

Executive Summary

Town of Sackville Recreation Master Plan

1.0 Sackville - A Lifestyle Community

The Town of Sackville is actively pursuing approaches to provide a living environment inclusive of sustainable intellectual, environmental, residential, technological, economic and recreational assets. Together, these assets form a community that offers diverse and attractive living options. Other initiatives are working to solidify these assets. This master plan represents the recreational and, to a lesser degree, the environmental components.

The purpose of this master plan is to develop a framework and implementation plan for the recreational component of a Sackville lifestyle community.

Project Statement

Several previous projects and community discussions have resulted in a number of initiatives that need to be rationalized and prioritized within the context of creating a lifestyle-based Sackville. The chosen process for this task is a consultation-based study. Therefore, the project statement is:

To develop a lifestyle-based Town of Sackville Recreation Master Plan based on the prioritization of desired existing and new projects.

Existing Recreational Environment

Sackville's collection of parks and green spaces result from developing where and when possible. This is a common approach in communities developing from a semi-urban core into rural landscape.

The core of Sackville's recreation facilities are the community's workhorses and, as such, require a high level of maintenance to sustain the product. Several of these facilities require upgrading to become a sustainable product.

Sackville is fortunate to have residents that keenly provide recreational activities such as soccer, hockey, etc. The Recreation Department supplements these with programs largely based in wellness. Both the municipality and its residents desire upgrades to facilities to ensure long term viability of programming.

2.0 Resident Desires for Recreation

Residents were consulted in four different formats to determine the types of programs and physical projects that should be undertaken to create an appropriate and relevant recreational environment for Sackville. Formats included youth sessions, program provider interviews, a program provider project development workshop, and a community project prioritization workshop. These resulted in a series of *key lessons*.

Key Youth Lessons - Youth desire a strong community that provides a reason to stay and play in the community. The Town of Sackville must focus recreation development within the community core to strengthen the entire town and this must include the university.

Key Program Provider Lessons - Given limited municipal resources, the Town of Sackville must refocus its administrative attention to a supplier of quality recreation facilities while assisting program providers to ensure a sustainable community-based recreation offerings. Also, the town must capitalize on available technology to assist with facility bookings and other forms of program provider assistance.

Facilities require an upgrade to create venues for program offerings. Several projects in existing facilities were identified and prioritized in manner that reflected the desires of youth.

3.0 Sackville Recreation Concept

The following points describe the inherent purpose for recreation product offerings in Sackville for the next 10 years (in two five-year phases).

Phase One - Clarify and Excel

The purpose of the first phase is to redefine the role of the recreation department while working on physical projects that create important community recreation nodes.

a. Recreation Programs. Community-based programs are assisted by the recreation department that shifts away from operating as program provider to the primary role of program support team. Reallocated staff for support and maintenance purposes utilizing new technologies support community efforts. A new, clarified and articulated approach provides a platform for the department to work with various partners on both physical and programmed products.

b. Recreation Sites. The first sites to receive development attention are the town center nodes (Bill Johnstone Memorial Park, Sackville Waterfowl Park). Facilities located out of the town core require implementation or master plan work in this phase. Also, staff reallocation provides maintenance to its sites for programmed use.

Phase Two - Build a Network

The purpose of the second phase is to gradually expand products within the administrative context formed in phase one (with partnerships developed during the initial phase). An implemented master plan results in a network of facilities supporting various community-based programs.

a. Recreation Programs. The town supports programs within existing facilities and, if necessary, will create new programs that are capable of operating without direct municipal management in the future.

b. Recreation Sites. Master plans formed in the first phase are implemented along with trail/greenway development, and shared-route street designation to form a network of facilities.

4.0 Master Plan Implementation

The goal of this project was to prioritize existing and newly discovered project ideas based on a community consensus developed approach to recreation planning in Sackville. Through consultation, an approach was developed based on the notion of "clarify and create": clarify the role of recreation in Sackville and create a future based on this clarified role. The following points describes interrelated elements of master plan implementation.

Approach to Programming. Creating *clarity* requires a review of how recreational products are delivered (and who is best positioned to deliver). The town presently delivers a mix of programming and facility care that, over time, has lost clearly defined purpose. This is not a unique position for a municipal department with endless program possibilities.

This plan recommends a move from a mixed program delivery/program support department to a program support department. This suggests a very clear role for the department while meeting the desires of community-based program providers.

The program support model is based on the notion of support for program providers. The notion is not based on the idea of becoming a secretarial service for providers; rather, it is based on the idea that the department provides high-level services and demands product excellence.

Approach to Facilities. There are two critical components to facility improvement. First, a rational approach to facility development is required and, second, maintenance has to become as important as facility development. *Quality* facilities require maintenance to remain as such.

The proposed approach to facility development is very simple. First, the town should focus on developing the core area projects that serve to make a stronger community center prior to developing outer area projects and trails. Thus, the approach is based on the notion of developing the core area nodes first, outer area nodes second, and finally, complete the trail and street network that create the connective linkages that form the network.

Another important aspect of facility improvement is revenue. The town should seek to build facilities based on administrative plans that match maintenance and revenue budgets. Thus, the town should only proceed with construction based on a partnership that will ensure revenues from user groups.

Approach to Partnerships. Strong *partnerships* with the user groups will be required for project success. The town should strive to create excellence through partnerships for residents; therefore, the town should be very proactive and open to building strong relationships that create mutually beneficial projects and programs.

Approach to Funding. This includes allocating the existing annual capital investment into projects that are primarily used at the local level. Investments for regional facilities and active recreation facilities (that have user group attraction well beyond the municipal boundary) should involve partnership development between all three levels of government and any special user groups.

Implementation Strategy

It is important to remember that implementation may not occur as described; however, it is important to achieve the primary goals of implementation - *clarity, quality and partnerships*. This is presented in two phases that could be complete within 10 years.

Phase One Implementation - Administration/Promotion

I. Achieve the Mandate to Implement this Master Plan. The town should formally present this document to the university, the district planning commission, downtown development, community groups, relevant MLAs and MPs, and any other important groups/individuals to

provide background information and intent to create a great Sackville through quality lifestyle development.

2. Partnership Development. Three critical partnerships need to be developed within this phase. First, the town needs to seek out groups and/or individuals capable of assuming responsibility for existing town operated programs.

Second, the town should expand the relationship with the university relative to recreation programs and facilities. Third, the town should explore potential partnerships with developers from within and outside of the region with the intent of identifying new and diversified community master plans and housing types. The partnerships should result in master planned areas inclusive of housing, green space, trails and, specifically, the required turf fields.

3. Technology and Training. The town should acquire a computer/web based system of recreation administration software. The software must include facility booking, group registration and accounting, department accounting and budgeting, maintenance scheduling and facility scheduling modules.

3. Marketing the Streets. The town should review the intent of the active transportation plan and ensure that the proposed approach is being followed. It will be important to market the notion of shared-use streets prior to promoting the shared-use of the streets.

Phase One - Active Recreation Facilities

1. Lorne Street Field Complex. The town should commission detailed concept plans and cost estimates for the revitalization of this site. In the short-term, the plan should identify an approach to improving the

existing facility inclusive of parking, improvements to the existing fields and viewing areas. Any focus on field development should be placed on town-owned facilities prior to improvements at school facilities. Maintenance should be inclusive of all facilities.

2. Mount Allison Athletic Centre. The town should commence discussion with the university to establish a reciprocal agreement for community use of this facility, and work with the university to explore new ways in which these facilities can be jointly utilized by students and residents.

3. Review the School District Two Reciprocal Agreement. The town should meet with District Two officials to discuss their reciprocal agreement with the school district to acquire more usage time (while offering increased maintenance and a more efficient booking system).

Phase One - Regional Parks and Trails

1. Beech Hill and Lillas Fawcett Master Plans. In association with local partners, the town should request financial assistance from the province to conduct detailed master plans for the sites inclusive of all projects and partners previously described.

The planning for these projects should include a review of potential funding sources for development. These are regional facilities with user group attraction beyond municipal boundaries.

2. Sackville Waterfowl Park. The Town's desire to include the park within the context of the Active Transportation network ensures a broadened appeal for the facility. This will require trail upgrades throughout the facility to ensure safe pedestrian/cycle circulation within the context of a nature park. Careful planning for this site should

ensure the sustained intent of the park within the context of expanded and varied use.

3. Detailed Trail/Greenway Plan. The town should begin a process of identifying landowners and acquiring easements for all trails indicated in the Greening Sackville Plan. This process will include legal and physical planning work that will likely take a few years to complete.

Phase One - Community Parks

1. Invest in Bill Johnstone Memorial Park. This is a core facility that forms the heart of the physical recreation plan. The town should continue to invest in this site until complete. Projects include the site building, water park, performance space, and market area.

Phase One - General

1. Facility Maintenance. The town should maintain existing levels of recreation department staffing; however, the shift from program provider to program support model will result in excess summer staff that can be immediately placed into maintenance roles.

2. Active Transportation. After two years of promotion, the town should restart the shared-route program and supplement signs with Transportation Association of Canada approved painted bike on street (in lieu of bike lanes).

Phase Two - Programming

1. Professional Partnerships. With a new departmental approach and process in place, the town can now begin to focus on gaps in programming. Some of these gaps will not be filled by community

volunteers and will require professionals. The town should actively pursue and encourage private business in recreation fields.

Phase Two - Facilities

1. Implement the Lillas Fawcett and Beech Hill Master Plans. The town should acquire funding from various partners to build these projects over a two to three year period.

2. Implement the Trail Plan. This is a long-term project with massive community appeal. The town should commence this project upon completion of right-of-way acquisitions.

3. Commence Play Field Development. The town should begin to develop play fields based on newly established partnerships.