

*Summary*

**Leisure Facilities Strategy Update, 2013**

**Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville**

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# Summary of the 2013 Update of the Leisure Facilities Strategy

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## Introduction

This report is a summary of the Update of the 2008 Leisure Facilities Strategy. The Update was completed in May, 2013. This summary report focuses on the types of recreation facilities that are eligible for funding through Development Changes. The DC Bylaw for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is undergoing an update in 2013.

The full Leisure Facilities Strategy Update document covers most leisure facilities, including arts and culture facilities. It also incorporates recommendations regarding the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library.

It is anticipated that a comprehensive parks, recreation and culture master plan will be undertaken within the next few years, which will build upon recent strategies for programming, culture and volunteerism, as well as this facilities Update. However, until the master plan is undertaken, the full Update document will stand as the most current strategy to help guide planning and decisions about facility improvement and expansion. A comprehensive parks and open space analysis and plan has not been completed, but will be a component of the future parks, recreation and culture master plan. High level comments about land requirements that relate to future facility needs have been included in this Leisure Facilities Strategy Update (see **Section 5.4** of the full Update document).

The Town has grown significantly since 2008, and the nature of the population has also changed with many new, younger and more ethnically diverse residents. That has impacted the level of demand for some leisure activities and has introduced increasing demand for activities such as visual arts and cricket, which are being considered in this strategy. Even as new, younger residents move into the community, the existing population continues to age, influenced in large part by the big Baby Boom population which in 2013 is age 48-67.

Population growth in Whitchurch-Stouffville exceeded what was predicted in the 2008 Leisure Facilities Strategy, which will impact the predicted dates for the expansion of recreation facilities in most categories. Also, the estimate of the capital cost of facility improvement and expansion requires update to current figures.

Research for this Update did not include consultation with user and other stakeholder groups, civic leaders or residents-at-large. It is anticipated that a comprehensive consultation program will be the centre-piece of the upcoming parks, recreation and culture master plan. Although recent projections of the total population are available for this Update, *age-specific* projections have not been updated since October, 2007 for the previous strategy.

## Planning Context

The Municipality is growing rapidly and well above the provincial and national average. Between 2006 and 2011, the Town grew by 54.3% to 37,628. Municipal planning staff estimate the June 2012 population at 41,200 and are projecting the June 2013 population to be 43,300. Families are younger in Whitchurch-Stouffville, with an above average percentage of age 0-4 and age 30-44. The proportion of teenagers is lower as is the young (age 20-29) and mid-life (age 45-54) adult populations. The age 55+ population is similar to the provincial and national averages. In 2011, 62% of families had children living at home (average number: 1.1). The average number of persons per census family was 3.0, which was the same as the provincial average. One-parent families represented 10.5% of the total and were well below the Ontario average of 16.7%. In 2011, 78.7% of occupied dwellings in Whitchurch-Stouffville were single-detached. The 2006 census reported that Whitchurch-Stouffville had average incomes levels that were considerably above the provincial averages for families, households and individuals. Not surprisingly, education attainment levels were also above provincial averages.

For planning purposes, this Update will project facility and open space requirements to correspond to the current full build-out target of 55,800 residents, which is expected to be achieved by 2021-2023.

## Changes in Leisure Facilities Since 2008

The following are the major changes in leisure facilities since the 2008 Leisure Facility Strategy and correspond to facility additions, major improvements and losses beginning in 2008.

- Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex (new twin pad arena and 450 square feet of multi-purpose space)
- Expansion of and renovation to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre (including additional and improved multi-purpose space)
- Initial phase of development of Bethesda Park (two senior lit ball diamonds, one senior lit soccer field, one unlit temporary cricket pitch, four unlit large mini soccer fields, central service building, eastern entrance and central parking)
- Initial phase of redevelopment of Memorial Park (completion of the Park Drive extension through the park and creation of eastern buffer zone, refurbished senior lit ball diamond and spectator stands, redevelopment of the lawn bowling green, new playground adjacent to the ball diamond, removal of the outdoor pool and two lit senior softball diamonds, initial development of Stouffville Common, and expansion of parking at the Leisure Centre)
- Closure of the Silver Jubilee Hall (loss of older adult programming space and a small creative arts studio)
- Temporary move of the Silver Jubilee Seniors Club to Latcham hall (temporary loss of 5,750 square feet of multi-purpose space for community programming)
- Two additional neighbourhood water play facilities

- Development of two new neighbourhood parks
- Two new lit tennis courts in Ballantrae Park
- Refurbished the two lit senior soccer fields adjacent to the Stouffville Arena

## Planning and Provision Principles

Nine Planning and Provision Principles were developed for the Leisure Facilities Strategy that was completed in 2008. The Leisure Programming Strategy which was prepared in 2010, expanded to the list to thirteen. The principles are intended to provide the guiding philosophy for planning, service provision and decision making regarding leisure programming and related services, municipal parks and leisure facilities in Whitchurch-Stouffville for now and into the future. The principles are listed below in title only. See **Section 4.1** of the full Update document for the complete text.

### Planning and Provision Principles

**Principle One:** Utilize the Benefits of Parks, Recreation and Culture *and* the Charter for Recreation and Parks in Ontario as the Foundation of this updated *Leisure Facilities Strategy*.

**Principle Two:** Ensure the Sustainability of Leisure Facilities, Programming, and Parks and Open Space.

**Principle Three:** Ensure Accessible and Inclusive Leisure Opportunities.

**Principle Four:** Support an Active, Healthy Community.

**Principle Five:** Be Environmentally Responsible.

**Principle Six:** Complement Rather than Compete.

**Principle Seven:** Maintain a Community Development Approach.

**Principle Eight:** Enhance Volunteer Engagement.

**Principle Nine:** Strive for Adequate Distribution and Location of Facilities.

**Principle Ten:** Cluster Facilities.

**Principle Eleven:** Strive for Facility Visibility and Prominence.

**Principle Twelve:** Optimize Facility Utilization.

**Principle Thirteen:** Continue to Evolve Partnerships and other Strategic Alliances.

## Planning and Provision Guidelines

**Figure 8** in the full Update document contains recommended provision guidelines for most leisure facilities. The guidelines are intended to assist with projecting future facility requirements to full build-out. They are based on current provision levels, known

shortfalls and surpluses, expected changes in the age profile of customers, and anticipated changes in the participation rate for each leisure activity. The provision recommendations should be considered as *guidelines* rather than strict standards when determining future facility requirements. Participation rates should be regularly monitored and the guidelines adjusted accordingly.

Facility provision or expansion by other providers can influence whether a municipal facility is required as projected. Degree of financial access for residents or restrictions, the quality of the facility and programming, and location would be factors influencing degree of ‘public availability’.

For many types of recreation facilities, the provision guidelines that were recommended in 2008 remain valid. However, for some facility categories, changes in the provision guidelines have been recommended to reflect changes and trends in the participation rate since 2008, the changing role of the Municipality in relation to other providers, and revised thinking about desired services levels and the delivery model.

### **Recommended Changes to the Planning and Provision Guidelines in the 2013 Update (Recreation Facilities Only)**

<b>Facilities</b>	<b>2008 Leisure Facilities Strategy</b>	<b>2013 Leisure Facilities Strategy Update</b>
Fitness centres	1 per 30,000 population	1 municipal facility per community
Older adult social/recreation centres	1 adequate main/urban centre per 50,000 population	1 principle municipal facility per community
Soccer fields		
▪ Full-size/Senior lit	1 per 5,000 12-54 yr. olds	1 per 6,000 12-54 yr. olds
▪ Large Mini	1 per 235 10-11 yr. olds	1 per 165 10-11 yr. olds
▪ Small Mini	1 per 100 8-9 yr. olds	1 per 100 8-9 yr. olds (unchanged)
▪ Micro	1 per 200 4-7 yr. olds	1 per 200 4-7 yr. olds (unchanged)
Ball diamonds		
▪ Senior lit Softball	1 per 5,000 9-40 yr. olds	1 per 5,000 9-40 yr. olds (unchanged)
▪ Junior/Five-pitch	1 per 925 5-8 yr. olds	1 per 500 5-8 yr. olds
Museums	1 per 50,000 population	1 per community
Outdoor Major Aquatic Facilities	1 per 50,000 population	1 per community
Neighbourhood Aquatic Facilities	Not included in the 2008 Strategy	1 per 8,500 population

## **Comprehensive Town-wide Provision Strategy**

The town-wide leisure facilities provision strategy integrates all of the individual facility-specific provision strategies into one comprehensive strategy. A key element of the town-wide strategy is the clustering of many indoor and outdoor facilities into one leisure centre, three large urban parks, the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex, the new Operations Centre, and three rural/hamlet parks, including the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre, as an extension of Vandorf Park.

The provision strategy for each type of leisure facility is summarized below. See **Chapter Three** of the full Update document for details on each facility category. See below for implications for parkland requirements and a summary of capital cost implications.

It is proposed that most of the existing and planned indoor and outdoor leisure facilities will be accommodated in the following five urban parks/sites and three rural/hamlet parks.

- ❑ **Memorial Park**, including an expanded Leisure Centre and library, improved and additional outdoor facilities, and the adjacent **Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment**;
- ❑ the **Stouffville Arena site** (including two lit soccer fields, a refurbished and expanded 4 lit tennis facility, and a refurbished outdoor running track);
- ❑ the **Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex** (with the opportunity to expand this facility to include a third ice pad and multi-purpose space);
- ❑ **Bethesda Park** (under development to include ball diamonds, soccer fields and support facilities – with the potential to expand the park to accommodate additional identified facilities);
- ❑ the new **Operations Centre** (to accommodate mini and micro soccer fields);
- ❑ **Ballantrae Park** including the community centre, and ball, soccer and tennis facilities;
- ❑ **Vandorf Park**, including ball and tennis facilities, and the adjacent **Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre**; and
- ❑ a new **community park in the Musselman’s Lake community**.

A few other stand-alone indoor facilities round out the facility system (e.g., the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment, Lemonville Community Centre, Latcham Hall, Latcham Gallery, and the proposed multipurpose facility in the former library building), as do a large number of other outdoor facilities located in various parks and partner sites throughout the Municipality.

An integral part of the facility strategy is the proposed expansion of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre. Although a comprehensive design exercise has not been completed along with detailed market testing, the research conducted for this Update has identified the following initial space program for an expanded facility. The intent would be to expand the Public Library on two or more levels within an expanded footprint, and to reconfigure and expand the ‘leisure’ component into a two storey structure. See the table below for the initial space program for an expanded Leisure Centre.

It is recommended that a comprehensive conceptual design and business case exercise regarding an expanded Leisure Centre and Library be completed in the near future. This initiative should include thorough testing of the assumptions supporting the initial space program to confirm the list of components and to fine-tune the scope and parameters of each of the proposed components.

## Proposed Expansion of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Leisure Centre

Component	Approximate Current Size (square feet)	Proposed Additional Square Feet	Resultant Area	Remarks
Aquatic Centre expansion	9,800	10,000	19,800	Assumes an additional pool tank comprising a leisure pool with two 25 metre lanes.
Strength & conditioning gym expansion (could be smaller if a full-service fitness facility is provided by the commercial sector)	2,300	4,700	7,000	Resultant area is similar to other facilities of this size and scope.
Aerobic fitness/dance studio expansion	1,400	400	1,800	Resultant area is similar to other facilities of this size and scope.
Gymnasium with walking track above		12,000	12,000	Allows for a double gymnasium with walking track above.
Change room expansion	3,000	4,000	7,000	Resultant area will allow for expansion and addition of adult/club rooms.
Multi-purpose room expansion	1,460	6,000	7,460	Variety of room sizes and flexible layout
Older adult component		12,000	12,000	Components identified in Section 3.6.
Child minding room		800	800	Typical area for a facility of this style and scope.
Pre-school program room		1,000	1,000	To be confirmed against Provincial legislation.
Health/wellness/first aide room		150	150	Based on typical standards.
Additional office/Leisure and Community Services staff	130	750	880	Assumes 4 offices in an open office configuration.
Additional storage	1,000	3,000	4,000	Based on similar facilities.
Additional washrooms	500	600	1,100	Based on occupancy assumptions & OBC.
Enlarged foyer/information/registration	2,000	1,500	3,500	To accommodate greater facility usage.
Building gross-up	4,910	14,215	19,125	Calculated at 1.25.
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,500</b>	<b>71,115</b>	<b>97,615</b>	

## Summary of Facility-Specific Strategies

**Arena strategy:** It is recommended that as the need for a fifth ice surface approaches by around 2021, consideration should be given to adding a third ice surface to the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex as the preferred location. This facility was selected because in order to add a third ice surface and sufficient additional parking to the Stouffville Arena complex, one of the adjacent recently renovated soccer fields would have to be relocated, thus reducing the two-field cluster that is ideal for that site. Additional required parking may result in the loss of both fields.

**Aquatic facilities** are recommended to be provided on three levels: i) expanded indoor facilities at the Leisure Centre; ii) a new community-scale outdoor water play facility at Memorial Park; and iii) six smaller water play facilities (splash pads) at major neighbourhood parks throughout the urban area, and a seventh water play facility at the future Musselman's Lake community park.

**Fitness Facilities Strategy:** It is recommended that the provision of fitness facilities be shared between the Municipality, the commercial sector and the non-profit sector. The municipal role should focus on a fully supervised fitness program, and by providing considerable focus on markets that are not typically as well served by the commercial sector, namely: youth, mid-age adults and seniors. The recommended provision guideline is one adequate municipal fitness centre per community. The provision strategy recommends rebuilding and expanding the fitness facility at the Leisure Centre when that facility is expanded. The new fitness facility would comprise 7,000 square foot strength and conditioning gym and a 1,800 square foot aerobic exercise/dance studio. Those facilities would be complemented by expanded and dedicated adult/club change rooms, a gymnasium, an indoor running/walking track and expanded aquatic facilities. If the commercial sector provides a full-service fitness centre before the proposed Leisure Centre expansion, the municipal facility should likely be smaller but with the same provision of identified areas of service including dedicated change rooms.

**Strategy for Indoor Multi-purpose Space:** The strategy proposes that indoor multi-purpose space be provided within various leisure facilities throughout the Municipality to accommodate a wide variety of municipal, library, community, and other programs and uses. 21,070 square feet of multi-purpose space is currently provided in the Leisure Centre and Library, the Stouffville Arena, the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex, the Museum and community centre, the Ballantrae Community Centre, the Lemonville Community Centre and Latcham Hall. That inventory should be maintained, with some enhancement to Latcham Hall to better accommodate the increasing demand for programming offered by the Municipality, as well as from community and social service groups and organizations. Approximately 6,000 square feet of additional and better configured multi-purpose space should be provided when the Leisure Centre is expanded as proposed. Approximately 2,500 square feet of additional multi-purpose space is recommended as part of the library expansion. It is recommended that the former library facility be retained as a municipal leisure facility when the lease to the Care and Share operation expires in 2013. This facility should be renovated to create approximately 6,000 square feet of additional multi-purpose space to support the rapidly increasing municipal and community programming requirements.

A provision guideline of 0.8 square feet of indoor multi-purpose space is recommended (not including gymnasias), which would result in 23,570 square feet of *additional* space provided by full build-out (55,800). If the former library building is retained and renovated as recommended, the requirement for future multi-purpose space would be reduced by approximately 6,000 square feet. If a third ice pad is added to the Clippers Sports Complex, one or more multi-purpose rooms should be included to support meetings and programs. If a municipal gymnasium is provided, that may reduce the requirement for other multi-purpose space, as some programming and activities better suited to a gymnasium are accommodated in that facility. It is recommended that the current provision guideline be

monitored for adequacy as the leisure programming role of the Municipality matures, and the demand by community and social service groups and other providers using municipal facilities evolves over the next few years. It is also recommended that the Municipality's facility allocation policy be strengthened, particularly as it relates to use and rental of multi-purpose space.

It is recommended that the Municipality construct a 12,000 square foot double **gymnasium** to be an integral part of an expanded Leisure Centre to support a wide variety of community leisure programs, gym sports for all ages, floor-based fitness programs for all ages, and large-group social activities and events. The 12,000 square feet of space is necessary to support a double gym and an elevated indoor running/walking track, associated with a second floor fitness centre.

**Older Adult Recreation Facilities Strategy:** It is recommended that recreation programming and related services for older adults be provided at three locations. A new, principle facility with dedicated space for older adults should be integrated into an enlarged Leisure Centre. The older adult component should be in the order of 12,000 square feet in size. Programming and activities for older adults would be focused in this facility and complemented by other programming and activities elsewhere within the Leisure Centre (e.g., aquatics, fitness, gym sports, large social events, programming in multi-purpose rooms, etc.). Programming for older adults should be provided and an associated seniors club should be encouraged for both the Vandorf and Ballantrae communities to be accommodated within the Ballantrae Community Centre and the recently expanded and upgraded Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre. In these facilities, it is not recommended that dedicated space be allocated to the older adult clubs.

**Ball Diamond Strategy:** Senior lit ball diamonds will mostly be clustered at Bethesda Park with three facilities required in that park by full build-out (55,800 population). Diamond #1 in Memorial Park has been retained and refurbished as a lit spectator facility, and a lit diamond is maintained at Ballantrae Park and another at Vandorf Park. Five-Pitch/Junior diamonds will be provided at Thicketwood and Rupert Parks as well as other local parks and elementary school as required in future. By full build-out, a total of five Junior ball diamonds will be required.

**Playing Field Strategy:** Most of the outdoor soccer facilities will be located at four sites: i) an expanded Bethesda Park, ii) adjacent to the Stouffville Arena, iii) Ballantrae Park, and iv) the new Operations Centre. The practice field at the former secondary school in Stouffville is considered temporary. The current arrangement with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority to utilize Bruce's Mill Conservation Area and the use of the Teva industrial site are also considered as temporary. These temporary facilities should be replaced with new facilities located in municipal parks. In future, elementary school sites should not be considered for soccer facilities to be used by the community soccer program. However, lighted artificial turf fields located at secondary schools and shared by school and community field sport programs is a feasible alternative strategy, which would reduce the requirement for as many natural turf fields provided by school boards and the Municipality.

A commercial **indoor soccer/field house** facility is being built in Whitchurch-Stouffville in 2013. The facility will comprise a full-size soccer field which can be divided into three 100' x 200' fields and will be available to support a community indoor soccer program and other activities, including: indoor running and walking; exercise/fitness/rehab programs; Ultimate Frisbee; golf practice (driving range); off-season training for any sport; children's summer sports programs/camps/events/soccer clinics; school daytime and after school board of education programs (soccer, track and field, other); flag football; field hockey; box lacrosse; rugby; baseball; and bocce.

**Tennis Court Strategy:** As recommended in the 2008 Strategy, there should be a shift toward larger clusters of higher quality lit courts and away from minimum quality single and double unlit tennis courts. It is recommended that new courts be provided in clusters of at least four and preferably more lit facilities and that they are located in higher level parks such as the Stouffville Arena site, Ballantrae Park, Vandorf Park and Memorial Park. If a tennis club forms at Memorial Park, a club house should be considered to support the tennis program. By full build-out, there should be 19-20 lit and 4-5 unlit courts.

The **Public Library** was not the focus of the original Leisure Facilities Strategy or this Update as independent library studies completed for the WSPL but the information included in this report. This was especially important since expansion of the library relates to the proposed expansion of the Leisure Centre. The Library Board proposes that library services be concentrated in one location within urban Stouffville, and that facilities be expanded at the current location to meet the evolving needs of the growing population. It is also recommended that the existing level of space provision as outlined in the recent dMA report be retained (0.65 square feet per capita) to reflect defined and evolving library space requirements. For a full build-out population of 55,800, 20,845 additional square of space would be required.

## **Implications for Parkland Requirements**

**A**lthough the 2008 Leisure Facilities Strategy did not examine or report on parkland requirements across the Municipality, it is clear that additional open space will be needed to accommodate all of the proposed outdoor and indoor leisure facilities that will be required to full build-out and beyond. The Municipality is fortunate to have three significant parks and two other recreation facility sites within the urban area, as well as three significant parks located within the rural area, including the community-level park proposed for the Musselman's Lake community. Although planning is in the early stage, Musselman's Lake Park is not to be a location for sports fields.

With three quarters of the full build-out population targeted for the urban area, there is a need to concentrate much of the community-wide open space that is intended for active recreation uses in or near the urban area.

The following recommended facilities require a location to be determined.

- 1 cricket pitch (if demand is warrants)
- 7 Small Mini Soccer fields (1 remaining to replace some of the temporary facilities, 4 by 2016 and 2 by 2021)
- 11 Micro Soccer fields (4 to replace some of the temporary facilities, 4 by 2016 and 3 by 2021)
- Tennis facilities (10 lit courts in two locations and 2-3 unlit courts in a neighbourhood park TBD)
- One Junior ball diamond (in a neighbourhood park TBD)
- Two neighbourhood-scale aquatic facilities (in neighbourhood parks TBD)
- Approximately 8,570 square feet of multi-purpose space

One desirable option that has been discussed for some of these facilities is to enlarge Bethesda Park to accommodate additional sports fields, support facilities and associated amenities. Although a facility-fit/conceptual design exercise would be required to determine the ideal facility layout and space requirements, a rough estimate of land requirements suggests that in the order of 25 additional acres (10 hectares) would be required to accommodate the facilities identified to meet the full build-out population of 55,800.

It is recommended that a facility fit/conceptual design exercise be undertaken in the near future to fine-tune land requirements, if enlarging Bethesda Park is to be considered.

Other recommended facilities are proposed to be accommodated within existing parkland and facility sites such as Memorial Park (enlarged Leisure Centre and library, and planned outdoor facilities that include: an water play facility, tennis courts, a skateboard facility, playgrounds, picnic areas, a basketball court, tennis courts, etc.), the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex (third ice surface and additional multi-purpose space), and the Stouffville Arena site (enlarged tennis facility).

A comprehensive parks and open space analysis and plan would identify other parkland requirements at the neighbourhood and community-wide levels to ensure sufficient lands and optimum locations for neighbourhood parks, community parks and a linear open space system to support a town-wide off-road walking and bicycle trail system. This type of parks and open space review and plan is anticipated by the Leisure and Community Services Department as part of a parks, recreation and culture master plan to be undertaken in the near future.

## **Capital Cost Implications**

The capital forecast focuses on the types of facilities that are included in the 2013 Leisure Facilities Strategy Update and includes the major items captured in the Fiscal Impact Study and/or 10 year capital forecast, including the required life cycle improvements current forecasted at the various facility locations. The has been included to provide a comprehensive overview of the significant expenses related to facilities for use in the future 10 year forecast, impact studies and related DC updates. It does not include the following

categories that are included in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville ten year capital forecast: playgrounds (other than those identified for Memorial and Bethesda parks), trail development, woodlot management, landscaping and trees, general park amenities, park and facility signage, equipment, pooled assets, non-leisure facilities, fitness equipment, museum exhibits and artifact conservation projects, the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment life cycle and other upgrades, and library life cycle and other upgrades (including collection/microfilm/furnishings/organizational staff study/website/check-in systems). Estimates reflect 2013 costs and will be higher than the previous 2008 Facility Strategy for the same items as no allowance was included for indexing of costs over future years. Also, no allowance for inflation has been factored in for subsequent years in this study as well as it will change year to year. For planning purposes, the capital forecast has been organized into five-year intervals that are tied to upcoming census dates.

The following are the estimates for each time period:

- 2013-2015 \$8,737,782
- 2016-2020 \$41,515,137
- 2021-2026 \$13,441,300

Two large components of the \$41,515,137 allocated for the 2016-2020 time period are i) the expansion of the Leisure Centre (\$23,964,500) and ii) the expansion of the Public Library (\$6,253,500). Together, they represent almost 73% of the total for that time period.