

FINAL REPORT

**TOWN OF GANDER
RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

TOWN OF GANDER

OCTOBER , 2015



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Purpose and Scope	1
1.2	Goals of the Master Plan	1
1.3	Approach and Methodology.....	1
2.0	EXISTING FACILITIES AND SERVICES	3
2.1	Indoor Facilities	3
2.2	Parks, Open Spaces and Trails	4
2.3	Programs and Service Delivery.....	6
3.0	IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND KEY ISSUES.....	8
3.1	Key Stakeholder Interviews.....	8
3.2	Public Meeting.....	8
3.3	Public Survey	9
3.3.1	Summary of Key Responses	9
3.3.2	Participation.....	10
3.3.3	Indoor Facilities.....	11
3.3.4	Parks, Open Spaces and Trails.....	12
3.3.5	Programs and Service Delivery	12
3.3.6	Programs and Service Delivery	13
3.3.7	Funding	13
3.3.8	Demographic of Respondents.....	13
3.3.9	Additional Comments	13
3.4	Preliminary List of Needs from Public Input.....	14

4.0	PLANNING CONTEXT AND INITIAL PRIORITIES	15
4.1	Decision Making Framework.....	15
4.2	Gander Demographic Profile.....	18
4.2.1	Demographic Profile of Gander	18
4.3	Trends in Leisure Services in NL and Canada	22
4.3.1	Implications: Demographic Trends.....	22
4.3.2	Implications: Behavioral Trends.....	24
4.3.3	Implications: Organizational and Workplace Trends.....	28
4.3.4	Implications: Infrastructure Trends	30
4.3.5	Implications: Environmental Trends.....	31
4.4	Assessment of Community Priorities before Validation	34
5.0	VALIDATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	38
5.1	Indoor Facility Issues and Recommendations.....	38
5.1.1	New Multi-Purpose Community Recreation Centre.....	38
5.1.2	New Indoor Aquatic Facility.....	40
5.1.3	Second Ice Surface at Gander Community Centre	41
5.1.4	Continued Support of a Gymnastics Facility	43
5.2	Parks, Open Spaces and Trails.....	44
5.2.1	Comprehensive Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails Development Master Plan	44
5.2.2	Better Implementation of Policies for Parks, Open Spaces and Trails in New Developments	45
5.2.3	New Outdoor Track Facility.....	48
5.2.4	Improved Sports Fields	49
5.2.5	New Festival Grounds Master Plan.....	51
5.2.6	Increased Use of Little Harbour	52
5.3	Program and Services Issues and Recommendations	53
5.3.1	Greater and More Defined Role for Town in Leisure and Recreation	53
5.3.2	Better Communication of all Leisure and Recreation.....	54
5.3.3	Increased Focus on Families and Youth with Low Income	55
5.4	Operational and Management Issues and Recommendations.....	57
5.4.1	Review of Parks and Equipment Staffing Needs.....	57

5.4.2 Better Coordination of User Groups 59

5.4.3 Enhanced Liaison with Gander Schools 59

5.5 Summary of Recommendations and Priorities..... 61

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, PRIORITIES, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND COST 62

APPENDICES (INCLUDED ELECTRONICALLY)

Appendix A - Stakeholder Comments and Issues

Appendix B - Summary of Public Meeting Comments

Appendix C - Public Survey Results

Appendix D - Decision Making Framework and Results of Council Workshop

Appendix E - Assessment of Public Benefit

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Gander is located in Central Newfoundland on a plateau overlooking Gander Lake. The Town services more than 80,000 people who live in 130 communities within a 100 km radius.

The Town has undertaken this Recreation Master Plan to provide a long – term plan to meet recreation planning and development needs and priorities in the Town of Gander for the ten- year period 2016-2026. This plan is intended to strengthen recreation and community services delivery and enhance the Town’s capacity to better provide recreation services to all citizens and visitors of Gander.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the *Town of Gander Recreation Master Plan* is to provide a detailed assessment of recreational amenities and services in the Town, and to provide recommendations that meet current and future needs of all citizens, while also ensuring services and facilities can be utilized to generate economic opportunities for the Town and its businesses.

1.2 GOALS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan will provide the Town of Gander with recommendations and directions that will guide the development and enhancement of current and future recreation programs, services and facilities in the Town for the next 10 years.

1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This Recreation Master Plan includes a rationale and framework for Council decision-making that is based on residents demand for services and facilities, an analysis of regional and national trends, an assessment of the quality and capacity of services and facilities, and the cost to meet existing and future recreation needs in Gander.

Recommendations to meet community recreation needs are developed in a manner that emphasizes and reflects practical solutions to any gaps that exist in the current delivery of recreation and leisure

services. The Recreation Master Plan reflects the needs of all Gander residents -- children, youth, adults, seniors, and families -- within the existing and future capacity of the Town.

The consulting team used a three-phase approach to developing the Master Plan. These phases were:

- Phase 1 - Assess the existing delivery system
- Phase 2 - Analyze current and future demand
- Phase 3 - Prepare the Master Plan.

2.0 EXISTING FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The tables below provide a synopsis of existing facilities in the Town of Gander.

2.1 INDOOR FACILITIES

Table 1: Indoor Facilities

Type of Facility	What Exists in Gander	Condition of what exists
Indoor Recreation Facilities		
Recreation Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gander Community Centre 9 Wing Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 Wing Gander is the closest facility in Gander to a multi-purpose recreation facility
Indoor Aquatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Culture Centre 9 Wing CFB Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Culture Centre is aged; 25 m 6 lanes 9 Wing also older; 18 m 3-4 lanes Both facilities available to public; Both offer swim lessons and NLS (lifeguarding) certification Small slide at Arts and Culture but no diving board
Ice		
Curling Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gander Curling Club (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aged facility run by volunteers; several upgrades planned or already undertaken
Stadiums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gander Community Centre (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand exceeds supply Shortage of storage and change rooms, especially female rooms
Gymnasias and Fitness Rooms		
Gymnasias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 Wing CFB Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre (1) 3 school gymnasias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gander Collegiate has an Olympic-size gym; available to public
Cardio and Weight rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Cardio and 2 Weight Rooms @ 9 Wing CFB Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre 1 Weight room at Gander Collegiate School 1 Cardio and 1 Weight Room at Fresh Faces Total Body Fitness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 Wing available to the public on a drop in and membership basis; some hours exclusive to military members only School weight room available to students and staff only Fresh Faces Total Body Fitness 2 level gym; membership or drop in available
Fitness Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just Breathe Studio (1) Evolve Total Body Fitness (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Privately operated facilities
Squash Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 CFB Wing Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available to public
Bowling Alley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Peyton's Pins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 pin, six-lane facility Ageing facility
Indoor Walking Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gander Community Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well used

Type of Facility	What Exists in Gander	Condition of what exists
Other		
North Atlantic Aviation Museum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation Centre/Museum telling the history of Gander • Offers school tours

2.2 PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

Table 2: Outdoor Facilities

Type of Facility	What Exists in Gander	Condition of what exists
Athletic Facilities		
Rectangular Sports Fields (for soccer, rugby, etc.)	Gander Academy (2 Soccer Pitches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by School; maintained by Town • Both in need of resurfacing
Baseball/ Softball Diamonds	3 Softball fields 1 Baseball field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All located at Gander Field Complex • One lit softball field • Baseball field needs a mound
Running Track	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many residents have stated a need for a Running Track
Tennis Courts	Gander Field Complex (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tennis courts will be added • Active Tennis Club with plans to build an indoor facility near site of new Gander Academy school
Basketball Courts	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located off Airport Road • Slated to be upgraded Summer 2015
Trails		
Walking Trails	Several kilometers in and near Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cobb's Pond Rotary Park • NL T' Railway • Thomas Howe Demonstration Forest • Former Town Site Walking Trail • Informal trails throughout Town • Residents concerned that trail connections throughout town are being lost to residential and commercial development
Cross Country Ski Trails	Airport Nordic Ski Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 km of groomed trails; 3 km of lit trails; 6 km of snowshoeing trails • Excellent facilities with new hut; ski loans program provides users with free equipment • Club plans to fix drainage problem areas and expand lit trails
Snowmobile Trails	Designated areas throughout Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gander promotes itself as a snowmobile friendly Town

Type of Facility	What Exists in Gander	Condition of what exists
Community Parks	1 – Cobb’s Pond Rotary Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redeveloped in 2013-2014 • Park that is immensely popular with residents of all ages
Playgrounds	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cobb’s Pond (new) • Lions Club at Field Complex (Elizabeth Drive) • Nungesser Avenue and Sullivan • Spruce Court • Edinburgh Avenue • Gordon Street • Most playgrounds are 8-10 years old;
Derby Pit	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located off Magee • Site of annual Quadapoolza
Splash Pads	Gander Lions Club Splash Pad (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New facility at Gander Field Complex • Very popular • Off Magee
Skateboard Park	Gander Field Complex (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very popular with youth
Outdoor Skating Rink	Gander Field Complex (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural ice surface maintained by Town and volunteers
Memorial Parks	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent Witness off TCH east of Cooper Blvd • Peacekeepers Park
Boat Launch- Marina	Little Harbour Marina (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town owns but operates in association with Gander Lake Marina Association • Has floating docks and boat launch to Gander Lake • Popular day park for residents • Site is remote off TCH and vandalism is an issue
Golf Course	Gander Golf Course (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gander does not have a driving range; no space at Golf Course • Some development would allow golf course to reach potential; club house expansion would increase event /rental revenue • Greatest challenge is attracting qualified coaches
Gander Rod and Gun Club	1 off the TCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located off road to Silent Witness Memorial
Other		
Gander Sea Plane Base		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunity to develop joint programs
Campground Park	Jonathan Pond Park Country Inn Trailer Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight park

2.3 PROGRAMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Table 3: Programs

Type of Programs	What Exists in Gander
<p>Children and Youth Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skate Canada CanSkate Learn to Skate and StarSkate Program • Competitive Figure Skating (4-17 years) • Minor Hockey Recreational and Competitive • Minor Hockey Coaching Training • Nordic Ski Junior Programs and Learn to Ski programs (Bunny Rabbit, Jackrabbit, Track Attack etc.) • Gander Special Olympics Snowshoe and skiers training • Winter Swim Club (Oct-June) • Soccer Skill Development and Games • Competitive Soccer All Star Level • Spring Indoor Baseball (Kids) • Minor Baseball • Minor Soccer • Baseball Player and Coaching Development Programs • Competitive, Non-Competitive and Recreational Cycling Programs • Junior Golf programs • Gander Lakers Summer Guppies Swim Program • Gander Lakers Competitive Swim Program • Swim Lessons, Arts and Culture and 9 Wing Gander • Airials Gymnastics Club Competitive Training Programs • Airials Gymnastics Club Cheerleading Training • 9 Wing Gander Tumbletime Preschool Program • School Curling programs • Cross Country Ski School youth groups • Air Cadets • Sea Cadets • Boys and Girls Club Afterschool Programs • Boys and Girls Club Summer Program • Basketball Programs • Tennis Programs • School Sports - Hockey, Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball, Track, etc.

Type of Programs	What Exists in Gander
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cubs, Girl Guides • Gander Special Olympics training • Martial Arts • Theatre programs • Dance Classes • Privately Offered Fitness Classes
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privately Offered Fitness Classes • Recreational Sports • Organized Social Activities • General Interest Programs
Special Events for Entire Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Festival of Flight • Canada Day • Gander Day • Quad-a-palooza • Snowfari • Concerts • Fly your car in Gander Charity Event • Sno-Drag Charity Event • Christmas Tree Lighting • Other

3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND KEY ISSUES

To identify current and future demand for leisure and recreational services, programs, and facilities in the Town of Gander, the consultants facilitated several consultations with key stakeholders and community groups, and held a public meeting with residents. An online survey was also posted on the Town website in which residents could answer questions about recreational and leisure services in Gander. As well some individuals provided a written submission. The consultants also met with staff currently involved in the delivery of recreation and parks services.

3.1 KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In order to maximize input from the community, a total of 54 groups were identified and invited to attend meetings or focus groups. 27 of these groups met with the consultants between May 11th and May 14th 2015, either individually or in groups to identify what services they provided and what their needs are. The stakeholder groups represented sports, recreation and leisure organizations and service providers, government and non-government agencies.

From the information collected through this process, the most important concerns, issues and needs were noted. It should be pointed out here that just because there is a perceived need for a new or improved service or program does not mean that the need is justified, or is a high priority if justified.

For complete stakeholder comments, see ***Appendix A: Stakeholder Comments and Issues.***

3.2 PUBLIC MEETING

Besides the stakeholder interviews, a general public meeting was held on May 14, 2015, at the Town of Gander Council Chambers. The goal of the public meeting was to engage the residents of Gander. This meeting was facilitated by the consultants, and provided an opportunity for the residents of Gander to discuss and highlight issues and concerns about recreational and leisure programs, services and facilities in the Town.

For a summary of the comments and concerns raised at the public meeting, see **Appendix B: Summary of Public Meeting Comments**.

3.3 PUBLIC SURVEY

In association with Town staff, the consultants developed and conducted an online survey that was administered via the Town of Gander's website from June 4th to July 7th, 2015. A total of 557 respondents participated in the survey. Respondents were asked questions regarding their opinions and perceived need for additional and/or enhanced facilities and programs.

Respondents were not required to answer all of the questions, and some of the 557 respondents chose to skip some questions. Typically, however, more than 400 respondents answered each question. For the sake of simplicity, the text below does not state how many survey participants responded to each question. The percentages given are in reference to those approximately 400 plus respondents who answered the question. (Readers can refer to the survey report for the number of participants that answered each question. This report of the survey results can be found in **Appendix C: Public Survey Results**.)

A summary of some of the key public survey responses is presented in Section 3.3.1. This is followed by a more detailed summary by category in the remaining sections.

3.3.1 SUMMARY OF KEY RESPONSES

- 80% of respondents participate in physical activity on a regular basis.
- 61% participate in leisure activities such as arts and craft, music, etc.
- 84% participate in Special Events in Gander.
- 50% of respondents are limited from becoming involved or more involved in recreational activities. Lack of facilities is the top reason that limits involvement (295 respondents answered this question; 262 respondents skipped it)
- More survey respondents (74%) participate in *walking* than any other physical activity.
- Running/jogging is the second highest physical activity participated in (46%).
- 94% of respondents participate in Gander Day and 92% participate in Festival of Flight

- A Movie theatre is the most needed indoor facility, with 83% of respondents thinking it is *very* needed.
- The second most needed indoor facility is a multi-purpose facility with a gymnasium, program spaces, etc. 58% of respondents think it is *very needed*, and 30 % think it is *needed*.
- An outdoor walking running track and neighbourhood parks are the most needed outdoor facilities, followed by walking trails.

3.3.2 PARTICIPATION

The top six physical activities or exercise that respondents participate in on a regular basis are:

- Walking (74%)
- Running/Jogging (46%)
- Recreational Swimming (35%)
- Weight and fitness training (34%)
- Biking and Cycling (32%)
- Recreational Ice Skating (29%)

The top three leisure activities (out of four selections provided) that respondents participate in on a regular basis are:

- Music (56%)
- General interest (cooking, gardening, etc.)(55%)
- Arts and Crafts (46%)

36% of respondents selected the fourth choice - *Organized social activities* (dinners, dances, card games).

The top four special events respondents participate in are:

- Gander Day (94%)
- Festivals (Festival of flight, etc.) (92%)
- Canada Day (77%)
- Concerts (74%)

The top five reasons that limit respondents' involvement are:

- Lack of facilities (42%)

- Cost or fees (38%)
- Inconvenient times/hours of operation (38%)
- Lack of time (34%)
- Lack of programs for adults (31%)

3.3.3 INDOOR FACILITIES

Participants of the survey were asked to select from a list of 15 indoor recreational facilities and rate them as “not needed” ‘needed’, “very needed” or respondents could select ‘unsure’.

The results reported below first combine “needed” plus “very needed” responses, and then present the facilities considered “very needed” by respondents. For complete results, please see **Appendix C**.

The top six indoor facilities needed (needed plus very needed) are:

- Movie Theatre (94%)
- Multi-purpose facilities with gymnasium, program spaces, etc. (89%)
- Indoor walking/running track (82%)
- Youth Centre (78%)
- Seniors Centre (76%)
- Indoor turf (soccer, softball, etc.) and fitness centre (cardio/weights) and gymnasium (69%)

68% of respondents think an ice hockey arena is needed (needed plus very needed), and 68% of respondents also think a gymnastics facility is needed (needed plus very needed),

Indoor facilities considered “*very needed*” are:

- Movie Theatre (83%)
- Multi-purpose facility (58%)
- Walking/running track (53%)
- Ice hockey arena (43%)
- Youth Centre (58%)
- Fitness Centre (cardio/weights) (38%)

3.3.4 PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

The top six outdoor facilities respondents think are needed (needed plus very needed) are:

- Walking/Running Track (86%)
- Neighbourhood parks (for all ages) (86%)
- Walking Trails (83%)
- Dog Parks (83%)
- Fairgrounds (82%)
- Children’s playgrounds (79%)

The top six outdoor facilities respondents think are “very needed” are:

- Walking/ running tracks (52%)
- Walking trails (50%)
- Neighbourhood Parks (49%)
- Fairgrounds (47%)
- Outdoor natural swimming areas (46%)
- Children’s Playgrounds (44%)

Dog Parks was the 7th most needed outdoor facility with 42% of respondents selecting it as very needed. Bike paths and lanes on main roads is the 8th most needed (and the 8th needed facility).

3.3.5 PROGRAMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Respondents would be motivated to use programs and services provided in Gander if there were:

- Increased quantity of facilities (81%)
- Broader range of programs and facilities (81%)
- Improved quality of facilities (79%)

The top three groups for whom respondents think improvements and additional programs are needed:

- Adults (80%)
- Families (80%)
- Teens (77%)

3.3.6 PROGRAMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The program types most respondents think require improvements and in which additional programs are needed in are:

- Outdoor and nature oriented activities (80%)
- Special Events (73%)
- Fitness (71%)
- General Interest Programs (cooking, gardening, etc.) (70%)

3.3.7 FUNDING

- 78% of respondents think the Town of Gander should commit funding to a multi-purpose community centre (with gymnasium, program space, etc.).
- 72% of respondents think the Town should commit funding to parks and open spaces.
- 67% of respondents think the Town should commit extra funding to walking trails.
- 71% of respondents would be willing to pay an increase in property tax or rent in order to help build or operate facilities and programs.

The majority of respondents (44%) either doesn't know, or have no comment on, how much they would be willing to build.

3.3.8 DEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

The majority of respondents (76%) were between the ages of 18-49. The majority of respondents (64%) also describe their households as being comprised of adults with children. See **Appendix C** for a breakdown of the respondent's profile.

3.3.9 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional written comments were provided by 151 survey respondents: these can be read in their entirety on pages 49-57 of the survey. See *Appendix C*.

3.4 PRELIMINARY LIST OF NEEDS FROM PUBLIC INPUT

Based on the results of the public survey, stakeholder and public consultations, a total of 16 preliminary community leisure and recreation needs were identified and are summarized in Table 4 below. Note these preliminary needs are not the recommendations; the recommendations will however arise from, and respond to, these needs. Note also that the preliminary needs in the table below are not ranked or prioritized.

Table 4: Summary of Preliminary Leisure and Recreational Needs from Public Input

Summary of Preliminary Leisure and Recreational Needs from Public Input	
Indoor Recreation Facility Needs	
1.	New Multi-purpose Recreation Centre
2.	New aquatic facility
3.	A second ice surface
4.	Continued support for future gymnastics facility
Parks and Open Space Needs	
5.	Comprehensive parks, open spaces and trails development Master Plan
6.	Better policies for parks, open spaces and trails in new developments
7.	New outdoor running track
8.	Improved sports fields
9.	Festival Grounds Master Plan
10.	Increased use of Little Harbour
Programs and Services Needs	
11.	Greater and more defined role for Town in leisure and recreation
12.	Better communication of all leisure and recreation opportunities in the Town
13.	Increased focus on families and youth of low income
Operational and Management Needs	
14.	Review of parks and equipment staffing needs
15.	Better coordination of user groups
16.	Enhanced liaison with Gander Schools

4.0 PLANNING CONTEXT AND INITIAL PRIORITIES

4.1 DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

The framework for assessing demands to arrive at real community needs and priorities was developed and approved in a workshop on May 12th, 2014 with Town Council and Senior Staff. This framework was used to help set priorities and justify recommendations.

The details of the decision making process are detailed in **Appendix D**.

The decision-making framework has five components:

1. The Benefits Based Approach
2. Demographic Trends
3. Behaviour Trends
4. Assessment and Validation of Needs
5. Recommendations

The first element is the Benefits Based Approach. This approach recognizes that public goods are focused on indirect benefit to all citizens rather than the direct benefit to users of services. In other words, in addition to providing some direct benefit to users of recreation and parks services, this approach must clearly demonstrate that there is also some spin-off indirect benefit to the entire community independent of use of the service. In the benefits based approach, decisions are focused on achieving the greatest amount of public good or indirect benefit at the least possible cost to the taxpayer.

The Benefits Based Approach is the foundation of the decision making process, and is the most influential component. All 16 preliminary needs are assessed using the benefits to confirm that the needs do indeed represent real community needs, and to determine what the initial priorities are. This part of the Decision Making Framework also factors in order of magnitude costs, so that some measure of cost/benefit can be determined. The initial set of priorities that result from this level of assessment are then adjusted and refined by the other components of the process.

The second and third components of the decision making process introduce a more technical approach to refining priorities. This part of the process involves assessing need in terms of demographic projections and leisure behaviour trends. Demographic trends show if the need will increase or decrease as the population changes, and leisure behaviour trends determine if the need is expected to continue over the short and long term. These two components could raise or lower the priority set initially by the Benefits Based Approach.

The fourth and final step in this process is an assessment and validation of the need. The validation component considers, where appropriate, total use and capacity of facilities and programs, quality of spaces to meet the need, and the functional lifespan of facilities. The technical validation of need ensures that demands put forth by residents of Gander can and should be met. The recommendations arise from this step in the process.

Table 4.1 below assesses each preliminary need based on the first three components of the Decision Making Framework - public benefit, capital cost, and operating costs. *See end of table for the key to rankings.*

Table 4.1: Summary of Public Benefit, Capital and Operating Costs

Recreation Need	Public Benefit	Capital Costs	Operating Support
<i>Indoor Recreation Facility Needs</i>			
New multi-purpose recreation centre	92 (H)	H	H
New indoor aquatic facility	65 (M)	H	H
A second ice surface	60 (L)	H	H
Continued support for future gymnastics facility	54 (L)	H	M
<i>Parks and Open Spaces</i>			
Comprehensive parks, open spaces, and trails development Master Plan	84 (H)	H	M
Better Implementation of policies for parks, open spaces and trails in new developments.	80 (H)	L	L
New outdoor track facility	58 (L)	M	L
Master plan for Festival Grounds	58 (L)	M	L

Recreation Need	Public Benefit	Capital Costs	Operating Support
Improved sports fields	74 (M)	M	L
Better use of Little Harbour	60 (L)	M	M
Programs and Services			
Greater and more defined role of Town in leisure and recreation	86 (H)	M	M-H
Better communication of all leisure and recreational opportunities in the Town	77 (M)	L	L
Increased focus on families and youth of low income	72(M)	M	M
Operations and Management			
Review of parks and equipment staffing needs	N/A	These operational issues must be met and cannot compete against other needs. Therefore they will be assigned an initial high priority rating.	
Better coordination of user groups	N/A		
Enhanced liaison with Gander Schools	N/A		

Public Benefit: 80 and above is high; 60-79 is medium; low is less than 60

Capital Cost Code: Less than \$1M is Low; \$1M-5M is Medium; \$5-10M is High

Operating Tax Support (annually): Less than \$50,000 new operating support is Low; \$50,000 to \$250,000 is Medium; \$250,000-\$1M is High.

4.2 GANDER DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This section provides a brief profile of Gander's demographics (5.1), followed by an overview of the key trends affecting leisure services in NL and Canada, and their likely implications for the Town of Gander (4.2).

4.2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF GANDER

Demographics refer to the description of a population in terms of numbers, ages, family configuration, income and other variables. The key source of demographic information in Canada is the Canada Census that is carried out every five years by Statistics Canada. The last Census was done in May 2011 with the next to occur in May 2016. There was a major shift between the 2006 Census and that of 2011, when the amount of detailed community information collected was unfortunately curtailed in comparison to previous censuses.

Population Shifts

A number of communities, including Gander, use the Canada Census data as a starting point in making their own ongoing population projections for the future, using local indicators such as residential growth patterns to estimate current and projected populations. Many communities in NL, especially outside of the St. Johns area, continue to see population declines. Growth in Gander, however, has been significant since 2006, and indications are that it will continue.

Table 1 shows the shifts between 2001 and 2011 for the populations in Gander and the Province.

Table 1: Population Shifts in Gander and NL between 2001 and 2011

Census Date	Gander Population	Shift Over Previous 5 Years	NL Population	Shift Over Previous 5 Years
2011*	11,054	11.1%	514,536	1.8%
2006	9,951	3.1%	505,469	-1.5%
2001**	9,651	-6.9%	512,930	-7.1%
Total Shift 2001-2011	+1,403	14.5% since 2001	1,606	0.3%

* Statistics Canada estimates a 3.1% undercount in the Census, so the likely 2011 population for Gander was closer to 11,400, and the province to 530,490.

** It should be noted that the 2001 shift over the previous 5 years was for the period of 1996 to 2001 for both Gander and NL. The respective 1996 Census populations of Gander and the province were 10,364 and 551,792.

Gander has shown relatively strong growth since the 1996 to 2001 decline. It is a key regional economic and transportation hub, and its amenities have attracted residents from surrounding small communities in the ongoing rural to urban migration. The Town estimates that the 2014 population was 12,732, and may have grown as high as 13,107 by the middle of 2015. There is strong residential development in the community and the Town expects to add 1,000 new homes in the next 7-10 years in five development areas.

The province's 2011 population is still 39,256 lower than in 1996, but has grown by 9,067 between 2006 and 2011. One key factor in recent growth has been Hibernia and a myriad of other offshore oil projects. Hibernia started actual production in November 1997 and other wells have added both construction and production personnel. The NL Government statisticians have predicted an ongoing net in-migration of 1,800 annually to the province between 2014 and 2035 (median estimate).

Age Groups

Table 2 shows the changes in the age group populations in Gander between 2006 and 2011.

Table 2: Population Changes between 2006 and 2011 in Gander

Age Group	2011 Census	2006 Census	Number and % Change
0 – 9	1,305	1,160	145 (+12.5%)
10 - 19	1,270	1,195	75 (+6.3%)
20 - 29	1,235	1,155	80 (+6.9%)
30 - 39	1,540	1,525	15 (+1.0%)
40 - 49	1,815	1,650	165 (+10.0%)
50 - 59	1,560	1,380	180 (+13.0%)
60 - 69	1,125	800	325 (+40.6%)
70 - 79	715	635	80 (+12.6%)
80+	495	440	55 (+12.5%)
Totals	11,054	9,951	1,103 (+11.1%)

Some of the increases in the 10-year age groups are simply the result of people moving from one age bracket to another as they age. The addition of younger children (under 10) is significant and indicates that a minor baby boom or an influx of younger families has occurred. The much larger growth of the age category 60 to 69 is very likely due to an in-migration of recently retired individuals into the community, likely from smaller communities in the region. The most surprising age category is the minimal change in age 30 to 39. If the predicted economic and population growth does occur since 2011, the number of adults in both the age 20-29 and 30-39 categories will increase by the next census in 2016.

Other Demographic Information

The 2011 Census provided limited other information beyond marital status, family types, housing types and language preferences.

Marital Status: Of those aged 15 and over (9,080), 5,390 were living in married or common law relationships (17.4% common law), 1,905 were single (never married), 635 were separated or divorced, and 615 were widowed.

Family Types: There were 3,395 “census families” defined as a couple living together with or without children. Of this total, 1,765 were two person households, 830 had 3 persons, 670 had 4 persons, and 130 had 5 or more persons. Of the 465 lone parent families, 385 had a female parent.

Housing Types: There were 4,520 total occupied private dwellings in 2011. Of these, 2,970 were single detached houses, while the other 1,540 were apartments, row houses or semi-detached. All of the apartments were 5 stories or less.

Language Preferences: Of the 10,915 individuals who indicated their mother tongue, 10,770 indicated English (98.7%), 55 indicated French, only 5 an Aboriginal language, and another 90 a non-official language. Of these 90, 25 indicated Arabic, and 10 each identified Chinese, Pilipino and Afrikaans.

4.3 TRENDS IN LEISURE SERVICES IN NL AND CANADA

Trends are observable patterns of change, some obvious and others more subtle, in areas as diverse as demographics, consumer preferences, economics, organizations and the environment. There are a number of trends that are affecting leisure lifestyles, and parks, recreation and cultural services across Canada and in Newfoundland and Labrador. While these trends are examined primarily at the national and provincial levels, most have clear implications and applicability for the Town of Gander.

The trends are grouped under the following categories:

1. Demographic
2. Behavioural
3. Organizational and Workplace
4. Infrastructure
5. Environmental

4.3.1 IMPLICATIONS: DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Gander's specific demographic profile is provided previously in this section. This overview of demographic trends focuses on five broad demographic trend areas occurring in Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador, and how they may be reflected in Gander.

4.3.1.1 *Declining Birth Rate is Now Increasing*

The birth (fertility) rate had declined steadily in Canada since the Baby Boom birth years of 1947 to 1966 and has only recently begun to grow slowly back. From a high of 3.93 children in 1959, the Canadian birth rate declined to 1.49 in 2000, and has now grown back to 1.67 (2009) where it still remains below the 2.1 children replacement rate. At the height of the Boom in 1959, there were 479,000 births in Canada; that is approximately 95,000 more births than annually occur now. This decline in the number of births is in spite of an overall doubling of the population since 1959, which is primarily due to increased immigration from other countries. The birth rate in Newfoundland and Labrador was 1.59 in 2009, an increase from 1.46 in 2007. While the province had 1,590 fewer children aged 0-14 in 2011 than 2006 (78,225 to 76,635),

there was an increase of 1,630 in those aged 0-4. Gander also had an increase in this age category of 65 children. This bodes well for more stable future school populations.

4.3.1.2 *The Baby Boomers*

This 19-year cohort, born between 1947 and 1966, makes up over one-third of the Canadian population. Significant increases in the birth rate, coupled with immigration after WW II, led to a swelling of the population over this period. The oldest Boomers turn 68 in 2015 and the youngest will be 49. As a whole, Boomers are more affluent; tend to be more active than preceding generations, and think of themselves as younger than their parents at the same age. As they age, Boomers are shifting from activities such as tennis and aerobics to less strenuous ones such as walking, cycling, tai chi and yoga.

4.3.1.3 *An Aging Population*

Another significant shift in the Canadian population is that it is aging as a whole. The proportion of those 65 years and older was 14.8% in Canada in 2011, an increase from 13.7% in 2006. The Newfoundland and Labrador proportions increased from 13.9% to 16.0% over the same period. While some authors have described population aging as a “silver tsunami”, the increase in the older adult population has been fairly gradual to this point and can be better described as a “silver glacier”. This will change, however, when those born in the peak years of the Baby Boom hit 65. The average Baby Boomers were born between 1953 and 1963. This means that the 65+ population in Canada won’t really peak until 2031 at 22.8%, and then grow more slowly to 25.5% by 2061 where it will level off. These new “seniors”, however, may be quite different than preceding older generations in their leisure choices. They will be more active and will likely stay in mainstream facilities where they are available, rather than joining designated seniors’ centres – at least until their later years.

4.3.1.4 *The Changing Family*

In Canada, the mix of family types has shifted, especially over the last decade. Between 2001 and 2006, for example, the number of married-couple families grew by only 3.5%, lone-parent families went up by 7.8%, while common-law-couple families shot up by 18.9%. Canada also saw a slightly higher growth of male-led as opposed to female-led lone-parent families, although female-led families still predominate. Other Canadian trends were an increase of one-

person households, and more young adults living with their parents. In 2006, 43.5% of young people aged 20-29 still lived at home, in contrast to 41.1% in 2001 and 32.1% in 1986.

4.3.1.5 Increasing Diversity

Communities, especially large urban centres, have become increasingly ethnically diverse. The proportion of visible minorities in Canada grew from 13.4% in 2001 to 16.2% in 2006 with the majority of new immigrants coming from South Asia and China. There are also increasing numbers of individuals from Eastern Europe, and other world regions and language groups. The visible minority population in Newfoundland and Labrador is very low at 1.1% (in 2006), with most of that population based in St. Johns.

4.3.1.6 Personal Economics - Growing Gap between Haves and Have-Nots

There has been a general shift in North America to a growing gap between the haves and the have-nots from a personal economic perspective. The gap is greater in the United States than Canada. In both countries, that gap is age related in that more than half the wealth of North Americans is now owned by people over 50. Young families with children are now twice as likely to live in poverty as defined by the Low Income Cut-off (LICO). Fee rates, however, still generally favour older adults (60 or 65+) more than young families. There is a need to re-examine accessibility and pricing policies, and to implement measures that support all individuals with low income, but especially young families and their children. While Gander is relatively affluent, there are still low-income families that need access to services.

4.3.2 IMPLICATIONS: BEHAVIORAL TRENDS

4.3.2.1 Toward Informal and Individual Activities

There has been a clear shift from formal and organized activities to more individualized and informal pursuits. People are increasingly choosing activities that can be done individually or in small groups, at a time of the individual's choosing, and often near or at the individual's home. There is an increased interest in outdoor activities. New trail development consistently ranks at or near the top of public surveys in terms of preferred new facilities. Gander has a number of excellent trails and viewpoints, but connectivity in the 5 planned future subdivisions needs to be carefully considered. Young families are also looking for inexpensive, informal activities that can be enjoyed as a family unit, including community events and festivals.

4.3.2.2 Changing Preferences and Expectations

Another clear trend is the shift toward the experiential aspect of activities. People are seeking personal growth and meaning in the activities they choose. For example, the Canadian tourism industry has noted that the two fastest growth areas in tourism are cultural learning and ecotourism/adventure recreation. Registration in classes has increased as people seek lifestyle skills. People not only have high expectations for achieving personal benefits, but also that there will be a high quality of service in terms of quality of instruction, customer service, and facility cleanliness and appearance. As people age they will continue to have an interest and commitment to being active, but will turn away somewhat from more strenuous activities such as aerobics and jogging to more moderate activities such as walking, water fitness and yoga. Boomers are also showing an increased interest in culture, both in terms of attending performances, visiting cultural and heritage venues, and in actual participation in art activities.

4.3.2.3 Time Segmentation

Authors have noted the general feeling that many people feel rushed, and that their discretionary time is available in smaller chunks. This is reflected not only in the shift to more individual activities, but also to shorter periods of activity that involve “time deepening” where people multi-task during both work and leisure activities, (e.g. reading a report while on a treadmill). While many individuals report that they value their leisure time more than work, they may still be challenged to integrate leisure into their lifestyles by finding or creating time.

4.3.2.4 Volunteerism

Canada lost a million volunteers between 1997 and 2000, going from 7.5 to 6.5 million (Stats Canada), but has since stabilized and improved slightly. The greatest drop-off in volunteerism rates is for the 35-49 age group; these individuals are perhaps most affected by time segmentation and having to juggle work and family obligations with leisure and volunteerism. Because of time pressures, individuals will more likely be willing to volunteer for shorter-term projects and tasks, as opposed to long-term commitments. Examples of short-term projects are trail building and clean-up days in parks, and special events planning in recreation. This trend is termed “episodic volunteering”.

4.3.2.5 Wellness and Chronic Disease

People are increasingly aware of the health benefits of activity and nutrition. This interest in personal wellness is reflected in the proportion of Canadian adults who are active enough to achieve health benefits. While Canadian adults are generally more active, they are also becoming more overweight; approximately 15% of the adult population is now obese. A lack of activity, coupled with fast foods and trans-fats intake, are responsible; community wellness initiatives will need to include a healthy eating component along with physical activity.

4.3.2.6 Children and Youth Inactivity

Inactivity levels for children and youth are considered to be a greater problem. The Ontario Medical Association estimates that Canadian children are 40% less active than 30 years ago. The Canadian Health Measures Survey identified that the fitness levels of Canadian children declined significantly between 1991 and 2009. Obesity rates tripled for children between 1981 and 1996, and children's overweight levels grew from 15% for both genders to 29.2% for girls and 35.4% for boys. Children now spend 5 to 6 hours daily in front of screens and less time playing outside. This challenge will require a coordinated effort by recreation, health, education and parents. There is also a 16% gap between male and female teens in activity levels. Inactivity and obesity levels in children and youth are resulting in the increasing early diagnosis of chronic diseases in the young, potentially resulting in a lower life expectancy than the current levels. Type 2 Diabetes among youth is a special concern to the health profession. After school programs are a key opportunity to improve activity levels.

4.3.2.7 Nature Deficit

Several researchers have noted the growing disconnect between children and nature. Fewer children are playing outside in natural settings for a number of reasons. These include parental fears of allowing children out of their direct supervision and a trend toward increasing amounts of sedentary screen time, (television, computers, hand-held devices, and video games), by children and youth in indoor environments. Many children are losing their connection with nature and the creativity, imaginative play and physical activity that occurs in outdoor settings.

4.3.2.8 Growing Leisure Activities

Activities that have grown in popularity and will likely continue to grow include:

- Walking and Cycling – There will be continued demands for safe and inviting places for active transportation activities. Gander residents expressed the need for more and better connected trails, such as the Cobb’s pond trail.
- Home Landscaping and Gardening – As the interest in gardening and landscaping grows, people will be looking for good information sources beyond television.
- Cultural Activities – The Boomers, in particular, will want to enjoy and participate in the visual, performing and cooking arts. There will also be a growing demand for art programs for school-aged children.
- Outdoor Activities and Environmental Learning – There may be a shift away from traditional camping towards closer to home, but challenging, outdoor pursuits on a day-basis. There is a growing interest in learning about local and regional flora and fauna. The opportunities for water-based recreation at Cobb’s Pond were noted.
- Cultural Learning and Ecotourism – When people do travel, they will want to go someplace to learn, including: art, language, the culture, cooking, and heritage. Ecotourism and adventure recreation will also remain strong as people seek unique experiences.
- Youth Physical Activity and Healthy Living Opportunities – Parents are beginning to get the messages about child and youth obesity and inactivity. There will be increasing demands for programs that get young people active and help them make healthy choices.
- Youth are attracted to challenging activities such as skateboarding, mountain biking and BMX.
- After School Programs – The after school period is viewed as an excellent opportunity to encourage children to be more active. The Boys and Girls Club currently provides opportunities in Gander.
- Rehabilitation and Chronic Disease Management – As people age and chronic disease conditions increase, they will seek to remain active while managing injuries and other conditions. Community recreation facilities, combined with rehabilitation programs and elements, will be key settings.

4.3.3 IMPLICATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL AND WORKPLACE TRENDS

4.3.3.1 *Leadership Shifts and Gaps*

The early Baby Boomers who have led parks and recreation organizations are now retired or soon about to be. There are a number of capable people to replace them at the senior levels, but there appears to be a gap at the entry level with fewer younger people being attracted to the field or having had a chance to advance. There are also issues with attracting program, instructional and technical staff in areas as diverse as aquatics and arena plant maintenance. This is especially evident in smaller and mid-size communities than in larger centres. A concerted effort will need to be made by post-secondary institutions and the field to address leadership gaps. Individual departments may need to develop and train their own staff in technical and program areas when there is a short supply.

4.3.3.2 *Partnering*

Parks and recreation has always functioned within a mixed delivery system model and has worked closely with other voluntary sport, culture and recreation organizations in the delivery of services. The most significant shift is the extension of these partnerships beyond the voluntary sector. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. This reflects both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies, and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health will be vital in promoting wellness.

There has been a growth in internal partnerships within municipalities. There are closer relationships with police departments around public safety and youth initiatives, as well as with planning and engineering departments in the development of greenway and active transportation systems.

4.3.3.3 *Alternative Delivery Systems*

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed and more alternative methods of delivering services are evident. There is more contracting out of certain services, and more cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions. Generally, contracting out works best for simple services that are easy to define

and evaluate, while more complex services and operations are more effectively operated in house.

4.3.3.4 Expanding Service Demands

Throughout Canada, local parks, recreation and culture departments are increasingly asked to be an integral part of addressing a myriad of social issues including responding to homelessness, drug-use for youth and young adults, child care needs, and other issues traditionally responded to by provincially-territorially sponsored programs. In many communities, recreation personnel are working more closely on internal integrated service teams, and with social service personnel in responding to these needs. This often requires new and different skills, different programs and services design, and the re-allocation of resources.

4.3.3.5 Accountability

Another clear shift is that political decision makers and volunteer boards are increasingly demanding that their departments measure and demonstrate their impact on the community. In the coming decade, the field will need to develop its capacity to ensure that sound performance measurement systems are in place, and have a balance between output and outcome measures. The field also has to become better at communicating the outcomes and benefits at a local, provincial and national level.

4.3.3.6 Technology

Parks and recreation has increasingly embraced greater use of technologies. This includes bar-coded entry systems for pass holders, computer and web-based program registration systems, user tracking systems, and enhanced communications with both users and colleagues, including social media such as Twitter and Facebook. These high tech capacities will compliment, but never replace the need for human contact and personal attention. In the parks area, the use of digitized aerial photography has changed mapping systems and has allowed for easier overlays of GIS mapping levels. Many of these maps, including trails, are becoming available to the public on interactive web sites.

4.3.3.7 Broad Workplace Shifts

A large proportion of new jobs in the Canadian economy are self-employed or part-time, and a number of full-time jobs have more become more flexible in time patterns. This has contributed to an increase in weekday use of recreation facilities and open spaces, especially drop-in casual use. Job descriptions are becoming obsolete in many fields as individuals often find themselves working in teams and on tasks outside of their normal roles. Younger staff members expect to be part of the planning and decision-making processes of the organization.

4.3.4 IMPLICATIONS: INFRASTRUCTURE TRENDS

4.3.4.1 Aging Infrastructure and Funding

Many of Canada's recreation and park facilities are aging. Many early facilities were built as Centennial projects in 1967, while others were built in a second wave of facility construction in the 1980's. Many older facilities are deteriorating more rapidly than necessary because of limited preventative maintenance programs. These facilities now have envelope, code, mechanical, and slab problems. The multi-purpose recreation centres built in the 1980's and 90's are in better shape, but need work, particularly in the pools component. Many of the older facilities are high-energy users and are expensive to operate. The Gander Pool is an example of an aging facility that will need replacement.

4.3.4.2 Historical Facility Shifts

Many of those Centennial era facilities were stand-alone arenas and curling rinks that catered to children and youth. The second wave of recreation facility construction in the 1980's saw a shift to multi-purpose, multi-generational facilities that combined a number of uses. There was also a shift to constructing free-form leisure pools to complement traditional rectangular pools within these complexes beginning in the mid to late 1980s.

4.3.4.3 Senior and Youth Oriented Facilities

A more recent shift has been a trend to including both senior and youth related spaces within multi-generational facilities rather than as stand-alone buildings. Individuals now entering their 60s are more likely to remain within mainstream facilities than to join designated seniors centres. If they do join, it is often to take advantage of program discounts rather than to

become a social member. It is becoming more common to add older adult oriented social and program spaces within a multi-purpose complex, and to balance these with existing stand-alone seniors' centers. These multi-purpose facilities still need social and program spaces that are older adult oriented. In terms of youth facilities, small stand-alone facilities have proven to be less successful than those that are part of a larger facility with gymnasium, fitness and other program spaces.

4.3.4.4 Expanded Facility Roles

Community leisure facilities are taking on a greater role in attracting tourism and in economic development. In particular, games and tournaments, cultural events, and heritage and agricultural activities are regarded as a means for economic growth and development. In fact, larger events have the benefit of providing the impetus and funding for facility construction and renovation. A growing trend will be the inclusion of partners from other fields in combined facilities. This may include public health units, libraries and social services.

4.3.5 IMPLICATIONS: ENVIRONMENTAL TRENDS

4.3.5.1 Growing Sense of Stewardship

The environment has remained on the agenda of individual Canadians. This is evidenced by the public support given to the preservation and protection of natural areas. On a personal level, Environics found that 88% of Canadians recycle or compost when opportunities are provided. This and other environmentally friendly behaviours do not appear to extend to reducing fossil fuel consumption in vehicles use. The average car produces 4 tonnes of Green House Gases annually, and public active transportation and public transit systems will need to be improved to reverse this pattern.

4.3.5.2 Interest in the Environment

There is heightened interest in environmental activities and learning, including an interest in learning about local flora and fauna. Growing activities include birding: over 70 million North Americans collectively now spend approximately \$5.5 billion annually. While interest in camping remains high, there is a growing trend towards shorter-term, but more intensive environmental experiences such as wilderness hiking. People are also investing more in their

individual environments as gardening and home landscaping grow in popularity. Municipal parks and recreation departments should look at increasing environmental and outdoor education opportunities.

4.3.5.3 Green Buildings

It is common practice to ensure that new facilities are designed and constructed to reduce energy and resource consumption. Many of these same practices apply to the retrofit of existing facilities. While LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification has been used as a benchmark, many communities have ensured that green building design standards are built into all significant capital projects, even if certification is not sought. A current common practice is to ensure that architectural firms being considered demonstrate their environmental expertise, and that of their mechanical, structural and electrical consultants.

Energy saving options include use of geothermal energy, better building envelope design, solar systems, heat recovery, movement sensors to turn lights off in smaller spaces, and improved central digital control systems that save energy and monitor systems. For existing buildings, an energy audit is a key starting point to identify opportunities and options for savings. Water conservation efforts that have become standard practice include parking lots and landscape areas designed to reduce water use and run-off with water infiltration systems, low flush toilets and faucet/shower cut-off valves.

4.3.5.4 Climate Change

While there is not common agreement on the causes, there is agreement that global warming is occurring. In the 20th century, the average global temperature rose 1 degree Fahrenheit; the expected increase in the 21st century is 5-8 degrees F. A rise of this magnitude will impact snow levels and glacial melting, sea levels and eco systems. The only safe prediction appears to be that weather will become more unpredictable. The number of extreme weather events in this decade in Canada has doubled over those 30 years ago.

For reasons explained in Section 4.1, the consultants have applied these trends in Table 4.4, to determine which recreation needs will become *more* or *less* important over the next ten years. For example, based on the existing demographic data, the need for services for young people and families would increase over the next years, as will the need for older citizens.

In Table 4.4, the information from Table 4.1 is included. Table 4.4 therefore contains the degree of public benefit realized by the need, the cost (order of magnitude) of meeting the need, as well as the impact of demographic and leisure trends on recreation needs. The initial priorities arrived at through this process are further refined and adjusted at the next steps in the process and applied to the final recommendations.

Positive, neutral, and negative influences are defined as follows:

Positive: the trend indicators are that the recreation need (activity and facility types) will increase over the next ten years

Neutral: There are no clear indicators that the trends or demographic influences will change the needs appreciatively. Some recreation facility needs also retain the status quo by upgrading existing aging facilities.

Negative: The indicators are that the recreation need will diminish because of trends or demographic shifts.

4.4 ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY PRIORITIES BEFORE VALIDATION

Recreation Need	Public Benefit	Capital Costs	Operating Support	Leisure Trend	Demographic Changes	Comments	Initial Priority
<i>Indoor Recreation Facility Needs</i>							
New multi-purpose recreation centre	92 (H)	H	H	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	Residents and stakeholders alike identified the need for new and improved indoor recreation facilities in Gander. 89% of survey respondents think a multi-purpose facility is needed in Gander. Operational costs can be reduced through innovative and diverse facility programming.	H
New indoor aquatic facility	65 (M)	H	H	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	Arts and Culture Centre pool is ageing, and lacks modern amenities. 9 Wing is also older and limited in size and modern features. A new facility will support programming for all ages as well as increase capacity for sport tourism.	M
A second ice surface	60 (L)	H	H	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	Lack of ice time and scheduling challenges due to trade shows and events in current facility impacts current and potential ice users. 2 nd ice surface will solve many conflicts and will also support capacity to host more trade shows and events.	M-H
Continued support for future gymnastics facility	54 (L)	H	M	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE	Aerials Gymnastics Club has an inadequate facility due to ceiling height. Gymnastics is a foundation support with 300 members in Gander. A better facility would enable them to host competitions.	M-H

Recreation Need	Public Benefit	Capital Costs	Operating Support	Leisure Trend	Demographic Changes	Comments	Initial Priority
<i>Parks and Open Spaces</i>							
Comprehensive parks, open spaces, and trails development Master Plan	84 (H)	H	M	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	Loss of trails and connections is a concern expressed by many residents and groups. Based on public survey walking is the most participated-in activity in Gander. Neighbourhood parks and trails are among the top two most needed facilities in Gander: 86% of public survey respondents regard neighbourhood parks as needed and 83% think walking trails are needed.	H
Better Implementation of policies for parks, open spaces and trails in new developments.	80 (H)	L	L	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	Residents are quite concerned that trails and the trail network is being lost to new housing and commercial development. Municipal policies and development regulations provide a means to protect and expand the parks and trail system.	H
New outdoor track facility	58 (L)	M	L	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	Survey respondents regard this, along with parks, as the top outdoor facility needed in Gander- 86% of respondents think this facility is needed, and it is the top facility regarded as very needed. Numerous stakeholders and the public have also stated the need for an outdoor track in Gander. The Town once had a track but it was removed to make space for a softball field. Supports youth athletics and Special Olympics.	H
Master Plan for Festival Grounds	58 (L)	M	L	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	Supports Special Events and has an economic benefit to the Town as a result of attracting visitors. Improving the grounds has the potential to generate more economic opportunity and benefit.	M-L

Recreation Need	Public Benefit	Capital Costs	Operating Support	Leisure Trend	Demographic Changes	Comments	Initial Priority
Improved Sports Field	74 (M)	M	L	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	General upgrades to facilities to improve quality and safety. Users have stated that re-surfacing and other improvements are needed to soccer and baseball fields.	M
Better use of Little Harbour	60 (L)	M	M	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	Site has great potential to be developed as a freshwater marina and day park. Economic development opportunities should be explored and a concept plan developed.	M
Programs and Services							
Greater and More Defined Role of Town in Leisure and Recreation	86 (H)	M	M-H	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	Town currently offers limited programming. Expanding role will complement offerings of other community organizations.	H
Better Communication of all Leisure and Recreational Opportunities in the Town	77 (M)	L	L	POSITIVE	NEUTRAL	This would benefit new and existing residents. 84% of respondents would like to learn about programs through social media, and 75% through the Town website.	H
Increased Focus on Families and Youth of Low Income	72(M)	M	M	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	Many low- income youth and families face social and financial barriers to participation. Town offers some low cost and free programs, but would like to expand options for this group.	H
Operations and Management							
Review of Parks and Equipment Staffing Needs	N/A						
Better Coordination of User Groups	N/A						

Recreation Need	Public Benefit	Capital Costs	Operating Support	Leisure Trend	Demographic Changes	Comments	Initial Priority
Enhanced Liaison with Gander Schools	N/A						
Maintenance Plan for Facilities	N/A						

¹ Capital Cost Code: Less than \$1M is Low; \$1M-5M is Medium; \$5M-10M is High

Operating Cost: Less than \$50,000 new operating support is Low; \$50,000 to \$250,000 is Medium; \$250,000-\$1M is High.

5.0 VALIDATION OF COMMUNITY NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INDOOR FACILITY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 NEW MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE

Interviews with numerous user groups and input by the general public, including at the public meeting, identified the need for new and improved indoor recreation facilities in Gander.

Currently there exists within the Town of Gander only one facility with a variety of amenities typically found in a multi-purpose facility – 9 Wing/CFB Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre. The purpose of this recreation facility is to serve the 300 military personnel and their families in Gander, but it is also open to the public during scheduled times each day.

The 9 Wing Base Recreation Centre includes a full-size gymnasium with a wood floor, a small pool (18m by 3-4 lanes, and 1.4 to 3.0m depth), a fitness facility with both a heavy weight area and fitness machine stations (treadmills, wt. machines), Male, Female and Family change rooms, and a squash court. The fitness rooms are available for the general public after 1:00 pm. The gym is heavily used by the community. While lacking general program rooms, the Base Recreation Centre is the closest facility in Gander to a multi-purpose recreation facility.

Various stakeholder groups identified the need for a broader program capacity in Gander including general interest programs, fitness and well-being opportunities, and improved aquatic experiences. The various age groups where unmet needs were identified were pre-school children, teens, and adults of various ages, including older adults.

Council, stakeholders and residents recognize there are gaps in program offerings. A multi-purpose centre in Gander will enable the Town to expand program offerings in Gander, thereby meeting the various program needs of all ages of the population, including families.

Development of a new multi-purpose recreation centre in Gander also meets several strategic priorities and objectives of the *Town of Gander Strategic Plan. A Place to Belong*. A new facility will have a positive economic benefit to the Town, as it will enhance Gander's appeal as a place to live and work, thus attracting new residents and businesses. It also fosters community and cultural development in Gander. Expanding programs in a state of the art facility, improves quality of life for all residents.

The programs and amenities available at the centre will have the added benefit of providing additional activities and attractions for visitors, potentially enticing people to extend their stay in Gander. Experiential programs, especially general interest/art programs, can form part of Gander's tourism asset and visitor experience.

89% of public survey respondents think multi-purpose facilities with a gymnasium, program spaces, etc. are needed in Gander. And 78% think the Town of Gander should commit funding to a multi-purpose community centre.

Recommendation 1: *That a new indoor recreation complex be constructed in Gander and be designed so that a future aquatic facility may be included. The triangle bounded by Cooper, Raynham and Magee would be a good location, with the facility closest to Raynham.*

The first phase of development should include a full size double gymnasium, fitness area, pre-school room, youth area, and at least two multi-purpose program rooms. These types of spaces would be in high demand both for use by community groups and for direct programs developed by the Town. The gymnasium would also be suitable for larger community gatherings and events on occasion. The change rooms should be configured so that they may easily be expanded for a future pool addition.

The recommended size of this facility is 38,250 sq. ft. The double gymnasium would support the provision of recreation sport programs for hundreds of school- aged children who want to participate in sports but may not qualify for the highly competitive school varsity teams. The double gymnasium should be developed in a side -by side configuration, so that its total

dimensions can be reduced to as little as 16,250 sf. This is a 130' by 125' gym with two full-size basketball, three full-size volleyball, and 8 badminton courts, along with other activities.

5.1.2 NEW INDOOR AQUATIC FACILITY

There are currently two swimming pools in Gander: one located in the Arts and Culture Centre pool, and one in the 9 Wing/CFB Gander Fitness and Recreation Centre. The Arts and Culture pool is an aged 25m rectangular pool with 6 lanes and the 9 Wing is an older 18m rectangular pool with 3-4 lanes. Both facilities offer recreational swimming and swim lessons, and National Lifeguard Service (NLS) certification.

The current provincially run Arts and Culture Pool has a number of limitations. It is ageing, as mentioned above, is too deep in the shallow end, has no family change room, and has a 5 week annual shutdown - as opposed to the usual two weeks closure for maintenance. Public swimming times are not heavily attended and the facility lacks attractors in spite of the best efforts of staff. In addition, the Provincial Government has indicated its interest in divesting itself of local pools found in other vicinities.

The current Arts and Culture pool is a limited amenity in terms of programming and especially public swim capacity. It lacks key amenities with little flexibility in changing or improving them. It would appear to be more viable in the future for the pool to be demolished and converted to an amenity more complementary to its role in arts and culture.

Recommendation 2: As a second phase of the indoor recreation complex, an aquatic facility with both a rectangular lap pool and an attached leisure pool, and other amenities should be added (within the next 5 to 7 years) to the Multi-purpose Recreation Centre proposed in Section 5.1.1.

The proposed new rectangular pool should ideally have eight 25-meter lanes going from a shallow to a deep end (allowing diving). It would be used for lap swimming, lessons, public swims and by aquatic sports. The free form leisure pool should have a shallow tot's area, water play equipment, perhaps a rapid channel, and two 25-meter lanes along one side for water

walking, rehabilitation and swim lessons. There should be expanded male, female and family change rooms at the Recreation Centre when the pool is added.

The Gander Lakers Swim Club would have additional training time and a far better facility in which to host swim meets. At the current time, the Lakers have 70 members and as many as 11 swimmers need to share a single lane at times at the Arts and Culture Centre Pool.

Other aquatic sports could be introduced in a new pool. In addition to swimming, other aquatics sport skills such as diving, synchronized swimming and water polo could be introduced. If they become popular, new aquatic sport clubs can be formed and supported.

Recommendation 3: That if the Province offer the existing pool at the Arts and Culture Centre to the Town, that the Town should decline taking over its operation.

5.1.3 SECOND ICE SURFACE AT GANDER COMMUNITY CENTRE

Almost all current ice user groups identified the need for an additional ice surface at the Gander Community Centre. Lack of ice time for users is a key issue. Besides demand currently exceeding capacity, trade shows and special events, and tournaments also impacts available ice time.

There are currently 395 youth registered in minor hockey in Gander, up from 300 players five years ago. The program has reached capacity and cannot expand due to lack of available ice time. Gander travel teams often practice in Glovertown, and some invitational games are also held there. As well, the Friday night recreation leagues, with a current membership of 70-80 players, often have scheduled ice time delayed or cancelled for reasons just stated.

Figure skating programs are also affected by lack of ice time. The Silver Jets Figure skating club, which has grown 15% over the last five years, has a consistent wait-list of more than 45 children waiting to enroll in the Can Skate program; some of these children have been waiting

for more than two years. The organization cannot hold teaching or coaching seminars, offer a tots program, or an adult learn to skate program due to the lack of ice time.

A lack of storage space, and change rooms, especially for female and mixed- gender teams is another issue with the community centre. Storage space is limited to the point where visiting hockey teams are unable to store their equipment during tournaments.

The addition of a second ice surface in Gander, besides filling a recreation need in the community, will also have a positive economic benefit as it will increase the capacity of the Town to host more and larger conventions and sporting events. As stated in the *Strategic Plan*, Gander is already a preferred conference/event destination for the entire province, and conference/event hosting represents one of its greatest opportunities for economic growth. The Town recognizes that supporting infrastructure is critical to expanding capacity in this sector. A second ice surface provides this supporting infrastructure while also supporting the demand for additional ice time in the community.

The second ice surface would ideally be of dimensions 200'X 85' and would allow for expanded practice, (e.g. Silver Jets Figure Skating), and minor and adult hockey practices and games. It should also allow public skates and lessons. There should be minimal seating (3-4 rows), and at least four full dressing rooms.

Recommendation 4: That a second full size ice surface be added, along with four change rooms, limited additional seating and storage, to the existing Gander Community Centre arena at its north-west end, utilizing the existing refrigeration plant where viable.

Sports Hall of Fame

The Sports Hall of Fame is currently located in the community centre in the hall connecting the community centre to the Arts and Culture Centre. This space is often locked to protect the historical pictures, thus prohibiting interior access between the Community Centre and the Arts and Culture Centre. The space has an abundance of natural sunlight due to the large windows in the space. The space is also subject to frequent leaking of water. It has been suggested that the pictures be relocated to the cafeteria and upper levels walls on the arena. This is actually an

excellent suggestion, as the many pictures in the SHOFA are subject to deterioration due to sunlight, and, potentially, fluctuations in temperature and humidity. If these photos are original, they should also be scanned and a digital record of the images and interpretation should be maintained. Pictures should also be stored/displayed in appropriate archival material. The Provincial Archives can be consulted for further information on proper material.

5.1.4 CONTINUED SUPPORT OF A GYMNASTICS FACILITY

The Airials Gymnastics Club has been in operation for 35 years and currently rents a facility in the business park. The Airials' current commercial facility has too low a ceiling for many of their activities; it also prevents them from hosting tournaments. They have been searching for a new venue for quite some time. In 2013, the Town commissioned a Gander Multiplex Project Report that included a dedicated gymnastics space, but the Town has decided not to proceed with the multi-project as recommended in the report.

The gymnastics club is a not for profit organization serving 300 members. Gymnastics is a growing sport in Gander: membership has increased by approximately 30% since 2009. This trend is consistent with growth in gymnastics in the province.

Airials' provides programming to 2-18 years of age 47 weeks of the year. The Club has stated in their business plan that, with a better facility, they would be able to better cater to this age group and offer fitness based programs to all ages throughout the year. The Town has given land to the Club so they can build a new facility, but cannot support the Club's request to co-sign a mortgage for a new facility.

The Aerials requires a dedicated space to run their programs. Because they need an exclusive facility, and would be expected to be responsible for all costs, the Town can support their efforts to find a suitable venue with a higher ceiling and sufficient space.

Recommendation 5: That the Town continue to support the Airials Gymnastics Club in their efforts to find a suitable facility with adequate size and height, but that this not be a Town facility.

5.2 PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS

5.2.1 COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

There are a significant number of avid trail users in terms of walkers, cyclists, X-country skiers, and motorized trail users. The Town of Gander, as stated in its *Strategic Plan*, recognizes and is committed to supporting an active lifestyle in Gander. This includes ensuring accessibility and continuity of the trail network, trail maintenance, and enforcing regulations on and street access to ATV/snowmobile trails.

A detailed, comprehensive parks, open spaces and trails inventory and plan has not been yet done for the Town of Gander. Such a plan would show all current parks and trails, along with what is planned for the future. Engineering is currently compiling an inventory of current trails that will be an excellent starting point for the inventory. For the plan to be truly useful, it needs to show future park locations, and new or extended trails. The bikeways portion should include the consideration of designated bike lanes on certain streets and bicycle signage.

There are some conflicts between motorized (snowmobiles and ATVs) and other users, and trail designations will likely need to be considered, especially on urban trails and heavily used areas like Cobb's Pond. Phase 2 of Cobb's Pond will see areas of the trail widened this summer. These relationships and conflicts should also be addressed in the proposed the Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Comprehensive Master Plan. It should be noted that the Town has established a sub-committee to look at all trails and determine which ones will be used for multi-use. Their findings will have to be included in the Master Plan.

Trails are seen as an excellent economic generator, and the Accommodation /Economic Development stakeholder group noted their impact on attracting visitors to Gander and visitor's consequent positive experiences in and around the community. Planning for future development in this area is important for both health and economic reasons.

The American Planning Association City Parks Forum *Briefing Paper 03: How Cities use Parks for Economic Development* examines five keys ways that parks provide positive economic

benefits and provides examples of revenue generated in a number of US municipalities. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and attract knowledgeable talent and workers, and attract and retain affluent retirees. Revenues for municipalities are derived not just from increased property tax revenue, but tax revenues from increased retail activity and tourism-related expenditures. Parks are a good financial investment for a community. See the following link:

<https://www.planning.org/cityparks/.../economicdevelopment.htm>

Support for parks, open spaces and trails, was very high in the stakeholder consultations and public survey. Neighbourhood parks and trails are among the top three outdoor facilities survey respondents think are most needed in the Town. As well, 67% of respondents think the Town should commit extra funding to walking trails.

The social and environmental benefit of parks, open spaces and trails is also significant. Parks and trails support outdoor recreation and programming in many ways, including nature - oriented activities, a program which 80% of residents think are needed in Gander. Parks, open spaces and trails and the outdoor programming opportunity they provide supports recreation opportunities to all ages, abilities and socio-economic status.

Recommendation 6: That the Town prepare a formal Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Development Master Plan to identify the location and size of new park lands, and a trails and bikeways plan for both future trail systems and greater connectivity of existing trails.

5.2.2 BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAILS IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Land development within Gander is taking place at a rapid rate, with an average of over 100 homes built annually between 2009-2015, and a growing commercial sector as well. While such growth bodes very well for the Town and its future, public access to existing and traditional trails is being lost to new residential and commercial developments. Connections to parts of the NL T'Railway, for example, are being lost, as are other traditional pathways such as

the pathway to Witman's Pond. As well, new subdivision developments are being planned and built without sufficient or adequate recreation land dedicated as parks and open space. Residents and stakeholders are quite concerned over the loss of trails and a connected network, and the lack of land conserved for parks and open spaces.

The Town, through its Municipal Plan and Development Regulations (2009-2019) has the means to control how land gets dedicated for parks, open space and trails and to ensure adequate neighbourhood parks, open spaces and trails are planned and provided in all new residential subdivision.

The Municipal Plan places a strong emphasis on Open Space Recreation. The goals and objectives stress healthy, active living and the provision of year-round leisure and recreation opportunities that are accessible and affordable for all residents. The Municipal Plan thoroughly addresses how these goals and objectives are to be achieved through policy statements. The Open Space Recreation policies specify a hierarchy of park types with prescriptive criteria and standards for neighbourhood, community, and regional parks.

Section 3.10 Open Space of the Municipal Plan includes policies and standards regarding the provision of three types of parks – neighbourhood, community and regional parks - in Gander. This section of the Municipal Plan also ensures the Town will continue to develop and integrate a trails system. The challenge seems to lie in the operationalization of the policies.

From a development control perspective, the Town has the opportunity to guide new development areas to ensure that they are compliant with the minimum public use dedication, as required by the Town's Development Regulations, enabled by policies in the Municipal Plan, and in keeping with the provisions of Section 37 of the Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000. The Town's Development Regulations concerning Dedication of Land for Public Use, *Regulation 98* requires all developments, if deemed necessary by the Town, to dedicate, at no cost to the Town, an area of land equivalent to not more than 10% of the gross area of the subdivision or 25 m² for every dwelling unit permitted in the subdivision, whichever is the greater, for public open space. It is the Town's responsibility to determine the suitability and location of the dedicated land.

A common challenge in Gander, as in other municipalities, the housing development industry has often been allowed to determine the location and configuration of required park dedication in Gander. This has often resulted in small tot lots or left-over non-developable land areas in new subdivisions that are unsuitable to achieve the Town's public use requirements, rather than a neighborhood park that supports a variety of needs and is well located, connected and visible.

The Town will need to ensure its emphasis, priority, and control over the location and configuration of green spaces, including parks, open spaces and trails in residential neighborhoods is needed. This concern was also noted by the Accommodation/Economic Development industry. There also needs to be greater connectivity between parks through trail development and/or preservation in nearby neighborhoods and civic amenities.

The planned East Gate high- density housing has been identified as a new subdivision where inadequate land has been identified for dedicated open space, parks and trails.

The Town Council has the tools to control the dedication of land for parks, open spaces and trails, and connections, but better operationalization of its policies and regulations is required in order to ensure adequate dedication of land for new and future facilities. Of particular importance is how the Council and staff work with developers to ensure it receives the best lands for Gander's parks, open spaces and trails system.

Council could consider implementing the following operational policies:

- That Council sustains and increase the amount of land zoned or used for Recreational Open Space purposes overall in the Town.
- If/when Council is presented with re-zoning or change of use applications, that it be policy not to change zoning or land use to the detriment of Open Space.

- Employ the existing standards stated in the Municipal Plan to achieve greater development control, allocation of recreational open space relative to population, proximity to parks, walkability, and catchment areas.
- That Council considers requiring developers to prepare a Land Use Assessment Report to inform decisions regarding Recreational Open Space lands for new subdivisions and comprehensive development areas. This assessment will identify optimal site selection, layout, and size for open space lands, parks, and recreational facilities, based on population catchment areas at the levels specified in the Municipal Plan (neighbourhood, community, and regional parks).
- That Council and staff resolve to work together to ensure that the policies and regulations are consistently implemented and effectively enforced in guiding development and maximizing quality

Recommendation 7: That the Town engage land developers to support planning for dedicated neighbourhood parks, open spaces and trails that are connected to the larger community network.

5.2.3 NEW OUTDOOR TRACK FACILITY

There is a very active running group in Gander, and many stakeholder groups and residents expressed a need for an outdoor running track in the Town.

A running track would benefit the many young athletes in Gander. School athletes need a running track, as they now have to use the asphalt loop at Cobb's Pond. Gander Collegiate, for instance, has a very active school population with 250 students enrolled in varsity teams. The school has a Track and Field Team, and students regularly compete in the 100km Ironman Contest, the Tely Ten road race held during the summer in St. John's.

A track is also critical to Special Olympics. One Gander-trained athlete has competed in Track and Field as part of team Canada in the World Special Olympics in Athens, Greece in 2011, exemplifying the caliber of training and the potential of Special Olympic athletes in the Town.

A walking/running track is considered to be the most needed outdoor facility by respondents of the public survey (86%). The experience in many other communities in Canada is that synthetic tracks, because of the resiliency of the surface, are heavily used by joggers and walkers. Mount Pearl currently has the only Olympic-size synthetic track in the province, and has an active program run by an at arms length organization.

A non-profit group has been very active in fund raising for the development of a 400 M outdoor track in Gander. The preferred location is behind St Paul's Intermediate and Gander Collegiate, although Festival Grounds if redeveloped, as per this plan's recommendation, is also a potential site. (The running track could also encircle the periphery of a soccer field.) However, based on the experience of other NL communities with a track facility, the consultants believe a 330 m track facility is more feasible for the Town, and would serve all users in the community.

Recommendation 8: *In cooperation with community partners, including and track user groups and the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District develop a strategy, including funding and location, to support the development of a new 330m outdoor track facility in Gander.*

5.2.4 IMPROVED SPORTS FIELDS

Baseball and soccer are two successful sports in Gander. Minor baseball is growing, with 160 members registered in 2015. The caliber of Gander's baseball programs and athletes is demonstrated by the success of the young men who compete provincially and nationally, including those who recently played with Team NL in the Canadian 18U Baseball Championships.

The only baseball diamond in Gander, the Art Walker Memorial Field, is in need of upgrading. Athletes have stated that the baseball field is in a state of disrepair, and that the batting cage is unsafe. The field also needs a pitching mound.

Soccer has 128 children in its indoor program and 240 members in its outdoor program. Gander has two soccer fields located at Gander Academy. The soccer fields are owned by the school but maintained by the Town. Although the Town has an excellent relationship with the school, there are limitations with using the field and access to school washrooms is sometimes limited, especially in May-June.

The condition and quality of the existing soccer pitches need to be improved. The soccer pitches are not regulation size. More pressing however is that the fields are compact and uneven, a condition that can and has led to injuries. Players can break an ankle in surface ruts, and a fall on a compact surface can cause concussion.

The baseball and soccer fields should be upgraded to a prescribed standard. Improvements for the soccer field include rototilling and augmenting the soil layer with a proper mixture of topsoil, sand and organic matter. The fields should also be topped with athletic turf sod. The baseball field should be re-graded in areas to enhance drainage, aerated, top-dressed, reseeded and/or re-sodded in select areas, and a pitchers mount added. The batting cage should also be replaced with a new one.

The standard and schedule for regular and seasonal start-up maintenance can be outlined in a maintenance plan (see Section 5.4.1).

The Town should consider the future of the soccer pitches before deciding to invest in upgrading the fields. The April 25, 2013 edition of the Beacon reported that MHA Kevin O'Brien suggested that a new primary school potentially could be built in Gander. The Town will want to confirm what will become of the two soccer fields if a new school is built, and what the timeline is for a new school.

In the meantime, a formal joint use agreement should also be negotiated with the school to ensure access to the school washrooms when required. This arrangement could include maintenance or protection of the gym floor due to “outside foot traffic”. Many municipalities in Canada currently have joint user agreements with schools. An example of such a joint use agreement can be seen at:

http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_communities/joint-use-agreement.aspx

Recommendation 9: That the Town upgrade the Art Walker Baseball Field and the Gander Academy Soccer Pitches.

5.2.5 NEW FESTIVAL GROUNDS MASTER PLAN

A strategic priority for the Town of Gander is to attract additional economic activity through hosting more sporting and recreational events, and to invest in developing or attracting supporting infrastructure to build capacity for such events.

Festival Grounds is an outdoor special event site bounded by Raynham, Magee and Cooper. The site is home to the Quad-A-Palooza ATV event held at the Festival Grounds in September. This annual event has been recognized in the Strategic Plan as a recreation-based activity yielding a significant positive economic impact.

The Festival Grounds area needs a plan that considers both current and future uses for this site. The new 4-6 School will be built adjacent to this site, as will the new indoor tennis facility. Other potential amenities could include the proposed multi-purpose recreation center and pool, as recommended in Section 5.1 of this plan.

Festival Grounds is no longer on the outskirts of the community, and some current uses may no longer be suitable. An artificial soccer turf, trails, and other amenities could also be considered. The Festival Grounds plan should also be developed in the context of the East Gate housing development, especially as it relates to potential parkland amenities and trail connections.

The Town should also consider building a new Town-owned soccer facility (even if the new Grades 4-6 School builds a soccer field). Consideration should be given to building a new artificial turf at the Festival Grounds. An accessory building with washrooms and a canteen can be provided at the field, or these amenities may be provided in the new multi-purpose recreation centre, if both facilities are built in close proximity. The running track discussed in Section 5.2.3 could be built around the periphery of the artificial turf soccer field. The artificial turf soccer field and running track could serve many purposes and users, including training of high school athletes and Special Olympics, and the many runners and walkers in the Town.

Recommendation 10: *That the Town develop a Master Plan for development of the Festival Grounds as a signature recreation facility for the Town and Region, that includes the proposed multi-purpose recreation center and artificial soccer turf.*

5.2.6 INCREASED USE OF LITTLE HARBOUR

Economic development groups see some potential at Little Harbour for a marina. The location is relatively close to Town and ideally suited for a freshwater marina. The marina would not be developed or operated by the municipality, but would be an endeavor of the private sector. To confirm the level of private sector interest, the Town should call for proposals of interest.

About 35% of Canadians (9.4 million people) participate in boating and Canadians own over 4.3 million boats. The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) Canada study *The Economic Impact of Boating (2012)* determined that Canada's core recreational boating industry has direct revenues of about \$4.4 billion per year and directly employs about 40,000 people. And while this value applies to the impacts of the core recreational boating industry (such as boat manufacturing, marina operators, repair and maintenance shops, schools and boat clubs) there is an additional benefit on related activities of fishing, outfitting, and tourism.

Recommendation 11: *That the Town assess the feasibility of developing a full service fresh water marina at Little Harbour.*

5.3 PROGRAM AND SERVICES ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 GREATER AND MORE DEFINED ROLE FOR TOWN IN LEISURE AND RECREATION

Review of Town's Program Role

The Recreation & Community Services has two coordinators: community events coordinator and a special event coordinator. Under the direction of the special event coordinator there are three special event planners. The three special event planners are responsible for events hosted at the Gander Community Centre and for supporting major community special events. The newest member of the program team is the Community Events Coordinator, whose role is to identify and develop broader community programs.

The Special Events Team is especially busy from May to October. They support conferences and other special events held at the Community Centre throughout the year, but with a heavier concentration when the ice is out. The Coordinator assigns events of which the town has 75 each year. They also help plan community special events such as Canada Day, Music Fest, Festival of Flight (6,000-10,000 attendees), and Winter Carnival, Gander Day (first Sunday in August) and Concerts in the Park (eight Friday lunch-times at Cobb's Pond).

The Community Events Coordinator (CEC) is a new position. The role of the CEC is to plan and implement various recreation and leisure programs for children, youth, seniors, and the general public. The CEC plans and implements the summer program for children and tots/parents during late June-August. The CEC will also work with the community to identify future program needs, including direct programming the Town can provide to fill program gaps, such as non-traditional activities for youth who do not participate in organized sports.

The Town of Gander should have a greater and more defined role in leisure and recreation. Traditionally, the Town has done little direct recreation programming outside of special events. This is unusual for a community of Gander's size and range of needs. What is required to meet this need is adequate programming staff. At this time, one new staff person is engaging in working with youth in a more direct way, while other program related staff currently focuses on supporting special events and festivals held at the arena and in the community. At least one

additional general programmer is needed in the near future, and more program staff will be required when a multipurpose recreation center is constructed.

The Town could, as an option, have a facilitated two- day workshop with recreation staff to define this expanded role, identify potential program offerings and staffing requirements.

Recommendation 12: That the Town review its programming role to include more direct program services in areas that complement the offerings of community organizations, and add further program staff as required to the one existing general programming position.

5.3.2 BETTER COMMUNICATION OF ALL LEISURE AND RECREATION

There is no current source of coordinated program information of recreational activities occurring in Gander. Each group generally has to create and disseminate its own information. 73% of residents surveyed said they would like to receive more information on recreation programs and services in Gander, with 84% saying they would like to receive information through social media, and 75% wanting to receive information via the Town website. 66% of respondents would like to learn about programs and services through a Recreation Activity Guide.

An electronic brochure would allow groups to share their program information, registration dates and sites, and other information. It could be connected to the Town website. The Town should ensure that seniors are accessing the information, and if not, limited printed copies can be made available to them.

Recommendation 13: That the Town consider the development of a program brochure in electronic form to promote all program offerings available in Gander, both the Town's general program offerings and those of other community organizations, in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter seasons.

5.3.3 INCREASED FOCUS ON FAMILIES AND YOUTH WITH LOW INCOME

While Gander is generally considered to be an affluent community, there is, as in all communities, a percentage of the population who are considered to be of low income. Based on Stats Canada National Household Survey (NHS) 2011, 23% of households, or 1055 households in Gander, have an after tax incomes of less than \$30,000. The National Housing Survey also reports that (within its after-tax low-income measure category) there are 385 individuals under the age of 18 years, and 860 adults between 18 and 64 years of age with low income. There are another 260 individuals age 65 and over falling within this category.

Generally, families and youth that are of low-income face several barriers to participation in community and recreational services. Groups representing low- income youth and women in Gander have stated that the biggest recreation issue for low-income youth and families is access to facilities and programs.

It is important to recognize that low- income families include young families in low salaried careers, and those just starting out in their life as a family. Barriers include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ **Financial:** Unable to afford to participate in the program or service.
- ❖ **Transportation:** Many youth do not have access to transportation. Trail network that connects facilities is important.
- ❖ **Equipment:** Unable to afford sports equipment.
- ❖ **Social Stigma:** Being uncomfortable in mainstream activities and environments, and not wanting to apply for subsidies or ask for help it will identify them as low income.
- ❖ **Time Restraints:** Parents too busy with work or other obligations to dedicate time towards recreation for themselves or their children.
- ❖ **Childcare:** Families with multiple children of various ages may require child-minding services so that another child can participate in an activity.
- ❖ **Lack of knowledge about recreation options:** Promotion of programs and services accessible to low-income individuals essential.

The Town's intent is to be inclusive as possible in its recreation services. It currently provides a number of special events and programs that are either free or offered at minimum cost. It's

summer day program for instance cost users only \$6.00 per day (half day program). The Town accessed a grant for Canada Day that enabled it to host the event at no charge to residents. And it will host a free outdoor movie night in September 2015. The Town intends to expand on accessible programs and services for low- income residents.

Having access to free services and facilities is critical to inclusion of youth and families. How events get marketed is also important in avoiding the social stigma for low- income individuals: it was suggested by Sandra McKellar of the Gander Women’s Centre that rather than promoting a free event, as a “free event”, it would be better to promote the event as being hosted by a community group. Free swim night, for example, would be marketed as “Senior’s are sponsoring a swim night for youth”. The seniors group, who currently partner with youth, would not have to actually pay for the event.

Other suggestions for improving access to low-income youth are:

- ❖ Identify funding and program partners in Gander, especially for youth. For example, engage the North Atlantic Aviation Museum to expose youth to aviation and aviation careers in Gander. Engage Thomas Howe to expose youth to careers in forestry and to conduct outdoor nature education programs.
- ❖ Work with the Open Door CYN to identify new partners and ensure youth can access a variety of quality programs. Consult with youth to determine their interests. Ensure youth have the opportunity to learn a variety of skills and develop leadership abilities.
- ❖ Work with the Seniors 50+ Club to ensure continuation of programs for youth, such as the former partnership with CYN where youth catered a meal for seniors (and then stayed to socialize).
- ❖ Offer equipment swaps and donation days where residents can donate sports equipment, skates, and clothing. Donations and swaps of used bicycles should also be held once the biking trails are completed.

- ❖ Have partners sponsor free swim, skate, and movie night that are open to everyone in the community.

Recreational programs and services for low-income families and youth has been shown to have several beneficial outcomes for both the individual, family, and the community, including improved health and the potential to break the poverty cycle. For more information, see the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association website for publications and toolkits on making recreation more accessible for low-income children and families.

Recommendation 14: Implement policies and programs to support low-income youth and families. Continually evaluate and monitor the success of the programs.

5.4 OPERATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 REVIEW OF PARKS AND EQUIPMENT STAFFING NEEDS

The quality of some playing fields has apparently diminished in recent years. This has been noted by user groups and by those attempting to attract tournaments. The causes appear to include inadequate maintenance equipment that lengthens both field preparation and maintenance, too short a maintenance season (staff are taken from the arena and return when needed in the fall), and more training and expertise.

The lack of adequate equipment lengthens the time needed for spring field preparation in terms of aeration, fertilization and other tasks, as well as ongoing field maintenance and repair. The current 15-year-old tractor is inadequate, and the staff identified a Kubota tractor with attachments (loading, cutting, backhoe and snow-blowing capacities), and the need for a full-size truck to move between jobsites. Additional and ongoing staff training is also needed.

There are training options available through distance education courses through the University of Guelph, or with Landscape Newfoundland and Labrador. The City of St. John's offers *Park Service Worker* certification/designation to its parks maintenance staff. Park Service Workers are then paid higher wages than labourers and second-class operators.

In order to receive certification, workers can either:

A. Write a Park Service Worker test offered by the City. The test is 20 pages long and takes one hour to write. If they achieve a mark of 70% or above, they have demonstrated their knowledge and will be certified as a PSW.

Or

B. Complete five distance- learning courses at the University of Guelph. The courses are:

- Cultural Practices in Plants
- Turf Management
- Introduction to Plant Identification
- Arboriculture (i.e. Tree care)
- Weed Management in Horticulture

Once PSW candidates have completed three of the five courses, the City can interview them. If they pass the interview, the City will designate them as PSW with the condition that they complete the remaining two courses within one year. After they complete the courses, they have to write the test and achieve a mark of 70% or more to receive PSW designation.

Option 2:

Obtain training through Landscape Newfoundland and Labrador (krista.russell@gmail.com):

Landscape Newfoundland and Labrador (LNL) is a non-profit professional association of business owners and operators in the landscaping and horticultural (non-food) industry sector in this province.

LNL is currently working with Dalhousie University to develop an apprenticeship program leading to national certification. This is a three-year program that builds on education and skills acquired through working in the landscape industry. Currently, candidates attend school in Nova Scotia – Truro Campus – for six weeks then receive on the job training here in the province of NL. (Note: Dalhousie has a Centre for Landscape Excellence at its Truro campus).

Option 3.

LNL can come to Gander to provide training. This would be in the form of short (2 day) seminars. A fee would be charged.

Recommendation 15: That the Town Develop an Operations and Park Maintenance Management Plan. The Plan will address parks staffing needs, and schedule for sport field, parks and horticultural maintenance, including the need for improved parks maintenance equipment so that athletic fields, community parks and playgrounds, are properly upgraded, operated and maintained. Further, that the Town support employee training in parks and sport field maintenance and horticulture to ensure facilities are safe and attractive.

5.4.2 BETTER COORDINATION OF USER GROUPS

User Group Coordination Support

In many communities, the municipality brings related organizations together to plan and coordinate their use of civic facilities and fields, both prior to and during the season. These joint planning and scheduling meetings would be held separately with ice group users, sport field groups, and youth service providers. In sessions that focus on scheduling, the Town would retain the right to make final allocations, but it is often found that groups will be cooperative and support each other.

What is required to meet this need is for the Town to facilitate planning and coordination sessions with groups such as ice users, sport field groups and youth services providers.

Recommendation 16: That the Town adopt a policy of continuous community engagement and recreation facility programming with user groups such as ice users, sport field groups and youth services providers.

5.4.3 ENHANCED LIAISON WITH GANDER SCHOOLS

A more formal liaison is required between the Town and senior School District personnel in Gander. The community link is especially needed with the involvement of the schools in projects such as the track, school use of proposed community facilities, and future planning.

Personnel from both Engineering and Parks and Recreation should be involved in the liaison meetings.

Recommendation 17: That the Town articulates an engagement strategy that enhances its liaison role with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District – Central Region, including the principals of Gander Schools, to plan and coordinate the program enhancement and facility development of both parties.

5.5 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PRIORITIES

Summary of Final Leisure and Recreation Priorities

1. Develop a new indoor multi-purpose recreation complex that is the designed to include a future aquatic facility.
2. Develop a new aquatic facility with a rectangular lap pool, leisure pool and other amenities as a future addition to the multi-purpose recreation centre.
3. That if the Province offers the Arts and Culture Centre pool, the Town decline taking over its operation.
4. Develop a full size ice surface with four change rooms, and limited additional seating and storage, as an addition to the existing Gander Community Centre arena.
5. Continue support to the Airials Gymnastics Club in their efforts to find a suitable facility with adequate size and height, that is not a Town facility.
6. Prepare a formal Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Development Master Plan.
7. Engage land developers to support planning for dedicated neighbourhood parks, open spaces and trails that are connected to the larger community network.
8. Develop a strategy, including funding and location, in cooperation with community partners, to support the development of a new 330m outdoor track facility in Gander.
9. Upgrade Art Walker Baseball field and Gander Academy Soccer Pitches.
10. Develop a Master Plan for development of the Festival Grounds as a signature recreation facility for the Town and Region, that includes the proposed multi-purpose recreation center and artificial soccer turf.
11. Assess the feasibility of developing a full service fresh water marina at Little Harbour.
12. Review Town's programming role to include more direct program services in areas that complement the offerings of community organizations, and add further program staff as required.
13. Develop an electronic program brochure to promote all program offerings available in Gander in all seasons.
14. Implement policies, procedures, programs to support low-income youth and families. Continually evaluate and monitor the success of the programs.
15. Develop an Operations and Park Maintenance Management Plan for athletic fields, community parks and playgrounds. Further, support employee training in parks and sport field maintenance and horticulture.
16. Adopt a policy of continuous community engagement and recreation facility programming with user groups such as ice users, sport field groups and youth services providers.
17. Articulate an engagement strategy that enhances its liaison role with the School District – Central Region, including the principals of Gander Schools, to plan and coordinate the program enhancement and facility development of both parties.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS, PRIORITIES, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND COST

Recommendation	Type	Priority	Development Cost
Develop a new indoor multi-purpose recreation complex that is the designed to include a future aquatic facility.	Facilities	High	\$ 11.1 M Based on a 38,250 sq. ft.
Develop a new aquatic facility with a rectangular lap pool, leisure pool and other amenities as a future addition to the multi-purpose recreation centre.	Facilities	Medium	\$ 10.5 M Based on 9000 sq. ft. pool space
Develop a full size ice surface with four change rooms, and limited additional seating and storage, as an addition to the existing Gander Community Centre arena.	Facilities	Highest	\$ 5 M Estimate provided by Town
Prepare a formal Parks, Open Spaces and Trails Development Master Plan.	Facilities	Highest	\$ 65,000
Upgrade Art Walker Baseball field and Gander Academy Soccer Pitches.	Facilities	Highest	\$ 280,000 for Two Soccer Pitches \$20,000 for Art Walker
Develop a Master Plan for development of the Festival Grounds as a signature recreation facility for the Town and Region that includes the proposed multi-purpose recreation center and artificial soccer turf.	Facilities	Highest	\$ 45,000
Develop a new full size 70 x 100 m outdoor artificial turf soccer field (potentially) on Festival Grounds (as above)	Facilities	Medium	\$ 2.4 M
Assess the feasibility of developing a full service fresh water marina at Little Harbour.	Facilities	Medium	\$ 42,000

Recommendation	Type	Priority	Development Cost
Continue to support the Airials Gymnastics Club in their efforts to find a suitable facility with adequate size and height, that is not a Town facility.	Operations	High	In house activity.
Engage land developers to support planning for dedicated neighbourhood parks, open spaces and trails that are connected to the larger community network.	Operations	Highest	In house activity
Develop a strategy, including funding and location, in cooperation with community partners, to support the development of a new 330m outdoor track facility in Gander.	Operations	Highest	In house activity
Review Town of Gander's programming role to include more direct program services in areas that complement the offerings of community organizations, and add further program staff as required to the one existing general programming position.	Operations	Highest	\$40,000 - 50,000 plus benefits for recreation staff
Develop an electronic program brochure to promote all program offerings available in Gander in the Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter seasons.	Operations	Highest	In house activity (some printing costs may be incurred for brochures for seniors)
Implement policies, procedures, programs to support low-income youth and families. Continually evaluate and monitor the success of the programs.	Operations	Highest	In house activity. Cost depends on programs and support provided (such as transportation)

Recommendation	Type	Priority	Development Cost
Develop an Operations and Park Maintenance Management Plan to ensure athletic fields, community parks and playgrounds, are properly upgraded, operated and maintained.	Operations	High	\$ 40,000 plus for equipment
Provide support for employee training in parks and sport field maintenance and horticulture to ensure facilities are safe and attractive.	Operations	High	TBD Approximately \$600 minimum per course per person
Adopt a policy of continuous community engagement and recreation facility programming with user groups such as ice users, sport field groups and youth services providers.	Operations	High	In house activity
Articulate an engagement strategy that enhances its liaison role with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District – Central Region, including the principals of Gander Schools, to plan and coordinate the program enhancement and facility development of both parties.	Operations	High	In house activity