

A Framework for Community Recreation in the City of Burlington

City of Burlington Parks & Recreation Department



live&play

CITY OF
Burlington

Executive Summary

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and cultural activities that enhance individual well-being and create a sense of community belonging.

Benefits of Recreation (Source: [CPRA: The Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015](#))

The evidence on the benefits of recreation and exposure to nature suggest that recreation and parks can address existing challenges with policies and practices that:

- Enhance mental and physical wellbeing
- Enhance social wellbeing
- Help build strong families and communities
- Help people connect with nature
- Provide economic benefits by investing in recreation.

The Parks and Recreation Department plays a vital role in fostering a Healthy and Engaged city as defined in the Corporate Strategic Plan.

More specifically, the role of the Parks and Recreation department is to act as a steward of recreation within the community.

We do this by:

- **Partnering** with others,
- **Providing** Opportunities, and
- **Promoting** the Benefits, through providing
- **Play** for All!

Framework Context

This framework highlights our **Vision, Values, Principles, Goals, and our Operating Criteria** for the provision of recreation in our community. This framework forms a set of rules, ideas, and beliefs to be used everyday. City Council entrusts the Parks and Recreation department to work with the community to fulfill this commitment. Below is a summary of the Framework:

Updated April 26, 2019

Vision	To Enhance the Quality of Life for Every One, Every Day!					
Values	Everyone Has the Right to Play	Individual Well-Being	Sense of Belonging			
Principles	Fundamentals First	Inclusive	Shared Responsibility	Meaningful Engagement	Complementary	Affordability
Goals	Participation	Partnerships	Variety	Thriving Neighbourhoods	Utilization	
Operating Criteria	Decision Making			Financial		

VISION

We aspire...

The Vision of the Parks and Recreation Department is to:

‘Enhance the Quality of Life for Every One, Every Day!’

VALUES

We Embrace...

We embrace the vision of the Parks and Recreation Department that can be achieved through our three Core Values:

	<p>Everyone Has The Right To Play</p> <p>Regardless of race, gender, ability, socio-economic status or age; everyone has the right to play and participate.</p>
	<p>Individual Well-Being</p> <p>This core value has a strong focus on the individual’s well-being; mental, physical, and social.</p>
	<p>Sense Of Belonging</p> <p>Belongingness is a human emotional need to be connected or accepted as a member of a group or community.</p>

The SIX Principles shown below represents the department’s core beliefs. These principles act as a checklist, compass and / or filter that can be used whenever something is in question or a decision needs to be made or when an opportunity emerges.

Fundamentals First ☑	Inclusive ☑	Shared Responsibility ☑	Meaningful Engagement ☑	Complementary ☑	Affordability ☑
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FUNDAMENTALS FIRST

We believe that putting the fundamentals of play first as it reaches the largest demographic of people without limiting one’s ability to participate.

The model illustrates that more city resources will be placed on recreation experiences that support the broader interests and needs that reach most of the population. As the skill level increases, the percentage of the population participating narrows, resulting in fewer city resources that would be allocated to support those experiences. As illustrated in

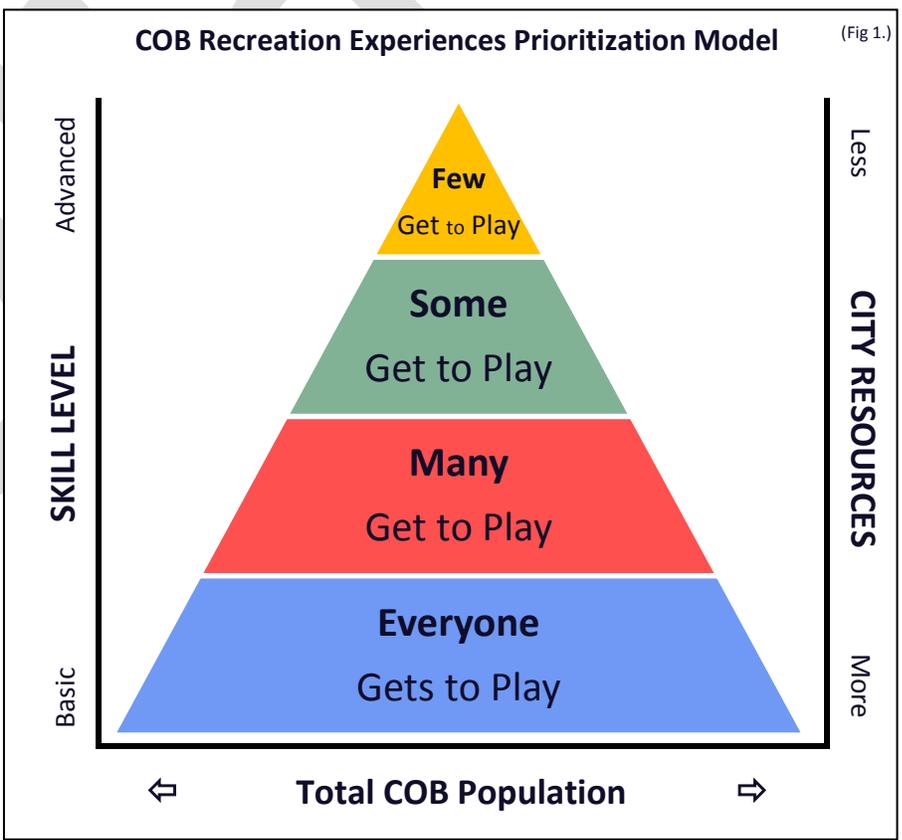


Figure 1, the department will strive to support ALL levels of play through a prioritization model based on the activity provided.

The X axis (base) represents the total population of the city (i.e. all residents). As shown on either side of the illustration the Y axis (left) represents ones' skill level, ranging from basic to advanced. The other Y axis (right) represents the level of city resources provided ranging from more to less. City resources include, but are not limited to, human, financial, assets, time, effort, etc. Each level of play is further described below.

<p>Everyone Gets to Play</p>	<p>This foundational level is considered 'Introductory' and/or 'Open-for-all ages and all abilities'. Opportunities reach the largest population at a basic, general or introductory level.</p>
<p><i>Some examples include; swimming lessons, recreational skating and swimming, general land and water exercise programs, general neighborhood-based camps, open social gatherings, family or multi-generational based programming, general interest programs, learn-to programs such as hockey or soccer, co-ed house-league type programs, general arts and culture based programs, community events, and open play opportunities in parks and facilities such as hiking, water play, public tennis, pickleball and skateboarding.</i></p>	
<p>Many Get to Play</p>	<p>This level continues to build on the introductory level, but opportunities are targeted towards a specific or unique population.</p>
<p><i>Some examples include; age-specific or targeted house league programs, age-specific general arts and culture-based programs, recreational swimming opportunities for specific groups, and targeted age-specific general opportunities like youth only or older adult only programs.</i></p>	
<p>Some Get to Play</p>	<p>This level is focused on more competitive play. Participants in this category have acquired high skill levels and talent. The target market for this category is a smaller segment of the population.</p>
<p><i>Some examples include; rep sports, competitive-level programming, advanced programming, leadership, competitive events and closed groups not open to the entire public. Opportunities to support this could be at the regional level, sharing this level of play with other neighbouring municipalities.</i></p>	

Few Get to Play

This level is focused on the elite level of play. Participants in this category are at the top of their game and compete at a provincial, national, or world-wide level.

Some examples include; elite level play and national or provincial level programming. While these experiences may represent a level of importance and pride within the community, the use of tax-supported resources would be minimal. Opportunities to support this level of play would be to leverage private sector-based partnerships.

INCLUSIVE

The city will demonstrate leadership by creating an atmosphere and culture where everyone feels safe and welcome, allowing everyone to participate with dignity and respect. An inclusive culture will be represented in city facilities, parks, amenities, programs, staff, policies and services. We will seek relationships that support inclusivity and look to remove physical, social and economic barriers to participation.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

We believe that recreation experiences should foster a shared responsibility approach. Responsibilities can be shared between the City, an individual, a neighbourhood, volunteers, community groups, partners, stakeholders, and Regionally. A culture that has a shared responsibility approach has the potential to create meaning, purpose and value for all of those involved. This approach removes the notion of linear City-to-Resident service, and rather creates a more robust approach where all stakeholders are involved. A shared responsibility approach helps to create a Win-Win-Win outcome for the taxpayer, the partner(s), and the city.

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

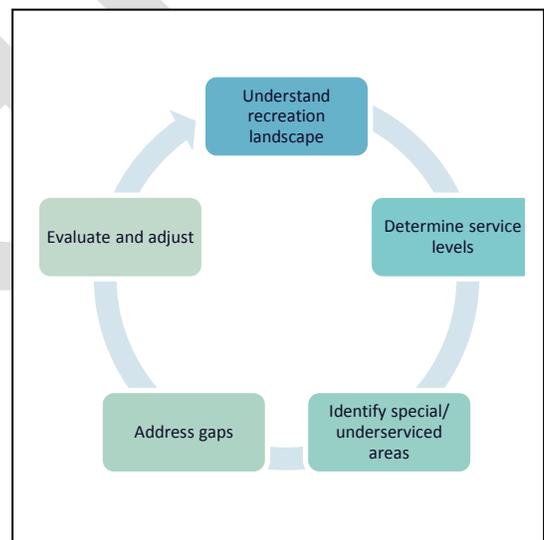
We believe that meaningful engagement and collaboration with residents, staff, partners and stakeholders is essential in the planning and delivery of recreation experiences. Collaborative strategies include, but are not limited to; public engagement opportunities, round tables, program provider forums, pilot

programming, surveys, and daily dialogue. Feedback received will be heard and leveraged to help meet community interests. Staff will use a spectrum of public participation approaches including Informing, Consulting, Involving, Collaborating, and Empowering. The approach that is used will be based on several factors including the projects goals, council direction, and the outcome desired.

COMPLEMENTARY

The recreation landscape in Burlington is rich with a variety of recreation experiences provided by non-profit, not-for-profit, and for-profit organizations. Where complementary to the landscape, the City will also provide recreation experiences to the community. We believe in providing recreation experiences that complement other providers rather than competing. The process highlighted below is cyclical requiring on-going review and readjustment when necessary. In many cases, when the recreation landscape changes, so do we. We look to complement the recreation landscape by:

- Understanding and being aware of the overall recreation landscape in Burlington,
- Determining service levels needed within the community,
- Identifying special or underserved markets,
- Addressing gaps by seeking opportunities to complement existing opportunities, and by
- Evaluating and adjusting service delivery.



AFFORDABILITY

We believe that everyone should have access to affordable recreation. We will provide places where everyone can play at no cost. This includes access to public recreation spaces and facilities, parks, trails, and community events. Where fees apply, the city will ensure affordability is considered broadly, with access to financial assistance programs for those who require support. We will also look to seek partnerships that uphold our interest in affordability.

The FIVE Goals noted below will represent the desired **outcomes** of the vision, values, and principles. The City will strive to *Maximize*:

Participation	Partnerships	Variety	Thriving Neighbourhoods	Utilization
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PARTICIPATION

The city will look to maximize participation in everything we do. We want more people active in play through supporting the recreational interests of our community. We want our recreation facilities, parks and trails filled with people participating. We want people to be involved and connected. Participation can be passive or active, and includes volunteerism, participation in programs, and casual use of facilities, parks and trails.

We will do this through active promotion of opportunities, removing barriers, developing programs and services that are desired and are aligned to interests, designing facilities that are conducive to maximize participation (e.g. multi-use spaces, supporting amenities), creating volunteer opportunities, and by living what we believe every day.

PARTNERSHIPS

The city will maximize a broad range of meaningful community partnerships to support the delivery of recreation. Partnerships include direct involvement with program providers, joint ventures organizations, neighbourhood organizations, social-good agencies, regional services, local boards, government organizations, school boards and

private organizations / businesses. We will continually work towards the enhancement of our current partnerships and seek new relationships.

VARIETY

With a lens on the end user (i.e. every citizen of the city), the city will look to maximize the variety of recreation provided across the city. We believe that residents should have the ability to choose from an abundance of recreation experiences that represent the many interests of our community, both current and forecasted.

We will do this by staying current in our program and service options, intentionally seeking new and emerging trends, forecasting needs, understanding the changing demographics of the community and connecting with program-matter experts in the community.

THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS

The City will look to invest in programs or practices that improve our subjective quality of life and improved social inclusion. This results in people feeling like they are connected to their neighbourhood, people having more empowerment over their lives and more likely to be active in civic life. By focusing programs directed at, “change makers,” there is a greater return because these people can influence their neighbourhood based on their robust social network of relationships. A connected neighbourhood is resilient and inclusive and results in taxpayer savings in health, justice and social service as well as improving a person’s employability and health.

UTILIZATION

The city will look to maximize the use of all physical assets (e.g. recreation centres, pools, arenas, parks and trails). We want people freely playing in their parks, registering for a program, joining a league, dropping in to an activity, contributing as part of a recreation organization, or participating in an event. We want our assets to be well used, all day, every day, year-round.

We will do this by promoting our assets, repurposing assets if under utilized, enhancing amenities to support use, developing incentive pricing strategies, and to seek year-round utilization opportunities. We will look to design assets that are multi-purpose, allowing for a broad range of use. We will place priority on assets that promote mixed/multi-purpose uses as opposed to single purpose assets.

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CONCLUSION

It is essential for a public service that is tax supported by the citizens of the City of Burlington, to be transparent by all. This framework represents our vision, values, principles, goals and our operating model. This framework is our department's foundation to which all other policies, procedures and planning are then built upon. We will review and update this framework every 5 years or when required to do so based on circumstance or through City Council direction.

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DEFINITIONS

For this framework, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions apply:

Term	As Defined in Framework
Activities	Something that somebody takes part in or does as related to one's recreation interests. Activities include both passive (e.g. table-top activities) and active (e.g. exercise classes) recreational pursuits, life skill programs (e.g. swimming lessons), drop-in programs (public skating), registered programs (camps), culture-rich programs (e.g. theatre and music), and community events, all that are either hosted by, or through the city.
Agreement	Formal document signed and dated by the participating parties that outline the objectives, terms and conditions of the working relationship. Agreements might be in the form of a memorandum of understanding, program and activity provider agreement, sponsorship agreement, rental agreement, license agreement, lease agreement, service level agreement, or joint venture agreement.
Asset	An economic resource that is either tangible or intangible. Assets are either physical (facilities, parks, amenities) or human (e.g. staff, volunteers).
Collaboration	To work jointly with others to pursue common goals. Collaboration includes both cooperation and coordination in delivering programs and activities.
Community	A group of people living in the same place <u>or</u> having a characteristics or interests in common. This includes a feeling of fellowship with others, because of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals. Examples could be a neighborhood, a seniors group, a sports group or league, or ethnic / cultural connection. A community can embody a variety of forms that share a collective interest.
Partnership	A collaborative working arrangement between two or more parties based on mutual interest and a clear understanding. For the purposes of this Framework, partnership is not intended as a legal term.
Pilot Programming	Pilot programming are short-term programming to measure interest and collect data and feedback. The collection of information is then used to help make decisions on future direction.
Program Provider	An individual or organization providing recreation programs and activities that is open for the entire community to participate. A Program and Activity Provider would be considered as a 'partner' with the city as related to this framework.

Term	As Defined in Framework
Framework	The necessary structure needed to support decision making, planning, service delivery and the daily operation.
Fundamental	Basic, beginner, entry level, general interest and foundational as related to recreational based experiences. These are the building blocks for more complex and specialized skills.
Joint Venture	Any combination of resources by two or more persons, corporations, collaborative relationships, or some combination thereof, whereby each agrees to contribute money, knowledge, skills, land/property to conduct an initiative together. The City of Burlington's Joint Venture Framework addresses major projects such as the development of new facilities, major renovations to existing facilities and a variety of financing options for program providers. The city might have complete, partial or no ongoing responsibility for facility maintenance, capital repair and asset preservation, hence, the city's risk rests with the ownership of the physical asset. Joint Venture Agreements can allow significant freedom to operate or be very detailed about limits.
Market	The market represents the broader community and their interests.
Recreation	Recreation is an activity of leisure. Leisure is free time. The "need to do something for recreation" is an essential element of human biology and psychology. Recreational activities are often done for enjoyment, amusement, or pleasure and are "fun".
Recreation Landscape	All recreation experiences provided across the city by all providers.
Round Table	A round table is a collective group of individuals coming together for a common interest. Typically, round tables are facilitated by city staff and would include representation from a group focused on a specific initiative.
Socio-economic status	Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.
Sponsorships	A sponsorship is a type of relationship where there is an exchange of money, products and/or services in return for a commercial benefit. A formal sponsorship agreement is typically associated with this type of arrangement.
Participation Fees	Participation Fees are Council approved rates a consumer would pay for. Examples include membership fees, program registration fees, rental fees, licensing fees, rent and drop-in fees.

Appendix A: Decision Making Matrix for New and Emerging Recreation Experiences

