



**The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
Regular, Monday, January 30, 2023  
Council Chambers and Electronic Participation, 6:00 PM**

This Meeting will be held both in person at Council Chambers and electronically. Individuals who are feeling unwell are asked to watch the Meeting online at [www.stcatharines.ca/youtube](http://www.stcatharines.ca/youtube) rather than attend in-person.

Delegations to Council can be made in-person in Council Chambers or electronically through Zoom. Requests to delegate must be submitted using the [City's Electronic Delegation Form](#) by Monday, January 30, 2023, before 9:00 a.m. Those wishing to delegate through Zoom must attend a test session on Monday, January 30, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

*Public Comments: The public may submit comments regarding agenda matters to the Office of the City Clerk by contacting [clerks@stcatharines.ca](mailto:clerks@stcatharines.ca) by Monday, January 30, 2023, before Noon.*

*His Worship Mayor Mat Siscoe takes the Chair and opens the meeting with a Land Acknowledgement*

- 1. Mayor's Report**
- 2. Adoption of the Agenda**
- 3. Adoption of the Minutes**
  - 3.1 Special Council, minutes of [January 9, 2023](#)  
[Addenda]
  - 3.2 Regular Council, minutes of [January 16, 2023](#)  
[Addenda]
- 4. Declarations of Interest**
- 5. Motion to Move Consent Reports**

Consent Reports are approved in one motion which approves all of the recommendations contained in each report. Prior to this motion, a councillor may request that one or more of the reports listed under Item 6 be moved to the list of Discussion Reports.

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## 6. Consent Reports

- 6 - 33      6.1      Planning and Building Services, Planning Services  
Demolition Permit for a Designated Heritage Property in the Port  
Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District: 31 Brock Street
- 34 - 46      6.2      Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk  
Council Correspondence

## 7. Public Meetings

## 8. Presentations

## 9. Discussion Reports

- 47      9.1      **Malcolmson Eco-Park northernmost part of the park**  
*(Correspondence pulled for discussion and deferred from the meeting of  
January 16, 2023)*
- 48 - 193      9.2      Community Recreation and Culture Services, Business Planning and  
Strategic Services  
Merritton Ward Splashpad, Washroom, and Sun Shelter

## 10. Motions

### 10.1      **Securing Canada's \$1 Billion Investment in a Strengthened Freshwater Action Plan**

*Councillor Phillips will present the following motion:*

WHEREAS the City of St. Catharines, as a member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, supports protecting source water, planning for climate change impacts and shoreline resilience, ensuring safe and affordable water services for all our residents, and building up a sustainable blue economy in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin; and

WHEREAS ensuring healthy communities and a strong economy for Canadians depend on securing Canada's source water, which includes addressing water quality issues, contaminants, and pollution, supporting biodiversity, and reversing wetland and fish and wildlife habitat loss and improving community knowledge to empower citizens to safeguard this essential resource; and

WHEREAS a Freshwater Action Plan and the Great Lakes Protection Initiative it supported were first announced in the 2017 Canadian federal budget with a \$44.84 million investment over five years; and



WHEREAS the Freshwater Action Plan has combined science and action to address priorities in the Great Lakes such as preventing toxic and nuisance algae, enhancing the resilience of coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes, restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern, and supporting Canada's commitments under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, among other priorities; and

WHEREAS a commitment was made by the Liberal Party of Canada in the 2021 federal election to strengthen the Freshwater Action Plan with an historic investment of \$1 billion over ten years to restore and protect large lakes and river systems starting with the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin; and

WHEREAS the federal government only committed \$19.6 million in funding in the 2022 Budget for the Freshwater Action Plan, falling short of the aforementioned commitment; and

WHEREAS the United States has invested \$1.8 billion in the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) since 2017 and will see accelerated funding with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act; and

WHEREAS a 2018 University of Michigan study shows that for every dollar of federal spending on GLRI projects between 2010 and 2016, yielded \$3.35 in additional economic activity; and

WHEREAS nearly half of Canada's population lives in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, a region that will continue to see accelerated growth, resulting in greater land and resource use pressures that will further contribute to water availability and quality issues; and

WHEREAS the Stockholm Resilience Centre recently identified the importance of wetlands as carbon sinks and fresh water's role in climate mitigation; and

WHEREAS the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative outlined 30 recommendations to Environment and Climate Change Canada as part of a ten-year, \$2.2 billion Action Plan 2020-2030 to protect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence (Action Plan 2020-2030), addressing shoreline erosion, outdated infrastructure, invasive species, exposure to toxins and beach contamination, following an 18-month consultation with First Nations, NGOs, academics, and other experts; and

WHEREAS the recommendations outlined in Action Plan 2020-2030 should serve as the basis of programming for strengthened federal action in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin through its strengthened Freshwater Action Plan; and

WHEREAS the newly established Canada Water Agency should play a role in accelerating the rollout of funding made available through a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan; and

WHEREAS Freshwater Action Plan funding should largely be directed to community groups, local governments, and First Nations to ensure that investments made will have the biggest local impact and empower action at the local level, rather than being held back for federal administration and operations; and

WHEREAS it is critical to implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including accelerating a \$1 billion over five years, and to creating a Canada Water Agency to consolidate and coordinate federal water efforts and support provinces and territories in addressing systemic issues impacting the viability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin and the communities dependent upon the region's source water.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines calls on the federal government to commit \$1 billion in funding over five years for a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan in Budget 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines calls on the federal government to guide its Freshwater Action Plan funding to implement recommendations in the Action Plan 2020-2030; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines calls on the federal government to direct priority funding under the strengthened Freshwater Action Plan to projects in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines calls on the federal government to make municipalities eligible for future funding in programs announced under the strengthened Freshwater Action Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines directs its staff to submit this resolution to the federal Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Finance; the Minister of Environment and Climate Change; the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate

Change (responsible for the Canada Water Agency), and local Member of Parliament.

**11. Call for Notices of Motion**

**12. Report Requests**

**13. Committee and Task Force Minutes**

13.1 Minutes to Receive:

- Heritage Permit Advisory Committee, meeting of [December 22, 2022](#) (Draft)

**14. Closed Session**

Council will meet in Closed Session for the following purpose(s):

14.1 Chief Administrative Officer

Property Matter – Disposal (*Closed Session Pursuant to Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, Section 239 (2)(c) a proposed or Pending Disposition of Land by the Municipality of Local Board*), 320 Geneva Street, Realty File No. 20.046

14.2 Chief Administrative Officer

Property Matter – Acquisition (*Closed session report pursuant to Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, Section 239 (c) a proposed or Pending Acquisition of Land by the Municipality of Local Board*), Port Weller East Access Options

[Addenda]

**15. Motion Arising from Closed Session**

**16. By-laws**

16.1 Reading of By-Laws

[Addenda]

**17. Adjournment**



## Corporate Report City Council

**Report from:** Planning and Building Services, Planning Services

**Report Date:** January 6, 2023

**Meeting Date:** January 30, 2023

**Report Number:** PBS-007-2023

**File:** 22 115503 HERT

**Subject:** Demolition Permit for a Designated Heritage Property in the Port Dalhousie  
Heritage Conservation District: 31 Brock Street

### Strategic Pillar:

This report aligns with the following St. Catharines Strategic Plan pillars: Cultural



## Recommendation

That Council approve the Heritage Permit application to demolish the residential building at 31 Brock Street, a property located within the Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District and designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## Summary

Staff are recommending the approval of a demolition permit for the existing residence at 31 Brock Street, a c.1898 residence located in the Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District.

Staff concur with the recommendation from the St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee (SHPAC) that the proposed demolition should be approved. The building has structural issues, which do not allow the owner to make alterations that were previously approved by the Heritage Permit Committee. The demolition will allow the applicant to rebuild the residence to match the previously approved plans, however, with a new foundation and structural elements.

## Relationship to Strategic Plan

The recommendation of this report directly supports the Cultural Renaissance Goal in the City's Strategic Plan:

4.1: Addressing Heritage Preservation.

## Background

In December 2003, the Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District (the District) designation received final approval from the Ontario Municipal Board. The District is one of the largest heritage conservation districts in Ontario. The District has the natural boundaries of Lake Ontario and Martindale Pond, and the southwestern boundary runs variously along Corbett Avenue, Johnston Street, and Shelley Avenue.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) requires that Council approval be obtained for new construction, additions to existing structures, and demolition within a Heritage Conservation District. The St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee (SHPAC) was appointed in May 2015 to review applications and provide advice to Council to facilitate this process. The Port Dalhousie Heritage District Advisory Committee (PDHDAC) provided this function from 2004 to early 2015.

By-law 2020-156 delegated the approval of heritage permits to the Director of Planning and Development Services; however, this authorization does not include the approval of demolitions, as is proposed with this application.

In accordance with Section 42(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, when a heritage permit, including demolition, is applied for, Council may give the applicant:

- (a) the permit applied for;
- (b) notice that the Council is refusing the application for the permit or;
- (c) the permit applied for, with terms and conditions attached.

If Council refuses the heritage permit, or approves the application with conditions, the owner may appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). If Council does not take any of the actions specified in Section 42(4) within 90 days after notice of receipt of the application is served on the applicant, Council is deemed to have given the applicant the permit.

## Report

An application has been submitted to demolish the existing residence at 31 Brock Street. Appendix 1 shows an aerial view of the structure proposed for demolition. Appendix 2 provides a photographic overview of the property. Appendix 3 includes the application package with proposed plans and notes and images from the owner's contractor.

## St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee

The proposed application was first brought before the SHPAC in June 2021. The owner received approval to make extensive changes to the house. The proposal involved changing the entire front façade including new window openings, a new entrance, a pair of new dormers and a new covered front porch across the front of the house. A side addition was also proposed along with new siding throughout the house. Changes were also approved for enlarging the existing detached garage. The Committee was in support of the proposal and made the following motion:

“That the SChPAC has received the presentation on 31 Brock Street presented by Michael Miryneh and are in favor of the proposed design, and further recommend approval of the heritage permit application.”

Upon further investigation, when preparing for the work to commence, it was determined by the owner’s contractor that the building had a number of structural deficiencies (these have been outlined in Appendix 3). The owners felt that it would not make sense to invest significant funds in a house with these significant deficiencies and came back to staff with the proposal to demolish the house and rebuild using the previously approved plans, with some minor changes (a comparison of the previously approved plans with the plans proposed today has been included in Appendix 3). The exterior is proposed to look nearly identical to what was approved by the Committee in 2021, but with new structural elements, a slight increase in height (2.5 feet) to fix the low ceiling heights, and some minor changes to the previously approved side addition. The new residence will be shifted by approximately a metre to allow for the building to conform to the sideyard setbacks in the Zoning By-law.

In order to follow through with their approved plans, the owners returned to the Heritage Permit Committee in December 2022 asking to demolish the existing building and to rebuild using the plans that were originally approved by the Committee in June 2021. At the meeting, the owners, along with their architect and contractor were in attendance to present their application and go over the issues with the existing residence. The owner also offered to retain elements (such as original timber beams) from the existing house for cosmetic reuse where possible. Like all applications for demolition, the Committee was concerned about the proposal and posed questions to the owners, architect, and contractor. Afterwards, the Committee passed the following motion on a five to one vote:

“That the SChPAC recommends approval of the proposed demolition of the residence at 31 Brock Street

And recommends approval of the proposed new residence, using plans previously approved by the Committee and resubmitted with minor changes to the design.”

## **Garden City Plan**

The City of St. Catharines Garden City Plan contains policies that guide the City’s approach to conserving cultural heritage. A number of general policies within Section 3 can be applied to the proposed demolition application. Most importantly, Section 3.1.4 states that “All development / redevelopment shall have regard for identified cultural heritage resources and shall wherever feasible, incorporate these resources into any development plan.” Given the property is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act and is regarded as a contributing heritage property within the Heritage District, the redevelopment of the property should incorporate the identified cultural heritage resource, if feasible. Though demolition is normally discouraged, the retention

of the building and construction of an addition using the approved plans is not feasible due to building's existing deficiencies.

Section 3.2 of the Garden City Plan addresses policies within the City's Heritage Districts. Section 3.2.6 states that "Within a designated district, it is the intent of the City to conserve and enhance its unique heritage character. The City, in consultation with the district committee will encourage property owners to maintain, repair and restore heritage buildings and seek government grants, loans and other incentive programs for eligible conservation work." The SCHPAC has been consulted on this application twice. The initial application in June 2021 involved maintaining the heritage building while making alterations that the Committee recommended for approval. The December 2022 application involves the construction of an entirely new building using previously approved plans which are consistent with what the Committee approved previously.

### **Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District Guidelines for Conservation and Change (The Guidelines)**

The property at 31 Brock Street is located within the Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District and due to its 1898 construction date, it is a contributing building within the heritage district.

Section 4.1 of the Guidelines notes that, "For the purposes of these guidelines a heritage building is considered to be any structure built prior to 1950". Furthermore, Section 5.1 notes, "As in many heritage districts throughout Ontario, residents and property owners of the Port Dalhousie are encouraged to work with existing buildings through sensitively adapting and altering them rather than demolishing and constructing new structures. While not prohibited by the Ontario Heritage Act the demolition of existing heritage structures and the creation of new buildings will be actively discouraged within the Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District."

As the residence was constructed in 1898, the demolition of the residence is technically discouraged according to the guidelines. However, the first portion of the above paragraph notes that owners are encouraged to work with existing buildings through sensitively adapting and altering them rather than demolishing. The owner's original intent was to do just that through an alteration that was supported by the Committee and approved by staff. Demolition was not part of the owner's original plans for the building. The need for demolition is entirely due to structural deficiencies that would be rectified as part of a new building that reflects the previously approved plans.

The proposed demolition is a bit unique in that the owner wishes to construct previously approved plans, but with the requirement to "start from scratch" due to structural issues with the existing residence (a similar application was approved by Council for 132 Main Street in April 2022). The approved alterations from June 2021 involved changing the aesthetic materials and appearance of the house, of which the Committee had no concerns. The question then lies in the value of the structural components of the residence. Unfortunately, the District Guidelines do not provide input on the importance of structural components, and rather focuses mostly on aesthetics and exterior

materials and design. Given the guidelines are largely concerned with the appearance of properties and the character of the neighbourhood, and that the structural components of the building do not contribute to this building's aesthetics, staff feel that the proposed demolition and rebuild of the residence using plans previously supported by the Committee is consistent with the Guidelines.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

## **Environmental Sustainability Implications**

There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

## **Conclusion**

The *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that the respective Municipal Heritage Committee be consulted prior to Council making a decision on a heritage permit application for demolition within a Heritage Conservation District. In this regard, the SCHPAC has been consulted with respect to the application to demolish the dwelling at 31 Brock Street and recommended that the application be approved. Due to the structural issues with the residence, the recommendation being made to Council is consistent with the cultural heritage policies within the Garden City Plan and the guidelines of the Port Dalhousie Heritage Conservation District Guidelines for Conservation and Change.

Planning and Building Services concurs with the recommendation of the SCHPAC based on the policies of the Official Plan and the District Guidelines and recommends the demolition permit be approved.

## **Notifications**

It would be prudent to notify the owner of the property.

### **Prepared by**

James Neilson, Heritage Planner

### **Submitted by**

Margaret Josipovic, Manager Planning Services

### **Approved by**

Tami Kitay, Director, Planning and Building Services

## **Appendices**

1. Location Plan - 31 Brock Street
2. Photo - 31 Brock Street
3. Application package with plans and photographs

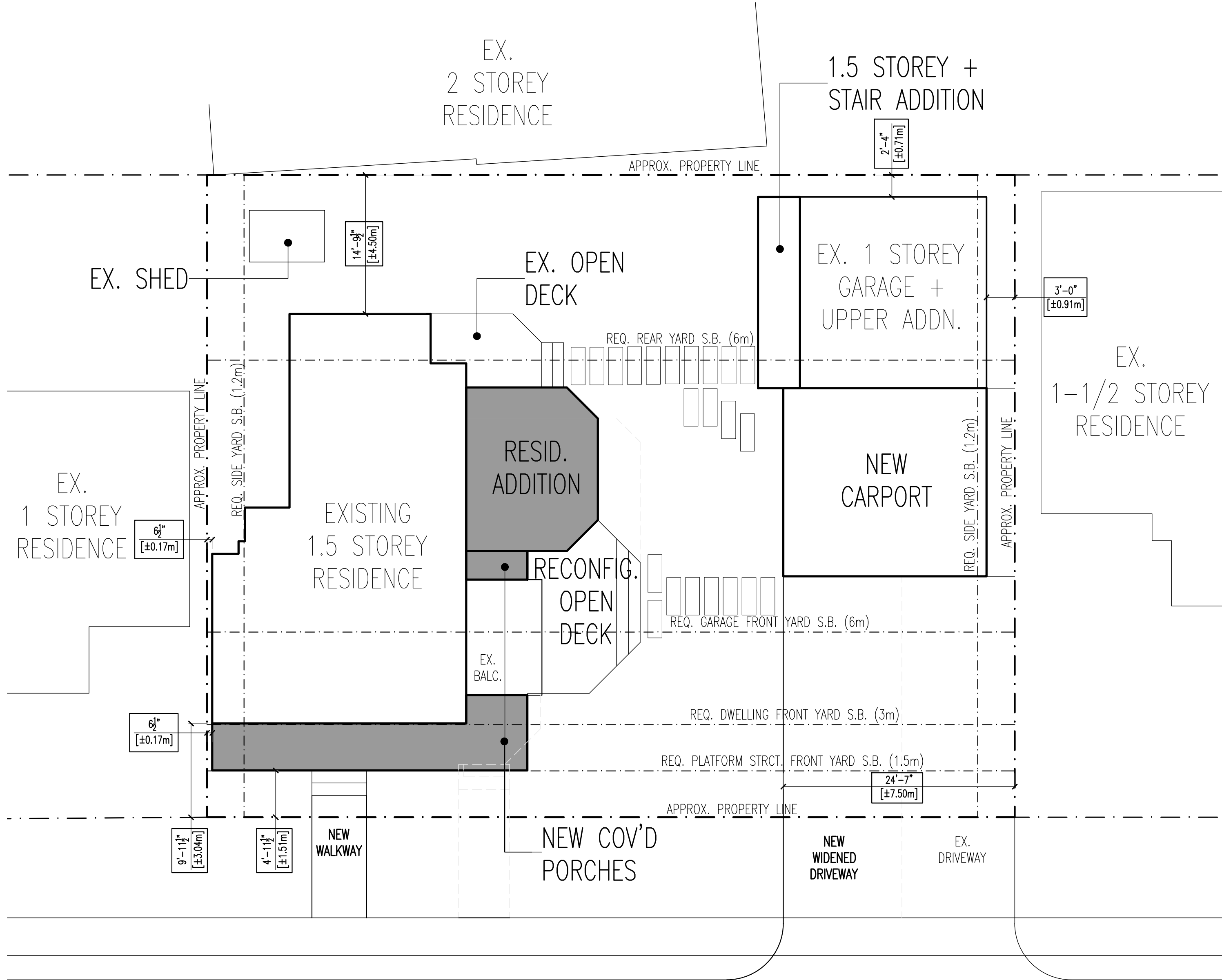


Appendix 1 – Location Plan - 31 Brock Street



Appendix 2 – Photo – 31 Brock Street



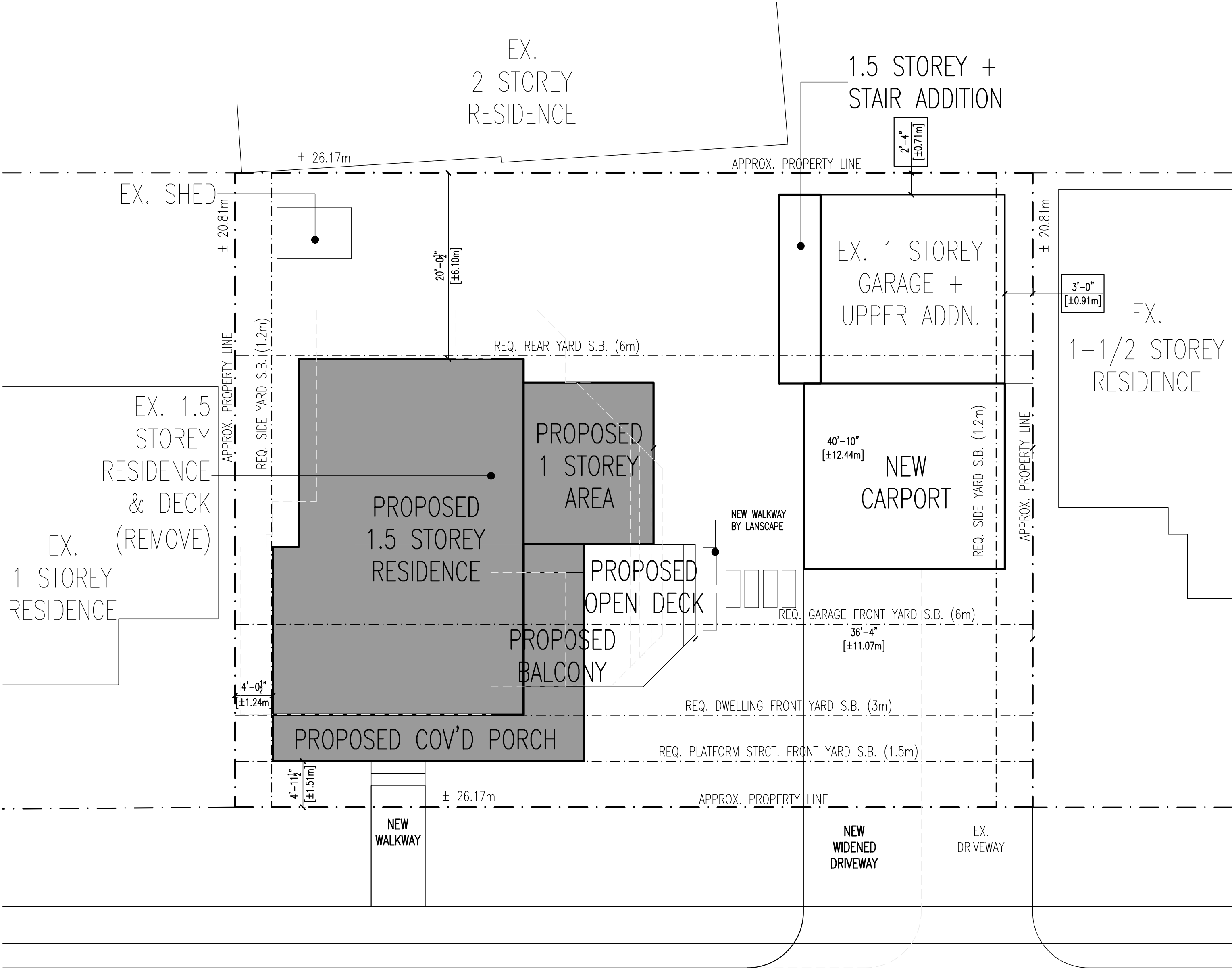


BROCK STREET

## HERITAGE APPROVED SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1:100

H.A. LOT COVERAGE TABLE (R2 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL)			
	AREA ± (SF)	AREA ± (SM)	% COVERED
LOT AREA	5863.1	544.7	100.0
ALLOWABLE LOT COVERAGE FOR ACCESSORY BUILDING	586.3	54.5	10.0
EXISTING 1-1/2 STOREY RESIDENCE	970.6	90.2	16.6
EXISTING OPEN DECK	89.0	8.3	1.5
NEW 3-4 SEASON SUNROOM ADDITION	232.6	21.6	4.0
RECONFIGURED OPEN PORCH / BALCONY	255.9	23.8	4.4
NEW COVERED DECKS	206.7	19.2	3.5
TOTAL RESIDENCE COVERAGE	1754.8	163.03	29.9
EXISTING SHED	44.0	4.1	0.8
EXISTING 1-STOREY GARAGE	403.3	37.5	6.9
NEW 1.5 STOREY	90.7	8.4	1.5
NEW CARPORT ADDITION	432.0	40.1	7.4
TOTAL ACCESSORY STRUCTURE COVERAGE	969.9	90.1	16.5
TOTAL LOT COVERAGE	2724.8	253.1	46.5



BROCK STREET

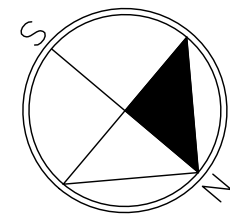
## PROPOSED SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1:100

PROPOSED LOT COVERAGE TABLE (R2 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL)			
	AREA ± (SF)	AREA ± (SM)	% COVERED
LOT AREA	5863.1	544.7	100.0
ALLOWABLE LOT COVERAGE FOR ACCESSORY BUILDING	586.3	54.5	10.0
EXISTING 1.5 STOREY RESIDENCE (REMOVE)	1069.5	99.4	18.2
EXISTING OPEN DECK (REMOVE)	524.4	48.7	8.9
PROPOSED 1.5 STOREY RESIDENCE	977.3	90.8	16.7
PROPOSED 1 STOREY AREA	243.5	22.6	4.2
PROPOSED COV'D PORCH / BALCONY	286.6	26.6	4.9
PROPOSED OPEN DECK	167.8	15.6	2.9
TOTAL RESIDENCE COVERAGE	1675.2	155.6	28.7
EXISTING SHED	44.0	4.1	0.8
EXISTING 1 STOREY GARAGE	403.3	37.5	6.9
PROPOSED 1.5 STOREY GARAGE	90.7	8.4	1.5
NEW CARPORT ADDITION	432.0	40.1	7.4
TOTAL ACCESSORY STRUCTURE COVERAGE	969.9	90.1	16.5
TOTAL LOT COVERAGE	2645.1	245.7	45.2

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NO.	BY	DATE	REVISION
01	RR	MAY 17, 2021	CITY-RECONSILATION MEETING
02	RR	JUN 17, 2021	ISSUED FOR HERITAGE PERMIT
03	RR	NOV 11, 2022	ISSUED FOR HERITAGE COMMITTEE REVIEW



**2M architects inc.**  
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www.2marchitects.ca

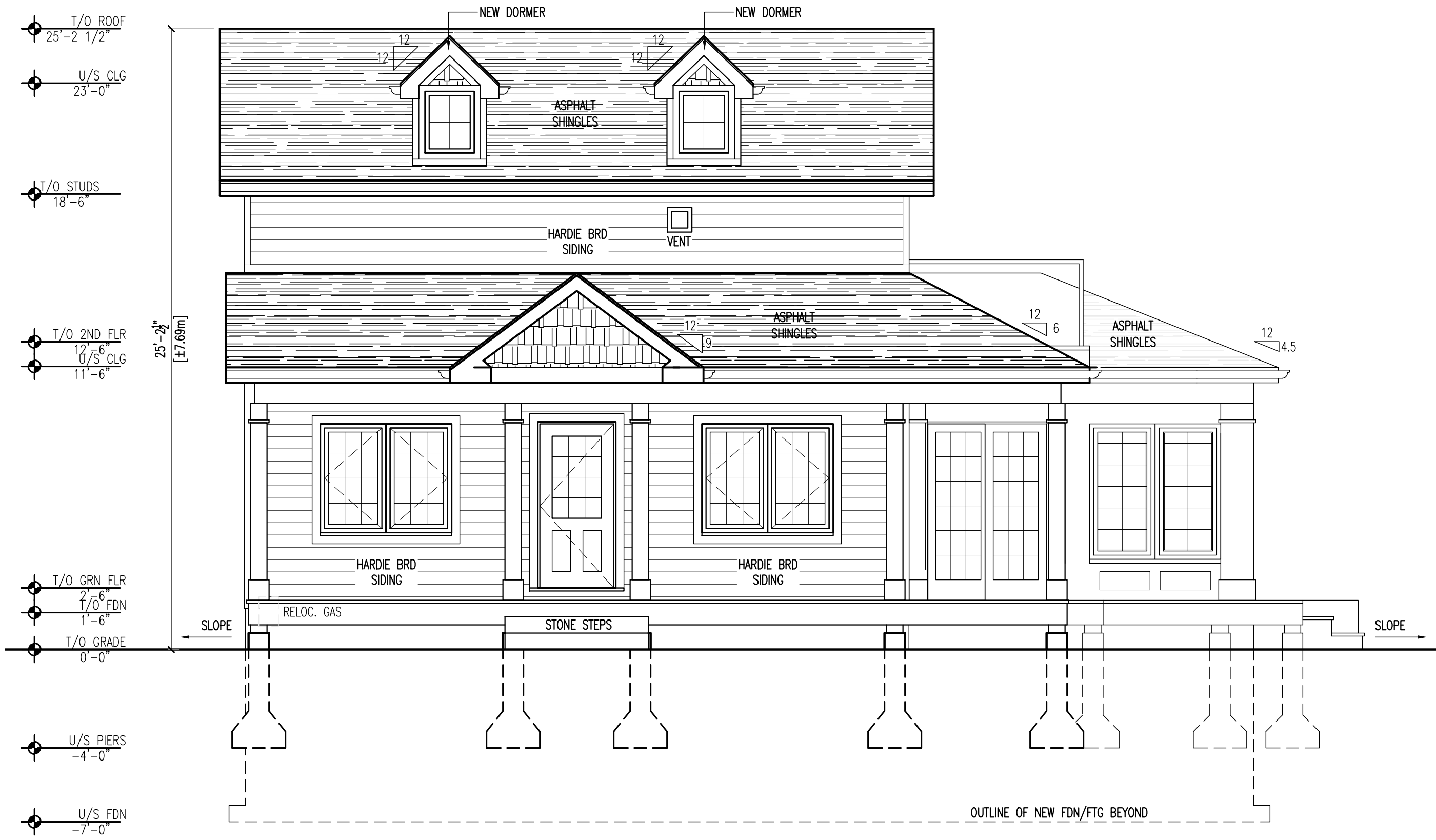
**2M architects**

drawn by:	RR	job scale:	1:1
design by:	MRM	scale:	AS NOTED
approved by:	LJM	date:	OCT 18, 2022

project title:	NEW RESIDENCE WARKENTIN RESIDENCE 31 BROCK STREET ST. CATHARINES, ON
drawing title:	SITE PLANS

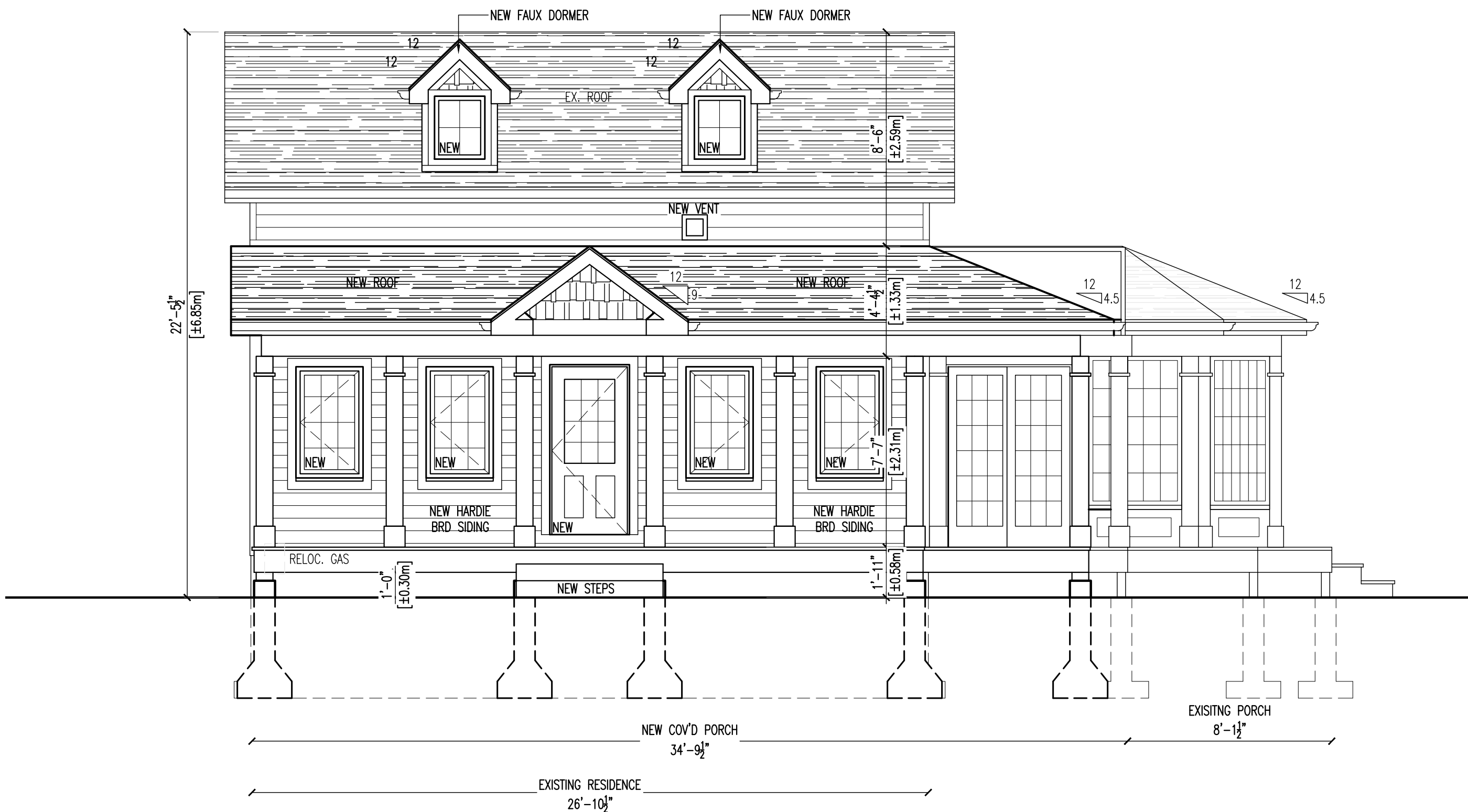
revision number:	20-115
drawing number:	A1





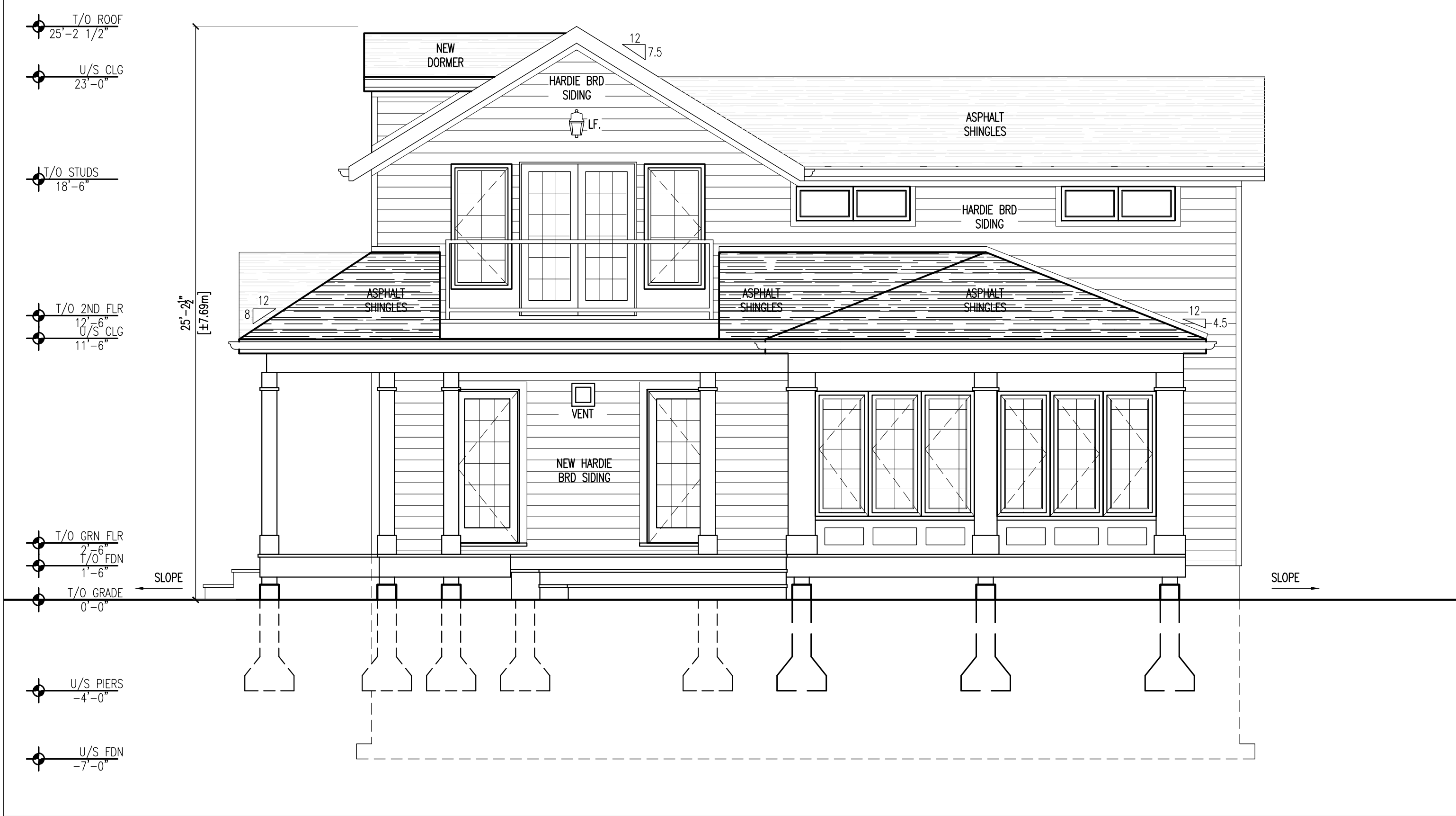
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



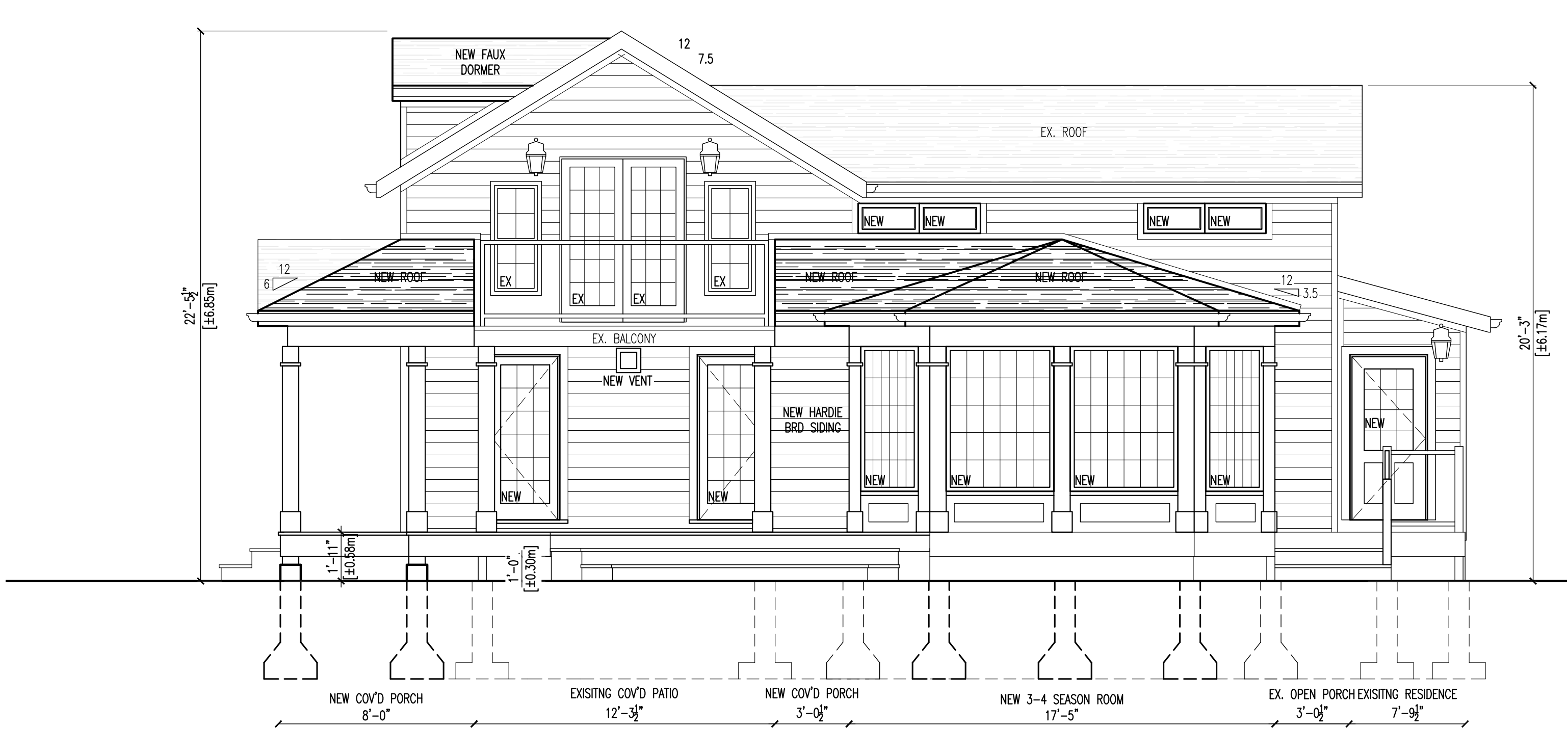
HERITAGE APPROVED FRONT ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"



PROPOSED RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

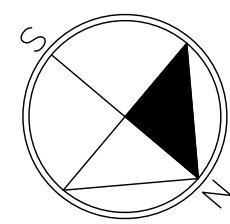


HERITAGE APPROVED RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

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NO.	BY:	DATE:	REVISION:
01	RR	MAY 17, 2021	CITY-PRECONSULTATION MEETING
02	RR	JUN 17, 2021	ISSUED FOR HERITAGE PERMIT
03	RR	NOV 11, 2022	ISSUED FOR HERITAGE COMMITTEE REVIEW



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**2M architects**

drawn by:	RR	job scale:	1:1
design by:	MRM	scale:	AS NOTED
approved by:	LJM	date:	OCT 18, 2022

project title:	NEW RESIDENCE WARKENTIN RESIDENCE 31 BROCK STREET ST. CATHARINES, ON
drawing title:	ELEVATIONS

revision number:	20-115
job number:	20-115
drawing number:	A2

# VERSLUIS BROS.

## CONTRACTORS INC.

26 John Street, St. Catharines, ON L2N 4P1

Telephone: (905) 646-0892

GST # 10551 6579

November 10, 2022



Re: Inspection and findings on the proposed renovations to your home at 31 Brock St in Port Dalhousie.

Subsequent to the preliminary estimate we presented to you, based on the plans drawn by 2M Architects, we examined the building to verify its structural integrity. Unfortunately we found several items of concern that are either building code issues or issues that would prevent the renovated home from ever meeting your expectations. Under separate cover I have sent a number of photos along with comments that show the structural deficiencies we uncovered.

The home as it stands seems fairly sound and reasonably attractive. There are some obvious issues such as the very low main floor ceiling and the noticeably distorted roof on the rear section, but further examination reveals much more of greater concern.

### Summary of deficiencies...

**Foundation;** There were several holes dug around the foundation to determine the condition and structure below grade. We found that on the main part there was a concrete foundation extending down about 30 inches below grade without a footing. This is well short of the 48" required by code. We could not verify the thickness of the concrete wall. There were several rows of block above grade. The rear addition had virtually no foundation, extending only 12" below grade with no footings.

**Crawl space;** We explored the crawl space as much as we could easily access. There was poly vapour barrier on grade but no insulation on the walls. There was a good number of props situated throughout the space, obviously holding up an overspanned joist system. These props were carried on some concrete block on top of the soil and some wooden blocking, also

CUSTOM HOMES  ADDITIONS  RENOVATIONS

carried on top of soil with no proper footings. There were some new joists nailed onto deteriorated woodwork and miscellaneous blocking inserted to remedy structural deficiencies. Joists and cross beams are heavily notched into the perimeter beams leaving very little structural integrity. There is no sign of mechanical tie down from the foundation to the framing.

Plumbing; The main floor has some exposed plumbing. Apparently for convenience of access the main meter was installed in the kitchen cabinet. There is no proper venting in the areas that are visible so the rest is then, of course, suspect. It is copper piping with ABS drains.

Electrical; the wiring is copper and seems ok. The panel would need to be upgraded and relocated to the proposed basement.

Main structure; Several areas of the walls and ceiling were opened up. Most areas have been strapped and furred out to appear straight but there is some deficient framing in the original parts of the building. The original house is a post and beam structure that has studding and furring added. The second floor structure consists of an overspanned 2x6 joist with newer 2x6 nailed on to straighten out the sag. There is notching of joists at the perimeter that would have weakened the structure and the exposed front corner post has been notched so that there is little mass left. Insulation has been done in the previous renovation with vapour barrier but is not to current standards.

The roof joists of the rear addition are old 2x4 lumber with newer 2x8 joists nailed to them. There is no apparent bearing provision at the outside walls. The exterior of the roof shows significant distortion from inadequate framing. There is also fiberglass insulation but not enough space for adequate insulation with required airspace.

Exterior; the exterior of the house has been re-clad with vinyl siding, windows have been replaced and a deck added to the side. There is no original structure or finishes visible anywhere.

[REDACTED]

Re 31 Brock St., Port Dalhousie

[REDACTED]

After submitting an estimate to you, we have examined the structural integrity of the building you are contemplating renovating and have found several rather serious issues that might make you re-think the concept. Some of these are functional and aesthetic but others are building code issues.

1./ the rear addition has no footing and the block extends about a foot below grade.





2./ the south wall has no footing, extends 30" below grade and consists of concrete poured in a trench of undetermined thickness and has several rows of block above grade.





3./ the crawlspace has many props and posts on a mix of concrete block and wood blocks on grade, joists and beams that are insufficient or rotten are scabbed on and doubled up to reinforce them,













Rot in beam left, supported and reinforced each side.



The crawlspace is block, uninsulated and there is no apparent tie down on the perimeter beam to foundation





Beams are notched into the perimeter beam leaving very little mass and drilling weakens it even more







We opened the corner of the kitchen under the second floor structure. The ceiling is part of a subsequent renovation as it is truss joist construction. 2x3 furring was used to straighten out uneven walls. The height is at about 7 Ft.





The plumbing comes up in the kitchen floor with the meter inside cabinets, there are no vents on the drains



There is about a 1 ½" sag in the floor of the mechanical room, indicative of the original condition of the rest of the floor that seems to be shimmed straight.



The corner of the original building in the living room was exposed showing a light post and beam structure that has been strapped and shimmed to be straighter. The original 2x6 floor joist are over spanned and had sagged, another newer 2x6 is nailed to the side to straighten the ceiling.







The front corner of the original building shows discontinuous studs joined together and the corner post severely notched.





The back half of the building shows existing 2x4 rafters were sistered with newer 2x8 rafters nailed onto the sides with no support at wall. The insulation is inadequate.



The roof at the back section is significantly sagged and distorted.



## Corporate Report City Council

**Report from:** Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk

**Report Date:** January 20, 2023

**Meeting Date:** January 30, 2023

**Report Number:** LCS-014-2023

**File:** 10.12.1

**Subject:** Council Correspondence

**Strategic Pillar:**

### Recommendation

That Council receive and file the items listed within the report; and

That Council receive and file additional correspondence distributed for the meeting held January 30, 2023, which is available upon request.

### Report

The Office of the City Clerk is submitting, for the approval of Council, correspondence received during the period of January 7, 2023, to January 20, 2023.

### Correspondence

1. Correspondence from Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative regarding \$1 billion booster for freshwater health campaign
2. AMO Watchfile – January 12, 2023
3. AMO Watchfile – January 19, 2023

### Reports Requested by Council

4. Outstanding Reports List – updated January 20, 2023

#### Prepared by

Sarah McWilliams  
Council and Committee Coordinator

#### Submitted and Approved by

Kristen Sullivan  
City Clerk





GREAT LAKES AND  
ST. LAWRENCE  
CITIES INITIATIVE



## Sub-Item 1

### MEMO

#### *\$1 Billion Booster for Freshwater Health Campaign*

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Working with other organizations across Canada, the Cities Initiative is advocating that the federal government **invest \$1 billion in a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan**, a Liberal election commitment which may be in jeopardy because of recent efforts by the government to reduce spending. As part of our campaign, the Cities Initiative is **asking member cities to reinforce this message with the federal government and local federal and provincial elected officials ahead of Budget 2023.**

#### HOW CAN YOUR CITY HELP?

- Encourage your municipal council to **pass a resolution and send a letter** to the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister (Chrystia Freeland) and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Steven Guilbeault). The Cities Initiative has prepared templates of a resolution and letter
- **Talk to your local federal and provincial elected representatives** to communicate your support for this campaign and the need for the federal government to live up to its commitment

#### WHY THIS MATTERS

- A \$1-billion investment in the Freshwater Action Plan would **lead to enhanced funding for Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin stewardship**, through budget increases for the Great Lakes Protection Initiative and the St. Lawrence Action Plan
- Without sustained funding from the federal government, **successful programs like the Great Lakes Protection Initiative won't be able to continue** as their funding will sunset in 2023
- The **Great Lake Protection Initiative supports action by municipal and local organizations** that enhance water quality. Increased funding could therefore have enhanced community benefits, as well as supporting local and regional economies
- **Population growth and increasing pressure to develop more housing will exacerbate land and water use pressures** in our region. Significant funding is needed to ensure we are able to address water quality and availability issues to allow for growth
- In the long run, **stewarding our source water reduces the cost of treating water** – helping keep water services affordable – as well as ensuring that water ultimately remains drinkable
- Investments to restore Great Lakes water quality have been shown to **create positive economic spinoffs** (more than \$3 for every \$1 spent on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in the US)

#### WHAT THE CITIES INITIATIVE IS DOING

- The Cities Initiative was part of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Collaborative that developed the [Action Plan 2020-2030](#), a 10-year, \$2.2-billion strategy which outlined 15 key actions to protect the economy and ecology of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, address shoreline erosion, outdated infrastructure, invasive species, exposure to toxins and beach contamination.
  - Action Plan 2020-2030 in large part serves as the blueprint for Cities Initiative and other organizations' advocacy around the Freshwater Action Plan



GREAT LAKES AND  
ST. LAWRENCE  
CITIES INITIATIVE



- The Cities Initiative is working with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), the Great Lakes Commission (GLC), the Canadian Coalition for Healthy Waters and the Québec Coalition for Healthy Waters to advocate for a **\$1 billion investment in the Freshwater Action Plan over five years**
  - As part of its work with the GLFC and GLC, along with the interparliamentary Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Taskforce, the Cities Initiative will participate in a summit in Ottawa in February 2023 to highlight the need for this investment. More details will be shared in the new year.
- The Cities Initiative also:
  - Passed a [resolution](#) this summer in support of the ask for a \$1-billion investment in the Freshwater Action Plan
  - Provided a [submission](#) to the federal Standing Committee on Finance for its 2023 pre-Budget consultations, which included a section on the Freshwater Action Plan

### BACKGROUND – *Freshwater Action Plan*

- During the 2021 federal election, the Liberal Party committed to a “strengthened Freshwater Action Plan,” including a **historic investment of \$1 billion over ten years**
  - The Cities Initiative and other organizations are pressuring the government to **accelerate the funding commitment over five years**, given the critical need to invest in freshwater restoration and stewardship projects, as well as concerns that longer-term funding commitments may be canceled by a future government
  - The original Freshwater Action Plan launched in 2017 following a Budget commitment of \$70.5 million over five years was scheduled to sunset in 2022.
  - Budget 2022 committed \$19.6 million to sustain the Freshwater Action Plan until March 2023, indicating that the future of the initiative would be communicated at a later date
- In the context of inflation and potential recession, the federal government is looking to reduce spending. According to [reports](#), the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Chrystia Freeland, has indicated that new programs will need to be funded by budget cuts to other programs
  - A **renewed push for austerity** by the federal government **could put this promised investment in jeopardy**
- The original Freshwater Action Plan funding of \$70.5 million (2017-2022) was divided between the **Great Lakes Protection Initiative (GLPI; \$44.84 million)** and the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program (\$25.7 million)
  - The **GLPI investments focused on supporting Canada’s commitments under the Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement** in six particular program areas:
    - preventing toxic and nuisance algae
    - assessing and enhancing the resilience of Great Lakes and coastal wetlands
    - evaluating and identifying at-risk nearshore waters
    - reducing releases of harmful chemicals
    - engaging Indigenous Peoples in addressing Great Lakes issues
    - increasing public engagement through citizen science
  - By comparison, **the United States has invested US\$1.8 billion in its Great Lakes Restoration Initiative since 2017** (more than US\$3.8 billion since 2010)
- The GLPI has leveraged \$2.13 in other funding for every dollar the federal government spent



### BACKGROUND – *Canada Water Agency*

- The Government of Canada has also committed to launching a Canada Water Agency to help coordinate federal efforts "to keep our fresh water safe, clean, and well-managed."
  - The Budget also committed \$43.5 million over five years and \$8.7 million ongoing to create the Canada Water Agency.
  - The government has committed to standing up the Agency in 2022, but there have been no further announcements on the Canada Water Agency to date.
- **The Cities Initiative sees the Canada Water Agency playing an important role in overseeing program development for a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan and in coordinating the rollout of funding.**

## Sub-Item 2

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January 12, 2023

### In This Issue

- Call for applications to fill AMO Board vacancies.
- Nominations Report on the 2023-2027 ROMA Board of Directors elections.
- Final comments on *More Homes Built Faster Plan* posted.
- 2023-2024 Seniors Community Grant applications.
- Invitation to golf car consultations.
- Register today for the 2023 ROMA Annual General Meeting and Conference.
- Councillor training at 2023 ROMA Annual General Meeting and Conference.
- New dates for Planning and OFIFC Indigenous Community Awareness trainings.
- Strengthen your leadership: AMO's New Councillor training.
- Webinar: A Barrier Free Website Builder for Municipalities.
- Canoe webinar series.
- Book your 2023 Road Assessment today.
- Hydro One Delegation meetings at ROMA 2023.
- New municipal resources on electricity for municipalities.
- Advantage Ontario Long-Term Care webinar for councillors.
- Careers: AMO, MOLITSD, Brampton, HSC, and Niagara Region.

### AMO Matters

AMO is soliciting applications to fill seven Caucus vacancies on the AMO Board of Directors; positions for elected officials and municipal employees are open. Application package can be found [here](#). Deadline: February 10, 2023.

The [nominations report](#) for ROMA Board Elections is now available. Voting will take place at the ROMA Conference on January 23.

A complete list of AMO's responses to environmental and regulatory postings to the *More Homes Built Faster Plan* are posted [here](#).

### Provincial Matters

Apply between January 11 - March 6 for Seniors Community Grants to support the delivery of programs and learning opportunities for seniors. Applications will be accepted through the [Transfer Payment Ontario](#) site.

Since June 2021, MTO has been piloting golf cars in Huron-Kinloss and Pelee Island. It is now exploring expansion and offering municipal consultation on February 1.

### Eye on Events

*ROMA 2023: Breaking New Ground* offers so much, including an outstanding educational program, an opportunity to hear from provincial leaders, participate in ROMA Board elections and meet the new Board. If you haven't registered yet, here is the opportunity.

AMO is offering councillor training live and in-person at the 2023 ROMA Conference. For more information and to register click here.

Registration is now open for AMO's foundational and strategic planning courses. We have also released two new training dates for AMO-OFIFC Indigenous Community Awareness training. The sessions provide you with insight and skills to community building and decision making. Click here for more information.

AMO training examines the realities, responsibilities, challenges and opportunities of municipally elected officials in today's context. Essential information on legislation, policy, roles, responsibilities and managing relationships are only some of the things attendees will gain insight and tools on. Register today for New Councillor training.

Join AMO and our partner of a barrier free web solution, GHD Digital, for a webinar on January 26 at noon to see Govstack, the newest content management system for your municipal website. Learn about the exclusive AMO offer, key features and capabilities of the new platform, and get an understanding of why Govstack is your best move in digital transformation.

### LAS

Canoe Procurement Group webinars are back! Learn about efficient arenas, green bin alternatives, ambulance procurement, and fleet electrification. Visit the LAS Events page for more details.

The LAS Road and Sidewalk Assessment service is getting ready for the 2023 survey season. Better data helps you to get the most out of every maintenance dollar. Contact Tanner for a free quote and to schedule your summer 2023 scan.

### Municipal Wire\*

Hydro One invites Municipal delegations to discuss important community issues at this year's ROMA 2023 conference. Request meeting.

Want to understand more about electricity planning? Members are encouraged to read the Independent Electricity System Operator's municipal toolkit and the Ontario Energy Board's Municipal Information Document on regional planning.

Registration is open for AdvantAge Ontario's free LTC Orientation webinar for municipal councilors. The webinar will be February 15 from 12-1pm. A brief on municipalities and LTC is also available.

#### **Careers**

Policy Intern - AMO. Assisting senior advisors and the Director of Policy, the successful candidate will support AMO's policy development process. Apply with a cover letter and resume to: [careers@amo.on.ca](mailto:careers@amo.on.ca) by January 16.

Client Service Coordinator, Talent Pool - Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Input, modify and control information in program databases and information management systems. Apply online by January 24.

Senior/Lead, Investigations - Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Provide quality assurance and finalization of investigation reports and oversee compliance of files and enforcement efforts. Apply online by January 24.

Investigator Analyst, Talent Pool - Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Assess applications for nomination in accordance with program procedures and the legislative requirements of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program. Apply online by January 24.

Manager, Parks Capital & Community Development - City of Brampton. Responsible for managing and coordinating all activities related to the delivery of City initiated projects. Apply online by January 16.

Senior Broker/Client Manager - Housing Services Corporation. Responsible for meeting client needs within the HSC client base. Apply to [humanresources@hscorp.ca](mailto:humanresources@hscorp.ca) by February 11.

Manager Fleet Services - Niagara Region. Responsible for overall management of fleet vehicles/equipment, fleet shops, inventory, driver trainer programs and fleet operations. Apply online by January 31.

#### **About AMO**

AMO is a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments. AMO supports strong and effective municipal government in Ontario and promotes the value of municipal government as a vital and essential component of Ontario's and Canada's political system. Follow [@AMOPolicy](#) on Twitter!

#### **AMO Contacts**

AMO Watchfile Tel: 416.971.9856

Conferences/Events

Policy and Funding Programs

LAS Local Authority Services

MEPCO Municipal Employer Pension Centre of Ontario  
ONE Investment  
Media Inquiries  
Municipal Wire, Career/Employment and Council Resolution Distributions

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## Sub-Item 3

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January 19, 2023

### In This Issue

- Call for applications to fill AMO Board vacancies.
- Final comments on *More Homes Built Faster Plan* posted.
- 2023-2024 Seniors Community Grant applications.
- New dates available for AMO's Land Use Planning training.
- Strengthen your leadership: AMO's New Councillor Training.
- Save the date for AMO-LAS 2023 Energy Symposium: November 2 - 3.
- New dates available for AMO's Navigating Conflict for Elected Officials training.
- Webinar: A Barrier Free Website Builder for Municipalities.
- Blog: Risk Management Trends to Follow in 2023.
- Canoe vendor spotlight: Bargreen Ellingson.
- Canoe/Grainger information session.
- Kraft Hockeyville nominations open.
- Careers: ONE, Niagara, Calvin, North Bay, Georgian Bay, MOLTC, and Durham.

### AMO Matters

AMO is soliciting applications to fill seven Caucus vacancies on the AMO Board of Directors; positions for elected officials and municipal employees are open. Application package can be found [here](#). Deadline: February 10, 2023.

A complete list of AMO's responses to environmental and regulatory postings to the *More Homes Built Faster Plan* are posted [here](#).

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### Eye on Events

AMO's Foundations in Planning and Deeper Dive training prepares elected officials in understanding planning concepts and requirements as well making strategic decisions on the complex issues you will face over the coming term. Register [here](#) and [here](#).

AMO training examines the realities, responsibilities, challenges and opportunities of



municipally elected officials in today's context. Essential information on legislation, policy, roles, responsibilities and managing relationships are only some of the things attendees will gain insight and tools on. Register today for [New Councillor training](#).

Following on the success of the 2022 Symposium, this in-person event will once again bring information and insight to all the energy issues on your mind. Information on the location of the Symposium, registration and how to submit a proposal to present is coming soon.

Navigating Conflict for Elected Officials training is an opportunity to gain skills in building collaborative relationships and negotiating difficult ones in your role as an elected municipal official. This virtual, interactive workshop, explores the constructs, traps and pitfalls of conflict relationships, why relationships may go wrong and how to approach, plan and execute relationships successfully using practical tips, tools and real-world examples. [Register here](#). Space is limited.

Join AMO and our partner of a barrier free web solution, [GHD Digital](#), for a [webinar on January 26](#) at noon to see Govstack, the newest content management system for your municipal website. Learn about the exclusive AMO offer, key features and capabilities of the new platform, and get an understanding of why Govstack is your best move in digital transformation.

#### **LAS**

In 2022, global industries were forced to adapt and respond to emerging risks and disasters. [Read our latest blog](#) to learn how your municipality can be more resilient in 2023.

Canoe now offers commercial kitchen equipment! We're pleased to welcome [Bargreen Ellingson](#) who can supply a wide range of supplies and equipment to help your kitchens operate efficiently and effectively. [Contact Simon](#) to learn more.

[Grainger](#) is one of the most popular suppliers in Ontario under the Canoe program. Join us to hear about their newly updated contract. [Contact Tanner](#) for an invitation.

#### **Municipal Wire\***

The Township of Lucan, Ontario won the Kraft Hockeyville competition in 2018. The grand prize winner will have an opportunity to host an NHL preseason game and receive \$250,000 for arena upgrades. Each Second Prize includes \$25,000 toward Arena upgrades. To submit a nomination visit the [Kraft Hockeyville website](#).

#### **Careers**

[Board Coordinator - ONE Investment](#). Provides legislative support to facilitate effective and efficient operations of ONE's Boards and Committees and prepares and distributes meeting notices, agendas, reports; takes and prepares minutes for both public and closed meetings. Deadline: 4:00 PM February 17. Email applications to:

[careers@amo.on.ca](mailto:careers@amo.on.ca).

Manager Capital Projects WWW Engineering - Niagara Region. Responsible for managing and administering complex capital works projects. [Apply online](#) by February 2.

Municipal Integrity Commissioner - Municipality of Calvin. Responsible for administering the Code of Conduct and assists in maintaining ethical standards at the township. Apply to [clerk@calvintownship.ca](mailto:clerk@calvintownship.ca) by January 31.

Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk - Municipality of Calvin. Exercising general control and management of the affairs of the municipality, ensuring efficient and effective operation. Apply to [mayor.gould@calvintownship.ca](mailto:mayor.gould@calvintownship.ca) by February 10.

Chief Administrative Officer - City of North Bay. Lead the coordination and administration of all departments and operations by adoption of leading practices and the effective and efficient delivery of strategy and services. Apply to [wanda.trottier@northbay.ca](mailto:wanda.trottier@northbay.ca) by February 12.

Director of Planning - Township of Georgian Bay. Delivering advice to senior management and Council as well as guidance to the public on matters related to land use. Apply to [bellchamber@sympatico.ca](mailto:bellchamber@sympatico.ca) by February 17.

Project Manager - Ministry of Long Term Care. Looking for an individual with leadership, project management and program evaluation expertise to manage, coordinate and implement the development of long-term care redevelopment projects. [Apply online](#) by January 30.

Project Engineer, Rapid Transit - The Regional Municipality of Durham. The successful applicant will support the coordination and delivery of Regional road and/or rapid transit projects. [Apply online](#) by February 13.

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City Council Outstanding Reports List

Sub-Item 4

Reports by Strategic Pillar			
Cultural	0	Economic	0
Environmental	0	Social	0
Reports Related to Strategic Plan		0	
Reports Unrelated to Strategic Plan		0	

Updated: January 20, 2023

Relation to Strategic Plan	ORL #	Requested	Requested by	Request	Lead Dept.	Expected Return Date	Comments
	2022-02	16-Nov-22	Harris	That staff prepare a report that outlines options to restructure the committee system.	LCS	Q1 2023	
	2022-03	23-Nov-22	Harris	That staff prepare a report on opportunities to partner with outside companies, including Alectra and St. Catharines Hydro, for energy retrofits to existing facilities.	EFES	Q2 2023	
	2022-04	23-Nov-22	Williamson	That staff prepare a report with respect to the costs, opportunity and history surrounding the Garden City Arena	CRCS/FMS		
	2022-06	23-Nov-22	Harris	That staff prepare the stats on whether those using the Seniors Without Walls program are residing in St. Catharines and the Niagara Region and report back in a years time (Q4 2023) as to whether the buildings used for these programs can be combined into one central location.	CRCS		
	2022-07	28-Nov-22	Garcia	Updated criteria and rationale for determining whether reports are listed as consent or discussion reports	LCS	Q1 2023	
	2023-01	16-Jan-23	Kushner	That a working group of Council and Staff be created to review the CIP and that staff be directed to bring terms of reference back to Council in February.	PBS	Q1 2023	
	2023-02	16-Jan-23	Garcia	A report recommending the process to be followed to eliminate paid beach parking for St. Catharines residents without the need for them to apply, with required permit or paperwork mailed out with water bills in advance of the Summer / beach season. Report to be ready no later than March 6 Council meeting.	CAO	Q1 2023	
	2023-03	16-Jan-23	Garcia	That staff prepare a report outlining a strategy or potential strategies for prioritizing the heritage designation of properties on the Heritage Register, in accordance with Bill 23, in Q1 2023.	PBS	Q1 2023	

Follow Up Reports							
	2022-07	28-Nov-22	Motion Arising from Closed	That staff report back to Council in early 2023 in respect to a framework or policy for religious and cultural displays on City property.	Collaborative	end of Q1 2023	Report Request Arising as follow up to Confidential Memo that went to Council Nov 28, 2022 re: Nativity Scene see Council Meeting Minutes of November 28, 2022, Item 15.1



## **Sub-Item 5**

As the bike trail along the east side of Malcolmson Eco-Park nears completion, I would like to propose that the northernmost parkette be named "The Ethel and Cyril Williamson Memorial Park". In early 1930, a tower and light in the modern Pharos style was erected in Port Weller to assist ships in navigating the northern entrance to the Welland Canal. It was not until 1969 that it was decommissioned and replaced by a modern automated range light. For the last 25 years of its existence, the Williamson family lived and operated the lighthouse while raising their 2 sons Douglas and Bruce. Their life at this lighthouse is beautifully captured in both pictures and words in a book authored by Ethel Williamson entitled "A Light On The Seaway". This little book is a must read by anyone living in St. Catharines especially Port Weller residents.

Greg Eckhardt

Past Chair

Malcolmson Eco- Park



## Corporate Report City Council

**Report from:** Community, Recreation and Culture Services, Business Planning and Strategic Services

**Report Date:** December 8, 2022

**Meeting Date:** January 30, 2023

**Report Number:** CRCS-009-2023

**File:** 68.31.99

**Subject:** Merritton Ward Splashpad, Washroom, and Sun Shelter

### Strategic Pillar:

This report aligns with the following St. Catharines Strategic Plan pillars: economic and social.



## Recommendation

That Council approve the Secord Woods Park site as the preferred location for the Merritton Ward splashpad; and

That the operating expenditures for the Merritton splashpad be included in the 2024 draft operating budget.

## Summary

This report presents the preferred location of the Merritton Ward splashpad, sun shelter and washroom which is the first phase of the Council approved Aquatics Facilities Strategy (Appendix 1). The modified balanced strategic direction within the Aquatics Facilities Strategy was recommended by Council as a framework to ensure the long-term operating sustainability and health of the City's aquatics system that replaces, renews and / or retains all three existing outdoor pools and recognizes that splashpads, outdoor pools and indoor pools are all necessary elements of a comprehensive strategy. The Merritton Ward splashpad is a new City service which will create additional operational impacts beginning in 2024.

## Relationship to Strategic Plan

The recommendation of this report supports the Economic Prosperity pillar within the Strategic Plan:

- **1.2** Develop a 10-Year Capital Infrastructure Plan that includes all major investments to address City needs, priorities and growth.

The recommendation of this report also supports the Social Well-Being pillar within the Strategic Plan:

- **2.1** Establish area-specific plans for the redevelopment of key sites in the City to promote strong, compatible, connected neighbourhoods that enhance the quality of life.
- **2.3** Refine and implement the Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (2015-2026):
  - Incorporate key deliverables into the Capital Infrastructure Plan and annual budget process
  - Implement the Park Renewal Plan (2017) and invest in prioritized play structures
  - Develop and implement sponsorship policy and pursue partnership opportunities for parks infrastructure

## Background

At its meeting on [August 9, 2021](#), Council approved the following motion:

That Council recommend a modified Balanced strategic direction within the Aquatics Facilities Strategy for use as a framework to ensure the long-term operating sustainability and health of the City's aquatics system that replaces, renews and / or retains all three existing outdoor pools and recognizes that splashpads, outdoor pools and indoor pools are all necessary elements of a comprehensive Strategy; and

That staff be directed to seek partnership opportunities for all potential aquatics facilities projects identified in the Aquatics Facilities Strategy; and

That staff be directed to develop an implementation plan which would include a base budget and projected timelines for facility replacement and construction which aligns with the overall corporate strategic priorities; and

That the Recreation Master Plan be advised of staff's recommendation prior to the report coming back to Council; and

That no aquatic facilities, including outdoor pools, be closed prior to Council's approval of the implementation plan; and

Further, that staff be directed to provide Council with the implementation plan as part of the 2022 Capital Budget presentation. FORTHWITH

At its meeting on [November 29, 2021](#), Council approved the following motion:

That funding be included in the Draft Capital Budget as outlined in the implementation timeline of the modified balanced strategic direction within the Aquatics Facilities Strategy, attached as Appendix 1.

## Report

The modified balanced strategic direction within the Aquatics Facilities Strategy was recommended by Council as a framework to ensure the long-term operating sustainability and health of the City's aquatics system that replaces, renews and / or retains all three existing outdoor pools and recognizes that splashpads, outdoor pools and indoor pools are all necessary elements of a comprehensive strategy. The splashpad, sun shelter and washroom in the Merritton Ward is the first phase of the modified balanced strategic direction.

## Modified Balanced Strategic Direction Recommended by Council

The modified balanced strategic direction was recommended by Council as a framework to ensure the long-term operating sustainability and health of the City's aquatics system that replaces, renews and / or retains all three existing outdoor pools and recognizes that splashpads, outdoor pools and indoor pools are all necessary elements of a comprehensive strategy.

The modified balanced strategic direction recommends to:

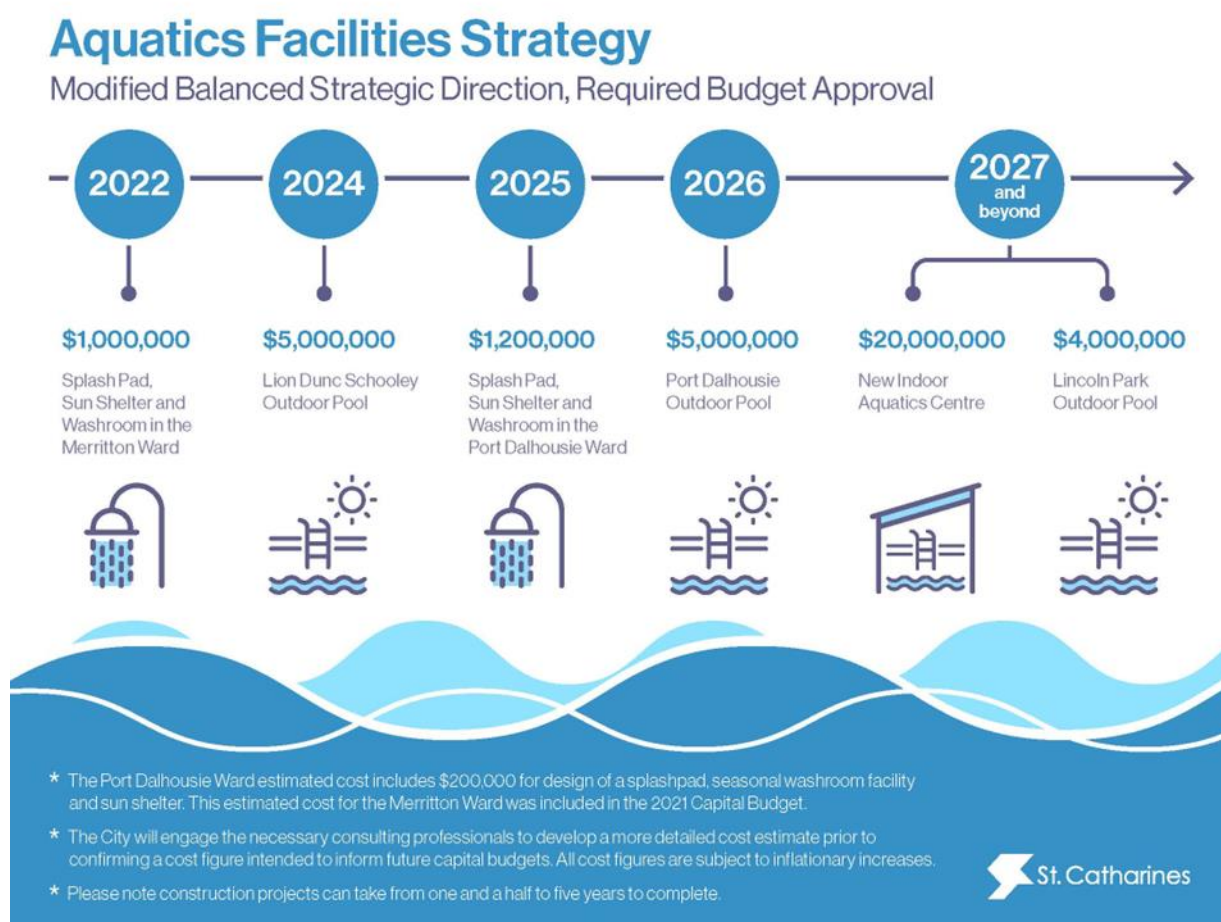
- Construct a new indoor aquatics centre
- Redevelop Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool
- Redevelop Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool
- Renew Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool
- Construct a Splashpad in the Merritton Ward
- Construct a Splashpad in the Port Dalhousie Ward

## Modified Balanced Required Budget Approval

The modified balanced required budget approvals can be found below in Table 1.



Table 1: Modified Balanced, Required Budget Approval



## Site Selection Process Reviewed All Options

Based on the Council approved Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan's (RMP) Site Selection Criteria for Major Recreational Facilities (Appendix 2), the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee (RMPAC), Outdoor Aquatics Facilities Task Force (OAFTF) and staff reviewed five possible sites within the Merritton Ward. The sites included Community Park, Pic Leeson Park, Trapper Leo Park (two locations), and Secord Woods Park. These sites were all existing municipal parks and generally met most of the approved criteria. Other site considerations that did not meet the approved criteria included Clifford's Creek Park and Wembly Drive Park. The City of St. Catharines Aquatic Facilities Map (Appendix 3) details all existing aquatic facilities locations.

A review of each site was conducted to determine if they aligned with the selection criteria and given a rating for further investigation. The analysis of the preferred sites (A and B sites) was further examined by the RMPAC and OAFTF with site visits and a more detailed review of the site's alignment with both the selection criteria and the RMP. As a result of this review, the unanimous choice for the location of the Merritton Ward splashpad was Secord Woods Park (Appendix 4).

Similar to the Bogart Street Park splashpad project, the existing Secord Woods Park playground will be relocated adjacent to the splashpad when it is renewed as per the Parks Renewal Plan. The Secord Woods Park playground is currently yellow category and due for replacement in the next 6-10 years.

## **Community Engagement Key Element of Site Selection**

The preferred site location was determined through a comprehensive engagement effort.

## **Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee & Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Task Force**

After a thorough review of all site options within the Merritton Ward, including site visits, on July 20, 2022, the RMPAC and OAFTF approved the following motion:

That the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee and Outdoor Aquatics Facilities Task Force recommend Secord Woods Park for community consultation as the future site of the Merritton splashpad, sun shelter and washroom; and

That staff contact the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) regarding a parking lot partnership between Applewood School and the Secord Woods Park site.

## **Engage STC Community Survey**

Following the RMPAC and OAFTF site recommendation, residents were invited to view the proposed site and offer feedback electronically from September 8, 2022, to October 6, 2022. The Engage STC community survey generated a total of 671 page visits with 57 responses.

The Merritton splashpad community survey was advertised using the City's social media feeds, contacting local media outlets, onsite signage and promoted by the RMPAC and OAFTF.

## **Public Information Centre**

The RMPAC, OAFTF, Merritton Ward Councillors and City staff held a Public Information Meeting on September 21, 2022, at Secord Wood Park and the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canals Centre to present the preferred site option to the surrounding neighbourhood, interested community groups and the public at large. The meeting was attended by approximately 10 residents.

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee**

On November 23, 2022, City staff presented the preferred site option to the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for feedback. The overall feedback of the AAC for the Secord Woods Park site was positive and that a universal washroom design for the project is non-negotiable.

## Community Engagement Feedback Positive

The overall feedback of the preferred splashpad location was positive. Some of the concerns voiced through the engagement were:

- Vehicular traffic on Woodrow Street
- Onsite parking
- Removal of the existing soccer field

### Vehicular Traffic on Woodrow Street

In response to the community feedback, prior to the splashpad becoming operational in 2024, Woodrow Street will be assessed through the Council approved Traffic Calming policy. Pending the results of the studies, staff will determine, what, if any action is warranted.

Once operational, further studies will be undertaken assessing any vehicular traffic changes on Woodrow Street, pedestrian patterns and parking impacts on the surrounding street network.

### Onsite Parking Partnership with DSBN

As recommended by the RMPAC and OAFTE, staff contacted the DSBN regarding the shared use of the DSBN owned parking lot at Applewood School. The DSBN informed staff that it had no objections to the community using its parking lot while visiting the splashpad. In addition, there is minimal overlap between the operational season of the splashpad and the school year. City splashpads typically open the last week of May and close in early September. The DSBN school year typically ends the last week of June and starts in early September. It is anticipated that the overlap between the DSBN school year and splashpad usage will be a few weeks annually.

The RMPAC, OAFTE and City staff recommend the use of the Applewood School parking lot as the preferred parking option for the Secord Woods Park splashpad site. As the Secord Woods Park site is located centrally in the Merritton Ward, the splashpad site will be a walkable destination for many households.

If Council wishes to pursue the addition of a parking lot to the Secord Woods Park site, the estimated cost for 10 parking spaces, concrete curbs, a storm sewer connection with no parking lot lights is approximately \$100,000.

### Existing Soccer Field

The existing soccer field at Secord Woods Park is identified as a drop in field and is not currently in the inventory of available fields that the City permits for games or practices. The soccer field is not programmed, permitted or utilized by the City, DSBN or user groups. Secord Woods Park provides significant park space (4.31 ha) that informal play could continue within the greenspace of the park for the neighbourhood.

## Anticipated Project Timelines

Pending Council approval of the site, the anticipated project timelines for the Merritton Ward splashpad, sun shelter and washroom are as follows:

**Q1 / Q2 of 2023**

Staff proceed with the procurement process of the design and build.

**Q3 / Q4 of 2023**

Construction of splashpad, washroom and sun shelter to begin.

**Spring of 2024**

Official Opening of splashpad, washroom and sun shelter.

## **Financial Implications**

At its meeting on December 14, 2020, Council approved \$200,000 for the design of a splashpad, seasonal washroom, and sun shelter. At its meeting on November 15, 2021, Council approved a \$12,000 transfer from the splashpad design to support the firehall project. At its meeting on November 29, 2021, Council approved \$1 Million for the installation of a splashpad, seasonal washroom facility and sun shelter in the Merritton Ward as per the Aquatics Facilities Strategy. At its meeting on December 12, 2022, Council approved an additional \$350,000 towards the project due to the increase in construction costs. The total Council approved capital budget is \$1,538,000.

Staff will include the operating expenditures for the Merritton splashpad for Council's consideration in the 2024 draft operating budget. As outlined in the Aquatics Facilities Strategy, the estimated annual operating cost will be \$100,000. This estimated operating cost is based on the previous average cost of City splash pads and assumes that operational responsibilities can be carried out by the City's existing staffing complement. Additional maintenance costs are discussed in the Operational Implications section below. This operational assumption will be verified prior to the 2024 draft operating budget and planned for accordingly.

## **Environmental Sustainability Implications**

As the future climate projections point towards hotter summers, and recent experience with high Lake Ontario water levels has resulted in Lakeside Beach being occasionally closed for swimming, opportunities for residents to cool down and get relief from the heat will be even more important in the future.

During the summer months, splash pads and outdoor pools can also be used for cool down experiences for residents. As hotter summers are predicted in virtually all climate change scenarios, the need for cooling centres is expected to increase in the future.

Any additional net increase in aquatic facilities would likely result in additional water and energy usage. Additional splash pads in particular will require significant amounts of water compared to a pool. The existing splash pads are a flow-through water supply design where water is not re-used. It is possible to employ a more environmentally friendly type with a recirculating system instead; however, there would be additional costs associated with these systems.



## Operational Implications

The Merritton Ward splashpad is a new City service which will create additional operational impacts beginning in 2024. Additional staff or contract services may be required to maintain the new splashpad. Staff will include associated costs in the 2024 Operating Budget proposal. As outlined in the Aquatics Facilities Strategy, the estimated annual operating cost will be \$100,000. This estimated operating cost is based on the previous average cost of City splash pads and assumes that operational responsibilities can be carried out by the City's existing staffing complement. This operational assumption will be verified prior to the 2024 draft operating budget and planned for accordingly.

## Conclusion

Staff are recommending that Council approve the Secord Woods Park site as the preferred location for the Merritton Ward splashpad based on the analysis completed by staff, the feedback received from a community consultation process and the endorsement of the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee and the Outdoor Aquatics Facilities Task Force.

### Prepared & Submitted by

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### Approved by

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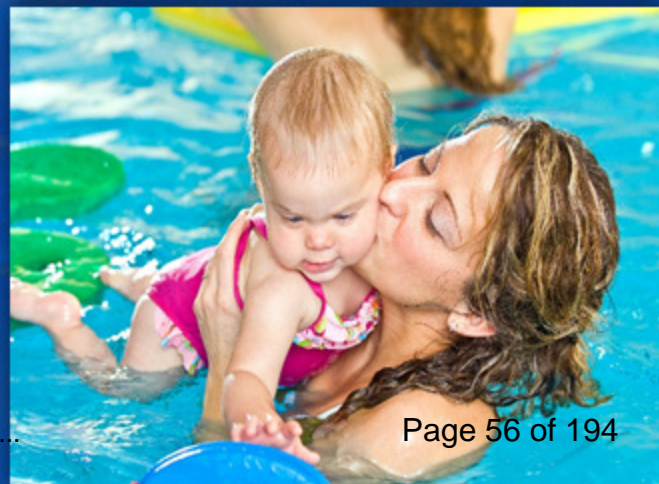
Anthony Martuccio  
Director Engineering, Facilities and Environmental Services

## Appendices

1. Aquatics Facilities Strategy
2. Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan Site Selection Criteria
3. City of St. Catharines Aquatic Facilities Map
4. Secord Woods Park Site Map

# City of St. Catharines Aquatic Facilities Strategy

March 2021





City of St. Catharines

## Aquatic Facilities Strategy Final Report

March 22, 2021

Prepared by:



*in  
association  
with*



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## Acronyms

FAIR	City of St. Catharines Fee Assistance in Recreation program
GGH	Greater Golden Horseshoe
OAS	Outdoor Aquatics Facilities Strategy (2016)
RPMP	Recreation Facilities & Programming Master Plan (2015)
SKAC	St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre









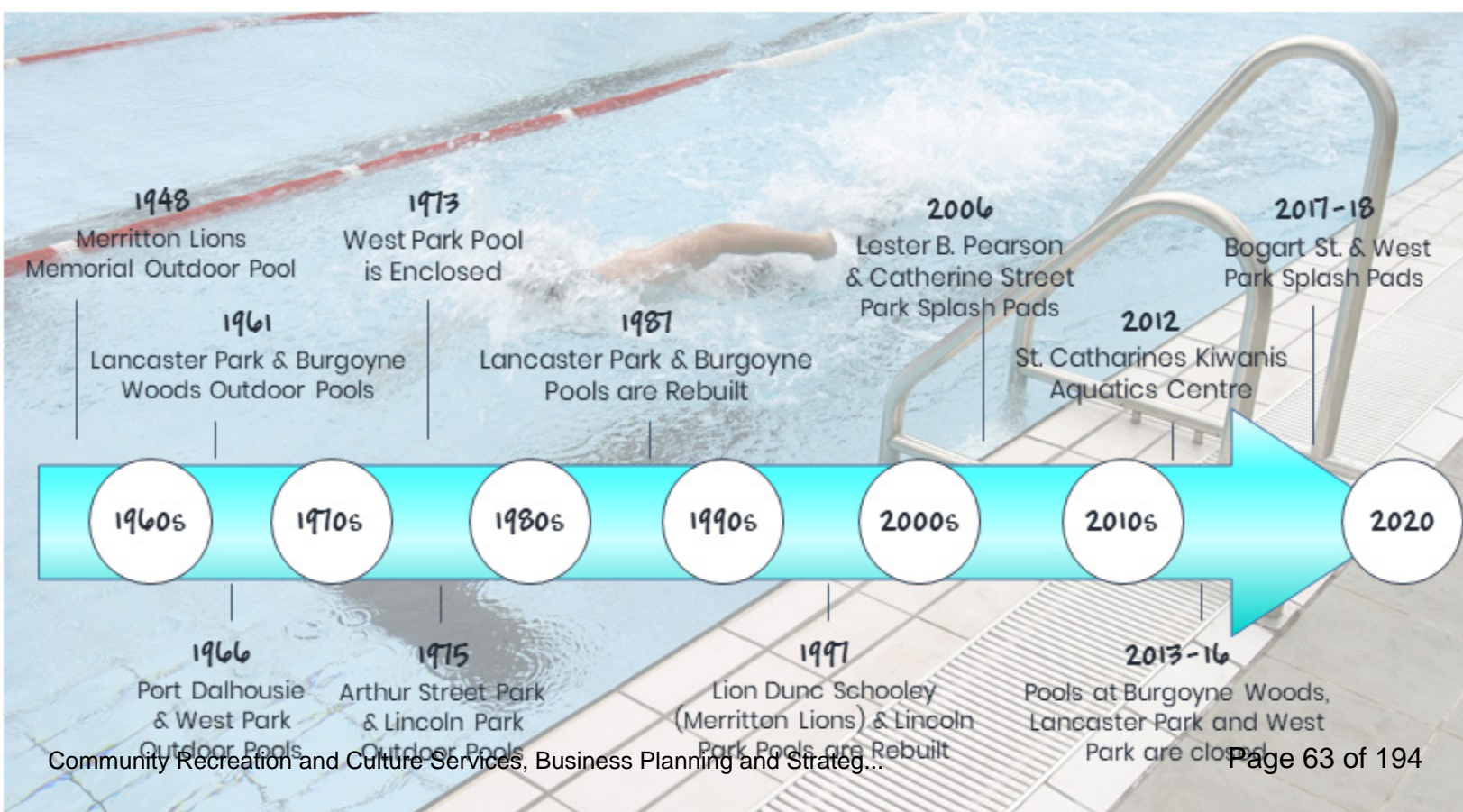
## Section 1:

# Aquatics in St. Catharines

### 1.1 A History of Aquatic Facility Development in St. Catharines

Many St. Catharines residents have fond memories of learning to swim and spending time at City pools. Starting with outdoor pools built more than 40 years ago to more recent investments in the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre and the four splash pads, new memories are being created as a result of the City's commitment to providing a progressive aquatics system for its residents and visitors.

The City originally enabled seasonal access to swimming pools by way of seven outdoor pools located across St. Catharines. Efforts of the Merritton Lions Club led to the opening of St. Catharines' first public pool in 1948 at the Community Park, becoming what is now known as Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool. Subsequent outdoor pools were built in 1966 at Port Dalhousie Lions Park and West Park, with other large outdoor pools constructed at Lancaster Park, Burgoyne Woods, and renovations to the Lions pool in Merritton in the years that followed. Two small pools were also built at Arthur Street Park and Lincoln Park to service their surrounding neighbourhoods. The City's outdoor pools were closely intertwined with the community fabric, as was the case in many Canadian cities between the 1960s and 1990s, serving as a gathering place for residents and their families to spend time outdoors. In 1973, the City enclosed the West Park Pool by attaching it to a high school and operating it through a cost-sharing agreement with the District School Board of Niagara.



With the typical lifecycle of an outdoor pool in southwestern Ontario between 30 and 40 years, and slightly longer for indoor pools, St. Catharines' pools were faced with growing age-related concerns by the mid-2000s even after substantial refurbishment projects. The emergence of splash pads across the Greater Golden Horseshoe introduced interactive waterplay opportunities that were cost-effective for municipalities and embraced by families due to their fun factor and ability to include children that did not know how to swim. The City was among the first GGH municipalities that responded to this trend by building splash pads at Lester B. Pearson Park and Catherine Street Park in 2006.

In 2012, the City took its aquatics system to the next level with the opening of the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre (SKAC). Since its opening, more than 275,000 drop-in leisure swims and over 15,000 learn-to-swim registrations have filled the pool, keeping St. Catharines residents healthy, engaged in their community and providing important water-safety training for a lakefront community. The SKAC was a planned replacement for the West Park indoor pool which was subsequently closed since its financial requirements had become untenable due to age and functional limitations.

The success of the SKAC coincided with a downturn in usage of the outdoor pools as a number of residents preferred the indoor pool's climate-controlled environment, consistency in scheduled programs (no weather-related cancellations), heated water, barrier-free accessible design, and the high quality changerooms, washrooms and family/universal changerooms. Fewer swimmers at the outdoor pools meant less revenue was being generated, challenging the City's ability to offset day-to-day operating costs as well as the growing costs of maintaining aging structural and mechanical components. Although some residents continue to prefer swimming at the City's outdoor pools for nostalgic reasons or a preference to be outside, decreased outdoor pool usage was also attributed to backyard pools becoming more affordable.

Following the adoption of the Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan in 2015 and an Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Strategy in 2016, the City constructed a splash pad at West Park while decommissioning outdoor pools at Lancaster Park and Arthur Street Park. In an attempt to retain the Burgoyne Woods outdoor pool, the City sought expressions of interest from the private sector and community to operate the pool but none were received and thus the decision was made to close it as well. The move allowed the City to redirect users and financial resources to its other pools in order to improve the sustainability of the aquatics system as a whole. In 2020/21, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the City to temporarily close its pools to maintain physical distancing practices and public health measures (the Port Dalhousie and Lincoln Park outdoor pools were opened for half of summer 2020 due to a heatwave, and the SKAC resumed operations in August 2020).

The City has embraced new trends, preferences and technologies to keep its aquatics infrastructure up-to-date. In aligning with best practices found across Canada, St. Catharines has re-adjusted its aquatics focus to provide year-round swimming and aquatic fitness programs for residents of all ages while delivering waterplay experiences to families and children. Doing so has required some difficult choices along the way but ultimately the City of St. Catharines has strived to deliver sustainable aquatic services for the enjoyment of current and future generations.



## **1.2 The Benefits of Aquatics**

As part of the parks and recreation system, municipalities provide access to water-based recreational services through an assortment of facilities that can include indoor aquatic centres, outdoor pools, splash pads, and beaches. Each type of facility has its own set of operational benefits and challenges such as the cost to build and operate them, the type of experience that they offer, and their programming potential. Municipalities balance such considerations in a manner that allows residents to obtain the many benefits of participating in water-based recreation.

Public aquatic facilities have always been an important part of the community fabric. They are destinations that can drive social interaction, stimulate economic development, showcase unique architectural and urban design elements that contribute to place-making, and promote healthy lifestyles. The St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre has been transformational on a City-wide scale, particularly when grouped with other investments such as the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and the Meridian Centre that have collectively enhanced the civic identity. At a more localized scale, the City's splash pads have played a part in bringing neighbourhoods together.

## **1.3 The Rationale for Providing Aquatic Services**

It is common knowledge in the recreation sector that pools are among the most expensive recreation facilities to build, maintain and operate. The SKAC typically recovers 35% of its operating costs through user generated revenues with the remainder of the operating costs funded through municipal taxes (experience in other parts of Ontario suggests cost recovery rates usually between 30% and 60%) while the Port Dalhousie and Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pools typically recover between 10% and 15% (there is no cost recovery at Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool since no admission is charged and there are no paid programs provided there). Cost implications aside, recreation professionals recognize that the value of providing pools cannot simply be measured in dollars and cents, and that the intrinsic benefits of pools and splash pads can offset a portion of expenditures incurred.

Municipalities subsidize many of their recreational services; the incentive to do so for aquatics services stems from the very nature of the aquatics system to reach individuals and entire communities. The highest levels of subsidization tend to be assigned for those municipal services that benefit the highest number of people in a community, as well as services that maximize what is referred to as the "public good." Municipal aquatic facilities are able to deliver multiple services that in turn engage a very large base of residents while also having the potential to be tailored toward specialized or individual interests. This provides strong rationale for investment/subsidization and the City's commitment to doing so is reinforced through Aquatic Facilities Strategy consultations that reveal St. Catharines residents value the fun and affordable opportunities available through aquatic services.

# Benefits of Aquatics Services

## **Water Safety / Drowning Prevention**

Teaching essential life skills of water-safety and learning how to swim, which is especially important in St. Catharines due to the presence of Lake Ontario, Twelve Mile Creek, the Welland Canal, beaches, marinas, piers and other waterways.

## **Leadership & Employment Skills**

Empowering future leaders through aquatic leadership training and employment opportunities for lifeguards, instructors, and other aquatic staff.

## **Health, Fitness & Rehabilitation**

Encouraging people to be physically active and maintain their health, as well as aiding in the recovery from injuries and management of disabilities / chronic pain.

## **Connecting Individuals with Communities**

Providing a venue for people to be connected with each other as well as combating social isolation faced by certain populations including newcomers, seniors, and others.

## **Time with Family**

Providing opportunities for families to spend time together participating in a collective activities, and helping to strengthen family bonds.

## **Connection to the Outdoors**

Outdoor pools and splash pads are located in settings that encourage people to get outside, and for some create nostalgic feelings of swimming outdoors as was more commonly done among previous generations of residents.

## **Aquatic Sport**

Promoting principles of sport for life, long-term athlete development, and sport development by way of swimming, diving and other aquatic sports.

## **Events & Tourism**

Hosting community special events, swim meets, and other organized gatherings intended to stimulate civic pride and attract tourism/sport tourism.

## 1.4 Purpose of the Aquatics Facilities Strategy

The Aquatics Facilities Strategy (the “Strategy”) guides the City of St. Catharines indoor and outdoor aquatics system to the year 2031. The Strategy builds upon the Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (RFPMP) and the Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Strategy (OAS) by analyzing the need for new aquatics facilities as well as defining a future course of action for the following:

- St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre – 25 metre 8-lane indoor pool plus leisure tank
- Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool – small, shallow depth pool
- Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool – 25 metre 6-lane pool plus small shallow depth pool
- Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool – 25 metre 6-lane pool plus small shallow depth pool
- Splash Pads at Bogart Street Park, Catherine Street Park, Lester B. Pearson Park and West Park

The Strategy is prepared in accordance with a Terms of Reference that was developed and overseen by the City of St. Catharines. It considers community input, capital and operating information, program and participation data at municipal pools, national and provincial trends, and demographic characteristics of St. Catharines.

The scope of the Strategy is relegated to determining capital infrastructure needs and accordingly is not intended to make recommendations regarding service delivery topics such as policies, procedures, allocation and scheduling practices, staffing, or rates and fees. Similarly, the Strategy is solely focused upon the need for built indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities in St. Catharines and thus does not delve into other recreational space assessments (although opportunities to integrate/accommodate other identified recreational needs could be considered during the Strategy’s implementation). The 2015 RFPMP and other city documents should be referenced for service delivery matters and non-aquatic activities.

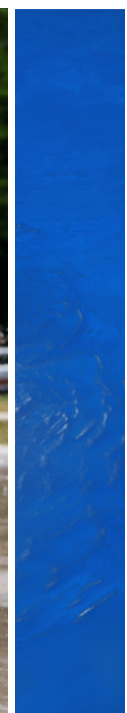




Figure 1:  
City of St. Catharines Aquatic Facilities

-  Indoor Pools
-  Outdoor Pools
-  Splash Pads



Data provided by the City of St. Catharines

## 1.5 Alignment with City of St. Catharines Guiding Documents

### St. Catharines Strategic Plan

Decision-making for the City of St. Catharines is guided by the corporate Strategic Plan, which spans the years 2019 to 2028. The Strategic Plan sets out the following vision for the City.

**“Our Vision for the future is for St. Catharines to be the most dynamic, innovative, sustainable, and livable city in North America.”<sup>1</sup>**

Aquatic facility developments and progressive aquatic program offerings are in keeping with the City’s pursuit of innovation, livability, and creating a vibrant and dynamic community.

The Strategic Plan identifies four core pillars:

- Economic Prosperity
- Social Well-Being
- Environmental Stewardship
- Cultural Renaissance

The Strategic Plan’s following objectives are relevant to consider as part of the Aquatics Facilities Strategy:

#### **Economic Prosperity Pillar:**

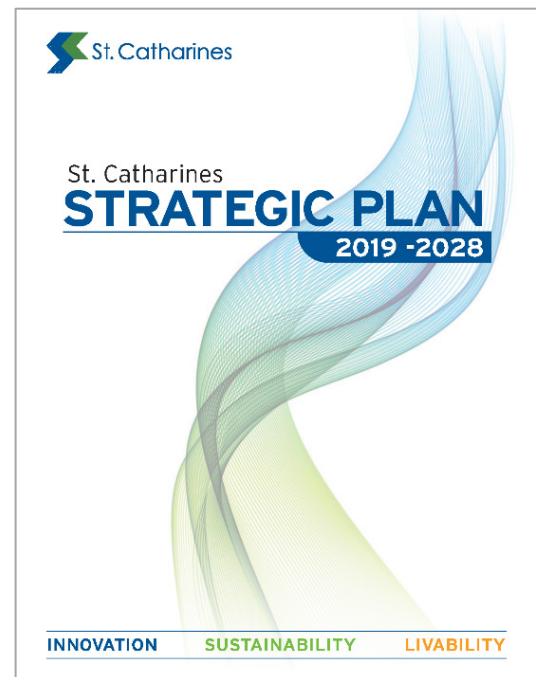
“Support the City’s commitment to building and growing a diverse and resilient economy through fiscal responsibility, urban regeneration and collaborative partnerships.”

- **Objective 1.2:** “Develop a 10-Year Capital Infrastructure Plan that includes all major investments to address City needs, priorities and investments.”

#### **Social Well-Being Pillar:**

“Build and support strong, inclusive neighbourhoods that provide high quality of life for residents of all ages.”

- **Objective 2.3:** “Refine and implement the Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (2015-2026).”



<sup>1</sup> City of St. Catharines. Strategic Plan 2019-2028.



## Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan

Since 1996, St. Catharines has prepared Master Plans to guide its recreation facilities and programs. Each of the last three Master Plans have reviewed aquatic facility needs along with other recreational infrastructure. The 2008 Master Plan recommended the construction of a new indoor aquatics centre to replace the West Park Pool, along with additions to the splash pad supply. The City implemented these recommendations with the SKAC though splash pad construction was deferred until after the 2015 Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan (RFPMP) was adopted.



Through the RFPMP process, consultations with aquatic stakeholders yielded concerns that the City may not be providing sufficient indoor pools based on population compared to other municipalities, which in turn was affecting their ability to swim in prime times. The RFPMP also re-emphasized the need to expand upon the splash pad supply and recommended that the City closely examine each outdoor pool's operating performance in relation to its lifecycle and ability to meet programming expectations of residents.

The following are aquatics-specific recommendations arising out of the 2015 RFPMP:

- Identify and engage potential partners that currently provide, or have an interest in providing indoor aquatics opportunities to determine how the City's residents and user groups may gain improved access to meet demands that cannot be met with the City's existing facility. *(Recommendation #4)*
- In tandem with the Master Plan's outdoor pool implementation strategy, splash pads should be distributed in a manner that ensures each of the six municipal wards have reasonable geographic access to a splash pad or continue to have access to an outdoor pool. The preferred location of future splash pads is within District or large Neighbourhood level parks. *(Recommendation #19)*
- Undertake usage and monitoring program at the two existing splash pads to collect information that can be used to rationalize the level of future investment relative to the costs associated with construction and operation of these facilities. *(Recommendation #20)*
- Develop criteria to be used to establish the feasibility of operating outdoor pools in certain locations by factoring remediation costs related to building code and accessibility standards, heating and projected operating costs. *(Recommendation #21)*

- In tandem with the recommended capital and operating budget exercises and the results of the performance analysis, initiate a business plan associated with the rejuvenation of outdoor rectangular pools selected for retention on the basis that they are to provide a more inclusive leisure and destination-themed experience. (*Recommendation #22*)
- Subject to the results of the recommended capital and operating budget exercises and the results of the performance analysis, leverage current outdoor pool sites and identify locations for splash pads to replace aging and non-compliant assets. (*Recommendation #23*)

### Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Strategy

In the months following the adoption of the RFPMP, the City initiated an internal review of its outdoor aquatics infrastructure by way of an Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Strategy (OAS). The OAS built upon the RFPMP's assessments to provide an implementation plan for the renewal and management of outdoor aquatics infrastructure between the years 2015 and 2020.

The timing of the OAS also coincided with:

- an approved federal and provincial infrastructure grant to redevelop West Park, which included a new splash pad;
- closure of the at Lancaster Park rectangular pool and the small pool at Arthur Street Park; and
- the release for an Expression of Interest for third party management and operations of the Burgoyne Woods outdoor pool through which no proposals were received, and the pool was subsequently demolished in 2016.



**City of St. Catharines  
Outdoor Aquatic  
Facilities Strategy  
2015 - 2020**

The Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee was engaged during the OAS planning process. The OAS made a number of recommendations after a review of the RFPMP, pool condition assessments, utilization data, and capital renewal requirements. The report stated that public feedback would be a critical next step to discuss potential locations, designs, programming needs, and opportunities for community involvement and partnerships.

### **Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Strategy Recommendations**

- 1.** Follow the recommendations identified in the RFPMP
  - a. Replace current pools with up to 4 additional splash pads located throughout the city
  - b. Replace or upgrade current pools with up to 2 outdoor accessible pools with modern features and amenities such as heated water, parking, accessible change rooms, shaded areas, play features and accessible entrances
- 2.** City adapt a service level standard of 1 pool per 70,000 population
- 3.** City adapt a service level standard of 1 splash pad per 3,000 children under the age of 9
- 4.** Monitor splash pad usage
- 5.** Complete Canada 150 CIP project including a new splash pad at West Park; close and decommission Lincoln Park pool
- 6.** Host community engagement sessions to gauge public interest in pursuing additional outdoor aquatic facilities and possible locations, features, etc.
- 7.** Engage [a] consultant and determine the feasibility of constructing a new outdoor aquatic facility at Burgoyne Woods or similar location
- 8.** Decommission Port Dalhousie Pools and replace with splash pad (at same or nearby location) if new pools are feasible
- 9.** Future splash pad to be located at a priority need area
- 10.** Explore funding opportunities

*Source: Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Strategy, 2016*











## Section 2:

# Aquatic Facilities in St. Catharines & Surrounding Areas

### 2.1 City of St. Catharines Aquatic Facilities

#### City-Owned Pools

The City of St. Catharines operates one indoor pool and three outdoor pools.

Pool	Year Opened	Design Features / Amenities
St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre	2012	25 metre eight lane rectangular pool plus a separate leisure pool
Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool	1975, Rebuilt 1997	Small pool (15 x 12 metres)
Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool	1948, Rebuilt 1997	25 metre six lane rectangular pool, separate small pool (15 x 14 metres), bathhouse
Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool	1966	25 metre six lane rectangular pool, separate small pool (15 x 12 metres), bathhouse



St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre



Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool



Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool



Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool

## City-Owned Splash Pads

The City of St. Catharines operates four splash pads.

Splash Pad	Year of Construction	Design Features / Amenities
Bogart Street Splash Pad	2018	Nautical theme with spray loop, fountain spray, geysers, and washroom building
Catherine Street Splash Pad	2006	Jets, fountain spray, spray loop, and buckets
Lester B. Pearson Park Splash Pad	2006	'Old West' theme with jets, fountain spray and geysers
West Park Splash Pad	2017	Jets, fountain spray, spray loop, buckets and washroom building



Bogart Street Splash Pad



Catherine Street Splash Pad



Lester B. Pearson Park Splash Pad



West Park Splash Pad



## City-Owned Beaches

The City operates three beaches in addition to its pools and splash pads. As beaches are natural amenities and are not lifeguarded, they are not considered to be part of the City's built facility inventory and are thus outside of the scope of the Aquatics Facilities Strategy. Beaches complement built facilities by providing residents with a different type of aquatic experience, allowing swimming and cooling along with enjoyment of the outdoors. City-owned beaches consist of:

1. **Lakeside Park Beach** – offers picturesque views of the Port Dalhousie harbour, lighthouse and the north shore of Lake Ontario. It shares a number of amenities with the park including washrooms, concessions, sand volleyball courts and a picnic area.
2. **Sunset Beach** – located in a protected bay, offers a picturesque view to Lake Ontario and small lighthouse beacon.
3. **Jones Beach** – 365 metres of sandy beach located along the Waterfront Trail and in proximity to the Welland Canal Parkway Trail.

Beaches contribute to the overall aquatics experience in St. Catharines but should not be treated as providing the same opportunity as would a pool or splash pad. Swimming in the lake requires a relatively strong skillset, the City does not offer any open-water aquatic programs, and water quality/water levels can be inconsistent (Niagara Public Health reported safe swimming conditions 67% of the time at City of St. Catharines beaches, on average, between 2015 and 2020).



## Aquatic Facility Lifecycle Considerations

Outdoor pools in southwestern Ontario typically have a lifespan up to 40 years while the lifecycle of for indoor pools is slightly longer given the ability to shield certain pool components from the weather. DEI Consulting Engineers undertook a review of the City's existing aquatic systems at each municipal pool and splash pad as part of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy. The report – contained under separate cover – provides a high-level overview of the aquatic systems, outlining the general condition of the existing pools and splash pads. Observations were based on pre-existing information available through the City as well as visits to each site. General findings from the DEI Report include the following.

### **SKAC**

The overall facility and pool tanks appear to be in excellent condition, with all mechanical equipment appearing to be in good working condition and regular maintenance being undertaken by the City. The SKAC appears to be in compliance with Ontario Building Code and Public Health regulations, and is designed to comply with facility accessible design standards.

### **Outdoor Pools**

A number of age-related deficiencies were documented. Pool tanks and surrounding decks of each of the three locations demonstrated different degrees of aging and deterioration, with observations indicating that they are nearing the end of their useful life. DEI estimates that the remaining life expectancy of major components at all three outdoor between the next 1 to 5 years (e.g. pool tanks, decks and certain mechanical equipment).

Unfortunately, some mechanical components are no longer available through the original manufacturer, thus presenting potential challenges in terms of availability and/or cost. In particular, the mechanical systems at Lion Dunc Schooley and Lincoln Park Outdoor Pools do not meet building code and health for turnover rate for water. Further, upgrading equipment at any or all three of the outdoor pools to meet current code regulations or improving operational efficiencies could result in other upgrades having to be undertaken to comply with provincial codes. Certain public and occupational health and safety improvements were documented for immediate attention. Due to the era of bathhouse and mechanical room construction, upgrading mechanical systems could be challenged by existing floor space or configuration thereby requiring additions or new structures to be built.

## **30 to 40 Years**

Typical lifecycle of an outdoor pool, and slightly longer for indoor pools

## **1 to 5 Years**

Estimated life expectancy remaining for many major components at the City's three outdoor pools

## **None**

Number of the City's outdoor pools meet current barrier free accessibility standards or provide heated water

From a functional standpoint, none of the outdoor pools are considered to meet barrier-free, facility accessible design standards in the absence of lifts and/or accessible ramps along with barriers such as steps (in the pool and bathhouses). Additionally, none of the pools are heated which can reduce their appeal for certain aquatic programs and participants.

### **Splash Pads**

The Bogart Street Park and West Park splash pads' concrete surfacing, water play equipment, and mechanical systems appear in good to excellent condition. For the Lester B. Pearson Park and Catherine Street Park splash pads, concrete surfacing and equipment appear in fair condition (with some signs of aging) while manifolds and control systems are in good shape.

## **2.2 Non-Municipal Aquatic Facilities**

### **Brock University**

The Eleanor Misener Aquatic Centre at Brock University contains a 50 metre indoor pool with a hydraulic floor in the shallow end that elevates to 4 feet at its maximum depth. The aquatic centre contains diving facilities (1-metre and 3-metre springboards plus a 5-metre platform) along with a Tarzan rope in the deep end. Water temperature is maintained at 28° C (82° F) with an on-deck hot tub providing a warmer alternative. Family changerooms, men's and women's showers, saunas, and lockers are all contained in the facility.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Brock University has limited pool access to only its students and is presently not available to the general public. In pre-pandemic times, Brock University offered a wide variety of swim programs and certification courses throughout the year. In addition to varsity, student and faculty users, the aquatic centre was open to the community for:

- Open/drop-in swim times;
- Learn-to-swim programs for all age groups are delivered in accordance with the Lifesaving Society curriculum;
- Lifeguarding and first-aid certification programs;
- Aquatic fitness classes;
- Competitive swim programs; and
- Summer camp programs.

The pool is available for community rentals in full, half (25 metre) and smaller increments, or individual lanes. Aquatic memberships are available for purchase by the community at \$36 per month which enables access to the facility itself; program registration costs are over and above that amount. A 10-punch pass is also available for



\$40. As an example of program costs, Swimmer 1 at Brock University costs \$8 per class while the City's comparable Swim Kids 1 costs \$7.25 per class (the City also offers a 20% discount for each additional child registered).<sup>2</sup>

### Walker Family YMCA

The Walker Family YMCA has serviced a share of the local and regional aquatics market for decades. In March 2021, during the finalization stages of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy, the YMCA of Niagara listed the 27-year old Walker Family YMCA building and its associated property for sale. This follows the closure of the YMCA's location in Niagara Falls and is due in part to the economic challenges that have exacerbated through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Walker Family YMCA building contains an indoor aquatic centre with a 25 metre, 6 lane rectangular pool that is equipped with a lift to facilitate access for persons with disabilities, as well as gendered and family changerooms. An exterior splash pad was also available to members and was used for some YMCA programming. The building also contains a fitness centre, gymnasium and program rooms.

### Ridley College

The indoor pool located on the Ridley College campus has historically provided a degree of community access by way of rentals. It is understood that Ridley College has plans to decommission the pool and thus it would no longer be available upon doing so.

### Other Pools in St. Catharines

Other pools that provide some access to residents and visitors to St. Catharines include:

- *hotel pools* such as at the Holiday Inn and the Best Western, the latter of which offers weekly aquatic fitness programs;
- *pools in retirement residences* including the Ina Grafton Gage Village and Royal Henley Retirement that offer open swims and aquatic fitness classes; and
- the *Niagara Children's Centre's* fully accessible, heated, salt-water pool that supports its rehabilitative programs but also offers open swim programs to children and their families who may be unable to participate in community-based pool programs due to their condition.

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<sup>2</sup> References to membership and program costs as of March 2020, excluding HST

## **2.3 Pools Operated by Area Municipalities**

Indoor pools are considered to be “drive-to” facilities that can be accessed within 30 minutes. For the City of St. Catharines, this is assumed to encompass a service radius of 30 kilometres noting that travel time will vary based upon accessibility via municipal roads, expressways (e.g. QEW, Highway 420, and Regional Roads), availability of transit, and driving conditions that may vary depending on the weather. Outdoor pools and splash pads tend to have a more localized catchment area, depending upon their size and function.

Figure 2 and the paragraphs that follow contain a summary public and quasi-public aquatic facilities within a 30 minute drive of most areas of St. Catharines.

### **City of Niagara Falls**

Like St. Catharines, the City of Niagara Falls historically relied upon seasonal outdoor pools to meet the needs of its residents. In total, the City operates five outdoor pools of which four are 25 metre, six lane rectangular configurations while the fifth is approximately 15 metres length. The City programs these pools for public swims, lessons and summer camp programs; the outdoor pools are typically operated between the last week of June through to the Labour Day long weekend.

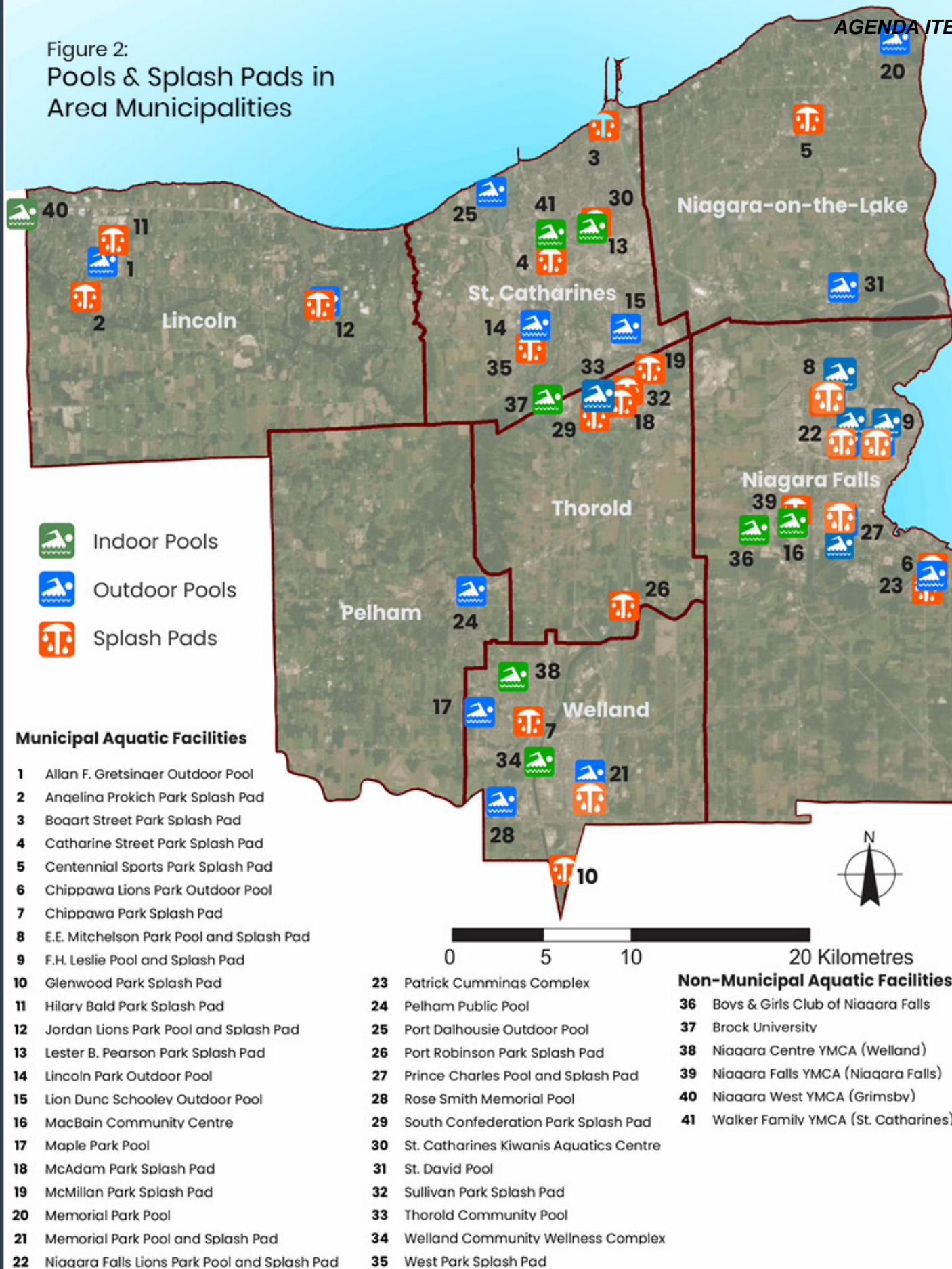
The City of Niagara Falls has contributed capital towards two indoor aquatic centres over the past 15 years through partnerships with the YMCA of Niagara and the Boys & Girls Club of Niagara (see paragraphs that follow). Unlike St. Catharines, Niagara Falls does not directly operate or program these two indoor pools; in January 2021, the YMCA permanently ceased operations at the MacBain Community Centre and the City of Niagara Falls is exploring options for the future of the aquatic centre.

The City co-locates splash pads onsite with all of its outdoor pools (outside of the fenced pool area) and the McBain Community Centre, as well as another at a sports field complex for a total supply of seven splash pads.

### **City of Thorold**

The Thorold Community Pool is a destination-style outdoor pool containing a rectangular tank, leisure tank with beach entry and waterplay features (including a waterslide), along with on-deck spray elements and shaded seating areas. Constructed in 2011, the City operates the pool between the last week of June through to the Labour Day long weekend during which public swims, aquatic fitness programs and lessons are delivered. In addition to its community pool, Thorold provides six splash pads.

Figure 2:  
Pools & Splash Pads in  
Area Municipalities



### **City of Welland**

The City of Welland operates an indoor pool that was originally constructed as part of a multi-use seniors centre that has since been opened to the public at large; as such, the pool is substantially undersized by modern standards since its focus was originally therapeutic programs for a very specific segment of the population, and thus this pool cannot be programmed as would a typical rectangular lane pool.

The City relies upon its three outdoor pools to deliver lessons and lane swims. Its outdoor pools are operated between eight and ten weeks in the summer, depending on the weather. In addition, Welland operates a total of three splash pads.

### **Town of Lincoln**

There are two municipally operated outdoor pools in Lincoln, both of which are 25 metre, five lane rectangular configurations. The pools are located in Beamsville and Jordan, the latter of which is well advanced into its lifecycle. The Town delivers public swimming, lessons and aquatic fitness at its outdoor pools.

The Town operates three splash pads but does not provide indoor aquatics.

### **Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake**

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake operates two outdoor 25 metre rectangular pools, one of which has five swimming lanes and the other has six lanes. These pools are open between the last week of June and Labour Day, offering public swimming, lessons and rentals. There is also one splash pad along with a wading pool in the Town, but no indoor pools.

### **Town of Pelham**

There is a municipal 25 metre, six lane outdoor pool located in Fonthill that is available for public swimming, lessons, and is also used by the local swim club. The Town does not have indoor aquatic facilities or splash pads at present time.

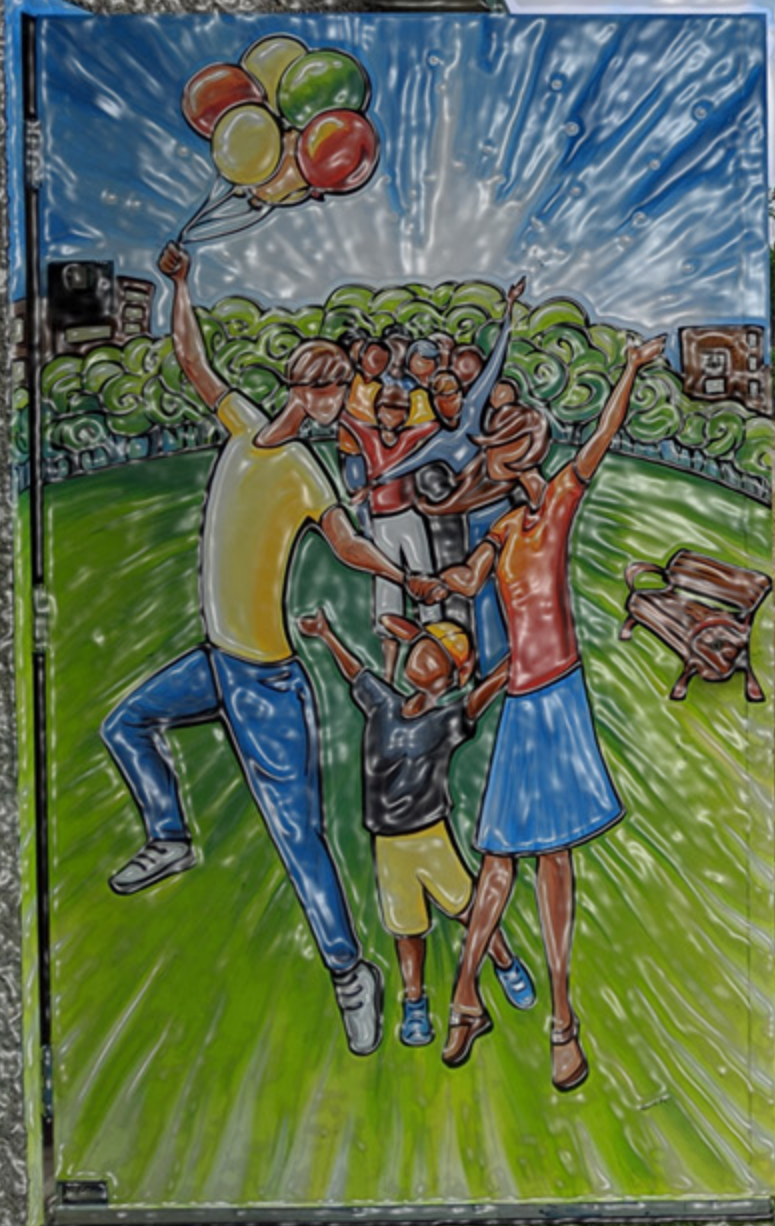
### **YMCA of Niagara**

Certain St. Catharines residents that are YMCA members may be making use of YMCA pools found in Grimsby, Welland and Port Colborne; these pools are generally within a 30 minute drive of most parts of St. Catharines.

### **Boys & Girls Club of Niagara**

The Boys & Girls Club of Niagara operates a 25 metre, six lane indoor pool at its community centre in the south end of Niagara Falls, located an approximately 20 to 25 minute drive of St. Catharines.







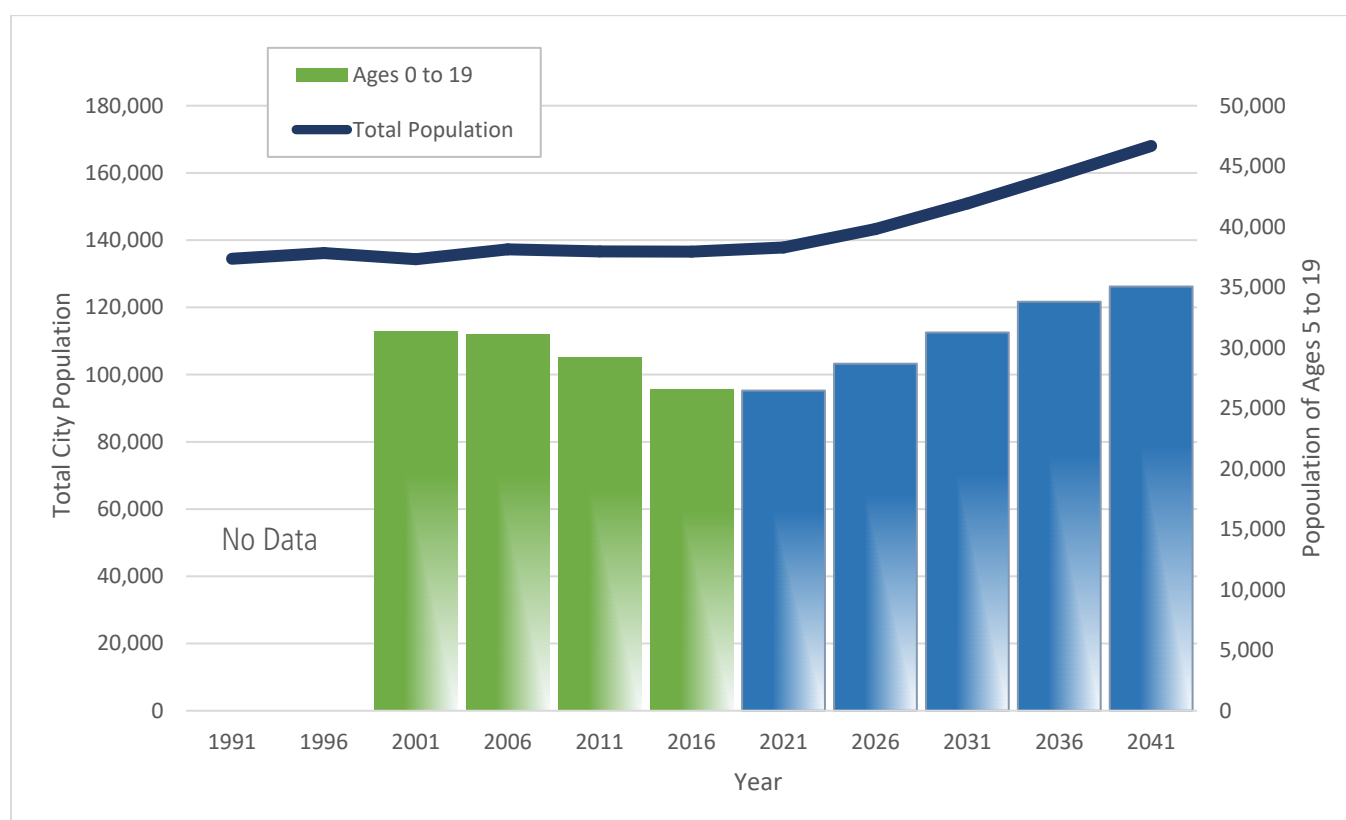
## Section 3:

# Market Context for Local Aquatics

### 3.1 Population

St. Catharines population is presently estimated to be approximately 137,000 persons. After two decades of relatively stagnant growth, the Region of Niagara's draft population forecasts<sup>3</sup> project St. Catharines' population to increase by more than 30,000 persons by the year 2041, exceeding 168,000 persons in total by that time. Growth in the total population has the potential to place pressures on existing aquatic facilities and possibly create needs for additional aquatic services.

**Figure 3: St. Catharines Historical & Forecasted Population by Census Year, 1991 to 2041**



Notes: figures include net census undercount. Population forecasts are Draft and have been prepared as part of the Region of Niagara's conformity exercise for the provincial 2041 Growth Plan.

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 1991-2016 (adjusted to reflect a 4% undercoverage rate); Region of Niagara draft forecasts, 2019

<sup>3</sup> Regional Municipality of Niagara. Draft Population Forecasts, provided via spreadsheet in 2019. These forecasts have not been approved by Regional Council at time of writing.

### 3.2 Age Structure

St. Catharines has historically experienced declining numbers of children and an aging of the population over the past 20 years. Children and teens tend to be the largest market for aquatic services due to lessons and leadership programs, as well as families seeking waterplay experiences. Over the past decade, greater numbers of older adults have been using pools with more awareness about the importance of active and healthy aging, along with growing participation in therapeutic and rehabilitative programs in aquatic settings.

The City's historical declines in the number of youth is forecasted to reverse after the year 2021 (see Figure 3). The Region's forecasts project to the 0-19 age group to increase by over 2,000 persons in the next five years, and add 8,500 more persons by the year 2041 at which time the total number of children and youth is projected to reach 35,000 persons in total.<sup>4</sup>

In most municipalities, children between the ages of 2 and 16 account for the majority of learn-to-swim registrations, generate the strongest demands for weekday evening prime times, and are the primary source of revenue (lessons account for 56% of St. Catharines aquatics revenues). Figure 4 and Figure 5 show St. Catharines' distribution of aquatic facilities in relation to youth populations across the city. Projected short-term and long-term growth among children and teens has the potential to increase demands for such aquatic programs. Conversely, should the child and teen market – or the City's population as a whole – not grow to the degree forecasted by the Region of Niagara, then demands for aquatic services have the potential to decrease compared to present day levels. Statistic Canada's upcoming 2021 Census will provide insights with respect to whether the Region's forecasts are applicable to the timeframe presently forecasted.

St. Catharines median age of the population increased by more than one year between 2011 and 2016 Census periods. The City's median age of 44.7 years is older than Niagara Region and Provincial medians (44.4 and 41.3 years, respectively). There were 4,300 more persons in the 55+ age group in 2016 compared to 2011 and the Region projects that there will be nearly 64,000 older adults in total by the year 2041. Although not all older adults participate in aquatic programs, greater awareness of the benefits of remaining active could generate demands for daytime pool times, aquafit classes, therapeutic programs and other warm-water activities.

**Projected growth** in the number of children and youth living in St. Catharines has the potential to increase demands for aquatic programs, particularly in prime time periods.

However, should **historical trends** prevail where this age group's population declines, related demands for child and youth aquatic programs may decrease.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Regional Municipality of Niagara, Draft Population Forecasts.

Figure 4:  
Aquatic Facilities in Relation to Youth Populations

Population of Residents Age 0-19

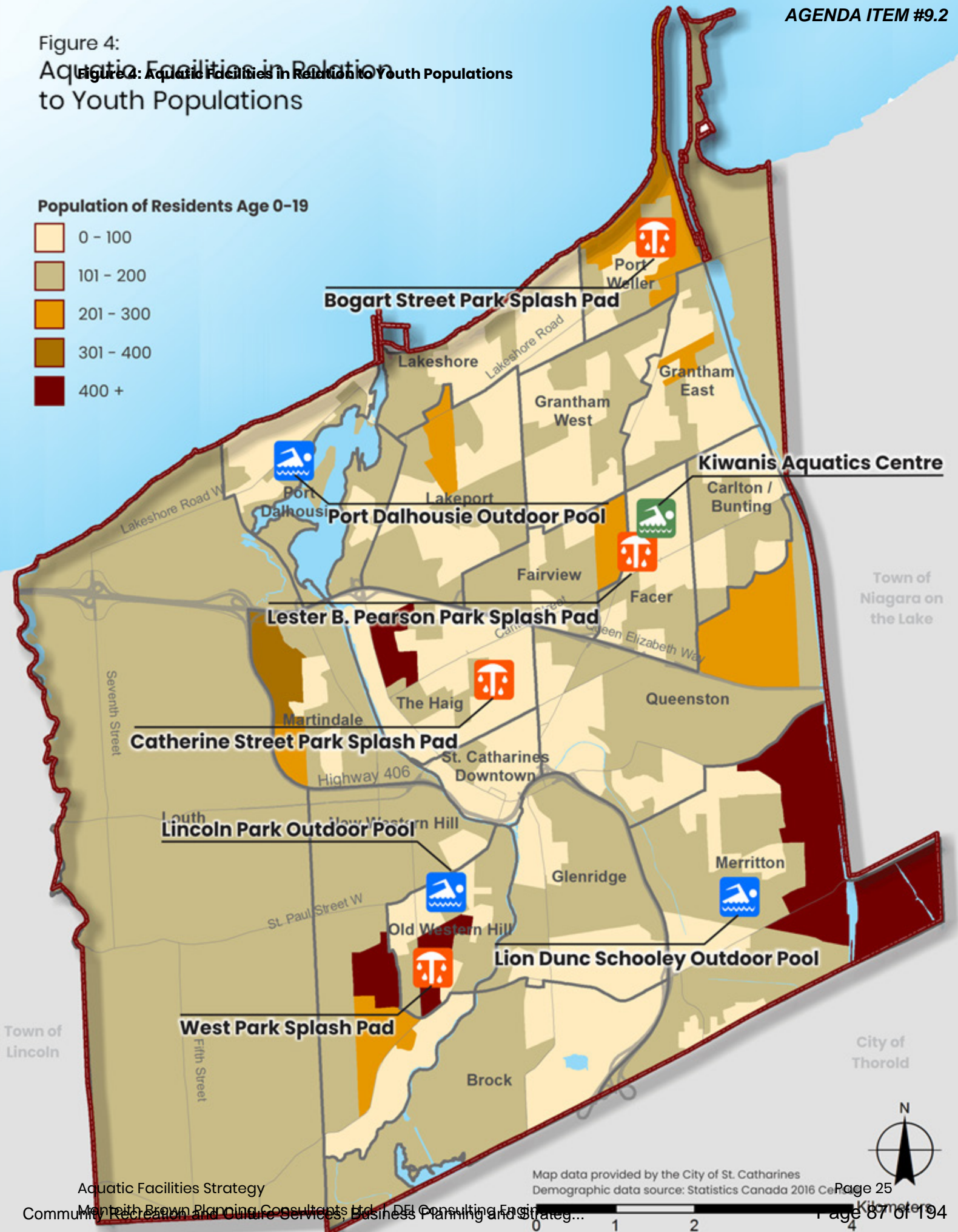
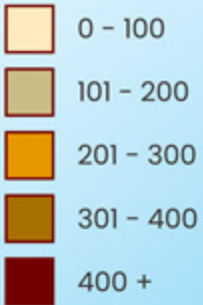
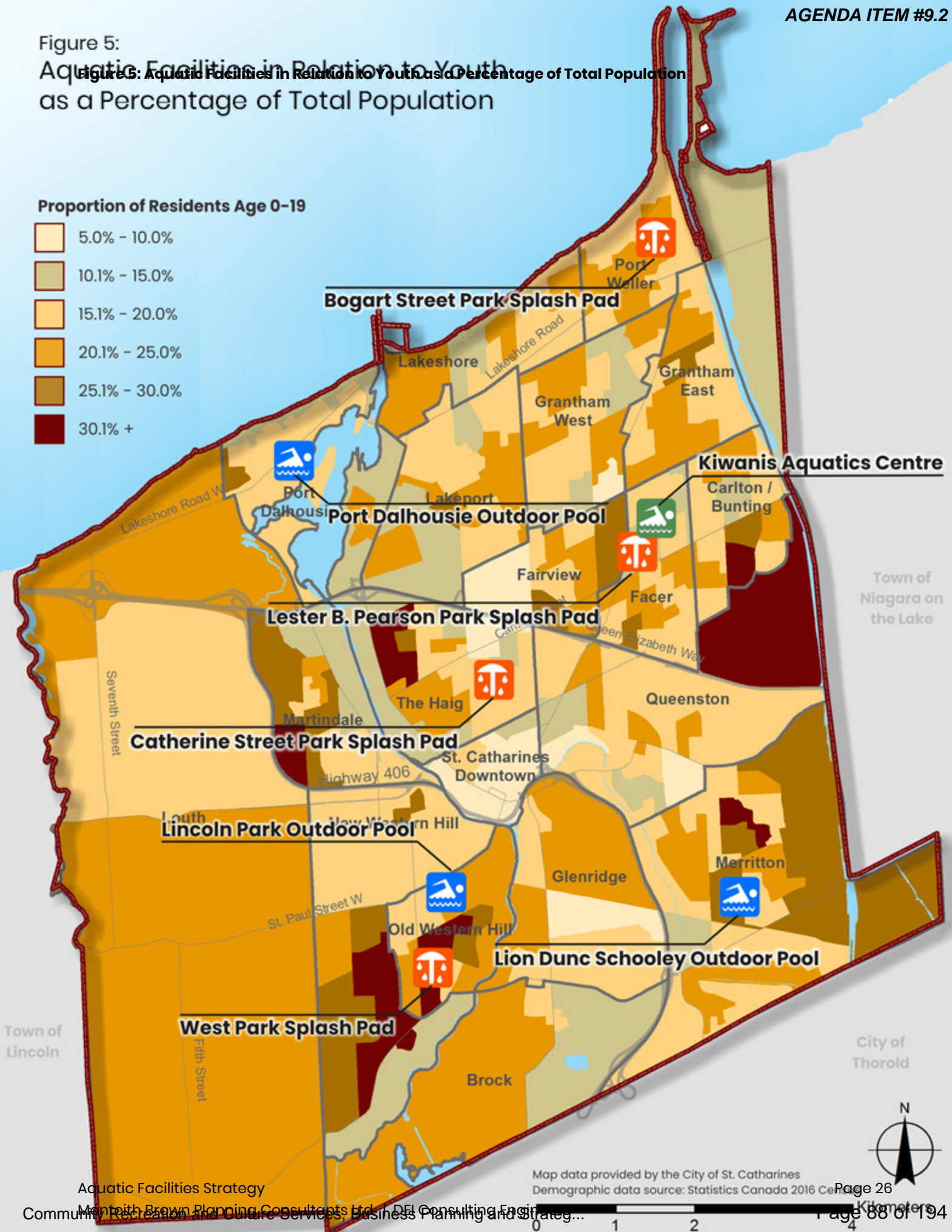
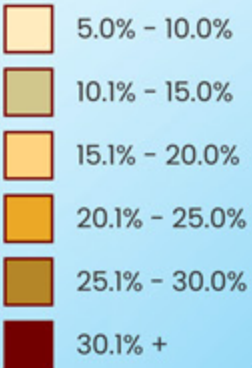




Figure 5:

# Aquatic Facilities in Relation to Youth as a Percentage of Total Population as a Percentage of Total Population

## Proportion of Residents Age 0-19



### 3.3 Income & Affordability

The City strives to make its aquatics services affordable to the general population, subsidizing programs like many of its other recreational offerings in recognition of the vast number of residents that these programs reach. The degree to which St. Catharines residents participate in aquatics services can be influenced by their income available to spend on programs. A 2018 survey conducted by Ipsos found that the average Canadian family spends \$1,160 per year on extra-curricular activities for children, and noted that swimming is the most popular activity with over two out of every five parents planning on signing their kids up for swimming lessons; Ipsos notes that while swimming is an essential skill, part of the appeal could be its affordability.<sup>5</sup>

One local indicator of the growing need for affordable recreation is a 39% increase in the number of aquatic participants making use of St. Catharines' FAIR program (Fee Assistance In Recreation) between 2017 and 2019; the greatest increases in FAIR allocations are associated with an eightfold increase in older adult swim passes, more than double the number of fitness passes, and a 15% increase in assistance provided to aquatic program registrants. Local income statistics suggest that the cost of participating in certain aquatic programs could affect a greater percentage of households in St. Catharines relative to the Region and Province. St. Catharines' median household income is approximately 15% lower than that of Niagara Region and 25% lower than that of Ontario as a whole. St. Catharines also has a greater percentage of residents living in low income households (17.5% measured by the LIM-AT and 10.1% under LICO) compared to regional and provincial rates, along with an above average percentage of children living in low income households.<sup>6</sup> Since participation in aquatic recreation activities can positively influence physical activity and social interaction, affordability continues to be an important consideration for the City through its delivery aquatic-related programming and waterplay.

**39%**

Increase in aquatic participants making use of the City's FAIR program between 2017 and 2019.

Work undertaken through the Niagara Prosperity Initiative finds the greatest vulnerability in a number of marginalization measures (low income, employment, poverty, etc.) in the following St. Catharines' neighbourhoods, the majority of which are located south of Scott Street:

- Downtown St. Catharines
- Fairview
- Old Western Hill
- The Haig
- Merritton
- Queenston<sup>7</sup>
- Facer

<sup>5</sup> Simpson, Sean. September 4, 2018. One in Three (32%) Families Going into Debt to Fund their Children's Extra-Curricular Activities, Up 5 Points from Last Year. *Ipsos*, Retrieved from <https://www.ipsos.com>

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada Census, 2016

<sup>7</sup> Niagara Prosperity Initiative, Story Map. Retrieved from <https://niagararegion.maps.arcgis.com>

With the exception of the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and Bogart Street Park splash pad in north St. Catharines, the City's aquatics facilities are located in or near the majority of the marginalized areas identified through Niagara Prosperity Initiative measures.

To exemplify low-income vulnerability, Figure 6 and Figure 7 illustrate facility locations in relation to Statistics Canada's LIM-AT as a percentage of total neighbourhood populations as well as youth. This income data at the City-wide and neighbourhood level supports the City's subsidization of its aquatic services, including the historical practice of providing free programming at Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool and the West Park splash pad where more than one in four residents live below the LICO. The City of St. Catharines recognizes that affordability is of prime importance for low-income and otherwise marginalized residents to attain the benefits of aquatic services to a similar degree as persons not facing such barriers.

To maintain fairness and equity in the system is not without challenge, particularly with growing financial implications of maintaining aging pools and growing aquatics infrastructure. The City, however, recognizes the importance of minimizing cost-related barriers faced by households and investing in facilities/services that are important for the physical and social health of all residents. The availability of financial assistance through the City's Fee Assistance In Recreation (FAIR) and Region of Niagara programs, along with support from private sector and community-based providers (e.g. Jumpstart, Tim Hortons sponsored swims, fundraising and volunteer contributions from service clubs, etc.) help reduce costs for vulnerable segments of the population.

### **3.4 Urban Structure / Land Use**

The type of future residential development in St. Catharines is likely to be markedly different than the past. The supply of developable land is limited due to provincial legislation such as the Ontario Greenbelt and policies within the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe that encourage higher densities along with development and redevelopment within existing built boundaries. Areas in the City are also subject to land use regulations associated with the Niagara Escarpment.

As a result, securing vacant lands for new civic/institutional developments will be more challenging and potentially costlier than in the past. Indoor aquatic facilities, recreation centres and certain outdoor pools/bathhouse facilities require large parcels of land, thus the implications of intensification-related policies will need to be considered and population levels will need to be monitored.



Figure 6:

# Aquatic Facilities in Relation to the Low Income Measure to the Low Income Measure

## Low-Income Measure, After Tax

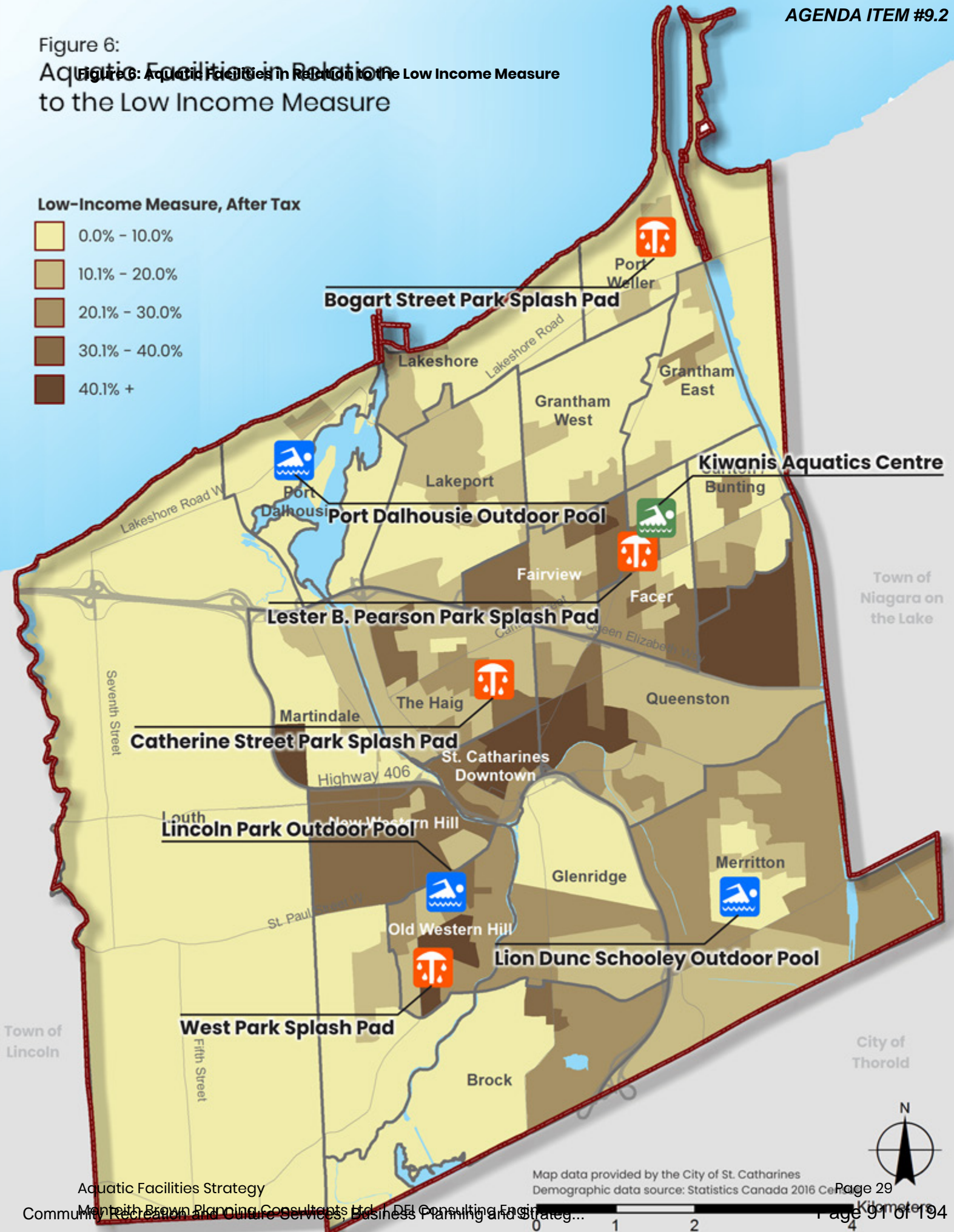
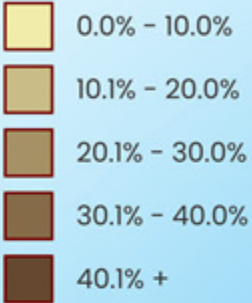
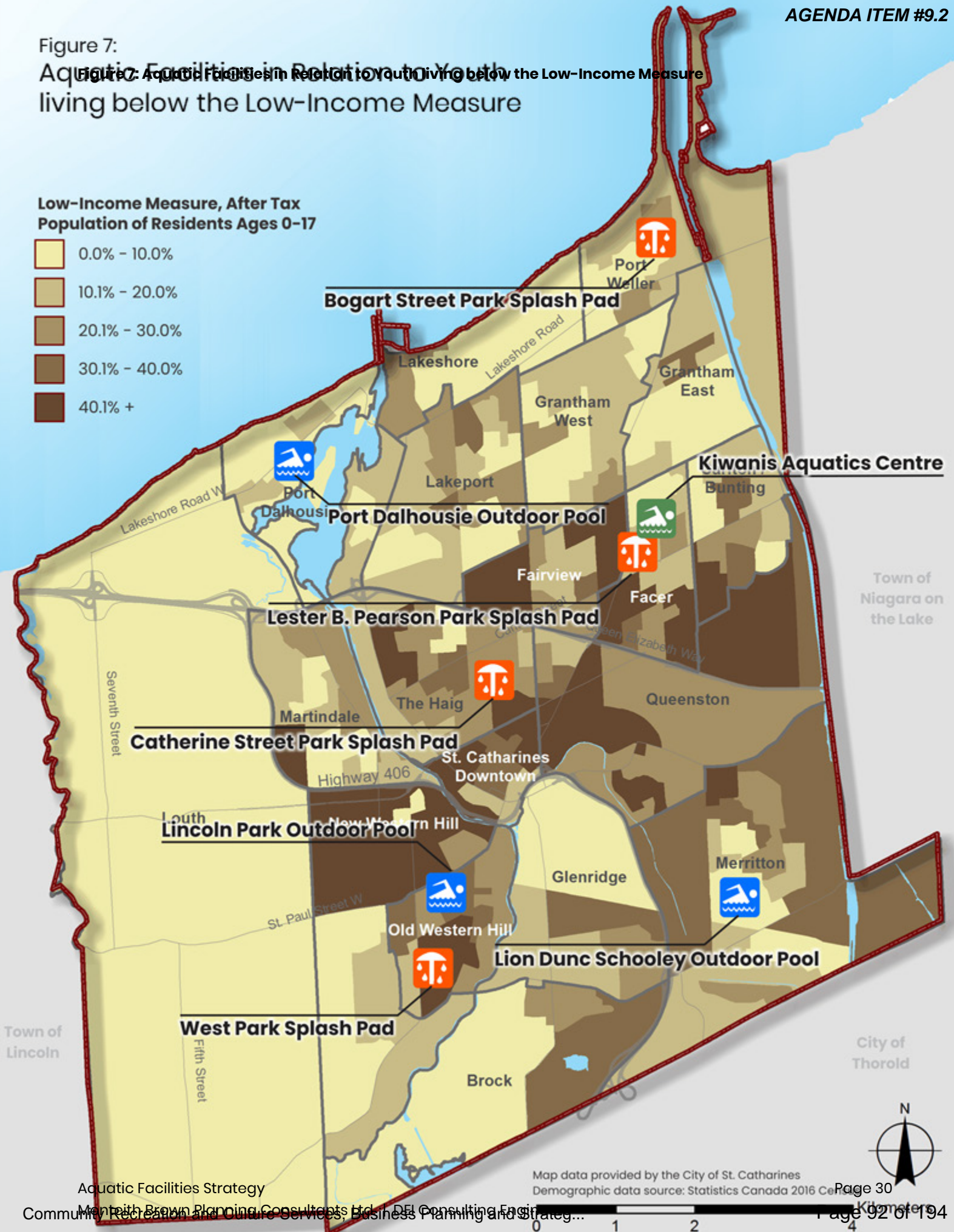




Figure 7:

# Aquatic Facilities in Relation to Youth living below the Low-Income Measure

Low-Income Measure, After Tax  
Population of Residents Ages 0-17













## Section 4:

# St. Catharines Aquatic Services Provision Model

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### 4.1 Aquatic Facility Classification System

The City of St. Catharines aquatic facility provision model is classified according to two primary factors, namely the type of aquatic use enabled by a facility along with its geographic catchment area. The size, scale and configuration of each aquatics facility is generally dictated by these two factors.

#### Type of Use

The term “Form follows Function” is often used by planners, architects, and designers of recreation facilities. In the case of aquatic services, this statement underscores the importance of understanding reasons why people wish to use pools in order to design – and program – aquatic facilities to address needs of the community.

People use aquatic facilities for vastly different reasons. By their very nature, aquatic facilities offer a highly diverse range of experiences across multiple age groups, ability or disability levels, and personal interests. Some of the most common reasons people make use of aquatic facilities include:

- Skill development and water safety
- Health and wellness
- Socialization and fun
- Therapy and rehabilitation
- Training, competition and sport

The form of aquatic facilities must consider the intended uses which are then translated into design, configuration and ultimately into operations and programming. For example, layout of the pool tank, water temperature, and program/rental scheduling should be considered to enable the type of uses that are to be addressed in response to community needs.

#### Catchment Area

The City’s pools and splash pads are designed to different scales and specifications, in part due to their intended function as described in the preceding paragraphs. However, the geographic reach for each facility ranges from a City-wide scale.

Table 1 illustrates the City’s aquatic facility classification system considering types of use and geographic catchment.

# Reasons for Using Aquatic Facilities

## Skill Development & Water Safety

Learn essential life sustaining and lifesaving skills through lessons, leadership programs, and education.

*Common Design Features:* shallow and deep water tanks for lessons and leadership, leisure/teaching tanks for beginners, meeting/program rooms for dry-land learning

## Health & Wellness

Many benefits are associated with exercise - swimming and aquatic fitness programs are an excellent way to improve physical health and conditioning.

*Common Design Features:* rectangular tanks for lane swimmers, medium depth and heated water for aquatic fitness programs, sufficient storage space for equipment

## Socialization & Fun

Aquatic facilities are a place for communities to gather and for individuals to interact with others, whether in the water or on the deck. Facility designs have evolved to be fun and interactive in order to enable leisure-based experiences.

*Common Design Features:* leisure/freeform pool configurations, waterplay features and splash pads, seating areas (on and off-deck), shade (for outdoor pools and splash pads)

## Therapy & Rehabilitation

The low impact/low resistance properties of water on the human body, combined with exercise and the therapeutic benefits of heat, are ideal for treating injuries. Hospitals and health providers are delivering aquatic programs for persons recovering from heart conditions, strokes, and other medical issues.

*Common Design Features:* heated water, shallow depth, accessible entry, in-pool seating, accessible changerooms, saunas/hot tubs

## Training, Competition & Sport

St. Catharines and Niagara Region have a long history of sport and athletic success. Aquatic facilities are an integral part of the sport infrastructure with multiple aquatics sports played at the international, national, provincial and regional levels.

*Common Design Features:* short and long-course rectangular lane tanks, starting blocks, diving platforms, sufficient depth, cooler water, equipment storage, spectator seating

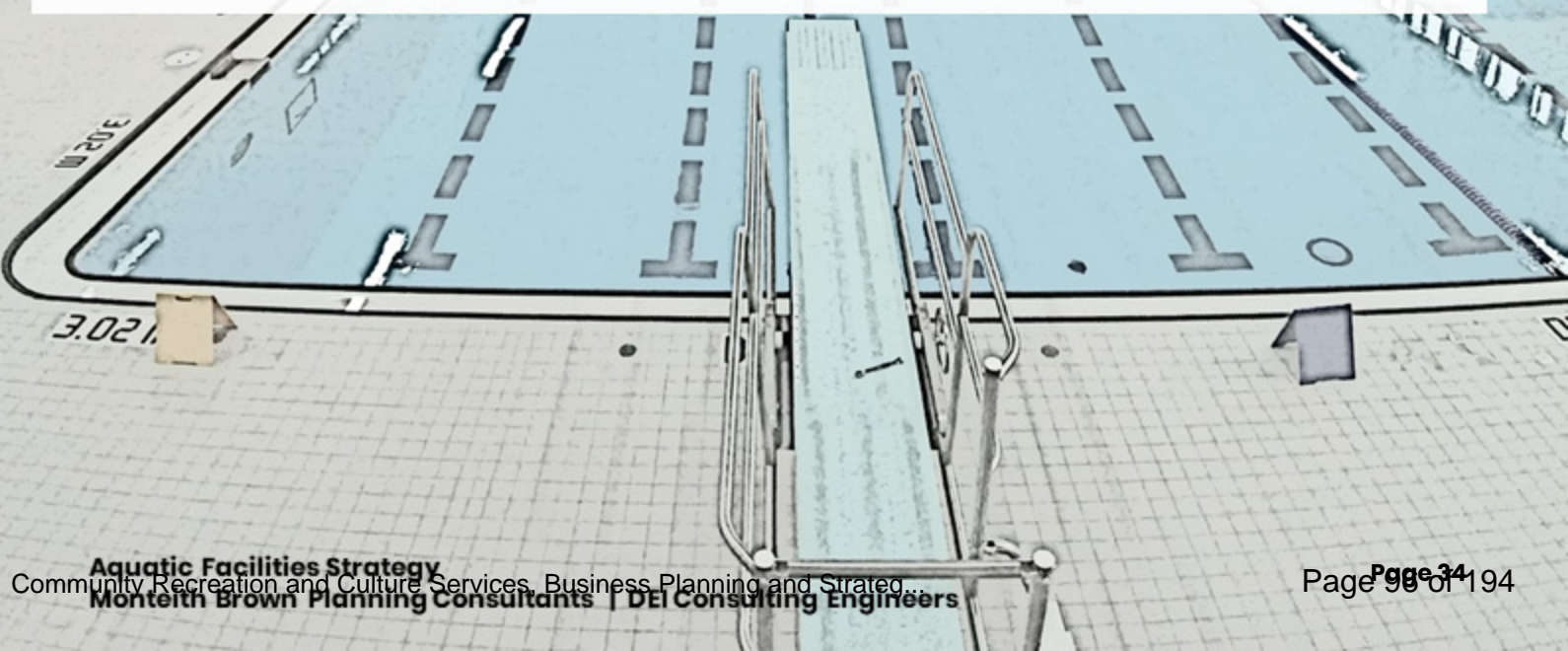
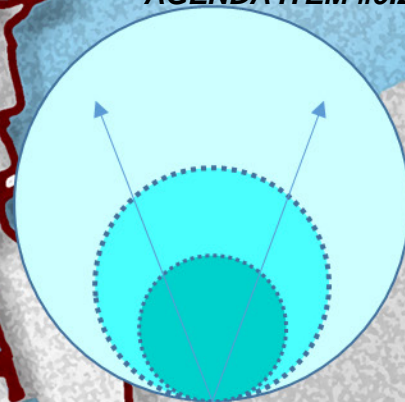




Table 1:  
Table 1: Aquatic Facility Classification System

The City's pools and splash pads are designed to different scales and specifications, in part due to their intended function as described in the preceding paragraphs. However, the geographic reach for each facility ranges from a City-wide scale.



Classification	Characteristics
<b>City-Wide</b>  St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre	<p>Large aquatic centres capable of a full range of needs from skill development, health and wellness, therapy and rehabilitation, sport and special events, etc.</p> <p>Splash pads would be considered 'destination' facilities located in a prominent location such as a civic-focused area in the downtown, a City-wide park, or beach.</p> <p>These facilities are typically accessible within 30 minutes by car or public transit, or longer for persons training competitively and when attending special events. These facilities tend to be located along major arterial corridors and transit routes.</p>
<b>Community</b>  Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool  Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool  Splash pads at Lester B. Pearson Park, Bogart St. Park, Catherine St. Park and West Park	<p>Pools and splash pads employing a design that services residents within a group of neighbourhoods. Pools would address needs for skill development, health and wellness, therapy and rehabilitation, and socialization and fun.</p> <p>Splash pad designs would be comprehensive, typically at a minimum of 2,000 square feet in area and featuring multiple waterplay elements.</p> <p>These pools serve a group of neighbourhoods, typically within a 15 minute drive from place of residence. They are located along or near arterial/collector roads and transit routes.</p>
<b>Neighbourhood</b>  Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool	<p>Basic pools and splash pads whose size and program capacity is scaled to accommodate usage from residents living in the surrounding neighbourhood. Pool programs would be tailored to skill development and health and wellness.</p> <p>These facilities are typically accessible within a 5 minute drive or a 20 minute walk of the facility. They tend to be embedded within a neighbourhood, commonly along collector roads depending upon where parks are located.</p>

The Aquatic Facilities Strategy's stakeholder consultations and community survey reinforced the geographic-based catchment as the basis for the facility design model. Approximately half of survey respondents that did not use a specific outdoor pool stated that it was because it was too far or difficult to reach. Fewer people reported distance as a barrier for the SKAC, thereby suggesting that the willingness to travel is influenced in part by the type of amenities and programs that are available at a given pool. The community survey also lends support that the SKAC is a drive-to destination with 91% of reported visitors arriving by car. By comparison, 75% of outdoor pool and splash pads are accessed by car; the outdoor aquatic facilities had a much greater share of people walking to them compared to the SKAC, suggesting that their catchment area is more localized.

## **4.2 Organizational Structure for Aquatic Services**

The City's Aquatics Division is responsible for programming and supervision of the pools, operating under the Community, Recreation & Culture Services Department. Maintenance and operations of the pools and splash pads lies with the Engineering, Facilities & Environmental Services Department where selected staff are Certified Pool Operators.

The organizational structure currently in place reflects the ability of the City to plan, program and deliver aquatic services to the community while fulfilling day-to-day and long-range operations and maintenance to keep aquatic facilities in a good state of repair. St. Catharines' Aquatics team is well regarded among their peers for their progressive approach to exploring new and emerging trends in the sector while executing a core mandate of drowning prevention in line with national best practices.

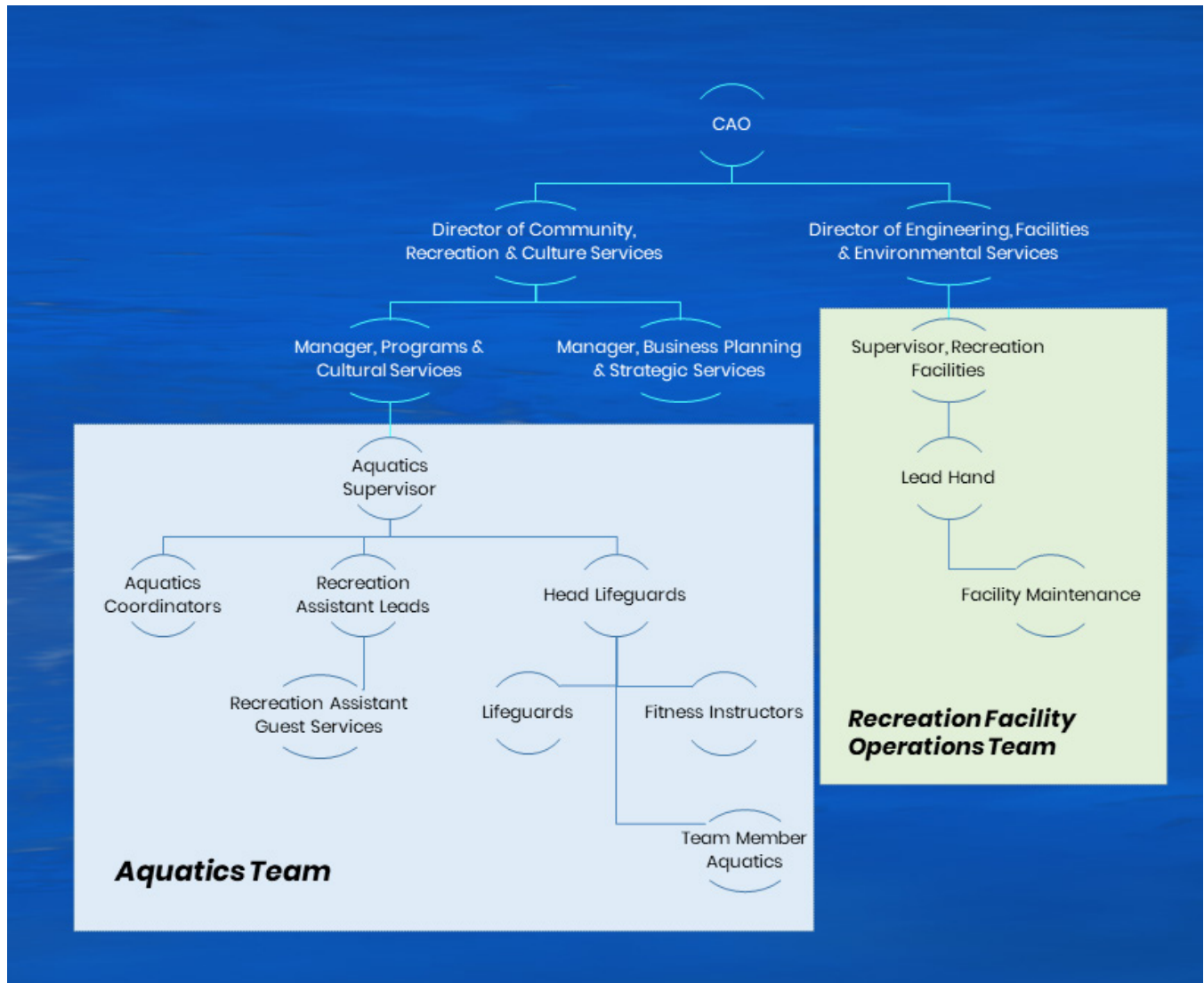
The Aquatics team has an enthusiastic base of young staff that are highly motivated in areas such as lifeguard recruitment, focused on providing strong customer service, developing relationships with community members, and delivering active living programs through aquatics. Front-line staff report being supported and encouraged by experienced individuals at the supervisory and management level. Staff at all levels are empowered to bring forward ideas for continuous improvement which contributes to positive customer feedback received from aquatic facility users/program participants.

The organizational structure allows Aquatics staff to monitor and ensure compliance with local health and safety regulations. Staff receive training in their respective areas along with opportunities for ongoing professional development through organizations such as the Lifesaving Society, Canadian Red Cross, Parks & Recreation Ontario (PRO) and Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA).

With an organizational structure consistent with a number of leading aquatics divisions across the province, St. Catharines appears to have an organizational structure that will allow aquatics services to grow with the City's population and respond to evolving trends and interests. That is not to say that the current number of staff should stay the same as staffing complement may need to be adjusted if or when new aquatic facilities are constructed, existing facilities are redeveloped, or as new trends or regulations in the sector emerge.



**Figure 8: Aquatics Organizational Structure**









## Section 5:

# Aquatic Facilities Strategy Consultations

The Aquatic Facilities Strategy employed a comprehensive engagement programme. A number of consultation initiatives were scheduled and ready to be implemented, however, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting provincial state of emergency occurred shortly thereafter. As a result, in-person initiatives such as workshops and roundtables were rescheduled and administered in online formats.

### 5.1 Engage STC

An interactive project portal for the Aquatic Facilities Strategy was hosted on “Engage STC”. The site received approximately 1,100 visits over the course of the planning process. The Aquatic Facilities Strategy was advertised using the City’s social media feeds, contacting local media outlets, print and digital advertisements, and promoted by word of mouth.

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## Make a splash: weigh in on aquatics facilities strategy

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**AQUATICS FACILITIES STRATEGY: HAVE YOUR SAY**

The City Where Everybody Can Play! help us build a roadmap for the future of pools and splash pads in St. Catharines [engageSTC.ca/AquaticsStrategy](http://engageSTC.ca/AquaticsStrategy)

The Aquatics Facilities Strategy Community Survey is now closed. Thank you to all those who took the time to provide us with their insight.

St. Catharines is a city where everybody can play, and that extends to our pools and splash pads.

We're looking to the future, developing an Aquatics Facilities Strategy, to ensure that for years to come residents can enjoy current and future aquatic facilities. The strategy will provide a snapshot of where aquatic facilities and programming stand; what works and what doesn't; and provide a roadmap for future improvements and investments into facilities and programming.

The City is looking to the community as we prepare to create this blueprint for the future of aquatic in St. Catharines. As the City moves forward working with the Outdoor Aquatics Facilities Task Force and Recreation Master Plan Committee, we are engaging staff, stakeholders, users and the public to help us plan for a future where everyone can swim, splash and play in whatever way best suits them.

Community consultations will play an important role, and, with that in mind, we reached out for insight via an online community survey.

Now that the survey is completed, staff will review the findings and City Council will be presented with the draft aquatic facilities strategy for approval and will consider the recommendations before moving ahead with any of the proposed options. The development of the aquatic facilities strategy supports several actions in Council's strategic plan, including the development of a 10-Year Capital Infrastructure Plan that includes all major investments to address City needs, priorities and growth; establishing area-specific plans for the redevelopment of key sites in the City to promote strong, compatible, connected neighbourhoods that enhance the quality of life; refining and implementing the 2015-2026 Recreation Facilities and Programming Master Plan by incorporating key deliverables into the Capital Infrastructure Plan and annual budget process.

**City Aquatics Facilities**

- St Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre
- Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool
- Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool
- Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool
- Bogart Street Park Splash Pad
- Catherine Street Park Splash Pad
- Lester B. Pearson Park Splash Pad
- West Park Splash Pad

**Who's listening**

**Eric Lamothe**  
Manager of Business Planning & Strategic Services

**Document Library**

[Gift Card Official Contest Rules and Regulations \(406 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

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## 5.2 Community Survey

A Community Survey for the Aquatic Facilities Strategy was administered through Engage STC between March 18 and May 4, 2020 during which 251 responses were received. The survey explored a number of aquatic topics including facility usage, frequency of use, access, preferences for types of aquatic facilities and potential improvements to be considered. As the survey was available for any resident wishing to complete it, results should not be interpreted as being statistically representative of the population. The following pages summarize selected findings although survey results are also referenced elsewhere in this report. The complete set of tabulated survey responses is contained in Appendix A.

The community survey yielded a number of interesting findings, most notably the strong level of reported use of the SKAC and more limited use of outdoor pools, though this appeared to be heavily influenced by willingness and ability to travel. Respondents were more likely to report outdoor pools and splash pads as being too far away as a reason not to use them, reinforcing the geographic scale that outdoor aquatic facilities are intended under the City's aquatic facility provision model (see Section 4.1).

Pools operated by the YMCA and Brock University were used by 33% and 26%, respectively. Just 7% of respondents used an indoor pool operated by another municipality, likely a result of having availability of indoor aquatics at the SKAC, YMCA (at the time of the survey) and Brock University within the City's borders. Private pools in backyards and condominium/apartment complexes, which may include a combination of indoor and outdoor facilities, were used by 26% of respondents.

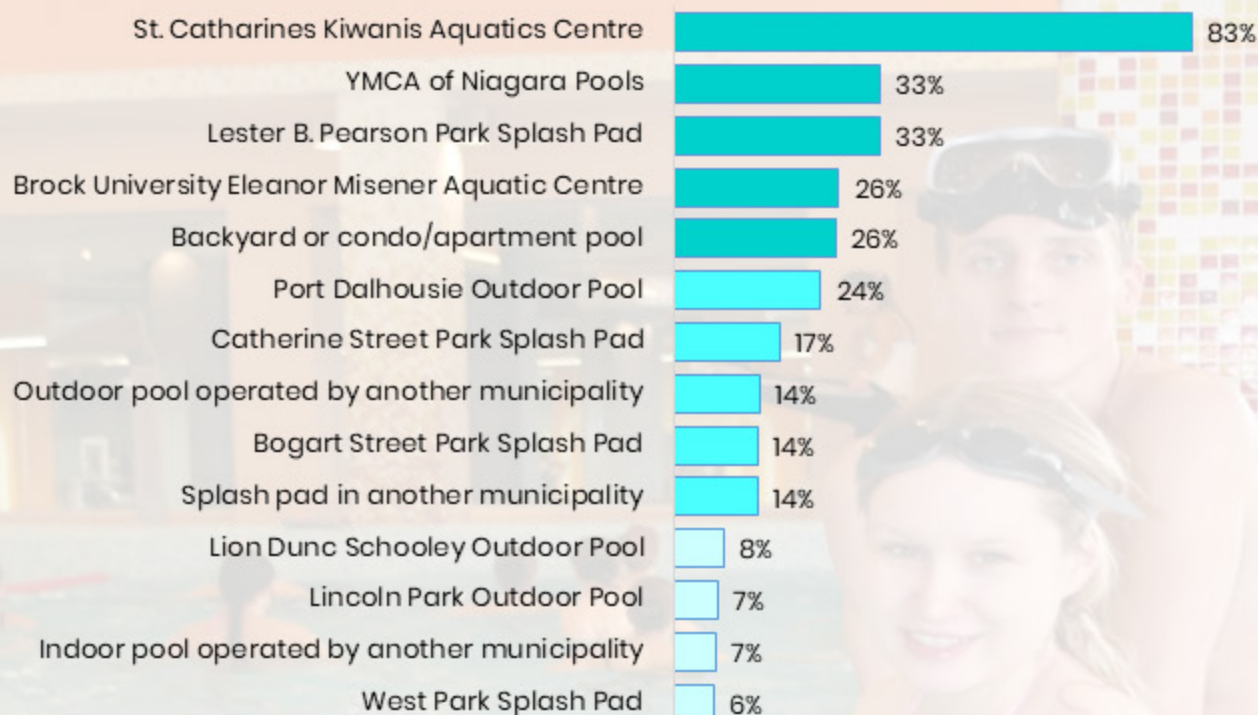
Survey respondents were most likely to use the City's aquatic facilities because they are fun, relaxing or affordable. Splash pads were more likely to be used as a reason to cool down on hot days than were pools (especially the indoor pool). For respondents that are not using some or all of the City's aquatic facilities, common reasons included: that they had memberships at non-municipal pools such as the YMCA or private fitness clubs; that the facilities were not easy for them to reach; or that they prefer to swim elsewhere such as in backyard pools or beaches.

If the City were to construct a new or substantially redevelop an existing outdoor pool, heated water was the most important feature for respondents. Other important considerations included recreational and family swim opportunities (69%), deep water (57%), on-deck viewing areas (57%), and special needs and/or accessibility features (57%).

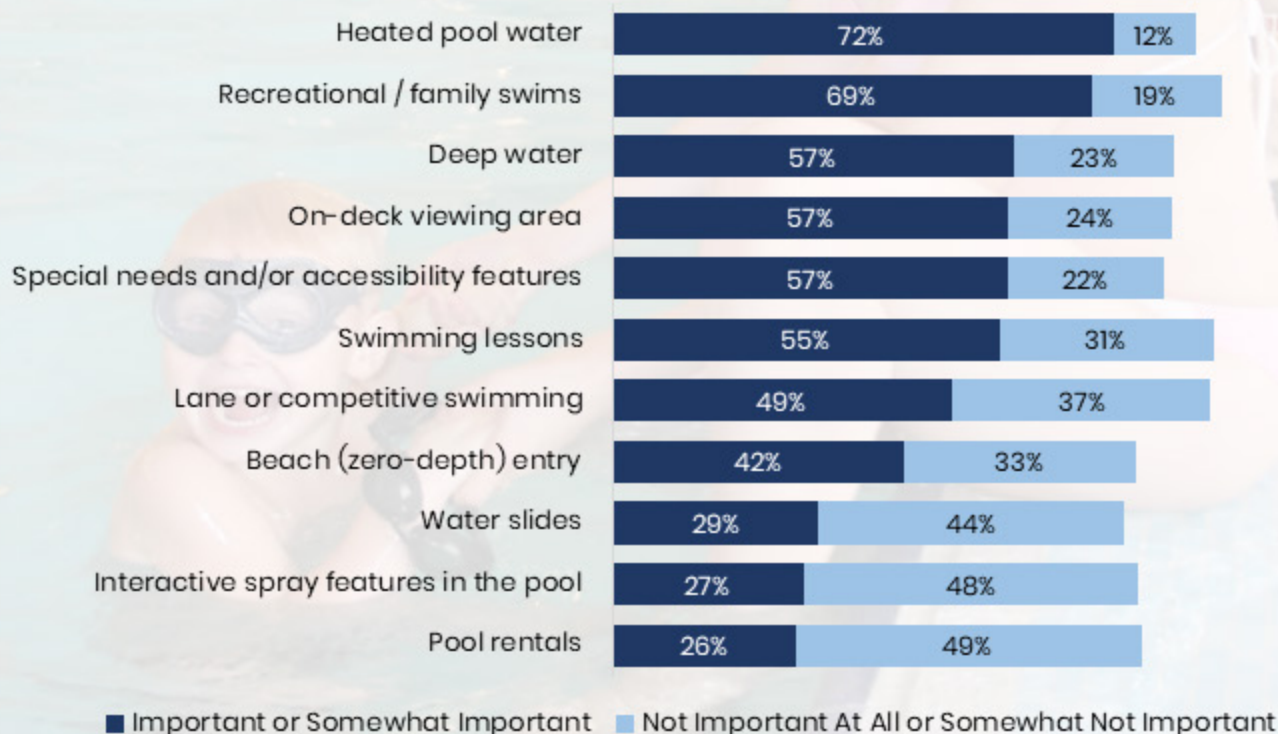
If the City were to build a new splash pad/water play features or substantially redevelop an existing one, nearly half (48%) of respondents felt that the inclusion of a water canopy (umbrella) is the most important design component that should be considered. Other important features that were identified included in-ground jets/spray (47%), sprinkler columns (47%), spray tunnel (43%), and a vibrant public fountain (43%).



## Aquatic Facilities Used in the Past 2 Years



## Desired Features in an Outdoor Pool



### 5.3 Advisory Committee & Task Force Input

A workshop with members of the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee (RMPAC) and Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Task Force (OAFTF) was originally scheduled for March 31, 2020. However, a provincial state of emergency was declared in the days leading up to the workshop due to the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Therefore, the RMPAC and OAFTF were asked to provide written submissions to inform the Aquatic Facilities Strategy. A summary of the input is as follows, noting that not all feedback has been reproduced but rather is considered in the needs assessments for this Strategy.

- Pools are used by residents of all ages and are no longer used exclusively for recreation and learn-to-swim as more people seem to be using them for exercise, rehabilitation and general health. Opportunities to continue to diversify aquatic program offerings would be appreciated and seen as a way to get as many people as possible into the aquatic facilities.
- Noted **challenges** in general included the fact that outdoor pools are getting older, upkeep has become expensive, not all are accessible for persons with disabilities, and it is difficult to find qualified lifeguards. There is a strong demand for swimming lessons in St. Catharines though it can be difficult to secure a spot since they fill up quickly. COVID-19 may discourage some residents from using pools and splash pads until a vaccine is developed though over the long-term usage levels will likely rebound, especially during heatwaves or as a result of climate change.
- Pools and splash pads should promote **inclusion** and encourage participation among all St. Catharines residents. Aquatic facilities serving low-income or otherwise marginalized communities are seen as important while integrating access for persons with disabilities needs to be considered in any future development or upgrade. Shade and seating are important considerations around pools and splash pads, not only for the users but for caregivers as well.
- **SKAC** is a beautiful facility that is centrally located, easy to access and is part of a true multi-use community hub. Its ability to provide a broad range of aquatic programs year-round is one of its primary strengths since most residents – including persons with disabilities – can participate in an aquatic activity of their choice. Some RMPAC and OAFTF members are of the opinion that a second indoor aquatic centre will be needed in St. Catharines, possibly in the west end.

Advisory Committee and Task Force members emphasized a number of points pertaining to providing a **high quality aquatics experience** to residents if the pools and splash pads are to be successful.

- **Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool** and **Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool** provide a desirable aquatics experience with their multiple pool tanks and other amenities found onsite; in the case of Lion Dunc Schooley pool, it is an important part of the broader community hub that serves Merritton. There are elements that could benefit from updating (e.g. changerooms) and there may be potential to expand the aquatics and overall recreation experience given the amount of space onsite (e.g. splash pad, additional pool components/features).
- Despite **Lincoln Park Pool's** aging/outdated state and a number of functional limitations (design, depth, lack of parking), it is viewed as being important since it serves a marginalized community whose residents can access it by walking, cycling or a short distance from transit. There is a preference to retain this pool but it is recognized this may not be feasible due to cost or site dimensions, thus a splash pad is something that should be considered for the community in the event the pool is removed.
- There was no clear consensus between a desire for the City to provide fewer but larger outdoor pools with enhanced features compare to a greater number of smaller pools that are oriented to their surrounding neighbourhoods.
- The City's **splash pads** are well-received in terms of their design, ability to serve many children living in the neighbourhoods that surround them, and the sense of community that they help to create by way of their co-location with other park amenities. Washrooms / changerooms would be great to have at all of them but the cost to do so is recognized as a challenge.
- In general, participants touched on a number of points oriented to the **experience** provided by pools and splash pads. A few participants believe that the success of the pools will be driven by the quality of experience and thus strategic investments need to be made for facilities and programming.

A second engagement opportunity was held on November 25, 2020. with the Recreation Master Plan Advisory Committee and Outdoor Aquatic Facilities Task Force. A virtual presentation and workshop was used to present the Draft Aquatic Facilities Strategy to the two advisory groups as well as a number of City Council members that attended the meeting.

The draft aquatic facility development strategy was well received with general agreement that investment in a new indoor aquatic facility and one renewed outdoor pool, combined with at least one splash pad provided in each political ward, would represent a better use of public funds than continue to reinvest in all three outdoor pools; a number of participants spoke in favour of the Balanced or Refocused Implementation Scenarios as presented in Section 9 of this report, while no specific mentions of support were articulated for the Status Quo Scenario.



## 5.4 Aquatics Stakeholder Input

A workshop with local and regional stakeholders of the aquatics system was originally scheduled for March 31, 2020; however, the workshop was cancelled due to COVID-19 and instead stakeholders were asked to provide written submissions. Requests for submissions were emailed to more than a dozen stakeholders and other groups with a potential interest in the local aquatic system. Organizations that contributed input included the following:

- Boys and Girls Club of Niagara
- Brock Niagara Aquatics
- Dan's Dive Shop (*scuba instruction*)
- EDGE Triathlon
- Harbour Fellowship Church
- Laura Secord Secondary School
- Tryforce (*triathlon*)

A summary of the input is as follows, noting that not all feedback has been reproduced but rather is considered in the needs assessments for this Strategy.

- The SKAC and Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool were used by the majority of responding stakeholders to access the City's programs or rent the pools for their own programs, camps or athletic training. The Boys and Girls Club was the only responding organization to report use of a municipal splash pad (at Lester B. Pearson Park).
- Responding sport organizations (competitive swimming and triathlon) benefit from the SKAC's 25 metre, 8-lane pool since there are few other sport-friendly pools in Niagara Region. Although Brock University provides a sport-friendly pool, some users reported that facility as having limited availability to accommodate additional rentals.
- Groups are observing a number of trends and pressures in aquatics including growing costs (for both pool operators and pool users), participation from a wide range of age groups, greater demands for personalized or individual classes/training, and difficulties in accessing 'prime times' such as evenings.
- All stakeholders reported that the design of St. Catharines' aquatic facilities are conducive to their needs. Suggested improvements included providing washrooms and changerooms, features to improve a person's ability to enter and exit a pool (including for persons with disabilities), setting 'comfortable' water temperatures, and therapeutic amenities such as hot tubs and saunas.
- A few stakeholders believe that an additional indoor aquatic facility will be needed in the future in order to accommodate growing registrations, and to provide additional capacity for lane swims and rentals. Others suggested pools and splash pads be provided in areas where residents are underserved or face barriers related to income and transportation.
- The majority of responding stakeholders indicated a willingness to work with the City of St. Catharines to find ways to increase the availability of pool time and improve the aquatic facility/program experience.

## **5.5 City Staff Roundtables**

Two virtual roundtables were held with City of St. Catharines staff on June 19, 2020. Separate discussions were organized with members of the City's Management Team along with a subsequent session with the Aquatics Division. The intent of both roundtables was to explore how the City's aquatics system is currently addressing resident needs along with opportunities required to address future priorities. The discussions encompassed a broad range of topic areas specific to indoor aquatics, outdoor pools, and splash pads ranging from facility designs to programming that is offered. The following summary consolidates the primary points of discussion of the two roundtables.

### **Contributions to Community Health, Safety & Wellbeing**

The City provides aquatics services in recognition of the health and social benefits provided to residents. Swimming was noted as a life skill and contributes to the overall health of the community through programs such as lessons, lane swimming, and aquatic fitness. The ability of the aquatics system to serve babies to elderly residents is a core strength.

### **Aquatic Facilities as Community Hubs**

Staff emphasized that local aquatics infrastructure serves as points for residents to gather and interact with others. Pools and splash pads are important parts of St. Catharines' social fabric that bring a diverse range of residents together and create connections. The SKAC is considered to be a city-wide hub, outdoor pools in Port Dalhousie and Merritton are important summer-time destinations for their respective communities, and the splash pads are mostly embedded in neighbourhoods to create localized points of social interaction.

### **Strength of the Aquatics Team**

City staff indicated that they have a motivated staff that manage, program and operate the pools in a manner that residents appreciate and are highly respected among their colleagues in the municipal aquatics sector. The aquatics team takes pride in keeping apprised of best practices and trends, and take the time to build relationships with pool users. They strive to meet resident expectations by offering fun and innovative programs while providing well-maintained facilities. Staff emphasized that providing a strong customer experience is a paramount consideration as they approach their day-to-day activities, noting that the ability to attract residents to aquatics facilities and have them consistently return is directly related to the enjoyment of their visit.

## Prime Time Programs are at Capacity

The SKAC is in high demand for programs due to its design, flexibility to program multiple tanks, and its centralized location. In particular, learn-to-swim programs at the SKAC are running at or near their full capacity (staff believe that other indoor pool providers in the community are also at or close to their lesson capacity). The City is not able to add substantial lesson capacity and other registered programs at its outdoor pools since many residents find the water too cold due to the unheated water.

Aquatics staff have noticed a significant increase in demand for private swim lessons that could be a result of a broader societal shift since these are more expensive than group lessons; a possible reason could be that residents with the financial means to afford private lessons see benefits in individualized attention as well as a participant spending more time swimming rather than observing others in the class. Compounding this challenge is that the City has not been able to offer the same number of private swim lessons due to regional shortages in qualified aquatic instructors/guards.

There are many competing priorities for prime time rentals and program offerings at the SKAC. The City does its best to balance its own learn-to-swim and aquatic fitness classes between the leisure pool and lap pool, while rental demand from aquatic sport groups further challenges the ability to accommodate everybody in prime times. Unlike arenas, there is no allocation policy to guide City staff.

## Growth in Older Adult Participation

Staff report that drop-in and registered program attendance among older adults has been steadily increasing. They believe growth is being driven by a number of factors such as greater awareness about the benefits of healthy and active aging, the sense of connection that older adults feel in these community hubs, cross-marketing with the seniors centre and enhanced communications efforts, and the comfort afforded by the SKAC's community room and lobby area to socialize. Staff have also heard that physicians and physiotherapists are touting the benefits of aquatic therapy to their patients.

## Areas for Improvement

A number of opportunities for improvement were identified including:

- Continuing to improve maintenance and cleanliness levels at facilities, though recognizing this could require additional resourcing;
- Strengthening asset management and lifecycle renewal practices so that aquatic facilities remain in good condition and are supported by sustainable funding sources, albeit with the recognition that reinvestment may be cost-prohibitive or not feasible for certain facilities;
- Building on program offerings and range of choice for pool patrons, and continuing to find ways to prioritize access for St. Catharines residents;
- Increasing barrier-free accessibility and providing universal changeroom facilities so that outdoor pools in particular are more inclusive to all residents; and
- Increasing seating and shade around outdoor pools and splash pads to encourage longer stays at these facilities, including the ability to picnic and "make a day of it."



## 5.6 Virtual Public Open House

A narrated presentation was posted on Engage STC along with the Draft Aquatic Facilities Strategy in February 2021. Public questions and comments were monitored by City Staff and the Consulting Team for a period of three weeks for consideration during the Strategy's final stages. A total of 523 impressions were generated during the commenting period and a total of 76 comments and questions were received, summarized into common themes as follows:

- There was support for a new indoor aquatic centre among roughly half of the 42 people posting comments (but not including those asking questions); 12 people favouring the Balanced Scenario, 3 people favouring the Refocused Scenario and another 5 people supporting an indoor pool but not specifying the scenario. By comparison, there were 7 people in total that supported the Status Quo or retaining an outdoor pool without specifying a scenario, while the remaining 15 comments did not speak directly to an implementation scenario.
- 5 comments or questions were received regarding interest in a 50 metre pool that these respondents indicated could provide added aquatic program capacity and support sport development and tourism.
- A number of comments indicated that they value the opportunity to swim locally as well as use the City's splash pads. A number of people indicated that aquatic activities are fun, allow them to be physically active, and connect with others in the city.
- A few responses supported co-locating a new indoor pool with other recreational components.
- A handful of comments questioned whether the City's financial resources might best spent on non-aquatics and non-recreational services.

In addition to Engage STC feedback, a conversation was held with members of Heart of Niagara Hotels. These members of St. Catharines' hotel and hospitality industry expressed support for investment in a second indoor aquatic centre. In addition to a new pool being able to provide a community recreational benefit, Heart of Niagara members expressed a desire for the City to consider how a new aquatic centre could generate additional economic benefits and spin-offs for the city. Heart of Niagara Hotels suggested this could be achieved by building a facility suitable for sport tourism such as swim meets and other aquatic sporting events, and were strongly supportive of a 50 metre competition pool. These individuals indicated that they would be raising the possibility of pursuing such a facility as a regional sport tourism initiative with area municipalities and educational institutions.

While the Aquatic Facilities Strategy has largely made its recommendations on serving recreational needs of St. Catharines needs, this does not preclude the City of St. Catharines from exploring how it may advance other corporate objectives once detailed design and business planning for a new pool is initiated in the future.





## Section 6:

# Indoor Pool Analysis

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### 6.1 St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre

The St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre (SKAC) has been the City's primary point of aquatics programming since its opening in 2012.

**Pool Characteristics** The SKAC contains a 25 metre, 8-lane rectangular pool plus a separate leisure pool. Gendered and universal changerooms are available. The aquatics centre is co-located with the Dr. Huq Family Library Branch, a multi-purpose program room, administrative offices for City staff, and shares a site with Lester B. Pearson Park.

**Community Survey Results** Approximately four out of five survey respondents reported that their households have used the SKAC in the past two years, which was by far the most commonly used aquatic facility. 47% of respondents using the SKAC visited more than 30 times in a given year, possibly due in part to the quality and desirability of the facility but also a result of its programming (e.g. there are multiple lessons or classes in a session).

52% of respondents that use the SKAC do so because it provides activities that are fun and relaxing, and approximately one out of three SKAC users take advantage of programs and drop-in swims offered there. While over half of respondents (55%) state that the SKAC offers affordable recreation activities, it bears noting that 21% stated that this facility can be overly expensive which prevents them from using it as much as they would like.

For the few persons that did not use the SKAC, the most common reasons were that they have a membership to a club that also offers a pool (e.g. YMCA or fitness chain), they simply prefer to swim elsewhere, or that the SKAC is located too far from them. If the City were to undertake selected enhancements to the SKAC, 75% of survey respondents indicated that they were likely to use the pool more often than they do at present.



**Stakeholder  
Feedback**

Stakeholders responding to requests for input emphasized the importance of the SKAC, not only in terms of its ability to accommodate their programs but also the facility's role as a hub that brings residents together. Many stakeholders noted that the SKAC is available for use to a greater degree than YMCA and Brock University pools which makes the SKAC a critical piece of infrastructure in serving St. Catharines residents.

Stakeholders noted that it is often difficult to access the rental times that they need, particularly if they are to grow their programs, due in part to the high demand of the pool for community lessons and other municipal aquatic programs. There is a belief among some stakeholders that a city the size of St. Catharines should have two indoor aquatic centres.

**Programming &  
Utilization**

The SKAC is very well used based on program registrations and recreational swims taking place. Between 2014 and 2019, the SKAC has consistently averaged 60,000 recreational drop-in swims, 27,000 fitness/wellness swims, and 5,000 registrations in instructional programs. These averages have been influenced by a three-month shutdown in 2017 for emergency repair while the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an anomaly for 2020 and 2021 due to pool closures and operating restrictions.

The SKAC is faced with strong demand for programming and rentals, many of which are for prime times. Lesson waiting lists have been cut in half since 2016 as a result of proactive efforts by the Aquatics supervisory team to contact individuals who have placed themselves on several waiting lists and optimize program schedules; some residents may also be looking elsewhere as the number of classes has also been reduced as the City has increased other programs such as fitness and wellness programs in response to community needs. The aquatic program and drop-in figures support staff and stakeholder observations that the SKAC is running near full capacity during the peak fall/winter seasons and peak times (weekday evenings and weekends).

## Capital & Operating Information

The SKAC is young in terms of its lifecycle, having been in service for 9 years. The City undertakes regular maintenance in accordance with an asset management plan to keep the facility in a good state of repair.

Aquatic programs, rentals and admissions generated revenues in excess of \$800,000 in 2019, approximately half of which are attributable to instructional programs and a quarter share through recreational swims. Pool-related expenditures are difficult to break-out due to the multi-use nature of the SKAC where a portion of overhead is shared with the program rooms and other City Departments. However, the majority of recreation activities are attributable to the pool thus the SKAC's operating expenditures of \$2.35 million are generally indicative of the aquatics services.

Total operating expenditures at the SKAC increased by 8% over the three-year period between 2016 and 2019; expenditures have outpaced revenues which have grown by 3%. In total, the SKAC was operated at a net cost of \$1.5 million to the City of St. Catharines in 2019 and achieved a 36% cost recovery rate.

**\$1.5 Million**

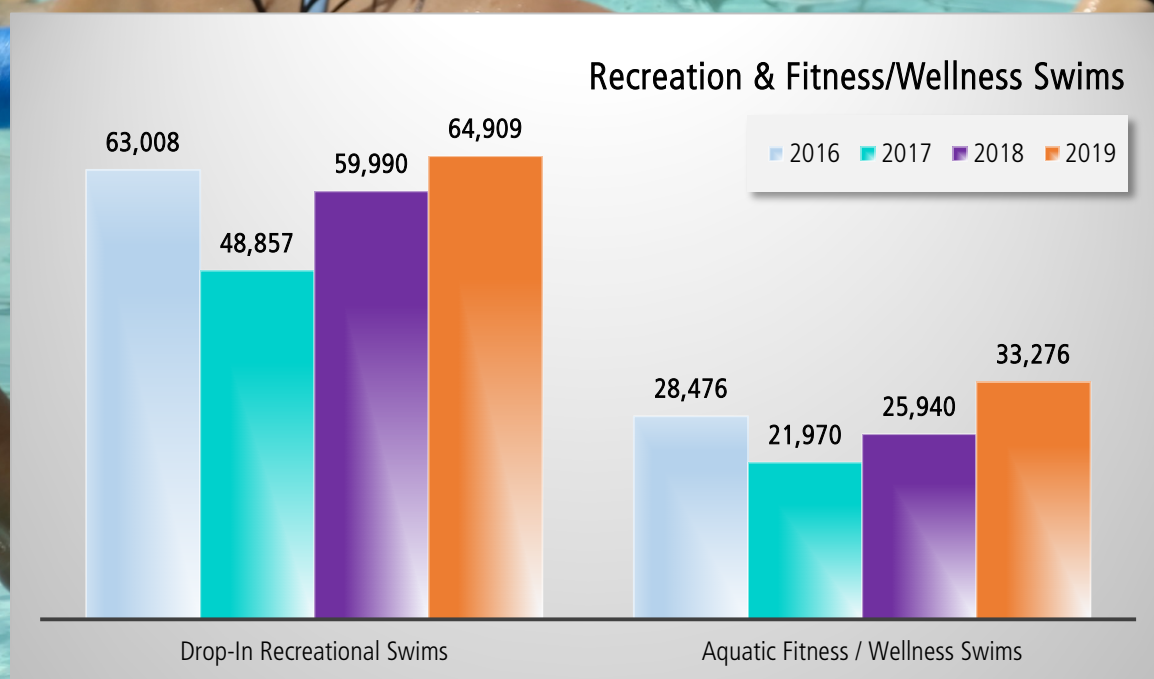
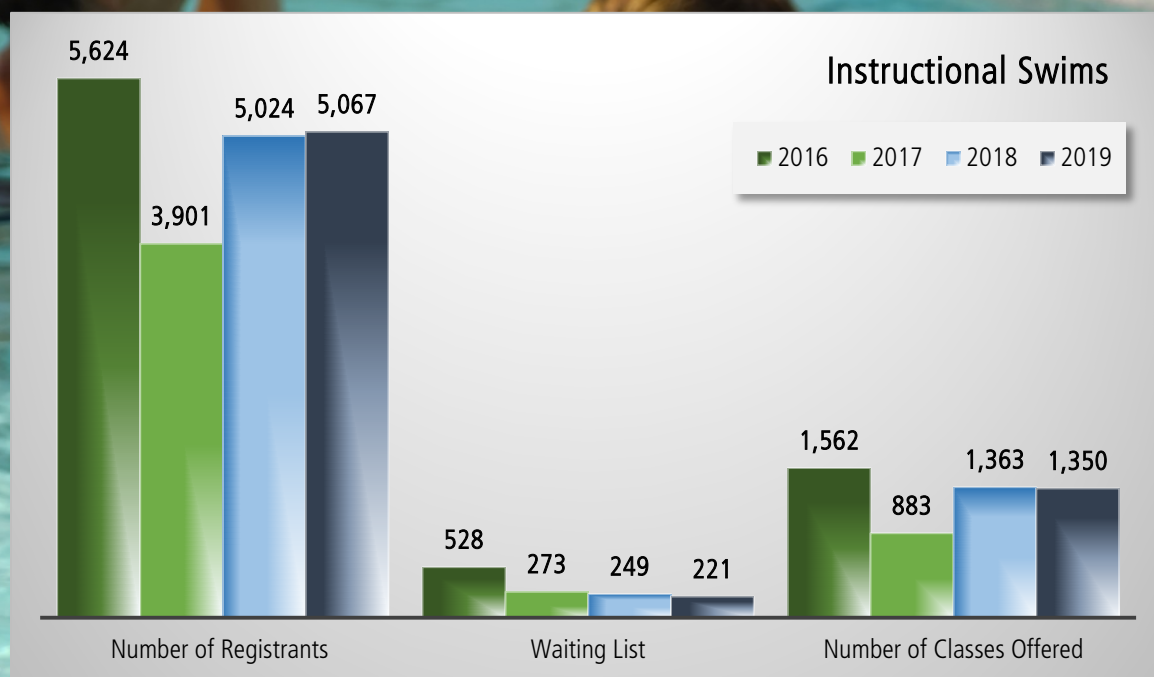
Annual net operating cost of the SKAC in 2019 (including non aquatic cost centres).

The facility recovers 36% of its costs through revenue.





Figure 9:  
Instructional, Recreational & Wellness  
Swim Participation, 2016–2019



Notes: 2017 figures affected by a 3-month facility shutdown

Source: City of St. Catharines Aquatic Program Tracking spreadsheet, 2016–2019



## 6.2 Indoor Pool Benchmarking Analysis

Within Niagara Region, only St. Catharines and Welland directly operate their own indoor aquatic centres, with the latter being a very small pool offering a limited number of programs. There are a number of quasi-public facilities available through post-secondary institutions, the YMCA of Niagara (including shared facilities such as the Vale Health & Wellness Centre in Port Colborne), and the Boys & Girls Club of Niagara that are not reflected in the table below.

St. Catharines provision level is the lowest among similar Greater Golden Horseshoe benchmarks, however, a number of these municipalities compensate for having fewer or no quasi-public pools compared to St. Catharines.

**Table 2: Indoor Aquatic Centres in Niagara Region & Selected Mid-Size Ontario Municipalities**

Region of Niagara Lower Tier Municipality	Estimated Population	No. of Indoor Aquatic Centres	Population Per Indoor Aquatic Centre
Fort Erie	31,000	0	--
Grimsby	27,500	0	--
Lincoln	24,500	0	--
Niagara Falls	88,000	0	--
Niagara on the Lake	17,500	0	--
Pelham	17,000	0	--
Port Colborne	18,000	0	--
Thorold	20,000	0	--
Wainfleet	6,500	0	--
Welland	56,000	1	56,000
West Lincoln	14,500	0	--
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>137,700</b>
<b>Regional Average</b>	<b>37,792</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>96,800</b>
<b>Regional Median</b>	<b>22,200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Selected Provincial Municipality	Estimated Population	No. of Indoor Aquatic Centres	Population Per Indoor Aquatic Centre
Ajax	129,500	3	43,100
Barrie	147,500	3	49,200
Burlington	192,500	4	48,100
Hamilton	570,600	19	30,000
Milton	115,000	3	38,300
Oshawa	159,500	4	39,900
Pickering	96,000	2	48,000
Whitby	128,500	2	64,200
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>137,000</b>
<b>Comparator Average</b>	<b>186,233</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>55,311</b>
<b>Comparator Median</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>48,000</b>

Notes for Tables: Supply only reflects aquatics infrastructure owned and operated by municipalities; quasi-public (e.g. YMCA) and private sector pools are not shown. Estimated populations have been rounded to the nearest 500 persons while service levels have been rounded to nearest 100 persons.

### 6.3 Future Indoor Pool Needs

The City of St. Catharines has historically been able to support a lower level of indoor aquatic facility provision due to the presence of the YMCA and Brock University. As noted in Section 2.2, the Walker Family YMCA is currently for sale and there is no indication at present time that the YMCA of Niagara will re-open a similar facility in St. Catharines. There are indications that the Brock University pool was very busy prior to the pandemic and thus had limited ability to meet broader needs due to the University's own programming requirements. The participation and attendance data presented earlier in this Section demonstrates the degree of pressure that the SKAC is facing, including waiting lists and unmet rental demand.

Recommendation #4 of the City's RFPMP recommended engaging non-municipal pool operators to seek greater public access in their pools. Since the RFPMP was approved, these providers appear to have little capacity beyond their own needs. The permanent closure of the YMCA will result in a significant number of people in St. Catharines that will no longer have access to the YMCA aquatics programs. With strong pressures already being placed upon the SKAC, the City does not have the capacity to accommodate all of the people displaced from the YMCA's local aquatics programs. Combined with Brock University's pool being unable to meet additional demands, there is cause to revisit RFPMP Recommendation #4.

If the City were to construct a second indoor pool, the level of service would be 1 per 75,000 population by the year 2031; if continuing to rely exclusively upon the SKAC, the service level would be 1 per 150,000 persons which is low even considering the non-municipal providers. Adding a second indoor aquatic centre would bring St. Catharines' service level closer to the benchmark averages but not in a way that would overbuild the supply so as to duplicate the non-municipal pools.

A future indoor aquatic centre would not need to be constructed to the same scale as the SKAC; for example, a new pool could have fewer than 8 lanes since the SKAC would continue to be the primary location for swim meets and aquatic sport training. Depending upon the demographic composition, a leisure tank could also be different particularly if the community age composition skews to the older age cohorts, thereby potentially reducing the need for waterplay space in favour of a smaller warm water tank. At this point in time, one could reasonably expect that a 25 metre, 6-lane pool plus separate tank is a plausible point of departure given this template is representative of the vast majority of recent municipal indoor aquatic centre projects.

Construction is proposed within the next 5 years. Statistics Canada's 2021 Census and subsequent data releases in 2022-2023 will identify the demographic composition of the community. More importantly, the Census will allow the City and Region of Niagara to assess whether the trajectory of current growth forecasts are being met; since population

growth and socio-economic characteristics will dictate the anticipated usage profile of a new pool, it is best to wait until such information is in hand and then confirm timing of construction. Furthermore, the RFPMP is due for a 5-year update and a comprehensive analysis of all recreation facility needs (e.g. arenas, gymnasiums, fitness space, etc.) will be helpful since a new indoor aquatic centre would ideally form part of a multi-use facility.

The cost implications of the future pool will be dictated by its design but could be in the range of \$15 to \$20 million based on recent experience in other parts of the province. Operating costs could be in excess of \$500,000 annually but that may be a best-case figure if recalling that the SKAC incurs a net annual operating cost in the range of \$1.5 million (when including the pool and non-aquatic components). Confirmation of capital and operating costs should occur after the pool and other community centre components are defined in greater detail.

In order for the City's aquatics system to be financially responsible and operationally sustainable, the Aquatic Facilities Strategy recommends that the construction of a new indoor pool should, in effect, replace the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool (though not necessarily in that area of the City). The substantial year-round capacity added by a new indoor aquatic centre is likely to result in further underutilization occurring at the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool, particularly if north-end residents gain greater access to freed-up times at the SKAC.

In order for the municipal aquatics system to have the financial means to fund the indoor pool supply and eliminate programmatic inefficiencies that would otherwise occur, the City should make the construction of its second indoor pool contingent upon:

- 1) **attaining population growth**, particularly among children and teen cohorts, as forecasted by the Region of Niagara;
- 2) **continued evidence of latent demand** as demonstrated by strong program fill rates, inability to reduce waiting lists, and/or constraints to public access at semi-public pools;
- 3) **decommissioning** Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool (under the Balanced and Refocused Scenarios presented in Section 9.0 of this report); and

St. Catharines' **second indoor aquatics centre** is contingent upon:

- 1) Attaining population growth forecasts established by the Region of Niagara;
- 2) Closure of Port Dalhousie and Lincoln Park Outdoor Pools;
- 3) Continued evidence of unmet demand for aquatic services; and
- 4) Co location as part of a multi use community hub facility.



- 4) confirmation through an update to the RFPMP or other assessment of recreation, culture, and/or library facility needs in order to co-locate a new pool as **part of a multi-use hub**.

In light of the COVID-19 global pandemic, municipalities across Ontario have adjusted the delivery of their recreation programs. For the aquatics sector, this could mean carrying forward things such as reduced participant numbers in programs, greater “down time” between programs to minimize physical interactions between people and carry out cleaning (in the pool, on the deck and in the changerooms), participant restrictions for drop-in activities (e.g. fewer lane swimmers) and more.

Given that the pandemic is presently in its “second wave”, it is unknown how long such restrictions will be in place and whether permanent changes to aquatic program delivery will result. In the event that program delivery practices are changed for the medium to longer term or become permanent, this has the potential to intensify the demand for additional aquatic facilities in response to fewer people per hour being able to be accommodated. In turn, municipalities could be pressed for new indoor aquatic centres to a greater extent than they are now, and would have to rationalize the costs of building and operating these facilities within such a context. The months to come will yield further insights into the implications of COVID-19 on the aquatics sector.

## **6.4 Indoor Pools – Potential Opportunities & Directions**

- #1 Plan for a new indoor aquatic centre to open by the year 2026, subject to confirmation of local and Regional growth forecasts pending release of 2021 Census data as well implementing the Aquatic Facilities Strategy recommendations to decommission the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and the Lincoln Park Outdoor Pools. The City should confirm this recommendation while also undertaking assessments of other recreation and community facilities that could be co located with the new pool, through a scheduled update to the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan, so that the feasibility of a multi use community hub is evaluated.











## Section 7:

# Outdoor Pool Analysis

### 7.1 Overview of Outdoor Pools

The City of St. Catharines' three outdoor pools accommodated 14,000 swims in 2019. Although this is just one-third of the swims that took place at the City's outdoor pools in 2010, the City's proactive and well-received investments to modernize its aquatics infrastructure since that time through the SKAC and splash pads have contributed to a transition from historical pool use patterns. The City responded to the strong declines in outdoor pool attendance between 2010 and 2014 (-60%), escalating lifecycle-related challenges, and various other issues by optimizing its outdoor pool supply through the closure of pools at Lancaster Park, Burgoyne Woods and Arthur Street Park. Following these actions, the Port Dalhousie and Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool attendance rebounded after 2015.

As shown in Figure 10 and Figure 11, Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool generated the most outdoor public swims over the past three years, accounting for over half of total outdoor pool attendance. Consultations carried out for the RFPMP and this Aquatics Facilities Strategy indicate that while most residents strongly support the high quality investments at the SKAC and local splash pads, there are still a number of people that wish to swim in outdoor pools. Part of this is attributable to sentimental reasons since many residents of certain generations grew up swimming at the City's outdoor pools; there are also residents that believe learn-to-swim opportunities are essential and cannot always be accommodated at the SKAC or Brock University indoor pools. There are also those that simply prefer to be outside during the summer months – 49% of the Aquatics Facilities Strategy's community survey sample stated such a preference compared to 30% that prefer to swim indoors in the summer (the remaining 21% had no preference either way).

The Port Dalhousie and Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pools designs can support usage capacities associated with populations living within a 15 to 20 minute drive of their respective locations; this coverage generally results in the north and south ends of St. Catharines being served. On the other hand, Lincoln Park Pool was originally designed as a walk-to destination for residents in the surrounding neighbourhood. If the community survey is any indication, all three outdoor pools service a highly localized catchment area unlike the SKAC which draws residents from across St. Catharines.

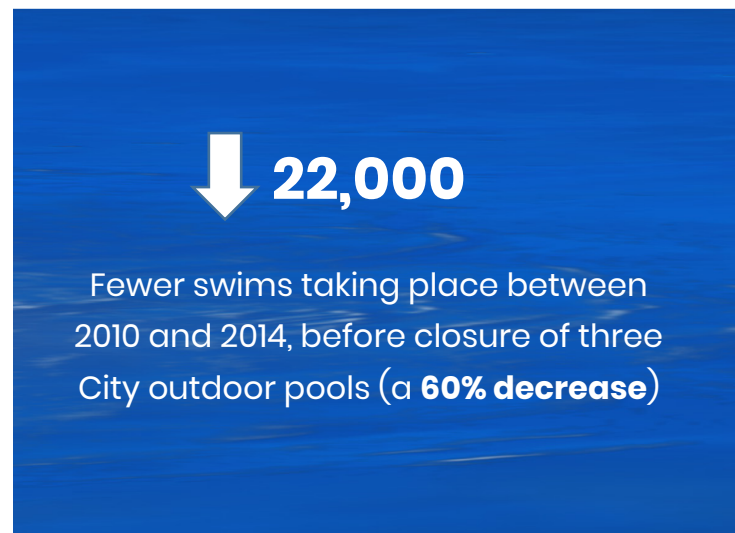


Figure 10:  
Annual Attendance by Outdoor Pool, 2017-2019

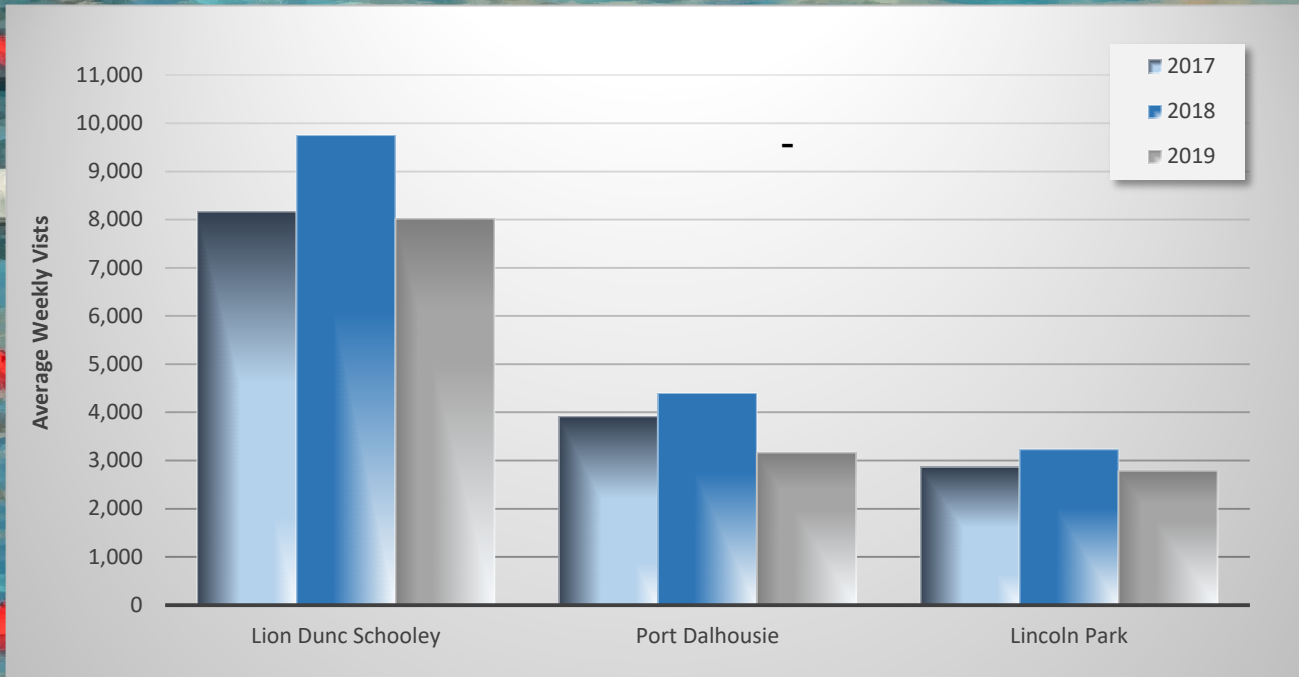
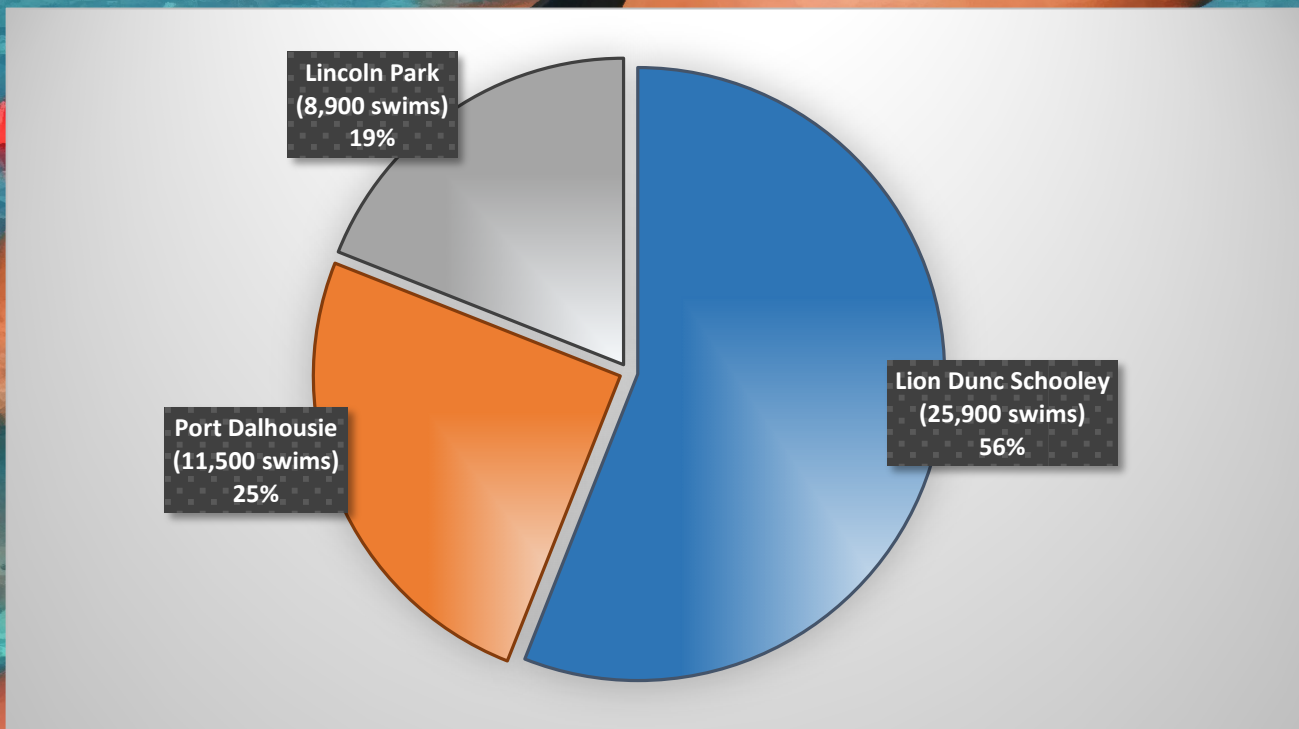


Figure 11:  
Share of Total 3-Year Attendance by Outdoor Pool, 2017-2019





Consultations reinforce residents' desires for quality facilities to be provided at different geographic scales. When asked their preference of pool size and geographic distribution, more than half (51%) of community survey respondents reported a preference for smaller, but more, outdoor pools. 35% of respondents support larger, but fewer, outdoor pools, while 14% were unsure. From a user group perspective, past consultations suggest preference for larger pools with multiple amenities from a sport and training perspective. Ultimately, consultations reinforce that different types of pools (and splash pads) are desired in accordance with the City's Aquatic Facility Classification System described in Section 2 (Table 1).

Therefore, it becomes incumbent upon the City to plan its future aquatics infrastructure in a way that balances the various needs while doing so in a fiscally-appropriate, sustainable manner. The age of each of its outdoor pools is such that they face growing challenges with respect to physical condition along with functional constraints related to programming and operations, comfort, and barrier-free accessibility.

The Community, Recreation & Culture Services Department's budget for outdoor pools and beaches is in the range of \$450,000 per year.<sup>8</sup> Estimates presented to City Council in 2020 showed that Port Dalhousie and Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pools incur direct annual operating costs in the range of \$165,000 per pool per year (excludes revenues which are typically 10% to 15% of costs) along with an annual operating subsidy of \$75,000 per year for Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool where no user fees are charged.

As documented throughout the Strategy, the most pressing limitations for each outdoor pool are associated with their age and era of original construction. None of the pools meet barrier-free accessibility standards which negates or limits their use by certain members of the public. Many structural and mechanical systems are highly advanced in their lifecycle, a number of which will require attention within the next five years if pool operations are to continue and/or comply with building and health codes.

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<sup>8</sup> Shows 2020 budgeted amount for outdoor pools and beaches (pre-COVID-19). Municipal budget tracking processes presently do not isolate actual operating costs realized for each outdoor pool.

## 8 Weeks

Length of a typical operating season for the City's outdoor pools.

## \$400,000

Estimated cost of operating the three outdoor pools each year.

## 10% – 15%

Estimated percentage of costs recovered through user fees at the Port Dalhousie and Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pools (*no admission fees or user pay programs are offered at Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool*).



For the future, any outdoor pools operated by the City of St. Catharines (if proceeding with a Balanced or Status Quo Implementation Scenario identified in Section 9.0) should be classified as a Community or City-wide Aquatic Facility under the classification system described in Section 4.1 of the Aquatics Facilities Strategy. Provision of Neighbourhood Pools are discouraged given the small population base that they would serve.

The outdoor pool assessments focus upon renewal of existing infrastructure but do not envision a net addition to the supply of outdoor pools. The City has worked diligently to consolidate outdoor aquatic operations to be fiscally-responsible and ensure sustainability within the aquatics portfolio as a whole. The historical trend of declining outdoor pool usage has been well-documented through the City's previous master plans and studies, and the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional uncertainty regarding use of public spaces; as one example, a recent newspaper article points to a surge in backyard pool sales among a number of St. Catharines-based pool builders that could affect short-term and longer-term use of municipal outdoor pools.<sup>9</sup> The financial impact of the pandemic and the length of physical distancing is also likely to alter operational performance, particularly on the revenue side, as the City accommodates less people per hour in the pools and increases its cleaning/sanitizing efforts. In addition, the City's current supply of outdoor pools and splash pads (analyzed in Section 8) attains RFPMP Recommendation #19 that states at least one such facility should be provided in each political Ward of the City as shown in Figure 12.<sup>10</sup>

The pages that follow summarize results of benchmarking, the present-day operating characteristics of each of the three outdoor pools, and an analysis and action plan for outdoor pools in St. Catharines.

All outdoor pools operated by the City should fall under the Community or City wide Aquatic Facility Classification as established in Section 4.1 of this Report.

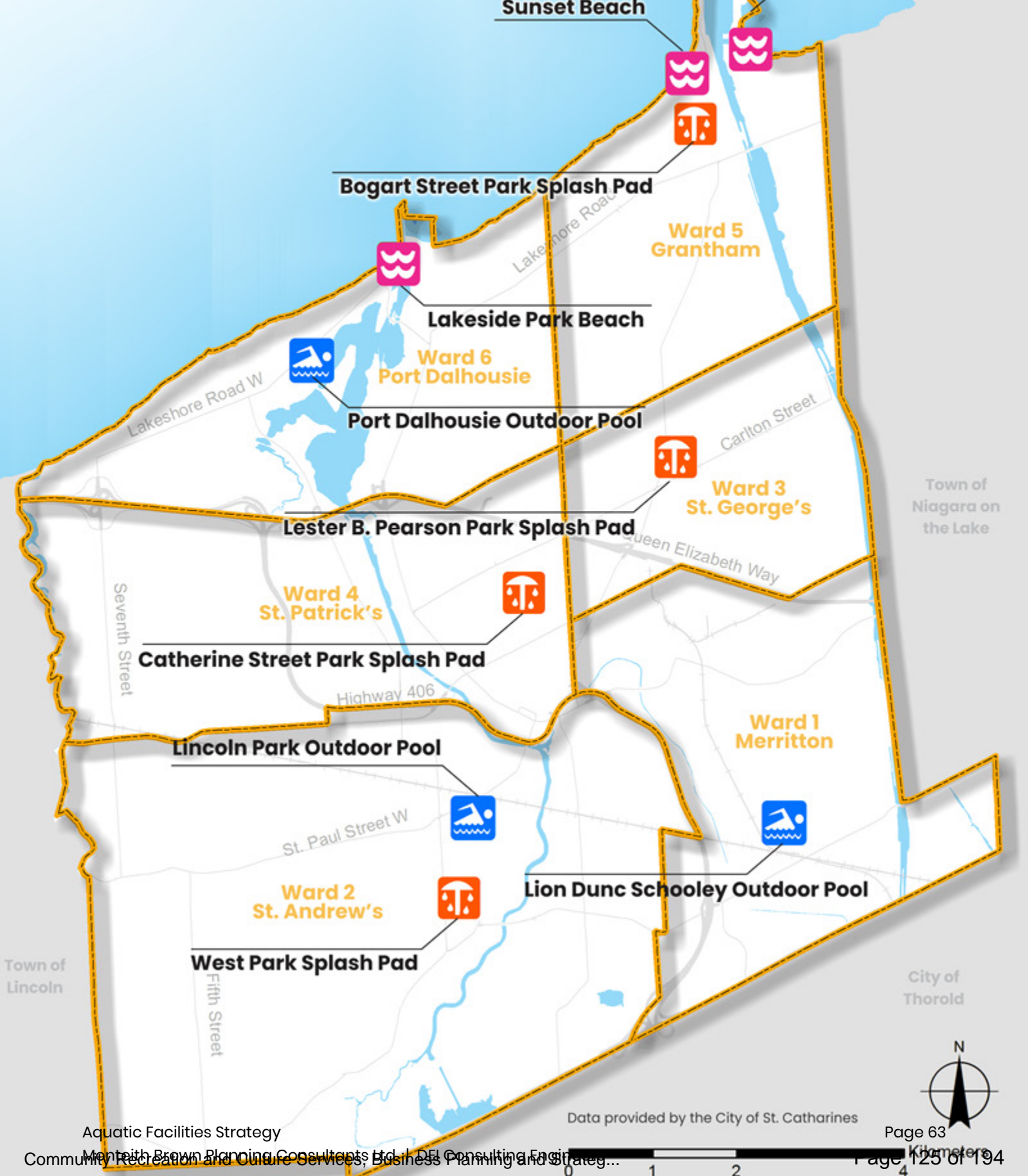
Neighbourhood Pool classifications are discouraged.

<sup>9</sup> Howard, Gord. June 1, 2020. Swimming pool sales hit high-water mark during pandemic. *St. Catharines Standard*, Retrieved from <https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca>

<sup>10</sup> City of St. Catharines. 2015. Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan. p.70.

Figure 12:

# Outdoor Pools & Splash Pad Supply by Ward



## Outdoor Pool Benchmarking Analysis

Within Niagara Region only the City of Niagara Falls provides more outdoor pools than the City of St. Catharines, noting that Niagara Falls presently does not operate or program any indoor pools of its own. While St. Catharines service level is below-average compared to the Niagara municipalities that operate pools, the majority of municipalities have much smaller populations and thus their need to provide at least one pool is the reason that the regional average is lower. It also bears noting that three Niagara Region municipalities do not operate an outdoor pool. In relation to the GGH benchmarks, St. Catharines provides the highest level of service while noting that three of these municipalities no longer operate any outdoor pools.

**Table 3: Outdoor Pool Supplies in Niagara Region & Selected Mid-Size Ontario Municipalities**

Region of Niagara Lower Tier Municipality	Estimated Population	No. of Outdoor Pool Tanks*	No. of Outdoor Pool Locations	Population Per Outdoor Pool
Fort Erie	31,000	0	0	--
Grimsby	27,500	1.0	1	27,500
Lincoln	24,500	2.0	2	12,300
Niagara Falls	88,000	4.5	5	17,600
Niagara on the Lake	17,500	2.25	3	7,800
Pelham	17,000	1.0	1	17,000
Port Colborne	18,000	0	0	--
Thorold	20,000	1.5	1	20,000
Wainfleet	6,500	0	0	--
Welland	56,000	3.0	3	18,700
West Lincoln	14,500	0	0	--
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>39,100</b>
<b>Regional Average</b>	<b>38,000</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>19,200</b>
<b>Regional Median</b>	<b>22,200</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17,300</b>

Selected Provincial Municipality	Estimated Population	No. of Outdoor Pools *	No. of Outdoor Pool Locations	Population Per Outdoor Pool
Ajax	129,500	1	1	129,500
Barrie	147,500	0	0	--
Burlington	192,500	3	3	64,200
Hamilton	570,600	10	10	57,100
Milton	115,000	1	1	115,000
Oshawa	159,500	2	2	79,700
Pickering	96,000	0	0	--
Whitby	128,500	0	0	--
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>39,100</b>
<b>Comparator Average</b>	<b>186,233</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>80,800</b>
<b>Comparator Median</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>71,900</b>

\* Undersized pools less than 200 square metres in area – such as tanks at Port Dalhousie and Lincoln Park in St. Catharines – are counted as the equivalent of half (0.5) of a standard 25 metre pool while stand-alone wading pools are counted as a quarter (0.25) of a standard pool. Thorold's multi-tank destination pool counted as 1.5 equivalents.

Notes for Tables: Supply only reflects aquatics infrastructure owned by municipalities. Estimated populations have been rounded to the nearest 500 persons while service levels have been rounded to nearest 100 persons.



## 7.2 Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool

**Pool Characteristics** Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool is comprised of two pool tanks and a bathhouse, originally opened in 1966. The large rectangular pool is a 25 metre six lane configuration with depth ranging from 1.2 metres to 3.2 metres in the deep end. A separate small pool measures 15 x 12 metres with depth of 0.35 to 0.89 metres.

Entrance is gained via the bathhouse, located on the north side of the pool deck. Inside is a control booth, male and female changerooms, and a lifeguard office. Changerooms open onto the pool deck at the shallow end (best practice), while two filtration rooms dedicated to each pool are co-located on either side of the bathhouse.

The pool tanks and bathhouse do not meet modern accessible facility design standards. The pool water is not heated.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



## Community Survey Results

Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool was used by one out of four respondents, making it three times more popular than the City's two other outdoor pools. As outdoor pool usage in St. Catharines is heavily influenced by geography, the degree to which Port Dalhousie pool was used may be related to a strong survey response from residents living in the City's north end.

Three quarters of people visiting the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool did so 10 times or less which amounts to less than once per week over the pool's summertime operating season. This finding was consistent with the City's other pools. Approximately 60% of people making use of this pool did so because it is an affordable, fun and relaxing activity, or as a member of an aquatics club. If the City were to enhance the user experience through facility upgrades, 51% of those surveyed reported that they would be more likely to use the Port Dalhousie pool more often than they do right now.

## Stakeholder Feedback

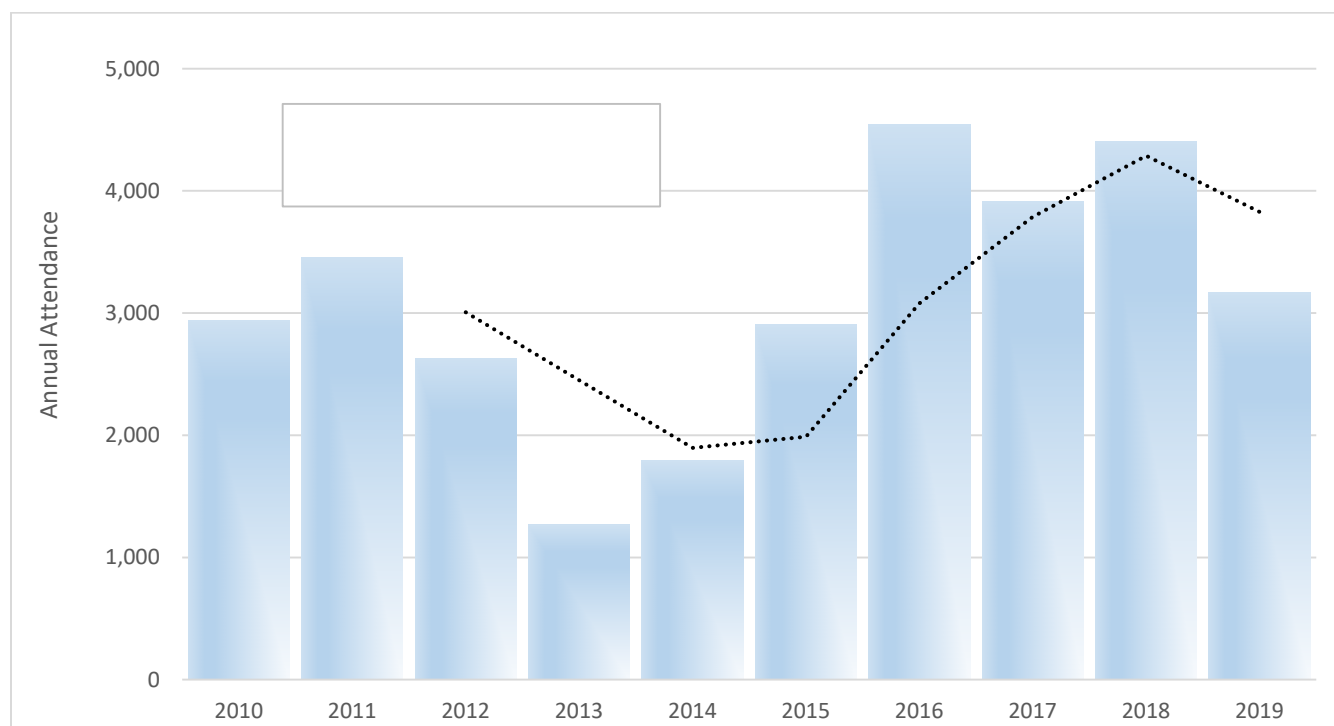
Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool was used by a number of stakeholders responding to requests for input. The two pools provide them with flexible programming opportunities though expressed desires for a modern aquatics experience through pool and bathhouse improvements. Heated water was also a common request, echoing comments received through the community survey and discussions with City staff.

## Programming & Utilization

Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool is typically in service eight weeks each year, generally opening in the last week of June and running until the end of August. The large pool is programmed for length swims, registered lessons, and leisure swims while the small pool is used exclusively for leisure swims due to its shallow depth and size/configuration. YMCA and other camp programs also take place throughout the week.

Annual attendance has been trending upwards since reaching a low in 2013, driven by the introduction of camp programs and rentals by the Garden City Aquatic Club in 2015. A drop-off in 2019 attendance could be explained by the YMCA ceasing to run its lessons and camps while peaks in 2016 and 2018 could be partially attributed to multiple heat alerts issued by the Region.

**Figure 13: Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool 10-Year Historical Attendance, 2010–2019**



Note: 2020 excluded due to a shortened operating season resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: City of St. Catharines, 2020



**Capital &  
Operating  
Information**

Site observations reveal that the pool tanks and deck are in poor condition; removal and replacement is a short-term priority, potentially within the next year or two if the City intends to continue operating this location. The bathhouse also appears to be in an advanced lifecycle state and does not meet barrier-free accessibility standards in a number of areas.

In July 2020, City Council requested staff to estimate the operating cost of the pool to inform a decision whether to re-open during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have estimated direct costs attributable to pool operations at approximately \$165,000 for the 8-week period.

**Analysis &  
Future Actions**

Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool has serviced the north end of St. Catharines for more than 50 years. With the SKAC and Bogart Street Splash Pad having been constructed in the past 8 years, historical pressures at Port Dalhousie's outdoor pool have been considerably reduced with the introduction of more choices for north-end residents (along with the City's three beaches spread along the Lake Ontario shoreline).

As an indication of its usage capacity, Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool attracts less than 40% of the number of visits than the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool which has a similarly-sized, two-tank configuration. It can be reasonably stated that the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool is underutilized and in recent years has lost external programs, camps and other rentals.

Aerial imagery illustrates strong competition from many backyard pools within its catchment area as well as from the SKAC and splash pads at Lester B. Pearson Park and Bogart Street Park. Mapping based on Census and Region of Niagara indicators point to a greater degree of affluence in Port Dalhousie and other areas north of the QEW, suggesting these residents have greater mobility to access aquatic services within their immediate communities and beyond. On this basis alone, Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool is not considered to provide the same degree of access or attain inclusionary-related benefits for marginalized residents as would the Lincoln Park and Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pools.

It can be reasonably stated that Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool is underutilized. The Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool attracts less than 40% of the number of visits as the similarly sized Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool, and has lost external programs and other rentals in recent years.

**Analysis &  
Future Actions  
(continued...)**

Three options are presented for the City's consideration in conjunction with the ongoing costs of replacement and operation.

**Option 1: Replace the pool tanks and pool deck in their current configuration,** albeit with barrier-free accessibility improvements added and certain comfort improvements such as pool heating.

**Option 2: Construct a new leisure/lap hybrid pool design.** This option would be a re-imagination of the pool and property that may integrate traditional swimming uses with water play elements.

**Option 3: Permanently decommission the pool and bathhouse, and replace them with a splash pad.**

For Options 1 and 2, redevelopment or a complete redevelopment of the bathhouse would be required to accommodate barrier-free requirements as well as potentially expand the mechanical rooms. A rebuild and relocation of the bathhouse would be optimal to offer greater shade and reduce glare off the water, though there may be site constraints due to available space and setbacks from adjacent residences to the south. There will also be a cost to replace mechanical equipment as major redevelopment could trigger building code and health regulations to be addressed (i.e. grandfathering existing equipment may not be possible).

As such, Options 1 and 2 could involve a costly approach, particularly if triggering a complete redevelopment of the site in addition to the pool and bathhouse. Depending upon the size and scale of the design associated with Option 2, an alternative site in Port Dalhousie may need to be considered particularly if parking lot needs to be expanded thereby bringing land acquisition costs into the equation as well as development restrictions associated with the Heritage Conservation District designation applied through by-law to the area.

Based on recent pool builds in other municipalities, total capital costs of Option 1 and 2 could range anywhere from \$1 million to \$5 million for replacement and reconstruction activities (the number will depend on site specific factors along with the chosen design). For Option 1, it would be safe to assume that the current operating cost would be similar to the \$165,000 annually incurred through tax-funded support. There may be certain revenue gains if attendance or rentals increase, along with the potential to reduce energy/water costs with more efficient mechanical systems. The operating cost associated with Option 2 are more difficult to assess until size, configuration and design components are more fully defined.

The City could realize net annual cost savings with Option 3 that could be sizeable over the lifecycle associated with an outdoor pool.

That said, there is a sentimental value that is not easily measured in dollars and cents

If proceeding with Option 3, the City would continue to comply with RFPMP Recommendation #19 so long as the splash pad that replaces the pool is constructed in the Port Dalhousie Ward boundary. The cost of splash pads tends to range from \$300,000 to \$600,000 depending on their size and design, and operating costs would be substantially lower than an outdoor pool if continuing to use a flow-through water supply system.

Ceasing pool operations would allow the City to reinvest proceeds from capital replacement and operating cost savings in other areas of the local aquatics system. For example, the City's fiscal ability to support an enhanced splash pad design in Port Dalhousie, potentially employing a more environmentally progressive recirculating system (also described in Section 8.6), would be made easier if redirecting capital and operating costs from a pool considered to be underutilized.

In addition, the City could realize net annual cost savings on the capital and operating side by transitioning service from a large pool to splash pad; savings would amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars (if not more) over the 40-year lifecycle typically associated with an outdoor pool. That said, there is a dedicated base of swimmers that make use of the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool that cannot go unrecognized. With generations of residents having learned to swim or formed community bonds at this pool, there is a sentimental value that is not easily measured in dollars and cents.

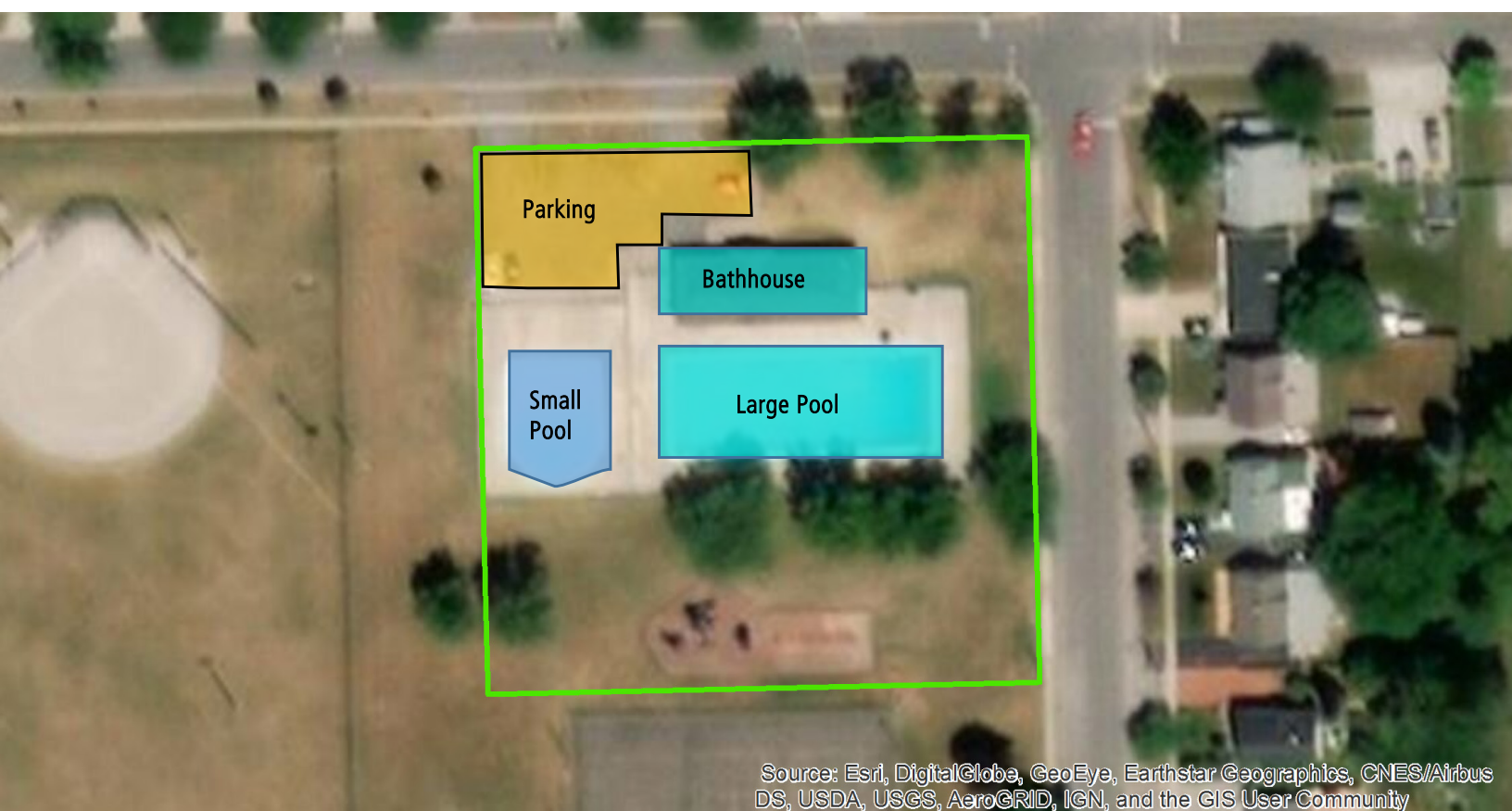
With the need for a new indoor pool looming on the horizon (see Section 6.3), financial sustainability of the local aquatics system is of paramount importance and development of such would further increase the redundancy and inefficiency of the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool. As such, it is the recommendation of this Aquatic Facilities Strategy that Option 3 be chosen and implemented through the Balanced and Refocused Scenarios presented in Section 9.0 of this report.



### 7.3 Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool

**Pool Characteristics** Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool is comprised of two pool tanks and a bathhouse. The large rectangular pool is a 25 metre six lane configuration with depth ranging from 0.87 metres to 2.29 metres in the deep end. A separate small pool measures 15 x 14 metres with its beach entry gradually sloping towards a maximum depth of 1 metre.

Entrance is gained via the bathhouse, located on the north side of the pool deck. Inside is a small cash counter, male and female changerooms, one small universal change room, and a lifeguard office. Changerooms open onto the pool deck, roughly in the middle of the large pool, while the filtration room is co-located with the bathhouse. The pool water is not heated.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

## Community Survey Results

8% of the sample reported use of the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool, noting that 13% of the survey sample live in south-east St. Catharines which is where this pool is located. One out of four Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool users stated that it provides an affordable, fun and relaxing activity or is a place where they cool down on hot days.

It is noteworthy that even if the City were to undertake improvements to enhance the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool, 59% of respondents reported that they would still not make use of the facility; this could be related to willingness to travel based upon the aforementioned point regarding geographic distribution of survey responses.

## Stakeholder Feedback

The appeal of Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool is aligned with its role as part of the Merritton Community Park campus. The co-location of the pool onsite with the Merritton Arena, ball diamonds, tennis courts and playground make it a true hub of community activity. Certain people noted the park's large size is conducive to providing an expanded/redeveloped pool and creates an opportunity to improve the aquatics experience.



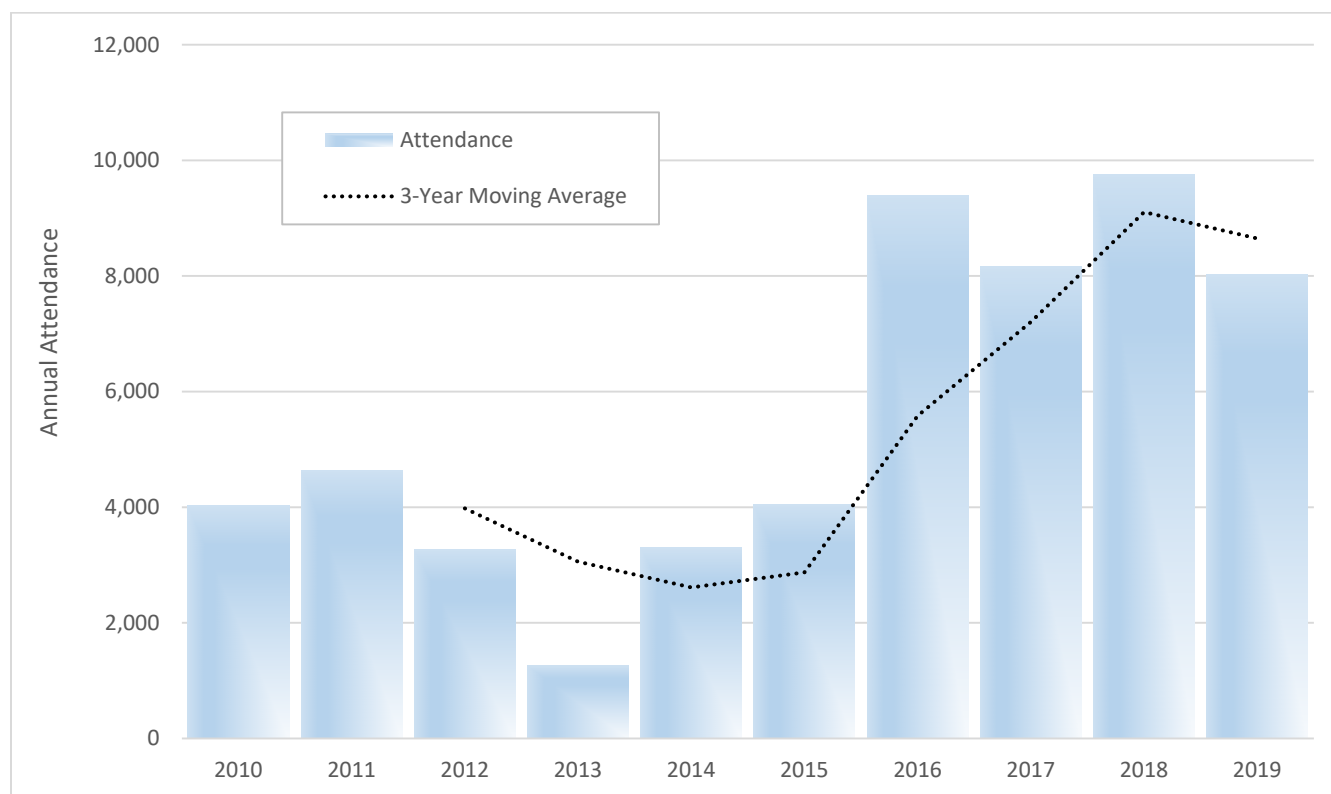


## Programming & Utilization

Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool is typically in service 9 weeks each year, opening in the last week of June and running until the Labour Day weekend. The large pool is programmed for length swims, drop-in and registered lessons, and leisure swims. The small pool is used exclusively for leisure swims due to its shallow depth and size/configuration. City camps also make use of both pools.

Annual attendance has been trending upwards since reaching a low in 2013, driven by the introduction of camp programs in 2015 which now account for approximately 40% of visitors. The closure of three municipal pools in 2015 also had an effect while the number of heat alerts issued in 2016 and 2018 can partially be attributed to above average attendance. With attendance of over 8,000 swims in 2019, Lion Dunc was the busiest outdoor pool in terms of attendance and accommodating 57% of all visits to municipal outdoor pools. In 2019, an above average number of swims in the large pool offset loss of certain YMCA camp programs.

**Figure 14: Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool 10-Year Historical Attendance, 2010-2019**



Note: 2020 excluded as the pool was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: City of St. Catharines, 2020



**Condition &  
Operating  
Information**

Site observations and review of municipal documentation suggest that the pool tanks and associated mechanical systems are reaching end of useful life while the deck is showing signs of aging. Condition improvements would be prudent in the next 1 to 2 years.

While City Staff have not compiled an estimate for this pool given it is closed in 2020 due to COVID-19, its similar scale of design to the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool could reasonably infer an annual operating in the range of \$165,000 (see Section 7.2).

**Analysis &  
Future Actions**

As the busiest outdoor pool by attendance that contributes to the multi-seasonal experience at Merritton Community Park and has historical value as the first pool in the City, there is strong rationale in continuing to operate Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool. Just as importantly, the pool services a number of south-end communities including areas that exhibit a number of quantifiable 'vulnerability' measures (see Section 2); such residents may not be otherwise able to access swimming opportunities due to their distance – particularly transit users – from the SKAC, Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and City beaches.

With the outdoor pool tanks nearing the end of their life expectancy and mechanical systems not meeting a number of current health and building codes, replacement of Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool can be supported should the City proceed with the Balanced Scenario discussed in Section 9.4 of this report's Implementation Strategy. Given the historical importance and strong use at the site, a fulsome re-imagination of the outdoor pool would be recommended under the Balanced Scenario with consideration given to a hybrid tank design that combines leisure swimming areas with more traditional lap/deeper water elements. Any redesign should also consider re-orientation of the bathhouse to the south side of the pool (to provide shade on-deck and reduce glare for lifeguarding) along with interactive spray features and other water play elements such as a slide.

## 7.4 Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool

**Pool Characteristics** The Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool is a small pool measuring 15 x 12 metres with depth ranging from 0.35 to 0.89 metres. The pool was constructed in the mid-1970s and last underwent a major renewal in 1997.

Entrance to the pool is through a perimeter gate with the small changeroom and mechanical building accessed only from the deck. There are no showers while the pool and changerooms do not meet accessible facility design standards (there is a narrow step running the width of the pool). The pool water is not heated.

**Community Survey Results** The outdoor pool at Lincoln Park received use from 7% of survey respondents, over half of whom do so because it offers fun, relaxing and affordable activities as well as to spend time with family and friends.

Even if the City were to undertake improvements to enhance the Lincoln Park pool, 60% of respondents reported that they would still not make use of the facility.

**Stakeholder Feedback** Little feedback was received regarding Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool apart from its relative importance in serving an area of the City that some characterize as exhibiting a greater degree of marginalization. No stakeholders submitting a feedback form reported use of this pool.

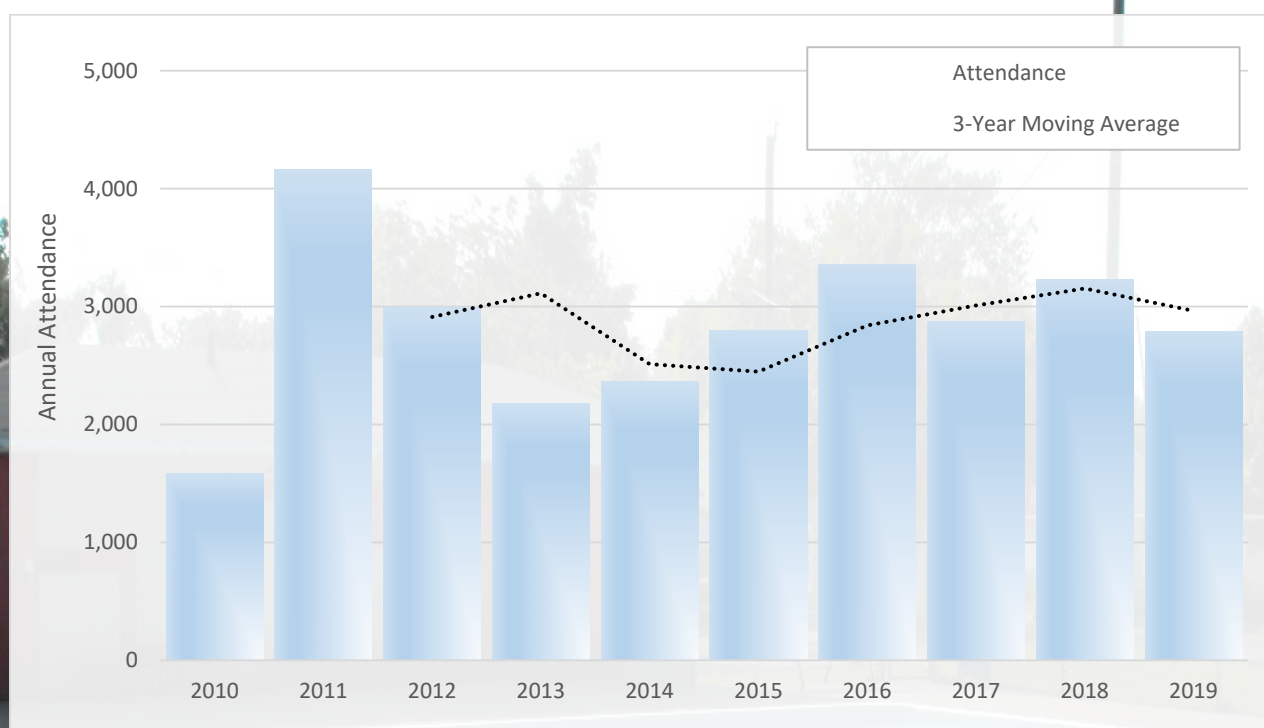


## Programming & Utilization

Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool is typically open for the 8 weeks between the last week of June and the end of August. It is used exclusively for leisure swims as its design is not conducive to lessons or other registered programs. The City does not charge an admission fee as the pool's function is relegated to cool down activities similar to a wading pool or splash pad (which tend to be free of charge). The vast majority of pool users are children under the age of 10.

Lincoln Park pool receives the fewest visitors as its design encourages a highly localized level of use in the absence of programming, deep water and vehicular parking. As such, its catchment largely encompasses neighbourhoods immediately surrounding the park. There were 2,800 visits to the pool in 2019 similar to its 10-year average though attendance has been trending slightly upwards in the past five years part of which could be attributable to the above-average number of heat alert days issued by the Region in 2016 and 2018.

**Figure 15: Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool 10-Year Historical Attendance, 2010–2019**



Note: 2020 excluded as the pool was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: City of St. Catharines, 2020



## **Capital & Operating Information**

Site observations reveal that the pool and deck are in poor condition, while filtration does not meet regulations. In conjunction with issues identified by City staff and in past condition assessments, this pool would benefit from a complete replacement if the City intends to retain a pool at this location.

In July 2020, City Council requested staff to estimate the operating cost of the pool to inform a decision whether to re-open during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have estimated direct costs attributable to the pool's operations at approximately \$75,000 for the 8 week period.

## **Analysis & Future Actions**

Of the three outdoor pools, Lincoln Park has the greatest functional and operational limitations. Its mechanical system does not meet the requirements of a Class A pool and upgrades would be challenging based on current site configuration. It would appear that a complete redevelopment of the pool is the most feasible way to address the lifecycle, barrier-free and compliance-related challenges.

However, the small size of the Lincoln Park and close setbacks to adjacent properties challenges redevelopment and/or expansion potential. Improved barrier-free accessibility usually requires larger building footprints, while the ability to improve amenities and on-site parking for the pool would consume a greater area. Even if rebuilding the pool with a similar design specification as is currently in place, the City would face similar challenges in not being able to program the pool for much apart from drop-in wading-type swims. A smaller pool, even if rebuilt, would still potentially receive a lower level of use relative to the other outdoor pools as it would continue to primarily service a highly localized catchment area (primarily residents in walking distance). This begs the question as to whether the City can reasonably expect to generate value from the financial investment that would be required.

The greatest benefit of Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool lies in its ability to service an area of St. Catharines that is categorized as 'vulnerable' based upon a number of quantifiable measures. However, the outdoor pool's value as a community service is diminished by its inability to offer learn-to-swim classes or other programs, and thus the pool is essentially a cool-down facility akin to the nearby West Park splash pad. West Park splash pad is a 15 to 20 minute walk from Lincoln Park, and thus the outdoor pool in its current state is arguably redundant given it services a similar geographic area.

Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool's greatest benefit lies in its ability to service an area of St. Catharines that can be categorized as vulnerable.

Unfortunately, it has the most functional and operational limitations in the local aquatics system. The pool's 'value' to the community is also diminished since its design cannot accommodate learn to swim classes, nor is it accessible to persons with disabilities.

Therefore, replacement of Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool with a new pool that has the same functional and programmatic limitations as the current facility is not recommended. Therefore, closing the pool is supported through the Balanced and Refocused Scenarios presented in Section 9.0 of this report so long as a splash pad is constructed to replace it. Providing a splash pad at Lincoln Park would result in servicing populations living beyond a 20 minute walk of West Park, retaining a degree of equity in the neighbourhood and particularly to those residents that do not have access to their own vehicle.

## **7.5 Outdoor Pools – Potential Opportunities & Directions**

- #2 Decommission the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and redirect financial resources that would have otherwise been spent on redevelopment, renewal and ongoing operating towards the splash pad recommended in the Port Dalhousie Ward and the new indoor aquatic centre that are being recommended through this Aquatic Facilities Strategy.
- #3 If proceeding with the Balanced Implementation Scenario identified in Section 9.4 of this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool and bathhouse should be replaced and redeveloped, preferably employing a single tank design that employs leisure and lap/deeper water swimming areas, along with water play features.
- #4 If proceeding with the Balanced Implementation Scenario (Section 9.4) or Refocused Implementation Scenario (Section 9.5) identified in this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, the City should decommission the Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool and replace it with a splash pad.











## Section 8:

# Splash Pad Analysis

### 8.1 Overview of Splash Pads

The City of St. Catharines was an early adopter of splash pads, recognizing in the early 2000s that residents were seeking a different aquatics experience. That long-range view proved to be progressive and in line with best practices, even to this day, as more municipalities embrace the water play opportunities within their parks' systems. Over the past 15 years, the City has built up its supply of splash pads so that four such facilities are located across St. Catharines.

Although the drop-in and non-programmed nature of splash pads makes it difficult to accurately record total attendance levels, the Community, Recreation & Culture Services Department is once again taking a progressive stance to monitoring how its splash pads are being used by conducting spot checks throughout the season. This information will inform future decisions such as when the City should reinvest in existing and new splash pads, and what scale of design is required; many other municipalities are only starting to contemplate similar practices while St. Catharines has been doing this for a number of years. Since 2017, Department Staff have recorded over 25,000 visits to local splash pads noting that this number is likely much higher due to the nature of spot-check observations and the addition of two new splash pads in 2018 will likely drive greater attendance numbers for the future.

# 25,000

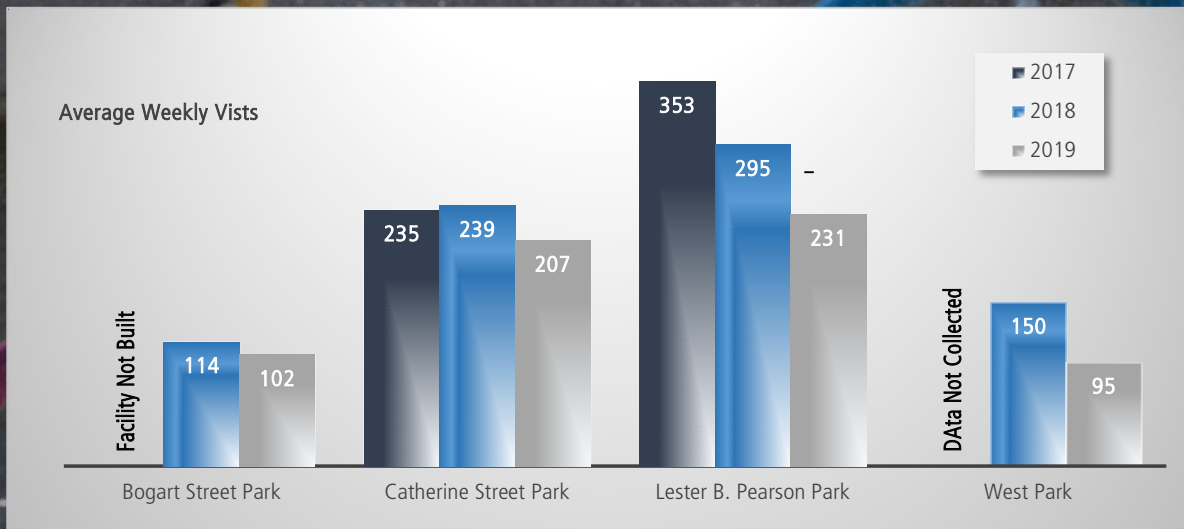
Visits recorded through spot checks carried out by City Staff at local splash pads since 2017.

Consultations suggest that the public values splash pads and that these are popular facilities. 40% of households responding to the Aquatic Facilities Strategy community survey visited a City of St. Catharines splash pad in the past two years, largely doing so to cool down on hot days, and because splash pads enable fun, relaxing and affordable experiences. In a typical summer, between 30% and 50% of people using a splash pad reported using them once a week or more (depending on the location) while between 48% and 68% reported usage of once a month or less. In addition, 14% of survey respondents have used a splash pad in another municipality.

The City's spot-checks support public and stakeholder feedback pointing to the Lester B. Pearson Park splash pad as the most popular in the municipal supply (Figure 16). That being said, strong levels of use in the peak of summer are also observed at Catherine Street Park and attendance can be expected to increase at West Park and Bogart Street Park as more residents become aware of the existence of these new splash pads.



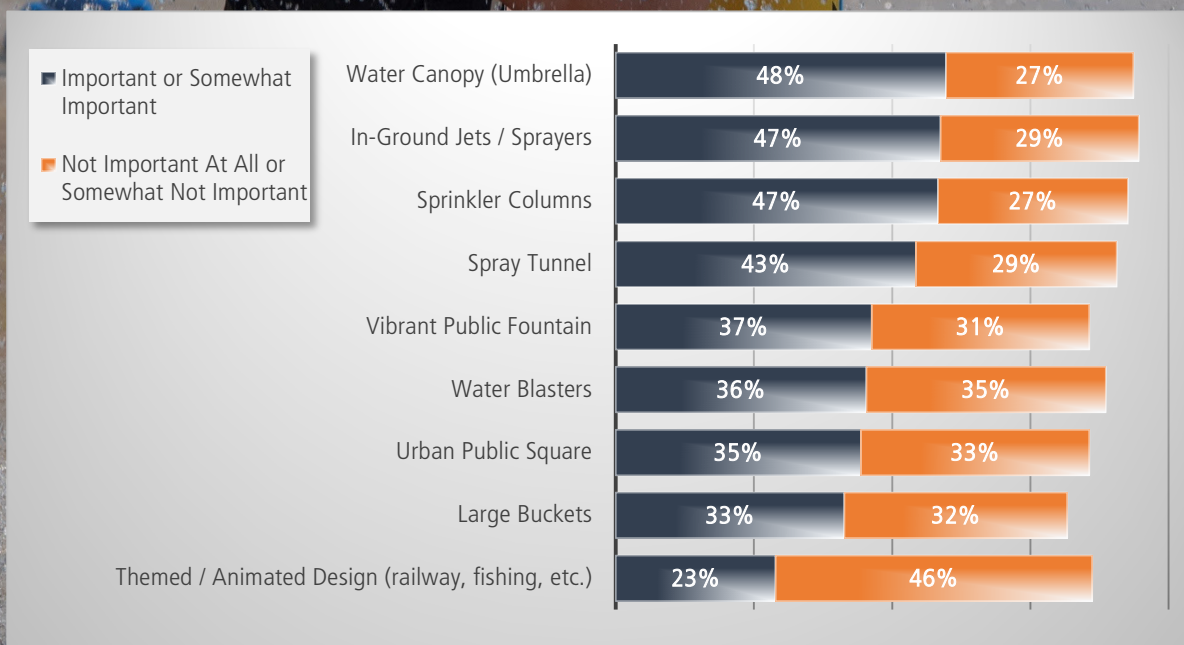
Figure 16:  
Average Weekly Peak Season Visits by Splash Pad, 2017–2019



Notes: Peak season spans the last week of June through to the last week of August. Statistics reflect the number of users present at times at which City staff were present to record data, and thus should not be construed as being based on total attendance. Visits to splash pads in a given year are influenced by weather related factors including heat alerts and rain days.

Source: City of St. Catharines splash pad monitoring activities, 2017–2019

Figure 17:  
Requested Splash Pad Amenity Features



Source: Aquatics Facilities Strategy Community Survey



Each of the City's splash pads serve the Community-level catchment area established in the Aquatic Facility Classification in Section 2 of this report. Each park provides a number of water-play features ranging from jets, sprayers and misters while their respective parks have vehicular parking, benches and shade (the latter through shelters and/or tree plantings). Dedicated washroom buildings are available at two splash pads while the other two splash pads provide washroom access via their adjacent community centre buildings. All of the splash pads are considered to be accessible to persons with disabilities with their concrete surfacing and internal pathways providing access from park entrances and parking lots to the splash pads.

The City of St. Catharines has doubled its splash pad supply in the past three years, bringing it closer to recommended service levels adopted by a number of municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Table 4). When looking at service level by population, there is one splash pad per 3,100 St. Catharines children up to the age of 9.

Since the splash pad supply is oriented to servicing Community-level catchments, geographic distribution must be factored in tandem with population-based service levels. The size of the four splash pads range from 2,600 square feet to 4,000 square feet which reflects the geographic scale of their catchment, particularly when considering the number of water play features within them (the City's newer splash pads actually fit more water play elements per square foot than the older ones).

## Splash Pad Benchmarking Analysis

While St. Catharines provides more splash pads on average than Niagara Region municipalities, service levels by population are lower due to smaller population counts in those comparators. In relation to GGH benchmarks, St. Catharines provides a lower level of provision measured against total population; however, the City is arguably providing an efficient level of service based on the primary users of splash pads who are typically under 10 years of age. It also bears noting that certain GGH municipalities provide basic waterplay elements that serve a small catchment (e.g. the surrounding neighbourhood) which inflates their supply relative to municipalities focusing on larger-scale, costlier facilities that serve a larger geographic area.

**Table 4: Splash Pad Supplies in Niagara Region & Selected Mid-Size Ontario Municipalities**

Region of Niagara Lower Tier Municipality	Estimated Population	No. of Splash Pads	Population Per Splash Pad (all ages)	Population Per Splash Pad (ages 0 to 9)
Fort Erie	31,000	4	7,700	700
Grimsby	27,500	1	27,500	3,100
Lincoln	24,500	3	8,200	900
Niagara Falls	88,000	7	12,600	600
Niagara on the Lake	17,500	1	17,500	1,300
Pelham	17,000	0	--	--
Port Colborne	18,000	1	18,000	1,600
Thorold	20,000	6	3,300	300
Wainfleet	6,500	0	--	--
Welland	56,000	3	18,700	1,700
West Lincoln	14,500	1	14,500	1,900
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>3,100</b>
<b>Regional Average</b>	<b>38,125</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16,200</b>	<b>1,500</b>
<b>Regional Median</b>	<b>22,250</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>1,400</b>

Selected Provincial Municipality	Estimated Population	No. of Splash Pads	Population Per Splash Pad (all ages)	Population Per Splash Pad (ages 0 to 9)
Ajax	129,500	6	21,600	2,600
Barrie	147,500	2	76,600	8,500
Burlington	192,500	7	27,500	2,800
Hamilton	570,600	68	8,400	800
Milton	115,000	14	8,200	1,100
Oshawa	159,500	6	26,600	3,000
Pickering	96,000	2	48,000	4,700
Whitby	128,500	15	8,600	1,100
<b>St. Catharines</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>3,100</b>
<b>Comparator Average</b>	<b>186,233</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28,900</b>	<b>3,100</b>
<b>Comparator Median</b>	<b>137,000</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26,600</b>	<b>2,800</b>

Notes for Tables: Supply only reflects aquatics infrastructure owned by municipalities, and includes multi-use water features (e.g. fountains that allow waterplay). There are variations in the size and scale of splash pads listed depending upon their catchment area (i.e. municipally-wide, community, or neighbourhood), thus splash pads do not accommodate the same usage capacities. Estimated populations have been rounded to the nearest 500 persons while service levels have been rounded to nearest 100 persons. Service levels for ages 0 to 9 are based upon 2016 Census figures for each respective municipality.

## 8.2 Bogart Street Park

### **Splash Pad Characteristics**

Bogart Street Park splash pad opened in 2018, employing a nautical theme featuring a mix of sprayers, geysers and a loop on a concrete pad. Comfort amenities include bench seating, shade shelter and a recent renovation to the adjacent Port Weller Community Centre included a universal washroom that provides exterior access to splash pad users.

The splash pad occupies a total surface area of approximately 3,100 square feet (290 square metres). It is in excellent condition as a relatively new splash pad, and thus should have ample service life remaining.

### **Community Survey Results**

The Bogart Park splash pad had reported usage of 14%. Approximately half of those reporting use visited the splash pad at least once per week.

### **Stakeholder Feedback**

No feedback specific to Bogart Street Park splash pad was received from stakeholders.

### **Usage**

Based on spot checks carried out at specific times, City staff observed an average of 102 users per week during the 2019 peak season (late June through August).





### 8.3 Catherine Street Park

#### **Splash Pad Characteristics**

The splash pad at Catherine Street Park has been in operation since 2006 and sits adjacent to Russell Avenue Community Centre. In-ground and above-ground features such as jets, tipping buckets, water blasters, and a spray loop are housed on a concrete pad. Park benches are installed on the periphery while washrooms can be accessed by way of the community centre during regular hours of operation.

The splash pad occupies a total surface area of approximately 2,600 square feet (240 square metres).

#### **Community Survey Results**

The Catherine Street Park splash pads had reported usage of 17% with approximately two out of three community survey users typically visiting the splash pad once a month or less in a summer.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback**

No feedback specific to Bogart Street Park splash pad was received from stakeholders. City staff indicated some challenges due to water run-off from the splash pad and certain water play components having age-related issues.

#### **Usage**

Spot checks by City staff recorded an average of 205 users per week during the 2019 peak season (late June through August).





## 8.4 Lester B. Pearson Park

### **Splash Pad Characteristics**

Opened in 2006 with an 'Old West' theme, the splash pad at Lester B. Pearson Park has a concrete surface featuring a combination of five above-ground water play elements plus in-ground geysers. Comfort amenities include a dedicated male-female washroom building, park benches, along with shade from mature trees and a shelter shared with other park users. Lester B. Pearson Park is co-located with the SKAC.

The splash pad occupies a total surface area of approximately 4,000 square feet (370 square metres).

### **Community Survey Results**

The splash pad at Lester B. Pearson Park was the most popular splash pad among the survey sample, used by one out of every three respondents that typically visit once a week or more in a summer. This splash pad, combined with the very high reported level of use of the SKAC, reinforces the view that the entire site is a prominent year-round destination for aquatic activity in St. Catharines.

### **Stakeholder Feedback**

Stakeholder feedback was limited though the co-location with the SKAC and other park amenities were noted benefits. City staff indicate that there are some areas of the surface that are more prone to slipping when wet.

### **Usage**

City staff observed an average of 230 users per week during late June through August 2019. This supports staff observations and community survey results that point to Lester B. Pearson Park as the most visited splash pad in St. Catharines.





## 8.5 West Park

### **Splash Pad Characteristics**

The West Park splash pad features a total of seven above-ground water play elements along with in-ground geysers.

The splash pad occupies a total surface area of approximately 2,800 square feet (260 square metres). As a relatively new splash pad constructed in 2017, it is in excellent condition.

### **Community Survey Results**

The West Park splash pad was used by just 6% of the sample, possibly because it is a relatively new facility that some residents may not be aware of. This was the only splash pad whose surveyed users stated its affordability as the primary reason for use, though its fun and cooling factor were also top reasons. Approximately half of reported users visit this splash pad at least once a week in a typical summer.

### **Stakeholder Feedback**

No feedback specific to West Park splash pad was received from stakeholders.

### **Usage**

Spot checks by City staff observed an average of 95 users per week during late June through August 2019.





## 8.6 Future Splash Pad Needs

### Port Dalhousie Ward

With the development of the Bogart Street Splash Pad, every political Ward in St. Catharines now has either an outdoor pool or splash pad, fulfilling RFPMP Recommendation #19.<sup>11</sup> While the RFPMP geographic standard has been addressed, St. Catharines' population of children under 10 years is projected to increase by 3,000 persons by the year 2031.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the RFPMP's Ward-based standard, the need for one additional splash pad is forecasted over the next 10 years in order to maintain the City's present service level of 1 splash pad per 3,000 children and keep it in line with generally accepted standards in many municipalities. In light of aquatic trends, usage preferences and community input gathered through the Aquatic Facilities Strategy, RFPMP Recommendation #19 should be slightly adjusted whereby one splash pad is provided within each political Ward of the City.

With Potential Opportunity & Direction #2 of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy recommending decommissioning of the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool, the new splash pad should be built in the Port Dalhousie Ward. Doing so will ensure that the RFPMP Recommendation continues to be retained while maintaining the above noted population-based service level. The significant costs associated with renewal or complete redevelopment of the outdoor pool (the other options identified in that assessment) could be redirected to the splash pad and would likely result in net cost savings to the City that could also be allocated to other aquatic infrastructure deficits.

A splash pad will also provide a safe alternative for children and caregivers to cool down and experience water, particularly among those that may not have the comfort, skill or ability to swim in Lake Ontario. It is recommended that the splash pad be designed to reflect the higher usage capacity that can be expected if located in proximity to a high foot-traffic area and thus would likely be well positioned as a City-wide aquatic facility per the classification system articulated in Section 2 of this report.

An appropriate location within the Port Dalhousie Ward will need to be selected after careful consideration of the suitability of existing parks (e.g. available space, infrastructure servicing requirements, parking, etc.) and, if necessary, other civic properties or new lands that need to be assembled. A splash pad in Port Dalhousie can be contemplated using the City's traditional template (e.g. buckets, sprayers, colourful fixtures, etc.) or alternatively using a public art/public fountain approach that could complement the character of the Port Dalhousie Heritage District or the historical arts and cultural roots of the area. There are a number of municipalities that have designed water play and cooling amenities using urban design principles rather than park design

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<sup>11</sup> City of St. Catharines. 2015. Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan. p.70.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Regional Municipality of Niagara, Draft Population Forecasts.

standards, oftentimes integrating them into public plazas or other civic spaces (e.g. Celebration Square in Mississauga, Riverwalk Commons in Newmarket, Ivey Park in London, etc.).

### **Examples of Water Play & Cool Down Features using Urban Design Principles**



Celebration Square, Mississauga



Ivey Park, London



Newmarket Riverwalk Commons

### **Lincoln Park Splash Pad**

As discussed in Section 7.4, replacement of the Lincoln Pool Outdoor Pool with a splash pad is recommended so that residents in areas surrounding Lincoln Park continue to have access to a cool-down opportunities and benefit from an enhanced waterplay experience. The splash pad design could form part of a broader park redevelopment project given that the east side of the park is largely undeveloped greenspace, thereby used as a potential catalyst for other neighbourhood revitalization efforts.

### **Merritton Community Park Splash Pad**

As discussed in preceding pages, a splash pad should be provided in each political Ward of St. Catharines. The Merritton is one of two such Wards without a splash pad (the other is Port Dalhousie) though outdoor aquatic needs are currently met by its outdoor pool. The preferred location for a new splash pad in Merritton would be at Community Park, regardless of whether the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool is retained under the Balanced or Refocused Implementation Scenarios identified in Section 9.0. In doing, so, the City would provide a free, outdoor aquatics experience to area residents consistent with splash pads found in other parts of St. Catharines.

### **Lester B. Pearson Park & Catherine Street Park Splash Pads**

These two splash pads have been in service for nearly 15 years and thus their waterplay components and certain mechanical systems can be expected to approach the end of their useful life over the next 10 years. Accordingly, the City should proceed with renewal and replacement activities in accordance with its asset management plans/practices; depending upon the nature of the renewals required, a decision would be made at that

time whether individual components are to be replaced or whether a more substantial redevelopment of the entire splash pad(s) represents better value.

### **Flow-Through and Recirculating Systems**

There are two types of mechanical systems commonly used to supply water to splash pads. A 'flow-through' or 'once-through' system draws from a domestic water source and discharges it into a storm drain. Alternatively, a 'recirculating' system is akin to a swimming pool filtration system whereby water is housed in an underground holding tank where it is circulated and treated with chemicals, ultraviolet light and filters.

All of the City's splash pads employ a flow-through system. Compared to recirculating systems, flow-through systems typically incur greater costs of water consumption but do not carry costs associated with onsite water treatment and testing. Flow-through systems can be viewed as the less environmentally-friendly options due to the amount of water discharged into the storm sewer though there are arguments that there are also environmental impacts of recirculating systems resulting from chemical treatment (e.g. chlorine) or greater electricity consumption with their more complex filtration systems.

While not in place in St. Catharines, certain flow-through systems will capture the 'grey water' into a holding tank or cistern that can be used to serve irrigation or other park needs, though may carry some water treatment and testing costs depending on the end use. For example, grey-water cannot be discharged through spray irrigation such as sprinkler heads/misters without being treated first, though gray water can be used for watering cans or drip irrigation.

The City should undertake a cost-benefit assessment of its current flow-through system in comparison to recirculating systems and inform a decision of which system to employ moving forward through new splash pad designs and at the time when existing systems are due for replacement. This assessment should include a review of its water consumption at local splash pads and factor in account both environmental and financial costs. Reviews of recirculating systems should consider costs associated with the purchase and storage of chemicals; installation, maintenance, and lifecycle replacement of equipment; and staffing resources required for testing and treatment. Above noted considerations for flow-through and recirculating systems should be the minimum as there may be other site-specific or best practice/legislated factors that need to be taken into account.



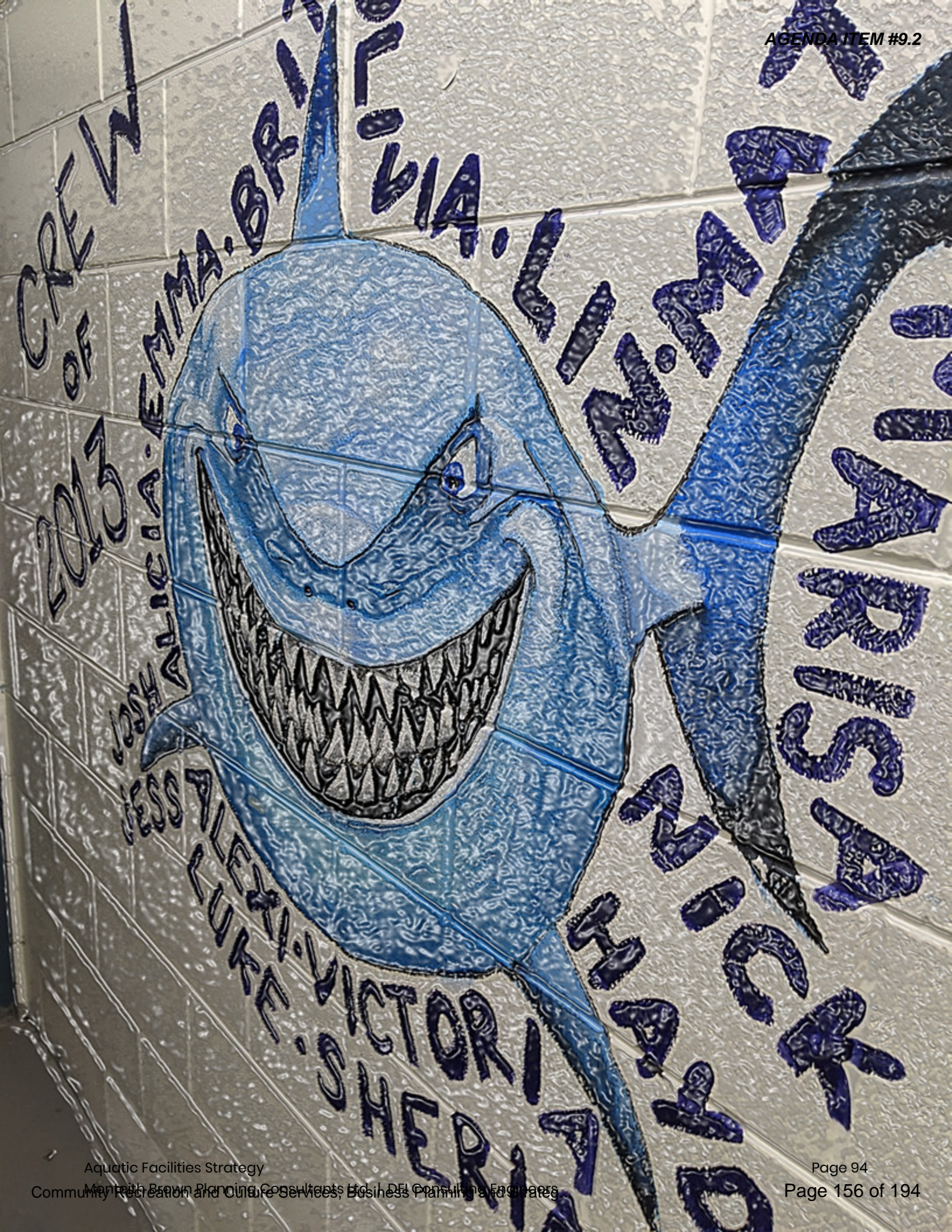
## 8.7 Splash Pads – Potential Opportunities & Directions

- #5 Each political ward in the City of St. Catharines should be served by a minimum of one splash pad, preferably designed as Community level facilities as identified in the classification system established in the Aquatic Facilities Strategy. The exception to this action would be if the City were to proceed with the Status Quo Implementation Scenario (Section 9.6) identified in this Aquatic Facilities Strategy.
- #6 If proceeding with the Balanced Implementation Scenario (Section 9.4) or Refocused Implementation Scenario (Section 9.5) identified in this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, construct new splash pads at Lincoln Park and a site to be chosen in the Port Dalhousie Ward to replace the outdoor pools identified in #2 and #4. A third splash pad should be considered at Community Park in Merritton to achieve the Aquatic Facilities Strategy's Potential Opportunity & Direction #5 so that all Wards in the City have such a facility.
- #7 Carry out replacement/refurbishment of splash pads at Lester B. Pearson Park and Catherine Street Park in accordance with their current asset management plans.
- #8 Undertake a cost benefit analysis of continuing to employ flow through systems versus moving to recirculating systems for splash pads. The analysis should factor quantitative and qualitative elements including (but not limited to) financial and environmental implications.











## Section 9:

# Aquatic Facilities Implementation Strategy

### 9.1 Ensuring the Long-Term Sustainability of the Aquatics System

Through strategic investments made over the past 60 years, the City of St. Catharines has positioned itself as a progressive leader in aquatic services within Niagara Region and in relation to its provincial peers. The City's aquatic system provides well rounded facilities and program choices throughout the year, serving neighbourhoods and entire communities.

As the number of people living in St. Catharines grows over time, residents will continue to seek high quality aquatic experiences to keep them physically healthy, socially connected, and active in aquatic sports. The City's current model of providing opportunities to swim indoors and outdoors is commendable, however, the aging state of the outdoor pools will especially challenge municipal finances if they are to provide the aquatic experiences that residents are looking for.

The Aquatic Facilities Strategy reconciles continued provision of quality aquatic services to St. Catharines residents with the fiscal reality of doing so, while keeping pace with forecasted population growth and changing expectations. The Strategy recognizes that construction, operations and maintenance practices are markedly different than when many of the original facilities were first built. The local aquatics system is but one of many infrastructure and service priorities for the City of St. Catharines; therefore, having a sustainable implementation strategy in place for aquatic facilities is critical so that resources are directed in a manner that brings benefits to residents and results in a quality aquatic system.

#### **St. Catharines' Service Levels are Below Average for Indoor Pools, Above Average for Outdoor Pools, and On Average for Splash Pads**

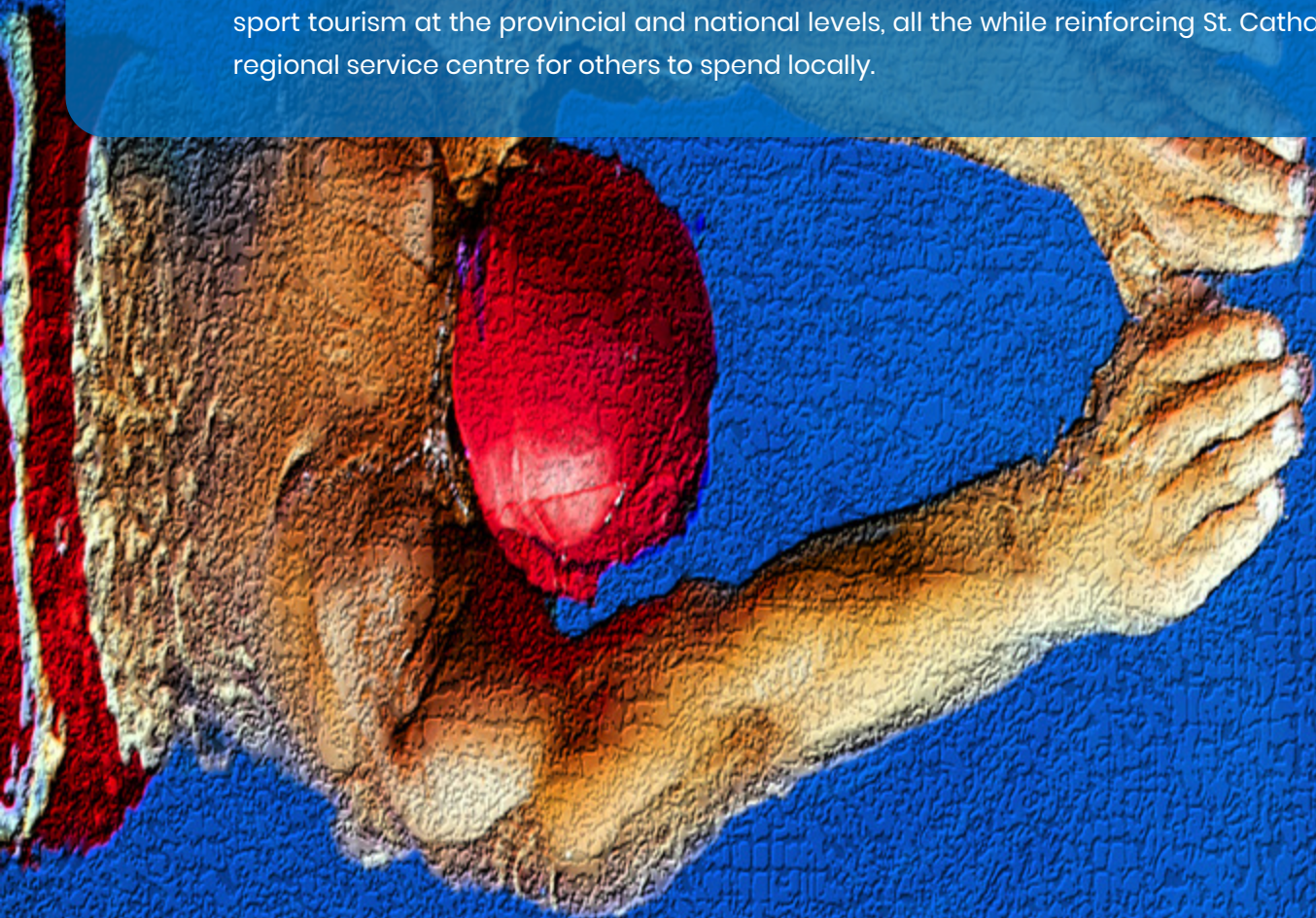
Benchmarking across selected Greater Golden Horseshoe municipalities finds that St. Catharines provides a service level that is:

- **2.5 times lower** than the average for indoor pools
- **2 times higher** than the average for outdoor pools
- **The same** as the average for splash pads



The implementation strategy seeks to maximize the benefits of aquatic services, as stated early in this report through Section 1.3., while aligning to City Council's Strategic Plan and the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan. The implementation strategy strives to provide the highest quality of life for residents through continued access to:

- **Physical Activities** places for residents to be active for life, engage in quality sport and recreation programs at both the grassroots and competitive levels, and developing the capacity of the local aquatic sport system as a whole.
- **Social Connections** places for established and new residents alike to congregate in engaging spaces where they can share common interests and form community ties.
- **Economic Opportunities** recreation facilities that encourage residents to remain in St. Catharines and create an incentive for new residents to relocate here, along with attracting sport tourism at the provincial and national levels, all the while reinforcing St. Catharines as a regional service centre for others to spend locally.





## 9.2 Summary of Potential Opportunities & Directions

The Potential Opportunities & Directions contained in the Aquatic Facilities Strategy are as follows.

- #1:** Plan for a new indoor aquatic centre to open by the year 2026, subject to confirmation of local and Regional growth forecasts pending release of 2021 Census data as well implementing the Aquatic Facilities Strategy recommendations to decommission the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and the Lincoln Park Outdoor Pools. The City should confirm this recommendation while also undertaking assessments of other recreation and community facilities that could be co located with the new pool, through a scheduled update to the Recreation Facility and Programming Master Plan, so that the feasibility of a multi use community hub is evaluated.
- #2:** Decommission the Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and redirect financial resources that would have otherwise been spent on redevelopment, renewal and ongoing operating towards the splash pad recommended in the Port Dalhousie Ward and the new indoor aquatic centre that are being recommended through this Aquatic Facilities Strategy.
- #3:** If proceeding with the Balanced Implementation Scenario identified in Section 9.4 of this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool and bathhouse should be replaced and redeveloped, preferably employing a single tank design that employs leisure and lap/deeper water swimming areas, along with water play features.
- #4:** If proceeding with the Balanced Implementation Scenario (Section 9.4) or Refocused Implementation Scenario (Section 9.5) identified in this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, the City should decommission the Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool and replace it with a splash pad.
- #5:** Each political ward in the City of St. Catharines should be served by a minimum of one splash pad, preferably designed as Community level facilities as identified in the classification system established in the Aquatic Facilities Strategy.
- #6:** If proceeding with the Balanced Implementation Scenario (Section 9.4) or Refocused Implementation Scenario (Section 9.5) identified in this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, construct new splash pads at Lincoln Park and a site to be chosen in the Port Dalhousie Ward to replace the outdoor pools identified in #2 and #4. A third splash pad should be considered at Community Park in Merriton to achieve the Aquatic Facilities Strategy's Potential Opportunity & Direction #5 so that all Wards in the City have such a facility.
- #7:** Carry out replacement/refurbishment of splash pads at Lester B. Pearson Park and Catherine Street Park in accordance with their current asset management plans.
- #8:** Undertake a cost benefit analysis of continuing to employ flow through systems versus moving to recirculating systems for splash pads. The analysis should factor quantitative and qualitative elements including (but not limited to) financial and environmental implications.



### 9.3 A Refined Model for Municipal Aquatics Services

Under the City's current model, its pools are used to provide community programs but also to function as a cool down centres throughout St. Catharines in the summer months. Splash pads inherently are used for cooling down though their design largely precludes any formalized programs to be delivered through them, apart from summer camps.

With a view of striving to attain the greatest number of benefits in the aquatics system and balancing finite resources of the City, the Aquatic Facilities Strategy advances a slightly refined aquatic services model whereby:

- 1) the primary means for the community to access aquatic programming and sport will occur in the City's pools; and
- 2) cool down experiences in the summer months will be directed to splash pads.

To this end, the Aquatic Facilities Strategy advances three implementation scenarios for the City of St. Catharines to consider as it positions its aquatic system for the next 20 years. Implementation Options listed below are not listed or numbered in any order of priority.

<b>Implementation Option #1:</b>	<b>Balanced Scenario</b>
<b>Implementation Option #2:</b>	<b>Refocused Scenario</b>
<b>Implementation Option #3:</b>	<b>Status Quo Scenario</b>

Benefits of having a sustainable aquatic system will allow residents to be healthy and physically active, form and reinforce their ties to the community, and benefit from economic investments and spending.



The *Balanced Scenario* retains the SKAC and the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool while adding a second indoor aquatics centre. The *Refocused Scenario* redirects all financial resources from existing outdoor pools to assist in funding the construction and operation of a second indoor aquatic centre, thereby relying upon splash pads to provide outdoor cooling experiences to residents. The primary difference between these two scenarios is how the City would treat Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool (i.e. redevelop versus decommission), essentially amounting to a decision whether to retain at least one opportunity for outdoor swimming in St. Catharines through a controlled environment.

The Balanced and Refocused Scenarios are fiscally-centred strategies that allow the City of St. Catharines to add a second indoor aquatics centre to its recreation facility supply. As the Aquatic Facilities Strategy's most capitably and operationally intensive recommendation, it is acknowledged that the financial ability of the City to pay for and operate a multi-million dollar indoor aquatic facility in the next five years will undoubtedly be influenced by other major capital priorities in its recreation portfolio. Other studies have rationalized investments in the Canada Summer Games Sport & Ability Centre, a potential arena in the north end, and a number of park development and improvement projects.

By comparison, the *Status Quo Scenario* maintains all existing aquatic facilities by continuing to reinvest in ongoing activities that results in a similar aquatic experience as provided today; the most notable difference between the status quo and the other two scenarios is that the Status Quo Scenario forgoes investment in a new indoor aquatic centre in light of finite fiscal resources that can be devoted towards municipal aquatics services. All three Scenarios retain the City's existing splash pads within their respective parks, and maintained in accordance with their asset management plans.

A risk inherent to investing in a second indoor aquatics centre as included in the Balanced and Refocused Scenarios is that future aquatic needs are projected using the Region of Niagara's population growth forecasts (see Figure 3 and Section 3.2). Recognizing the long-term planning horizon for this Aquatic Facilities Strategy, unanticipated changes in aquatic participation trends and population factors (i.e., the Region's draft forecasts are not realized, continued aging of the population and reductions in the number of youth) run the risk that the local aquatics market remains at, or falls below its current size. If any of these negative factors are realized, the 20-year projection of aquatic system needs could be overstated.

## 9.4 Implementation Option #1: Balanced Scenario

The Balanced Scenario embodies the refined aquatics service model by directing aquatic programming to pools and utilizing splash pads as the primary venues for cool down activities. There are continued opportunities for swimming to occur within indoor and outdoor settings in St. Catharines. In doing so, the Balanced Scenario involves constructing a new indoor aquatics centre along with redevelopment of the Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool, potentially employing a single tank design that allows lap and leisure swimming opportunities. Splash pads at Lincoln Park and an appropriate location within the Port Dalhousie Ward would be constructed to replace the two outdoor pools in those respective areas.

To increase the financial viability of funding the construction and ongoing operation of a new indoor aquatics centre, the Balanced Scenario refocuses investments away from maintaining and operating two aging outdoor pools (with the exception of Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool), and continuing to provide splash pads in their place. The Aquatic Facilities Strategy Potential Opportunities & Direction #1 to build a new indoor pool is thus tied to the decommissioning of Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool and Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool, thereby allowing the City to redirect financial resources – estimated between \$7 million and \$10 million in capital plus nearly \$5 million in annual operations over a 20 year period – towards a new indoor aquatic centre and improved outdoor aquatic experiences at selected locations.

### **Balanced Scenario:**

- Construct a New Indoor Aquatics Centre
- Redevelop Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool
- Construct a Splash Pad at Lincoln Park to replace Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool
- Construct a Splash Pad in the Port Dalhousie Ward to replace Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool
- Construct a Splash Pad at Merritton Community Park to complement the outdoor pool

### **Estimated Costs:**

Construction: \$25 million to \$31 million

Operations: \$1.3 million per year





As noted in preceding pages, the City would choose the Balanced Scenario should it wish to retain the opportunity for outdoor swimming in St. Catharines (whereas the Refocused Scenario shifts all pool programming to indoor settings). The financial implications of the Balanced Scenario are estimated in the range of \$25 million to \$31 million in upfront construction costs along with \$1.3 million annually in operating costs.<sup>13</sup> This would place the Balanced Scenario as the costliest approach among the three implementation options presented in this report but would result in two new pools. It bears noting that the redevelopment of Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool may not fully meet growth-related eligibility criteria of the Development Charges Act and thus its reinvestment could be relying upon tax-based funding to a great extent which increases its share of cost borne by existing taxpayers.

### Choosing the Balanced Scenario

The *Balanced Scenario* should be selected if the City of St. Catharines wishes to continue providing opportunities for swimming within indoor and outdoor settings, including through a second indoor aquatics centre.

It allows approximately \$15 million to be diverted from outdoor pools to fund year round programs in a new indoor aquatics centre over the next 20 years.

<sup>13</sup> Capital and operating costs will depend upon design and programming ultimately provided, and thus should be determined after detailed design, engineering and operating analyses are completed. Operating estimates are based on assumed \$800K per year for a new indoor pool, \$225K per year for Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool, and \$100K per year per splash pad. Costs of the SKAC are excluded to allow for comparison across the three Implementation Scenarios. All costs stated in 2021 dollars and are unadjusted for inflation or other escalations.

## 9.5 Implementation Option #2: Refocused Scenario

The Refocused Scenario also reflects the refined aquatic service model by directing all aquatic programming to indoor aquatic centres and relying upon splash pads for cool down experiences in each Ward. The Refocused Scenario involves constructing a new indoor aquatic centre along with splash pads at Lincoln Park, Merritton Community Park, and a location to be determined in the Port Dalhousie Ward to replace the three existing outdoor pools in those areas.

The Refocused Scenario recognizes that St. Catharines residents have been gravitating away from outdoor pools over the past decade. Between 2010 and 2014 – prior to the closure of any outdoor pools – outdoor swimming attendance declined by 60% amounting to 22,000 fewer swims; this concerning trend along with multi-million dollar capital renewal obligations factored into City Council's decision to decommission the Burgoyne Woods, Arthur Street and Lancaster pools. Additionally, St. Catharines residents have consistently faced waiting lists when trying to register for selected indoor aquatic programs at the SKAC since the facility's opening.

The City of St. Catharines is facing similar challenges with its remaining supply of outdoor pools. While attendance at the outdoor pools has stabilized since 2015, it is a fraction of the historical averages from 10 to 20 years ago. As illustrated through Implementation Option #3, the City could reasonably expect to incur capital renewal costs and ongoing operating expenditures in the range of \$24 million for its three existing outdoor pools over the next 20 years.

For this reason, along with realigning the aquatic service model, a second indoor aquatic would be more financially viable by freeing up significant resources that would otherwise be consumed by outdoor pools that are capable of operating only 8 to 10 weeks of the year. The roughly 14,000 outdoor swims that take place at St. Catharines' three outdoor pools could easily be accommodated in a new indoor pool while retaining ample capacity for new year-round aquatic activities (e.g. learn-to-swim, aquafit, and sport training) and addressing program waiting lists at the SKAC.

### Refocused Scenario:

- Construct a New Indoor Aquatics Centre
- Construct a Splash Pad at Community Park to replace Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool
- Construct a Splash Pad at Lincoln Park to replace Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool
- Construct a Splash Pad in the Port Dalhousie Ward to replace Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool

### Estimated Costs:

Construction: \$19 million to \$22 million  
Operations: \$1.1 million per year





The financial implications of the Refocused Scenario are estimated in the range of \$19 million to \$22 million in upfront construction costs along with \$1.1 million annually in operating costs.<sup>14</sup> Under the Refocused Scenario, Merritton Community Park would be a prime candidate for a new indoor aquatic centre. In essence, the Lion Dunc Schooley pool could become an indoor aquatic centre allowing a year-round swimming and presents a strong opportunity to create a new community centre in Merritton, particularly with the City's Arena Strategy identifying a need to redevelop the 50-year old Merritton Arena. Section 9.9 explores this idea in greater detail.

### Choosing the Refocused Scenario

The *Refocused Scenario* recognizes that St. Catharines residents have been gravitating away from outdoor pools and accordingly directs these resources to improve the financial viability of providing a new indoor aquatics centre for access to a substantially higher number of year round aquatics programs.

<sup>14</sup> Capital and operating costs will depend upon design and programming ultimately provided, and thus should be determined after detailed design, engineering and operating analyses are completed. Operating estimates are based on assumed \$800K per year for a new indoor aquatic centre and \$100K per year per splash pad. Costs of the SKAC are excluded to allow for comparison across the three Implementation Scenarios. All costs stated in 2021 dollars and are unadjusted for inflation or other future escalations.



## 9.6 Implementation Option #3: Status Quo Scenario

The Status Quo Scenario retains the City's current aquatic service model whereby outdoor pools are used for both programming and cooling purposes. In doing so, the Status Quo Scenario relies exclusively on the SKAC to provide year-round community aquatic programs for the foreseeable future while renewing each of the three outdoor pools in a manner that replicates their existing configurations and programming capabilities; however, alterations to the outdoor pools will still be required to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as well as meet updated building codes and health and safety regulations.

Given the antiquated state of the three outdoor pools, the term Status Quo may not reflect the scale of reinvestment required since the City would be still expending substantial resources if pursuing this scenario. Renewal of the outdoor pools and their associated bathhouses could be expected to cost between \$11 million and of \$16 million depending upon the scale of redevelopment activities required to bring them up to modern standards. Compounded over the next 20 years at the current operating subsidy of \$400,000 annually, the City could expect a capital and operating expenditure of \$24 million if retaining its three outdoor pools to provide an outdoor aquatic experience that is fairly similar as found today.<sup>15</sup>

There is also an important funding consideration in that the redevelopment of the existing outdoor pools may not be eligible as growth-related projects and thus would not be eligible for Development Charges funding, thereby placing the burden of reinvestment on tax-funded sources and user fees. By comparison, a new indoor aquatics centre advanced in the Balanced and Refocused Scenarios would likely constitute a growth-related project thereby transferring funding obligations from the existing tax base to new developments.

### **Status Quo Scenario:**

- Renew Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool
- Renew Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool
- Renew Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool
- Rely on St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatic Centre as the City's only venue for indoor swimming (i.e. no new indoor pool or splash pads would be built)

### **Estimated Costs:**

Renewal/Replacement: \$11 million to \$16 million

Operations: \$400,000 per year

<sup>15</sup> Capital and operating costs will depend upon design and programming ultimately provided, and thus should be determined after detailed design, engineering and operating analyses are completed. Operating estimates are based on the current outdoor pool operating budget of \$409K per year. Costs of the SKAC are excluded to allow for comparison across the three Implementation Scenarios. All costs stated in 2021 dollars and are unadjusted for inflation or other future escalations.



The timing of required pool renewal projects under the Status Quo is such that it would also be difficult to allocate funding all at once without taking on debt or creating a noticeable tax impact. Therefore, the Status Quo Scenario carries a risk that if any given pool experiences a catastrophic failure or cannot meet operating/legislative codes before its planned renewal, there will be a financial impact to the City (unless funds can be redirected from other capital priorities).

Conversely, should the City decide to proceed with the *Balanced* or *Refocused Scenarios* then it must exercise diligence until a new indoor aquatic centre is built and avoid reinvesting in an outdoor pool that is planned to be decommissioned; this may result in an outdoor pool being closed ahead of schedule.

### Choosing the Status Quo Scenario

The *Status Quo Scenario* heavily relies upon the existing tax base and user fees to pay for improvements since facility renewal is not eligible for development charge funding.

This is in contrast to the *Balanced* and *Refocused Scenarios* through which a new indoor aquatic centre, potentially funded using Development Charges, is used to meet future aquatic needs.

Given the antiquated state of the three outdoor pools, the term Status Quo largely pertains to the service delivery model; in reality, the City would still expend substantial resources if pursuing this scenario.

## 9.7 Capital Implications of Implementation Scenarios

To provide a high level indication of the capital implications associated with various implementation options, estimated project costs are identified as a point of departure.

### Estimated Project Costs

High level capital and operating estimates were developed with City of St. Catharines staff and are presented in Table 5 for each facility development option articulated through the Balanced, Refocused and Status Quo implementation scenarios. As noted below, all cost information should be confirmed prior to reliance upon them for budgetary or other purposes.

### *Disclosures & Limitations*

*Capital costs are subject to a number of factors including (but not limited to) the outcomes of detailed design – such as building size, specifications, materials, etc. – as well the timing of construction, and site conditions, none of which have been confirmed at this initial stage in the planning process. Project costs provided in the Aquatic Facilities Strategy represent the best estimate of the Consulting Team based upon information available from the City of St. Catharines and selected projects undertaken in the province. **The City should engage the necessary consulting professionals to develop a more detailed cost estimate prior to confirming a cost figure intended to inform future capital budgets.***

*The total project costs stated herein should not be interpreted as a formal capital budget. They are provided simply as a general indication of what the City of St. Catharines might expect to consider based upon the experience of other municipal aquatic projects. The estimates assume optimal site development conditions (i.e. no encumbrances, geotechnical or environmental concerns).*

*The disclosure of any capital costs identified herein is the sole responsibility of the City of St. Catharines. Any use which a third party makes of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, is the responsibility of such third parties. Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. and DEI Consulting Engineers accept no responsibility for damages, if any, suffered by a third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report.*



**Table 5: Estimated Project Costs of Implementation Scenarios**

Action	Estimated Project Costs (2021 dollars)	Notes / Assumptions
<b>New Indoor Aquatic Centre Construction</b>  (Balanced & Refocused Scenarios)	<b>Capital Construction:</b> \$17 million to \$20 million  <b>Operating Impact:</b> \$800,000 per year	2 basins (25 metre, 6-lane pool plus leisure pool), gendered and universal changerooms, mechanical areas, storage space and pool administration areas; cost estimate assumes aquatic centre will form part of a multi-use community centre (a stand-alone aquatic facility may result in a higher project cost).  Operating cost based on discussions with selected municipalities operating an indoor aquatic centre with a 25 metre, 6-lane pool.
<b>New Splash Pad Construction</b>  (Balanced & Refocused Scenarios)	<b>Capital Construction:</b> \$600,000 per splash pad  <b>Operating Impact:</b> \$100,000 per year per splash pad  <i>Note: excludes costs associated with a washroom or changeroom structure</i>	Assumes splash pad designed to similar size and design specification as Bogart Street Splash Pad including flow-through water supply and discharge system. Cost excludes construction of a washroom / changeroom structure.  Operating costs are based on the average cost for three splash pads (Catherine St. Park, West Park and LB Pearson Park) developed by the City of St. Catharines in 2020; assumes that operational responsibilities can be carried out by the City's existing staffing complement (to be verified)
<b>Redesigned Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool</b>  (Balanced Scenario)	<b>Capital Construction:</b> \$6 million to \$9 million  <b>Operating Impact:</b> \$225,000 per year	1 basin including lap and leisure swimming areas along with a \$1 million allowance for a new bathhouse/mechanical building.  Operating cost is assumed to be higher than incurred at present time on the basis that a larger pool footprint may result out of detailed design work.
<b>Rebuilt Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool</b>  (Status Quo Scenario)	<b>Capital Construction:</b> \$4 million to \$6 million  <b>Operating Impact:</b> \$168,000 per year	Rebuilt to the same design specifications within existing physical footprints, with basic accommodations for AODA. Areas have been derived using Google Maps due to lack of available site records and therefore must be verified through site surveys.  Cost estimate assumes that existing bathhouses are retained, and excludes costs of demolition.  Operating cost assumes same operating cost as incurred at present.
<b>Rebuilt Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool</b>  (Status Quo Scenario)	<b>Capital Construction:</b> \$4 million to \$6 million  <b>Operating Impact:</b> \$168,000 per year	
<b>Rebuilt Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool</b>  (Status Quo Scenario)	<b>Capital Construction:</b> \$3 million to \$4 million  <b>Operating Impact:</b> \$73,000 per year	

Exclusions: land acquisition, site servicing works, environmental remediation, landscaping, professional fees, contingencies, FFE, and escalation.

Note: costs presented above are considered to be preliminary estimates and must be confirmed through architectural, engineering and/or other design studies undertaken subsequent to this Strategy. Costs are stated in 2021 dollars and assume optimal site development conditions

## 9.8 Comparison of Implementation Options

A comparison of the facilities, features and estimated costs of capital and operations is presented below for each of the three Implementation Options. While the Balanced Scenario carries the highest cost, it also provides greatest degree of new programming capacity and ability to address resident expectations for modern services and amenities. The Status Quo Scenario carries the lowest cost but would be tax-funded projects rather than drawing from growth-related sources; in addition, it would not allow the City to expand its aquatic services to meet current and future needs.

**Table 6: Comparison of Facilities, Features & Costs between Implementation Options**

	Balanced Scenario	Refocused Scenario	Status Quo Scenario
<b>Core Facility Elements</b>	New indoor aquatic centre, redeveloped Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool, and 3 splash pads	New indoor aquatic centre, 3 splash pads and close all outdoor pools	Retain and renew existing pools (i.e. no new indoor aquatic centres or splash pads, and no new outdoor pool amenities)
<b>Capital Construction Costs (estimate)</b>	\$25 million to \$31 million (partially funded through Development Charges)	\$19 million to \$22 million (funded through Development Charges)	\$11 million to \$16 million (tax-funded projects)
<b>Net Operating Costs to be added over a 20 year period (estimate)</b>	\$26 million	\$22 million	\$8.2 million
<b>Programming Capacity Added</b>	Substantially Greater (throughout the year)	Greater than Present (eliminated for outdoor swims)	No Change (waiting lists likely to continue)
<b>Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities / Special Needs</b>	New facilities would be designed in accordance with AODA	New facilities would be designed in accordance with AODA	Accessibility / barrier-free requirements may result in loss of pool or deck space (e.g. lanes converted to ramps) due to current site constraints
<b>Comfort / Amenities / Enhanced Designs</b>	New facilities would reflect best practices in design	New facilities would reflect best practices in design	Design enhancements may result in loss of pool or deck space due to current site constraints

Note: facility features and costs identified in the table should be considered preliminary as detailed design and business planning activities are required in order to confirm actual site capabilities and costs to be borne

## 9.9 Reinforcing the Case for a Future Indoor Aquatic Centre

Section 6.3 of this Aquatic Facilities Strategy establishes the need for a second indoor aquatic facility in St. Catharines contingent upon:

- Attaining population growth forecasts established by Niagara Region;
- Closure of Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool;
- Continued evidence of unmet demand for aquatic services; and
- Co-location as part of a multi-use community hub facility.

In addition to the assessment of indoor aquatic needs contained earlier in this Strategy, the following factors demonstrate how a new indoor aquatic centre can result in operational and environmental efficiencies, advancing municipal objectives of fiscal responsibility and climate change resiliency.

### Co-Location as Part of a Future Multi-Use Community Centre

Indoor aquatic centres function best when co-located with other recreation, cultural, library and/or other public services; that is, indoor aquatic centres are optimal in facilities designed as community hubs. In doing so, residents have the opportunity to make use of multiple services in a single visit while benefiting from a holistic wellness experience that may combine aquatics with fitness programs, access to youth and/or older adult space, gymnasium programs, etc. A shared recreational setting may also allow families to participate together or apart, at the same time; as an example, household visiting the SKAC has the opportunity for one family member to participate in swimming lessons while another is making use of the library, all in a single trip. A multi-use facility with more components (e.g. an arena or gymnasium) expands on this opportunity. In addition, new facilities must be designed to comply with barrier-free accessibility standards thereby ensuring that it is inclusive to all residents, and making it a true hub for all residents.

### Social & Operational Efficiencies of the Community Hub

Co location of aquatics with other services results in operational and environmental efficiencies, advancing municipal objectives of encouraging healthy lifestyles, community vibrancy and social connections, potential for partnerships, fiscal responsibility and resiliency to climate change.

Financial performance of an indoor aquatic centre can be improved through co-location. By providing a well-rounded, one-stop recreational experience, multi-use facilities tend to draw higher levels of foot-traffic and participation than single-use facilities. The amenity value of creating a holistic wellness experience (akin to a fitness club containing multiple amenities) can also bolster usage of a pool and other facility components, and thus increasing potential operating revenues. Furthermore, revenues earned from operating units with higher levels of



cost recovery (e.g. fitness and certain arena programs) can be used to subsidize the cost of aquatic operations.

Implementation Scenarios #1 and #2 both present opportunities to co-locate an indoor aquatics centre as part of a future multi-use recreation hub. As stated in #1 of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy, a comprehensive analysis of all recreation facility needs (e.g. arenas, gymnasiums, fitness space, etc. through an Update to the Recreation Facilities & Programming Master Plan) is needed to rationalize which components to align with the new indoor pool.

### Improved Energy Efficiency

Modern buildings have the advantage of employing leading edge technologies that were not in place when existing, older facilities were first built. By transitioning away from structural and mechanical systems in older facilities to newer systems designed with energy efficiency in mind, municipalities have the ability to lower their ongoing operating expenditures. In addition to standard lighting, insulating, and water conservation measures, energy efficiency and financial performance can be enhanced through the following measures:

- Dehumidification systems can be leveraged whereby rejected heat from warm air can be injected into the pool system with an internal heat exchanger. Depending on location of this unit a circulation pump may be required to ensure proper / constant flow to the unit as the pool system typically isn't designed to ensure a contact steady flow to peripheral equipment.
- Use of Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) units that maintain a set speed of the pump, analogous to cruise control in a car; as filter systems become dirty, the VFD speeds up to maintain the designated flow of the system.
- Auxiliary heat exchangers can be added to the pool discharge line (required to for water turnover) to capture already heated water. Prior to discharging this water into the drain, heat is recovered and added back in to the domestic incoming water supply to pre-heat the domestic source. This services to reduce the amount of energy expended to heat the cold incoming water.
- If pools are co-located with arenas, as could potentially be the case if combining an aquatics centre with an arena in Merritton, they have the potential to capture rejected heat from the ice plant compressors that in turn can be injected into the pool (similar to the dehumidification system noted above), thereby saving energy and reducing pool heating costs.
- Ability to use geothermal and solar heating technologies, though the latter can be challenging due to the large area that is required (though community centre roofing can accommodate solar panels).
- As energy efficient technologies are rapidly changing, future technologies related to improved energy efficiencies should continue to be explored.

## Balancing Geographic Distribution of Swimming Opportunities

Selecting where a future indoor aquatic centre / multi-use community centre should be located involves maximizing the geographic distribution of swimming opportunities while situating the facility where populations exist to support it. The SKAC is fairly centrally located in St. Catharines although residents living north of the QEW would have a shorter travel time than most residents living south of the highway. Residents living north of the QEW also have the opportunity to swim at any of the three beaches should they wish.

Under the Balanced Scenario, residents living in the south end of St. Catharines would have strong access to swimming opportunities for 10 weeks of the year, weather permitting, by way of Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool. The Refocused Scenario, however, would result in a gap to residents living in south St. Catharines unless a new indoor aquatics centre was built south of the QEW.

## Ability to Create a Community Focal Point

As the City has demonstrated with facility investments such as the SKAC and First Ontario Performing Arts Centre, civic facilities have the potential to become architectural focal points and catalysts for community revitalization. Multi-use community centres are inherently hubs of activity, particularly when combined with investments that rejuvenate their exterior grounds as well. A future aquatic centre should consider opportunities to inspire and instill pride among residents through its strategic location.

## Other Considerations

Selection of a site will also need to consider other factors including (but not limited to) compatibility with adjacent/nearby land uses, land availability and/or cost to assemble land if required for the building and other onsite amenities, conformity with local zoning provisions, optimal site conditions being in place to facilitate construction and infrastructure serving, access to regional markets, and proximity to current and/or future populations that the facility is intended to serve.

That being said, this Strategy ties the justification and timing for a new indoor aquatics centre to confirmation of the local growth forecast upon release of 2021 Census data and facility components identified through an update to the RFPMP.

Through the design and site selection process, the City will also consider emerging technologies that may maximize cost and land savings, and advance other corporate goals such as inclusion and climate change resiliency. For example, there are a few examples in Ontario that combine indoor and outdoor swimming onsite through building designs (e.g. roll-up doors, moveable roofing systems), facilities that seek to operate on a carbon neutral basis, and more; the benefits and costs associated with technological advancements would be evaluated through the facility design process.

## **A Potential for a New Community Centre at Merritton Community Park**

Based upon the preceding pages, the Refocused Scenario presents an especially interesting possibility to consider moving forward. Under this scenario, the City has the opportunity to leverage the historical role and current public use of Community Park in Merritton as a multi-use, multi-seasonal hub. With the ample space that exists on site and an identified need to redevelop the Merritton Arena in the next 10 years, a multi-use community centre containing an arena and indoor aquatic centre makes strong sense, particularly if combined with other recreation facility needs identified in future assessments. Providing an indoor aquatic centre here would serve a dual purpose of not having to expend monies to renew the aging Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool while still retaining aquatic programming on the same site, with the added benefit of providing access to high quality, 12-month aquatic services.

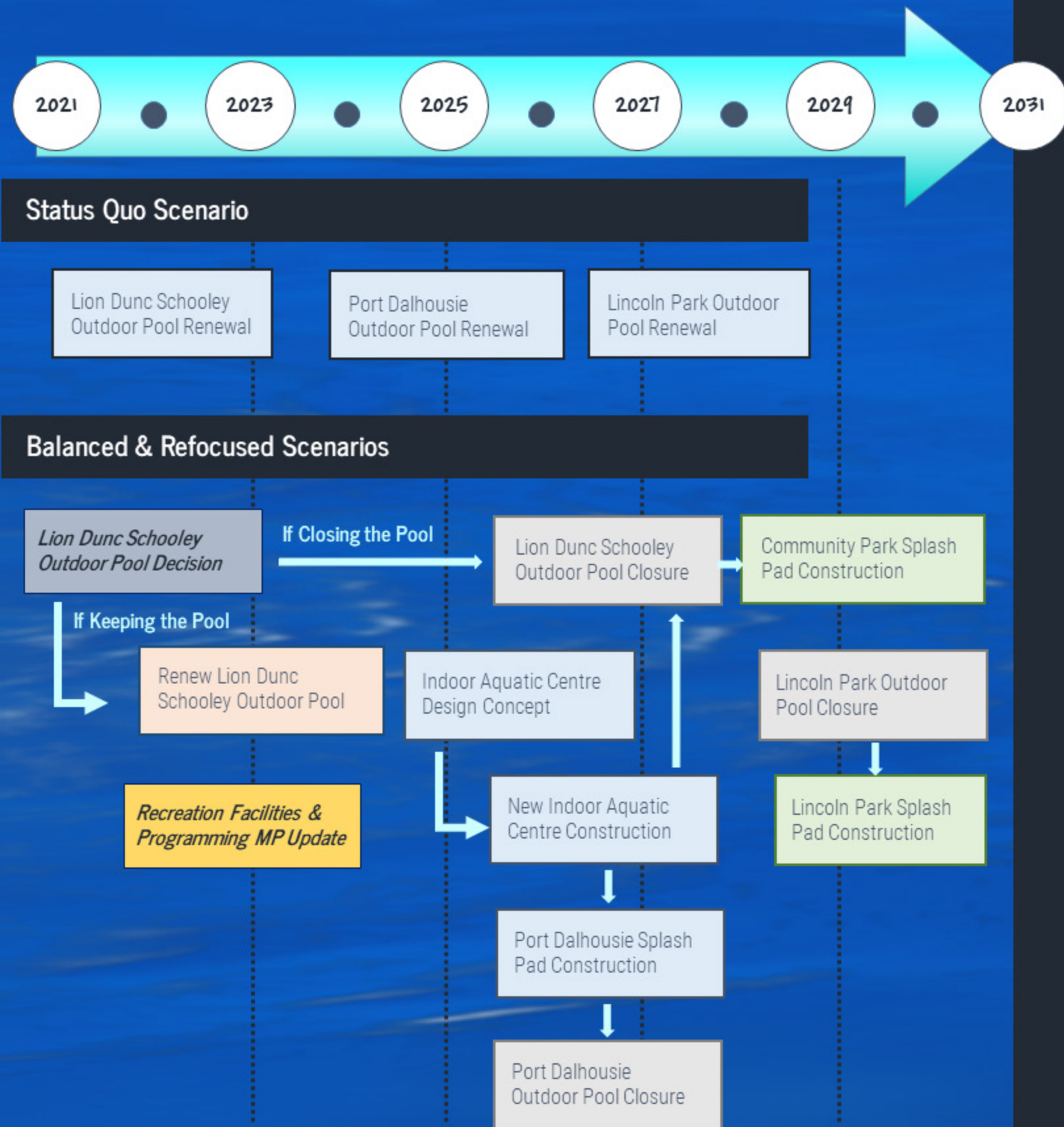
The creation of a new community centre at Community Park can provide the City with a number of efficiencies, including cross-programming opportunities, exchange of heat between the arena and pool, creating a community focal point in St. Catharines' south end, and making use of a parcel that has few development constraints and is already owned by the City (thereby negating land purchase costs). Community Park is also located within 5 minutes of the nearest interchange with Highway 406 that opens a multi-use community centre to regional markets (and potentially drive higher operating revenues).

### **9.10 Proposed Implementation Timeline**

A proposed schedule of implementation-oriented activities is provided through Figure 18. Timing is not intended to be definitive nor inflexible as circumstances may arise that result in projects being accelerated or pushed back; such factors may include the ability to access funding from senior levels of government, unforeseen or catastrophic failures to aging structural or mechanical components, deviations from population forecasts or socio-demographic conditions contained in this report, or changes to the regional supply or non-municipal supply of aquatic facilities (e.g. YMCA, private sector, or area municipalities).



Figure 18:  
Aquatic Facility  
Implementation Timeline









## Appendix A: Community Survey Results

**Q1** Please indicate any of the following publically-operated pools and splash pads that you and/or a member of household have used in the past two years.

	#	%
St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre	209	83%
YMCA of Niagara Pools	83	33%
Lester B. Pearson Park Splash Pad	83	33%
Brock University Eleanor Misener Aquatic Centre	66	26%
Backyard or condo/apartment pool	65	26%
Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool	59	24%
Catherine Street Park Splash Pad	43	17%
Outdoor pool operated by another municipality	35	14%
Bogart Street Park Splash Pad	34	14%
Splash pad in another municipality	34	14%
Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool	20	8%
Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool	18	7%
Indoor pool operated by another municipality	17	7%
West Park Splash Pad	16	6%
Other (please specify)	13	5%
Total Respondents	251	100%

**Q2** Tell us why you and/or members of your household use the...

Kiwanis Aquatics Centre	#	%
It is an affordable activity	115	55%
It is a fun / relaxing activity	108	52%
For a learn-to-swim program	75	36%
For drop-in lane swims	72	34%
For an aquatic fitness program	57	27%
To hang out with friends and family	46	22%
As a swim team / club member	38	18%
To cool down on hot days	31	15%
For a camp program	8	4%
Other (please specify)	28	13%
Total Respondents	209	100%



Tell us why you and/or members of your household use the...

<b>Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
It is a fun / relaxing activity	14	82%
To cool down on hot days	13	76%
It is an affordable activity	11	65%
To hang out with friends and family	9	53%
For a learn-to-swim program	0	0%
For an aquatic fitness program	0	0%
For drop-in lane swims	0	0%
For a camp program	0	0%
As a swim team / club member	0	0%
Other (please specify)	2	12%
Total Respondents	17	100%

<b>Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
It is a fun / relaxing activity	11	24%
It is an affordable activity	11	24%
To cool down on hot days	11	24%
To hang out with friends and family	6	13%
For drop-in lane swims	3	7%
For a learn-to-swim program	2	4%
As a swim team / club member	1	2%
For an aquatic fitness program	0	0%
For a camp program	0	0%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Total	45	100%

<b>Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
It is an affordable activity	35	59%
It is a fun / relaxing activity	34	58%
As a swim team / club member	34	58%
To cool down on hot days	22	37%
For an aquatic fitness program	12	20%
For a learn-to-swim program	11	19%
For a camp program	9	15%
To hang out with friends and family	6	10%
For drop-in lane swims	2	3%
Other (please specify)	0	0%
Total	59	100%

**Q3** Please share any reasons that typically prevent you from using the...

<b>Kiwanis Aquatics Centre</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
I am a member of a fitness club that offers a pool (e.g. YMCA)	10	30%
I prefer to swim elsewhere (other cities, beaches, backyard pools etc.)	10	30%
The pool is located too far from home and/or it is hard to get to	9	27%
It is too expensive	7	21%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the pool does not meet my expectations	5	15%
There are members in my household that do not know how to swim	3	9%
Health issues / disability	3	9%
I prefer to visit splash pads	2	6%
The pool's design does not meet my expectations	2	6%
Members of my household are not interested in swimming	1	3%
We are too busy	1	3%
The pool is not accessible for persons with disabilities	0	0%
Other (please specify)	9	27%
Total	33	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this pool	8	
<b>Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
The pool is located too far from home and/or it is hard to get to	68	43%
I prefer to swim elsewhere (other cities, beaches, backyard pools etc.)	45	28%
I am a member of a fitness club that offers a pool (e.g. YMCA)	25	16%
I prefer to visit splash pads	11	7%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the pool does not meet my expectations	8	5%
Health issues / disability	7	4%
There are members in my household that do not know how to swim	6	4%
The pool is not accessible for persons with disabilities	6	4%
The pool's design does not meet my expectations	6	4%
Members of my household are not interested in swimming	4	3%
We are too busy	2	1%
It is too expensive	1	1%
Other (please specify)	27	17%
Total	160	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this pool	68	

Please share any reasons that typically prevent you from using the...

<b>Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool</b>	#	%
The pool is located too far from home and/or it is hard to get to	72	53%
I prefer to swim elsewhere (other cities, beaches, backyard pools etc.)	37	27%
I am a member of a fitness club that offers a pool (e.g. YMCA)	24	18%
I prefer to visit splash pads	11	8%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the pool does not meet my expectations	5	4%
Health issues / disability	5	4%
Members of my household are not interested in swimming	4	3%
The pool is not accessible for persons with disabilities	4	3%
There are members in my household that do not know how to swim	2	1%
The pool's design does not meet my expectations	2	1%
We are too busy	1	1%
It is too expensive	1	1%
Other (please specify)	30	22%
Total	136	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this pool	89	

<b>Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool</b>	#	%
The pool is located too far from home and/or it is hard to get to	51	48%
I prefer to swim elsewhere (other cities, beaches, backyard pools etc.)	33	31%
I am a member of a fitness club that offers a pool (e.g. YMCA)	19	18%
I prefer to visit splash pads	12	11%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the pool does not meet my expectations	6	6%
The pool is not accessible for persons with disabilities	5	5%
Members of my household are not interested in swimming	4	4%
Health issues / disability	4	4%
We are too busy	2	2%
There are members in my household that do not know how to swim	2	2%
The pool's design does not meet my expectations	2	2%
It is too expensive	2	2%
Other (please specify)	19	18%
Total	107	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this pool	80	



**Q4** Tell us why you and/or members of your household use the following City of St. Catharines splash pads.

<b>Bogart Street Park</b>	#	%
To cool down on hot days	31	91%
It is a fun / relaxing activity	27	79%
It is an affordable activity	23	68%
To meet / hang out with friends and family	20	59%
Other (please specify)	8	24%
Total	34	100%

<b>Catherine Street Park</b>	#	%
To cool down on hot days	34	83%
It is a fun / relaxing activity	32	78%
It is an affordable activity	30	73%
To meet / hang out with friends and family	23	56%
Other (please specify)	4	10%
Total	41	100%

<b>Lester B. Pearson Park</b>	#	%
To cool down on hot days	78	96%
It is an affordable activity	67	83%
It is a fun / relaxing activity	64	79%
To meet / hang out with friends and family	40	49%
Other (please specify)	6	7%
Total	81	100%

<b>West Park</b>	#	%
It is an affordable activity	16	100%
It is a fun / relaxing activity	15	94%
To cool down on hot days	15	94%
To meet / hang out with friends and family	12	75%
Other (please specify)	6	38%
Total	16	100%

**Q5** Please share any reasons that prevent you from using the...

<b>Bogart Street Park Splash Pad</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
My household does not have young children	63	47%
The park is located too far from my home and/or is difficult to get to	41	30%
Members of my household are not interested in using splash pads	33	24%
We prefer to swim	29	21%
We prefer other splash pads (private water parks, other cities, etc.)	11	8%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the park or splash pad does not meet my expectations	4	3%
The park / splash pad is too busy	1	1%
The park lacks sufficient parking	1	1%
We are too busy	0	0%
The design of the splash pad is not up to my expectations	0	0%
Other (please specify)	12	9%
Total	135	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this splash pad	76	
<b>Catherine Street Park Splash Pad</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
My household does not have young children	71	53%
The park is located too far from my home and/or is difficult to get to	31	23%
Members of my household are not interested in using splash pads	30	23%
We prefer to swim	29	22%
We prefer other splash pads (private water parks, other cities, etc.)	12	9%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the park or splash pad does not meet my expectations	8	6%
The park / splash pad is too busy	7	5%
The park lacks sufficient parking	4	3%
We are too busy	1	1%
The design of the splash pad is not up to my expectations	1	1%
Other (please specify)	13	10%
Total	133	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this splash pad	70	53%

Please share any reasons that prevent you from using the...

<b>Lester B. Pearson Park Splash Pad</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
My household does not have young children	69	62%
Members of my household are not interested in using splash pads	30	27%
We prefer to swim	22	20%
The park is located too far from my home and/or is difficult to get to	13	12%
We prefer other splash pads (private water parks, other cities, etc.)	8	7%
The park / splash pad is too busy	7	6%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the park or splash pad does not meet my expectations	4	4%
The park lacks sufficient parking	3	3%
We are too busy	0	0%
The design of the splash pad is not up to my expectations	0	0%
Other (please specify)	11	10%
Total	111	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this splash pad	52	
<b>West Park Splash Pad</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
My household does not have young children	73	46%
The park is located too far from my home and/or is difficult to get to	60	38%
Members of my household are not interested in using splash pads	35	22%
We prefer to swim	29	18%
We prefer other splash pads (private water parks, other cities, etc.)	15	9%
The maintenance / cleanliness of the park or splash pad does not meet my expectations	4	3%
We are too busy	1	1%
The park / splash pad is too busy	1	1%
The park lacks sufficient parking	0	0%
The design of the splash pad is not up to my expectations	0	0%
Other (please specify)	13	8%
Total	159	100%
Nothing prevents me from using this splash pad	68	



**Q6** In a typical year, how frequently do you and members of your household visit the following City pools?

	Kiwanis Aquatics Centre		Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool		Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool		Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1 to 5 times	31	15%	8	36%	18	67%	33	46%
6 to 10 times	24	11%	4	18%	4	15%	20	28%
11 to 20 times	30	14%	6	27%	4	15%	7	10%
21 to 30 times	25	12%	2	9%	1	4%	4	6%
More than 30 times	99	47%	2	9%	0	0%	7	10%
Total	209	100%	22	100%	27	100%	71	100%
We do not typically use this pool	42		229		224		180	

**Q7** In a typical summer, how frequently do you and members of your household visit the City's splash pads?

	Bogart Street Park		Catherine Street Park		Lester B. Pearson Park		West Park	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less than once a month	11	22%	14	29%	25	25%	5	22%
Once a month	14	29%	17	35%	44	44%	6	26%
Once a week	20	41%	10	20%	22	22%	6	26%
Multiple times a week	4	8%	8	16%	10	10%	6	26%
Total	49	100%	49	100%	101	100%	23	100%
We do not typically use this splash pad	202		202		150		228	

**Q8**

Please identify the mode of transportation you typically use to access the St. Catharines Kiwanis Aquatics Centre, City outdoor pools and splash pads

	Kiwanis Aquatic Centre		Outdoor Pool		Splash Pad	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Personal automobile	201	91%	94	77%	95	77%
Walk or cycle	11	5%	20	16%	25	20%
Public transit	8	4%	8	7%	4	3%
Total	220	100%	122	100%	124	100%
We do not typically use this facility	31		129		127	

**Q9**

In a typical summer, what is your level of preference to swim in an indoor pool versus an outdoor pool?

	#	%
Strongly prefer an indoor pool	52	21%
Slightly prefer an indoor pool	25	10%
No preference	51	20%
Slightly prefer an outdoor pool	45	18%
Strongly prefer an outdoor pool	77	31%
We do not swim	1	0%
Total	251	100%

**Q10** If the City of St. Catharines was to build a new outdoor pool or substantially redevelop an existing outdoor pool, how important would the following features be to you and/or your household?

	Not important at all		Somewhat not important		Neutral		Somewhat important		Very important		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Heated pool water	19	8%	11	4%	41	16%	90	36%	90	36%	251	100%
Recreational / family swims	38	15%	9	4%	32	13%	55	22%	117	47%	251	100%
Deep water	47	19%	11	4%	49	20%	68	27%	76	30%	251	100%
On-deck viewing area	53	21%	6	2%	50	20%	73	29%	69	27%	251	100%
Special needs and/or accessibility features	49	20%	7	3%	53	21%	49	20%	93	37%	251	100%
Swimming lessons	62	25%	15	6%	35	14%	58	23%	81	32%	251	100%
Lane or competitive swimming	68	27%	25	10%	36	14%	44	18%	78	31%	251	100%
Beach (zero-depth) entry	63	25%	20	8%	63	25%	58	23%	47	19%	251	100%
Water slides	99	39%	11	4%	67	27%	47	19%	27	11%	251	100%
Interactive spray features in the pool	92	37%	28	11%	62	25%	52	21%	17	7%	251	100%
Pool rentals	100	40%	24	10%	61	24%	42	17%	24	10%	251	100%
Other	103	41%	4	2%	116	46%	6	2%	22	9%	251	100%

**Q11** If each of the existing pools were enhanced to contain most of the features you felt were important (as identified in the previous question), how likely would you and/or your household be to use each pool more often than you do right now?

	Kiwaniis Aquatics Centre		Lincoln Park Outdoor Pool		Lion Dunc Schooley Outdoor Pool		Port Dalhousie Outdoor Pool	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
We would not use this pool	21	8%	122	49%	117	47%	76	30%
Not at all likely	21	8%	28	11%	31	12%	17	7%
Somewhat likely	54	22%	39	16%	37	15%	62	25%
Very likely	134	53%	29	12%	31	12%	67	27%
Unsure	21	8%	33	13%	35	14%	29	12%
Total	251	100%	251	100%	251	100%	251	100%



**Q12**

The City is trying to balance the financial realities of investing in its outdoor pools. With a certain amount of money available for outdoor pools, the City is looking at whether it is more advantageous to construct a large pool with a number of features / amenities that attract residents from across St. Catharines compared to spreading the investment across multiple pools that contain fewer features.

To best meet the needs of you and your household, would you prefer to visit a larger pool with more amenities, recognizing that you may have to travel further, or would you prefer a number of smaller pools with less amenities that may be closer to you?

	#	%
Larger, but fewer, outdoor pools	88	35%
Smaller, but more, outdoor pools	128	51%
Unsure	35	14%
Total	251	100%

**Q13**

If the City of St. Catharines was to build a new splash pad / water play feature or substantially redevelop an existing one, how important would the following features and amenities be to your household?

	Not important at all		Somewhat not important		Neutral		Somewhat important		Very important		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Water canopy (umbrella)	61	24%	7	3%	63	25%	76	30%	44	18%	251	100%
In-ground jets / spray	65	26%	7	3%	61	24%	76	30%	42	17%	251	100%
Sprinkler columns	64	25%	5	2%	65	26%	79	31%	38	15%	251	100%
Spray tunnel	65	26%	8	3%	69	27%	76	30%	33	13%	251	100%
Vibrant public fountain	69	27%	10	4%	79	31%	66	26%	27	11%	251	100%
Water blasters	73	29%	14	6%	73	29%	64	25%	27	11%	251	100%
Urban public square	70	28%	13	5%	79	31%	59	24%	30	12%	251	100%
Large buckets	74	29%	7	3%	87	35%	61	24%	22	9%	251	100%
Themed / animated design (railway, fishing, etc.)	98	39%	17	7%	78	31%	51	20%	7	3%	251	100%
Other	97	39%	1	0%	128	51%	10	4%	15	6%	251	100%

**Q14** Please indicate the number of people, including yourself, that live in your household

	# of Respondents	Sample Size
1 Person	25	25
2 People	80	160
3 People	44	132
4 People	66	264
5 People	22	110
Total	237	691
Persons Per Household		2.9

**Q15** How many people in your household are...

	#	# of Persons	%	2016 Census %
Under 10 Years	158	149	19%	9%
10-19 Years	61	98	13%	10%
20-34 Years	81	117	15%	20%
35-54 Years	131	209	27%	25%
55-69 Years	91	145	19%	21%
70+ Years	34	48	6%	15%
Total		766	100%	

**Q16** Please state your year of birth

Age	#	%
25 years or younger	4	2%
26-35 years	49	20%
36-45 years	55	23%
46-55 years	46	19%
56-65 years	43	18%
66-75 years	30	12%
76 years or older	14	6%
Total	241	
Average Age	50	
Median Age	48	

**Q17** Are you a resident of St. Catharines

	#	%
Yes	225	90%
No	24	10%
Total	249	100%

**Q18** What are the first three digits of your postal code?

	#	%	Canada Post %
L2N	60	25%	21%
L2M	50	21%	24%
L2R	44	18%	20%
L2S	28	12%	13%
L2P	16	7%	11%
L2T	14	6%	9%
L0S	6	3%	2%
L2W	3	1%	1%
I don't know	3	1%	
Other	14	6%	
Total	238	100%	







## 6.2 Site Selection Criteria for Major Recreation Facilities

In evaluating and selecting preferred sites for new and/or redeveloped recreation facilities, the City should use the minimum site selection criteria presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Possible Site Selection Criteria for New and Expanded Recreation Facilities**

Criteria	Considerations
<b>Location and Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is within reasonable proximity to existing and future residential areas.</li> <li>The site is located along an arterial or collector road, is in the vicinity of a sidewalk or walkway with lighting during the evening, and has barrier-free access.</li> <li>The site is reasonably serviced by public transit</li> </ul>
<b>Focal Point Potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is located at or has the potential to be a community focal point and the site is at a highly visible location.</li> </ul>
<b>Site Development Potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site area and shape are sufficient for the proposed use and provide a reasonable level of flexibility in design.</li> <li>The site is able to accommodate enough on-site and/or nearby parking for both patrons and staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Compatibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The facility would be compatible (in terms of building design, scale, landscaping, setbacks, etc.) with the surrounding area/buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Known Constraints</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is not unduly impacted by a geographic barrier (e.g. watercourse, rail line), is not restricted by easement/man-made obstructions, does not require site decommissioning (e.g. brownfield), and is relatively flat.</li> <li>Suitable infrastructure exists (e.g. sewers, water, etc.) on or adjacent to the site.</li> <li>The site does not require the demolition of an existing and needed building or elimination of necessary parkland, parking or other vital land use.</li> </ul>



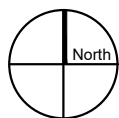
Criteria	Considerations
<b>Planning Approval Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site complies with Environmental Assessment Act and Official Plan policies, and has acceptable Zoning By-Law regulations or there is planning support for amending the planning documents.</li> </ul>
<b>Availability of Site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site is owned by the City (preferable), the site is currently for sale, and/or the site presents a viable partnership opportunity.</li> </ul>
<b>Expansion Potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site possesses long-term expansion potential.</li> </ul>
<b>Amenity Opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site has the ability to enhance and/or support other facilities or parkland, accommodate potential partners, and generate increased usage due to proximity to other locations.</li> <li>The site offers the potential for economies of scale in construction and/or operation due to the co-location of other municipal and/or community services.</li> </ul>
<b>Enhanced Design Potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site has the ability to incorporate outdoor parkland/features and architecturally integrate with surrounding buildings.</li> </ul>

Figure 1:  
City of St. Catharines Aquatic Facilities

-  Indoor Pools
-  Outdoor Pools
-  Splash Pads











## By-laws to be considered Monday, January 30, 2023

- (a) A By-law to amend By-law No. 89-2000 entitled "A By-law regulating traffic and parking on City Roads." (One reading - with respect to parking prohibitions on Andrea Drive. Delegation of Powers and Duties By-law No. 2020-156.)
- (b) A By law to authorize the acceptance of a conveyance of certain lands from 2706703 Ontario Inc. for road widening along Chetwood Street and Leeper Street. (One reading - with respect to 50 Chetwood Street. Delegation of Powers and Duties By-law No. 2020-156.)
- (c) A By-law to repeal By-law No. 2019-213 entitled "A By-law to amend By-law No. 2019-193 entitled "A By-law to authorize an Amendment to the Brownfield Tax Increment Based Incentive Grant Program Agreement with Brickyard Developments Limited and to repeal By-law No. 2019-108." (One reading - with respect to housekeeping correction pertaining to the redesigned development project at 40 Woodburn Avenue/50 Herrick Street, Phase II, Heritage Point Subdivision. General Committee, April 15, 2019, Item No. 3.4.)
- (d) A By-law to amend By-law No. 2022-145 entitled "A By-law to establish a Municipal Accommodation Tax in the City of St. Catharines." (One reading - with respect to the amount of Municipal Accommodation Tax collected in 2023, 2024, 2025 and beyond. Council, January 16, 2023, Item No. 9.1.)
- (e) A By-law to adopt the Operating Budget for the City of St. Catharines for the year 2023. (One reading - with respect to 2023 operating budget. Council, January 16, Item No. 7.1.)
- (f) A By-law to confirm the proceedings of council at its meeting held on the 30th day of January 2023. (One reading - with respect to confirming the proceedings of the meeting held on January 30, 2023.)