



# Township of Uxbridge

## Strategic Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture

Final Report  
September 2006



**Planning & Management Services**

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September 5, 2006

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Re. Final Report – Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan

Dear Ms. Svelnis:

We are pleased to provide our final report for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan for the Township of Uxbridge. The Plan provides a detailed strategy for the future development of parks, recreation and cultural services in the community. The Plan builds upon the high level of service currently enjoyed by residents and ensures that these services will continue to meet the needs of the community.

We trust that the Strategic Master Plan will be useful guide for Council and senior staff and support the Township's efforts to provide the best possible parks, recreation and cultural services in the future. We appreciate the role played by the Steering Committee in the preparation of the Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to work with municipal Council, staff and the community to prepare this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Morgenstern', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jim Morgenstern, MCIP  
Principal

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Purpose of the Study .....	2
1.2	Study Process.....	2
1.3	Planning Context Summary .....	3
1.3.1	<i>POPULATION.....</i>	<i>3</i>
1.3.2	<i>EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES .....</i>	<i>3</i>
1.3.3	<i>PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND REPORTED NEEDS .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DELIVERY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	4
2.2	Outcomes and Service Delivery Principles.....	4
2.3	The Needs Assessment and A Strategy for the Future Development of Parks, Recreation and Culture Services .....	5
2.3.1	<i>NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS.....</i>	<i>5</i>
2.3.2	<i>STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>FACILITIES AND PARKS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1	Overview.....	11
3.1.2	<i>FACILITIES AND PARKS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY .....</i>	<i>11</i>
3.2	Indoor Facilities .....	12
3.2.1	<i>CURRENT STATUS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS.....</i>	<i>12</i>
3.3	Scheduled Outdoor Playing Fields .....	19
3.3.1	<i>CURRENT STATUS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS.....</i>	<i>19</i>
3.4	Other Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities .....	22
3.4.1	<i>CURRENT STATUS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS.....</i>	<i>22</i>
3.5	Parks, Open Space and Trails .....	29
<b>4.0</b>	<b>PROGRAM AND DELIVERY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>35</b>
4.1	Overview.....	35
4.1.2	<i>PROGRAM AND DELIVERY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.....</i>	<i>35</i>
4.2	Programs and Activities.....	36
4.3	Delivery System.....	42
<b>5.0</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.....</b>	<b>62</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	62

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Strategic Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture is a comprehensive analysis of recreation, culture and park needs to be addressed in Uxbridge over the next 10 years. The Strategic Plan will guide municipal Council and staff when making decisions concerning these services. The Plan is organized as follows:

- 2.0 Framework for Service Delivery
- 3.0 Parks and Facilities Development Strategy
- 4.0 Program and Delivery System Development Strategy
- 5.0 Implementation Strategy

A Technical Background Report to the Strategic Plan exists under separate cover and includes:

- An Environmental Scan, which documents background information relevant to study.
- Public Consultation Program Results, which report the findings of public consultation activities.
- A Needs Assessment, which identified parkland and facility requirements. The Needs Assessment forms the basis of the discussions and future directions presented in this document.

### 1.2 STUDY PROCESS

The Strategic Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture was developed in three phases.

Phase One comprised the Environmental Scan of current, and anticipated future, conditions in Uxbridge with respect to: population; parks, recreation and culture services; and leisure trends and best practices in service provision. It also included a review of the supply and use of parks, and recreation and culture facilities in the Township. A Vision and Future Directions Workshop was also held at which Township representatives articulated a preferred future for leisure services in Uxbridge.

Phase Two included the Public Consultation Program, comprising a public meeting, focus groups, a survey of sport and recreation user groups, a survey of arts and culture user groups, submissions from volunteer community organizations, meetings with recreation and culture boards, and personal interviews with key informants and municipal staff.

A detailed Needs Assessment was completed during the second part of Phase Two. This assessment determined requirements for future development of recreation and culture facilities and parks. The Needs Assessment was followed by a Service Delivery Principles Workshop, at which municipal representatives discussed the manner in which future leisure service needs should be met by the Township.

Phase Three involved the preparation of the Strategic Plan, based on the result of all previous work. It details the strategies by which recreation and culture needs in Uxbridge will be met over the next ten years. The Plan presents parks, facility and program needs and provides direction on future delivery system development to ensure the provision of needed services. The Plan includes an implementation strategy that

outlines priorities, timing, responsibilities and, as warranted, order of magnitude costs associated with its recommended directions. Guidelines on introducing ongoing planning activities to maintain the Plan's relevance are also presented.

### **1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT SUMMARY**

The Environmental Scan, which is contained in the Technical Background Report referred to above, provides detailed information on the planning context for the Strategic Plan. Discussion in this section therefore, is limited to a brief summary of key contextual variables. Relevant information is also presented throughout the document, as it relates to specific discussions.

#### **1.3.1 POPULATION**

The Township of Uxbridge has been experiencing significant population growth, which is expected to continue through the term of this Strategic Master Plan. Most of this growth will occur in the urban area. Uxbridge's population is expected to grow to 23,425 people over the next 10 years<sup>1</sup>, which represents an 18% increase from the estimated 2006 total of 19,895.

The increase in primary and secondary school age cohorts, the number of couple households with children, the higher household income, and the significant percentage of owned dwellings suggest that Uxbridge is becoming home to growing numbers of established urban families. The Township's rural population, however, will remain a significant factor during the period of the Plan.

#### **1.3.2 EXISTING PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES**

Uxbridge is exceptionally well supplied with good quality parks, open space, trails, and recreation and culture facilities. This assessment is based both on comparisons to similar-sized communities and the evaluations of those who participated in public consultation activities. While there are opportunities for improvement, and particularly in the areas of programming and arts and culture, the community is generally satisfied with available services and the Township's efforts in their provision. The Strategic Plan reflects this situation, as it focuses on expanding the capacity of the community-wide delivery system to do more with available resources.

#### **1.3.3 PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AND REPORTED NEEDS**

The results of the public consultation program are presented in detail in a background report and summarized, as warranted, in the discussion that follows. However, in large part the community expressed considerable satisfaction with existing services, as should be expected given the quality and supply of parks, recreation and cultural resources in the community.

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<sup>1</sup> Population projections are based on available information and apparently are under review. While growth will occur as indicated, the timeframe may be extended.

## 2.0 FRAMEWORK FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes an overall framework for parks, recreation and culture in the Township of Uxbridge by describing Outcomes and Service Delivery Principles and identifying the broad strategies and action plans that will guide the Department in the next ten years.

### 2.2 OUTCOMES AND SERVICE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

Early in the study process, a series of discussions were held with the Strategic Master Plan Steering Committee, members of Council, and other community representatives to broadly define Outcomes and Service Delivery Principles for Parks, Recreation and Culture in the Township. The Outcomes described the products or ends of these services while the Service Delivery Principles described the manner in which the municipality would deliver its services. The following were the Outcomes and Service Delivery Principles identified through this process. They have been used to guide the development of strategies and action plans in this report.

#### Outcomes

- Providing opportunities for all residents in Uxbridge to have active and healthy lifestyles.
- Attracting visitors to Uxbridge and thereby contributing to the local economy.
- Providing opportunities for individuals to excel and achieve excellence in the recreational activities of interest to them.
- Preserving and protecting Uxbridge's environment.
- Providing opportunities for individual personal growth and development (e.g., building character, self esteem and confidence).
- Providing opportunities for social interaction and building stronger, more cohesive communities.
- Fostering community development, creating stronger community organizations and community leaders.
- Providing opportunities for all residents to have enjoyable, rewarding leisure time activities.

#### Service Delivery Principles

- Ensuring that the Department's operations are consistent with the "best practices".
- Delivering our services, to the greatest extent possible, through partnerships with other agencies and organizations.
- Maintaining close contact and ongoing communication with all community interests and stakeholders.
- Documenting a clear rationale for decisions and actions taken by the Department.
- Ensuring that the Department's services, to the greatest extent possible, represent the full range of interests in the community including those of various ages, incomes and lifestyles.
- Supporting volunteers in their efforts to deliver services, with the understanding that the primary responsibility to provide programs rests with the volunteers.

- Identifying needs and introducing new services even if the community is not requesting these.
- Maintaining up-to-date plans and policies to guide Department decision-making.

## 2.3 THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE SERVICES

As noted earlier, this report builds on the Needs Assessment and identifies a strategy for the future development of parks, recreation and culture services in the Township. The strategy encompasses the facility and park needs determined in the assessment but also clearly identifies the municipal initiatives necessary to meet these needs. These initiatives include developing new or improved policies, confirming roles and responsibilities, completing additional planning studies, adding staff and revising operating procedures. They are captured in two broad strategies – A Parks and Facilities Development Strategy and a Program and Delivery System Development Strategy – which together describe 19 Action Plans.

The Action Plans identified in this report support the Outcomes and Service Delivery Principles noted above. They will be the municipality's focus for the next ten years and largely describe the priority undertakings that must be addressed to maintain the high quality of services that Uxbridge has enjoyed in the past. The recommendations from the Needs Assessment are outlined in Section 2.3.1 and the Strategies and Action Plans are summarized in Section 2.3.2 and discussed in the remainder of the report.

### 2.3.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

#### Aquatic Facilities

- The Township will be adequately served during the term of the Plan with a single indoor pool.
- The existing pool does not provide opportunities to serve the full range of aquatic needs in the community. Desired aquatic facilities, not available at the Uxpool, include a therapeutic pool, a children's pool, a family changeroom, and related ancillary facilities.
- A strategy for meeting future aquatic facility needs could include upgrading the existing pool or replacing the Uxpool with a new, state-of-the-art 25-metre pool with leisure amenities, and the above-noted components, in a new multi-use recreation complex.
- The results of a planned structural assessment of the Uxpool will determine the feasibility of renovating the existing building to incorporate additional facilities or the need to consider building an entirely new aquatic centre.

#### Arenas

- While a need to provide a third ice pad will likely emerge towards the end of the Plan's term, no new facilities are recommended in the Plan. Arena needs should be monitored and the timing of new facility development reconfirmed during the period of the Plan.
- Additional opportunities to program the arena for non-ice uses, such as box lacrosse, ball hockey etc., should be pursued by the Township in partnership with community volunteers.

### Gymnasia

- While the school boards will meet the majority of demand for gymnasium time, the Township should have access to a municipal gymnasium to augment this supply, provide daytime access, and provide opportunities for specialized programming.
- The gymnasium should be provided as part of a multi-use community complex, ideally associated with other major recreation facilities such as an indoor pool, multipurpose programming space, and specialized program areas (such as areas for youth).
- The Township should pursue improved agreements for access to school facilities for community programming.

### Multi-Purpose/Meeting Space

- The Township should provide multi-purpose space for program development
- The Township should endeavor to improve the use of existing multi-purpose facilities for new programming.

### Dedicated Seniors' Space

- Additional, dedicated seniors' space is not required in Uxbridge Township.
- Program and service development during the timeframe of the Plan can be met using existing and recommended community facilities.

### Squash Courts

- No additional squash courts should be provided.
- The Township should work with the squash club to expand use and assist in junior program development.
- If the Uxpool is redeveloped to include a therapeutic pool, improved changeroom facilities and other amenities would be available to the squash courts.

### Ball Diamonds

- No additional ball diamonds will be required during the period of the Plan.
- The Township, in consultation with users, should determine the actual use levels of ball diamonds in Uxbridge and work towards removing a number of diamonds from use for league activity, reducing maintenance at these locations, and retaining them for casual play or possible future reinstatement for organized use if participation should increase.
- Actual use of fields should be monitored on an ongoing basis to verify need, and longer-term changes in demand.
- Although no additional diamonds are required from a use perspective, the proposed third lit diamond at Bonner Fields is intended to enhance local facilities for community level tournaments, and so should be provided.

### Soccer Fields

- No additional soccer fields are required in Uxbridge during the Plan's timeframe.
- The Township should meet with field users to re-define prime-time for more intense scheduling purposes, to identify required revisions to its turf management program to support increased field use, and to prepare a work program to deal with issues at the Herrema fields. Ultimately, fields not needed for soccer could be considered for conversion to multi-purpose fields.
- Actual use of fields should be monitored on an ongoing basis to verify need, and longer-term changes in demand.

### Playing Fields for Other Sports

- The Township should assess opportunities to meet community interest in other field sports through existing field conversions to multi-purpose playing fields.
- Actual use of fields should be monitored on an ongoing basis.

### Lawn Bowling Green

- The existing lawn bowling green will meet community needs during the term of the Strategic Plan, and likely beyond.

### Tennis Courts

- The Tennis Club, supported by the Township, should prepare a strategy for the Club's long-term membership development and on this basis the development of an additional tennis court at the arena site and improvements to the existing courts would be supported.
- The courts in Leaskdale and Goodwood Park should be considered for conversion to multi-purpose playing courts.

### Skateboard Park

- The Township should develop one permanent skateboard park.

### Splash Pads

- The municipality should provide one Township-serving splash pad, in a major park designed to be a destination point for the use of this facility.

### Multi-Purpose Sport Pads

- A program for the development of multi-purpose pads should be developed in consultation with area residents.
- The number of courts required to serve existing and future population should be determined, based on community demand and monitoring actual use as the courts are developed.
- Existing underutilized facilities (e.g., basketball courts and tennis courts) should be considered for conversion to multi-purpose pads.

### Playground Structures

- Existing playgrounds should be evaluated and a program for upgrades should be developed.
- Decommissioning of existing playgrounds should be considered, as warranted, based on local age-related needs.
- A significant junior and senior playground structure should be provided in a major-destination park to complement the splash pad recommended above.
- In the short term, one fully accessible playground structure should be provided. This would usefully complement the major playground and splash pad referred to above.

### Outdoor Track

- The Township should investigate community interest in track programs, and volunteer interest in developing and operating a club using the track at Uxbridge Secondary School.
- Should interest materialize, the Township should work with Uxbridge Secondary School and the club to establish an acceptable agreement for use of the track.

### Trails

- The community very positively receives the existing trail system, and efforts to extend the trails system are strongly supported.
- The Township should investigate community volunteer interest in developing organized use of the trail system for recreation activities.
- The promotion of the trail system as a possible attraction to visitors should be explored.

### Arts and Culture and Heritage Facilities

- The provision of an improved performing arts theatre continues to be of interest to the arts community but is only feasible if a partner was prepared to play a major role in the use and financing of the facility. The Township should only proceed with a detailed feasibility study if a viable partnership is demonstrated.
- There is a need for dance/rehearsal space, gallery space and arts programming space in the Township to complement the performing arts space at the Music Hall.
- The recent provision of space at the Museum School House to the Arts Association has expanded facilities art programs and provides at least a short-term solution to these space problems.
- The Strategic Plan discusses issues related to the location and centralization of arts facilities in support of a long-term goal to establish a permanent centre.

### Community Halls

- The existing community halls are important recreation resources in their communities and should be retained.
- The relationship between the municipality and the hall/parks boards should be reviewed and revised to establish a more effective partnership.

### Equestrian Facilities

- The Township should consult with the Horsemen's Association to determine needed facility improvements and the ability to accommodate these requirements in a manner that is consistent with the long term use of Elgin Park.

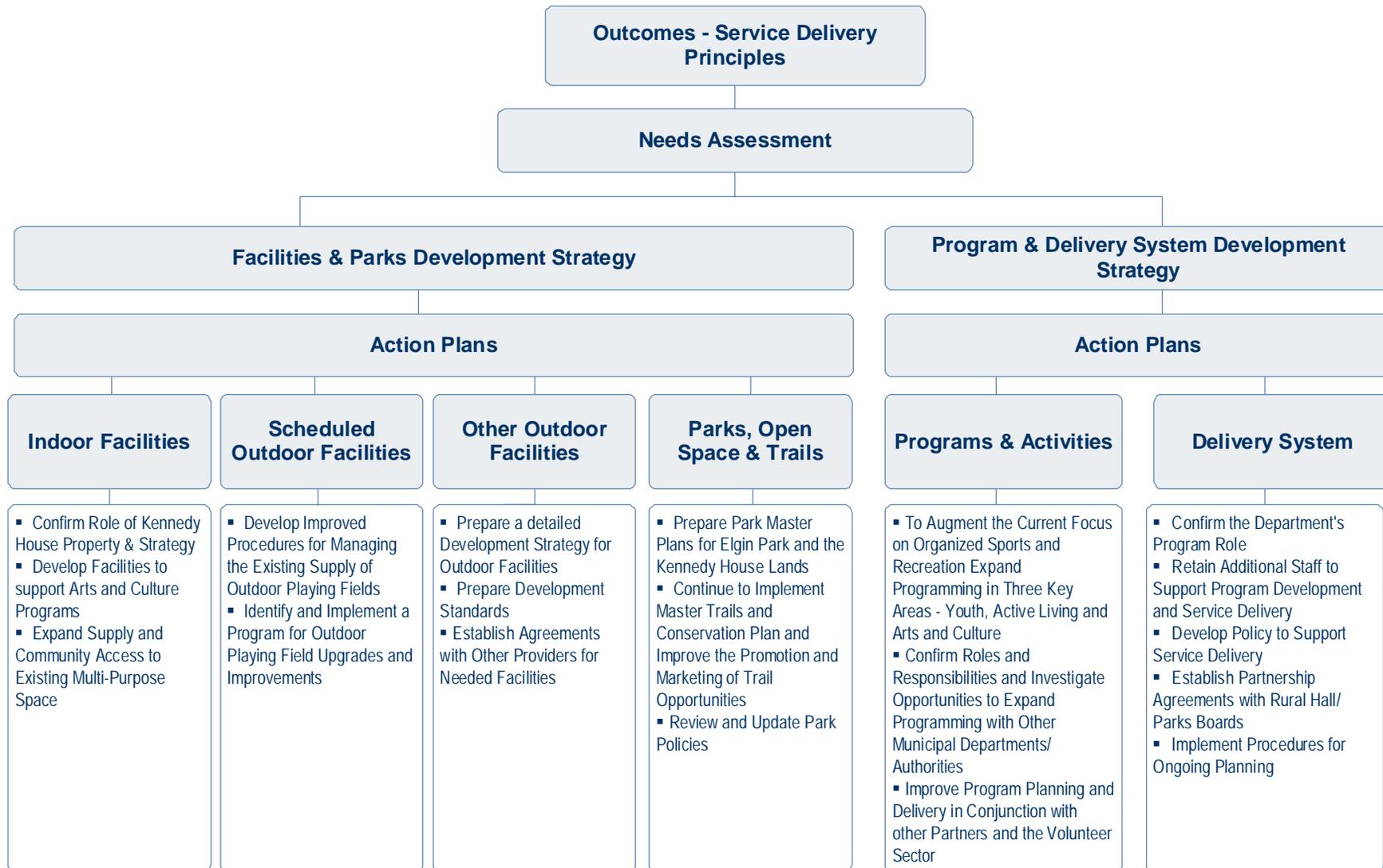
### Youth Centre

- The Township should support the efforts of local volunteers to secure space for, and operate, a youth centre.
- Initially, dedicated part-time space should be secured to establish the centre, as it is more likely to be available in the short-term, and a part-time centre will provide a "pilot" project to verify the need to expand.

## 2.3.2 STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

Figure 2.1 is an overview of the Strategies and the Action Plans discussed in this report.

Figure 2.1: Program & Delivery System Development Strategy



## 3.0 FACILITIES AND PARKS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### 3.1 OVERVIEW

Parks and facilities comprise the infrastructure for leisure services, by providing the places at which organized programs are offered or residents can spontaneously engage in recreation. The needs assessment indicated limited requirements for additional parks and facilities in Uxbridge. This is understandable, given the variety and quality of parks and leisure facilities in the community. Uxbridge is considerably better supplied with almost all traditional sports and recreation facilities than other Ontario municipalities of comparable size. The community occupies a somewhat unique position in its supply of arts, culture and heritage facilities, being extremely well supplied relative to other similar-sized communities, despite less than ideal venues at some facilities. Uxbridge also has an extensive, high quality trail system that is part of a network in progress - another area in which it has surpassed the level of development in other Ontario communities. The Township is also well supplied with parkland, both in terms of acreage and function. While the results of the public consultation program identified interest in new facilities, much of this was related to enhancements of the existing supply or responding to the needs of specific markets. Generally, Uxbridge residents and users appear to be very satisfied with the sport, recreation and arts and culture facilities available for community use. Consequently, the Strategic Master Plan focuses on building on an excellent facility and parks base over the next ten years, and integrating existing and future development in a coordinated infrastructure system.

#### 3.1.2 FACILITIES AND PARKS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The development strategy for parks and facilities envisions a Township-wide system that builds on existing infrastructure to simultaneously:

- Maximize opportunities for leisure participation;
- Create focal points for indoor and outdoor leisure programming and activities;
- Implement a hierarchy of parks and facilities;
- Ensure an appropriate geographic distribution of infrastructure throughout the Township; and
- Incorporate the resources of non-municipal providers.

The facilities and parks development strategy is discussed under the following headings:

- Indoor facilities;
- Scheduled outdoor playing fields;
- Other outdoor recreation facilities; and
- Parks, open space and trails.

## 3.2 INDOOR FACILITIES

### 3.2.1 CURRENT STATUS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS

#### *Sports and Recreation*

- Although the Township will be adequately served during the term of the Plan with a single indoor pool, a new therapeutic/children's pool, a family changeroom and related ancillary facilities are required to serve the full range of aquatic needs in the community. The results of a structural assessment planned for 2007 will determine the feasibility of renovating the existing building to incorporate additional facilities. If the structural assessment concludes that the life of the Uxpool is limited, the option of building an entirely new aquatic centre will need to be considered.
- The Township should have access to a municipal gymnasium to augment the supply of school gyms, provide daytime access, and provide opportunities for specialized programming. Multi-purpose space is also required for program development and to facilitate better distribution of existing facility use.
- Should the Township decide to build a new aquatic facility, a gymnasium, multi-purpose programming space, and specialized program areas (such as areas for youth) would best be incorporated in a multi-use community complex.
- The need to consider providing a third ice pad will likely emerge towards the end of the Plan's term.
- Given that anticipated growth will largely occur in the urban area, no new rural community halls are needed. No additional squash courts or dedicated seniors' facilities are needed during the term of the Plan.
- Improved access to school facilities for community programming is required, along with an inventory of the availability and use of existing multi-purpose and meeting space in the Township.
- Overall trends suggest increasing demand for, and use of, multi-purpose facilities.

#### *Arts, Culture and Heritage*

- Uxbridge is very well supplied with arts and culture facilities. While individual facilities are not necessarily ideal for the range and sophistication of programs that could be offered, they have nonetheless provided a base for the development of a vibrant arts community. While the performing arts community would clearly benefit from better facilities for their work, the provision of a new theatre cannot be supported during the term of this Plan, particularly as a sole municipal endeavor.
- Facilities for the visual arts and multipurpose program space for art and culture programming is a current deficiency. Additional dance/rehearsal space, gallery space and programming areas specifically for the visual arts (e.g., studio, kiln, etc.) are required. The recent provision of full use of the School House Museum to the Arts Association has increased facilities for art programs and constitutes a short-term solution to space problems, with a long-term goal of establishing a permanent community arts centre in Uxbridge. Interest exists in converting the fire hall adjacent to the Music Hall into an arts center/gallery, should the building become available. This type of space might also be provided as part of a major multi-purpose community centre.
- Uxbridge has an extensive, built heritage resource including the Historical Centre, the home of Lucy Maud Montgomery, the Foster Memorial and the Quaker Meeting House. Although these

facilities provide some programming for local residents, their focus is more appropriately the visitor market.

- Demand for arts and culture facilities is, to some extent, a reflection of the need to reduce the gap that typically exists between community sport/recreation and arts/culture facility supply.

### **Recommended Action Plans**

In the ten-year time frame of this Master Plan, the Township's focus for major indoor facilities can be captured in three Action Plans, as noted below. As indicated in the needs assessment, while there are some facilities that will be added to the supply and local parkland will increase through the normal development process as the population grows, there are not major deficiencies to correct. Instead, the next tens years will be spent consolidating and updating existing resources and setting the stage for growth beyond the 10 year time frame of the Strategic Plan. Determining the future role of the Kennedy House property and the future of the existing indoor pool are the most important pieces of the long term facility strategy. In addition, the opportunity to provide an appropriate venue for visual arts activities will be investigated in this timeframe. Finally, the Township will explore a variety of opportunities to increase the supply of and access to multi-purpose space as part of an ongoing effort to expand programming in the community.

**Action Plan #1:** Confirm the Future Role of the Kennedy House Property and the site adjacent to Elgin Park and Detailed Strategy for Consolidating and Expanding Major Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

**Action Plan #2:** Develop Facilities to Support Arts and Culture Programming

**Action Plan #3:** Expand the Supply and Community Access to Existing Multipurpose Programming Space.

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
<p><b>Action Plan #1: Confirm the Future Roles of the Kennedy House Property, the site adjacent to Elgin Park, and prepare a Detailed Strategy for Consolidating and Expanding Major Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct detailed structural assessment of Uxpool to determine the expected life-span of the facility and the need to renovate the existing facility or replace it as part of a new multiuse complex at the Kennedy House property</li> <li>▪ Undertake required studies of Kennedy House buildings to establish the design, siting, configuration, costs and phasing of development for required indoor facilities including a gymnasium, multi-purpose space for general and specialized programming (e.g., arts, youth) space, related ancillary facilities and possibly an indoor pool</li> <li>▪ Assess the potential for major indoor facility development at the site adjacent to Elgin Park</li> <li>▪ Prepare necessary feasibility studies to support the development of major indoor facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The future of the indoor pool must be decided in the short term. Future facilities, in terms of those needed and development configurations, are contingent upon the results of this assessment</li> <li>▪ Future plans depend on the Township's ownership and possible use of Kennedy House properties and facilities, in relation to the parcel adjacent to Elgin Park.</li> <li>▪ Focus on providing multi-purpose facilities that, where possible, can satisfy both recreation and arts programming needs, and changes in interests over time</li> <li>▪ Consolidation of facilities supports the development of focal points for activity, provides cross-programming opportunities and reduces costs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action Plan #2: Develop Facilities to Support Arts and Culture Programming</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine if a viable partnership exists among the Township, the Durham Board of Education and the local arts community to proceed with a feasibility study for a performing arts centre at the secondary school</li> <li>▪ Determine availability and potential of fire hall to provide needed visual arts programming/gallery space and expanded multipurpose space for arts programming</li> <li>▪ Should the hall become available, a feasibility study will be required to assess the potential of existing facilities to be redeveloped to provide <u>appropriate</u> facilities for visual arts uses, particularly against the opportunities and costs of developing new facilities in a multi-use complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Could offer an opportunity to consolidate visual arts facility requirements in a small node with the Music Hall at this location</li> <li>▪ Must ensure redeveloped facilities are ideally suited to users requirements, to ensure appropriate municipal capital investment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action Plan #3: Expand the Supply and Community Access to Existing Multipurpose Programming Space</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop inventory of municipal and non-municipal multi-purpose and meeting space including facility details, availability, current use(s), terms and conditions of use, etc. for municipal use in program development, and community referral to available program space</li> <li>▪ Review and, as required, renegotiate school access agreements</li> <li>▪ Promote community referral service to school and other program spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will identify space for needed program development in the short-term</li> <li>▪ Will optimize use of available facilities, particularly those in outlying areas</li> <li>▪ Will identify gaps in the type of space(s) needed that can be met with future municipal facilities</li> </ul>

**Action Plan #1:** Confirm the Future Role of the Kennedy House Property, the site adjacent to Elgin Park, and prepare a Detailed Strategy for Consolidating and Expanding Major Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

It is important to note that the potential for the scenarios described below to offer a practical solution to the provision of needed facilities in terms of site and building characteristics (e.g., site size, the design of existing facilities and their potential to be appropriately renovated; engineering/structural considerations, etc.) has not yet been addressed and must be determined on the basis of additional, detailed studies.

The degree to which reuse/renovation/expansion of existing facilities can best meet facility requirements also needs to be considered. Developing a new multi-use community recreation centre would allow the provision of state-of-the-art, appropriately designed facilities for each required component, while capitalizing on opportunities to enhance multi-purpose functions (e.g., multi-purpose room with unfixed performing arts components for rehearsals; spaces such as kitchens shared by for various user groups, common areas, etc.). It would also preclude dealing with issues related to expanding and renovating old facilities, and the relative age of various components in expanded/redeveloped facilities. However the renovation of existing facilities cannot always produce the necessary venues in terms of required space, special features, technical systems, etc. for a wide range of uses. Investment in renovations and the trade-offs required to reduce costs, therefore, must be carefully considered to ensure that the result will be the appropriate types of facilities.

A new, multi-use centre would also provide a single community focal point for all recreation activity for many years into the future. It would offer opportunities to program for simultaneous participation by family members of different ages, at one location. While not addressed in this study, future library or other community facilities might also be included in a new multipurpose facility.

#### *Acquisition of Kennedy House Site and Facilities*

The Township is investigating the possibility of acquiring the provincial land and school buildings on the Kennedy House site, to acquire both the soccer fields that it currently leases, along with the gymnasium and other school buildings. The acquisition of this property would present the following opportunities:

- Soccer fields that are currently leased by the municipality from the province would come into municipal ownership, both increasing the supply of fields and giving the Township absolute control over these facilities and their future use;
- The green space associated with these playing fields and the remainder of the property would contribute to an increase in municipally-owned parkland;
- Investigating the feasibility of redeveloping and expanding existing school buildings to provide needed indoor facilities (e.g., aquatic centre; gym, multi-purpose space, special program areas) or demolishing the existing structure and building a new facility; and
- A potential location for needed outdoor facilities (e.g., skateboard park, Township-serving splash pad and playground) to provide a major indoor-outdoor leisure complex.

The question of municipal ownership of this property must be resolved before other facility development decisions are made. This site offers considerable potential for future indoor and outdoor facility development in the form of a new or redeveloped community complex, with or without an aquatic centre. To the extent possible, therefore, the Township should expedite this process with the provincial government. Feasibility studies and an overall site master plan (discussed elsewhere) will be required to confirm the feasibility of redeveloping this property as a major multipurpose recreation complex for the Township.

In the event that the Kennedy House lands are not available to the municipality, additional property must be identified and/or acquired for recreation facilities. The most pressing consideration is land for soccer fields. As discussed elsewhere, aquatic facilities could likely be redeveloped on the existing Uxpool site. However, in the longer term, property will be required for other major indoor facilities, including a possible arena, gym and multipurpose space. The Township should consider the need for contingency plans if the Kennedy House property is not available.

#### *Structural Assessment of Uxpool*

The structural assessment of the Uxpool, which is scheduled for next year, will determine the anticipated life-span of the facility. The outcome of this study will provide the cost basis for deciding whether it is feasible to build additional indoor facilities at this location (e.g., therapeutic pool, improved change facilities, municipal gym and multi-purpose/meeting space) or best to decommission the pool in the short-term and construct a new aquatic centre as part of a multi-use recreation centre.

If the Kennedy House site is acquired but the structural assessment of the Uxpool supports its continued operation for the period of this Plan, provision for a new aquatic complex after the term of the Plan should be incorporated in plans for other complex facilities at Kennedy House (i.e., municipal gym, multi-purpose and special program space, meeting space, major outdoor facilities, playing fields, etc.). Indoor recreation facility needs that emerge in the longer-term could be also considered for inclusion (e.g. a third ice pad), Other facilities that are complementary to the recreation component could also be included. If pool conditions support decommissioning in the short-term, an aquatic complex including the needed therapeutic component, should be part of the initial phase of the project.

If the Kennedy House site is not acquired and the structural assessment of the Uxpool supports its continued long-term operation, therapeutic pool facilities and program space should be provided at this location as part of a renovated complex.

#### *Site Adjacent to Elgin Park*

This Township-owned 25-acre (approximately) property may offer the potential to develop active indoor recreation facilities and maintain the environmental character of the Elgin Park portion, while integrating the two parcels into a larger park. Providing a new multi-use complex at this location will depend on outcomes related to the Kennedy House and Uxpool sites, and the capacity of this site to: accommodate all likely components of a recreation complex (including possible longer-term facility needs), related outdoor facilities, and remain compatible with the future role and uses in the existing Elgin Park. It may be preferable, for instance, to resolve some of the current conflicting use issues at Elgin by shifting a number of these to the "annexed" portion, and possibly combining these with major outdoor recreation facilities only. The Master Plan for Elgin Park, as discussed elsewhere in the Strategic Plan, should include this parcel and address the combined site as a whole.

#### **Action Plan #2:** Develop Facilities to Support Arts and Culture Programming

The development of a major performing arts centre, focused on a theatre but also possibly involving gallery space and specialized facilities for the visual arts, could not proceed without a detailed feasibility study. This study would be required to confirm the local market, generate a detailed business plan identifying

costs and revenues, and confirming an ownership and management structure. It is recognized by all parties in Uxbridge, that a development of this type could only be undertaken as a partnership; it is not a feasible project for the Township alone. There have been discussions in the past with the Board of Education concerning a joint development at the High School. A local arts group has been pursuing this opportunity and the Board has expressed some interest. The ability of the Board to financially participate in the project is limited by their funding parameters. We understand, however, that the Board has, in principle, indicated their support for the project and their willingness to provide land for a development at the high school. They have also indicated the school would use the facility and some type of lease arrangement could likely be negotiated. We understand that no capital funding would be available from the Board.

A budget in the order of \$50,000 would be required for the feasibility study for this project. (This assumes very limited architectural or site planning requirements because we understand this work has largely been completed to a level of detail sufficient for a feasibility assessment. The site, we understand can accommodate the facility and a preliminary concept drawing has been prepared. Capital costs would need to be updated). Before proceeding with a feasibility study for a project of this magnitude, a viable partnership should be in place. This does not appear to be the case at this time. Our recommendation to proceed with a feasibility study is contingent upon the core partners – which we understand to be the Township, the Board and the volunteer group represents the arts in Uxbridge - making the following commitments to the project:

- A clear indication of the ongoing financial commitment from the Board. While understanding the Board cannot commit capital funds, further direction is required on a possible “lease” arrangement. A long-term commitment (10-15 years) to an annual contribution to operating costs should be confirmed;
- A willingness of all three partners to participate in and contribute to the cost of a feasibility study.
- A confirmation from the Township of their maximum contribution to capital. We understand that the volunteer arts sector has committed to raising funds for the project but a municipal contribution to capital is critical to its feasibility. The Township should indicate the extent to which they are prepared to commit capital funds. (The most recent estimates suggest a capital cost in the order of \$5-7 million. This should be updated as part of the feasibility study because it may no longer be adequate);
- A documented strategy on the part of the volunteer sector to raise the additional funds required to meet any shortfall between the municipal capital contribution and the expected project costs. This should include evidence that the arts sector in the Uxbridge is strongly in support of the project, will contribute to its realization, and consider it the priority for arts and cultural development in Uxbridge; and
- Agreement on an initial management structure that would indicate how the core partners will proceed with the feasibility study and potentially with the implementation of the project.

These are reasonable pre-requisites for a feasibility study. Of course, the feasibility study will indicate if there is sufficient market to support the project and confirm costs. The partners will use this information to determine if the project is viable in Uxbridge.

There is a need to provide enhanced opportunities for arts and culture programming, specifically for the visual arts. Whether a performing arts centre at the secondary school proceeds or not, there is a need to improve access to other programming space for the visual arts and a wide range of instructional arts programming. If not at a new performing arts centre, this might be accommodated in new multipurpose space at a community centre at Kennedy House, as discussed above, or may be possible by renovating the existing Fire Hall to act as an Arts Resource Centre.

#### *Feasibility of an Arts Resource Centre at the Fire Hall*

Assuming the fire hall becomes available, the feasibility of renovating it to accommodate arts and culture programming and a gallery will depend on:

- The future availability of the fire hall for other uses;
- The outcomes of the above-noted site issues, since an arts facility component could be incorporated in a multi-use indoor complex, provided the site was large enough to accommodate all required components for both recreation and arts;
- The fire hall's capacity to produce required arts facilities in relation to the costs of renovation; and
- The community and Township's interest in working to provide a cultural node at the site of the Music Hall and the fire hall, and supplementing this with facilities in a complex at another location.

A feasibility study should be conducted to assess the relative costs and benefits of using the fire hall for an Arts Resource centre as versus providing this space as part of a future multipurpose complex at the Kennedy House site (assuming the site is purchased for this purpose). The fire hall's location relative to the Music Hall is a benefit as is the downtown location and the possibility to link expanded arts facilities to the business and commercial sector. However, as noted above, an appropriate renovation may not be possible at the fire hall or there may be other constraints, such as the timing of its availability. These issues should be investigated in a feasibility study. The Township can begin discussions with the arts community to clarify space and facility requirements and to determine if the fire hall building can accommodate needs in a cost effective manner.

#### **Action Plan #3:** Expand the Supply and Community Access to Existing Multipurpose Programming Space

This Plan recommends the expansion of programming, particularly for arts, youth and unstructured activities that can support healthy and active living (discussed below). This programming will require additional facilities and while some of these may ultimately be provided at a new recreation complex, in the short term opportunities to expand access to existing space should be explored. This may involve making better use of municipal resources for programming (e.g. some of the community halls, the senior centre when not used by the seniors, etc.) but also improved access to school board resources. These issues are explored further in subsequent sections of the Plan.

### Summary Indoor Facilities – Products of the Plan

The Indoor Facility Action Plans will result in the following products by the end of the planning period:

- Improved access to existing multi-purpose and meeting space in the Township;
- Feasibility studies (as warranted) for major indoor facilities at a development plan for the Kennedy House property (as warranted) and a detailed strategy and timeframe for provision;
- Detailed structural assessment of the Uxpool and a strategy for upgrades or replacement; and
- Improved visual arts facilities.

## 3.3 SCHEDULED OUTDOOR PLAYING FIELDS

### 3.3.1 CURRENT STATUS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS

- The Township provides 9 ball diamonds, of which 6 are lit;
- The supply of soccer fields in Uxbridge totals 15: 12 unlit fields at Kennedy House (4 full-size, 4 mid-size and 4 mini-pitches); these fields are leased by the Township from the Province, and maintained by the municipality; 2 full-size lit, and 1 mid-size unlit at Herrema Park; which double as mini-pitches.
- The supply of municipal ball and soccer fields is supplemented by those at local schools.
- The Township provides one lawn bowling green.
- Generally, ball and soccer fields are underutilized due to their condition, limited demand or restrictive use during prime time.
- No unmet demand emerged for ball diamonds or lawn bowling facilities; interest was expressed in additional soccer fields.
- With the exception of the proposed third lit diamond at Bonner Fields, which will be provided to support tournament activities, no additional playing fields are required during the term of the Plan.
- National and provincial activity trends indicate that participation in soccer has increased over the past ten years while overall participation in ball sports has declined.

### Recommended Action Plans

In large part the Township's supply of outdoor playing fields is adequate to meet long term needs. The focus of the Master Plan therefore is on improved management and planning of these resources, rather than the development of new sports fields. The Township's focus for outdoor playing fields can be captured in two Action Plans.

**Action Plan #1:** Develop Improved Procedures for Managing the Existing Supply of Outdoor Playing Fields.

**Action Plan #2:** Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements.

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
<b>Action Plan#1: Develop Improved Procedures for Managing the Existing Supply of Outdoor Playing Fields</b>	
<p><b>Inventory Existing Fields to Rationalize Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verify current supply and field use</li> <li>▪ Consult with all organized users of playing fields to determine actual levels of use of all fields</li> <li>▪ Identify those that are least able to meet required needs based on location, design, quality, current use, etc., (e.g., small diamond at Goodwood Park; Leaskdale, Elgin Park, Uxpool diamonds)</li> </ul> <p><b>Classify fields and establish prime-time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify fields that should be retained for organized play and those that should be removed from schedule/use for league activity</li> <li>▪ Establish reasonable definitions of prime-time for scheduling purposes, based on turf management practices, and verify prime-time is being fully used</li> </ul> <p><b>Institute monitoring program</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Institute a program to monitor actual field use and develop an accurate database on facility use and unmet demand for field time</li> <li>▪ As required, assess opportunities to meet community interest in other field sports through existing field conversions to multi-purpose playing fields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Needs assessment indicates that the supply of playing fields in Uxbridge could comfortably accommodate current and future use during the term of the Plan, and that reported shortages in soccer fields are due to other factors including scheduling practices, field quality, etc.</li> <li>▪ Block booking practices by users do not accurately reflect the extent to which fields are used, resulting in apparent discrepancies between supply and demand</li> <li>▪ Non-usable fields should be removed from schedule, to provide a more realistic reflection of supply</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designating poorer fields for casual use will result in lower maintenance costs at these locations and expanded opportunities for pick-up play, while retaining these facilities for possible future reinstatement as scheduled facilities should demand change.</li> <li>▪ The existing supply of good quality fields should be used to full capacity during prime-time before considering additions to supply</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will verify continued need for fields to accommodate current uses and will identify longer- term changes in demand, which may result in need for new types of playing fields</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #2: Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements</b>	
<p><b>Determine capital and operations improvements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify required revisions to Township turf management program to support increased field use</li> <li>▪ Prepare a work program to deal with puddling/drainage problems at the Herrema fields, and investigate options to deal with mosquitoes at this location.</li> <li>▪ Identify and incorporate other required improvements to optimize field use in improvement program</li> </ul> <p><b>Develop third lit diamond at Bonner Fields</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> </ul> <p><b>Identify opportunities to convert fields to multi-use</b></p> <p>During the period of the Plan, demands for new sports will likely emerge and some of the current sports fields may be converted for other uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will support capacity organized use of best quality fields</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to provide enhanced community tournament facilities, consolidating these at two locations: Bonner Fields and Goodwood Park</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will allow the Township to make the best use of available resources and plan for new activities.</li> </ul>

**Action Plan#1:** Develop Improved Procedures for Managing the Existing Supply of Outdoor Playing Fields

*Verify Current Supply and Field Use and Institute Monitoring Program*

Verifying use and demand for field time requires formal planning activities that are not currently in place in Uxbridge. These include monitoring actual field use on an ongoing basis, and establishing unmet demand for access to fields. In most communities, actual use of sport fields falls short of scheduled use. The Township should monitor field use in relation to scheduled use through periodic, rotating site checks or other means. The Township can also track requests for field use that are denied, and the reasons that use cannot be accommodated. User groups should provide the municipality with needed information on membership levels, number of participants by age, waiting lists, program plans, etc. on an annual basis. The municipality should help the groups establish efficient, flexible procedures to collect and submit required information. These data should be collected and assessed annually, to allow any shifts in demand to be reflected in the Township's overall plans for field development/improvements, etc. Users groups should also be involved in the evaluation and application of this information to the confirmation of field requirements. Setting up a planning program will require the Township to clarify information requirements for ongoing planning activities, and consult with user groups about the need for planning and associated information requirements.

In addition to establish procedures as noted above, the Township should rationalize the current inventory of sports fields to ensure the best fields are used to capacity and maintenance costs are reduced.

**Action Plan #2:** Identify and Implement a Program for Outdoor Playing Field Upgrades and Improvements

The scope of this study did not include a review of current conditions at outdoor soccer fields or other sports fields. However, as noted above, existing conditions – rather than the supply of fields – was the major concern of user groups. The Department in conjunction with the users should review current concerns and outline a work program, costs and timing to correct problems, as warranted.

*Conversions to Multi-Purpose Playing Fields*

The existing inventory of outdoor sports fields and the existing user groups in Uxbridge reflect traditional Ontario sports - primarily ball and soccer. Demand for outdoor sports fields to accommodate other organized uses was not identified, and likely will not emerge in the short-term. The potential for emerging new interests, however, should be anticipated for the following reasons:

- Broader trends suggest interests and participation are shifting to field sports outside the historically popular activities of ball, soccer, and football. Along with an upsurge of interest in rugby, fields sports including field hockey and ultimate Frisbee are gaining momentum;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Annual participation report of the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association, as published in the Toronto Star. February 1, 2006. p D8.

- Youth in Uxbridge indicated interest in new recreational league activities such as rugby, lacrosse, and football that, with the appropriate volunteer support, could evolve into new areas of organized activity; and
- Many Ontario communities that are becoming homes to new Canadians are experiencing significant demands for less traditional sports, including cricket and to a lesser extent field lacrosse.

It is not likely, however, that demand in Uxbridge for any individual new field sport would support the provision of dedicated fields. The Township's long-range plans for playing fields, therefore, should consider the potential to accommodate these needs through conversions of existing fields to multi-purpose facilities. Fields that are not fully utilized for soccer, as determined through field use monitoring, should be considered for conversion to multi-purpose fields. Activities typically accommodated on multi-purpose fields include soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football, field hockey and, more recently, ultimate disc sports. Field dimensions and layout meet requirements for all activities being accommodated, and structures such as goal posts and nets are incorporated so as not to present obstructions. Overuse, and wear related to the different traffic patterns of various sports, is of particular concern in the provision of multi-purpose fields. To some extent, these issues can be addressed in scheduling procedures that incorporate rest periods, and restricting the use of individual fields to sports that generate similar patterns of wear (e.g., twinning lacrosse/soccer and rugby/football on separate fields).

### **Summary Outdoor Playing Field – Products of the Plan**

The Outdoor Playing Field Action Plans will produce the following products at the end of the planning period:

- Improved scheduling procedures for all outdoor facilities and a process for monitoring use and ensuring facilities are used to capacity.
- Reclassification of existing facilities to clarify role in meeting future needs in the manner that is most cost effective.
- Improvements to existing playing fields.
- A long-range plan for playing fields to accommodate emerging sports interests on multi-purpose fields.

## **3.4 OTHER OUTDOOR SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

### **3.4.1 CURRENT STATUS AND IDENTIFIED NEEDS**

- Uxbridge is very well supplied with a number of indoor recreation and arts/culture facilities, and outdoor playing fields for organized sports. With the exception of an extensive, high quality trail system, however, facilities for unscheduled, spontaneous recreation facilities are relatively deficient.
- The community expressed considerable interest in expanded opportunities for casual participation, particularly for youth and in rural hamlets. Broader trends see these facilities increasingly incorporated in municipal supply, and the ultimate success of current provincial initiatives in the area of active, daily living will depend on easy access to facilities that encourage activity. In

Uxbridge, the provision of these types of facilities will be central to increasing opportunities for children and youth to participate in non-competitive, unstructured recreation. The multi-purpose nature of some of these facilities also makes them very attractive in isolated settlements in rural areas.

- The existing supply of unscheduled facilities includes:
  - Five courts in three locations, three of which are for casual use. The Uxbridge Tennis Club schedules two courts at the arena;
  - A mobile skateboard park that has occupied several locations since it was introduced;
  - Sixteen playground structures are located throughout both the urban and rural areas of the municipality: 4 are in major parks, 6 are in parkettes and the remaining 6 are in hamlet parks of varying size;
  - An extensive, network trail system that is being further developed according to a Master Plan; and
  - An outdoor track at Uxbridge Secondary School, which is a high quality facility that has deteriorated over time.
  
- The Township's inventory does not include basketball or play courts; outdoor water play areas; state-of-the-art or accessible playground structures. Additions to the facility supply, therefore, should include:
  - A major, Township-serving junior and senior play structure;
  - A major, Township-serving splash pad;
  - A fully accessible playground structure, to complement the major playground and splash pad, to be provided in the short-term;
  - Multi-purpose sports pads; and
  - A permanent skateboard park. The skateboard park may be required in the short term to replace the existing facility.
  
- The development of acceptable agreements with volunteer groups and Uxbridge Secondary School may facilitate improvements to tennis and outdoor track facilities, thereby supporting increased activity levels.
  
- Overall trends indicate increasing need for facilities to accommodate casual, unscheduled recreation, and these types of facilities encourage activity through relatively easy access.

### **Recommended Action Plans**

The supply and quality of unscheduled outdoor sports and recreation facilities requires improvement, with an emphasis on providing the facilities listed above that are not currently represented in the inventory, and reviewing the distribution and design of playground structures. Provision should be determined on the basis of a number of factors including: an audit of existing facilities, user-related and distributional requirements, community interest and consultation, park and facility development standards, park roles/concept plans and volunteer involvement, as required.

These considerations suggest the following Action Plans for the future development of outdoor facilities. .

**Action Plan #1:** Prepare a Detailed Development Strategy for Outdoor Facilities.

**Action Plan #2:** Prepare Development Standards.

**Action Plan #3:** Establish Agreements with Other Providers for Needed Facilities.

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
<b>Action Plan #1: Prepare a Detailed Development Strategy for Outdoor Facilities</b>	
<b>Identify Candidates for Upgrades and Improvements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inventory and assess existing supply of outdoor recreation facilities by type, location, age, condition, potential for upgrades/conversion/replacement, current levels of use, characteristics of existing and anticipated population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Potential may exist for under-used tennis courts in Goodwood and Leaskdale to be converted to multi-sport pads</li> <li>▪ Existing playgrounds include many, small sites that are in need of upgrading, replacement or decommissioning</li> <li>▪ A comprehensive, detailed assessment will identify other facilities to be considered for upgrades, replacement, etc. and is the basis for preparing a capital conservation policy, as discussed elsewhere in the Strategic Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Determine locations for additional facilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine the type, size, design and distribution of facilities to be installed at various locations by park type (i.e., local-serving, community-serving)</li> <li>▪ Concept plans for a major Township-serving, destination park should incorporate the major splash pad, the major playground structure and the permanent skateboard park</li> <li>▪ Prepare capital improvements plans, as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will integrate existing and new facilities in creating activity focal points, and an appropriate hierarchy and distribution</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #2: Prepare Development Standards</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and revise existing, or adopt new, park and facility development standards that distribute facilities appropriately and ensure consistent, safe facilities at new or redeveloped sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standards will ensure appropriate levels of facility development, safety and distribution by type of park, thereby establishing the desired site functions and relationships, for both existing and future parks</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #3: Establish Agreements with Other Providers for Needed Facilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The outdoor track at Uxbridge Secondary school offers the potential for improvements to support community use, given an effective sharing agreement between the municipality and the school board</li> <li>▪ Other outdoor facility needs may be most effectively met through new or renegotiated joint agreements (e.g., soccer field at Uxbridge Secondary School)</li> <li>▪ Adopt policies that stipulate opportunities/requirements for volunteer participation in the provision of facilities/services (discussed further in a subsequent section of the report)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promotes effective use of all available resources, and currently underutilized facilities, in meeting community demand and interest for recreation</li> <li>▪ Carefully constructed agreements can mutually benefit to relevant partners</li> <li>▪ Active volunteer participation is a requirement for municipal investment in developing/expanding facilities and services, and expectations should be consistent for all groups requesting support; volunteer involvement is also warranted in financing some facility enhancements</li> <li>▪ The Uxbridge Tennis Club and the Track and Field Club may offer immediate opportunities for policy-based partnerships in the provision of new/improved facilities to support expanded recreation activity.</li> <li>▪ Residents and/or service clubs may undertake fund-raising for smaller facilities (e.g., local playgrounds, multi-sport pads)</li> </ul>

**Action Plan #1:** Prepare a Detailed Development Strategy for Outdoor Facilities

The scope of this study did not involve detailed site assessments that would indicate opportunities to upgrade existing resources or convert underutilized facilities to new uses. This site specific examination and assessment should be undertaken by staff and a plan prepared to upgrade and convert facilities to alternative uses, as warranted. A timetable, costs and priorities should be a part of this assessment.

In addition, as recommended elsewhere in the report, concept plans will be prepared for both Elgin Park and, should it be acquired, the Kennedy House property. Both sites are major Township-serving parks that could accommodate some of the recommended facilities. Appropriate candidates for these locations will be determined when the master plans are prepared for these sites. Finally, a number of local serving facilities (e.g., multi-purpose courts) will be added to existing parks and new neighbourhood parks that are developed in new urban areas. Appropriate locations should be determined and a plan put in place for providing these facilities as resources allow.

**Action Plan #2:** Prepare Development Standards

Uxbridge, for the most part, has high quality parks and facilities that have been designed and developed to appropriate standards. While playing field user groups have some concerns related to turf quality and field drainage, in large part the parks appear to be well designed and very well maintained. The park system and outdoor facilities have evolved without the benefit of over-riding principles or more detailed development and maintenance guidelines. The following principles, therefore, should be adopted to guide the future development of the parks system in Uxbridge. These principles are reflected in other Strategic Plan recommendations.

- To the greatest extent possible, parks should be fully developed and provide opportunities for multiple activities (i.e., picnicking, play structures, passive play areas, active play areas) to encourage maximum use and enjoyment of these resources by community residents.
- Parks and open space areas should be developed and maintained in a manner that is safe for users and protects the interests of the Township.
- All major parks should be developed in accordance with a Master Plan that clearly indicates appropriate uses, functional areas of the park, natural and environmentally sensitive areas, and relationships among park activity areas. A Master Plan is required to ensure the park is developed in the most cost effective manner, to serve the broadest range of community needs and to ensure it implements the overall rational development of the parks network.
- To the extent possible, trails and paths should link parkland and open spaces to promote active living, encourage tourism, and protect significant natural or heritage features.

Consistent with these principles, the Township should develop design and maintenance guidelines to set standards of facility development and maintenance. While the current practices are acceptable, there are no agreed upon standards and, in the opinion of some, inconsistencies are apparent among existing sites. Standard park design guidelines would describe how the community's parks are to be developed – including specifications for recreation facilities (e.g., outfield dimensions, lighting, fencing, etc.) and playgrounds (junior and senior structures), parking requirements, signage, etc. These design standards will

ensure a consistent approach to park development that meets community needs, user expectations and maximizes safety and ease of maintenance.

Similarly, it would be useful to agree on consistent guidelines of municipal maintenance for parkland but more importantly for outdoor sport fields. These guidelines would specify a maintenance regime (e.g., frequency of grass cutting); confirm requirements associated with maintenance and use (e.g., to ensure that the fields are in adequate condition before they are used at the beginning of the season; schedules to ensure turf is rested and can rejuvenate, etc.); and describe the maintenance responsibilities of both Township staff and users (e.g., responsibilities for dragging the field, lining fields, etc.)

Development and maintenance guidelines are important in Uxbridge for two reasons. First, as discussed further elsewhere in the report, both the provision of new, and the maintenance of existing, facilities will be a shared responsibility – with the Township and volunteers acting together. There must, therefore, be clear and understood expectations and requirements. This will ensure that new recreation facilities, including those in which volunteers play major roles in financing, are built to an appropriate standard for community use and cost effective operation. Secondly, these guidelines will support other policies adopted by the Department. For example, elsewhere the Strategic Master Plan outlines a community funding program whereby user groups wishing to provide enhanced or specialized facilities would largely be responsible for these costs, while the Township would assume the majority of costs associated with basic facilities required to meet core community needs. These guidelines would be used to distinguish between enhanced and basic services.

A final consideration is adopting policies to limit management and operating issues associated with unsupervised municipal recreation facilities such as multi-purpose sports pads, play structures, skateboard parks, etc. The Township should consider developing a policy that stipulates the desired terms and conditions for the development of these types of facilities.

Design requirements could be based on the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) - a concept based on the assumption that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the incidence and fear of crime and improve quality of life<sup>2</sup>. These principles include:

- Improving natural surveillance - the “eyes on the street” concept and the simple idea that casual surveillance can reduce the incidence of crime.
- Improving maintenance and management - a poorly maintained park suggests that there is little attention directed to it and that, as a result, activities will go unnoticed.
- Developing territoriality and proprietorship - design of the built environment can alter the perception of the extent of private or semi-private space. The use of landscaping, decorative fencing or landforms, to name a few, can increase the sense of risk for potential criminal behaviour and extend a sense of “ownership” into the space from those living or working in the area.

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<sup>2</sup> Doyle, C. & Stiver, J. (2004). *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. The Ontario Planning Journal; Vol. 19, No. 5, 2004.

- Enhancing the control people have over places - limiting the points at which the public can enter private or semi-private spaces and denying access to crime targets with either physical built form (e.g., walls, fencing) or mechanical devices (e.g., doors, locks) makes it more obvious to the casual observer when someone is where they should not be.<sup>3</sup>

Design criteria might be integrated in the park and facility development standards, discussed above. Volunteer management and operations involvement could be incorporated in policies on volunteer support and assistance and/or community funding. The relevant elements in each of these policies, therefore, would combine in practice to create a desirable context for providing unsupervised recreation facilities.

### **Action Plan #3:** Establish Agreements with Other Providers for Needed Facilities

Both local school boards have policies that govern community use of indoor school facilities such as gyms and classrooms, and users work directly with the Boards in accessing and scheduling these facilities. We understand that school facilities are well used by the community, and that the Township's primary interest in working with the Boards relates to specific facilities that might offer the potential for partnerships. In addition, as noted above, in special cases partnership agreements might be established with volunteer groups, such as tennis clubs, for the exclusive, or near exclusive use of facilities. Furthermore, while the focus of this discussion is outdoor facilities, these types of partnerships might also be implemented for indoor facilities (similar to the arrangements for a shared community board of education theatre that have been discussed in Uxbridge in the past). There are a number of considerations that would guide these types of partnerships.

The shared development, maintenance and use of facilities on school board properties can be achieved through effective agreements. Provided the board(s) is willing, however, Township initiation of discussions on shared agreements is contingent upon the willingness and commitment of a volunteer organization to establish, develop and operate programs using the facilities. We would not endorse municipal support of jointly owned facilities for casual community use. In Uxbridge, municipal involvement in upgrades to the outdoor track at Uxbridge Secondary School has been raised as an opportunity. In our view, this must first be supported by sufficient organized use to warrant its consideration, the willingness of relevant parties to enter into a long-term agreement, and the adequacy of available facilities to meet organized users needs. Ultimately, the arrangement must produce a service benefit to the community to support continued municipal contributions. The use of the track (and, as warranted, use of other outdoor sports facilities at local schools) would require a formal agreement that stipulates shared capital improvement and maintenance costs, and access to the facility, in terms that are acceptable to the three partners involved – the Township, the School Board and the organized club.<sup>4</sup>

A comprehensive, binding agreement is required to guarantee that the needs and responsibilities of all parties are understood and respected. The following items are important to consider and clearly document in formal agreements for access to outdoor school facilities:

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The Track and Field Club did not respond to the study's survey, although interest in repairing the track was mentioned at the public meeting and by other stakeholders.

- 1) If the Township makes an investment in a facility that it does not own, the agreement should guarantee long-term access (i.e., 25 years) and specifics concerning the scheduling and use of the field by the school and the community. The agreement must provide for full community use.
- 2) To protect facility quality (i.e., track surface), it cannot be used as part of the general play area of the school yard or be made available for casual community use, and steps would need to be taken to ensure use is restricted to scheduled times as outlined in the comprehensive agreement.
- 3) The Township's share of capital and operating costs should be proportionate to its access for community use, and organized users should be required to contribute some portion of the Township's costs, either through fund-raising or services-in-kind.
- 4) The Township must balance its contribution to capital and operating costs against the value of the service that is being provided to the community. The outcomes of the investment, therefore, must be measurable and, to do this, mechanisms must be in place to gauge the contribution expanded programming has made to community residents.

As with all agreements of this nature, a process for dispute resolution must be included along with stipulations regarding periodic review, and the terms and conditions for termination of the partnership, should it be required.

### **Summary Other Outdoor Facility – Products of the Plan**

The following products would be available to the community at the end of the planning period if these Action Plans are implemented.

- A detailed plan, priorities and phasing for improvements to existing facilities and capital conservation requirements;
- Development and maintenance guidelines for parks and outdoor facilities; and
- As warranted, new agreements for the joint provision and use of outdoor facilities and an approved process for establishing such agreements.

## **3.5 PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS**

### *Current Status and Identified Needs*

- Current park supply and quality is good and represents a valuable community asset.
- The total supply of parkland and open space per 1,000 population is currently approximately 10.54 hectares.
- The current supply of active parkland exceeds the combined provision standard for local and community parkland. Population based provision for passive parkland approaches twice that for active parkland.

- The current supply of municipal parkland is adequate to meet needs during the term of the Strategic Master Plan. Parkland added to supply as a result of residential development will contribute to improved provision.
- The trail system in the Township comprises over 143 km of trails of various types and belonging to different agencies, within the largely rural planning area. The community is interested in further development of the existing trail system into a fully linked network.
- The Township continues to implement the Master Trails and Conservation Plan (June 2005), which provides a comprehensive, integrated approach to trail development and environmental conservation.
- Growth pressures may increase in relation to provincial legislation restricting development on the Oak Ridges Moraine and in greenbelt areas of the Township.
- The Township provides high quality parks operations and maintenance, and is guided by environmental parks policies.
- General trends indicate increasing use of parks and open space areas for a variety of active and passive pursuits.

### **Recommended Action Plans**

The supply of parkland and the policies and procedures currently in place for dealing with parkland provision through the development process are apparently not issues in the municipality and this is reflected a parks system that is currently meeting the community's needs.

Although the municipality is well supplied with parkland for the term of the Plan, park supply policies must ensure continued adequate supply in view of recent provincial legislation that will restrict future development in some areas of the Township. The municipality should also continue to focus on the development of its trail system, which is an extremely valuable, high quality asset for the Township and its residents.

Finally, Elgin Park (including the Township-owned parcel adjacent to the park) and the Kennedy House lands (should they be acquired) are two major park properties that require detailed master plans to guide future planning and development.

**Action Plan #1:** Prepare Park Master Plans for Elgin Park and the Kennedy House Lands.

**Action Plan #2:** Continue to Implement Master Trails and Conservation Plan and Improve the Promotion and Marketing of Trail Opportunities.

**Action Plan #3:** Review and Update Park Policies.

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
<b>Action Plan #1: Prepare Master Plans for Elgin Park and the Kennedy House Lands</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detailed master plans are required for both of these sites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elgin Park and the adjacent parcel may offer significant development potential</li> <li>▪ As a major, community-serving park its future role and function must be established to ensure development implements a considered vision for the park</li> <li>▪ Similarly, Kennedy House is already the home of the Township's major soccer facilities and may become a future site for major indoor facilities and other outdoor resources. The site would be substantially redeveloped should this occur and a master plan is required to guide this activity.</li> <li>▪ The future development of these properties will have implications for the development of other community-serving parks</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #2: Continue to Implement Master Trails and Conservation Plan and Improve Promotion and Marketing of the Trails</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All stakeholders involved in trail development reported strong support for current plans and existing processes for trail development.</li> <li>▪ The only major area for improvement related to marketing and promotion rather than the actual development of the trails.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trails are the primary infrastructure for promoting healthy, active lifestyles for all residents, as they are relatively easy to access for a variety of activities</li> <li>▪ Trails are particularly important to providing rural residents opportunities to participate in activity outside the urban area of the Township.</li> <li>▪ Comprises a rational approach to trail development, and works towards linkages to other components of the Township's infrastructure and to regional trail systems</li> <li>▪ Will help ensure continued environmental sustainability of existing resources, which is supports related parks policies</li> <li>▪ A promotion and marketing plan is required to expand use but also to generate additional support and funding for trail development.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #3: Review Policies Related to Parks Supply</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Park development policies should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will ensure policies continue to generate sufficient future parkland in relation to recently introduced provincial legislation that will now preclude development in some areas of the Township.</li> <li>▪ Will ensure policies continue to support parks and open space development and use that is environmentally sustainable</li> <li>▪ Will align municipal inventory with Official Plan classifications</li> </ul>

**Action Plan #1:** Prepare Master Plans for Elgin Park and the Kennedy House Lands

*Future Development of Elgin Park*

Elgin Park is a large (19 ha), centrally located site that is largely passive but also has a number of specialized uses, including the horse track and bandshell. The facilities and uses in the park have emerged over time without the benefit of an overall Master Plan. Immediately adjacent to the park is a Township-owned property of approximately 10 ha that should be incorporated in the Master Plan. These properties

are valuable park resources to the community in terms of size, location and character, and future development should ensure the most desirable and effective use of the entire site. A variety of potentially competing/incompatible uses exist for the Elgin Park portion (e.g., special events, equestrian activities, major passive/family park destination) and these must be resolved in the master planning process.

In the interest of developing Elgin Park to best meet community needs, the Township must determine the future role of the park with consideration to the following:

- Elgin Park could be the preferred location for some of the facilities designated in the Strategic Plan for a Township-serving “destination” park including a major splash pad, a major playground, a fully accessible playground structure and a permanent skateboard park. These types of specialized facilities will likely be shared between Elgin Park and the Kennedy House site (if acquired and developed); not all of these facilities will be compatible with one another or with the preferred concept for the park. More active and intrusive uses, such as a skateboard park or major splash pad, may not be acceptable if the dominant purpose of the park is passive and natural. These issues need to be addressed in the concept plans to ensure all facilities are located appropriately and do not have a negative impact on other park uses or the surrounding neighbourhood.
- the need to balance the environmental sensitivity of the park with the need for more active uses and facilities, and possibly deferring some uses to other parks in the Township;
- the ability to accommodate equestrian needs in a manner that is consistent with the long term vision for the park;
- opportunities to integrate the needs of special events uses, occurring 4 or 5 times a year, in a design that incorporates a new role for the park;
- potential Township acquisition, and future uses, of the Kennedy House site; and
- the relationship of Elgin Park to other existing and future parks in the Township’s system;

The Township should prepare a detailed master plan for Elgin Park. This should be done in consultation with organized users (e.g., the Uxbridge Horsemen’s Association, Uxbridge Falls Fair, Highland Summer Games etc.) and the community-at-large, to determine an appropriate approach to development of Elgin Park.

#### *Kennedy House Lands*

As discussed earlier, there are a number of opportunities for indoor and outdoor facilities should the Township proceed with the acquisition and development of the Kennedy House lands. An overall master plan should be prepared to determine appropriate locations for facilities, parking and access, relationships between existing and planned outdoor and indoor facilities, and future development potential.

#### **Action Plan #2:** Continue to Implement Master Trails and Conservation Plan and Improve Promotion and Marketing of the Trails

A meeting was held with volunteer organizations and community representatives currently involved with trail development both within the built up and rural areas of the Township. These representatives were unqualified in their support for existing plans and the existing partnership between the Township and the

community for trail development. While increased funding would accelerate implementation of the trails system and this was of course supported, they saw no need for improved plans or policies associated with trail development.

The trail representatives did identify promotion and marketing as an issue. The trails are not well publicized for visitors or for residents. This promotion would not only increase use, it would expand opportunities for community financial support. This has been the case in the Town of Collingwood, for example, where a trails guide is published and widely circulated throughout the community, at local hotels, and tourist information centres. The guide itself is financed in part through advertisement and sponsorship. More importantly, however, since the trails have been more actively promoted, use has increased and this has promoted local business, particularly those serving visitors, to actively sponsor trail development. A promotional and marketing program of this type should be developed in Uxbridge in consultation with the organizations involved with trail development.

In terms of future residential development, new development should be provided with links to the recreational trail system.

**Action Plan #3: Review Policies Related to Parks Supply**

The Township's existing park policies are satisfactory and have allowed the municipality to acquire appropriate parkland, in both supply and quality, as well as create open space linkages and in-town recreational trails as the population has grown. This will continue to be the case as the population expands during the period of this Strategic Master Plan.

While a need for new or improved park policies was not identified during the study process, these policies should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated as required to respond to growth pressures and provincial legislation.

The Township's existing supply of parkland is adequate to meet current and future requirements for facilities, assuming that the leased land at the Kennedy House site is retained. The possible future development of the Kennedy House lands will expand open space opportunities and this site, if acquired, could become the Township's major community park. Alternately, Elgin Park and the adjacent site offers similar opportunities. The Township's future park planning efforts, therefore, will likely be focused on assembly of local serving neighbourhood parks. This may provide opportunities for the Township to take cash in lieu as development proceeds and direct these funds to the future development of both Elgin Park and the Kennedy House lands.

### **Summary Parks, Open Space and Trails – Products of the Plan**

The key products of the Parks, Open Space and Trails Action Plans are:

- Detailed Master Plans for Elgin Park and adjacent lands and, if acquired, the Kennedy House lands;
- Full implementation of the Trails Master Plan and a Marketing and Promotional Strategy for trails; and
- Up to date park policies to support ongoing parkland provision.

## 4.0 PROGRAM AND DELIVERY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

Collectively, the program supply and opportunities to participate in casual recreation provide Uxbridge residents with a broad range of activities. A well-developed parks and facility infrastructure, as discussed above, supports local provision of a variety of programs for different interests and age groups. For the most part, the community is satisfied with the availability, quality and cost of programs. Interest exists, however, in providing activities to complement an excellent supply of organized sports and leisure activities – in the areas of unstructured, casual participation and the arts. There is particular interest in developing a youth activity centre, to provide Uxbridge teens with an informal meeting place for socializing and accessing support services. More generally, the Township has a greater role to play in expanding programming focused on healthy, active living and lifestyle advocacy, which is consistent with the Provincial Active 2010 initiative.

The Township is not a direct programmer, but provides support to volunteer organizations, non-municipal agencies, and individuals in the development and operation of community leisure programming. Only in instances where programs cannot be provided through other agencies and organizations, does the Township take a direct program role (e.g., aquatic instruction, day camps). Historically, Uxbridge has had a strong base of volunteers that provide sport, recreation and arts programming to the community with the help of the Township. The municipality's role as program facilitator will continue in the future. Program and activity needs in the community, therefore, must be met through increasing reliance on volunteers and other non-municipal providers. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that the delivery system is increasingly effective in responding to greater community expectations regarding the range and quality of local leisure services. Local community halls run by volunteer boards have traditionally served the rural hamlets of Uxbridge. These facilities need to be better integrated in community's service network. The Strategic Master Plan focuses on closing identified "gaps" in the existing supply of competitive sport, and arts programs and activities, capitalizing on available resources to do so, and increasing the capacity of the Township to fulfill its facilitative role in program delivery.

#### 4.1.2 PROGRAM AND DELIVERY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The development strategy for programs and the service delivery system will:

- Focus on program/activity areas that are in keeping with residents interests, are not now available, and coincide with evolving initiatives and practices in municipal services;
- Capitalize on the use of available resources in expanding the program base;
- Develop and strengthen existing and new partnerships in service provision; and
- Provide the Township with the resources and tools to fulfill its role and function in all areas of responsibility for leisure services.

Discussion is presented under the following headings:

- Programs and activities; and
- Delivery system.

## 4.2 PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

### *Current Status and Identified Needs*

- While maintaining and enhancing the existing supply of recreation programs, areas that require further development are unstructured, non-competitive, minimal commitment sports/activities for youth; drop-in pre-school, after school and evening programs; activity opportunities in outlying areas; social recreation/sport programming; activities for seniors.
- Support for a youth program and service centre is strong among various sectors of the community, and volunteer interest exists in working with the Township to provide this centre.
- The arts sector is better represented and more active in Uxbridge than in many similar size communities. Consequently, arts programming is relatively well developed here and provides an important resource to build upon for the future. Nevertheless, the supply of programs lags behind that for traditional sports and recreation.
- Uxbridge has an extensive, built heritage resource, for which programming at specific sites is appropriately focused on the visitor market.
- The program areas that are deficient in Uxbridge are also often lacking in other communities, and these deficits are a reflection of the need to improve services that parallel trends in activity interests and lifestyle and a more recent, broad emphasis on activity as part of healthy, daily living.
- We recognize that the Township currently performs many of the program development tasks described in our Recommended Action Plans, and that the result has been a high quality supply of community programs. It is restricted, however, in its ability to further develop, expand and formalize this role with current staff resources and limited policy supports.

### **Recommended Action Plans**

The community was largely satisfied with the existing supply of programs, however, it was frequently noted that traditional sport and recreation programs are much better supplied than arts and culture programs and opportunities for unstructured leisure pursuits. Further, growing demand in both of these areas should be expected given changing social and demographic characteristics of the community. Finally, the growing emphasis on active living and health promotion suggests an immediate need to expand programming in this area.

Program supply is linked to both the availability of facilities and staff and volunteers initiating, developing and operating individual programs. While existing and future facilities in Uxbridge will in large part provide the required physical infrastructure for programming, program development will require an improved delivery structure/process. Improvements will focus on coordination and partnerships - including those within the municipality - and better program evaluation and planning.

The recommended Action Plans focus on expanding the supply of currently underrepresented areas of programming/activities, but this will not be possible without additional staff which is discussed in the delivery system strategy in the following section.

The following Action Plans should be pursued during the period of the Strategic Master Plan.

**Action Plan#1:** To Augment the Current Focus on Organized Sports and Recreation Expand Programming in Three Key Areas - Youth, Active Living and Arts and Culture

**Action Plan #2:** Confirm Roles and Responsibilities and Investigate Opportunities to Expand Programming with Other Municipal Departments/Authorities

**Action Plan #3:** Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
<b>Action Plan #1: Augment the Current Focus on Organized Sports and Recreation Expand Programming in Three Key Areas – Youth, Active Living and Arts and Culture</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ While expanded programming is generally supported by the Plan, particular emphasis should be placed on youth, active living and arts and culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As noted above, this study revealed a number of gaps in program supply: casual recreation, non-competitive and unstructured sports; house league level sports; drop-in programs; special events programming with the downtown business sector, and while programming should be pursued in all areas, three priorities were identified.</li> <li>▪ Particular need was expressed for youth programming through a youth centre</li> <li>▪ Active 2010 implies an expanded role for municipalities in recreation service delivery, and a number of Ontario communities are in the processes of implementing this initiative</li> <li>▪ Arts and culture activities are of particular interest in Uxbridge and were strongly represented in the needs assessment; opportunities to make better use of existing resources to expand programming should be explored</li> <li>▪ In addition to these priorities, the study revealed interest in programs/activities that could be introduced using existing park and facility infrastructure (e.g., organized use of trail system)</li> <li>▪ This can provide solutions to the need for new programming in the short-term and represents a better “return” on capital investment in existing facilities (e.g., using the trail system for a new cross-country ski or snow shoeing group)</li> <li>▪ Supports the need for other recommended new facilities that would contribute to the supply of needed programs/activities (e.g., multi-sport pads in outlying hamlets, a permanent skateboard park)</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #2: Confirm Roles and Responsibilities and Investigate Opportunities to Expand Programming with Other Municipal Departments/Authorities and External Partners</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Department should formally adopt program roles and responsibilities to better define its relationship with other municipal sectors, other providers and the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As the leader in facilitating program development and provision, the Township is primarily responsible for identifying required resources, securing and coordinating the participation of all relevant actors (i.e., the volunteer sector, private program providers, social services/health sector, non-municipal leisure service providers, library, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #3: Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In conjunction with other relevant parties, conduct regular research, community needs/interest identification, and program monitoring/evaluation to keep program supply responsive to current needs</li> <li>▪ Research and evaluation methods can be kept simple (e.g., periodic review of current literature, periodic on-line surveys of community interest in new/ revised programs, participant program evaluations, tracking registration/attendance, etc.)</li> <li>▪ redesign or discontinue programs based on the reasons they are unsuccessful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A partnership approach to service provision requires ongoing joint planning to ensure that all needs are brought to the table in a timely manner, and that each party assumes the most effective role in responding to these needs based on their mandate and resources</li> <li>▪ Programming is an ongoing and iterative activity, whereby the success of current programs and potential new needs/interests are monitored and required adjustments are made to program supply</li> </ul>

**Action Plan#1:** Augment the Current Focus on Organized Sports and Recreation Expand Programming in Three Key Areas - Youth, Active Living and Arts and Culture

*Youth Program and Service Centre*

A potential immediate program initiative for the Township is providing a centre for programming and services geared to youth in a relaxed, supportive environment. A youth centre would not comprise a newly built or redeveloped, segregated facility - at least not in the short to medium term. Long-term need for separate facilities will be determined by the centre's success and growth in its early years. Suitable space in existing facilities is likely available and could be dedicated for this purpose. We understand, for example, that time may be available at the arena hall in the evenings. Whether or not this facility would be suitable, only dedicated part-time space is required initially, to establish the centre as a "pilot" project to test interest and verify the need to expand. To succeed, this centre would require ongoing supervision and formal programming, although not necessarily of a structured, commitment-oriented nature.

Volunteer organizations and individuals in the community have come forward to work on this project with the Township's assistance. The group's core of volunteers has formally organized itself into a board with a supporting sub-committee structure. The intent is to develop a grass-roots organization with the involvement and support of all relevant community organizations/agencies, and private sector interests. To this end, the group is now actively seeking community partners. It views the Township as a leading partner in the Youth Centre, from both a practical standpoint and the credibility that its affiliation will bring to the project. Areas in which the Centre is seeking Township participation are funding, facility provision, staffing, liaison, and knowledge in the provision of recreation services. In our view, it is appropriate for the Township to assist the core volunteer group in the centre's development in areas that are both within the Department's mandate and reasonable in terms of available resources. The Department can, for example, advise the board in planning, implementing and evaluating its program; assist in securing space, establishing operating hours, and applying for grants; liaise with other agencies/organization (as required); and offer administrative/logistical support in fundraising activities. In view of the Department's broad mandate in program provision and limited resources, however, it would not be reasonable for the Township to provide staff for the centre. Assistance with finding qualified staff, however, could be provided. The potential for Township funding will be based on Council's decision regarding if, and how, funding should be provided, which will be based on the group's demonstration of the project's feasibility and benefits to the community. Discussions elsewhere in the Plan that relate to the development and operation of a Youth Centre include recommended policies in the area of community funding and volunteer assistance.

*Physical Activity, Healthy Living and Unstructured Programs*

The Province's recently announced Active 2010 program is directed at municipalities and other community service providers (including health units, school boards, YMCAs, Scouts Canada, hospitals, etc.) with the objective of significantly increasing physical activity levels in Ontario. The program is a direct response to alarming increases in health related problems due to child obesity and physical inactivity. Communities are being encouraged to marshal the resources of all relevant agencies to expand physical activity programming through special events (annual walks or fitness challenges); school based programs; seniors walking and fitness programs; social marketing and health promotion (e.g., encouraging residents to walk rather than drive, take the stairs instead of the elevator, etc.), revised policies that remove barriers to

physical activity (e.g., financial or scheduling constraints) and selected improvements to infrastructure (e.g., recreational trails development).

The Active 2010 program is clearly the Province's priority in the recreation area and one of the very few initiatives for which funding is available. The Province will fund the development of Physical Activity Plans and potentially support their implementation. If staff resources are available, the Township should explore the interest of other providers in a Physical Activity Plan for Uxbridge.

Active 2010 will encompass new services and the development of new partnership networks to implement, given its broader emphasis on lifestyle advocacy and stronger links to the health sector. At the same time, certain initiatives may require minimal resources, particularly in the area of advocacy where services can be limited to advertising and promotion of messages regarding lifestyles associated with health. Some of this work, therefore, could be undertaken in the short-term, while larger tasks around plan and partnership development can be pursued over the longer-term.

#### *Arts and Culture Programming*

A reoccurring theme in the community consultation surrounding this Plan was the need for an expanded supply of arts and culture programs to establish a better balance with existing sport opportunities. As noted earlier, this will depend in part on improved access to appropriate facilities. However, with adequate staff support, the Township could work with existing arts providers, including private sector dance instructors, visual artists, and musicians, to expand the supply of community programs, in a manner consistent with the facilitation and partnering roles discussed in a subsequent section of the Plan.

**Action Plan #2:** Confirm Roles and Responsibilities and Investigate Opportunities to Expand Programming with Other Municipal Departments/Authorities and External Partners

#### *Partnerships among Municipal Departments/Authorities*

One of the major thrusts of the Strategic Master Plan is the integration and coordination of community-wide leisure services, both to optimize supply and to use available resources in the most cost-effective manner. This approach is logical and, more importantly, required in the face of diminishing financial resources for all providers.

As the agency with primary responsibility for leisure services, the Township should spearhead this initiative. As a first step, the Township could better define responsibilities and pursue greater coordination and cooperation within the municipal sector. All units within the corporate structure that are involved in leisure services should work together to provide programs that respond to community needs using all available municipal infrastructure. Parks, Recreation and Culture, the Library, heritage and tourism interests share a common purpose in meeting the community's leisure needs and, therefore, should do so collectively. The likely result of such collaboration will be program expansion in areas of interest and geographic areas of the Township. Need for expanded literacy programming, for example, might warrant the Library's use of community halls in the Uxbridge's hamlets and, as noted elsewhere in the Plan, tourism and heritage objectives can be integrated through the design of trail systems. Other opportunities for programming will likely emerge that would not under a more traditional, segregated view of services.

### *Community Partnerships*

Again, by virtue of its mandate, the Township is the designated leader in community partnership development. To operate a community-wide service network, all relevant partners must be appropriately involved in program provision. External partners that are closest to the Township in the provision of services include the volunteer recreation and culture organizations and the volunteer community hall/parks boards. These groups will continue to offer the bulk of community leisure programming in Uxbridge, and much of the Plan's direction with respect to policy and staffing is focused on defining and strengthening this partnership to support program expansion. The community hall boards, in particular, will require assistance from the Township in getting organized and oriented to perform a pro-active program role.

In addition to other leisure providers such as the YMCA and commercial interests, Active 2010 and broader definitions of wellness will now bring health and social service agencies into the partnership "mix" for leisure services. Although Departmental partnerships beyond the volunteer sector are currently limited to those with individual, private sector providers, the municipality has had positive experience working with the YMCA, local school boards and other non-municipal agencies in the past. Furthermore, health and social service agencies generally welcome the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with municipalities in providing programs that combine the fitness, social and health aspects of recreation. Now, in particular, provincial support is available through Active 2010 in the creation of partnership-driven Community Activity Plans.

Many partnership activities will require considerable work to plan and implement. However, areas of potentially immediate collaboration for the Township and other providers include promotion of each other's programs and services at community events held by partner agencies; ensuring that promotional material is always available at designated facilities belonging to each partner; holding joint registration evenings at several locations per programming season. These are discrete, specific tasks that can be undertaken with minimal organization. The Township would be the initiator of these activities, and would take responsibility for ensuring that the programs of the community's leisure volunteer sector are represented in these efforts.

### **Action Plan #3: Improve Program Planning and Delivery in Conjunction with other Partners and the Volunteer Sector**

Programs and services are the result of planning activities, which are cyclical and ongoing. Needs for each program session should be established in the previous session to allow sufficient lead-time for program design and implementation. Initially at least, semi-annual planning meetings should be held to discuss program plans for the upcoming season, discuss emerging needs, identify gaps and overlaps, identify required Township support (e.g., assistance with accessing appropriate facilities, equipment, staff recruitment, etc.), and plan joint promotion/publicity efforts. Ideally, the Township should hold separate planning sessions with representatives of the local volunteer sector and with outside agencies. While the overall intent is to create an integrated service network, the mandates, resources and concerns of volunteers may differ from those of agencies and institutions. Also, managing such a large group in a working session could inhibit arriving at the decisions needed for the next steps in program design and implementation.

Clearly, implementing a comprehensive and effective planning process involving a number of different groups and agencies is a considerable task. If approached incrementally, however, it can evolve in keeping

with the capacities of the parties involved and, at least in the short-term, should be kept simple. The Township's first focus in this area should be increased coordination with other non-profit agencies, both due to past experience in working with these types of agencies and the need to integrate the health and social service sectors in programming.

Over time, the scope and sophistication of planning should be increased to include other public and quasi-public agencies, and interested private/commercial sector operators. Eventually, a community-wide inventory of programs and services in all sectors could be developed. This tool could be used locally for referral purposes by partner agencies, and beyond the community for tourism development. Individual agencies should carry out ongoing planning tasks in their service areas for use in community-wide program development and, to the extent possible, these efforts should be coordinated among partners to ensure comparable information sharing (e.g., ideally, program statistics among all agencies should track numbers at registration, loss of participants, waiting lists, etc.). The long-term outcome of these efforts should be a streamlined, responsive service network in which each partner assumes an appropriate niche in program provision with the necessary Township support.

### **Summary Program and Activity – Products of the Plan**

The following are the key products of the Plan's Program and Activity Action Plans:

- A significantly expanded supply of programs for youth, physical activity and healthy lifestyles and arts and culture, supported by appropriate facilities and partnerships with the community to support this programming;
- Clear and supportive roles and responsibilities among municipal staff, municipal departments and other public agencies for the delivery of parks, recreation and culture programs in a manner that maximizes services, avoids duplication and makes best use of available resources;
- Formal procedures and expanded partnerships with other community agencies for programming; and
- Improved procedures for planning, managing and evaluating programs provided by the Township but also the volunteer sector and other community interests.

## **4.3 DELIVERY SYSTEM**

### *Current Status and Identified Needs*

- Generally, Uxbridge residents and volunteer organizations are very well satisfied with the manner in which the Township provides and operates leisure services, and its support for others in program provision. Consequently, required delivery system improvements focus on making it more effective by clarifying the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department's roles and responsibilities in service provision and making these explicit in policy. Of particular importance is the need to define the Department's responsibilities in relatively new or growing areas such as tourism, heritage, and the arts, and the priority to be attached to services that serve visitors as well as residents.
- The Township's current role as indirect program provider is appropriate and should continue and be further developed. The Department's primary programming focus should be on facilitating

service delivery and entering into effective program partnerships. Its role as a direct programmer will continue to be secondary.

- The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department is organized to facilitate community programming. Working directly under the Department Director are three managers, one each for recreation programming, parks and arena, and museums. Under the supervision of the Recreation Program Manager is the Recreation Program Supervisor who coordinates the program delivery staff (i.e., part-time swim instructors, life guards, and summer camp councilors) The existing staff complement, however, is insufficient to assume the workload implied in the Strategic Master Plan, and appropriate staffing is required to ensure the Plan's successful implementation.
- In Uxbridge, service partners are currently limited to private individuals/businesses using municipal facilities to offer programs. In the past, the YMCA provided summer day camps using Township facilities, but these were eventually assumed by the municipality. Future partners could include other non-profit agencies, the library, school boards/schools, and other public agencies (e.g., public health, upper-tier parks agencies). Expanded services engaging more partners must be supported by expanded formal, partnerships - either in joint service provision or simply in planning and delegating responsibilities to various providers to minimize overlap and, therefore, competition. To date, limited activity in the area of partnerships has been largely due to lack of resources to undertake the required work. The Department's role and working relationship to other providers, therefore, must be supported by the appropriate staff resources.
- Important policy requirements include volunteer assistance and service pricing. Volunteers and Township staff need to know their respective roles and tasks in bringing services to the community. A rational pricing policy is required to ensure equitable and reasonable fees for service.
- Historically, the Township's rural community halls have been managed by autonomous volunteer boards, and this arrangement worked well in maintaining active community centres in the Township's hamlets. Shifting demographics and lifestyles, and recent changes in provincial legislation, however, have contributed to an overall decline in the use of these facilities. Some are now used only periodically, while others are unavailable for public use pending upgrades to conform to provincial water regulations. In recent years, the Township has had to assume responsibility for booking the halls, due to concerns regarding increased liability. The relationship between the governing boards and the Township vary, as do their needs for support and assistance. The community favours continued and strengthened local volunteer involvement in facility management. At the same time, the municipality cannot afford to continue supporting significantly underused facilities. The future relationship between the Township and local volunteer management boards must be clarified, and made consistent, through formal agreements.

### **Recommended Action Plans**

Implementing initiatives in the areas of parks, facilities and programs requires a delivery system that has resources and is both coordinated and consistent in its approach to service development and provision. The Strategic Master Plan, therefore, focuses on building the required base of policy, human resources and partnerships to ensure that this happens. In many instances, Uxbridge already has some of the relevant components of a comprehensive delivery structure, and the following recommendations further develop these, along with new elements, into an integrated framework.

The Township can improve the delivery of parks, recreation and culture services with the following five Action Plans.

**Action Plan#1:** Confirm the Department's Program Role

**Action Plan #2:** Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery

**Action Plan #3:** Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery

**Action Plan #4:** Establish Partnership Agreements with Rural Hall/Parks Boards

**Action Plan #5:** Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning

These Action Plans are summarized in the following table and discussed in the remainder of this section of the report.

Recommended Action Plan	Rationale
<b>Action Plan #1: Confirm the Department's Program Role</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a formal program role for the Department that confirms the current focus on facilitation and partnership.</li> <li>▪ Clarify the Department's role in tourism, heritage and the arts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To address both current and future program needs, the Township will be required to expand its role in program development and support, particularly through facilitation and partnerships.</li> <li>▪ A clear sense of what this role and associated functions are, is needed to delineate what the Township's resources will be directed to, and to inform the community about what the Township is able to do.</li> <li>▪ To clarify the Department's responsibilities areas such as tourism, heritage, and the arts.</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #2: Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retain a full time administrative assistant within the Department to allow the existing Recreation Supervisor to concentrate solely on recreation and culture services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing staffing complement cannot perform additional work associated with the Strategic Master Plan, so additional staff is critical to providing required manpower to add, and possibly shift, responsibilities among personnel</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #3: Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop policies for pricing/user fees, volunteer support, facility allocation, community funding, and capital conservation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy development is a time consuming process, so should be initiated as soon as possible</li> <li>▪ Collectively, policies are directed towards achieving an overriding goal in the provision of recreation and culture services, so should support and complement each other in their design and application</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #4: Establish Partnership Agreements with Rural Hall/Parks Boards</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare agreements with the Hall/Park Boards to clarify the partnership between the Board and the Township.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To ensure the retention of rural halls and parks in isolated locations in a manner that maximizes use and makes the best use of available resources.</li> <li>▪ To create a formal, mutually beneficial relationship between the Township and volunteer boards</li> <li>▪ Parameters must be set to justify of continued Township support for community halls and associated facilities that are currently underused</li> </ul>
<b>Action Plan #5: Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt a formal procedure for compiling information to evaluate services and prepare long range plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Department should have the capabilities to update the Strategic Master Plan on a regular basis</li> <li>▪ The outcomes and service delivery principles identified for this plan should be monitored and the Department's success in achieving desired outcomes evaluated on a regular basis</li> </ul>

**Action Plan#1:** Confirm the Department's Program Role

*Program Development*

Smaller Ontario municipalities are increasingly being required to assume a larger role in program and service delivery. Both expanding program needs and interests, and greater complexities involved in service delivery (e.g., legislative requirements, higher user expectations) demand more resources than volunteer organizations can reasonably provide. Despite overall positive views on the assistance the Township now provides, volunteer organizations in Uxbridge reported a number of concerns, including the challenge of volunteer recruitment, training and certification, fundraising difficulties, and problems with marketing and promotion. These are typical issues facing the volunteer sector throughout Ontario. Community interest and trends also clearly indicate the need for more, different types of programming, while retaining the current supply and continuing infrastructure development/maintenance responsibilities. These considerations suggest the Department should expand its role as a community programmer. The Township currently performs some program support functions extremely well, but all areas of its involvement will likely require some degree of expansion or improvement to meet future program needs. The following outlines different aspects of the Township's role that are central to effectively support program development and provision.

As a facilitator, the Township will:

- Provide support for volunteers offering high quality, cost-effective programs and services in the Township;
- Work with existing volunteers recreation organizations and the Community Hall/Park Boards to expand programming and increase the use of rural community halls with new programs and events;
- Foster the development of new community groups; working with new and existing groups to expand programming to respond to needs and trends;
- Encourage, support and provide training programs to improve the quality of leadership in recreation activities by staff and volunteers;
- Serve as a liaison between the Community Hall Boards/Park Boards, School Boards, the Public Library and other community organizations;
- Expand marketing and improve community awareness of parks, recreation and culture services;
- Provide assistance, as required, in areas such as program design, evaluation, etc.;
- Help groups recruit, retain and recognize volunteers; and
- Assist groups with grant applications or fundraising efforts.

As a partner, the Township can bring resources and expertise to a particular project in combination with another agency or organization. In this case, the municipality would take a direct role in the program's development but costs and responsibilities would be shared. The Township currently assists commercial recreation businesses in the community offer programs to residents using municipal facilities (e.g., aerobics at the Uxpool hall). This is an appropriate role for the Township, and lends itself particularly well to expanding programming in outlying community halls. This model can be applied to a variety of program initiatives whereby the Township markets a program, arranges for the space and recruits individuals to offer

programs (e.g., private dance instructors, music instructors, local artists, etc.) Partnerships may be possible with other public or quasi-public agencies, private sector providers, or non-profit organizations.

In a limited number of situations the Township may act as a direct program provider and assume responsibility for all aspects of the program, including design, delivery, staffing and evaluation. While most programs will be offered through facilitation or partnership, direct program delivery would be appropriate if:

- There is an immediate need to respond to continually high levels of community demand and no other provider is available;
- For reasons of liability, knowledge, skill level, and past experience, the Department is the only feasible program provider;
- Programs contribute to important or essential program goals that are not being met through other providers - such as preventative health and wellness, safety or environmental protection (e.g., learn to swim, water safety, life skills, environmental awareness); or
- The Township can through direct program delivery realize revenues that can be used to offset the cost of programs requiring a subsidy.

Currently, the Department's direct programming is largely focused on the Uxpool and summer day camps. This is appropriate and should continue.

The role of the community hall boards is an important consideration in the Township's future recreation program development strategy. Expanded programming is possible and desirable in the community halls managed by the Boards. Currently, limited use of most of these spaces is occurring, and not all of the Boards have the resources to deliver community programming. It is likely, however, that more programs would result if the Hall Boards were supported by more staff time committed to program development, as discussed further below. The Township's role in support of the hall boards and other volunteers is discussed elsewhere in the report.

### *Arts and Culture*

As a relatively new area in community programming, arts and culture often needs the types of assistance that established areas of sport and recreation programming no longer require. In most Ontario communities, the arts and culture sector is underdeveloped in terms of organization and coordination among the various groups providing programs and services. Consequently, needs and concerns that could be more effectively dealt with collectively are duplicated at an individual group level with insufficient resources to address them. A lack of structure and connection also undermines the potential profile the arts community as a whole might otherwise command, and the true extent and value of its resources are not well known. From a service perspective, the groups may not be aware of the support available from the Township to offer programs.

The arts and culture community in Uxbridge is well established and relatively extensive compared to other similar-sized communities. Recently released research based on the 2001 Census<sup>1</sup> indicates that among

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<sup>1</sup> Hill Strategies Research Inc. "Artists in Small and Rural Municipalities in Canada." Vol. 4. No. 3. February 2006

Ontario municipalities of less than 50,000 population, Uxbridge's labour force comprises 1.1% artists.<sup>2</sup> Like the arts in other communities, however, the groups and individuals involved are insufficiently organized to effectively offer programs and services.

As with other volunteer organizations, the Township's role is to support and assist arts and culture groups to provide their services to the community. Unlike the situation with more established groups, however, the Township can provide these organizations - at least initially - with more basic help in structuring an approach to developing and providing programs. The local Arts Association is the ideal vehicle through which the individual arts and culture groups can be connected, organized and contacted. The Association can act as a liaison between the arts community and the Township in bringing artists' needs to the municipality's attention, and in helping the Township respond appropriately. Through the Association, the Township can undertake an active outreach function to communicate to the groups the types of support that are available to volunteer organizations that provide community programs and services. The Township, for example, might provide the groups with specific information on the help a first-time programmer can expect from the Township (e.g., finding space, advertising, supplies and registration). A first step, therefore, is consultation between the Arts Association and the Township regarding their relationship and respective responsibilities in organizing and assisting the various member organizations.

### *Tourism*

Tourism is not an explicit component of the Department's leisure mandate, and this is appropriate. Tourism falls within the economic development function of the municipality, and primary responsibility for attracting visitors to the area should rest with local and regional tourism authorities. However, we understand that the Township does not have dedicated tourism/economic development staff and there are clear links between the Department's services and tourism, particularly in the areas of arts/culture, heritage, trails and special events. Consequently, there is merit in investigating opportunities to capitalize on the tourism potential of parks, recreation and culture services while maintaining the Department's focus on community-based services. The following outlines possible ways in which the Township can pursue the dual objectives of community leisure and tourism service development:

- The Township's trails present a major opportunity to attract visitors, through promotion and the provision of amenities to accommodate self-directed trail users (e.g., parking, high quality mapping at trail heads, good directional signage, washrooms, etc.);
- As noted above, Uxbridge has an extensive, built heritage resource, for which programming at specific sites is appropriately focused on the visitor market. The Township should investigate ways to ensure that these facilities are properly restored, accessible to visitors and offer related programs, where appropriate;
- We understand that there are some efforts now to promote arts-related events such as studio tours, etc. and it is our expectation that, as the arts and culture community increases its organization and presence in Uxbridge, more opportunities will emerge in this area. The Township can continue to work with the Arts Association to identify and pursue these types of tourist attractions;

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<sup>2</sup> Artists include actors, artisans and craftspersons, conductors, composers and arrangers, dancers, musicians and singers, sculptors and other visual artists, producers, directors, choreographers, writers.

- Special events also offer opportunities to attract visitors and, if twinned with other attractions, can encourage longer stays; and
- Uxbridge currently produces a considerable amount of high quality literature about available facilities and services. The need to coordinate and integrate the pieces related to tourism, however, is important to promoting a “package” of attractions for visitors (e.g., heritage sites and trails). We understand that the Township is currently preparing promotional tour material for heritage sites. The possibility of integrating information on other visitor attractions in this package should be considered.

If the Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments is to support tourism in this manner, funding must be available. Coordination among services and relevant sectors of the community must also be established. In the area of services, opportunities to physically link interesting “destination points” to trails should be considered (e.g., heritage sites, parks that host special events, etc). The Master Plans for park properties (recommended elsewhere), and particularly Elgin Park, should consider a possible expanded role for special events. The need to coordinate with the downtown business community and other private sector providers that are interested in attracting visitors is also required. A formal working group, with representation from the Department, municipal economic development interests, relevant volunteer groups, the local Chamber of Commerce, and private business might be established to plan a coordinated strategy for tourism development.

#### **Action Plan #2:** Retain Additional Staff to Support Program Development and Service Delivery

As noted above, the Department’s existing staff complement is insufficient to assume the expanded programming that the Strategic Master Plan envisions. Indeed, without the required staff resources, it will not be possible for the Township to progress much further in developing a broader program base.

Among current positions, the Recreation Manager is assigned the duties that are consistent with facilitated program development including:

- Research and identification of aquatic and recreation program needs;
- Staff and program development and management;
- Policy development pertaining to recreation programs and community development;
- Reviewing program delivery approaches, direct delivery or alternate service approach;
- Marketing and promotion initiatives and strategies; and
- Maintain liaison with Township staff and council.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, however, these tasks are not being undertaken since the position is fully occupied with managing the Uxpool and the Township’s summer camp program, much of which involves administrative work. Given the existence of a position incorporating the responsibilities of facilitated program development, it would be preferable to adjust staffing arrangements to allow the transfer of some of the Manager’s existing

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<sup>3</sup> Source: Township of Uxbridge. Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture. Job Classification Description.

administrative workload to other personnel. Time will then be released for the Recreation Manager to engage in the above-noted activities.

Among the remaining staff positions, only two are directly or indirectly related to programming. A second full-time position that assists the Recreation Manager is the Recreation Supervisor.<sup>4</sup> This position is fully dedicated to overseeing Uxpool staff, their training, affiliated programs, and scheduling. The Facility Booking Clerk's position promotes and administers hall and arena bookings. Neither of these positions can reasonably assume the required volume of the Manager's administrative work to free adequate time for program development. Indeed, there will likely be an increase in the support these positions provide to the Recreation Program Manager as a result of program expansion (e.g., growth in facility bookings).

In our view, an additional staff position will be required to allow the Recreation Program Manager to properly engage in program development activities. Given the need to transfer some of the Manager's administrative responsibilities to another position, it would be reasonable to hire one full-time administrator. This position would become responsible for administrative tasks that are currently undertaken by the Manager and can reasonably be removed from the Manager's job description. The new administrative position should also be charged with additional administrative tasks that the Strategic Plan will generate. We understand, for example, that the Township is interested in creating a computerized program registration system. The planning activities envisioned by the Plan would ideally be supported by such a system, particularly if it could be designed to track trends in registration over time, keep detailed wait lists, monitor requests for programs that are not available, etc. Other computer applications could include service evaluations, attendance at special events over time, etc. In addition to transferred responsibilities, therefore, this position could support essential planning functions.

In addition to the above-noted responsibilities, the Recreation Program Manager will play a central role in developing partnerships among providers, and in directing planning and evaluation activities. Although the Recreation Program Manager would rely on the Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture for guidance and supervision, and will receive support from other staff, this position bears sole responsibility for programming. Assuming 20 hours per week of the Manager's time can be dedicated to program development, the demands of the job will far exceed this amount. Initially, therefore, progress will be slower than a full-time position could generate and will require the Manager to carefully assign priorities and schedules to tasks, to make the most of available time. This approach, however, offers a cost-effective and relatively seamless way of developing the Township's programming mandate. In addition, there is no question that the program development responsibilities in the Recreation Program Manager's job description need to be implemented if the Strategic Master Plan's programming and delivery system objectives are to be achieved.

The effectiveness of a revised staff complement will be evidenced by the results of monitoring growth in programs and partnerships. The Township, however, should undertake a formal operational review in the

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<sup>4</sup> In view of the assumption of program responsibilities envisioned in the Plan, the titles of these positions should be changed to Recreation Program Manager and Assistant Recreation Program Manager, and these titles are used for the balance of the discussion.

next 3-5 years to review staff requirements resulting from the initial implementation of the directions in this Plan. We expect this will indicate a need for additional programming/community development staff.

While not justified at this point, the operational review noted above should evaluate staff requirements associated with growth in arts, culture and heritage services as well as the relationship to cultural tourism. Given the Strategic Plan's future directions in these areas, additional staff may be needed during the term of the Plan. Should service needs support hiring additional staff, the Township may wish to consider creating a position to manage cultural services. Currently, the Department's full-time cultural staff is limited to a Curator to manage the Uxbridge Historical Centre. A Manager of Culture Services would be responsible for all arts, culture and heritage services in the Township, and could assume existing curatorial duties, if required.

**Action Plan #3:** Develop Policy to Support Service Delivery

While the absence of detailed policy has not created significant problems in the delivery of services, policy should be developed to guide future planning and decision-making. The key areas to be addressed with new or expanded policies are noted below.

*Volunteer assistance*

Future programming in Uxbridge will be more heavily dependent on the volunteer sector. Program development and expansion will be almost entirely pursued through facilitation and partnership, requiring the Department to become more involved in supporting the volunteer sector. In addition, as noted above, staff resources must be committed to this program development function.

The Department's activities in this area should be supported by a policy that states the purpose or goals of the Department's volunteer development initiatives, the way in which the Department will provide support to community recreation and culture groups, and specifics on the nature and extent of the support to be provided. The Volunteer Development Policy should contain, at minimum, the following components:

- A statement recognizing the contribution of volunteers and community groups to the quality of life in Uxbridge and to the services offered by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department;
- A statement indicating the Department's commitment to support local volunteer and community groups in their efforts to provide leisure programs and services;
- Guidelines outlining the services and support available from the Department for volunteers and volunteer organizations; and
- Guidelines describing how the municipality will participate with volunteers in joint capital development projects or to support facility upgrades and improvements.

Table 4.1 describes some of the initiatives that might be undertaken in support of volunteers that would be documented in a Volunteer Development Policy. These initiatives would be consistent with the Department's program role, are generally consistent with current practices, and would largely be the responsibility of the Recreation Program Manager.

**Table 4.1: Volunteer Development and Support Policy Components**

<b>Municipal Responsibilities</b>	<b>Approach/Activities</b>
Standardize procedures for maintaining regular contact with voluntary organizations and for providing administrative and operational assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assistance might involve providing guidance for establishing new groups, helping with promotion and publicity; identifying grants, and preparing funding applications; making arrangements for the use of facilities, etc.</li> <li>▪ Ensuring communication and contact between the municipality and volunteer organizations with regular meetings and established procedures (such as a regular schedule for submitting budget requests).</li> </ul>
Help volunteers to get established in new program areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Find suitable facilities for programs.</li> <li>▪ Assist with promotion and marketing of new programs.</li> <li>▪ Provide "seed money" for initial program development expenses (e.g., to contribute to equipment costs, publicity and organizations costs). This funding would be limited, on the expectation the group would be self-sufficient in an agreed-upon timeframe.</li> </ul>
Encourage other sectors of the community to support volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage business and service clubs to sponsor volunteer groups and to provide specific services (e.g., secretarial, printing, equipment).</li> </ul>
Encourage volunteers to participate in training programs to improve effectiveness of their activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigate the availability of appropriate programs.</li> <li>▪ Investigate interest in training programs among voluntary organizations.</li> <li>▪ Identify other organizations (e.g., School Boards, Library Board, Health of Social Service agencies) to co-sponsor programs for volunteers.</li> </ul>
Provide short term financial assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a community funding policy for this purpose (discussed elsewhere in the Strategic Master Plan).</li> </ul>

*Pricing/User Fees*

While the Township has a schedule of fees, it does not have a comprehensive user fee policy or a documented strategy for revenue enhancement. Increasingly, municipal leisure authorities are being asked to provide expanded and improved services without resources from senior levels of government. Capital grants from the Province of Ontario for recreation facility development were commonplace in Ontario for the past 20 years and contributed to the current supply of recreation and culture facilities in most communities. Grants of this type are no longer available. Similarly, operating grants and special program grants are rare and changes in legislation (e.g., the revised Development Charges legislation) make it increasingly difficult to access non-municipal funds for parks, culture and recreation facilities and programs. The full cost of leisure services is now largely the responsibility of the local municipality. This shift in responsibility is, of course, accompanied by a continued resistance among local taxpayers to increases in their assessments for municipal services.

For municipalities, therefore, the challenge is to generate a larger share of capital and operating funds from sources other than the local tax base without restricting the community's access to essential parks and recreation services. To accomplish this, municipalities require effective user fee policies and a more aggressive approach to securing alternative revenue sources.

Uxbridge charges user fees for a number of recreation services. A policy is not in place, however, that provides a rationale for a full range of user fees and charges. Such a policy should be developed with the objective of maximizing revenues without restricting access to parks and recreation services. Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) has developed guidelines for municipalities preparing user fee policies with this

objective in mind. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department should obtain these guidelines and prepare a detailed user fee policy to maximize revenues from users.

A central principle of the Township's user fee policy (and all other policies) should be consistency in approach. In this regard, we see no reason why fees for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities used by organized sports and recreation groups should be treated in a different manner. The Township currently does not charge user fees for minor league use of ball diamonds or soccer pitches, despite the fact that they provide services for users. There is a per player charge for maintaining fields but this is a one-time levy that is not related to use. The Township should, in consultation with users, review fees for indoor facilities and establish fees for outdoor facilities. Consistent with the approach noted above and outlined in the PRO documents, these fees should recover some portion of municipal costs without unduly restricting community access to programs. The costs to be covered must be determined in consultation with the community, and should be consistent across all types of facilities. Of course, municipal costs are directly related to level of service provided to users and this, therefore, would also be a point for discussion in arriving at user fees for outdoor fields and possibly revising indoor facility fees.

The Department should also investigate other revenue producing strategies that will help offset operating costs without passing on fee increases to residents. These strategies might involve amore aggressive approaches to the sale of advertisements in major facilities and marketing material (e.g., the seasonal brochure); sponsorships; programs for donations and bequests, etc. In addition, a rental fee policy should be established such that various types of organizations are paying a reasonable and largely consistent rent for use of municipal facilities. Reasonable fees should be established based on the quality of the facilities and either the revenues that can be realized through programming or the cost of comparable facilities. Consistency should also be explored. The current fee schedule lists different rental fees for each of the community halls, without a rationale for the disparities. For example, karate is charged \$25.00 per night at Zephyr Hall, while yoga and line dancing are charged \$15.00 per hour at Siloam Hall. While there may be legitimate reasons for the variations, this approach will inhibit efforts to simultaneously increase the use of all of these facilities if some are less expensive than others. In addition, it appears that these rates have been set for each specific use at these particular facilities, rather than for a category of use at all the halls (or at least, all the halls for which the same rates would justifiably apply). Any variations in rental fees should be supported by clear rationale, although differences should be kept to a minimum. Rental rates for older, smaller halls in need of capital upgrades, for example, might be priced at a lower rate initially with the intention of raising rates to that of newer facilities if increased use justifies required upgrades. The need to establish a discounted rental rate for non-profit organizations in relation to that paid by for-profit groups should be addressed, as non-profits that serve the Township indicated the need to control these costs to provide reasonably priced programs.

Finally, program fees for leisure programming within the municipal corporation (e.g., Parks, Recreation and Culture, Library) should be comparable to eliminate competition among different sectors, while balancing equity and cost recovery objectives. This supports the corporate view of programming and service provision discussed above. Ideally, fees consistency and comparability will extend to the services of other agency providers as well, but the Township has less control over the cost recovery needs of non-municipal agencies. At the same time, there may be opportunities to adjust the program design or delivery to bring fees more in line with those that are typical.

### *General Facility Allocation Policy*

The Township has an ice allocation policy that assigns priority to users, outlines qualifying criteria for groups/users, and provides for the introduction of new users into the arena schedule. It also contains regulations and procedures for tournaments/special events, vandalism, and payment. A similar policy should be developed for other Township facilities that are scheduled by organized users. This will be particularly important if gymnasium and new multipurpose space is provided and for space designed to serve emerging arts and culture interests. Although outdoor playing fields are not now used to capacity, the Strategic Master Plan's recommendations on expanding programming and bringing facility supply more in line with need may eventually require a priority-driven approach to allocation if competing demands emerge. The following guidelines, most of which have been incorporated in the Township's ice allocation policy, are appropriate for facility allocation:

- Determine the facilities to be addressed in the policy - the policy should distinguish between types of facilities or facilities that are intended for specialized use (e.g., league use versus informal use);
- Determine whether policies apply at all times or only during prime time;
- Determine various user groups that should be reflected in the policy - the policy might distinguish between leisure/non-leisure groups; age groups (e.g., children, adults, seniors); special populations; gender; and established versus new groups. These are customary criteria for allocating facilities; and
- Determine the various types of uses to be reflected in the policy - the following uses might be assigned different priorities:
  - Profit/non-profit groups;
  - Special events;
  - Recreation skill level/advanced skill level;
  - Closed to the public/open to the public;
  - Subsidized/revenue-producing; and
  - Type of leisure activity (e.g., social, sport, cultural, etc.)

The priorities assigned for facility allocation will have obvious implications for the programs and services available to residents, the residents served, and the revenues and costs to the municipality. These implications must be assessed in refining the facility allocation policy. As is the case with the existing ice allocation policy, an expanded policy should incorporate guidelines regarding allocating facility time to new groups to establish new programs or activities. A central objective of the Strategic Master Plan is program development in new areas. It is essential, therefore, that facility allocation support this objective, even if it means existing programs may have to operate on reduced hours.

### *Community Funding Policy*

The Township of Uxbridge does not have a policy regarding the provision of financial support or short term operating grants to community groups providing recreation and culture services. A number of municipalities have developed policies that describe conditions under which they will provide funding in support of community initiatives. Frequently, these are cost-sharing arrangements where the municipality contributes matching or proportionate funds for approved projects. A Community Funding Policy has merit in Uxbridge,

both to support volunteer culture and recreation organizations with specific projects, (e.g., the Tennis Club's interest in a third court at the arena; community interest in upgrading the Uxbridge Secondary School track), and to clarify arrangements for financial support for Community Hall/Parks Boards.

A Community Funding Policy outlines the parameters for project-specific funding to community groups. It does not provide grants or subsidies on an on-going, regular basis to support a basic level of recreation or culture service in the Township. The Township should continue to support this level of service through its capital and operating contribution to facilities, support for marketing and program development and staffing. The Community Funding Policy will be used in situations where the Township is prepared to make a financial investment in a project or program operated by a community group. It is understood that this investment is made with the expectation of a return that benefits the community and justifies the expenditure.

Financial investment from the municipality could be requested for the following reasons:

- To build new or renovate existing facilities for the leisure activities of a group where this investment represents an enhanced level of service and is also financed by the group requesting assistance;
- To assist a new group with start-up costs with the expectation the investment will support a new community service that will be self-sufficient; and
- To directly subsidize the operating costs of a program or service, that would otherwise not be financially viable, because there is a social or economic return to the Township as a whole that justifies the investment.

These three cases should be addressed in a Community Funding Policy in a different manner.

A number of municipalities have introduced programs where they financially support community groups wishing to upgrade existing or develop new facilities. In some cases, this is on a cost-sharing basis and in others it is in the form of a no-interest loan. Both types of financial assistance are appropriate and can create very effective partnerships for facility development and upgrades. This type of arrangement would be appropriate with the Community Hall/Parks Boards interested in upgrading local parks or facilities but could also apply to projects identified by a sport organization or other community group. The following considerations would generally be reflected in these policies:

- Facilities in question must be publicly accessible and serve Uxbridge residents;
- Funding would only be available to non-profit community organizations;
- All other sources of funding will be investigated before the funding application is considered;
- Requests for funding would have to be submitted in a prescribed fashion and according to a schedule that allows the Department to incorporate these in its annual budgeting process;
- Community organizations would be responsible for demonstrating the need for the facility or desired upgrades and, if a loan is involved, demonstrating financial viability;
- In situations where the Township provides a loan, this would be an investment that allows a viable community project to proceed more quickly. The community organization would be expected to contribute financing to the project as well;

- In situations where the Township contemplates providing a loan, the community organization should be expected to demonstrate the benefits to the municipality;
- In cost sharing situations, the community organization would be expected to come up with their share of the funds before the municipality made its contribution. This share would be clearly set out in the policy (e.g., 50% of the approved capital expenditure after grants from external sources) and
- The decision to cost share or provide a loan would be based on the Township's standards concerning core facilities. The municipality must define standards of service for all leisure facilities (discussed elsewhere in the plan for outdoor facilities). This involves both defining what types of facilities are to be provided by the municipality and an acceptable quality or standard of development for the facility. If the request for assistance will result in facilities that meet the Township's standards for core facilities, cost sharing would be appropriate. In other cases, the Township should consider an interest free loan.

Start-up funding for new organizations should also be considered in the Community Funding Policy. Start-up funding might be provided for a number of purposes, including purchase of equipment, access to facilities, staff assistance, marketing or organizational assistance and advice. This would be a short-term investment to help establish a self-sufficient program that can serve residents for a number of years. This funding should only be provided in response to a business plan. The business plan would demonstrate the financial viability of the project and the anticipated benefits to the community. Financing would generally be provided for the short term (2-3 years) on a declining basis. The business plan should demonstrate ongoing viability after the start-up period. As with the direct financing noted above, this funding would generally only be available to non-profit community organizations serving a demonstrated need in Uxbridge.

Municipalities do not normally provide ongoing annual operating grants to community recreation or culture organizations, other than covering the shortfall in the costs of maintaining and developing community facilities that is not covered by user fees, and assuming staff costs for program development, community development and marketing. In special circumstances, however, the Township may wish to provide additional assistance. This might be the case, for example, if it can be demonstrated that there are directly related economic benefits that justify the investment. (e.g., an investment in a special event that brings visitors into the community and supports local business). Similarly, a program directed at a special population – such as youth at risk – might be worthy of a direct investment because of the unique social benefits associated with the program. Community Hall/Parks Boards might also require operating grants for specific projects. In these situations, Council should consider a direct operating investment if justified by the anticipated social or economic return for the community. The onus, however, should be on the community organization to demonstrate that their program or facility is directly responsible for economic or social benefits that justify the investment. A business plan or similar assessment should be prepared by community organizations requesting a direct operating subsidy and they might be requested to demonstrate that the anticipated benefits are realized.

A Community Funding Policy of this type, if carefully developed and consistently implemented, can be very beneficial to the Township. It is clearly preferable to ad hoc decisions made in the absence of any Council approved policy. More importantly, it provides Council with the opportunity to strategically invest in community projects that might not otherwise proceed, as well as a sound rationale for consistently and

equitably rejecting proposals of limited merit. In communities that have adopted these policies, an annual maximum municipal contribution is sometimes established and criteria are adopted to set priorities when requests exceed the maximum. While committees of Council and staff are sometimes formed to review these requests, the intent is to have a Council approved policy that is clear enough to allow staff to administer the program. The purpose is defeated if Council reviews and approves requests on a case by case basis, particularly if exceptions that contradict the policy are granted - as is often the case when Council intervenes.

### *Capital Conservation Policy*

Capital conservation deals with repairs and replacement of major building components and systems due to natural aging, facility design, construction or maintenance problems. Without a capital conservation fund, the Township could be faced with major capital repair expenses and no resources to undertake the work. We understand that the Township has a capital reserve fund, but that contribution to the reserve is not based on anticipated capital costs and is not guided by a policy that stipulates the requirement for an annual contribution of a designated magnitude. There is interest, however, in developing a capital conservation policy and this discussion outlines an approach to its preparation.

Initially, the Township should undertake a comprehensive review of existing infrastructure to identify capital conservation requirements, life expectancy of major components, and future financial liabilities. (This is being done for the Uxpool, and could also be undertaken for other Township facilities). This should be done so that the cost of maintaining the existing infrastructure is known and can be used in planning for future expenditures. Relevant costs would include those associated with the original infrastructure as well as those that have since become mandatory through legislation requirements (e.g., the Ontarians with Disabilities Act). These costs must be determined, and included with other standard capital conservation items, for the Township to have a complete understanding of its future financial liabilities.

Based on the costs identified by a detailed capital conservation assessment, the Township should annually allocate a specified amount to a capital conservation fund. Once a reserve fund is established, it should be monitored annually and its adequacy assessed based on the amount accumulated in reserve, the maintenance and repairs completed, and the anticipated costs of future repairs and renovations. In the absence of information provided by the capital conservation study, the Township might establish an interim reserve based on general guidelines that have sometimes been adopted for this purpose. It is sometimes recommended that municipalities establish reserves based on a minimum of 1% of the replacement cost of existing facilities.

The capital conservation study will also identify issues associated with the long-term sustainability of the Township's facilities. In particular, the ability to retain some of the community halls may have to be reconsidered in light of anticipated capital expenditures for both accessibility upgrades and capital conservation. This information should be assembled so that the Township has a solid basis upon which to address this issue with the Community Hall/Parks Boards.

**Action Plan #4:** Establish Partnership Agreements with Rural Hall/Parks Boards

A Township document outlines the roles and responsibilities of Community Centre Associations (referred to in the Plan as Hall/Park Boards). It specifies their composition, term of office, officers, meeting details, and the role of the Township and Council's representative. The duties of the Associations, as listed in this document, are generally in keeping with our rationale for establishing formal agreements between the Township and the Hall/Parks Boards. This document, therefore, envisioned a more pro-active and consistent approach to the volunteer management of these rural community halls and their associated facilities. Given the current situation with respect to underuse of these facilities and an increasing liability to the municipality, there is a need to reassess the documented roles and responsibilities of the volunteer Hall/Parks Boards, to further define and formalize the relationship between the Boards and the Township.

The foundation of a renewed relationship is an agreement based on roles and responsibilities that are mutually beneficial and clearly stated. The Township should be prepared to invest in the Boards' facilities as a cost effective means to provide services in rural hamlets. The Boards should be prepared to demonstrate that the Township's investment results in a level of service that justifies the expenditure. Both the Township and the Boards must agree to operate in a manner that respects the needs and interests of the other party.

A possible model for the Township-Management Board partnership is outlined below. These suggestions should be reviewed with the Boards and, ultimately, formal agreements with each Board should be adopted. All Boards wishing to maintain a relationship with the Township should be governed by the terms of the agreement. If some chose not to enter into an agreement with the Township, the municipality should divest itself of any facilities associated with these Boards in a manner that protects their ongoing interests, and provide no further financial or other support. A reasonable time-frame to assess implementation of the agreements is two years from the date of signing. At that time, the success of the agreements can be evaluated and the Township can determine if sufficient progress has been made to continue its involvement. The Township, in consultation with the Boards, should develop criteria to be used to evaluate the success of programming/use initiatives at the two-year mark, and annually beyond that point.

*Financial Relationship*

The Boards should be eligible for Township funding to support the buildings and park sites they operate and programs and services that they provide. The Township's major contribution to infrastructure should address basic capital conservation requirements to ensure facilities meet all regulatory codes and safety requirements. The partnership agreement should clearly outline the Township's financial responsibility for facilities operated by the Boards. It would be reasonable for the Township to assume responsibility for major capital expenditures associated with the building or park infrastructure but to expect operations and maintenance to be largely funded through revenues associated with community use and fund-raising. Consequently, the Township should assume responsibility for such costs as a roof replacement but minor improvement and maintenance projects (such as installing new lighting, painting) and equipment purchases (e.g., a dishwasher, a sound system, etc.) which are not essential to the basic functioning of the facility should be financed through revenues generated by the Board. The Township should continue to cut the grass and maintain turf and lighting at active sports fields located in parks operated by the Boards but it

would be reasonable to cost-share with the Board for minor upgrades to the park (e.g., park furniture, another piece of play-ground equipment, etc.)

The Township should provide an operating grant to support Board facilities and parks, as required. The amount of the grant would be determined during the annual budget process, in response to documented requests that substantiate the need and viability of projects. These grants should reflect the unique circumstances of each facility/park and the level of activity and community service being provided by the Board. The Community Funding Policy discussed above should address the potential need for Township financial assistance to the Boards.

### *Operations and Management*

The Boards and the facilities, parks and programs they operate would be governed by a consistent set of policies designed to ensure the services meets the needs of the community, capital investments are protected, and the Township is not placed at risk. At minimum this would involve the following:

- Adopting appropriate procedures to manage risks and liabilities (e.g., associated with the rental of a building or the use of a park for licensed functions or special events; ensuring appropriate insurance coverage is in place; ensuring that all staff working at such functions have been trained in the Server Intervention Program, etc.);
- Maintaining and improving facilities and parks in accordance with Township guidelines and requirements. This would involve staff routinely inspecting the facility to ensure operating equipment and the physical structure is appropriately maintained for safe community use and to maintain the equipment and systems in the most cost effective manner;
- Conforming to standard municipal practices concerning financial accountability, the submission and approval of budgets, maintaining financial records, etc.; and
- Ensuring operations are consistent with Council approved policies respecting community programming, including user fees, facility allocation priorities, etc., which will be further developed as a result of this plan.

### *Programming and Community Use*

The Boards should be required to work with Department staff to identify programs of interest to the local community and to maximize the use of their facilities and parkland through promoting their use for a wide range of community and social events. Facilities and parks that are not well used would receive less municipal funding and staff support.

The Department should support the activities of the Boards by assisting with program identification and development, marketing programs, and, providing staff assistance and expertise, as required. Assuming staffing is increased as discussed above, this Recreation Program Manager should work closely with the Boards. Formal meetings between Township staff and the Boards should be regularly scheduled and the Recreation Program Manager should facilitate meetings among the Boards to share program ideas, investigate joint projects, coordinate schedules and fund-raising, etc. The Recreation Program Manager should also act as liaison between the Boards and other program providers such as the YMCA, the library etc. that might use their facilities, and should help the Board develop a strong and sustained leadership

base in the local community. The ongoing success of this partnership model will depend on expanded community development activities by staff.

The nature of the partnership between the Boards and the Township assumes an active, committed and involved volunteer group. While the range of activities may vary from one Board to the next, the ongoing municipal investment in facilities must be justified by reasonable levels of community use. This investment is made because the community is also willing to invest their time in supporting community events, working with the Recreation Program Manager to develop local programs, and partnering with the Township to continually improve the parks and facilities operated by the Board. If these conditions are not met, and an active Board is not in place, the Township should discontinue support to the Board and its facilities/activities.

**Action Plan #5:** Implement Procedures for Ongoing Planning and Evaluation

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department should establish a database to provide a solid and defensible basis for future planning and decision making. At minimum, the Department should undertake the following activities:

- Annually update the inventory of culture and recreation facilities and parkland, and document parkland supply according to Official Plan classifications;
- Identify measures to determine the capacity and use of facilities and ensure that scheduling procedures that are adopted provide data in this format. (e.g., the procedures used to schedule ball diamonds could be simply structured as input to a spreadsheet that would yield data on when diamonds are used, the extent to which prime time is fully committed, variations in use during the season, etc.) These data could then be used to ensure all existing resources were at capacity before providing new facilities. Ideally, computer based scheduling software would be used for this purpose;
- As the population increases, update per capita ratios of facility and parkland supply;
- Meet regularly with all user groups and partners for planning purposes; and
- Develop and track simple performance measures (discussed below) to monitor/evaluate changes in the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery over time.

These tasks will contribute to an ongoing database useful for planning and decision-making. It would also be valuable to occasionally (perhaps every 3 years) collect more broadly based community input on parks, recreation and culture needs. This might be done through such vehicles as community meetings hosted by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department and/or a short questionnaire for user groups and/or via the Township website (similar to those used for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan).

As noted above, performance measures should be adopted as part of the ongoing planning process. It would be advisable to develop simple performance measures to track the Department's progress in meeting the objectives of the Strategic Master Plan and to track changes in service delivery over time. Performance measures such as the following might be tracked:

- Number of participants in Department direct or partnered programs;
- Total number of program hours by broad categories of program description (sports, arts, general interest, etc);
- Program hours per capita provided in partnership with non-municipal providers;
- Total number of volunteer organizations affiliated with the Department and staff hours committed to volunteer support;
- Net operating cost per operating hour for major facilities;
- Proportion of cost recovery for selected programs and/or facilities;
- Municipal parkland per capita;
- Total funds committed to service improvements from community sources; and
- Proportion of total capital costs for local park or facility improvements contributed by local residents.

The Department could develop all of these measures from an in-house database. With additional information collection (e.g., a simple survey distributed to user groups annually or simple, consistent questions asked of people participating in the Department's programs) additional measures could be developed. The Department should identify a limited number of relevant performance measures to put in place immediately and add to these measures over time as resources permit.

Once data for a number of past performance periods is collected and analyzed, reasonable targets for the future can be established. This type of information can be used to determine where changes to the program/service mix, areas where new marketing strategies are warranted, etc., to improve financial and service-related performance. This type of performance-related data can also be used by the Department to help communicate the benefits of parks and recreation service to Council and to the community.

### **Summary - Delivery System – Products of the Plan**

The following Delivery System products will be available if these Action Plans are implemented:

- A clearly defined role for the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department in programming, support for arts and culture, heritage and tourism.
- Additional staff resources to support programming and community development.
- New policies to specifically address volunteer assistance, fees and pricing, facility allocation, community funding and capital conservation.
- A new formal agreement to govern partnerships between the Community Hall and Parks Boards and the Township that protects both parties from liability, justifies the Township's investment in parks and facilities, and ensures that community needs are met to the greatest extent possible through the use of these facilities.
- A comprehensive process for compiling data and evaluating services on an ongoing basis and a procedure for updating the Strategic Master Plan.

## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Table 5.1 outlines an implementation strategy for the Plan. The table lists recommended directions in each service area, notes other related strategic directions, identifies the party responsible for undertaking the work, and provides estimated capital and operating costs. While the Township is ultimately responsible for at least initiating all work related to the Plan, the distinction is made here between work that can be done exclusively by Parks, Recreation and Culture Department staff and that which will require them to consult or work with others. As can be seen from the table, implementing the majority of the Plan's directions will require the Department to work with other groups, agencies and individuals. This is to be expected, however, given the Township's primary role of facilitator in recreation and culture service development. The table also shows that the bulk of this work will be absorbed in staff costs, which emphasizes the need for sufficient staff resources to undertake it. Of course, implementing all of the recommendations assumes the Department's ongoing liaison with, and required approvals from, Township Council.

**Table 5.1 Implementation of Future Directions**

Future Direction(s) Parks and Facilities	Related Directions	Staff Only	Responsibility Department Staff in consultation with...	Estimated Cost	Comments
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare concept plans for Elgin Park, adjacent municipal property, and Kennedy Lands</li> </ul>			Community and park user groups	\$40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff to oversee completion by qualified professionals</li> <li>▪ Assumes the need for 2 concept plans</li> <li>▪ Staff to oversee work</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to implement Master Trails and Conservation Plan</li> </ul>			Volunteer Trail Committees		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trail promotion and marketing</li> </ul>			Volunteer Trail Committee	\$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ongoing costs covered by advertisement</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update park policies</li> </ul>	Overriding policy goals	X			
<b>Indoor Facilities</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve access to existing multi-purpose and meeting space</li> </ul>		X			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct detailed structural assessment of Uxpool</li> </ul>		X		\$10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff to oversee completion by qualified professional</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If a viable partnership is demonstrated, proceed with feasibility study for performing arts centre</li> </ul>			Township in conjunction with Board and arts Sector	\$50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only undertaken as a partnership</li> <li>▪ May preclude need for a study of the firehall (see below)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine availability and potential of fire hall to provide arts programming/gallery space</li> </ul>			Arts user groups	\$20,000 - \$23,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>If fire hall becomes available</u>, feasibility study would be required to establish potential of building to the converted for arts programming</li> <li>▪ Staff to oversee completion by qualified professionals</li> <li>▪ Capital costs to be determined</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare detailed feasibility study for indoor facilities at Kennedy House or elsewhere</li> </ul>			Community and facility user groups	\$35,000 - \$40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Depends on scope of project; capital costs assume all new construction of multi-purpose complex, including aquatic centre</li> <li>▪ Staff to oversee completion by qualified professionals</li> <li>▪ Capital costs to be determined by feasibility study</li> </ul>

**Table 5.1 Implementation of Future Directions**

Future Direction(s) Parks and Facilities	Related Directions	Staff Only	Responsibility Department Staff in consultation with...	Estimated Cost	Comments
<b>Outdoor Playing Field Directions</b>					
▪ Classify fields and establish prime-time		X	Field user groups		
▪ Determine capital and operations improvements for existing fields	Capital conservation policy development	x	Field user groups		
▪ Develop third lit diamond at Bonner Fields		X		Capital cost to be determined	▪ Staff to oversee construction
▪ Institute a field use and monitoring program	Service planning and evaluation	x	Field user groups		▪ Appropriate software and staff training needed (discussed elsewhere)
▪ Consider long-range potential to accommodate several activities with multi-purpose fields.		X	Future fields user groups	Staff cost	▪ As need is demonstrated
<b>Other Outdoor Sports and Recreation Facilities</b>					
▪ Audit existing facilities for improvements, conversions, etc.	Capital conservation policy development	X		Cost to be determined	
▪ Prepare development and maintenance guidelines for parks and outdoor facilities	Parks policy development	x	Community and user groups	\$10,000	▪ Cost allowance for consulting support
▪ Develop unscheduled outdoor facilities (playgrounds, multi-purpose pads, splash pads, skate board parks)		x	Youth, community, interested volunteer	\$100,000 (annually for capital)	▪ Capital costs will depend on actual facility requirements. An estimated \$100,000 annual average is assumed for life of the plan ▪ The skateboard park may be required in the short term to replace the existing facility
▪ Negotiate agreements for the joint provision and use of outdoor facilities at local schools			Facility user groups and school board	Staff cost	
<b>Program and Activity Directions</b>					
▪ Focus short-term initiatives in program development on those that capitalize on the use of existing infrastructure and those requiring minimal resources to implement		x	Existing and potential user groups	Staff cost	
▪ Township should take an active supporting role in helping the core of volunteers taking responsibility for the Youth Centre			Core volunteer group leading the initiative	Staff cost	

**Table 5.1 Implementation of Future Directions**

Future Direction(s) Parks and Facilities	Related Directions	Staff Only	Responsibility Department Staff in consultation with...	Estimated Cost	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Township should take the lead in investigating opportunities to pursue Active 2010 funding</li> </ul>		x	Other eligible partner agencies	\$15,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Possible Township contribution to a physical activity plan. Other partners would also contribute</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen internal municipal partnerships to develop a corporate view of leisure programming and to maximize use of all available infrastructure in program development</li> </ul>		x	Other corporate units/functions providing leisure services	Staff cost	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define and strengthen external partnerships with local volunteer sector</li> </ul>		x	Community volunteer sector		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will occur through new policy and staffing initiatives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pursue External partnerships with other agencies</li> </ul>			Non-municipal partners providing leisure and related programs/services	Staff cost	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Township should lead the development of coordinated program planning among all providers in Uxbridge</li> </ul>	Service planning and evaluation		All leisure service providers	Staff cost	
<b>Municipal Role Directions</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Township's primary role in program development is facilitator, and secondary role is direct program provider</li> </ul>	Policy development in the area of assistance to volunteers	X		Staff cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Township currently provides programs in this manner; Strategic Plan's recommendations will expand and strengthen this function</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Township, in conjunction with Arts Association, can play a coordinating/strengthening function in the arts and culture</li> </ul>	Policy development in the area of assistance to volunteers		Arts association, volunteer and other art and culture program providers	Staff cost	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Department should be a partner to tourism development, through working body with relevant representation and involvement related to available resources</li> </ul>	Complementary facility and program development		Representatives of tourism interests	Staff cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assumes tourism related capital or operating funding is available, as warranted, for selected projects</li> </ul>

**Table 5.1 Implementation of Future Directions**

Future Direction(s) Parks and Facilities	Related Directions	Staff Only	Responsibility Department Staff in consultation with...	Estimated Cost	Comments
<b>Staffing Directions</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire a full-time administrator to work at the Uxpool, assume Recreation Program Manager's current responsibilities for administration and new duties in implementing the Strategic Master Plan</li> </ul>	All directions related to program and activity development	NA		\$35,000 - \$40,000 (annual cost)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Existing Recreation Program Manager and Assistant Recreation Program Manager undertake expanded program development</li> </ul>	All directions related to program and activity development	NA		Existing staff cost	
<b>Policy Directions</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Start policy development in the short-term and coordinate individual policies to ensure they are directed to the Township's overriding goals in parks, recreation and culture service provision</li> </ul>				Staff cost	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare policies in the following areas: volunteer assistance, service pricing, facility allocation, community funding, capital conservation</li> </ul>	Parks policy development		Community and all relevant user groups, and other non-municipal service providers	Staff cost \$15,000 (consultant costs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assumes lead role by staff with consulting support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepare a study of all municipal recreation facilities to determine current deficiencies and future requirements for upgrades, maintenance and repairs; document costs of maintaining existing infrastructure and use to prepare future capital budgets</li> </ul>	Capital conservation policy		Community	\$20,000- \$25,000 (study costs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A minimum 1% of replacement costs of existing facility should be set aside in capital reserve fund to fund future facility upgrades and improvements</li> </ul>

**Table 5.1 Implementation of Future Directions**

Future Direction(s) Parks and Facilities	Related Directions	Staff Only	Responsibility Department Staff in consultation with...	Estimated Cost	Comments
<b>Township-Community Hall Board Agreements</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partnership between the Community Hall/Parks Boards and the Township should be governed by a formal agreement that protects both parties from liability, justifies the Township's investment in parks and facilities and ensures that community needs are met to the greatest extent possible through the use of Board-managed facilities.</li> </ul>	Policy development in the area of assistance to volunteers and community funding; staffing directions to provide program development functions		Hall and Park Boards	Staff cost	
<b>Planning and Evaluation</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adopt procedures required to generate a database for service planning and establish formal criteria to evaluate project priorities</li> </ul>	Facility use monitoring and program planning		Community and all relevant user groups, and other non-municipal service providers	\$15-20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Software costs/training</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify and implement performance measures for key aspects of service delivery</li> </ul>	Facility use monitoring and program planning		Community and all relevant user groups, and other non-municipal service providers	Staff cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Software costs/training included under facility use monitoring</li> </ul>