

Background

The City of Brandon Community Services Department is developing a master plan to provide a 20-year vision and framework for city recreation and community facilities. This initiative has been prompted by the need to update the existing Brandon Recreation Facilities Master Plan created in 2007 and to help guide recreation services and direct future investments and implementation to support greater recreation opportunities and community well-being.

The Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan Update is also spurred by Brandon’s steady and healthy population growth, which includes new residents from diverse cultural backgrounds. These new recreation users bring new opportunities and needs for the City of Brandon to provide facilities and programs that are responsive, current and forward thinking and will build upon the present effective delivery of recreation and leisure services.

A public engagement and communication strategy was developed to support this project. The following details the promotion methods and engagement activities since the project launch in late fall to now.



General:

Website:

City of Brandon webpage launched November 26, 2018

News Releases:

November 26, 2018
December 20, 2018

Email Notice:

First notice sent to 182 stakeholder email addresses with forwarding to other networks. An additional 202 email addresses were received through the survey sign-up option for project updates.

Social Media:

Targeted content posted on City of Brandon social media platforms yielded a combined reach of 48,595

Media:

Media Coverage

1220 CJRB Radio
November 27, 2018
Brandon Sun
November 27, 2018
Westman Journal
November 29, 2018
Brandon Sun
December 21, 2018
91.5 Q Country News Radio
December 21, 2018
Westman Journal
January 3, 2019
Brandon Sun
January 18, 2019
Westman Journal
January 22, 2019

Engagement Activities

Date	Activity	Details
November 2018 – February 2019	Stakeholder & Outreach Interviews & Meetings	Telephone interviews and in-person meetings with more than 30 organizations and special interest groups.
November 26, 2018 – January 31, 2019	Public Survey	Online and Paper Survey: 1,214 respondents
January 17, 2019	Public Workshops	January 17, 2019
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm		A.R. McDiarmid Civic Complex
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm		Total Participants: 65+

The aim of the public survey and open houses was to gain insight into how residents currently use Brandon's recreation facilities and what barriers prevent them from participating in activities. Residents were also asked about their priorities for investment into renewal of existing and development of new recreation facilities. The following summary outlines key findings gathered through public engagement that will help inform the development of the Brandon Recreation & Community Facilities Master Plan.

Survey: Key Findings Recreation Values & Needs

Why do you participate in recreation and leisure activities?

Respondents were asked to select their top three reasons for participating in recreation activities.

Health & Wellbeing

75% of respondents said one of their top reasons for participating in recreation was to keep active for personal health & wellbeing.

Family

44% of respondents said one of their top reasons for participating in recreation was to spend time with family.

Socializing

36% of respondents said one of their top reasons for participating in recreation was to be social & make friends

These responses show that recreation in Brandon is about more than sports and physical fitness; it is about personal wellbeing and connection with community.

Top Activities

These were the top 5 activities respondents said they occasionally or regularly participated in.



Walking



Cycling



Swimming



Skating



Fitness Programs

Top Brandon Events

These were the top 5 Brandon events respondents said they occasionally or regularly attended.



Spectator sports



Major concerts & live events



Royal Manitoba Summer Fair



Canada Day celebrations



Royal Manitoba Winter Fair

Most Visited Indoor Facilities

These were the top 5 Brandon indoor facilities respondents said they visited occasionally or regularly.



Keystone/Westoba Place



Sportsplex



Healthy Living Centre at Brandon University



Downtown YMCA



Community Centres

Most Visited Outdoor Facilities

These were the top 5 Brandon outdoor facilities respondents said they visited occasionally or regularly.



1
Riverbank
Discovery
Centre



2
Neighbourhood
Park



3
Children's
Playground



4
Skating Oval



5
Splash Pad
or Spray
Park

Top Barriers to Participation

Respondents were asked what, if anything, prevents them or someone in their household from participating in recreation programs in Brandon? The following infographic shows the percentage of respondents that indicated each reason as one of their top three barriers



1
Unaware of
opportunities
44%



2
Cost is
too high
38%



3
Inconvenient
hours
31%



4
Facility
condition
29%



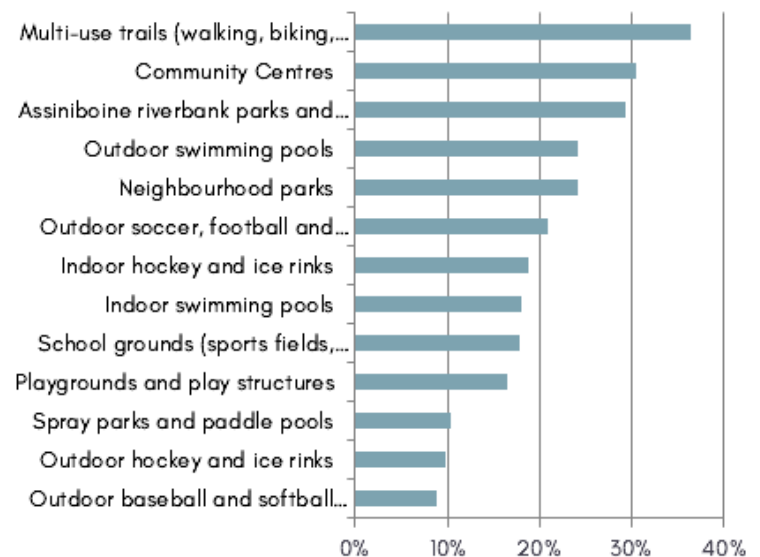
5
Overcrowded
29%

Three of the top five barriers identified relate to access and service, suggesting there are ways to improve and optimize the provision of recreation that do not involve large capital investments. These include raising awareness, making recreation more affordable and improving hours of operation.

Priorities for Future Investment: Existing Facilities

Survey respondents were asked to select their top three priorities that Brandon should focus on when doing upgrades and investment to existing recreation facilities.

These results speak to the desire for accessible, low-cost community spaces where people can gather and recreate at their own pace and schedule. It is also telling that the top items in this list are facilities that are dated or in declining condition and in need of investment.



Priorities for Future Investment: New Facilities

Survey respondents were also asked to identify their top three new recreation facilities that Brandon should consider developing in the future.

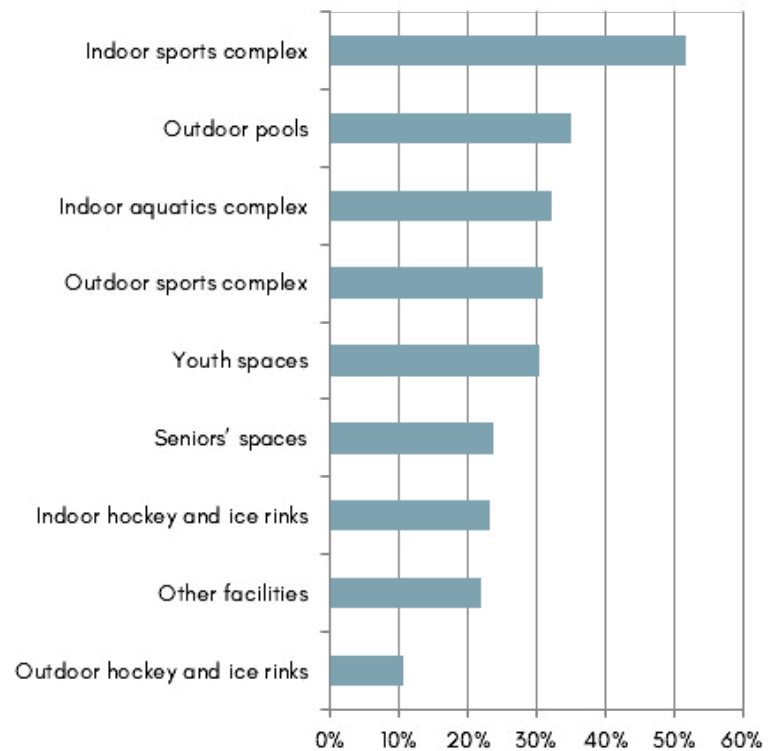
More than half of respondents (52%) said Brandon should consider building a new indoor multi-purpose recreation complex.

34% of respondents said the City should prioritize building a new outdoor pool facility, while 32% identified a new indoor aquatics complex.

There was also a high demand for youth spaces with multi-use program rooms (31%). Slightly fewer respondents (24%) identified the need for seniors' spaces with multi-use rooms.

New indoor (23%) and outdoor (11%) hockey and ice rink facilities rank relatively low in this list, despite discussions with community members that have said Brandon's hockey facility supply is insufficient and in need of upgrades.

In terms of other facilities, the top comment (373 respondents) was "more outdoor soccer fields". 5% of respondents identified a pickleball facility, while others said they were looking for facilities like a disc golf course, water slides, beaches, and arts & cultural spaces.



Survey Respondents

In total, 1,214 people responded to the survey. As a whole, respondents said they were passionate about recreation and leisure activities (an average of 88 on a scale from 1, "not important", to 100, being "very important."). 47% of respondents already volunteered in recreation in some way, with an additional 18% saying they would be interested in volunteering. Respondents came from Brandon and beyond and were evenly distributed across the city. Nearly half of respondents have children in the home under 16 years of age. 56% of respondents are between the ages of 30-49 years, and 29% are 50 years or older.



Workshop: Key Findings Recreation Values & Needs

The Brandon Recreation Facilities workshops offered the opportunity for Brandon residents to share their values and vision for recreation, provide input on the barriers to participation, identify gaps and expectations in the provision of recreation facilities, and discuss the opportunities for recreation to be an agent for community development. The format of the workshop was an introductory presentation followed by five stations where participants circulated through facilitated discussions and activities. The following summary outlines key findings gathered at the workshop sessions.

What does health & wellbeing mean to you?

- Being involved in the community, building social capital
- Participation and social inclusion
- Physical activity is key to mental health and wellbeing
- Getting outside and enjoying nature
- Feeling good about yourself
- Keeping active all through life
- Healthy eating and food security



What would help you access and participate in health and wellness opportunities more regularly?

- Better connectivity year-round, safe and lit pathways and trails
- Active transportation, cycling and trails map
- Neighbourhood connectivity between housing and recreation
- Better use of Community Centres
- Sidewalks in new developments
- Beautifully designed facilities with lots of natural light
- Better maintenance of facilities
- Funding for youth and marginalized people

Summary of Results from the 'Create Your Own Active Living Guide' activity

These are the activities that people would most like to see offered in the community. The majority of participants suggested that these activities could take place in existing city facilities such as community centres and parks.

Outdoor Programs Canoe/Kayak Gardening Birding Nature walks/hikes Cross country skiing/snowshoeing Walking for seniors	General Interest Cooking classes Preserving and canning food Music Intro to theatre/acting Drawing classes Photography Arts and crafts lessons	Sports Dodgeball Badminton Pickleball Soccer Hockey Flag football Baseball
Fitness Physical Literacy Martial arts Yoga	Learn to ... Learn to swim Learn to skate Learn to ski	Other Family activities and sports Library reading groups Volunteer opportunities

What are some of the spin-off benefits of recreation?

- Increased number of hotel stays
- Increased tourism
- “Eyes on the street” / public safety / reduced crime
- Healthy competition between cities
- Youth opportunities, encouragement to stay in the City
- Building a sense of place
- Life-skills and coping skills
- Quality of Life
- Connecting to others and networking
- Local sense of pride
- Reduced health costs
- Reduce travel costs
- Attracting talent / industry
- Hosting puts Brandon “on the map”

What can Brandon do to maximize these economic benefits?

- Identify where resources are available
- Build partnerships with the private sector, offer naming rights
- Build better facilities
- Build a multi-use facility; a family focused facility; an arts and performance facility;
- Increase funding for recreation
- Have a broader definition of recreation
- Focus on customer service
- Grow Brandon University and Assiniboine Community College
- Integrate recreation into broader city policies
- Don’t sprawl, focus on building-in
- Increase volunteers
- Build on local talent

Facilities and Infrastructure

This activity asked participants to tell us what kinds of facilities they would like to see included in a future Multi-Purpose Recreation facility, and co-create in small groups their ideal facility.

Results

Three of the top ranking results were community spaces: daycare, multi-purpose room and events hall. Other community spaces such as a kitchen and café also ranked highly; followed by ice sheets, swimming pools and water slides. A key takeaway is that families are seeking opportunities to have “one stop” for recreation activities for adults and children.

This shows that people want recreation facilities to be complimented with community amenities and view recreation as more than just sports.

Where do you find information about recreation opportunities in Brandon?

- City of Brandon website and app
- Google - “things to do in Brandon”
- Riverbank Centre website
- Radio ads
- Signs while driving
- eBrandon events
- Brandon Tourism
- Facebook
- Brandon Sun
- Word of mouth
- Kids bringing handouts home

How can communication be improved?

- Email newsletter
- Leisure Guide
- Info board posters around city
- Website with all recreation opportunities listed in one place
- Better web design / user experience / no more than 3 clicks

From a list of recreation facilities, participants were asked to decide which facilities should be provided in neighbourhoods, communities, or within the region.

Top Facilities

that serve local residential neighbourhoods, generally accessible by walking 5-10 minutes.

1

Playgrounds

2

Multi-use trails and pathways

3

Community gardens

4

Outdoor basketball courts

5

Picnic/BBO areas

Top Facilities

that serve several neighbourhoods, generally accessible by walking, biking, or driving > 10 minutes.

1

Outdoor tennis/pickleball courts

2

Outdoor swimming pool

3

Multi-use open green spaces

4

Spray park/paddle pool

5

Community centre (indoor flexible multi-use space)

Top Facilities

that serve the city and the broader region, accessible by driving or transit.

1

Canoe/kayak docks

2

Multi-use recreation complex

3

Baseball/softball diamonds

4

Special event/performance venues

5

Indoor swimming pool



Community & Belonging

Role of the Community Centre: THEN vs. NOW

Brandon's Community Centres were developed in the 1960s—a time when our relationship with community was markedly different than it is today. This was a time before the internet and television, when it was more common for neighbours to know each other and socialize together. The Community Centres were developed adjacent to outdoor hockey rinks, which had largely been built by the efforts of the community to provide a place for young people to play. Some of the buildings were repurposed army barracks and provided the community with a hall that could be used for social functions. Today, our relationship with community has changed. We have the Internet and other forms of media as a resource for information, families tend to be more inward focused, and our socializing usually happens within special interest / hobby or peer groups rather than our immediate neighbourhood community.

Need for Small and Medium Sized Rentable Space

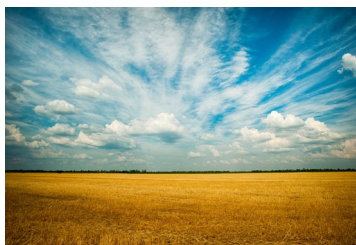
There are very few venues you can rent in Brandon to hold a social or similar community event. If the Community Centres were to disappear entirely, this would leave a large gap in the community.

Community Needs to be Cultivated

We heard from participants that community is something that needs to be cultivated and nurtured in order to thrive. It does not just exist spontaneously because there is a hall to gather in. Participation in community, volunteerism and the like are learned behaviours that people need to be exposed to when they are young. The Community Centres, at their best, can be places where people can build a sense of connection and belonging with community.

Brandon's Changing Demographic

Brandon is more culturally diverse today than it has ever been. However, unlike in the past when large waves of immigrants created cultural neighbourhoods (e.g. the Ukrainian community north of the tracks in the early 20th Century), newcomer populations are more likely to be dispersed across Brandon today. This presents challenges for newcomers who are actively looking for spaces where they can gather with their communities. Other demographic changes include the ageing population and a large number of young families. These groups have special recreation needs and practices. For example, newcomers with large families have embraced Brandon's parks and river as a place to hold large family / community gatherings. Sports such as soccer and cricket are growing in popularity among newcomer youth. Seniors want facilities such as warm water therapy pools and places where they can go to keep active.



Community Centre Volunteers are Stretched Thin

The Community Centres are managed by volunteer committees. Several volunteers were present at the workshop and spoke about the challenges involved in caring for aging buildings, limited financial support from the City, and volunteer recruitment. Many expressed concern about not knowing where the next generation of volunteers are going to come from.

There is an opportunity to foster a “next generation” of volunteers as it was noted that many newcomers may not be aware that there are volunteer opportunities with Community Centres. Volunteering is a very powerful way for newcomers to get involved in the local community, practice English (if relevant) and build experience that can support employment.

Next Steps...

Informed by the values and priorities identified through this public engagement process, along with facility analysis, growth planning, recreation and leisure trends, and financial analysis, the insights gathered from stakeholders and residents will be used to form the development of the draft Brandon Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan.

The public is invited to attend a come-and-go Open House on **April 8, 2019 from 3:00pm - 7:00pm at A.R. McDiarmid Civic Complex** to view the draft plan and provide feedback. Open House materials will be available on the City of Brandon website to view and provide on-line feedback.

Following a presentation to Council and Council approval, the plan will be posted on the City of Brandon website.



Questions or Comments? Contact:

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