is approved by a municipal council formalizes the commitment of the organization and helps ensure the viability and long-term sustainability of the policy.
5. Child and youth development programs foster leadership and self-esteem, which enhances physical and emotional health and increases social skills, resulting in healthier, more resilient adults who are able to effectively contribute to society.¹⁸

¹⁵ Warren, C. *Kid's Sports*. Statistics Canada. 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2008001/article/10573-eng.htm#a2>

¹⁶ Statistics Canada. 2006: Earnings, income, and shelter costs. 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080501/dq080501a-eng.htm>

¹⁷ Emily, M. *Obese youth in Canada tripled since 1981*. Toronto Star, HealthZone, June 21, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.healthzone.ca/health/dietfitness/article/1012053--obese-youth-in-canada-tripled-since-1981>

¹⁸ Parks and Recreation Ontario. *Affordable Access to Recreation for Ontarians*. 2010. Retrieved from http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci_id/3721.htm

Participation in Organized and Unorganized Sports

The public is placing greater demands on spontaneous, non-programmed forms of activity due to evolving households, schedules, and lifestyles, prompting a transition of activities from organized to unorganized sports. In 2005, Statistics Canada reported that participation in organized sports declined from 57% in 1992 to 51%.¹⁹ 61% of children were found to be more likely to participate in unorganized physical activities, although this is a decline from a recorded 69% in 2000; suggesting an overall decline in physical activities.²⁰ This trend is largely driven by a lack of time, a general decline of many organized sports, socio-economic status, and the desire for self-scheduled, and accessible forms of activity.

Declining participation in organized sports, especially among younger generation, is also the result of an evolving demographic profile, translating into differing interests. As growth in many GTA communities occurs through immigration, many new residents are coming from areas where certain sports are not played. For example, participation in minor hockey, one of Canada's most popular sports, is expected to decline nearly one-third by 2021 due to a declining youth interest in the sport (according to Hockey Canada, there were 577,000 members for the 2010-2011 year, and it is expected that there will be 360,000 members by 2021).²¹

This trend is further supported by findings from the random household survey undertaken for the 2013 Active Together Master Plan. 31% of respondents reported to have participated in hockey and figure skating in the past 12 months, declining from 35% reported in the 2008 Active Together Master Plan household survey. While this difference may not be statistically significant, it is indicative of Vaughan's diverse community profile, where immigrants make up approximately 45% of the population who may be unaware of the sport or lack access or lack interest.

Parks and open spaces support a range of unstructured activities and are, for the most part, free to the public and generally represent a lower community investment relative to indoor recreation facilities. A simple open field which can facilitate pick-up sports (e.g., kicking a soccer ball, flying a kite, picnicking or tossing a Frisbee) provides low-barrier opportunities to participate in physical activities. Outdoor activities, particularly those that engage families and other social networks, tend to be highly popular amongst new Canadians.

Emerging Activities

The community profile of Vaughan continues to evolve, much like many communities in the GTA, which is creating needs that are different from those observed in the past. Evidence of an aging population generates demands for spaces and activities that may not have previously been considered. Today, however, older adults and seniors have been observed to be more physically active than past generations of the same age group, seeking opportunities for casual sports, active living, and a greater variety of choices. In addition, pressures continue to be placed on sports fields, non-programmed spaces for social activities, as well as accessible facilities supportive of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

¹⁹ Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute. [Children's active pursuits during the after school period](http://www.cflri.ca/media/node/922/files/PAM%202010%20Bulletin%204%20-%20Active%20Pursuits%20EN.pdf). 2010 Physical Activity Monitor: Facts and Figures. 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.cflri.ca/media/node/922/files/PAM%202010%20Bulletin%204%20-%20Active%20Pursuits%20EN.pdf>

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Kaufman, B. [Hockey losing numbers game](http://www.lfpress.com/sports/hockey/2011/10/31/18902646.html). London Free Press. 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.lfpress.com/sports/hockey/2011/10/31/18902646.html>

Increasing levels of ethnic diversity in Vaughan also facilitates the evolution of parks, recreation, and library needs. Many cultures view recreation as a family event and are more inclined to pursue activities together. This growing diversity creates the need for a wide range of activities as well as grouping services into multi-use facilities, providing opportunities for all members of a family to participate at the same time without travelling to multiple facilities or parks. Another example is Vaughan Public Libraries, which provides library materials in 16 different languages and in a variety of mediums in addition to other resources and programs to provide support for new immigrants.

Newcomers to Canada are frequent users of community spaces as these are ideal locations for social gatherings and interaction. The variety of passive and active pursuits between cultures is immense, with many activities serving to define cultures and how they interact. Social gathering spaces are perhaps the most sought after 'non-traditional' parkland use and these spaces serve as venues through which the City can offer special events such as festivals, concerts, and cultural celebrations.

The continued diversification of Vaughan has resulted in a growing emphasis on non-traditional and non-structured activities. Municipalities across the GTA have seen increasing popularity in a variety of active pursuits such as Ultimate Frisbee, cricket, and road racing (cycling). The popularity of emerging passive activities such as hiking, tai chi, community gardening, and casual cycling also generates demand for passive parks and open spaces. Extreme/non-traditional sports such as skateboarding and BMX biking are also expected to experience continued support and strong participation rates among youth and children. Incorporating flexible facility designs in the provision of parks, recreation, and libraries allow for multiple uses, as some activities may decline and others emerge.

Overcoming Challenges for Residents with Disabilities

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 15% of the world's population lives with a disability, making this group the world's largest minority.²² In Canada, the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey conducted by Statistics Canada in 2006 estimated that approximately 4.4 million Canadians were challenged with a disability, with nearly one-quarter of those living in Ontario.²³ It is anticipated that this figure will continue to grow, increasing to 3.3 million Ontarians with a disability by 2025. As a result, the Province has been responsive to this growing segment through enacting the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

The intent of the AODA is to 'improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province' (c.32, s.1). Barriers are defined to include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barriers. For recreation and community services, this could include (but is not limited to) customer service practices, communications and signage, accessibility to facilities, ramps to entrances, proper lighting, removal of barriers for pedestrian paths and hand rails. Inclusive program opportunities may also be considered as a method of integration. The benefits of recreation can be especially important for persons with disabilities who may also be faced with issues of poverty, isolation, and secondary disabilities.

²² World Health Organization. *World Report on Disability*. 2011.

²³ Statistics Canada. *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey*. 2006. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-628-x/89-628-x2010015-eng.pdf>

Vaughan has undertaken a variety of measures to ensure the removal of barriers to participation and inclusivity of all members of the public. Since 2001, Vaughan has been developing annual accessibility plans in partnership with Department Staff, the Accessibility Advisory Committee and other committees, and the groups who serve those with disabilities. A variety of other documents exist which pertain to accessibility, including the City's 2012 Accessibility Policy, Accessible Customer Service Policy, Accessible Customer Service Compliance, training policies, and the AODA Accessibility Standards. The latter item refers to the AODA Built Environment Design Standards for recreational trails, play spaces, outdoor public use eating areas, etc., which were released in late 2012; these will affect amenities built in 2016 and beyond. Additional standards for the built environment are anticipated to be developed in the future. These new standards may have financial implications relative to the retrofit of existing amenities and facilities and design of future amenities and facilities.

5.2 TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Parkland & Open Spaces

The role of parkland within communities is immense. Depending upon their size, location and function, parks have multiple applications and can act as:

- facilitators of “placemaking” and high quality urban designs;
- catalysts for community improvement and revitalization;
- hubs for special events and social interaction;
- venues for physical activity, whether for programmed or spontaneous usage;
- educators and stewards of the natural environment; and/or
- spaces for family gatherings and relaxation.

The increasing integration of “places” and “destinations” through urban design seeks to create comfortable, connected and sustainable streetscapes. The role of parkland is essentially tied to these objectives as parks function as hubs for social and physical activity, while increasing the overall attractiveness of any given area (provided they are designed with aesthetics and functionality in mind). While park development can increase the attractiveness and marketability of new areas, parkland redevelopment can act as a catalyst for improving quality of life and revitalizing existing areas.

As such, the importance of the parks and open spaces as an asset cannot be understated. Vaughan offers a number of parks and open spaces to encourage physical and social activity, wellness, and informal use opportunities.

Park Comfort and Safety

Ensuring that parks provide attractive and comfortable experiences to the user is paramount to ensuring successful utilization by a broad range of users. The presence of informative signage and attractive gateway features is the first impression that a user will have of the park and park system as a whole. The presence of consistent and effective signage is an important element in promoting recognition and stewardship in the community. Some signs can also provide interpretive information that connects a user to the park and may encourage the person to take further interest in their surroundings.

The provision of parking is a convenience that many residents look for in accessing parkland, though parking is best suited for parks which are more intensively used, such as those containing community centres or multiple sports fields. Once inside a park, patrons often look for a number of convenience and comfort-based features, depending upon their intended use. In non-programmed or passive parks where social activities such as picnicking, family gatherings, and cultural events are taking place, users might be looking for amenities such as treed areas and shade structures, picnic tables, pavilions, and washrooms. Such amenities are also beneficial in strategic locations along major trail routes and at trail heads. Similarly, users at active parks such as sports field may be looking for similar amenities as well as features such as designated seating, change rooms, and concessions.

Finally, parks are being designed with users' safety in mind through the application of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and other design principles. High volume areas should be well lit, low visibility areas should be limited, and neighbourhood level parks should be designed so that surrounding residents and streets have "eyes on the park", thus discouraging undesirable users and activities. Some of the parks in Vaughan's older areas have little to no street frontage, a design that has contributed to vandalism, property damage, and safety concerns. Maintenance of parks is now accepted in the industry as a key component of perceived "safety" in parks and in deterring inappropriate behavior. Considering CPTED principles in park design will achieve safer, user-friendly parks in Vaughan.

Aging Infrastructure

A 2006 study by Parks and Recreation Ontario identified that 30-50% of recreation facilities in Ontario are approaching the end of their useful life.²⁴ In fact, infrastructure province-wide is chronically underfunded,²⁵ though these pressures have been somewhat alleviated through the recent provincial and federal economic stimulus programs. In addition to job creation and stimulating economic growth, investment in recreation infrastructure renewal helps to stimulate higher levels of participation in physical and recreation activities. Provision of quality recreation infrastructure and facilities is a cost-effective, proactive solution to promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activity and participation.

Some communities have undertaken community facility master plans to identify the state of their recreation facilities and determine their suitability to accommodate future growth and the evolution of recreation trends. Single-purpose, older facilities have typically been unsuitable to support the needs of expanding communities, lack accessibility and appropriate space to meet the needs of user groups, or require costly maintenance. Older facilities are also typically single use facilities where opportunities may exist to expand or relocate multiple facility components to achieve economies of scale. Given Vaughan's rapid and recent growth, most of its recreational and library infrastructure is relatively new. Nevertheless, some older facilities remain and many others will require some form of renewal over the coming years.

Since 2009, the Canadian government has invested over \$12 billion in infrastructure projects and program. Recent initiatives include the Recreation Infrastructure Canada program, a stimulus program designed to renew, upgrade, and expand recreation facilities over a 2-year span. This initiative resulted in massive success, with over 1,600 applications and approved funding for 718. In Ontario, nearly \$200

²⁴ Parks and Recreation Ontario. [Ontario Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Study](http://216.13.76.142/PROntario/index.htm). 2006. Retrieved from <http://216.13.76.142/PROntario/index.htm>

²⁵ Parks and Recreation Ontario. [Investing in healthy and active Ontarians through recreation and parks infrastructure](http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci_id/3542.htm). 2007. Retrieved from http://www.prontario.org/index.php/ci_id/3542.htm

million was invested in the renewal and upgrading of recreation facilities and infrastructure, resulting in more than 750 projects funded with the assistance of the federal and provincial government.²⁶ Projects that have benefited from this program and/or the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund in Vaughan include renovations and improvements to Sonoma Heights Community Park, Memorial Hill, and Maple Nature Reserve.

Over the past three years, a number of renovations have also been undertaken at a number of Vaughan's public library branches including Pierre Berton, Bathurst Clark, Woodbridge, Kleinburg, and Dufferin Clark. These renovations were mainly to enhance the user's library experience, improve operational efficiencies, and to undertake necessary improvements to replace aging facility components and to ensure that the library branches are accessible to all residents, families, and abilities. Such accessible improvements include automated entrances and doors, accessible bathrooms, and an elevator.

Multi-use Parks & Facilities

There is growing demand for parks and facilities that contain something for everybody, rather than those designed solely for singular uses. While single use parks have merit in appropriate locations (e.g., sports field complexes), parks that provide opportunities for a range of ages, family types, and abilities are viewed as spaces for inclusive recreational activity. Furthermore, there has been a considerable trend towards participation in non-programmed (spontaneous) outdoor activities such as pick-up sports, picnicking, family gatherings, special events, etc. In this sense, parks can be viewed as "outdoor community centres" that combine a number of programmed and non-programmed uses – this is a foundational element in the philosophy being placemaking.

The provision of high quality, multi-field parks and open spaces in larger complexes or parks (such as those found at North Thornhill Community Centre and Vellore Village Community Centre) not only encourage physical activities among all age groups, but high quality facilities also provide opportunities for attracting tourists and tournaments at a regional scale or beyond. When developing new or existing parks with sports fields, municipalities are considering the needs of local users and spectators through supplementary amenities such as washroom facilities and covered shelters. Incorporating more non-programmed spaces and natural areas, as well as linkages to the trail network, will also become increasingly important in serving local needs.

Communities are also moving away from single-purpose, stand-alone facilities in favour of multi-use facilities that integrate numerous activities and offer economies of scale with respect to construction, maintenance, staffing, and scheduling. Multi-use facilities are often designed with flexible spaces (e.g., activity rooms, gymnasiums, etc.) that have the potential to expand and easily respond to changing trends and demands of future users. Multi-use parks can also achieve efficiencies through having common infrastructure such as irrigation, lighting and drainage systems, and common parking areas. In addition, the ability to offer cross-programming opportunities and their responsiveness to the 'time crunch' make them attractive 'one-stop shopping' destinations, particularly among households with wide ranges of interests. The recently completed North Thornhill Community Centre is an excellent example of this model.

²⁶ Recreation Infrastructure Ontario. Recreation Infrastructure Canada Program – Ontario. 2011. 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/708.nsf/eng/home>

Despite the benefits of larger multi-use parks and facilities, increasing land scarcity will present challenges in accruing the land mass required to accommodate large multi-use facilities. Public feedback indicates there is a growing appetite for a more localized, neighbourhood-based facility model. There are two main drivers behind this: (1) to celebrate and respond to the unique needs and strengths of each community; and (2) to improve convenience by enabling residents to access parks, recreation, culture, and library services without having to drive. To achieve this, alternative facility provision approaches may be required, particularly in higher density areas.

Multi-Season Usage

While the majority of park usage occurs in the summer months, many communities are creating formal and informal year-round opportunities within their park systems, such as Vaughan's Uplands Golf and Ski Club. Multi-season trail developments may facilitate hiking opportunities during the summer and cross-country skiing during the winter. Similarly, the provision of outdoor ice in parks and open spaces can be provided as seasonal recreational infrastructure through partnering with communities. A number of these outdoor ice opportunities exist throughout Vaughan, including at York Hill District Park, Dufferin District Park, Chancellor District Park, Fr. Ermanno Park, and Matthew Park.

Positioning parks to be year-round destinations is a way to maximize physical activity goals. Strategic tree planting and landscaping can create wind buffers to offset the winter wind chill and blowing, while ensuring that major trailways and internal park walking circuits are free of snow and can facilitate greater use. While there are inherent costs associated with winter maintenance (even if it is limited to plowing of parking lots), the availability of no-to-low cost activities throughout the year is a benefit to Vaughan residents that may have financial challenges.

Rise of Urban Parks

In many communities, it is evident that there is a shifting focus from greenfield development to the intensification of urban centres and corridors, resulting in multi-unit, high rise dwellings. Increased population densities further drive the need for high quality amenities. Between the 1980s and '90s, sports facilities and other major venues have been the solution for boosting local economic development, urban renewal, and revitalization.²⁷ Today, the demand for urban spaces and public squares in highly urbanized areas has become increasingly popular, particularly in areas where the availability of traditional parkland, open spaces, and amenities within walking distance are limited. Not only do these urban spaces provide a wealth of outdoor opportunities and variety of uses, urban park projects can stimulate economic development and regeneration and have been found to support highly populated, livable, urban areas.²⁸ Nevertheless, urban parks are considerably more expensive than traditional park development projects due to the amount of hardscape and need for robust materials.

Urban spaces are dynamic by nature and function as a focal point to facilitate passive recreational opportunities and also play a supporting role in complementing surrounding land uses, providing places for people to meet, gather, and socialize. Community groups and other stakeholders often desire public spaces as the location to hold community programs and special events. Integrating parks and open spaces into higher density areas is critical to providing livable urban spaces for community gatherings, while also softening the streetscape with green features.

²⁷ JoAnn Greco. City parks, bringing urban centres back to life. Washington Post. July 30, 2010

²⁸ Project for Public Spaces. The Re-Emergence of Public Squares. Retrieved from <http://www.pps.org/reference/the-re-emergence-of-the-public-square/>

Redeveloping underutilized brownfields (including buildings and surface parking lots) in urbanized areas to public open spaces has also been an increasing trend. Repurposing these areas provides opportunities to turn underutilized lands into public open spaces. Green amenities in urban areas can strengthen the surrounding community, promoting quality of life and trickle-down redevelopment and rejuvenation in surrounding areas through private investment.²⁹

The Vaughan Official Plan (2010) contains a parkland classification typology for these types of spaces called “Public Squares”. These parks serve as spaces for users to gather and socialize, supporting both neighbourhood and city-wide events. These spaces provide opportunities for public art, outdoor game areas, formal gardens, fountains (which can be designed for multi-functionality; e.g., waterplay, winter ice skating, etc.), and seating. This type of parkland is typically suitable in highly visible locations within intensification areas where opportunities to provide traditional forms of parkland is limited due to land scarcity or difficulty in acquiring parcels of sufficient size.

Increased Environmental Awareness & Stewardship

Since the 1980s, the importance of environmental protection has been increasingly recognized by society; the environment is often ranked as the number one priority in Canadian public opinion polls.³⁰ The ban on the use of pesticides in 2009 provides further supporting evidence of the Province’s commitment to a healthier environment, encouraging chemical-free and alternative options to lawn maintenance. As people become more aware of the benefits of environmental protection, demand for passive settings that connect people to nature is increasing. Communities are placing a greater emphasis on the development of passive park space (e.g., woodlots, prairie grasslands, flower gardens, civic gathering spaces, etc.), often times ensuring that a portion of new active parks remains in a more natural state.

Naturalized park spaces (whether by ‘maintaining’ a site in its natural state or ‘returning’ a site to its natural state) are becoming more popular and are consistent with many of the principles related to environmental stewardship. Naturalization typically involves reduced grass cutting, planting of native species, and public education to create awareness in the community. Interpretative signage can also help in appropriate areas to help park patrons understand the significance of indigenous or significant plants and habitats. By facilitating education, interests, and understanding of natural processes through stewardship opportunities, many municipalities promote a philosophy that is aligned with overall sustainable development and shifting thinking away from the way communities are traditionally built through sprawl.

The Stewardship Network of Ontario defines stewardship as *‘an ethic by which citizens care for our land and water as part of a natural life-support system and collectively act to sustain and enhance it for generations to come.’*³¹ Stewardship initiatives are not only intended to educate the public at large, but also to improve the ecological functions at a macro-scale by maximizing ecological contributions found in naturalized parks, as well as the traditional active/manicured parks often found in more urban areas. It is estimated that there are thousands of environmental stewardship organizations throughout

²⁹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. [A Practical Guide to Brownfield Redevelopment in Ontario](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4995). 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4995>

³⁰ The Centre of Environmental Stewardship and Conservation Inc. [The State of Stewardship in Canada](http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca/files/scn/State_of_Stewardship_in_Canada_April_20.pdf). 2009. Retrieved from http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca/files/scn/State_of_Stewardship_in_Canada_April_20.pdf

³¹ The Centre for Environmental Stewardship and Conservation Inc. [A Review of Stewardship Programs and Activities in Canada’s Provinces and Territories](http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca/files/scn/Final_Prov_Territorial_April_20.pdf). 2009. Retrieved from http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca/files/scn/Final_Prov_Territorial_April_20.pdf

Canada, bringing together those who share a common interest in restoring the natural ecosystem and enhancing biodiversity.³²

Stewardship programs are generally established locally by a municipality or community group to engage the community, often being supported through partnerships such as Ontario Stewardship and Evergreen, non-profit environmental organizations that promote green community initiatives and provide funding opportunities (a common barrier found among many stewardship programs). Such stewardship initiatives include enhancing wildlife habitats, tree plantings, and education to share ideas about the environment. Stewardship programs provide opportunities to combine outdoor physical activities with education and restoring the local ecosystem with native plant species, combating harmful invasive species. On a local and regional level, particular attention has been given to educating the community and raising awareness on the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive species introduced to York Region in 2008 (and previously the Asian Long-Horned Beetle in 2003).

Stewardship objectives can be achieved through the incorporation of sustainable design features into parkland developments. Green infrastructure such as onsite stormwater ponds, bioswales, pervious trails and parking areas can enhance ecological functions. Increasing tree cover and canopies (12% of Vaughan is woodlands), as well as creating ‘urban forests’ and engineered wetlands through parkland, can also be effective design tools which create carbon sinks, offer shading to park users and surrounding residences, provide habitat opportunities for select wildlife, and contribute to naturalization or reforestation objectives. Furthermore, incorporating energy efficiency (e.g., LEED certification) and water conservation measures into park and facility designs can contribute to the overall greening of the community and showcase leadership in addressing environmental issues.

The City of Vaughan provides a number of opportunities through the *B’Leaves* initiative, which encourages environmental stewardship to make Vaughan a more vibrant and healthy place to live. This initiative provides educational information on the Emerald Ash Borer, the benefits of trees; notable achievements in environmental protection and awareness such as the 5-year tree planting strategy and tree protection by-law, and Vaughan’s Green Directions Plan. The *B’Leaves* initiative also promotes a wealth of environmental stewardship programs such as the Tree Dedication Program, Adopt-a-Park, ‘Dazzle Me!’ Neighbourhood Challenge, ‘My Vaughan Blooms’ Curb Appeal, and community events such as Greening Vaughan Environmental Days, Earth Day Tree Planting, and local community clean-up.

5.3 TRENDS IN THE TRAIL SYSTEM

Multi-Use Pathways

Providing an interconnected system of parks and open spaces is an important component of human health and ecological function. As many parks are considered to be “destinations”, ensuring that they are accessible can go a long way in encouraging people to visit them. Linking parks with trails, sidewalks, bicycle paths and roads provides choices for people to travel to these areas while creating infrastructure for commuter, utilitarian and recreational uses.

³² The Centre for Environmental Stewardship and Conservation Inc. *A Review of Stewardship Programs and Activities in Canada’s Provinces and Territories*. 2009. Retrieved from http://www.stewardshipcanada.ca/files/scn/Final_Prov_Territorial_April_20.pdf

A survey conducted by the American National Association of Homebuilders found that trails are the most desired feature in a community, especially in new subdivisions.³³ Respondents indicated that they would choose a new community based on the type and extent of the pathway system. Multi-use pathways are also a cost-effective method to increase physical activity levels, of particular importance to Vaughan given its goal of reducing inactivity levels. Not only do pathways support positive interaction between the community and the natural environment to facilitate recreation activities, they provide links between destinations and in many cases, provide alternative commuting means if strategically linked to schools and key employment areas. Unfortunately, 88% of Vaughan's elementary schools are not within 400-metres of trails or paths.³⁴

Throughout Ontario, walking is often cited as the most popular recreation activity, while pathways are often identified as some of the most pressing recreational infrastructure needs. In the household survey conducted for this Plan, 88% of Vaughan households reported that they participated in walking and hiking for leisure in the past 12 months. As age increases, so too does the propensity to identify walking as a favourite recreation time activity. This bodes well for future demand in Vaughan given that the older adult population is expected to grow throughout the study period. Vaughan's network of off and on-street trails and its active transportation initiatives provide evidence of the City's commitment to developing multi-use trails, but more work is needed.

Multi-use pathway development has been shown to promote physical activity, healthy lifestyles, encourage social gatherings and community development, and provide open spaces for members of the community to enjoy the natural environment while preserving natural heritage features. In addition, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* maintains that persons of all ages and abilities should have equal opportunities to participate. As a result, municipalities are required to design trails that can be used by all abilities through universal design of pathways, incorporating design considerations such as grade, surface material, width, and cross-slopes.³⁵ While it may be unreasonable to ensure all trails are accessible, the development of accessible multi-use pathways can be focused in locations where the terrain and environment can sustain higher levels of utilization. In addition to universal design of pathways, experiences in other communities suggests that the development of supporting amenities (such as the provision of accessibility, washrooms, rest areas, and wayfinding signage) may also encourage greater usage of pathways and trails.

Active Transportation

'Active transportation' refers to human-powered modes of travel which are intended for recreational or utilitarian purposes (i.e., non-motorized travel for the purposes of accessing all aspects of daily life). While the most common forms of active transportation are walking and cycling, other examples include running, skateboarding, skating, snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, and use of non-mechanized wheelchairs. Support for active transportation is an identified priority and outcome of a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies not only for recreational purposes, but also active commuting.

Active transportation forms a critically important part of an efficient and sustainable transportation system by reducing the number of motorized vehicles on the road, a concern for a number of

³³ National Association of Homebuilders. [Home Buyers Survey](http://www.nahb.org). 2002. Retrieved from <http://www.nahb.org>.

³⁴ Healthyork. [York Region Community Picture](#). February 2011.

³⁵ Mike P. Accessible Trails. [National Trails Training Partnership](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/SustainPasso.html). 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/accessible/SustainPasso.html>

communities in the GTA, which in turn reducing road congestion and greenhouse gas emissions (particularly during rush hour), consumption of land required for road-based infrastructure, as well as the amount of capital expended on road construction and maintenance. The provision of active transportation choices brings a number of benefits to individuals and their environment, notably by shifting travel from automobiles to non-motorized modes of transport, thereby improving elements of human health pertaining to:

- Air and water quality by minimizing vehicular emissions such as carbon dioxide and ground level ozone, which positively contributes to ecological and human health;
- Increasing physical activity, which has positive health effects such as reducing levels of obesity and chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease;
- Community and social vibrancy by encouraging compact developments and more liveable communities where people are more likely to have personal contact with each other; and
- Financial well-being by reducing expenditures on gasoline and certain vehicular costs (such as parking, less frequent oil changes), as well as health care (which benefits society as a whole through lower taxes).

A recent study on active transportation found that nearly one quarter of Canadians walk six or more hours per week to school, work, or for errands. For the same purposes, 10% of Canadians are likely to cycle. Individuals in lower income groups are more likely to walk while young adults are more likely to cycle, and students are more likely to walk and cycle as a means of transportation, similar to people who are generally physically active on a daily basis.³⁶

Opportunities for active transportation are largely dependent on the proximity between destinations from residential areas to commercial, recreational, institutional and employment areas. Residents are more likely to choose non-motorized forms of transportation in highly urbanized areas where driving and parking may be more difficult. Other considerations include the presence of pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks and cycle lanes, traffic patterns, destination routes, topography and walkable neighbourhoods. According to Statistics Canada, Vaughan is predominantly a commuter population with only 2% of commuters traveling on foot or bicycle. A large commuter population coupled with dispersed community facilities generally leave residents reserved to their vehicles, although public transit options in Vaughan are improving every year.

Further, there are a number of challenges with encouraging active transportation choices, not the least of which is Ontario's highly varied climatic and weather conditions. Whether in the form of rain, snow, or extreme heat or cold, people's choices will differ particularly if active transportation routes are not designed for multiple seasons or are not adequately shielded from the elements. Other barriers include the convenience factor of using a car and a lack of pedestrian/cyclist connectivity and infrastructure. It is also important to recognize that persons with health issues or disabilities might not choose active transportation due to their physical limitations, thus accessibility must be a central consideration in design.

Active transportation opportunities can be maximized by providing the necessary infrastructure that facilitates safe, comfortable, and convenient usage. As such, the Region and its municipalities benefit from increasing their emphasis on active transportation choices and highlighting the importance of sidewalks, pathways, and cycling routes. A number of urban municipalities, such as Vaughan, have

³⁶ Butler G. Orpana, H. Wiens, A. By Your Own Two Feet: Factors Associated with Active Transportation in Canada. Canada Journal of Public Health. 2007. 98(4).

undertaken Pedestrian and Cycling/Active Transportation Master Plans. Encouraging non-motorized forms of transport has also been articulated through the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008) and the City's Transportation Master Plan (2012). Both these Master Plans contain a series of actions for facilitating supportive infrastructure and a sustainable transportation network that connect residents within Vaughan and throughout the Region. More recently, York Region's community indicators identified that 42% of the streets in Vaughan have sidewalks, slightly lower than the Regional average. Vaughan also has 36 kilometres of cycling lanes, making up 6% of York Region's overall cycling routes.³⁷ These figures indicate that there are many opportunities to improve Vaughan's active transportation infrastructure to be more competitive on a regional level. Vaughan's 2007 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan made a number of recommendations regarding the provision of trails, sidewalks, cycle routes and bike lanes, reinforcing Vaughan's commitment to active transportation solutions.³⁸

5.4 TRENDS IN THE LIBRARY SYSTEM

Libraries Matter

Strong library systems are the cornerstones of strong communities and, across Canada, libraries are growing in importance and use. There is a great deal of research that highlights the importance of public libraries as an accessible, universal and primarily free benefit to the residents of a community. *Long Overdue* (Public Agenda, 2006), *Realizing Our Full Potential* (Association Resource Centre Inc., 2003), and *Ontario Public Libraries Market Survey* (Market Probe Canada, 2010) and a variety of other sources support the following benefit statements:

- Libraries are at the heart of a strong, well-informed community.
- Libraries continue to be highly valued.
- Libraries are accessible and welcoming to all.
- Libraries provide free, universal and unlimited access to knowledge, culture, and information.
- Libraries are more important now than ever before as the power of knowledge translates into greater socio-economic benefits.

In a survey of Ontario residents, 37% of respondents ranked libraries as the most important tax-supported service. The household survey for this 2013 ATMP also revealed that 72% of households visited one of Vaughan's public libraries in the past 12 months and 77% of households support additional funding for new or improved library facilities. Across Ontario, membership levels at libraries have remained consistent over the last ten years despite the prevalence of near-universal internet access; while the number of in-person library visits has not been adversely affected, these technological changes seem to have affected *how* people use the library rather than *if* they use it. Borrowing materials, collecting information, and reading/studying continue to be the main reasons to visit the library.³⁹

On a national scale, overall library use has increased over the past decade, with electronic transactions accounting for a large part of the growth. Electronic resources are not replacing physical resources, as the number of in-person library visits has remained stable, while internet visits have increased

³⁷ York Region. *Living in York Region: Our Community Check-up*. 2011

³⁸ City of Vaughan. *Pedestrian and Bicycling Master Plan*. 2007

³⁹ Federation of Ontario Public Libraries. *Federation of Ontario Public Libraries Research*. 2010

substantially over the last ten years.⁴⁰ Between 2007 and 2011, visits to Vaughan Public Libraries have increased by 29% (exceeding 2.0 million visits in 2011) and borrowing has increased by 27% (exceeding 2.8 million items in 2011), despite the number of locations remaining the same. Canadian and Ontario libraries are remaining an important municipal service, which is expected to continue in coming years.

Libraries are Evolving

Public libraries are increasingly being recognized as a community destination and an attractive public space with an enjoyable atmosphere. Many libraries are recognizing their role as a community hub and work to service groups of collective citizens as well as individuals.⁴¹ Additionally, libraries are becoming more of a civic integrator, particularly through a focus of providing information on health, education, government and other local services.⁴² New library facilities are being internally and externally designed and built to be noticed in the community as a symbol of community pride. A library can represent a community at its best, and function as a civic landmark.

Further, libraries are being designed as flexible spaces that can be reconfigured according to changing needs. These library spaces have an increased focus on people and less on collections space.^{43,44} As a result, libraries are also being increasingly seen as a “third space” – an essential venue, not unlike home or work/school. They provide critical supports to the self-employed, under-employed, students, and the general public. They are valued for their comfortable, free, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

Libraries Are Utilizing Emerging Technologies

With the increased integration and utilization of technology in services, libraries are experiencing greater demand for eBooks, online services, digital reference services, and other technological innovations. Increasing demand for technology has not led to a decrease in demand for books and other library formats; as measured by borrowing rates, demand for library collections increases steadily year over year. These resources have become an added level of service, rather than a replacement for print material. As a result, the continuing need for space for collections, along with the increasing need for space for public technology services, means that overall library space needs have increased.

Current and future libraries are expected to be knowledgeable in the availability and use of technological resources available through the library.⁴⁵ With technology integrated into the library system, many users can now search the library catalogue, check out materials, and place holds without assistance. Staff are “unchained” from the reference and circulation desk and are free to focus on additional tasks or programming.⁴⁶

Vaughan Public Libraries offer a variety of eBooks, which can be digitally loaned to members. The library also loans eBook readers to promote accessibility to digital resources. An issue facing libraries with eBooks is that one book can be theoretically loaned to an unlimited number of users; however, publishers place restrictions on their use. Most publishers have restricted licensed eBooks to one user at a time, and others have limited the number of times a book can be lent (e.g., 26 times). It is recognized

⁴⁰ Lumos Research. *An Analysis of Public Library Trends*. 2011

⁴¹ Southern Ontario Library Service. *Library Development Guide: Creating the Future You've Imagined: A Guide to Essential Planning*. 2007

⁴² Benton Foundation. *Buildings, books, and bytes*. 1996

⁴³ Southern Ontario Library Service. *Library Development Guide: Creating the Future You've Imagined: A Guide to Essential Planning*. 2007

⁴⁴ Southern Ontario Library Service. *Environmental Scan for Ontario Public Libraries*. 2011

⁴⁵ Southern Ontario Library Service. *Library Development Guide: Creating the Future You've Imagined: A Guide to Essential Planning*. 2007

⁴⁶ Southern Ontario Library Service. *Environmental Scan for Ontario Public Libraries*. 2011

that Vaughan Public Libraries are experiencing issues with limited access to eBook titles. While eBooks do not face the same physical limitations as paper books, they often face the same lending restrictions.⁴⁷

Library Development Trends

Libraries are also being progressively more integrated with other civic spaces, such as within multi-use community facilities – a model that Vaughan has long-embraced – in order to attain operating efficiencies and cost savings through sharing common areas, storage space, programming rooms, and facility management services. If effectively designed and managed, this model has the potential to offer considerable benefits to residents, who appreciate the one-stop shopping experience that it provides.

In many communities, smaller, isolated library branches are gradually being succeeded by fewer but larger library branches in prominent central locations that are highly visible, accessible with public transportation, offer expansion capabilities, and barrier-free access to all members of the community. In Canada a branch library typically ranges from a minimum of 12,000 to a maximum of 30,000 ft². Some recent examples in Ontario include the Waterloo Public Library (which built a 17,000 ft² branch), the Mississauga Public Library (which has built their most recent branches in the range of 15,000 to 29,000 ft²), and the Markham Public Library (which just opened a 25,000 ft² branch).

The increasing size of library facilities is also a result of accessibility requirements, which create a demand for more floor space to house and circulate the same collection size (due to smaller stacks, wider aisles, larger washrooms, etc.). It is estimated that floor space will have to be increased by 8-10% to accommodate accessibility standards.

Library Design

Most recently, the design of public libraries has been influenced by big box bookstores, a transition that has already occurred in Vaughan. Facilities are being designed to offer large, comfortable reading and working areas, private and collaborative study rooms, homework centres, an ample supply of Internet workstations, wiring/outlets for personal computer use and/or wireless Internet access. In addition, libraries are moving towards flexible, multi-use library space with modular fixtures and ergonomic furniture, wide and uncluttered aisle ways with lower shelving, and a more “open” interior to accommodate changing technologies. As a result, the demand for library space is on the rise, as is the need to locate libraries within attractive buildings in prominent, central locations that are easily accessible to the community. Vaughan Public Libraries has embraced new design elements that incorporate many of these amenities, including welcoming atmospheres, attractive decor, meeting rooms, and designated areas for different age groups.

⁴⁷ Levien, R. Confronting the Future, Strategic Visions for the 21st Century Public Library. 2011

5.5 TRENDS IN SERVICE DELIVERY

Volunteerism

Volunteers are essential to the operation and delivery of high quality parks, recreation, and library services and many communities rely heavily on their assistance; Vaughan is no exception to this rule. The 2007 *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* indicated that volunteerism is rising slightly, but experience in several other communities suggest that many groups still struggle in finding volunteers. One key result of the national survey was that 18% of the volunteer hours in Canada are in the sports and recreation sector, which is the highest of all sectors. However, while 46% of Canadians (15 years or older) volunteered in 2007, it must be noted that the absolute average volunteer hours per year decreased slightly from 168 hours per year to 166. The rate of volunteerism by those between the ages of 15 and 24 has doubled from 29% in 2000 to 58% in 2007, perhaps largely due to the addition of mandatory volunteer hours for high school students as part of the high school curriculum.

At the same time, youth ages 15 and under represent the smallest proportion of volunteers, representing a need to engage this age group early to improve the likelihood of retaining volunteers in the future. One of the most common barriers to youth volunteering is the lack of free time. More youth lead structured lives with school, organized sports, and often part-time employment, resulting in the inability to make long-term commitments to volunteering. Today's digital age and increasing sedentary activities also limit youth's level of community involvement. Other research suggests that youth are unable to find opportunities or are unsure of how to get involved in volunteering, suggesting a gap in communication between organizations and the community. Lastly, youth may feel that their opinions are not valued by organizations. Youth volunteers need to be engaged with community service delivery as they may provide new skills and perceptions that may be overlooked by other age groups.

Seniors currently represent the most active volunteer group; however, greater pressures to attract new volunteers are anticipated as this volunteer group becomes less dominant; thus impacting the delivery of services and programming capacity. This gap in the volunteer base opens opportunities to attract new volunteers, particularly among youth but also the baby boomer generation as they move through the mature stage of their life cycle. As baby boomers enter into retirement, this age group will be seeking more opportunities to get involved in the community with less commitments, resulting in more available time and flexibility in schedules, although it is anticipated that many boomers will seek part-time work. Volunteers in this age group are also more likely to seek opportunities in new areas unrelated to their careers, allowing them to learn new skills, while others may seek volunteer opportunities where they can utilize their experience.

Research has shown that Canadian immigrants represent a large proportion of the volunteer pool.⁴⁸ This is significant in the context of Vaughan given that 45% of the population is represented by new Canadians, providing considerable opportunities to engage these groups. Immigrant volunteers provide a variety of benefits to organizations including multi-lingual assets, skill capacity, and providing a new outlook and perspective that may assist service delivery among organizations. Volunteering assists with self-development in social skills, confidence, and building community connections among immigrants.

Vaughan provides a wide variety of recreational volunteer opportunities for all ages, particularly for teenage students for fulfillment of their required volunteer hours. Opportunities range from year-round

⁴⁸ Volunteer Canada. [Bridging the Gap](#), 2011

pre-school, children's, youth, adult, and seniors' programs, in addition to City-run events and festivals such as Canada Day and Concerts in the Park.

Partnerships

In addition to the City, organizations such as conservation authorities, school boards, non-profit organizations, and private businesses offer access to parks, natural areas, recreation activities, and community facilities. The most successful partnerships are derived from common objectives (e.g., environmental conservation, community improvement, physical activity, trail development, etc.), utilizing the skills and strengths of each group in delivering access while sharing responsibilities and minimizing risks (e.g., costs and liabilities).

Maximizing the resources of each party is seen as a beneficial way to increase the amount of publicly accessible facilities provided, so long as the public interest is maximized and the partnerships fulfill the desired objectives of the City and its partners. For example, many communities provide facility space for programming, events, and activities while the staffing responsibilities are provided by a partnering community organization. Many other partnership opportunities exist with private sector businesses through sponsorships, project funding, and donations. These types of partnerships allow businesses to give back to the community while gaining market exposure. With the realization that municipalities cannot meet all needs by themselves, this trend towards an integrated provision approach is growing.

Promotion of Tourism

The provision of high quality community and library facilities are a way to draw visitors and participants from external markets through sport, tournaments, festivals and special events, nature-based and historical experiences, etc. Promoting tourism requires exploring ways to improve awareness of the local resources to visitors. Festivals and special events often generate "multiplier effects" from tourism spending but also create a sense of local pride and build community spirit.

Nearly 82% of Canadian tourists pursue outdoor activities as an out-of-town tourist.⁴⁹ Many of today's tourists are between the ages of 35-50 who are well-educated and generally have higher incomes, which in some cases, suggests more disposable incomes.⁵⁰ Communities are thus showcasing high quality park attractions and recreational facilities to draw participants and spectators from external markets to drive tourism dollars.

Vaughan is home to many tourist attractions, the largest of which is Canada's Wonderland. Other opportunities include an abundance of retail, fine arts, and recreation pursuits, such as the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, historic villages, and annual heritage celebrations.

⁴⁹ Ontario Canada. Canadian travel market – Outdoor activities while on trips of one or more nights. Travel Activities and Motivators Survey (TAMS). 2008. Retrieved from http://www.sse.gov.on.ca/medt/investinontario/en/Pages/tourism_tams_cdn_outdoor_activities.aspx

⁵⁰ York Region. Long Term Tourism Development Strategy (Draft). 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.york.ca/NR/rdonlyres/4csyzpaefhqkx25nkphwxpxyd5ohoio6kijatvbsgpp6xuja3apuadaqvnp2zsbledudbrfrb6k53zq6wl6ysulfh/Jan+7+Long+att+1.pdf>

SECTION 6: GUIDING PRINCIPLES & METHODOLOGY

6.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR FACILITY PROVISION

When designing, funding, constructing, and operating parks, recreation, and library facilities, the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Public Libraries should ensure that – to the greatest degree possible – that recreation and library facilities, parks, and trails are:

1. **Integrated and coordinated** – Co-location of parks, recreation, library, and other civic facilities should continue to be a priority for the City. Section 7.2.1.4 of the City’s new Official Plan states that it is a policy of Council: *“To encourage and support the development of joint and/or shared community facilities, such as schools, community centres, libraries, day care or other appropriate facilities, on shared sites and, where appropriate, adjacent to public parks.”*
2. **Multi-use and multi-generational** – Multi-use facilities are generally preferred over stand-alone single-purpose facilities, the development of which is discouraged due to operational inefficiencies and the narrow range of uses that can be accommodated.
3. **Accessible and connected** – New community centres, libraries, and district parks should, at a minimum, be located in highly accessible locations and on transit routes, have high visual identification, and be designed in consultation with community representatives to ensure that spaces are responsive to their users. This is in support of Section 7.2.1 of the City’s new Official Plan, which states: *“Conveniently located and accessible community services and facilities are critical to the success of municipal programs and services, and contribute directly to the health and social wellbeing of communities. Community services and facilities should be integrated into existing and New Community Areas, and located within Intensification Areas and other central locations in order to facilitate access and use.”*
4. **Flexible** – The inclusion of flexible multi-purpose spaces should be considered in the design of all community centres, public libraries, and appropriate civic facilities.
5. **Delivered in partnership with others** – Where appropriate and in the public’s best interest, the City should pursue partnerships in the provision and delivery of parks and facilities. Guidance may be sought from the Council-approved program framework to determine the potential involvement of various parties.
6. **Provided in response to target market needs** – This Active Together Master Plan provides a basis for identifying and prioritizing City-wide and community-specific needs and should be referenced as opportunities arise. Facilities and parks should be designed for their intended function, be it City-wide, community, or neighbourhood.
7. **Provided in a timely fashion** – Where required, land for major facilities should be secured well in advance of construction to leverage lower land values and promote integrated planning.
8. **Affordable and financially sustainable** – Fiscal responsibility will be a key principle in the provision of parks and facilities (e.g., achieving cost recovery targets), as will affordable access for Vaughan residents.

9. **Environmentally responsible** – New and substantially renovated community recreation and library facilities should be designed to incorporate “green” technologies to a level supported by LEED or equivalent standards, thereby reinforcing the City’s role as a leader in environmental efficiency and stewardship.
10. **Inclusive of persons with disabilities** – The City should continue to ensure that regulations established in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* are met at all community facilities and parks.
11. **Identifiable** – The City should ensure that adequate and consistent signage exists at all parks, trails, and recreation and library facilities. Public art should also be encouraged in parks and community facilities.

6.2 HOW FACILITY AND PARKS NEEDS ARE IDENTIFIED

This Active Together Master Plan was developed to ensure that investments in parks, recreation, and library infrastructure occur in a manner that is timely, fiscally responsible, and meets the highest priority needs of present and future populations.

To assist in meeting this objective, the Plan has established provision targets that will help Vaughan identify and plan for new parks, recreation, and library facilities. These targets are based upon a combination of market-driven factors (such as demand, trends, and demographics), public input expressing local desires and expectations, benchmarks seen in other municipalities, and the City’s past and present circumstances. They are intended to be applied flexibly and may be modified over time to remain responsive to local needs. Most provision targets are population-based, such as one indoor pool tank per 30,000 residents. Often, community planning areas are used as the basis of analysis, particularly for community-level infrastructure.

For more localized facilities that residents expect to be able to walk or bike to (e.g., playgrounds, waterplay facilities, meeting space, etc.), geographic distribution also becomes an important consideration. Assessing spatial distribution is not an exact science, as each community exhibits direct socio-economic characteristics, built form, traffic patterns, and expectations. For example, for years, Vaughan’s development patterns were largely low-density and automobile-dependent. Parks, recreation, and library infrastructure were distributed based on this model through the development of larger, community-level facilities. However, several intensification areas within or adjacent to established communities have been identified by the City’s new Official Plan, which is already creating changes to Vaughan’s urban form. Most of these intensification areas will be characterized by dense populations, high-rise buildings, mixed land uses, and access to transit and alternative transportation choices. In these areas, the reliance on the public realm to provide respite, accommodate gatherings, and protect community identity is heightened. In some cases, existing community infrastructure within these areas will not be sufficient to accommodate the thousands of new residents. Parks, recreation, and library facilities and services are vital to community health and social development and appropriate access is a necessity.

It bears noting that this Plan is a guideline and is flexible in its implementation. While it provides targets and principles that will allow for long-term consistency in planning, this Plan represents a snapshot in time. Further analysis will be required in some cases to more specifically define facility components,

timing, operating models, locations, and costs. For example, the City of Vaughan Planning Department requires Community Facilities and Services Impact Studies for all development applications pertaining to high-rise developments; this Plan is not intended to replace these impact studies, but rather to provide guidance.

Furthermore, new information, changing trends, adjusted population forecasts, public input, partnership alignment, and land and funding availability all have the potential to influence the implementation priorities identified in this Plan. Implementation should be monitored regularly and the entire Plan should be updated in five years' time.

6.3 MUNICIPAL INVENTORY – WHAT IS AND IS NOT INCLUDED

The City of Vaughan owns and maintains over two hundred active park sites and several community recreation and library facilities, some in partnership with other providers. Mapping of community centres, other indoor recreation facilities, outdoor recreation facilities, and Vaughan Public Libraries is contained in [Appendix G](#).

The inventory data referenced herein considers only municipal assets located on land owned or under agreement by the City of Vaughan, and is considered to be accurate as of February 2013. Where known, parks and facilities to be constructed in 2013 have also been included in the inventory. Facilities located on school board properties, with the exception of sports fields permitted by the City (as of 2012), are not included unless otherwise noted. While non-profit and private facilities may augment the supply, they have not been included in the inventory as they may impose restrictions to public access.

In addition to municipal parks, recreation, and library facilities, it is recognized that Vaughan is home to a number of additional municipal assets (e.g., cultural facilities, heritage buildings, etc.) and non-municipal assets provided by schools, places of worship, non-profit organizations, private businesses, conservation areas, etc. Some of these key facilities, which have been considered in the Active Together Master Plan analysis where appropriate, include:

- City Playhouse Theatre (386-seat theatre)
- City-owned designated heritage buildings: Armstrong House, Beaverbrook Activity Centre (Sarah Noble House), J.E.H. MacDonald House, John Charlton House, John R. Arnold House, Kleinburg Railway Station, Kline House, Maple Cemetery Vault, Michael Cranny House, Nathaniel Wallace House, Vellore School & Township Hall, Woodbridge Mackenzie Site (Archaeological Site), Memorial Hill
- McMichael Collection
- Uplands Golf and Ski Club
- MacMillan Farm
- Gallanough Resource Centre
- Boyd Conservation Area (TRCA)
- Kortright Centre
- The Sports Village
- Private arena facilities (The Pavilion, Vaughan IcePlex)
- The Soccer Centre (Ontario Soccer Association)
- Schwartz-Reisman Centre (Jewish Community Centre)

SECTION 7: PARKLAND ASSESSMENT

Parks provide countless benefits to the social, economic, environmental, and physical dimensions of individuals and communities. From an economic perspective, parks are an economic catalyst and positively impact the value of neighbouring properties. The availability of park and leisure facilities is an important consideration for companies and well-educated individuals that are choosing to re-locate.

“...Urban parkland is not only a vital community asset, but it also serves to define a healthy, vibrant city – one that attracts and retains investment, as well as a variety of social amenities.”

- Evergreen, *Green Space Acquisition & Stewardship in Canada’s Urban Municipalities*

This section contains an assessment of active parkland needs extending to 2031. For the purposes of this Plan, “active parkland” is referred to as all lands owned, leased, and/or managed by the City and classified as Regional Parks, District Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, and Parkettes / Public Squares. Active parkland typically consists of tableland suitable for the development or installation of built recreational amenities (such as sports fields, playgrounds, courts, etc.) that may be used for both organized and unorganized activities.

“Open space” lands, which have no to low development potential and are primarily designated for purposes such as environmental protection/conservation, stormwater management, buffers, etc. are outside of the scope of this plan.

7.1 Current Situation

Parks are critical elements that define Vaughan’s quality of life and contribute to the physical and social wellbeing of its residents. They are gathering places that help to strengthen neighbourhoods and create healthy and complete communities. They are used and loved by young and old, valued by residents from all walks of life, and relied upon to provide an increasingly wide range of structured and unstructured leisure and sport activities. Parks not only provide immeasurable personal benefits to the individual, but also contribute positively to the health of the environment, economy, and social/public realm.

The current park system has served the City well, but like many other large municipalities, Vaughan’s parks system is faced with several challenges:

- a) The City is continually seeking to keep pace with demands for sports fields and many other park amenities. General trends in leisure activities include an increase in some physical, social, and self-scheduled (unstructured) activities resulting in greater interest in walking and cycling trails, skateboard parks, natural areas, community gardens, picnic areas, special event areas, dog parks, etc. Trends and the movement toward “complete communities” also suggest that people are spending more time in their local communities, which is increasing the importance of equitable access to parks and open space areas. Public use of parkland is not only increasing along with the City’s population, but is also diversifying. The result is a greater need for a wider range of public spaces that fulfill the many roles of parks.
- b) Vaughan’s diversity places pressure on its park system, including greater demand for pursuits that various ethnic groups enjoy in their home country. This results in a growing need for

facilities such as fields for various sports (e.g., cricket, soccer, rugby, football), community gardens, and special event spaces.

- c) Although children are the primary user of parks, outdoor amenities and opportunities for adults and seniors are equally important, particularly given the health and social benefits that result from physical activity and community interaction. With a growing seniors' population, accessibility and geographic factors related to the location of parks will remain key factors in their overall provision.
- d) There is a growing deficiency of parkland in the City's newest communities and residential intensification areas. Opportunities to acquire land in these areas are infrequent and costly.
- e) The tools available under the *Planning Act* for parkland dedication are not sufficient on their own to meet Vaughan's active parkland needs. Without thoughtful municipal intervention, per capita active parkland supplies will continue to decline.
- f) The opportunities to assemble and acquire District and Regional Park sites – the larger parks that contain multiple lit sports fields, waterplay facilities, skateboard parks, picnic areas, etc. – are dwindling as the City transitions its focus from greenfield development to intensification.
- g) With higher density residential development comes smaller and more urban park parcels. Urban parks provide visual relief and respite, a space for social interactions, and connections within an otherwise dense urban environment. These parks will be intensively used and require a much higher standard of design and construction, making them more costly. A new funding framework is required to address the development and maintenance of this growing park type, as well as for the renewal of older park within neighbourhoods undergoing intensification.
- h) An ever escalating economy means that monies taken as cash-in-lieu for parkland dedication in years past will not buy the same amount of land today. Furthermore, parkland dedication values differ depending on the type of development application, while most municipal acquisitions (particularly in established areas) are purchased at full market value. The City has recently amended its cash-in-lieu of parkland formula to better account for these rising costs.
- i) Outside of the cash-in-lieu generated from new development, there is currently no dedicated municipal reserve fund for parkland acquisition. Furthermore, as the City matures and intensifies, the renewal and revitalization of parks will become a greater concern; however, funding sources are largely limited to the tax levy. Modifications to make parks more physically accessible to persons with disabilities will also place increased pressure on existing budgets.
- j) Vaughan lacks a comprehensive strategy to identify parkland acquisition priorities and opportunities. This Plan is helpful in identifying system-wide issues, but a more detailed acquisition strategy is needed in the short-term before opportunities are lost.

The emerging focus on medium and high density areas poses the greatest challenge to the City. With more multi-unit buildings, there will be fewer private backyards, which will create a greater reliance on public parks – both existing and new – for a wide range of uses. Parks in these areas are expected to be more intensely used and reflect their surrounding urban area, with a focus on providing a local gathering space for unstructured activities, including informal play and socialization. Further, these areas tend to attract a broader and larger group of users, including local residents, residents from across the City, office workers, tourists, and mobility hub users. In these contexts, the demand for parkland by different uses overlaps, which generate a greater demand for, and use of public space.

As is discussed later in this section, the City has begun to make changes to its parks system to better align it with these realities, including adopting a new classification system and reviewing its cash-in-lieu rates. The new Official Plan recognizes this: *“Intensification Areas will require new and creative parkland opportunities provided on a more urban scale, mostly in the form of Neighbourhood Parks and Public Squares.”* Nevertheless, there is the concern that the City’s current parkland dedication policies and implementation procedures may not be fully responsive to the City’s future growth patterns and trends. As such, there are a number of other policies and practices that will need to evolve in order to keep pace with these changes, including those that address matters such as (but not limited to) ownership, conveyance, funding, design, and maintenance.

7.2 Parkland Classification and Types

As recommended in the 2008 ATMP, the new Vaughan Official Plan established a new parkland classification system, including the introduction of Public Squares. This classification system is intended to act as a guide for the planning and development of future parks.

Table 3: Current Parkland Classification System

Parkland Type	Size	Target Market / Location Criteria	Uses / Amenities
Regional Parks	15+ hectares	City-wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large cultural, recreational and entertainment events, such as festivals, sport tournaments, weddings and other events, as well as uses found in District Parks
District Parks	5+ hectares	coordinated with community centre sites, where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a variety of recreational and athletic interests, including major sports fields, large skateboard parks, outdoor skating facilities, field houses, picnic shelters, off-leash areas, aquatic/waterplay facilities and other uses
Neighbourhood Parks	1 to 5 hectares	within a 10-minute walk of the majority of the community served; coordinated with school sites, where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a balance of active and passive uses
Public Squares	up to 1 hectare (smaller sites may be considered in densely populated areas)	areas of higher density (intensively-used spaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a range of neighbourhood-oriented social opportunities and larger city-wide entertainment and cultural events depending on their size and location may include public art, small outdoor game areas such as chess tables, formal gardens and lawns, fountains/waterplay, small areas for dog walking, concert facilities and stages, seating areas and places to eat may also accommodate street-related activities such as vendors, retail kiosks, temporary markets, performance and exhibit space, and a range of other facilities

Source: Adapted from the new City of Vaughan Official Plan

Not listed above are “Open Space types”, including greenways, nature reserves, woodlots, stormwater management facilities, and cemeteries.

The parkland hierarchy in the City’s new Official Plan is a step in the right direction, but does not reflect the full complement of parks being proposed for some of Vaughan’s intensification areas, such as smaller public squares, plaza/ pocket parks, strata parks, and private amenity space. While the Vaughan Official Plan indicates that parks within intensification areas may be designed to be smaller, support more intensive uses, and accommodate less land-intensive activities, it does not provide alternate park types or criteria.

The City should review the urban parkland hierarchy and conveyance policies and develop innovative policies that support the development of a high quality and diverse parks system; this may be undertaken separately or as part of the proposed Parkland Acquisition Strategy. This review may consider amending the City’s existing hierarchy or adopting a separate hierarchy for higher density areas. In either case, a new urban park system must ensure that core park functions are maintained and that smaller parks are thoughtfully provided as part of a comprehensive planning strategy, not merely because a development site has a remnant piece of land.

Consideration of a new and flexible parkland dedication regime for Vaughan’s higher density areas should also take into account (among other matters):

- parkland dedication amounts and alternative provision rates;
- smaller and more urban park types, along with minimum park sizes;
- policies for strata parks (built on a development site, over top of a structure), with a view towards ensuring appropriate legal agreements and public access;
- policies for private amenity space; these may be accepted at the discretion of the City, but should not result in full parkland dedication credit;
- guiding principles for private sector involvement in park operation (e.g., cafes, markets, etc.); policies should seek to maximize public access, affordability, and municipal accountability; and
- alternative funding, maintenance, and management strategies.

As Vaughan becomes more urbanized, the need for larger district and regional parks will increase, as these parks will provide services unavailable elsewhere. The proposed Parkland Acquisition Strategy should also assess the potential to acquire these large types of parks moving forward, along with parkland needs in under-served communities.

Parkland Classification and Types	<i>Recommendations</i>
	<p>1. Continue to ensure consistency between Vaughan’s Official Plan, Secondary Plans, and this Active Together Master Plan. Where applicable, the evaluation of parkland and facility requirements relative to development applications should reference the findings, targets, and recommendations of this Plan. Furthermore, parkland requirements should be stated and evaluated using per capita measures, where possible.</p>

Parkland Classification and Types	Recommendations
2. Develop an urban parkland hierarchy and conveyance policy that serves as an appropriate, equitable, consistent, and transparent framework for parkland dedication in higher density areas. Policies should take into account:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• parkland dedication amounts and alternative provision rates (e.g., 1 ha : 300 units);• smaller and more urban park types, along with minimum park sizes;• policies for strata parks (built on a development site, over top of a structure), with a view towards ensuring appropriate legal agreements and public access;• policies for private amenity space; these may be accepted at the discretion of the City, but should not result in full parkland dedication credit;• guiding principles for private sector involvement in park operation (e.g., cafes, markets, etc.); policies should seek to maximize public access, affordability, and municipal accountability; and• alternative funding, maintenance, and management strategies.

7.3 Active Parkland Supply

The City's inventory of active parkland currently includes approximately 197 properties totalling 582 hectares; this includes lands that have been developed by the City, as well as those that are planned for development in 2013 (note: the 2013 inventory does not include parks that are slated for development beyond 2013, such as North Maple Regional Park and future District Parks – these will be applied against future populations).

With a population of 311,200, active parkland is currently being provided at a rate of 1.87 ha/1000 persons. Parkland per capita is a useful tool in monitoring how the City is achieving the active parkland goals in comparison to both historical measurements, as well as future projections. Maintaining or increasing the active parkland rate of provision will require a continued commitment toward parkland acquisition and creative partnerships with the development sector and other stakeholders.

Additional open space lands are also currently in municipal ownership and is supplemented by other greenspaces owned and/or maintained by agencies such as the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. As mentioned earlier, "open space" lands are outside of the scope of this plan as they are not typically acquired by way of legislated parkland conveyance.

The following table summarizes the active parkland supply by community and park type. Presently, Neighbourhood Parks and Parkettes comprise 61% of the inventory (1.1ha/1000), while District and Regional Parks represent the remaining 39% (0.7ha/1000). The highest per capita active parkland supplies are currently seen in Woodbridge and Thornhill/Concord (2.6ha/1000) – the City's oldest communities. Conversely, Vaughan's newer communities (Carrville and Vellore), along with Kleinburg/Nashville, have lower rates of active parkland provision (1.1 to 1.2ha/1000). These deficiencies were noted in the 2008 ATMP and, since that time, the City has acquired approximately 38 hectares of additional active parkland within these three communities in an effort to boost supplies.

Table 4: Active Parkland Supply by Type and Community, City of Vaughan (2013)

	Neighbourhood Parks / Parkettes (ha)	District Parks (ha)	Regional Parks (ha)	Total (ha)	Estimated Population (2013)	Ha per 1,000 residents
Carrville	41.9	12.5	0.0	54.4	50,860	1.1
Kleinburg/Nashville	13.6	0.0	0.0	13.6	12,067	1.1
Maple	55.9	24.7	0.0	80.5	59,051	1.4
Thornhill/Concord	101.7	19.8	57.2	178.7	68,962	2.6
Vellore	31.0	15.6	0.0	46.6	38,751	1.2
Woodbridge	111.0	57.4	40.0	208.4	79,291	2.6
Total (City-wide)	355.0	130.0	97.2	582.1	311,200	1.87
Ha per 1,000 residents (pop. = 311,200)	1.14	0.42	0.31	1.87		

Source: City of Vaughan, 2013

Totals may not add due to rounding

Note: Supply includes existing parks, as well as those to be developed in 2013. Excluded are parks that have been recently conveyed or purchased by the City, but that are not slated for development until beyond 2013, such as North Maple Regional Park and proposed District Parks in Blocks 11 and 18.

Year after year, in response to growing demand, the City extends its active parkland inventory. However, the City currently lacks a formal mechanism by which to track and update park assets. This led to challenges in documenting active parkland supplies in the 2008 ATMP (which were overstated); inventory data in this 2013 ATMP has been verified to correct known discrepancies. It is recommended that the City seek to integrate its parks and community facility inventory into a GIS-based system in order to improve research, future planning, asset management, and coordination. A formal updating mechanism will be required to keep this database current.

Active Parkland Supply	Recommendations
	3. Integrate the municipal parks and community facility inventory into a GIS-based system in order to improve research, future planning, asset management, and coordination. A formal updating mechanism will be required to keep this database current.

7.4 Active Parkland Needs and Acquisition

Household size and density have substantial implications for a parks system because they define the number of potential park users and also influence the scale and character of parks. Although the *Planning Act* and Vaughan's Official Plan relate parkland requirements to dwelling unit rates and land allocations, parkland needs are best determined on a per capita basis. A "persons-based" approach is considered to be more equitable as it better accounts for the dramatic range of people generated by various forms of housing and changes over time, while ensuring some consistency (on a per capita basis) between urban and suburban forms of development.

The 2008 ATMP recommended that the City target the provision of active parkland at a rate of 2.5 hectares per 1,000 residents (1.5ha/1000 for neighbourhood parks and parkettes; and 1.0ha/1000 for

district and regional parks). This standard was established by comparing Vaughan’s active parkland provision rate at the time (which was thought to be 2.85 ha/1000; however, subsequent analysis of the inventory revealed that this figure was overstated) to ratios being targeted by other municipalities (generally 2.2 to 2.5 ha/1000 for active parkland) – the higher end of this range was chosen for Vaughan.

Further analysis though this Plan indicates that Vaughan active parkland provision rate is currently 1.87 ha/1000 persons (including existing parks, as well as those to be developed in 2013) and that some municipalities are beginning to lower their overall parkland targets due to factors such as the aging of the population and higher density developments. For larger urban communities such as Vaughan, a target near the lower end of the previously stated range – 2.2 ha/1000 for active parkland – has been found to be sufficient for meeting most parkland needs at a City-wide level. While this measure is intended for active parkland only, it is recognized that many such parks may have passive areas (e.g., open space, woodlot, etc.) and built recreation facilities (e.g., community centres, arenas, etc.) that complement their active components.

At this time, a City-wide target of 2.2 hectares of active parkland per 1000 residents is recommended to meet the needs of Vaughan’s current demographic mix. This ratio has been cross-referenced against facility and land requirements and found to be representative of current needs. As discussed further in the next section, parkland conveyance and cash-in-lieu will not likely be sufficient on their own to achieve this target in Vaughan. Strategic acquisitions (e.g., North Maple Regional Park), alternative acquisition tools, and partnerships will all be required.

The following table documents active parkland requirements based on the recommended provision target of 2.2 ha/1000 persons. With a supply of 582.1 hectares, the City presently has a shortfall of 102.5 hectares, although much of this will be negated through pending parkland development (including North Maple Regional Park). If no new parkland is added, this shortfall would increase to 210.7 hectares by 2021 and 334.4 hectares by 2031. To meet the 2031 target, the City’s active parkland supply would need to increase by 57%, to 916.5 hectares.

Table 5: Forecasted Active Parkland Requirements, 2013-2031

	2013	2021	2031
Total Population	311,200	360,380	416,573
<i>Parkland Provision Target</i>	<i>2.2 hectares (active parkland) per 1,000 residents</i>		
Parkland Supply Required to Attain Provision Target	684.6	792.8	916.5
Current Parkland Supply (ha)	582.1		
Parkland Surplus (Deficit)	(102.5)	(210.7)	(334.4)

Note: Does not include open space lands such as woodlots, stormwater ponds, or school lands.

The City's parkland development capital plan identifies anticipated park properties to be conveyed and/or developed by 2021, subject to development applications and funding availability. This database identifies 235.4 hectares of future parkland, comprised of the following (note: timing, size, and distribution are subject to change):

- 1 Regional Park (North Maple Regional Park)
- 6 District Parks (Blocks 11, 18, 29, 35, 40S, and 59)
- 46 Neighbourhood Parks / Linear Parks
- 30 Parkettes
- 14 Public Squares

As of 2013, the City of Vaughan has an active parkland ratio of 1.87 ha/1000 persons. Should the 2021 parkland and population targets be achieved, this ratio is forecasted to increase to 2.27 ha/1000. The anticipated development of the 80-hectare North Maple Regional Park is a big reason for this increase. This 2021 ratio is slightly greater than the recommended City-wide ratio of 2.2 ha/1000; however, it should be noted that this represents one point in time – the level is likely to fluctuate from year to year. Further, there is some uncertainty in the City's ability to achieve the level of parkland development anticipated by 2021; development applications, market conditions, policy frameworks, and municipal acquisitions all have the ability to positively or negatively impact overall parkland provision.

It is not practical or possible to achieve this provision target in every area of Vaughan. For example, it is recognized that this target may be more difficult to achieve in areas of higher density development. Caution should be expressed if this measure is used for community-specific planning as other factors may come into play. The City may utilize different community-specific targets that are representative of local supply and demand factors.

Nevertheless, this exercise can provide an interesting measure of park distribution per capita. Application of this target at a community-level suggests that the Carrville, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, and Vellore areas are likely to be below the City-wide standard. Section 7.3.3.1 of the Vaughan Official Plan states that "*communities that fall short of the active and passive parkland targets are considered priorities for additional parkland resources.*"

Over time, these and other growing communities will require the acquisition of additional active parkland to keep pace with population growth, including beyond 2021 when it will be increasingly challenging to secure larger park blocks. Additional parkland acquisition and/or dedication is likely to be required in all growth areas in order to achieve appropriate service levels and distribution targets, as defined by the City's parkland classification system. Land will also be needed to accommodate the indoor recreation and library facilities recommended in this Plan.

In terms of parkland acquisition, the only legislative mechanism the City has is through parkland dedication in the development process; however, this is not generally sufficient to meet the full range of active parkland needs. As such, parkland dedication must be maximized and supplemented through acquisition or other arrangements.

Through the *Planning Act* and Vaughan's Official Plan, the City currently requires parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu as a condition of development or redevelopment. Parkland is conveyed at a rate of 2% for industrial or commercial and 5% for residential of the land proposed to be developed or redeveloped. Alternatively, parkland or cash-in-lieu may be required at a rate of up to 1 hectare per 300

dwelling units proposed; this alternative method generates more parkland at densities greater than 15 units per hectare.

As residential densities increase, the development industry in several communities has raised concerns over the application of the 1ha/300 units alternative method, indicating that it can place a significant burden on high rise developments. In some cases, the required parkland amount may be prohibitive to development (a density of 300 units per hectare requires 100% of the site be dedicated for parkland).

As a result, some municipalities are offering reduced parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu rates for medium and/or high density residential development, partly as a way to incentivize higher density development. Vaughan has achieved this by establishing a formula for a fixed unit rate to be applied to cash-in-lieu requirements for high density development (in 2012, the City reviewed its cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication for high density development and subsequently adopted a phased-in increase that continued to be based on a ratio of 1 hectare per 300 units). The main objective of a cash-in-lieu policy is to ensure that there are sufficient revenues collected to acquire the parklands necessary to meet City standards.

As identified earlier in this section, it is recommended that the City develop an urban parkland hierarchy and conveyance policies to address parkland dedication in higher density areas. Recognizing that intensification projects are likely to result in lower parkland ratios compared to more traditional greenfield developments, this framework should assist the City in securing meaningful park blocks within the development area in order to meet basic needs (e.g., neighbourhood level amenities such as playgrounds, courts, waterplay facilities, gathering spaces, etc.), while receiving the remainder of the dedication as cash-in lieu so that lands can be acquired elsewhere to address the balance of facility requirements generated by the development. This process should give consideration to the findings and recommendations of this Active Together Master Plan, including possible alternate funding streams to address the additional costs associated with urban park development.

It is important to note that the City now requires the conveyance of land (or cash-in-lieu) for park purposes in commercial and industrial areas, as per the provisions of the *Planning Act*. The provision of public parkland amenities to serve the City's employment lands is essential. These lands provide employees with places to meet, socialize, recreate, and exercise; employment areas also represent one of the last opportunities the City may have to develop larger District Parks, as is proposed in Blocks 35 and 59. In these instances, District Parks need not be co-located with community centres, but may contain lit sports fields and other uses that may otherwise have impacts on adjacent residential areas.

Vaughan's current ratio of active parkland is 1.87 hectares per 1,000 residents (including existing parks, as well as those to be developed in 2013), which is below the recommended City-wide provision target of 2.2ha/1000. Additional active parkland will be needed to meet community needs, both now and in the future. If the City were to rely on parkland dedication alone, this target may be unattainable in light of high land costs and the changing pattern of urban development. For this reason, the City will need to continue to employ a number of alternative acquisition methods to maintain an acceptable supply of parkland.

The following parkland acquisition tools are supported by Vaughan's Official Plan (Section 7.3.3.10):

- land purchases;
- the provisions of Section 37 of the *Planning Act* as set out in Section 10.1.2.9;
- land exchanges or swaps, especially where it may prevent private development on or adjacent to an open space that provides significant environmental benefits or is highly valued by the community;
- partnerships and/or joint provision of land; and,
- establishment of a non-profit Parks Foundation to promote parkland donation and conservation easements.

Section 37 of the *Planning Act* refers to “**bonusing**”, which allows the City to negotiate with developers to receive additional “public benefits” in exchange for an increase in height and/or density beyond current zoning regulations. In the context of this Plan, contributions could be secured toward the provision of and/or improvements to a community centre, library, parkland, or outdoor parks amenities that are on-site or in the general vicinity. As the agreement can be registered on title, the municipality has the power and authority to enforce the provisions of the agreement on successive owners.

To achieve the desired public benefits associated with “bonusing” and to facilitate timely and efficient discussions with developers, it is advantageous to determine local priorities and needs in advance of development applications. Public benefits should be sought when there is an identified need and when they can be achieved through the application of good planning principles.

Another option to consider in high growth areas is the provision of amenities that are traditionally outdoor features (such as soccer fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, etc.) inside buildings as part of mixed use developments. However, instead of these indoor spaces being private, they can be owned or leased by the City (possibly through a condominium agreement or public-private partnership) and, in this way, can be open to the general public. Where land is too scarce, this concept replaces outdoor parkland (but ideally not all outdoor space) with a comparable amenity indoors, where it can utilize floor space within a multi-level development (not unlike strata parks). For this model to be successful, a strong legal agreement is required (addressing ownership, maintenance, etc.) and the space must be accessible (both real and perceived) to the general public.

A Parkland Acquisition Strategy has been proposed to identify and prioritize parkland and open space acquisition options across the City. It is anticipated that this process will consider many of the alternatives outlined above, as well as land banking to take advantage of lower land values and to prepare for future requirements. Given the legislative challenges of assembling meaningful park blocks, all opportunities to expand and strengthen Vaughan's park system should be explored and maximized.

Lastly, “open space” lands (which are not captured in the active parkland provision) are largely a function of the local physical environment (e.g., valley lands, woodlots, waterways and area of environmental or geological significance). It is recommended that the City obtain new open spaces where the opportunity presents itself, but not as part of the required parkland dedication.

Active Parkland Needs and Acquisition	Recommendations
<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Acquire active parkland at the maximum applicable rate as permitted by the <i>Planning Act</i> and the City's implementing documents, with the goal of maintaining a City-wide supply of 2.2 hectares of active parkland per 1000 residents. The City may utilize different community-specific targets that are representative of local supply and demand factors.5. If deemed necessary by the City, developers may be required to provide additional parks and recreational amenities in areas of intensification (or indoor space in lieu of parkland), in addition to the prescribed parkland dedication and/or cash-in-lieu. This may be achieved by area-specific subdivision / condominium agreements or other implementing mechanisms, such as bonusing as per Section 37 of the <i>Planning Act</i>.6. Continue to require parkland conveyance within employment areas in order to create public spaces that attract and serve businesses and their employees.7. Do not accept undevelopable Open Space lands (e.g., stormwater management ponds, woodlots, valley lands, floodplains, hazard lands, etc.) as part of the parkland dedication requirement (i.e., no credit should be applied). Where appropriate, the City may assume these lands through voluntary dedication or easement. Trails and connections may be dedicated through 51(25)(b) of the <i>Planning Act</i>.8. Develop a Parkland Acquisition Strategy to identify alternative parkland provision mechanisms and potential priority properties for acquisition, with a focus on under-served areas and larger district and regional park types.	

7.5 Park Renewal and Redevelopment

Compared to many other communities, Vaughan's parks system is quite modern. Many of its larger parks were built in the 1990s and 2000s to address the needs of a rapidly growing city. The typical lifespan for many parks and park components is approximately 30 years, although this can vary from site to site as it is dependent upon many factors. Nevertheless, there is a growing need to reinvest in some of the City's existing parks, particularly those near areas of residential intensification as new development brings with it a new wave of park users and demands. The impetus for park redevelopment can also be driven by many factors, including changes in leisure preferences, socio-demographic composition, and public support. To ensure that the park system remains relevant and that existing parks are properly aligned with changing community needs, opportunities for parkland renewal must be examined.

Renewal can take many forms, but should generally reflect the needs of the area the park is intended to serve, and should seek to modernize park designs and components such that they are able to withstand substantial use for many more years to come. This may range from simple component replacement, to expansion, to upgrades, to a complete redesign and redevelopment. Examples could include converting under-utilized assets (e.g., ball diamonds) to in-demand uses such as skate zones, or adding lighting to a sports field to extend usage, or re-imagining an older neighbourhood park as a village green for gatherings and passive recreation.

In order to determine needs and priorities associated with the retrofit and redesign of older municipal parks, a comprehensive study should be undertaken that examines the physical condition of parks, usage patterns, demographic factors, public input, design trends and practices, maintenance and management functions, financing options, etc.

In areas of intensification, the City should consider improving the quality of facilities within the area and developing linkages to other public facilities within a reasonable geographic area. In locations where land is limited, existing parks and facilities may need to be substantially refurbished to accommodate the more intense utilization of under-designed amenities. Where possible, lifecycle repairs and replacements should be coordinated so as to refurbish entire parks at one time, rather than taking a piecemeal approach over time.

As is the case in most municipalities, the lack of dedicated funding for park renewal is an impediment in Vaughan. Development Charges can be used to address growth-related shares, but are not eligible for repairs or replacements, leaving municipal tax funds as the major source of funding. Some municipalities use cash-in-lieu to assist in capital improvements required to accommodate intensification. Section 42(15) of the *Planning Act* states that, in addition to the acquisition of parkland, cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication can be used for “*the erection, improvement or repair of buildings and the acquisition of machinery for park or other public recreational purposes.*”

The potential to use cash-in-lieu for park improvements and/or renewal in Vaughan’s intensification areas should be supported in principle. In fact, City of Vaughan Council directed that staff review this matter and develop a program that would consider that an appropriate percentage of the funds collected be used to retrofit parkland in the vicinity of the residential development providing the funds. Such a program should ensure that some of the funds will be utilized in the immediate vicinity directly for the benefit of the residents in the high density areas.

Despite these proactive steps, it is likely that existing funding will be insufficient to provide for both parkland acquisition and parkland retrofitting. The City should also remain open to alternative partnerships that could assist in funding park development / redevelopment projects. The City is currently considering this option for the future North Maple Regional Park.

Park Renewal and Redevelopment	<i>Recommendations</i>
	<p>9. Where appropriate, use cash-in-lieu to offset the total cost of renewing and revitalizing existing parks intended to serve areas of residential intensification.</p> <p>10. Promote appropriate community and public-private partnerships in the municipal parks system in order to leverage additional resources, expedite development, and improve accessibility. Partnerships and creative approaches for park maintenance in areas of higher density may be required (e.g., adopt-a-park).</p>

7.6 Parkland Design Considerations

Through park design, a number of amenities are provided at municipal parks that enhance the user experience and allow the parks to be used for different functions. In general, the City's population, like nearly all communities across Ontario and beyond, is becoming older, less mobile, and more ethnically diverse. Parks will remain prominent civic destinations and hubs, but many will require additional amenities to accommodate an evolving citizenry. This may include the need for more washrooms, benches, shade structures, picnic pavilions, open space for pick-up sports, outdoor fitness equipment, community gardens, hard surface pathways, recycling bins, drinking fountains, signage, etc. In addition, time-pressed individuals of all ages and families are looking for areas where they can enjoy park uses at their own convenience. As such, a greater emphasis should be placed on providing more informal space in new parks in order to promote unstructured activities.

Regarding more active use parks, wherever possible, the City should cluster the same type of playing fields together to increase a sense of form and function. Such parks should also include contain washrooms, electrical outlets, benches and safe, pedestrian-friendly pathways, etc. Washrooms should generally be provided at parks where major sporting facilities (e.g., soccer fields, ball diamonds) are located and along key destinations in the trails system.

Although demand is high for organized spaces such as permitted sports fields, a greater emphasis should also be placed on providing more informal space in new parks in order to promote unstructured and unorganized activities, as well as emerging interests. For example, picnicking has been observed to be a popular endeavour in communities with high levels of multiculturalism, a trend that is being seen in Vaughan. The design of active and passive parks should also incorporate elements that cater to individual physical activity and wellness, such as outdoor fitness stations and reading gardens. Incorporation of public art into public and private spaces is also encouraged.

New and replacement parks and trails infrastructure should continue to be designed and constructed on the basis of a "low maintenance" philosophy and approach. Components such as light fixtures, site furnishings, and signage should generally be selected on the basis of durability and replacement part availability to support ease of maintenance and repair. It would also be appropriate to identify a simple hierarchy of site features (e.g., basic, contemporary, heritage, etc.) to achieve a consistent image and cost efficiencies. Any use of non-standard materials and equipment (such as might occur in "special" parks) is to be based on a full understanding and justification of the operational ramifications and cost increases that will accrue to the relevant municipal department.

Lastly, Section 7.2.1.4 of Vaughan's Official Plan encourages the development of joint and/or shared community facilities, such as schools shared with public parks. This objective remains responsive to community needs and the City should continue to work with local school boards to develop and facilitate access to facilities and parks, with consideration to potential risks and lessons learned from past projects.

Parkland Design Considerations

Recommendations

11. In **designing parks**, continue to:
 - incorporate spaces and amenities encouraging physical activity, wellness, and informal use opportunities;
 - consider the needs of a diverse and aging population through the provision of washrooms, seating, shade, drinking fountains, pathways, and picnic areas;
 - follow accessibility legislation and guidelines to accommodate persons with disabilities;
 - apply CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles;
 - promote designs that encourage sustainable maintenance practices;
 - incorporate native and drought resistant vegetative features;
 - utilize materials that are robust, durable, and mindful of future maintenance requirements;
 - seek innovative and engaging initiatives that encourage environmental stewardship (e.g., recycling bins);
 - encourage public art; and
 - encourage active transportation connections and a linked open space system.

12. Continue to encourage the development of **joint and/or shared community sites**, such as schools, community centres, libraries, and parks.

SECTION 8: INDOOR RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT

This section contains an assessment of indoor 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.

8.1 Community Centres and Multi-use Space

Community Centres			Inventory
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
9	10	1 : 31,120	n/a
<i>Comments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Thornhill Community Centre opened in 2010 			

Table 6: Inventory of Vaughan Community Centres (2013)

Centre	Community	Year Built/ Expanded	Facility Size (sf)	Pool (tanks)	Arena (pads)	Fitness	Gymnasium
Al Palladini	Woodbridge	1989/ 1990/2001	143,685	✓ (1)	✓ (2)	✓	✓
Chancellor	Woodbridge	1998/2006	50,090	✓ (1)	--	--	✓
Dufferin Clark	Thornhill	1994/2006	96,097	✓ (1)	--	--	✓
Fr. Ermanno Bulfon	Woodbridge	1988/2000	46,187	✓ (1)	--	✓	✓
Garnet A. Williams	Thornhill	1984/2003	126,837	✓ (1)	✓ (1)	✓	✓
Maple	Maple	1974/ 1990/2004	147,739	✓ (1)	✓ (1)	✓	✓
North Thornhill	Carrville	2010	94,766	✓ (2)	--	✓	✓
Rosemount	Thornhill	1996	69,400	--	✓ (1)		✓ (2)
Vellore Village	Vellore	2005	87,619	✓ (2)	--	✓ (2013)	✓ (2)
Woodbridge Pool & Arena	Woodbridge	1974/1992	56,523	✓ (2)	✓ (1)	--	--

Source: City of Vaughan, 2013

With ten full-service community centres (including the City's newest facility in North Thornhill), Vaughan provides at least one such facility in each community with the exception of its lowest populated community – Kleinburg/Nashville. Community centres provide for a wide range of activities, serving the full age and ability spectrum of residents (pre-school to seniors). Vaughan's community recreation centres are high quality, offering an excellent mix of arenas, pools, libraries, adjacent parkland, etc. 72%

of households have used or visited a municipal community centre in the past 12 months, making them valued assets.

The following table illustrates the distribution of community centres throughout Vaughan. As it is hard to compare one community centre to the next due to their varied components, this table also looks at total square footage per community. An examination of the data highlights the lack of space in Kleinburg, as well as lower than average provision levels in Vellore, Maple, and Carrville.

Those communities with arenas (Woodbridge, Thornhill, and Maple) tend to have higher square feet per capita ratios, as arenas represent a significant proportion of total space provision. The City-wide ratio of all community centre space is 3.0 square feet per capita. When arenas, indoor pools, and specialized facilities are removed from the equation (leaving true multi-purpose and general programming space, such as gymnasiums, fitness centres, and community rooms), the City-wide ratio of community space is approximately 1.5 square feet per capita.

Table 7: Current Distribution of Community Centres by Community

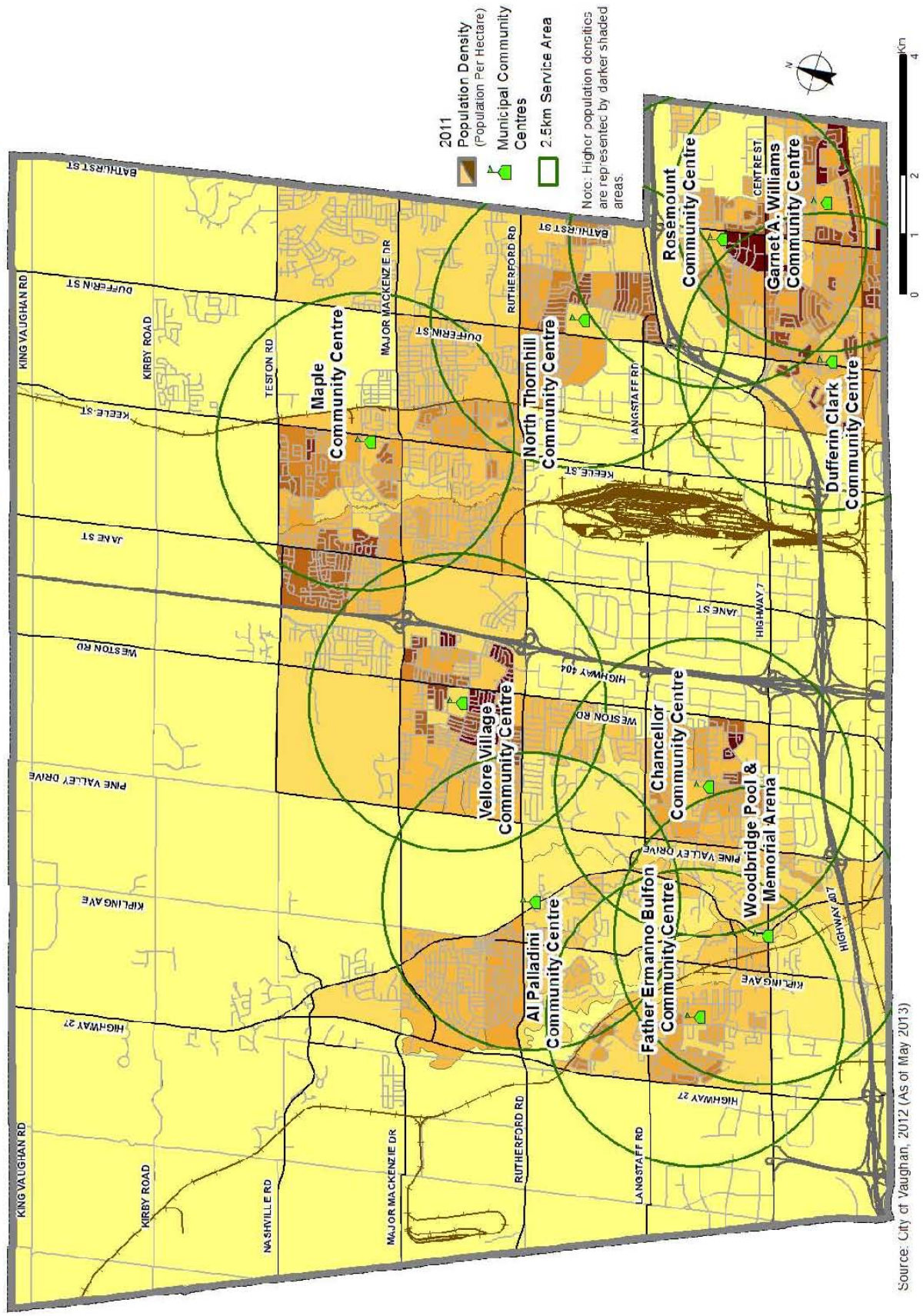
Community	Total Community Centres (2013)	Per Capita Provision Level (2013 – Estimated)	Community Centres – Square Feet (2013)	Square Feet Per Capita (2013 – Estimated)
Carrville	1	1 : 50,860	150,000	2.9
Kleinburg/Nashville	0	0: 12,067	0	0.0
Maple	1	1 : 59,051	147,739	2.5
Thornhill/Concord	3	1 : 22,987	292,334	4.2
Vellore	1	1 : 38,751	53,115	1.4
Woodbridge	4	1 : 19,823	301,366	3.8
Total	10	1: 31,120	944,554	3.0

Map 6 on the following page illustrates the location of municipal community centres, along with a conceptual 2.5 kilometre service radius.

The City of Vaughan has long recognized the value of consolidating multiple uses at a single site rather than pursuing the development of stand-alone, single purpose multi-site venues. As leaders in this facility design trend, the City has been able to streamline services and make delivery much more cost effective. In many jurisdictions and to a degree in Vaughan, community centres are beginning to accommodate even more uses, such as other municipal services, child care, tenant spaces for retail uses, office space for community organizations, etc.

Note: The demand for community centres is largely driven by the need for major components, such as libraries, pools, arenas, gymnasiums, fitness centres, etc. An appreciation of these needs (discussed in the following subsections) is required to fully understand community centre requirements.

Map 6: Municipal Multi-Use Community Centres



Neighbourhood Hubs

In general, larger, full service community centres are more efficient and more successful at meeting resident expectations than smaller, single-use facilities. This model, however, requires re-examination given participation trends and changes to the City's urban form.

Leading practice research suggests that a greater neighbourhood-focus may be necessary in select circumstances (i.e., areas of high density) in order to promote "complete communities" and strong neighbourhoods. Traffic is becoming a greater concern and residents are increasingly seeking options that are "closer to home". In order to promote accessibility and convenience, smaller neighbourhood hubs and program sites will be needed to fill distribution gaps in emerging areas undergoing substantial population renewal/growth, such as **Kleinburg/Nashville** in the shorter-term and possibly **Block 27 (North Maple)** and **Vaughan Mills** in the longer-term.

With the growth that is anticipated for the **Kleinburg/Nashville area**, the need for a neighbourhood hub in this area is more imminent and may include amenities such as a gymnasium, fitness studio, activity rooms, meeting rooms, and possibly a larger library branch. A location has not yet been determined for this facility, but site selection and land acquisition should be high priorities in the short-term; a location capable of serving the existing village and residential growth anticipated for Blocks 61 and 62 is preferred. Construction in the 2016-2019 timeframe is recommended based on current population forecasts.

Neighbourhood hubs may be provided where residents encounter economic or transportation barriers to accessing facilities beyond their local area. A minimum critical mass is needed to justify this level of provision – a population threshold of 8,000 people is recommended for consideration a neighbourhood hub. With alternate providers being a distinct possibility in high density communities (e.g., private fitness clubs, condominium-based recreation areas, etc.), municipal provision should focus more on rentable and flexible programming space (e.g., gymnasiums, multi-use rooms, fitness studios, etc.) that can fill activity gaps. Office space for complementary local organizations may also be considered as may library branches. Larger components such as arenas, indoor pools, and full fitness centres are not suitable for neighbourhood hubs.

A target of 1.5 square feet per capita may be used for the preliminary planning of neighbourhood hubs (this figure is generally equivalent to Vaughan's current provision rate of community space – excluding larger/specialized facilities such as arenas, indoor pools, and the theatre). Based on this guideline, a neighbourhood serving a population of 8,000 would target the provision of a 12,000 square foot hub.

Neighbourhood hubs may also take several forms, such as a main floor within a multi-storey mixed use building, attached to a school, or co-located with another civic facility or park. They may be constructed by the City or by developers, potentially in lieu of part of the required parkland conveyance or through bonusing provisions within Section 37 of the *Planning Act* (these options are discussed further in Section 7.4 of this ATMP). This space should have frontage on a primary or major street, be centrally located and in a prominent location (with transit access) so that it reinforces its "public" image (this is not private amenity space just for one development). The key is to create an identifiable public place where interaction, involvement, and sense of community can evolve.

This model will not be appropriate for all neighbourhoods, nor is it sustainable on a City-wide scale due to its potentially higher operational costs and loss of economies of scale. The facility and programming

needs of each neighbourhood are unique, and assessments should continue to be undertaken as part of all development applications for high-rise developments, such as those being proposed in the Yonge Street Corridor and Steeles West. Steps should be taken to secure appropriate community facilities where there is a demonstrated need. These facilities will serve as strong focal points of the neighbourhood and key destinations for area residents, helping individuals develop their own skills and capacities while building strong social networks with others.

Multi-use, Office & Lease Space

Each of Vaughan's community centres incorporate some degree of multi-purpose space through a combination of meeting areas, activity rooms, and age-specific program areas (e.g., pre-school rooms, play rooms, youth rooms, and seniors' rooms). Additionally, there are a number of meeting rooms located at various community-based resources such as schools, seniors clubs, theatres, etc. Many of these spaces are adaptable to a range of programming opportunities that respond to community-based demand, as well as complementing features offered within the larger facility. Demand for multi-use room rentals is on the rise, particularly for cultural groups, youth, and older adults. As established in the guiding principles, each new or expanded indoor recreation and library facility should include accommodations for multi-use space.

Non-profit community groups have also expressed a desire for inexpensive office space within community centres, as have others with links to the recreation sector, such as child care and health care. While these arrangements may challenge the City's cost recovery targets, they benefit residents by creating a convenient "one-stop shopping" environment and, in some cases, may help to maximize under-utilized spaces. While third-party tenants should not be pursued at the expense of achieving the core municipal mandate (i.e., space needed for City programs and activities), the City should be open to this option in situations where it has surplus space and/or a partnership agreement can be achieved that is in the best interest of the public, as guided by the City's partnership framework. The provision of lease space would fit particularly well with the neighbourhood hub concept.

Multi-Service Centres

Another option for the City's community centre model is the creation of multi-service centres that also provide other municipal services (some of which the City already does), such as public libraries, the sale of transit tickets and dog licences, payment of parking tickets and property taxes, pick-up locations for items such as building permit applications, etc. Section 7.2.2.1 of the City's new Official Plan states that community centres "*shall be planned to develop as, or evolve into, full service centres that provide for a wide variety of community needs in addition to recreation. To achieve this, community centres may include a variety of municipal services and limited commercial or retail uses that would contribute to the overall function of the centre as a community hub.*" This model has been adopted in some municipalities (e.g., Windsor, Greater Sudbury) and may help to address transportation barriers in Vaughan by provide options that are closer to home for many residents. A variation on this theme is to promote greater coordination between co-located recreation centres and libraries, such as the establishment of one joint customer service desk. Additional study is required to determine if these operational models would provide effective and cost efficient results to the City and its residents and the development of a business plan is recommended.

Major Community Centre Needs

Major multi-use community centres are facilities that combine a variety of recreation components under one roof, such as pools, ice pads, activity/meeting rooms, gymnasiums, and/or libraries. The City of Vaughan currently has ten such facilities, ranging in size from 46,187 square feet (Fr. Ermanno Bulfon CC) to 147,739 square feet (Maple CC).

Provision ratios for community centres range widely across the province, as do the size and design of such facilities. A population based provision target for community centres in Vaughan is not recommended; rather, future major community centres requirements should be informed by demand for their component parts, as well as distribution in relation to current and future populations. To this end, subsequent sections of this report identify the need for the following indoor recreation facilities by 2031:

- two additional ice pads and the potential replacement of two existing single pad arenas through multi-pad designs
- two additional indoor pool locations and the potential decommissioning of one facility
- four additional gymnasiums
- two additional equipment-based fitness centres
- several multi-use / studio activity spaces

The 2008 ATMP recommended that the City construct four additional multi-use community centres by build-out:

- Carrville (Block 11);
- the northern portion of the Vellore Village (Block 40/41/42);
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre; and
- to serve the whitebelt (northern limit of the City).

Population characteristics (this developing area is attractive to young families) and forecasts continue to support the development of a community centre in **Carrville (Block 11)** and the City has purchased land in this area to facilitate this. The City has earmarked funds in its 2015/16 budget for this project. **This project should be the next major community centre built in Vaughan** and will help to reduce pressure on the Maple Community Centre. Potential components include a twin pad arena, gymnasium, multi-use space, and fitness studio (for more detail, reference should be made to the appropriate section in this Plan). For any major capital project such as this, a feasibility study is recommended prior to design to confirm the preferred sizing and components. In planning the Block 11 community centre, consideration should also be given to the Schwartz-Reisman Centre (Jewish Community Centre), which is located nearby (Bathurst Street north of Rutherford Road). This facility, which opened in 2012, contains a 25-metre indoor pool, therapeutic pool, fitness centre, gymnasium, classrooms, and arts centre, and offers a wide range of sport, fitness, and general interest programs. The intended market area for the Schwartz-Reisman Centre is the Jewish community of Greater Toronto but is also open to non-members. The City of Vaughan has recently formed an agreement to enhance community access to the Schwartz-Reisman Centre pool, gymnasium, and multi-use areas on a limited basis (e.g., 4 hours per week in the pool, 3 hours per week in the gymnasium, and a few days per year in various rooms). Given the availability of the Schwartz-Reisman Centre, the proposed sizing of the Block 11 community centre has been reduced slightly from what was recommended in the 2008 ATMP – most notably changing the fitness centre to a smaller, equipment-less fitness studio.

The recommendation in the 2008 ATMP for a major community centre to serve Blocks 40/41/42 was intended to address the substantial population growth anticipated for the Vellore area and to alleviate pressure on the Vellore Village Community Centre. However, the City's new Official Plan does not propose residential growth for Block 42 and Block 41 is one of Vaughan's "New Community Areas" (along with Block 27), which will be the subject of a secondary plan to determine its residential capacity.

Nevertheless, Vellore is a high growth community in Vaughan that attracts many families, characteristics that generate substantial demand for community centres and associated activities. Furthermore, additional growth is possible in Block 27 (to the east, across Highway 400 in the Maple area) as well as in the Kleinburg area to the west. Vellore is centrally located in the City's north end and well situated to serve new growth areas in the north. In addition, Vellore only contains one municipal community centre for a population of 35,700 (growing to 58,700 by 2031), but benefits from joint use space associated with the attached secondary school. To serve demand generated by new growth in the northern portion of Vaughan, the City should begin planning for the development of a **major community centre in Block 41**. Potential components include a twin pad arena, indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, multi-use space, and fitness centre (for more detail, reference should be made to the appropriate section in this Plan). Development patterns should be monitored to determine timing for community centre development; however, current projections suggest that this should be the next major community centre developed after the one in Block 11.

There also continues to be justification for a major community centre to serve the **Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)**, tentatively located in Block 30E. The development of the VMC is a priority for City Council and, by the year 2031, the area is forecasted to accommodate 25,000 to 30,000 residents and thousands of jobs. Potential components include an indoor aquatic centre, gymnasium, multi-use space, and fitness centre (for more detail, reference should be made to the appropriate section in this Plan). The timing of this community centre will coincide with development in this area, which will depend on a number of factors, not the least of which are market forces. At this point, it is recommended that the City establish a placeholder in its budget for development of this community centre around the year 2021.

Given the high-rise form of this community and premium placed on land values and construction costs, it is recommended that the size of the proposed VMC community centre be reduced slightly from what was initially proposed in the 2008 ATMP, without removing or compromising any of the proposed components. The proposed community centre should be able to be accommodated on two floors (noting that the pool and gymnasium require higher ceilings), each with a minimum floor area of 35,000 to 40,000 square feet (for a total of approximately 75,000 square feet, with space for the proposed library being over and above this amount). The specific design and sizing of this facility should be addressed through a feasibility study.

The former recommendation for a major community centre to serve the **whitebelt** (previously referred to as the Long-Term Residential Growth Area) was based on an assumption that lands north of Kirby Road on both sides of Highway 400 would become available for residential development. However, the City's new Official Plan does not propose residential growth for Blocks 42 and 28, which were allocated a population of approximately 36,000 people in the 2008 ATMP (much of this capacity has been reallocated to intensification areas distributed throughout the City). **As a result, the need for a major community centre to serve the whitebelt is no longer valid**; growth in the City's north end will be served by the community centre proposed for Block 41.

In terms of distribution and overall provision, the communities of Woodbridge and Thornhill/Concord are adequately served by existing major community centres, although the potential need for neighbourhood hubs should be assessed for high density residential developments and other mid-sized gap areas (e.g., Kleinburg).

Based on the foregoing, there are now three major community centres being proposed by the City's build-out, as opposed to the four recommended in the 2008 ATMP. The following table summarizes the various indoor components proposed in each of the three recommended major community centres.

Table 8: Proposed Major Community Centres & Facility Components (excluding proposed Neighbourhood Hubs)

	Carrville (Block 11)	Vellore Village (Block 41)	Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (Block 30E)
Indoor Ice Pads	twin pad*	twin pad** (2 nd phase)	No
Indoor Pool(s)	No	Yes	Yes
Gymnasium	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fitness Centre	No (activity studio only)	Yes	Yes
Multi-use Program Space & Dedicated Space for Age-Specific Markets	Yes	Yes	Yes
Library Space	Branch	Branch	Resource Library
PROPOSED TIMING FOR CONSTRUCTION	2015-2016	2017-2018	~2021

* twin pad development in Block 11 is connected to the re-purposing of Maple Arena (see Section 8.2)

** twin pad development in Block 41 is connected to the re-purposing of Memorial Arena (see Section 8.2)

Additional facility components could be considered as part of the community centres, pending further study and assessment. For example, the ultimate design and implementation of each capital project will be further refined through engaging the community and user groups to ensure that the specific needs of stakeholders are addressed. Prior to the development of future multi-use community centres, the City should also conduct business plans to identify a preferred operating model.

Facility Renewal & Expansion

In addition to the need to build new community centres for the new development areas, it will also be important that existing community centres continue to be kept on par with newer facilities to ensure that existing facilities offer a comparable level of service. Existing community centres may need to be retrofitted or renewed to achieve this objective, particularly those that are in highest use, those requiring lifecycle maintenance, and those that are in proximity to areas proposed for residential intensification.

In terms of overall aesthetics and design, Woodbridge Pool/Arena, Fr. Ermanno Bulfon, Garnet A. Williams, and Dufferin Clark Community Centres are the facilities that are most in need of a refresh (unless slated for decommissioning). The City is currently pursuing the renovation and expansion of the Fr. Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre, a project that is proposed to expand the fitness centre, add an activity room in the existing bocce court, and reconfigure the pool change rooms. This and other

projects that extend the lifespan of facilities and enhance their responsiveness to community needs must continue to be advanced.

Over time, as its facilities age, facility renewal and expansion will need to become a greater priority for the City. Substantial renovations must address the accessibility legislation (AODA) and should promote environmental initiatives, as established in this Plan’s guiding principles. The City has recently begun the development of a Corporate Asset Management Strategy, which will be a critical piece in understanding the status and long-term requirements associated with its recreational infrastructure.

Although this Plan is supportive of facility renewal, facilities that no longer provide public benefits commensurate with their level of investment should be considered for decommissioning and replacement with facilities that better serve today’s needs and participation trends. This is particularly true for single use facilities and under-utilized park amenities. Beyond heritage structures, two more prominent single use recreation facilities in the City include: (1) the Glen Shields Activity Centre, which suffered extensive fire damage in 2012; and (2) Patricia Kemp Concord Community Centre, which is a stand-alone gymnasium that was recently leased to the Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan for a 20-year term. The latter is a good example of the increasing demand for ethno-cultural activity space and successful partnerships, and is supportive of Vaughan’s Creative Together Master Plan, which recommends that the City “identify spaces in new buildings and those designated for adaptive re-use to provide a range of interconnected or stand-alone spaces to be used for cultural activity and initiatives.”

Community Centres	Recommendations
13.	Pursue the timely development of a major community centre in the Carrville area (Block 11) . Construction is currently recommended for 2015-16.
14.	In the short-term, acquire land for a major community centre in Block 41 to serve growth in the City’s north end, including the Vellore area. Construction is currently recommended for 2017-18.
15.	In the short-term, acquire land (or negotiate) to develop a major community centre in Vaughan Metropolitan Centre . This facility is likely to be part of a high rise development, the timing of which should coincide with other construction activities in the area. Timing of construction will depend on a number of factors, but is currently recommended around the year 2021.
16.	Expand the City’s facility provision model to include neighbourhood hubs to fill distribution gaps in emerging areas undergoing substantial population renewal/growth. Neighbourhood hubs require a minimum population threshold of 8,000 people and should focus on multi-use activity spaces, such as gymnasiums and meeting rooms (generally provided at a rate of 1.5 square feet per capita). Neighbourhood hubs may take several forms, but should be in accessible and prominent locations that reinforce their “public” image. Such indoor space may be constructed by the City or by developers, potentially in lieu of part of the required parkland conveyance or through bonusing provisions within Section 37 of the <i>Planning Act</i> .

Community Centres	Recommendations
17.	Secure a site for the establishment a neighbourhood hub in the Kleinburg/Nashville area in the short-term; a location capable of serving the existing village and residential growth anticipated for Blocks 61 and 62 is preferred. Pending further study, the neighbourhood hub may include amenities such as a gymnasium, fitness studio, activity rooms, meeting rooms, and possibly a larger library branch to replace the existing Kleinburg branch. Construction in the 2016-2019 timeframe is recommended based on current population forecasts.
18.	Consider the need for a neighbourhood hub in Block 27 (north Maple) in the longer-term (2023 or beyond), subject to residential development in this area.
19.	Consider the need for a neighbourhood hub in the Vaughan Mills (east of Highway 400) in the longer-term (2023 or beyond), subject to residential redevelopment in this area.
20.	Develop a business plan to identify and assess options for community centre operational models that involve: (1) greater coordination between Recreation & Culture and Vaughan Public Libraries; and (2) the creation of full service centres that provide a wider variety of community services beyond recreation.
21.	Within its community facilities, including neighbourhood hubs, the City may provide office and/or program space for third-party tenants that are aligned with the municipal mandate and where surplus space exists, where public benefits can be achieved, and where supported by the City's partnership framework.
22.	Community centre renewal and expansion must become a greater priority for the City over time, with direction from asset management plans, accessibility plans, and community needs. Demand will be greatest for facilities with mounting lifecycle requirements and those in proximity to areas of residential intensification (e.g., Fr. Ermanno Bulfon, Garnet A. Williams, and Dufferin Clark Community Centres).
23.	Explore options for installing electronic roadside signage and providing public access to a free wireless network (WiFi) at municipal community centres. WiFi is currently available at all VPL branches and City Hall.
24.	Pursue partnerships with community agencies and the development sector in areas with below average access to municipal community centres.

8.2 Arenas

Arenas		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
8	8	1 : 507 registered youth participants	1 : 500 registered youth participants
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supply includes municipal rinks and the equivalent of two ice pads covered by the Sports Village partnership agreement • private supply includes the equivalent of two additional ice pads at Sports Village, two pads at The Pavilion (Thornhill), and four pads at Vaughan IcePlex (Thornhill); a six-pad facility (Canlan Ice Sports-York) is located just south of Steeles Avenue 			

The City operates six arenas which contain eight (8) ice pads between them. Municipal arenas are located at the Al Palladini Community Centre (2 rinks), Garnet A. Williams Community Centre (1 rink), Maple Community Centre (1 rink), Rosemount Community Centre (1 rink), and Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena (1 rink). The City also has a partnership agreement with a private-sector operator at the Sports Village; this is a four pad facility and the City has access to 140 hours of ice per week, which is approximately equivalent to 2 pads. The Sports Village is the only facility in Vaughan currently offering summer ice.

Hockey and ice skating have long been mainstays of the Canadian sports landscape, although Vaughan's arena provision ratio is at the lower end of the range seen in comparable communities. However, several communities are beginning to see changes in participation brought largely about by socio-demographic trends. In terms of general trends, an examination of Hockey Canada registration data finds that, in Ontario, youth male participation in hockey is not growing at the same pace as the population. While female participation in the sport has increased rapidly in recent years, it too is beginning to taper off.

In Vaughan, 31% of households have at least one member that has participated in hockey, figure skating, or ice sports in the past 12 months. Registration data provided by the City of Vaughan indicates that over 4,400 youth play organized ice sports in the City (as of 2011/12), an increase over four years ago. The City does not have reliable data on adult participation, many of whom likely rely on several private rinks in and around the City. The municipal rinks focus largely on youth rentals and recreational skating, as well as some adult usage mainly outside of prime hours (a review of Vaughan's schedules suggest that 90% of rentals are for youth sports and 10% for adult sports). It is noteworthy that the city-wide population (ages 5-19) increased by approximately 13% over this same period, suggesting that interest in ice sports may be slowly declining, similar to provincial trends.

Table 9: Youth Ice Sport Registration, City of Vaughan (2012)

Organization	2011/12
City of Vaughan Hockey Association – House League	2,519
City of Vaughan Hockey Association – Rep	323
Vaughan Panthers – Rep	271
Vaughan Girls Hockey Association – House League	114
Vaughan Girls Hockey Association – Rep	117
Thornhill Figure Skating Club	1,075
Woodbridge Figure Skating Club	
Total	4,419

includes waitlist data

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

It is also important to note that 7.2% of the 5 to 19 age group participates in organized youth hockey or figure skating in Vaughan; this figure is generally consistent with other highly urbanized and diverse communities, but is substantially lower than most smaller communities. The City’s capture rate is likely influenced by the composition of the population (e.g., diversity), the regionalism of competitive hockey (which draws skilled players to teams outside Vaughan), and the popularity of other activities.

With 4,450 youth participants (estimate for 2012/13) and the equivalent of 8 municipal ice pads, the City of Vaughan is currently providing one ice pad for every 556 youth participants. 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 at municipal rinks, including adults, in keeping with the terms of the City’s allocation process. The 2008 ATMP recommended a provision target of one ice pad per 500 registered youth participants, indicating that the City is lagging slightly behind this target at the present time.

To confirm if this target remains a reasonable measure of arena demand in Vaughan, it is helpful to examine current utilization. A review of ice schedules for the 2012/13 season finds that 93% of prime time ice amongst the six City operated rinks is currently booked during peak season, as are 65% of shoulder hours¹. Unbooked hours are common between 4pm-5pm on weekdays and 7am-8am on weekends, as well as many evenings after 10pm. This is a typical usage profile for most rinks in Ontario, many of which are having difficulty renting the “shoulder” hours that decades ago were in higher demand. This profile also suggests that there remains sufficient capacity to accommodate more adult users (late night) or retirees / shift workers (afternoons), but that the prime youth-serving hours are essentially in full use.

The following table illustrates the forecasted demand for ice sports by applying the current youth capture rate to population forecasts and then dividing by the recommended participant-based target to arrive at an arena demand calculation. Should the youth participation rate change or should forecasted population levels not be achieved, this demand calculation should be revisited. For example, accelerated

¹ For the purposes of this report, prime time is defined as 5pm to 10pm Monday to Friday and 7am to 10pm Saturday and Sunday. Shoulder hours are defined as 4pm to 5pm and 10pm to 12am Monday to Friday and 10pm to 12am Saturday and Sunday.

registration in youth ice sports could advance the timing and need for more municipal ice rinks. As a result, it will be important that the City to continue to maintain accurate registration figures for ice sport organizations.

Table 10: Forecasted Demand for Municipal Arenas, 2013-2021

	2013	2021	2031
Youth Population (ages 5-19), forecasted	61,504	64,224	68,247
Youth Participants (ages 5-19), based on 6.6% participation rate	4,450	4,645	4,935
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 ice pad per 500 registered youth participants</i>		
Required Ice Pads (municipal)	8.9	9.3	9.9
Existing Ice Pads (municipal)	8		
Surplus (Deficit)	(0.9)	(1.3)	(1.9)

The analysis suggests that the City’s arena supply is currently under pressure and that **there is justification to add one additional pad to the inventory in the short-term**. Should participation rates remain steady, a **second additional ice pad will be required to meet needs by 2031** (for a total of ten, plus the equivalent of two municipal ice pads at the Sports Village). In forecasting youth participation, it is interesting to note that the number of projected players increases, but not as quickly as the City’s total population – this is because Vaughan is aging and will have a greater rate of growth in its older age groups.

In rationalizing its current and future arena supply, the City should consider the following factors. First, single pad arenas are not nearly as financially viable as multi-pad facilities and are outdated from a user perspective as well; therefore, any future arena construction should occur in the form of a multi-pad facility (ideally two or four pads). Second, public-private partnerships are another consideration, as the arrangement with the Sports Village has proven to be a success (all four pads are extremely well utilized). Third, despite the fact that nearly all ice users are likely to drive, geographic distribution and proximity to residents remains a critical concern, particularly to local associations that draw from a defined community.

The 2008 ATMP also recommended the eventual decommissioning of Memorial (Woodbridge) and Maple Arenas. Due to their age, **the eventual replacement of Maple and Memorial Arenas needs to be planned for** (note: Memorial Arena and Woodbridge Pool are located in a floodplain, which restricts their expansion and/or redevelopment potential). Lifecycle and operating costs analyses of these two arenas should continue to be monitored in order to develop a strategy for capital cost avoidance.

The long-term demand for two additional rinks, plus the eventual replacement of two single pad arenas, translates into a need for four new ice pads over the long term. Multi-pad facilities offer substantial efficiencies over single pad arenas. To achieve the City’s long-term ice needs and improve geographic distribution, it is recommended that the City seek to construct two twin pad facilities associated with community centres. The first twin pad should be located at the proposed Carrville **Block 11 community centre** in 2015/16, to coincide with the closure of **Maple Arena**. Demand for the second twin pad should be monitored as it is longer-term; this twin pad should coincide with the closure of **Memorial**

Arena and should be part of the proposed **Block 41 community centre** (possibly as a second phase of development beyond the year 2022, dependent upon demand).

Under this scenario, timing for arena development would be impacted by the decommissioning of Maple and Memorial Arenas, which should occur at the same time that the replacement rinks are opened. As with all major facilities, feasibility studies are recommended prior to design and construction and/or decommissioning. In new facilities, the potential for summer ice should be considered (this was raised as a need by local user groups), as well as an indoor walking track circling a rink (this was a public request and an increasingly common design element).

Arenas	Recommendations
25.	Develop a twin pad arena to the major community centre proposed for Block 11 (Carrville) in 2015/16. Once this facility opens, Maple Arena should be closed and a re-purposing study should be undertaken to determine a future uses.
26.	Develop a twin pad arena as a second phase to the proposed community centre in Vellore (Block 41), beyond the year 2022. Pending further study, Memorial Arena may also come off-line at this time.

8.3 Indoor Aquatics

Indoor Aquatics		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
10 (tanks)	12 (tanks)	1 : 25,933	1:30,000
<i>Comments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new aquatic centre opened in North Thornhill Community Centre in 2010 			

The City provides indoor aquatic facilities at 9 community centres, which – between them – contain a total of 12 tanks (the Vellore Village, Woodbridge, and North Thornhill facilities each contain multiple tanks). The design of the aquatic facilities ranges from standard 25m lane pools to freeform leisure pools to smaller 11m and 14m rectangular pools.

Swimming is a popular activity that is enjoyed by all ages, and indoor pools are a core service for the City of Vaughan. In the household survey, 60% of households participated in swimming over the past 12 months. The City offers a wide variety of programming at its indoor aquatic facilities, including learn-to-swim, special interest (e.g., diving, synchronized swimming, etc.), swimming leadership, aquatic fitness, and community rentals.

Another indicator of demand is the number of swims per capita in municipal pool. Vaughan’s pools received approximately 520,000 swims at its indoor pools in 2012 – an average of 1.7 swims per capita at the time, which is slightly above average when compared to other communities in the GTA.

Furthermore, annual indoor pool usage in Vaughan increased by 6% between 2011 and 2012. These findings suggest that demand for indoor swimming in Vaughan is on the rise, particularly recreational swimming (most notably older adults).

Presently, Vaughan has one indoor pool tank for every 25,933 residents, giving it one of the highest provision rates amongst comparable communities. Nevertheless, the public engagement program yielded considerable interest in increasing the provision of indoor aquatic facilities – 77% of Vaughan households support additional funding for indoor pools, tied with public libraries for the most support amongst 23 indoor and outdoor facility types.

Also of note, in 2012, Vaughan’s nine indoor pool locations averaged nearly 60,000 swims each (lessons and recreation swimming; swim clubs excluded), with the larger pools (Vellore Village and North Thornhill) receiving the greatest amount of use. Conversely, Fr. Ermanno Bulfon, Chancellor, and Woodbridge pools received the lowest amount of use, although the Woodbridge Pool has seen a slight resurgence recently as it is a primary venue for swimming and diving clubs and its therapeutic pool is a unique and valued amenity in the City. This data suggests that there is still available capacity within many of the City’s pools, although participation is increasing year over year and prime-time hours are very well utilized.

The 2008 ATMP established a provision target of one municipal indoor pool tank per 30,000 residents (excluding small tot pool or therapeutic pools). This target takes into account the additional capacity that a two tank aquatic centre may have over a facility with only one tank. This target is reasonable and will be used for projecting future needs.

Table 11: Forecasted Demand for Municipal Indoor Pools, 2013-31

	2013	2021	2031
Total Population	311,200	360,380	416,573
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 indoor pool tank per 30,000 residents</i>		
Required Indoor Pools	10.4	12.0	13.9
Existing Indoor Pools	12		
Surplus (Deficit)	1.6	0.0	(1.9)

Based on this calculation, the City currently has a sufficient number of indoor pool tanks, but will require **two additional tanks to serve population growth between 2021 and 2031.**

In terms of distribution, the Woodbridge community contains 5 of the City’s 12 indoor pools and has the highest per capita supply (one for every 16,200 residents). Conversely, the Maple community only has one indoor pool for a supply of one per 57,000 residents. Anticipated population growth in residential intensification areas (most notably Vaughan Metropolitan Centre) and the northern part of the City (Maple, Vellore, and Kleinburg) will generate the most substantial demand for additional indoor pools.

New indoor pools should be associated with major community centres to create synergies with other activities and support amenities. Major community centres are recommended for Block 11, Block 41, and the VMC. The Block 11 (Carrville) community centre is proximate to the new North Thornhill Community Centre (and Schwartz-Reisman Centre) and should not contain indoor aquatic facilities. **The major community centres proposed for Block 41 (Vellore) and the VMC are both viable candidates for**

the provision of aquatic centres given the anticipated population growth in the vicinity. The number and design of the tanks at each facility should be determined at the feasibility study stage.

Any new indoor aquatic facility should be suitable for a broad range of community programming and be “senior friendly”, including high levels of accessibility, accommodations for both lane swimming and lessons/classes, warmer water (including consideration for a therapeutic pool tank), and appropriate support space (e.g., change rooms).

A suggestion was received from a local aquatic club for a 50-metre pool; however, this type of facility would require a more detailed assessment as to a potential operating model, utilization, costs, and partners, with due consideration of other facilities in the region (two are being built in Markham and Toronto for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games). The evaluation of facilities that are driven largely from a sport tourism or economic development platform – such as a 50-metre pool – are outside the scope of this Plan.

The future of **Woodbridge Pool** is uncertain as past reports (including the 2008 ATMP) have called for its eventual decommissioning. Although Woodbridge Pool is one of the City’s oldest indoor aquatic venues, it is still well within a normal lifespan for such a facility. However, this pool is not fully accessible, which limits the range of potential programming. Furthermore, compared to other areas of Vaughan, Woodbridge has a significantly greater number of pools per capita and the overall utilization levels of Woodbridge Pool are amongst the City’s worst. Given the factors involved, this issue requires further study. Should Woodbridge Pool be removed from service, the City should give consideration to shifting the aquatic programming to nearby pools, including the one proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (around the year 2021). The therapeutic pool component of Woodbridge Pool should remain open.

Indoor Aquatics	Recommendations
27.	Include an indoor aquatic facility as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017/18.
28.	Include an indoor aquatic facility as part of the major community centre proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre around the year 2021.
29.	Pending further study, should Woodbridge Pool be removed from service, consideration should be given to shifting its programming to nearby pools, including the one proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. The therapeutic pool component of Woodbridge Pool should remain open.

8.4 Age-specific Activity Space (Youth, Seniors)

The City offers dedicated space for pre-school children, youth, and older adults at most of its major community centres; the types of spaces provided typically reflect the composition of the local community. There are also several multi-use spaces available to various age groups throughout Vaughan, including gymnasiums, pools, arenas, activity rooms, and fitness centres.

Pre-School

The pre-school population (ages 0-4) currently constitutes 6% of the City's population, but as the community ages, this proportion is forecasted to decline slightly to 5% (while still increasing in overall numbers). With the Province transitioning its educational curriculum to accommodate full-day kindergarten, the City has experienced some declines in its pre-school programming. Continued monitoring of attendance is recommended, and should demand wane, select pre-school rooms may be considered for re-purposing to other uses in keeping with the needs of the community.

Youth

Youth are traditionally a very challenging market for municipal recreation departments to serve due to their range of needs (e.g., recreational, social support, arts and culture, leisure hang-out, etc.), their segmentation, peer pressures and the changing "trendiness" of certain activities, competing interests, and lack of transportation options. To address the latter point, it is vital that youth facilities be located in prominent locations, such as along transit routes and major pathways so as to maximize accessibility.

Trends suggest that the number of youth engaged in unstructured, drop-in activities are increasing, while the percentage of youth participating in organized sports is generally declining. Activities that are spontaneous, social, and/or encourage personal expression are very popular among teens, including music, visual / dramatic / media arts, basketball, fitness, special events, etc. Based on Vaughan's Youth in Action report (2008), teens are interested in theme nights, drop-in sports, and swimming – consistent with what we heard at the November 2012 Youth Forum.

The household survey revealed that only 43% of households were satisfied with the recreational opportunities Vaughan's youth (slightly better than opportunities for older adults). When asked about additional spending for recreation facilities, 73% of households supported additional funding for youth centres, the third most supported facility type (behind only libraries and indoor pools).

Youth and teens ages 10-19 account for 14% of the City's population; however, by the years 2021 and 2031 the proportion of youth is forecasted to fall to 12% and 11%, respectively. By 2031, the youth cohort will still increase in size, just not as fast as Vaughan's overall population. This suggests that demand for youth space (dedicated and/or multi-use) will persist, particularly in the City's growing areas (Vellore, Carrville, and the periphery of Maple).

It should also be acknowledged that Vaughan has been very successful in engaging and empowering the youth community and these efforts should continue. An Active Together Youth Leadership program has been created to support the City in developing initiatives for youth, advocating for physical activity, volunteering at special events, and providing feedback about the needs and interests of Vaughan's youth. In 2007 and 2013 Vaughan was recognized with a bronze "Youth Friendly" award by the Play Works Partnership Youth Friendly Communities Program.

Older Adults

Six of the City's major community centres offer one or more dedicated spaces for older adults. In addition, there are also five storefront/dedicated facilities used by the City for older adult clubs (Pine York, Sonoma Heights, Concord West, Pinecrest, and Merino Road). Vaughan's approach of providing

older adult spaces as part of multi-use centres is considered a “best practice” that many other communities are emulating.

In 2012, there were approximately 3,850 members within twenty affiliated older adult clubs in Vaughan; this represented a 6% decrease over the previous year. In the household survey, 7% of households indicated that they had at least one member that participated in at least one organized older adult/senior program in the past 12 months. The largest clubs operate out of Fr. Ermanno Bulfon, Sonoma Heights, Chancellor, Merino Centennial Centre, Vellore Village, and Dufferin Clark Community Centres.

When asked to rate satisfaction with recreational opportunities for various age groups, dissatisfaction was greatest amongst older adults age 60 years and over. Furthermore, when asked about additional spending for recreation facilities, 73% of households supported additional spending for older adult/seniors’ centres, ranking fourth out of 23 different facility types. These findings imply that residents are expecting more from Vaughan’s older adult services.

Presently, adults age 60 and over constitute 16% of the City’s population; by the years 2021 and 2031 this proportion is forecasted to increase to 20% and 26%, respectively, reflecting the aging trend that is occurring in Vaughan. In total, the population of Vaughan residents age 60 and over is expected to increase by nearly 59,400 people by 2031, representing an increase of 126% from 2011 levels and accounting for nearly one-half of the City’s anticipated growth during this period. As such, demand for services oriented to this age group can be expected to increase considerably, particularly in the Woodbridge and Thornhill areas, which currently contain much of the City’s older populations.

Given the considerable growth forecasted for Vaughan’s older adult population, greater attention to the personal and social health and wellbeing of this age group will be required. To help achieve this goal, the City and its various departments should pursue “age-friendly” status. Age-friendly communities design their policies, services, and infrastructure to help people of all ages – particularly older adults – to be active in their community. More information on this initiative can be found through the World Health Organization’s “Global Age-Friendly Cities Project” and the Public Health Agency of Canada’s “Pan-Canadian Age-Friendly Communities Milestones”.

Today’s older adults are remaining active longer in life than past generations (both work and play), as well as continuing to work later in life, which has caused a shift in the type and intensity of recreation activities pursued by the different age cohorts within this population. The Baby Boomers (the leading edge of which is now 67 years old), as a group, are more active and fit than those that came before them. This will continue to be of interest as they age, and is expected to result in an increase in drop-in activities, as well as usage of aquatic and fitness centres (which are currently well attended by older adults in Vaughan). Programs and workshops that allow for participation in learning and intellectual activities are also of increasing interest to the new generation of older adults. However, there will also still be older adults that are interested in traditional pursuits (e.g., cards, teas, bingo, etc.), which will require the continued provision of a broad range of opportunities. There is considerable segmentation of the older adult market that it is not only based on age, but also physical, mental and social abilities, income, and culture.

Municipalities are now beginning to recognize the challenges associated with meeting the needs of the “new senior” while also balancing opportunities for the more elderly and other age groups. From a general programming standpoint, the City of Vaughan should continue to evolve its services to include

more active living, fitness, educational, and arts-based opportunities for older adults. Recently, the City has flagged its older adult programs for further review through its program review initiative; this process may lead to changes in the scope of programs and/or how they are delivered. As the outcome of the program review may have potential implications on space requirements, this is a process worth monitoring.

Another matter that is closely related to the City’s review of older adult program is its fee model. Currently, older adult clubs are not charged rent for their space, while many age 60+ programs and memberships offered by the City are done so at a reduced rate. With an aging population, this will place a greater burden on the City’s financial resources over time, creating challenges in meeting cost recovery rates elsewhere. Furthermore, several studies also indicate that this age group has higher disposable incomes than previous generations. Although it is recognized that there will continue to be a segment of the population at all ages that will not be able to afford program or membership fees, the City offers a financial assistance program to address affordability. Nevertheless, the City may wish to examine the long-term sustainability of the current older adult pricing model (for recreation programs, memberships, and clubs), with a view toward improving cost recover levels over time.

Given the considerable growth in the older adult population, additional space and programming for older adults will undoubtedly be required to adequately serve the needs of this market. With changes to the older adult market, there are increasing demands not only for daytime programming, but also evening and weekend, which are typically preferred times for youth and families. As a result, multi-use spaces that are capable of accommodating a variety of needs – depending on the time of day, week, or season – are required. The inclusion of flexible spaces oriented to older adult programming (but not necessarily dedicated) should be considered in the design of all new major community centres and neighbourhood hubs.

Given this direction, no new stand-alone older adult facilities are recommended. Furthermore, the City should conduct reviews of its stand-alone / storefront older adult centres (particularly those that are suffering from declining membership and utilization) to determine long-term options for their maintenance, renewal, or divestment.

Age-specific Activity Spaces (Youth, Older Adults)	Recommendations
30.	Continue to accommodate age-specific activities (e.g., pre-school, youth, older adults, etc.) in major community centres and neighbourhood hubs through a focus on flexible multi-use spaces . Dedicated spaces may also be provided, but should only be provided where justified by demand and operational requirements.
31.	Make Vaughan an “age-friendly” city recognized by the World Health Organization. This will require an action plan for ensuring that municipal policies, services, and infrastructure enable people of all ages – particularly older adults – to be active in their community.
32.	Review options for stand-alone / storefront older adult centres that are suffering from declining membership and utilization. New stand-alone older adult centres are not recommended.

8.5 Fitness Centres / Active Living Spaces

Fitness Centres / Active Living Spaces			Inventory
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
4	6	1 : 51,867	1:50,000
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • since the 2008 ATMP, a fitness centre was constructed as part of the North Thornhill Community Centre (2010) and a fitness centre was added to Vellore Village Community Centre (2013) 			

The City provides fitness centres at six of its community centres and is viewed as a leader in the municipal fitness sector across the province. In addition, six squash courts and one racquetball court are offered between three facilities. The City presently offers a range of fitness opportunities including aerobics, cycling “spin” classes, weight training, etc. for youth, adults and seniors alike. Existing municipal fitness centres in Vaughan appear to be generally profitable and are able to offer a high level of quality to their users.

There are several private sector fitness clubs in the City as well, many of which are newly formed. Competition with the private sector is increasing as more clubs open; however, the City tries to offer a differentiated product through its rate system, support services, and facility design (many of which benefit from aquatic facilities).

Nearly 5,000 residents are members of the City’s fitness centres (excluding Vellore Village, which opened in early 2013). Membership is highest at Al Palladini, Garnet A. Williams, and Maple Community Centres (membership is lower at North Thornhill and Fr. Ermanno Bulfon fitness centres). Although it is a small snapshot (2011-12), it would appear that senior memberships to City fitness centres are on the rise; seniors now represent over 25% of all members.

For the purposes of this plan, fitness centres are defined as equipment-based training clubs that includes amenities such as treadmills, free-weights, and other exercise machines, as well as multi-use studio rooms. A provision target of **one municipal fitness centre per 50,000 residents is suggested** (note: the 2008 ATMP did not establish a population-based target). This is largely a guideline, however, as the decision to provide fitness centres may be impacted by other providers. Therefore, new fitness centres should be confirmed through a business planning process that includes a market assessment. Municipal fitness centres should only be provided in community centres with gymnasiums and, ideally, indoor pools.

Table 12: Forecasted Demand for Municipal Fitness Centres, 2013-2031

	2013	2021	2031
Total Population	311,200	360,380	416,573
<i>Provision Target</i>	<i>1 municipal fitness centre per 50,000 residents</i>		
Required Fitness Centres	6.2	7.2	8.3
Existing Fitness Centres	6		
Surplus (Deficit)	(0.2)	(1.2)	(2.3)

With six municipal fitness centres at present, two additional municipal fitness centres will be required (for a total of 8) by 2031. Pending confirmation through future business plans, equipment-based fitness centres are recommended for the major community centres proposed for Block 41 and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. All new community centres (including the one proposed for Block 11) should have one or more multi-use fitness studios with rubber flooring, mirrors, and storage at all to enable a variety of active programming.

Given the heightened interest in active living and wellness (as identified and promoted in the City's Physical Activity Strategy), the City should continue to expand its focus, over time, on such programs that facilitate health and wellness benefits associated with physically active lifestyles. The public engagement program yielded several suggestions for more fitness programs (such as yoga and zumba), as well as WiFi at fitness centres. However, some of the City's fitness centres are lacking sufficient studio / multi-use activity rooms to accommodate the growing demand for these programs and options for modest expansions or reconfigurations should be explored.

Fitness Centres / Active Living Spaces	Recommendations
33.	Include an equipment-based fitness centre as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017/18.
34.	Include an equipment-based fitness centre as part of the major community centre proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre around the year 2021.
35.	Ensure that all municipal fitness centres have sufficient studio / multi-use activity rooms to accommodate the growing demand for health and wellness programs. Expansions or reconfigurations to existing facilities may be required to address shortfalls.
36.	Continue to develop innovative and engaging fitness and active living programming that responds to the needs of the growing and evolving population.

8.6 Gymnasiums

Gymnasiums		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
9	9	1 : 34,578	1:30,000
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new gymnasium was part of North Thornhill Community Centre, which opened in 2010 • the Patricia Kemp Community Centre (gymnasium) was recently leased to a local group and has been removed from the public inventory • the City also permits several school board gymnasiums, including three that are attached to the Vellore Village Community Centre 			

With the exception of Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena, all of the City's major community centres contain one or more gymnasiums. Additionally, several school gymnasiums are permitted under a joint-use agreement with local school boards, including three that are attached to the Vellore Village Community Centre. Facilitating reliable access to school gymnasiums through joint use agreements should continue to be a priority for the City.

Gymnasium sports continue to exhibit high levels of demand, especially for sports such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, etc. There was modest demand expressed for gymnasiums through the household survey and the public meetings yielded requests for open (drop-in) family gym times in the evenings.

The 2008 ATMP established a provision target of one municipal gymnasium per 35,000 residents. Given the substantial demand and flexibility for these types of spaces, it is recommended that the target be altered to one municipal gymnasium per 30,000 population.

Table 13: Forecasted Demand for Municipal Gymnasiums, 2013-2021

	2013	2021	2031
Total Population	311,200	360,380	416,573
Provision Target	1 municipal gymnasium per 30,000 residents		
Required Gymnasiums (municipal)	10.4	12.0	13.9
Existing Gymnasiums (municipal)	9		
Surplus (Deficit)	(1.4)	(3.0)	(3.9)

Notes: The three gyms at Vellore Village C.C. are not included in the supply, but are permitted through the Recreation and Culture Department.

The preceding table illustrates that there is current an unmet demand for one additional gymnasium, growing to three by 2021, and four by 2031. To meet these needs, gymnasiums are proposed for each of the City's three future major community centres (Block 11, Block 41, and VMC), as well as a fourth location to be determined. Consideration may be given to developing gymnasiums as part of the proposed neighbourhood hubs (e.g., Kleinburg, Block 27/North Maple, Vaughan Mills, etc.). All new

gymnasiums should be co-located with other recreational facilities so as to emphasize convenience and the benefits associated with multi-use facilities. Furthermore, divisible gymnasiums allow a greater range of uses and increase opportunities for community access and programming.

Gymnasiums	<i>Recommendations</i>
37.	Include a gymnasium as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 11 in 2015/16.
38.	Include a gymnasium as part of the major community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017/18.
39.	Include a gymnasium as part of the major community centre proposed for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre around the year 2021.
40.	Consider designing gymnasiums as part of proposed neighbourhood hubs (e.g., Kleinburg, Block 27/North Maple, Vaughan Mills, etc.).
41.	Continue to seek and facilitate reliable access to school board gymnasiums through joint use agreements.

8.7 Indoor Bocce

Indoor Bocce		<i>Inventory</i>	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
17	17	1 : 18,306	n/a

The City offers a total of seventeen indoor bocce courts at four community centres: Dufferin Clark, Fr. Ermanno Bulfon, Chancellor, and Maple. Vaughan also provides outdoor bocce courts at over twenty locations throughout the City.

Bocce is a sport that is especially popular among older men in the Italian community. Most clubs have modestly-sized memberships that are aging. As the baby boomer generation ages, there may be some opportunities for growth in the sport if it can better establish itself with the next generation of older adults. However, there is sufficient capacity within the current inventory of indoor courts to accommodate any foreseeable participation gains.

Given its limited market (10% of households contain at least one member that has participated in indoor and/or outdoor bocce in the past 12 months), low public support (only 21% of households supported additional funding for bocce courts), and questionable long-term viability, a provision target is not recommended for bocce courts. No additional indoor bocce courts are recommended at this time. Monitoring of usage and membership trends at existing facilities is recommended.

Indoor Bocce	Recommendations
42. No additional indoor bocce courts are recommended at this time. Monitoring of usage and membership trends at existing facilities is recommended.	

8.8 Other Indoor Recreational Spaces (Turf, Tennis, etc.)

Some leisure and sport interests appeal to a narrow margin of the population. Although it is recognized that these pursuits are worthwhile and beneficial, there are limitations on the ability and/or responsibility of the City of Vaughan to supply such groups with the requested facilities. Rather, it is typical for most specialized facilities to be established through community-led partnerships, with or without municipal participation.

The ATMP's engagement program has yielded a number of requests from local organizations for recreation facilities that would represent a new level of provision for the City, including **curling, indoor tennis, indoor soccer, and indoor cricket**. While it is possible that the participants in these specialized recreation activities may have unmet facility requirements, this demand is often representative of a relatively small group of residents and/or is a product that is typically delivered by the private or non-profit sectors. The provision of City-funded facilities, however, should consider a number of factors, including the overall impact (public benefits and persons affected), one-time and ongoing costs, risks, and alignment with the municipal mandate.

For guidance on municipal role definition, the City should reference the seven questions from the Council-approved Program Review framework:

1. Is the program still in the public interest?
2. Does this service fit with the public's priorities?
3. Is the delivery of the program a legitimate and necessary role of the City?
4. Should the program be realigned with other levels of government?
5. Should it be delivered in partnership with the private or voluntary sector?
6. Is the program affordable given our financial situation?
7. Can the program be redesigned for efficiency?

Vaughan should remain open to discussions with new and emerging recreation interests and evaluate capital proposals through the aforementioned framework, with consideration to the City's 10 year capital forecast and the City's capacity to participate in such projects. To assist in its evaluation, the City may require unsolicited proposals to be accompanied by business plans (completed to the City's satisfaction) that detail the proposal, market needs, operating and capital costs, financial capacities, sustainability measures, evidence of community benefits, and a risk assessment. Low risk participation in projects that address unmet demands, make use of underutilized resources, promote physical activity, encourage public access, and support other municipal objectives will generally rank ahead of more risky proposals.

Other Indoor Recreational Spaces

Recommendations

43. In evaluating municipal involvement in **specialized indoor facilities and/or unsolicited proposals**, consider the seven questions from the Council-approved Program Review framework and require proponents to prepare comprehensive business plans (completed to the City's satisfaction) to enable the evaluation.
44. Consider low risk municipal participation in a community partnership for a seasonal **indoor tennis facility** (air-supported structure) that maximizes use of an outdoor court complex. Such a project would require a favourable assessment through the Program Review framework and appropriate partnership agreements.

SECTION 9: OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT

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 Pedestrian and Bicycle Implementation Strategy 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 linked network of recreational trails through the integration of woodlots, open spaces, and parks, as well as loop trails within parks and open spaces.
47.	Work with the TRCA and other partners to undertake a risk assessment and explore options for addressing maintenance of public trails.
48.	Improve the quality and quantity of signage, mapping, and promotion of recreational trails in Vaughan.
49.	Utilize 51(25)(b) of the <i>Planning Act</i> to require the conveyance of pedestrian and bicycle pathways 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"> • supply includes permitted school fields (39), as well as fields (7) developed in partnership with the Ontario Soccer Association • excluded are “mini mini” fields (36) • the 2008 field count cannot be validated as several non-permitted school fields may have been included; inventory accuracy has since improved 			

*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
Total	144	1 : 2,161

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
Total	9,791

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 12th 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

	2013	2021	2031
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		
Surplus (Deficit)	(20)	(27)	(38)

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 38 additional fields by 2031 (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 adjust the dimensions of existing fields 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"> the accuracy of the 2008 field count is questionable as several non-permitted school fields may have been included; inventory accuracy has since improved some lower quality diamonds have been removed from the active inventory 			

* 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
Total	71	1 : 4,383

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 (16th 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)

Organization	2012
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
Total	2,435

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

	2013	2021	2031
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		
Surplus (Deficit)	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 expanding up to four junior and/or senior fields 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 developing adult ball diamonds (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 convert or repurpose underutilized and low quality junior or t-ball diamonds 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.

Other Sports Fields	Recommendations
55. Continue with plans to develop multi-use fields (football, rugby, lacrosse, etc.) at Agostino Park and the proposed North Maple Regional Park.	
56. Seek to develop a proper cricket pitch 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

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

Basketball Courts		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
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
Total	126	1 : 2,470	84	1 : 495

*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 “ observation project ” 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 25 new tennis courts 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 15 new basketball courts and/or play courts 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 20,000ft² 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 3,000ft²) 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

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

* 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

	2013	2021	2031
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		
Surplus (Deficit)	(7)	(8)	(8)

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.

Skateboard Parks and Skate Zones	<i>Recommendations</i>
60.	Develop three additional (major) skateboard parks 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 five or more additional (minor) skate zones 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.	Engage 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"> • Supply is supplemented by 1 outdoor swimming pool and 1 wading pool in Thornhill (at the same location) • 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 			

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 6th 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
Total	17	8	5 to 8

* 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 13 additional waterplay facilities 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 Thornhill outdoor pool 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
Total	159	1 : 240

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.

Playgrounds	Recommendations
65.	Provide playgrounds within 500-metres 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 outdoor fitness stations 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

Off-Leash Dog Parks			Inventory
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
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.

Off-Leash Dog Parks	<i>Recommendations</i>
67.	Develop a second off-leash dog park 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 District Parks proposed for Blocks 35 and 59 (both are in employment areas).
69.	Explore options for establishing smaller, more localized off-leash areas 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"> • since the 2008 ATMP, an artificial rink has been removed from Glen Shields Activity Centre • 2008 ATMP listed the supply as 9 artificial rinks, however, three facilities were part of proposed parks that were yet to be built • supply excludes natural rinks, which may be established on outdoor basketball courts or play courts 			

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 7th 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
Total	5	1 : 62,240

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 4 to 5 outdoor artificial rinks , 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.	Play courts 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

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

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 22nd 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.

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

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 policy 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	Recommendations
	<p>74. As opportunities permit, establish additional picnic sites (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).</p>

SECTION 10: LIBRARY FACILITY ASSESSMENT

This section contains an analysis of public library space needs, as well as a facility provision strategy for Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) to the year 2031. This strategy is guided by a number of factors, including population growth and trends, public and staff input, geographic distribution, and space standards. Efforts have been made to ensure that future plans are appropriate and strategic in nature, representing facility provision that is responsive to the needs of existing and new residents.

Strong library systems are the cornerstones of strong communities and community surveys indicate that public libraries are important to the large majority of Vaughan residents. There is a great deal of research that highlights the importance of public libraries as an accessible, universal, and primarily free benefit to residents.

10.1 Current Situation

Public Libraries		Inventory	
Municipal Supply		Provision Levels	
2008	2013	2013	Recommended Target
120,603sf (7 locations)	120,603sf (7 locations)	0.39 sf per capita	0.61 sf per capita
<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there have been no new libraries built since prior to the 2008 ATMP; two facilities (North Thornhill Branch and Civic Centre Resource Library) are currently in the design/tender process 			

Vaughan Public Libraries is frequently commended for its programs, services, collections, facilities, and staff, all of which have garnered high ratings from local residents. VPL is a valued service provider (72% of households reported visiting Vaughan Public Libraries within the past 12 months) and continues to be a leader in meeting the changing needs of an ever-growing community. One of these changes, which is reflected in the City and Library's policy documents, is creating a stronger link between libraries, community centres, schools, and the various cultural/ethnic communities in Vaughan.

At present, VPL has seven library service locations with a combined floor space of 120,603 square feet. The VPL system accommodated more than 2 million visits in 2011 – a 29% increase since 2007. Two of its facilities are resource libraries (with an average size of 34,750 square feet and are intended to serve the entire City), while the average size of the other five branch libraries is approximately 10,220 square feet. Three of the branches are attached to Vaughan community centres. A virtual library system is also available through the Internet.

Table 27: Inventory of Vaughan Public Libraries (2012)

Library Facility	Community	Location/ Association	Classification	Year Built	Facility Size (sf)
Ansley Grove	Woodbridge	Chancellor CC	Branch	1990	10,487
Bathurst Clark	Thornhill	Stand-alone building	Resource Library	1994	36,500
Dufferin Clark	Thornhill	Dufferin Clark CC	Branch	1988	12,516
Kleinburg	Kleinburg	Stand-alone building	Branch	1966/75	5,500
Maple	Maple	Maple CC	Branch	1991	13,000
Pierre Berton	Woodbridge	Stand-alone building	Resource Library	2004	33,000
Woodbridge	Woodbridge	Stand-alone building	Branch	1981	9,600
TOTAL					120,603

Source: Vaughan Public Libraries, 2012

Aligning facility development with the City’s dramatic growth has been a challenge for VPL; the most recent branch to be constructed was the Pierre Berton Resource Library in 2004, when the City’s population was approximately 30% less than it is today. This lengthy period with no library development is affecting the City’s ability to meet its space provision target and to leverage Development Charges to help in funding future branches.

Presently, Vaughan Public Libraries are working toward the development of two new service locations: (1) a branch library located in the North Thornhill Community Centre (estimated at 7,500 square feet); and (2) the Civic Centre Resource Library (estimated at 36,000sf).

10.2 Facility Model

In many communities across Ontario, the average size of a branch library is increasing and smaller branches are being succeeded by larger branches in more prominent locations that offer greater visibility, expansion opportunities, and barrier-free access to all members of the community (new accessibility requirements are estimated to require a 10% increase in space requirements). Conversely, some communities are developing smaller, more conveniently located library branches. In larger urban communities, a neighbourhood-level branch ranges from 7,000 to 12,000 square feet, while district or area libraries ranges from 12,000 to 35,000 square feet. Some recent examples include in the GTA:

- Burlington: 7,000sf (Aldershot) and 11,400sf (Alton, shared with high school and community centre)
- Markham: 25,000sf (Cornell) and 20,000sf (Southeast, planned)
- Mississauga: 9,300sf (Churchill Meadows, shared with school); planning a 17,000 to 22,000 sf branch to serve intensification area
- Richmond Hill: planning 16,000sf (Oak Ridges; Library Master Plan underway)
- Milton: 30,000sf (Central, with possible second phase) and 11,300sf (Beaty, branch)
- Brampton: 8,000 (Mount Pleasant, 2nd phase to add 12,000+sf) and 35,000sf (Gore Meadows)
- Hamilton: 24,000 (Turner Park)

Each of these communities and the circumstances around their library development are unique. For example, the City of Vaughan's new Official Plan is built on a philosophy of creating "complete communities" that support transit service and promote walking, cycling, and healthy living; a more compact urban form is anticipated, particularly in intensification areas. In Vaughan, it will be important that future library branches are large enough to accommodate books, quiet study, computer areas, and program space to provide the greatest level of service possible to residents.

Libraries are increasingly being integrated with multi-use community facilities to improve operating efficiencies and cost sharing through the sharing of common areas, storage space, programming rooms, parking, and facility management services. More importantly, libraries within recreation centres provide added convenience to residents through cross-programming and "one-stop shopping" opportunities. VPL has had success with this model at the Maple, Ansley Grove, and Dufferin Clark branches, all of which are co-located with community centres.

As VPL has done in the past, it is strongly recommended that library development be coordinated with community centres and civic facilities as this not only generates economies of scale, but also improves customer service. This is supported by Section 7.2.4.4 of the City's new Official Plan states that it is the policy of Council: "To encourage and support the development of joint or co-located library facilities such as community centres, schools, or other appropriate facilities."

Despite the increased prevalence of technology in our lives, public libraries continue to experience very high levels of circulation amongst print materials (VPL's borrowing exceeding 2.8 million items in 2011, representing a 27% increase since 2007 despite little change to its collection size), although e-book circulation and other technologies are generating growing demands. The 2012 household survey found that the most common reasons for using VPL are: reading and/or borrowing books/e-books (70%), study / do research (30%), borrow DVDs or Blu Rays (15%), borrow CDs or audio tapes (4%), and use the internet/computers (4%). The variation in use, combined with the evolving role of public libraries as community hubs and gathering spaces, is creating additional space demands, not less.

The demand for places for customers to connect their personal devices and larger group study areas are two more reasons why demand for public library floor space is increasing. Additional space dedicated to children and teens, art exhibits, comfortable reading areas with cafés, flexible programming space for community activities, wide aisle ways, and accessible book stacks to accommodate individuals with physical disabilities are some of the other factors that have contributed to an overall increase in library space across Ontario. Because these features are highly desirable amongst modern library users, it is most likely that public libraries will strive to continue offering them. As a result, the demand for more public library floor space is not expected to decrease in the near future. In fact, there is every indication that larger libraries are here to stay.

As a result, it is recommended that the design of Vaughan's libraries continue to evolve in line with trends and best practices, including the provision of more space and resources for programs and activities, independent and group study, and new media and technologies.

On this point of larger libraries, it is notable that the household survey found support at a ratio of more than 2:1 for "large-sized libraries with a wide range of services and materials" over "small-sized libraries that provide a narrower range of services and materials". This is different from the finding of the 2008 ATMP which found that 47% preferred smaller libraries and only 38% preferred larger libraries. It should also be noted that the latest survey found greater support for larger libraries from younger

residents/families, while older adults seemed to prefer smaller libraries. The most visited locations tend to be the City’s larger libraries (resource libraries).

To better understand facility sizing and functions, it is helpful to consider potential facility models. A library facility model defines the sizes, roles, relationships, and key service characteristics of the different buildings in the overall library system. It can also be used to determine how the total required space would best be distributed among future library facility developments. Facility models differ slightly from community to community, based on factors such as local needs, system-wide goals, and community characteristics.

Since the 1980s, Vaughan Public Libraries has endorsed a tiered decentralized facility classification model consisting of resource libraries and branches (both community and neighbourhood). The following table illustrates the differences between these typologies.

Table 28: Vaughan Public Libraries: Current Facility Classification Model

Targets	Resource Libraries	Branch Libraries (Community and Neighbourhood)
Population served	100,000	10,000 to 30,000
Catchment	2.4 to 4.8 km	1.6 to 2.4 km
Floor Space	30,000 to 40,000 sf	6,000 to 15,000 sf
Collection size (items)	100,000 to 125,000	30,000 to 80,000
Hours of Operation per week	60 to 85	25 to 60
Program/meeting room space	85 people	35 people
Parking Spaces	50 to 75	20 to 30

Source: Vaughan Public Libraries, 2013

With a series of medium to large branches that are distributed amongst established and growing communities, we would consider VPL’s facility model to be a modern representation. Some communities are served by a series of smaller neighbourhood branches that were established decades ago to serve historic settlement areas; however, due to their era of construction, these typically do not respond well to changing trends. The VPL system has only one such facility (Kleinburg); the remainder of its facilities are generally 30 years old or less. As a result, Vaughan Public Libraries are well positioned to meet changing demands, although substantial space challenges persist.

Vaughan’s high growth forecast requires a facility model that allows for substantial library space provision in a cost-effective manner that is sufficiently nimble to respond to rapid population changes. Rather than waiting ten years between facility construction cycles, VPL must be able to react more swiftly. Although smaller libraries may be a better fit with the desire to create more walkable communities, larger libraries can provide more amenities and specialized services and are generally more efficient to operate. The VPL facility model must strike the proper balance between financial sustainability and the defined City of Vaughan direction to create “complete communities” that support transit service and promote walking, cycling, and healthy living. Continued co-location with community centres and within proximity to key populations will ultimately provide the greatest value to Vaughan and its residents.

The library facility model should be implemented with some flexibility, depending on community-specific needs, funding, and partnership opportunities. As such, there may be instances where it is

reasonable for the Library to deviate slightly from this recommended threshold if not doing so would otherwise negate an opportunity to deliver improved library services in a cost-effective manner.

10.3 Space Needs

Demographic characteristics and population forecasts are a significant influence on the usage of – and requirements for – library space and services. The City is still very much in the growth stage and will continue to expand at a rapid pace for many years to come. As such, Vaughan Public Libraries will require a building programme involving the creation of new library buildings – as well as the expansion of library services within existing but intensifying communities – that will be spread over the next twenty years and possibly beyond.

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken to provide a simple comparison of Vaughan Public Libraries with select library systems in the Greater Toronto Area.

Table 29: Library Space (SF) per Capita, 2012/13

Library System	Population	Library Total Square Footage	Square Feet per Capita
Burlington	175,800	94,384	0.54
Mississauga	738,000	395,166	0.54
Brampton	523,900	166,552	0.32
Richmond Hill	195,119	99,600	0.51
Markham	323,804	153,241	0.47
Average	--	--	0.46
Vaughan	311,200	120,603	0.39

Sources: 2011 Canadian Public Library Statistics (Canadian Urban Libraries Council); Richmond Hill space figure from Development Charges Background Study; Markham space figure includes new Cornell branch opened in late 2012; Brampton space figure includes new Gore Meadows branch opened in early 2013; Population data from 2011 Census(Statistics Canada) and York Region Population Estimates for December 31, 2012

Note: Because this information represents a snapshot in time, it may not accurately reflect the space standards employed by the library systems for planning new buildings/expansions.

The previous table indicates that the average per capita library space provision for the benchmarked communities is 0.46 square feet; if the highest (Burlington) and lowest (Brampton) ratios are removed, this average becomes 0.52 square feet per capita. At this time, Vaughan is providing approximately 0.39 square feet of library space per capita, considerably lower than the average of the listed library systems. It is notable that 77% of Vaughan households support additional public spending on public libraries, tops amongst a list of 23 different facility types.

The 2008 ATMP supported a provision target of 0.61 sf/capita for library space. Although the City is currently well below this threshold, it remains a relevant target to work towards as it represents a measure of an effective and responsive library system in Ontario – the “industry standard” that continues to be used as a planning objective by many communities is 0.60 sf/capita. The benchmarking exercise yielded an average level of provision of 0.46 sf/capita; however, most of these systems are striving to achieve a higher provision rate. Vaughan Public Libraries is currently below this range. When

the combined 43,500 square feet from the proposed North Thornhill Community Centre and Civic Centre libraries are accounted for, it is estimated that the provision rate will peak at 0.50 sf/capita (2016 population estimate), bringing it more in line with the average, but still well below the provision target.

Given the high level of importance that Vaughan residents place on library services, further improvements will be needed. As library space needs are very closely linked with growth forecasts and associated Development Charges funding, it would be to the Library's advantage to continue to expand the level of service provision into the future in order to maximize the fiscal contribution of development charges to new facility construction and, in turn, to expand its service to the community.

The approach of using per capita standards continues to be a reasonable methodology for projecting needs at the "master planning level". Despite the recent evolution of library holdings and roles (such as an increasing emphasis on electronic resources and the library as a community gathering place), library usage levels have remained strong and the use of a standards-based approach remains relevant.

Population growth will continue to place increasing demands on library space requirements. The following table provides the space requirements for library provision based on the population projections and the Library's 0.61 square foot per capita target.

Table 30: Projection of Library Space Needs based on Recommended Provision Target, 2013-2021

Year	Forecasted Population	Existing Library Space (sf)	0.61 sf per capita	
			Library Space Needs (sf)	Deviation from Current Supply (120,603sf)
2013	311,200	120,603	189,832	69,229
2021	360,380		219,832	99,229
2031	416,573		254,110	133,507

Application of the 0.61 square feet per capita target indicates that the current library space shortfall is approaching 70,000 square feet. By 2031, approximately 133,500 square feet of additional library space will be required to serve the forecasted population of 416,573. This need will be experienced incrementally over time as new residents move to Vaughan, as will corresponding demand for additional library collections (digital and print).

10.4 Library Distribution and Community-Specific Assessment

In addition to the overall space allocation, geographic distribution is a fundamental consideration in the establishment of a library building programme as there is an expectation that – to the greatest degree possible – branch libraries be accessible to all Vaughan residents. 50% of survey respondents felt that the maximum reasonable distance to a library in Vaughan is 5 kilometres or less, a distance that is substantially larger than recommended. The VPL's current Facilities Development Plan states that a service radius of 3.6 kilometres should be applied to resource libraries, 2.4 kilometres for larger library branches, and 1.6 kilometres for smaller library branches. These distances are similar to what is being used in other growth communities and are a reasonable starting point for the analysis. **Map 7** on the following page illustrates the location of library branches and their theoretical service radii page. Existing library locations (as well as the facilities proposed for North Thornhill and the Civic Centre campus) have been mapped to show their current distribution.

The distribution analysis illustrates that Vaughan Public Libraries have excellent geographic coverage. 58% of household survey respondents agree that libraries in Vaughan are equitably distributed. Geographic gaps in library distribution (within residential areas) include:

- The majority of the Vellore area – this is also supported through the household survey
- Block 11/12 (smaller gap at City’s eastern edge)
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (future gap)
- Vaughan Mills area (potential future gap)

As the mapping cannot adequately illustrate the number of people served by libraries in each community, a more detailed assessment is required. The following analysis examines the distribution, population, and potential synergies for library development within each community. Although the 0.61 sf/capita provision target is used as a guideline, it is not practical or feasible to stringently apply it to each community – it is intended as a City-wide target.

Carrville

The branch at the North Thornhill Community Centre will be the community’s first library. As of 2011, there were 43,800 residents in this area without coverage. If the City-wide target of 0.61 sf/capita was to be achieved in this community, approximately 40,100 square feet of space would be required by 2031. The 2008 ATMP recommended that a 15,000 square foot branch be developed in Carrville; if this space target is to be achieved, it will have to be done so at two facilities, as the branch library located in the North Thornhill Community Centre is proposed to be 7,500 square feet. There is an opportunity to co-locate a second branch in this area with a community centre proposed for Block 11. A second branch would assist in meeting needs and, even though Carrville’s service level would still be well below the City-wide provision target, the proposed Civic Centre Resource Library is nearby and would help to mitigate this shortfall.

Thornhill/Concord

With two library locations (including one of the City’s two resource libraries), this area has good geographic coverage. Currently, this area is being served at a rate of approximately 0.7 sf/capita; future population growth will make use of this capacity and the 2031 provision level is forecasted to drop to 0.58 sf/capita by 2031 (or lower if anticipated intensification targets are reached). If the City-wide target of 0.61 sf/capita was to be achieved in this community, a minimum of 2,700 square feet of additional space would be required by 2031.

Maple

This area has a considerable population that is currently only being served by one branch, resulting in a ratio of 0.2 sf/capita at present. A resource library (36,000 square feet) is currently proposed for the area (Civic Centre), which will boost its overall provision, but will also create a geographic overlap of service (despite their different functions). A decision has not yet been made regarding the Maple Library’s future – further study and monitoring of usage at Maple Library is recommended to determine if changes to its function and services will be required. Longer-term partnership potential may exist should a neighbourhood hub be developed in north Maple (Block 27).

Vellore

There are presently no libraries within this community of 35,700 residents (2011 Census); the closest library is the Pierre Berton Resource Library to the southwest. If the City-wide target of 0.61 sf/capita was to be achieved in this community, approximately 35,800 square feet of space would be required by 2031. The 2008 ATMP recommended that a branch be developed at the Vellore Village Community Centre and co-location opportunities exist for a second branch with the community centre proposed for Block 41.

Woodbridge

With three library locations (including one of the City's two resource libraries), this area has excellent geographic coverage. Currently, this area is being served at a rate of approximately 0.7 sf/capita. Existing space is predicted to be sufficient to meet long-term needs.

Kleinburg

This area is served by one branch library, which currently translates into a provision rate of 0.9 sf/capita. Future population growth at the periphery of this area may result in some small service gaps, but the larger issue is that the provision ratio is forecasted to decline to 0.22 sf/capita by 2031 based if the current supply is maintained. If the City-wide target of 0.61 sf/capita was to be achieved in this community, approximately 15,200 square feet of space would be required by 2031. There is no potential for significant expansion of the existing Kleinburg Library to meet future demand, nor would a second service location be justified in this community. The possibility of establishing a neighbourhood hub (i.e., smaller community centre presence) in the longer-term has been identified and opportunities to move the public library to this facility should be explored.

Intensification Areas (e.g., VMC, Vaughan Mills)

A future primary growth centre for the City is the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, which is forecasted to accommodate approximately 25,000 to 30,000 residents by 2031. Based on a provision target of 0.61 sf/capita, this translates into a need for approximately 17,100 square feet of library space by 2031, based on current forecasts. However, this area is also expected to be a significant employment centre and become the "downtown" for Vaughan – both of these factors justify a more substantial presence for the library and the development of a resource library in this community has been recommended previously. Co-location opportunities may exist with a community centre proposed for the VMC.

The Vaughan Mills area is another community that may emerge over the longer-term as this area undergoes redevelopment pressures. The City's "Where and How to Grow" report (June 2009) identified a preliminary population target of nearly 13,000 for the area east of Highway 400; currently, a secondary plan is being developed for this area to more closely define development options. The possibility of establishing a neighbourhood hub (i.e., smaller community centre presence) in the longer-term has been identified and opportunities to develop a library branch within this facility should be explored. Based on the current population forecast, a 7,500 square foot branch would meet the 0.61 sf/capita provision guideline.

10.5 Recommended Provision Strategy

The following facility provision strategy is recommended based on the information presented in this report. Any changes to the City's population forecasts or the VPL's facility model may require this strategy to be updated. The proposed timing and sizing is consistent with the City's Development Charges Study.

Table 31: Recommended Library Development Program (listed in expected order of implementation)

Recommendations	Approximate Square Footage	Approximate Timing*
1. Continue to develop a Library Branch in the North Thornhill Community Centre	7,500 sf	2013-14
2. Continue with plans to develop a Resource Library at the Civic Centre	36,000 sf	2014-15
3. Develop a Library Branch in the Vellore Village Community Centre	7,500 sf	2014-15
4. Assess the viability of retaining Maple Library once Civic Centre Resource Library opens	n/a	2015-16
5. Develop a Library Branch in the community centre proposed for Block 11	7,500 sf	2016-17
6. Develop a Library Branch in the community centre proposed for Block 41	7,500 sf	2017-18
7. Explore opportunities to secure land/space to house a Resource Library in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre	36,000 sf	2013-14 (land) 2021 (constr.)
8. Explore opportunities to relocate the Kleinburg Library to create a larger Library Branch (possible co-location with a neighbourhood hub)	12,000 sf (6,500 sf net increase)	post-2021
9. Explore opportunities to develop a Library Branch in the neighbourhood hub proposed for the Vaughan Mills area	7,500 sf	post-2026
10. Address future service gaps with the development of 2 to 3 Library Branches (e.g., Block 27, etc.)	17,500 sf	post-2026
Total Net Increase	133,500 sf	

* timing and location may be dictated by population growth, funding and/or timing of joint municipal building projects

Note: The recommended provision strategy does not account for the expansion or closure of any existing libraries; should either of these options be contemplated, this analysis should be revisited.

In terms of existing libraries, similar to community centres, there is a need to ensure that existing facilities offer a comparable level of service to newer ones. As a result, existing libraries may need to be retrofitted or renewed, particularly those that are in highest use, those requiring lifecycle maintenance, and those that are in proximity to areas proposed for residential intensification. The City has recently begun the development of a Corporate Asset Management Strategy, which will be a critical piece in understanding the status and long-term requirements associated with its library infrastructure.

Public Libraries	Recommendations
75.	Giving consideration to the recommendations of this Active Together Master Plan, refresh the Library's Facilities Development Plan , with a continued focus on accessibility, equity, integration with other civic facilities, flexible design, and customer service.
76.	Continue to develop a Library Branch in the North Thornhill Community Centre in 2013-14.
77.	Continue with plans to develop a Resource Library at the Civic Centre in 2014-15.
78.	Develop a Library Branch at the Vellore Village Community Centre in 2014-15.
79.	Undertake a study in 2015-16 (once the Civic Centre Resource Library has been open for a period of time) to determine future uses for the Maple Library .
80.	Develop a Library Branch in the community centre proposed for Block 11 in 2016-17.
81.	Develop a Library Branch in the community centre proposed for Block 41 in 2017-18.
82.	In 2013-14, seek to secure land/space for a Resource Library in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre . Timing of construction will depend on a number of factors, but is currently recommended around the year 2021.
83.	Explore opportunities to relocate the Kleinburg Library to create a larger Library Branch (possible co-location with a neighbourhood hub) beyond 2021.
84.	Explore opportunities to develop a Library Branch in the neighbourhood hub proposed for the Vaughan Mills area beyond 2026.
85.	Address future service gaps with the development of 2 to 3 Library Branches beyond 2026 (e.g., Block 27, etc.).

SECTION 11: ACTIVE TOGETHER MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Note: The Executive Summary contains a listing of all recommendations, along with their proposed timing and priority level.

This implementation strategy identifies the high-level capital and operating cost estimates associated with the recommendations of this Active Together Master Plan. It bears noting that the recommendations in this Plan are based upon what is needed, regardless of what is financially achievable at the present time. As a result, sustained efforts should be made to implement these strategies through a variety of appropriate and acceptable means. The full implementation of this Plan may require the pursuit of alternative funding and the establishment of various partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, schools, agencies, developers, and other partners.

By approving this Plan, the City is not bound to implementing every recommendation or providing facilities in the order, amount, or timing indicated; rather, this Plan provides guidance on community priorities, and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined. It is expected that the City of Vaughan and Vaughan Public Libraries will make decisions on individual projects and funding sources annually through the capital budget process.

11.1 Implementation & Financial Considerations

Strategic partnerships with community and private interests are essential for the successful implementation of the Active Together Master Plan. The nature of these partnerships will vary widely, depending on the type of facility/program, local context, and defined roles and responsibilities of those involved. For example, for facility upgrades that generally serve identifiable user groups, a surcharge fee may be considered. For larger expenditures where the public benefit may be more limited, the City may consider a lesser role that more appropriately reflects the risks involved. First and foremost, the purpose of this Plan is to identify current and future needs – in this way, it serves as a common voice and catalyst for future investment and collaboration amongst various stakeholders.

A detailed breakdown of operating and capital cost estimates can be found in [Appendix H](#).

The total operating cost impacts of the recommendations in the Plan are detailed in the following table.

Table 32: Operating Cost Summary

Operating Cost Summary	Short-Term (2013-2016)	Medium-Term (2017-2021)	Long-Term (2022-2031)	Total
Outdoor Recreation & Parks Facilities	\$2,170,193	\$2,254,815	\$3,277,181	\$7,702,189
Active Parkland	\$864,698	\$1,567,929	\$1,808,799	\$4,241,426
Recreational Trails	\$25,910	\$32,387	\$64,774	\$123,070
Soccer	\$646,997	\$55,511	\$364,860	\$1,067,369
Baseball	\$147,064	\$35,468	\$156,597	\$339,129
Other Sports Fields	\$31,145	\$24,525	\$3,310	\$58,980
Tennis and Basketball	\$49,698	\$49,698	\$37,816	\$137,213
Skateboard Parks & Skate Zones	\$39,030	\$22,361	\$61,290	\$122,681
Waterplay Facilities	\$79,428	\$39,714	\$138,999	\$258,141
Playgrounds & Outdoor Fitness	\$129,819	\$258,008	\$466,619	\$854,446
Off-Leash Dog parks	\$10,123	\$10,123	\$10,123	\$30,368
Ice Rinks and Play Courts	\$133,470	\$133,470	\$138,375	\$405,315
Picnic Areas	\$12,810	\$25,620	\$25,620	\$64,050
Indoor Recreation & Culture Facilities	\$807,415	\$4,366,660	\$2,709,830	\$7,883,905
Library Facilities	\$3,724,828	\$1,520,200	\$6,791,025	\$12,036,053
Total \$ Impact	\$6,702,436	\$8,141,675	\$12,778,036	\$27,622,147
Average Yearly Tax \$ Impact	\$1,675,609	\$1,628,335	\$1,277,804	\$1,453,797
Estimated Average Yearly Tax % Impact	1.01%	0.89%	0.62%	0.77%

Notes:

Operating Costs include funding for future repair and replacement of assets as per City of Vaughan Reserve Policy. Infrastructure Replacement accounts for \$6.1M of the total operating cost impact. Assessment Growth ignored in calculation of Tax Rate impact in future years. All operating costs are net of revenue.

In addition to the previous table, there are one-time Co-Funding payments attached to the timing of new facilities (see table below). The Co-Funding is not treated as a tax rate increase as there is already annual spending related to citywide infrastructure through capital from taxation in the budget. There may be pressures on the timing of the recommendations in the Plan in order to balance projects year to year both with ATMP recommendations and other City-wide infrastructure projects competing for the same funds.

Table 33: Capital Cost Property Tax Impact (Co-Payment)

Capital Cost Property Tax Impact (Co-Payment)	Short-Term (2013-2016)	Medium-Term (2017-2021)	Long-Term (2022-2031)	Total
Outdoor Recreation & Parks Facilities	\$4,547,438	\$6,779,667	\$6,545,840	\$17,872,944
Indoor Recreation & Culture Facilities	\$3,875,270	\$10,949,190	\$6,809,600	\$21,634,060
Library Facilities	\$1,192,158	\$3,362,144	\$2,564,500	\$7,118,802
Total Tax Funded Co-Payment	\$9,614,865	\$21,091,001	\$15,919,940	\$46,625,806
Average Yearly Tax \$ Impact	\$2,403,716	\$4,218,200	\$1,591,994	\$2,453,990
Estimated Average Yearly Tax % Impact	1.47%	2.29%	0.77%	1.32%

Note: It should be noted the average four year historical capital from taxation amount for ATMP related services was \$1.5 million and the average in the multi-year budget is \$2.1 million, both slightly below the ATMP forecast average.

In addition to the operating costs, a detailed financial analysis was prepared in relation to the capital costs in the short, medium and long-term. These costs are funded from a number of sources including Development Charges, Cash-in-lieu and Co-Funding. The following table shows gross capital costs, which include the Co-Funding amounts shown in the previous operating cost table.

The majority of the capital costs are growth-related and therefore are DC funded. The proposed timing of the projects will generate pressures on the DC reserve balances. In the short-term, the DC reserves are adequate. In the medium and long terms there may be issues with the timing of projects and DC collection as current City policy dictates that assets are not built unless funds are on hand.

Over the last two decades, Vaughan has experienced tremendous growth, which has brought significant capital investment in parks, recreation and library infrastructure. These investments have been funded primarily by the development industry. However, it bears noting that delays in building new infrastructure can reduce Development Charges in future years, which may cause the City to further delay future projects. To optimize collections of Development Charges, it would be to the City's advantage to maintain its service levels (or increase them, where warranted) by building new assets when they are needed.

Cash-in-lieu (CIL) is used for parkland purchases and the timing of the purchases in the Plan is in-line with the expected CIL balances. Land availability is an issue and may necessitate acquiring more land in advance which would then put pressure on the CIL reserve level. Depending on the timing of land purchase, it may be necessary to find other funding sources. In addition to this, if CIL is used to fund the renewal of existing infrastructure, then this will place additional pressures in the ability to acquire land.

Table 34: Capital Cost Summary

Capital Cost Summary	Short-Term (2013-2016)	Medium-Term (2017-2021)	Long-Term (2022-2031)	Total
Parkland Purchases (required in addition to dedication)	\$5,559,674	\$35,581,912	\$73,387,694	\$114,529,279
Outdoor Recreation & Parks Facilities	\$45,474,376	\$67,796,665	\$65,458,400	\$178,729,441
Developing Active Parkland	\$28,034,211	\$52,596,356	\$46,932,059	\$127,562,626
Recreational Trails	\$1,200,000	\$1,500,000	\$3,000,000	\$5,700,000
Soccer	\$6,582,348	\$2,609,129	\$1,638,000	\$10,829,477
Baseball	\$1,871,740	\$1,463,212	\$325,546	\$3,660,498
Other Sports Fields	\$167,804	\$154,152	\$0	\$321,956
Tennis and Basketball	\$899,410	\$676,084	\$599,759	\$2,175,253
Skateboard Parks & Skate Zones	\$1,272,615	\$1,423,820	\$819,000	\$3,515,435
Waterplay Facilities	\$831,600	\$831,600	\$1,039,500	\$2,702,700
Playgrounds & Outdoor Fitness	\$3,185,140	\$4,999,020	\$8,649,086	\$16,833,246
Off-Leash Dog parks	\$218,900	\$109,450	\$0	\$328,350
Ice Rinks and Play Courts	\$1,021,608	\$1,055,842	\$2,077,450	\$4,154,900
Picnic Areas	\$189,000	\$378,000	\$378,000	\$945,000
Indoor Recreation & Culture Facilities	\$38,752,700	\$89,491,900	\$48,096,000	\$176,340,600
Block 41 CC	\$55,700	\$41,037,000	\$14,880,000	\$55,972,700
Block 11 CC	\$36,530,000	\$0	\$0	\$36,530,000
VMC CC	\$0	\$35,004,700	\$14,549,000	\$49,553,700
Other Centres	\$2,167,000	\$13,450,200	\$18,667,000	\$34,284,200
Library Facilities	\$11,921,577	\$33,621,443	\$25,645,000	\$71,188,020
VMC Resource Library	\$0	\$24,610,000	\$0	\$24,610,000
Kleinburg Library	\$0	\$0	\$8,145,000	\$8,145,000
Civic Centre & Vellore Libraries	\$10,629,244	\$0	\$0	\$10,629,244
Block 11 & Block 41 Libraries	\$1,292,333	\$9,011,443	\$0	\$10,303,776
Other Libraries	\$0	\$0	\$17,500,000	\$17,500,000
Total Capital Cost	\$101,708,327	\$226,491,920	\$212,587,093	\$540,787,340
Average per Year	\$25,427,082	\$45,298,384	\$21,258,709	\$28,462,492

Note: Land banking is not considered in the costing of the ATMP. Land purchases when required are included in the costing 2-4 years before the land is required.

A new challenge for the City is address the substantial repair, renewal, and replacement costs of its aging infrastructure, while also keeping pace with growth and emerging service and facility pressures. However, like all municipalities, Vaughan's fiscal capacity does not match its wide-ranging responsibilities and local needs. Additional investment is critical to keeping Vaughan's infrastructure operational and enhancing its quality of life and economic health. Recently the City has put in place an infrastructure reserve policy. The operating cost estimates include a provision for future repair and replacement of all the additions being recommended in the Plan. However, a gap still exists in funding renewal for existing assets. Though not inconsistent with other municipalities, this is an issue that needs to be addressed. As illustrated in the *Financial Master Plan (FMP)*, resources will be required to overcome this challenge. The FMP detailed a funding gap of \$151.4 million in 2012 (net of reserves), which was expected to grow by 10 to 15 million/year.

Implementation & Financial Considerations	Recommendations
86. As a general principle, encourage partnerships and sponsorships in the provision and delivery of facilities and services, in keeping with the framework outlined in the Council-approved Program Review and other municipal policies, as amended from time to time.	
87. Where appropriate and consistent with municipal policies and priorities, consider alternative funding and cost-sharing approaches to achieve capital and operating cost recovery levels, such as (but not limited to) surcharges, fundraising, grants, Section 37 bonusing, and various forms of collaboration. The Recreation User Fee Surcharge recommended in the City's 2012 <i>Long-Range Financial Master Plan</i> is a good example of an alternative funding approach intended to offset infrastructure maintenance and/or replacement.	
88. Review the status of the Active Together Master Plan and priority projects as part of the City's annual business planning/budgeting process.	
89. Conduct feasibility studies, business plans, site assessments, and/or public engagement prior to developing or expanding major parks, recreation, and library facilities to ensure that the project is aligned with community needs, partnership opportunities, and financial capacities.	

11.2 Monitoring and Updating the Active Together Master Plan

Trends change and often unforeseen factors emerge which create unanticipated increases or decreases in participation and which, in turn, may impact substantially upon facility provision. Continued monitoring of the participation levels (as well as overall population figures) in the City's major leisure activities is necessary to identify significant changes and to relate the change to the corresponding impact on the facility and park provision recommendations. As a result, the direction of the Plan may need refocusing from time to time.

As such, the recommendations contained in this Plan should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain reflective of municipal priorities and responsive to the changing needs of the community. It is also anticipated that the ATMP will be updated in another five years' time. This is supported by Section 7.1.1 of the City's new Official Plan, which states that it is the policy of Council to: *"update the Active Together Master Plan every five years, coinciding with the review of this Plan, including adjustments to facility needs and targets based on updated long-term population targets and growth patterns."*

Monitoring and Updating the Active Together Master Plan	Recommendations
90. Implement a system for the regular monitoring and reporting of the Active Together Master Plan, including participation rates and other performance measures.	
91. Undertake a comprehensive five-year review of the 2013 Active Together Master Plan in 2018, in collaboration with the 5-year Development Charges Study.	