Smithers
Parks & Recreation Master Plan

TOWN OF SMITHERS

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2024

Town of Smithers

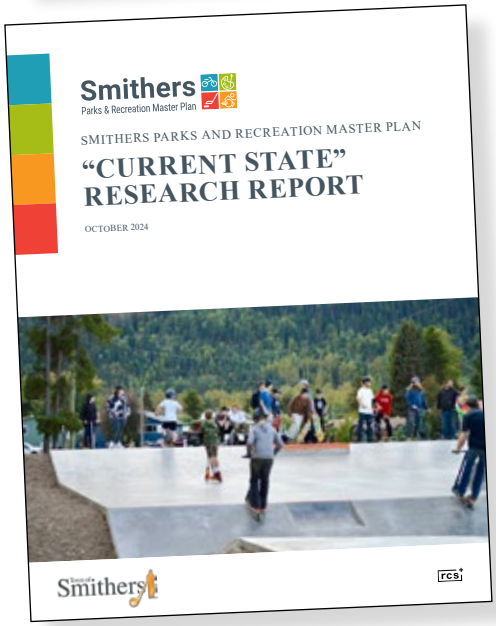
rcs+ BINNIE

THE TOWN OF SMITHERS ACKNOWLEDGES THE GIDIMT'EN CLAN AND THE WITSUWIT'EN PEOPLE, ON WHOSE UNCEDED ANCESTRAL TERRITORY WE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Smithers has developed a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide future investment and focus areas for these highly valued services. The Master Plan establishes priorities and provides staff and Council with a valuable point of reference that can ensure resources are directed to where they can provide the most community benefit.

The Master Plan was informed by an extensive community engagement process that included over 600 touchpoints with the community through surveys, discussion sessions, virtual engagement and targeted community organization consultation. The engagement along with other research conducted by the project team (trends, population and demographics, inventory and assessment, benchmarking, etc.) informed the key elements of the Master Plan. The detailed findings from the engagement and research are contained into two project background documents – the *"What We Heard" Engagement Findings Report* and *Current State Summary Report*. A summary of findings from the community review of the Draft Master Plan is also provided in Appendix D.



The Master Plan identified **six Service Delivery Objectives**. These objectives provide a foundation that identify what the Town is looking to achieve through its ongoing investment in parks and recreation and articulates key values that guide focus areas and priorities.

- **Service Delivery Objective #1**: Parks and recreation services provide physical, social, and creative opportunities for all.
- **Service Delivery Objective #2**: The ongoing investment in parks and recreation results in a more vibrant, appealing, connected, and flourishing community.
- **Service Delivery Objective #3**: Parks and recreation services are aligned with best practices and provide high quality experiences.
- **Service Delivery Objective #4**: Parks and recreation services are financially sustainable.
- **Service Delivery Objective #5**: Parks and recreation services are collaborative, adaptable, and able to meet dynamic community needs.
- **Service Delivery Objective #6**: Parks and recreation services show environment leadership.

The Master Plan identifies **four Key Directions** that have been identified as the most significant focus areas for investment and action over the next 10 years. These Key Directions are targeted at gaps, needs, and opportunities identified through the research and engagement. Additional information on each Key Direction is provided in Section 5.2.

- **Key Direction #1**: Re-imagine Heritage Park and Central Park.
- **Key Direction #2**: Create more structure and purpose around park experiences and uses.
- **Key Direction #3**: Prioritize trail investment to create better connectivity and all-season opportunities.
- **Key Direction #4**: Prioritize working with partners to meet community needs for large span multi-use space.

Section 6 of the Master Plan provides an additional **38 Amenity Strategies** and **4 Service Delivery Strategies**. The Amenity Strategies are aimed at optimizing investment into several different types / categories of parks and recreation infrastructure and also further build upon the Key Directions. The Service Delivery Strategies include 10 actions that reflect a mix of recommended new practices/initiatives as well as those that already work well and should be advanced.

Section 7 of the Master Plan provides an initial, high-level implementation plan that outlines timing and resource requirements. It is important to recognize that the Master Plan is not intended to be a static document, but rather one that is continually revisited. As such, the Key Directions and Strategies will require continual adjustment and updating based on resource realities, emerging needs, and funding or partnership opportunities.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. MASTER PLAN PURPOSE

The Town of Smithers has developed this new Parks and Recreation Master Plan to provide a long-term strategic plan for parks and recreation service delivery. The Master Plan gives Town Council, staff, and partners a resource and point of reference that will:

- Help ensure future decision making and resource allocation is informed;
- Identify priorities and focus areas for capital and operational investment; and
- Creates a vision for key spaces, facilities, and topics.

The Master Plan is a long-term document that aligns with the Town's Official Community Plan (Bylaw No. 1935) as well as other key and related strategic planning influences, including the Strategic Priorities Plan 2023 – 2026, Age Friendly Assessment and Action Plan for the Town of Smithers (originally developed in 2016 and updated in 2023), Accessibility Plan, Smithers Active Transportation Plan, Town of Smithers Tourism Strategic Plan, and Child Care Plan (2021). Reflecting the Town's broader commitment to best practices in the provision of public parks and recreation, the Master Plan also reflects alignment with a number of provincial and national frameworks and strategies, including *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* (2015), *Parks for All* (2017), *Active People, Active Places—BC Physical Activity Strategy* (2015), and *Let's Get Moving: A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada* (2018).

The Town furthermore acknowledges that it can play an important role in reconciliation and decolonization through the provision of park and recreation services. This role includes advancing relevant Calls to Action identified in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report and Calls to Action.*

1.2. PROCESS AND INPUTS

The Master Plan process was initiated in the summer of 2023 and concluded in September 2024. The graphic below illustrates the three key phases that led to the development of the final Master Plan.

1. Learning About Parks and Recreation in Smithers

a) Research and service level analysis
**Findings in the "Current State" Research Report*
b) Engagement with groups, key interests, and the community
**Findings in the "What We Heard" Engagement Summary Report*

2. Strategic Direction Setting

a) Using the research, analysis, and engagement to identify key areas of focus.
b) Working with the Task Force to test potential strategies and actions.

3. Developing the Master Plan

a) Draft the Master Plan
b) Community review
c) Final Master Plan

The Master Plan process was guided by a Project Task Force consisting of representatives from a number of community organizations and partners. The Task Force played a critical role in shaping the Master Plan by providing a local lens and feedback at key stages in the process.

Community Input into the Master Plan

Input from the community on the current state of parks and recreation, as well as future needs and opportunities, was critical to developing the Master Plan. In total, the project team had over 600 touchpoints with the community through surveys, discussion sessions, virtual engagement, and targeted community organization consultation. A summary of key findings is provided in Section 3 of this Master Plan report and the detailed engagement findings can be found in the "What We Heard" Community Engagement Findings Report.

2 THE CURRENT PARKS AND RECREATION CONTEXT

2.1. THE TOWN'S INVESTMENT IN PARKS AND RECREATION

The Town of Smithers invests over $2 million dollars per year in recreation and culture, representing approximately 9.7% of overall municipal expenditures.[1] When reflecting on the Town's investment into these services, it is also important to note that the replacement value of recreation facilities and park amenities owned and operated by the Town is in the tens of millions of dollars and represents a significant proportion of Town assets that will require long-term re-investment to sustain service levels.

Municipal investment into parks and recreation services is a justified and supported expenditure due to the numerous health, wellness, social, economic and community benefits that these services provide. Residents clearly understand these benefits both as they relate to their own household and the broader importance to the community. As stewards of public funds, the Town needs to ensure that the cost-benefit equation for providing parks and recreation is maximized so residents receive the greatest level of benefit from the financial input into these services.

Like many small to mid-sized communities, Smithers supports the provision of parks, recreation, and related opportunities (programs, activities, and events) through an indirect delivery model. This approach primarily involves supporting volunteer-based community organizations by providing subsidized facility time, grants, and other in-kind supports. Using this approach enables the Town to make the most efficient use of resources by leveraging community organization and volunteer expertise and efforts. The Town does provide some direct programming through the Recreation Coordinator position and contracted instructors.

Key Findings from the Master Plan Resident Survey

- 97% of residents believe that parks and recreation opportunities are important to resident quality of life (83% indicated that they are "very" important).
- 97% of residents believe that parks and recreation opportunities are important contributors to the appeal and attractiveness of Smithers for current and prospective residents (82% indicate that they are "very" important).

[1] Based on 2023 Town of Smithers approved budget.

Service Delivery Models:

- Direct Delivery: The local government provides programming and other related activities at facilities that they operate.

- **Indirect Delivery: The local government facilitates the provision of programming and related activities by financially supporting (and in some cases operating) facilities that are available for community organizations to book at a subsidized cost. Indirect delivery often also includes other types of support such as grants, annual funding contributions, and in-kind resources (e.g. staff time) to support program delivery by community organizations.**

- Mix of Direct and Indirect Delivery: The local government directly offers some programming and other related activities to meet gaps and ensure equitable access, but also invests in recreation and culture through the indirect methods noted previously.

Partnerships and funding collaborations also play a key role in the provision of parks and recreation opportunities. An example of a local recreation partnership would be the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre which is funded by multiple jurisdictions (Town of Smithers, Village of Telkwa, and Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako - Electoral Area A), owned by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, and operated under the direction of the Bulkley Valley Aquatic Centre Management Society.

2.2. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FACILITIES

Below is an overview of parks and recreation infrastructure (facilities and amenities) in Smithers. The Town's inventory represents an asset base with a replacement value in the tens of millions of dollars, built over numerous decades through a combination of community and Town-led initiatives. The inventory includes over 25 different types / categories of facility and amenity types operated by the Town and partners.

2 Arenas

Civic Centre Arena and the New Arena

The Town of Smithers operates the facility and community organizations provide programming.

Regional Pool & Recreation Centre

Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre

Funding Partnership with Regional District and Surrounding Communities. The Regional District owns the land and the building. The facility is operated by the Bulkley Valley Aquatic Centre Management Society.

Municipal Library

Smithers Public Library

The Town of Smithers provides funding and helps operate and maintain the building.

The Smithers Public Library Board is responsible for providing overall direction to the library to ensure relevant, comprehensive and efficient service to the community. The Library Board is established by the Library Act of the Province of British Columbia, and since the Smithers Public Library is a municipal Library, members are appointed to the Board by the Town of Smithers Council.

Gymnastics Studio

Smithers Curling Centre

Smithers Art Gallery

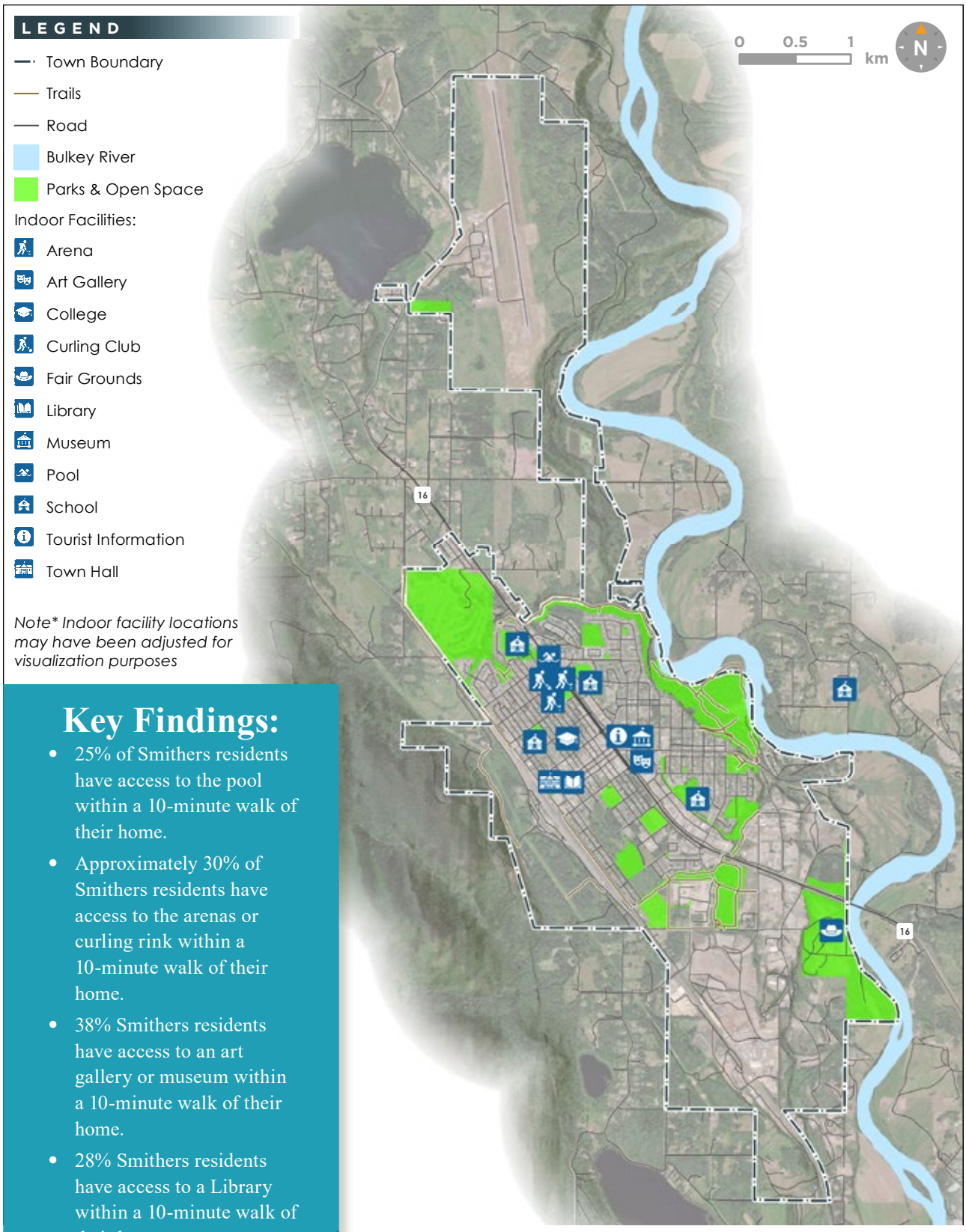
Bulkley Valley Museum

School Gymnasiums
(3 SD54 Public Schools, 3 Private Schools)

Smithers Fairgrounds Hall

Ranger Park Building

INDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE MAP



Key Findings:

- 25% of Smithers residents have access to the pool within a 10-minute walk of their home.
- Approximately 30% of Smithers residents have access to the arenas or curling rink within a 10-minute walk of their home.
- 38% Smithers residents have access to an art gallery or museum within a 10-minute walk of their home.
- 28% Smithers residents have access to a Library within a 10-minute walk of their home.

OUTDOOR PARKS AND RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE IN SMITHERS

MUNICIPALLY PROVIDED OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

1 Skate Park (Heritage Park)

1 Municipal Campground (Riverside Campground)

1 Off Leash Dog Park (Heritage Park)

7 Playgrounds

1 Outdoor Stage (Bovill Square)

6 Ball Diamonds (5 at Elks Park, 1 at Heritage Park)

1 Fair Grounds (Smither Fairgrounds is owned by the Town and operated by the Fall Fair Management Committee)

1 Disc Golf Course (Ranger Park)

2 Tennis Courts (Montreal Tennis Courts)

1 Outdoor Rink (Central Park)

13 Parks

4 Rectangular Fields (3 at Chandler Park, 1 at Heritage Park)

2 Basketball Courts (1 net available at Dogwood and Rangers Park)

1 Bike Park (Elks Park)

OTHER OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

1 Outdoor Stage (operated by the Smithers Community Radio Society)

1 Track (Smithers Secondary School)

1 Community Garden (Northern Root Community Garden located in Elks Park)

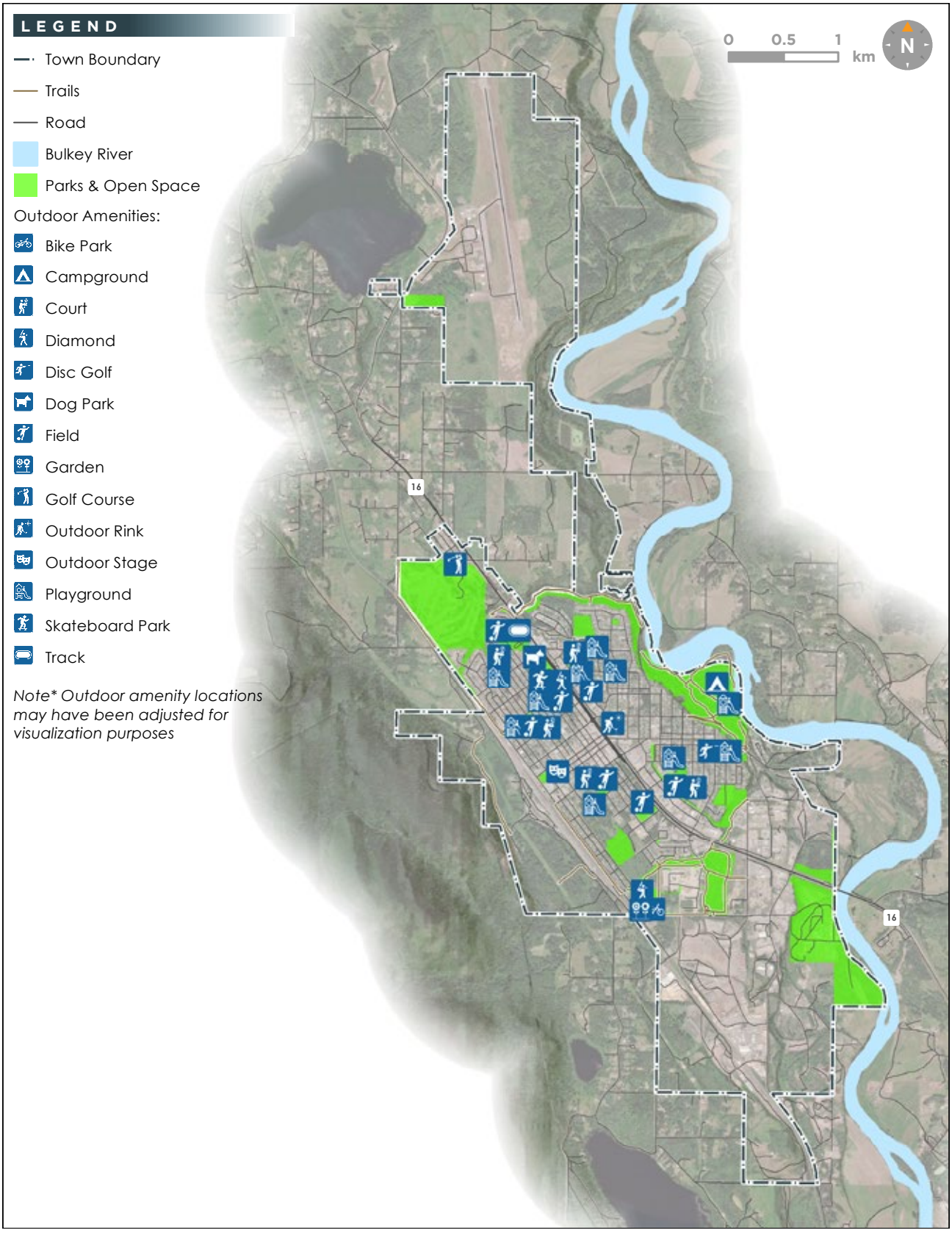
3 Playgrounds (School Playgrounds)

1 Golf Course (Smithers Golf & Country Club)

4 Sport Courts (School Courts)

6 Multi-Use Fields (School Fields)

OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

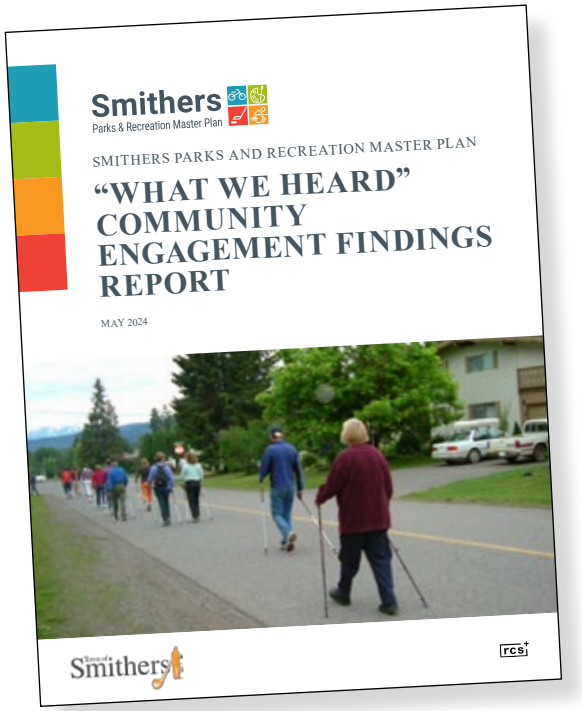


3 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH

3.1. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (INPUT PHASE)

Community engagement was a critical aspect of developing the Master Plan. Through engagement, the project team was able to garner insights on resident activity preferences, trends, motivators and barriers to participation, satisfaction levels, and future needs. The community engagement was guided by a Communications and Engagement Plan. A key goal of the engagement was to ensure that all residents and community organizations had multiple opportunities to provide input. **The adjacent graphic identifies the engagement tactics and levels of participation.**

Summarized are key findings and highlights from the engagement. The detailed findings are available in the ***"What We Heard" Community Engagement Findings Report.***



HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (CODED VERSION)
276 Responses

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (NON-CODED VERSION)
95 Responses

YOUTH SURVEY
127 Responses

GROUP SURVEY
24 Responses

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSIONS
22 Discussions with 38 Participants.

PROJECT WEB PLATFORM TOOLS
(www.engagesmithersrecplan.ca)

- **Mapping Tool** – 65 'pins' from 26 contributors
- **Recreation Interest Quick Polls** - 23 responses from 17 contributors

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY FINDINGS

Most residents participate in outdoor recreation activities on a regular basis. *86% of household survey respondents indicated they hike/walk/ or run on a regular basis. 95% of household survey respondents indicated that they used a trail in Smithers at least a few times a year, with approximately two-thirds indicating that they used a trail at least weekly. Additionally, when asked about what motivates them to participate in parks and recreation activities 71% indicated that they participate to enjoy nature.*

The Bulkley Valley Pool & Recreation Centre is the most popular indoor recreation amenity in the community. *Almost half of household survey respondents indicated that their household uses the pool for drop-in swimming and over one-quarter use the pool for programming. When asked about future priorities for facility investment, the pool was identified as the top amenity amongst survey respondents.*

The biggest barrier to participating in recreation and parks activities for residents is poor or inadequate facilities. *When asked about barriers to their participation in parks and recreation activities, the most prevalent response from household survey respondents was poor/inadequate facilities. The need for improved or more accessible facilities and program space was also commonly identified through the community group and stakeholder engagement.*

There is a growing demand for large span indoor multipurpose space. *The resident, user group, and youth engagement all reflect a desire for a large span (e.g. community gymnasium or flexi-hall) type of space that can accommodate a variety of programs and unstructured activity.*

Spontaneous and unstructured recreation is an important aspect of the parks and recreation landscape in Smithers. *Engagement with the community validated that a significant proportion of recreation activity occurs in casual and unstructured ways. While it is important to continue supporting organized programs, there is a clear need to ensure that informal opportunities exist for residents of all ages and interests.*

Communication about parks and recreation opportunities could be improved in Smithers. *Approximately one-third of household survey respondents indicated that they do not feel adequately informed about parks and recreation opportunities or has awareness of available programming. Findings from the engagement also reflect the need to use a variety of traditional and newer communication platforms to reach both tenured and newer residents. Additionally, a number of community groups also expressed that opportunities exist to enhance dialogue and collaborations between groups and the Town.*

Community Review of the Draft Master Plan

The Draft Master Plan was shared with the community in June 2024 through an open house event and online materials. Feedback from residents and community group representatives was sought and used to refine this Master Plan document.

Please refer to Appendix D for a summary of the feedback received.

3.2. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH

A variety of other research and analysis methods were used to further explore the state of parks and recreation in Smithers and, building upon the engagement, identify or validate potential needs and focus areas.

- **Inventory of amenities and spaces**
- **Population and demographics analysis**
- **Spatial analysis**
- **Benchmarking**
- **Trends and best practices review**
- **Functional assessments of the park system**

Overview of the Research Inputs

Provided as follows are highlights and key findings from the research and analysis. The detailed findings are available in the ***"Current State" Summary Report.***

Research Highlights and Key Findings

- The Town of Smithers has created a good foundation for future planning. The most recent Official Community Plan (OCP), along with other recent planning documents (Child Care Plan, and Accessibility Plan), has set some reasonable objectives and policy recommendations that will integrate well into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- The Town of Smithers population demographics are expected to change over the next 10 years. While the Town still has a higher proportion of youth (ages 0-14) than the rest of B.C., the seniors population is expected to grow while the youth population is expected to decline.
- Opportunities exist to use recreation as a key driver of improved health metrics and outcomes. Anticipating different recreation and park services needs can help to be proactive in addressing health outcomes that are linked with an aging and sedentary population.
- Partnerships are a large component of how Smithers provides recreation services and programs. The Town owns but does not operate programs within a number of recreation facilities. In order to maintain what is currently provided it is important that the Town maintains and updates current agreements in place.
- The two arena facilities have the capacity for more use, including further summer utilization. While the New Arena is the newest ice arena in the Town of Smithers, the New Arena is considered 'a second sheet of ice' due to its limitations in hosting competitive events. The Civic Centre arena is the more desired space for ice bookings.
- The Smithers Public Library is an important community space and resource centre. The library has seen a significant increase in program participation as well as the use of their computer stations and Wi-Fi services. Its current size poses challenges to hosting events and expanding library programs.
- Sport field bookings have increased over the past four years, but there is still capacity for more bookings in the system. Sport organizations are growing and there is a desire to extend the season of play.
- In general, benchmarking research indicates that the provision (on a per capita basis) for most types of parks and recreation facilities is similar in Smithers compared to similarly sized communities.

Findings from the Spatial Analysis of the Parks and Outdoor Amenity Inventory in Smithers

57%
of Smithers residents have access to a park with a playground within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

36%
of residents have access to a sport field within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

7%
of residents have access to a ball diamond within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

38%
of residents have access to a tennis court within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

84%
of Smithers residents have access to a park with a playground within a **10-minute walk** of their home.

73%
of residents have access to a sport field within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

33%
of residents have access to a ball diamond within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

76%
of residents have access to a tennis court within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

4 SERVICE DELIVERY OBJECTIVES

4.1. WHAT ARE THE SERVICE DELIVERY OBJECTIVES?

Publicly supported parks and recreation services are most effective and efficient when they are rooted in clear objectives. The Service Delivery Objectives in Section 4.2 provide a foundation that identify what the Town is looking to achieve through its ongoing investment in parks and recreation and articulates key values that will guide focus areas and priorities. The Key Directions, Strategies, and Actions in Sections 5 and 6 help achieve the Service Delivery Objectives.

4.2. THE SERVICE DELIVERY OBJECTIVES

Service Delivery Objectives	What does it mean?	How will the Town implement and measure success of the Service Delivery Objective?
Service Delivery Objective #1: Parks and recreation services provide physical, social, and creative opportunities for all.	Recreation is often applied as a broad term and in the Smithers service delivery context includes sport, leisure, arts, and culture. Through its investment in programming, facilities, and support for community organizations that deliver these opportunities, the Town will strive to ensure that residents of all ages, ability levels, and backgrounds can benefit from participation in parks and recreation. The Town will also work to identify areas where historical, social, and physical barriers exist.	• Regular engagement with residents to assess perceptions on inclusion and access. • Targeted and ongoing engagement with equity deserving individuals and service providers to identify barriers and needs. • Program audits to ensure a sufficient supply of no or low-cost opportunities. • Physical accessibility reviews of facilities.

Service Delivery Objective #2: The ongoing investment in parks and recreation results in a more vibrant, appealing, connected, and flourishing community.	The Town invests nearly 10% of its total expenditures towards parks and recreation because these services provide an array of significant benefits that residents strongly recognize and value. Over the next 10 years the Town will use the Master Plan to optimize parks and recreation (and related) services with the objective of even further leveraging its investment through healthier and more engaged residents, increased visitation and associated economic benefits, and a more connected and prosperous community. Parks and recreation facilities and the experiences they provide also contribute significantly to creating a sense of 'place' in a community. The Town's investment in infrastructure and activities will continue to focus on connecting residents with positive experiences that make them feel part of the community.	• Regular engagement to validate and test key values and benefits related to parks and recreation. • Available public health data that provides insights into outcomes / data points on resident wellness. • Through improved collection of data, statistics on visitation and economic benefits related to parks and recreation (e.g. non-local spending, financial value of parks and trails, etc.).
Service Delivery Objective #3: Parks and recreation services are aligned with best practices and provide high quality experiences.	Programming supported by the Town will reflect alignment with best practices such as Sport for Life's Long Term Development (LTD) and other physical literacy resources. The Town will also focus on quality with programming it delivers directly and ensure programming it supports indirectly is offered in a safe, high quality, and inclusive manner.	• Program participant feedback. • Regular program audits. • Qualitative and quantitative community surveys that provides insights into experiential aspects of programs, events and spontaneous use.
Service Delivery Objective #4: Parks and recreation services are financially sustainable.	The Town has limited financial resources and must make the best use of public funds. Overextending Town resources by providing facilities that are not viable long-term presents a risk that will ultimately impact ratepayers. The Town will need to balance demands for new infrastructure with sustaining what already exists and prioritize potential projects that provide the greatest benefit within financial resource realities.	• Over the next 10 years, the Town is able to keep expenditures at an affordable level. • Cost-benefit rationale is used as a primary consideration / criteria when making the final decision on potential projects. • The Town conducts regular partnership evaluations which reflect that these partnerships have made good use of public resources. • Success with utilizing grants and other external sources of funding.

Service Delivery Objective #5: Parks and recreation services are collaborative, adaptable, and able to meet dynamic community needs.	Parks and recreation activity preferences and demands are highly dynamic and continually evolving. The changes in a community can result from a host of factors including demographic shifts, the introduction of new activities, volunteer and community group capacity, climate change, facility supply, and broader provincial and national trends. The Town will ensure that staff and other available supports are best positioned to be adaptable and able to evolve over time. Collaborations with community groups and having access to strong data to support decision making will be key to achieving this objective.	• The Town collects good data through community engagement, bookings and program registration systems, and other sources. Staff are able to demonstrate how this data informs programming offered directly and supported indirectly by the Town. • Partnership agreements balance having sufficient structure with mechanisms to adapt and evolve over time. • Program audits reflect that the mix of programming and other activities are aligned with community needs (as identified through engagement).
Service Delivery Objective #6: Parks and recreation services show environment leadership.	Parks and recreation services play a critical role in helping reduce climate change and advance key sustainability initiatives. Parks help sequester carbon, provide critical habitats for a variety of species, mitigate erosion, and offer respite during hot weather. While indoor and some outdoor recreation facilities are often a significant user of water and GHG's, the Town can demonstrate leadership by implementing practices that mitigate resource consumption and promote sustainable practices.	• Energy tracking or audits of facilities. • Calculating the value of the Town's tree canopy and park spaces. • Analyzing green space loss or gain over the next 10+ years.

4.3. A COMMITMENT TO RECONCILIATION AND DECOLONIZATION

In alignment with and addition to the six Service Delivery Objectives identified, the Town will continue to work towards reconciliation and decolonization in how it provided parks and recreation (and related services). Ways in which this will be achieved include:

- Advancing Calls to Action that pertain to sport, health / physical activity, and culture from Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report.
- Identifying ways to decolonize parks, trails and recreation infrastructure and service delivery (e.g. revisiting historically embedded practices that may foster inequities or barriers, naming, etc.).
- Learning from other communities and sector best practices.

Working with local Indigenous organizations and First Nations partners to identify ways to make facilities and programming fully inclusive and accessible to Indigenous individuals will be critical to meaningful action on reconciliation and decolonization. The Town can additionally play a leadership role in advancing Indigenous participation and actions towards decolonization with local organizations through education and facilitating connections locally and regionally.

5 KEY DIRECTIONS

5.1. WHAT ARE THE KEY DIRECTIONS?

The Key Directions presented in this section reflect potential projects and focus areas that have been identified as priorities for the next 10 years. The Key Directions, to varying degrees, represent incremental investments aimed at optimizing parks and recreation opportunities, addressing gaps, and meeting key community needs identified through the community engagement and research.

5.2. 4 KEY DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

KEY DIRECTION #1: RE-IMAGINE HERITAGE PARK AND CENTRAL PARK.

Provided on the following pages are concept images for re-imagined Heritage and Central park spaces. These concepts provide a point of reference for future phases of planning, community engagement, and detailed design. The program spaces identified in each concept have been based on the following key considerations:

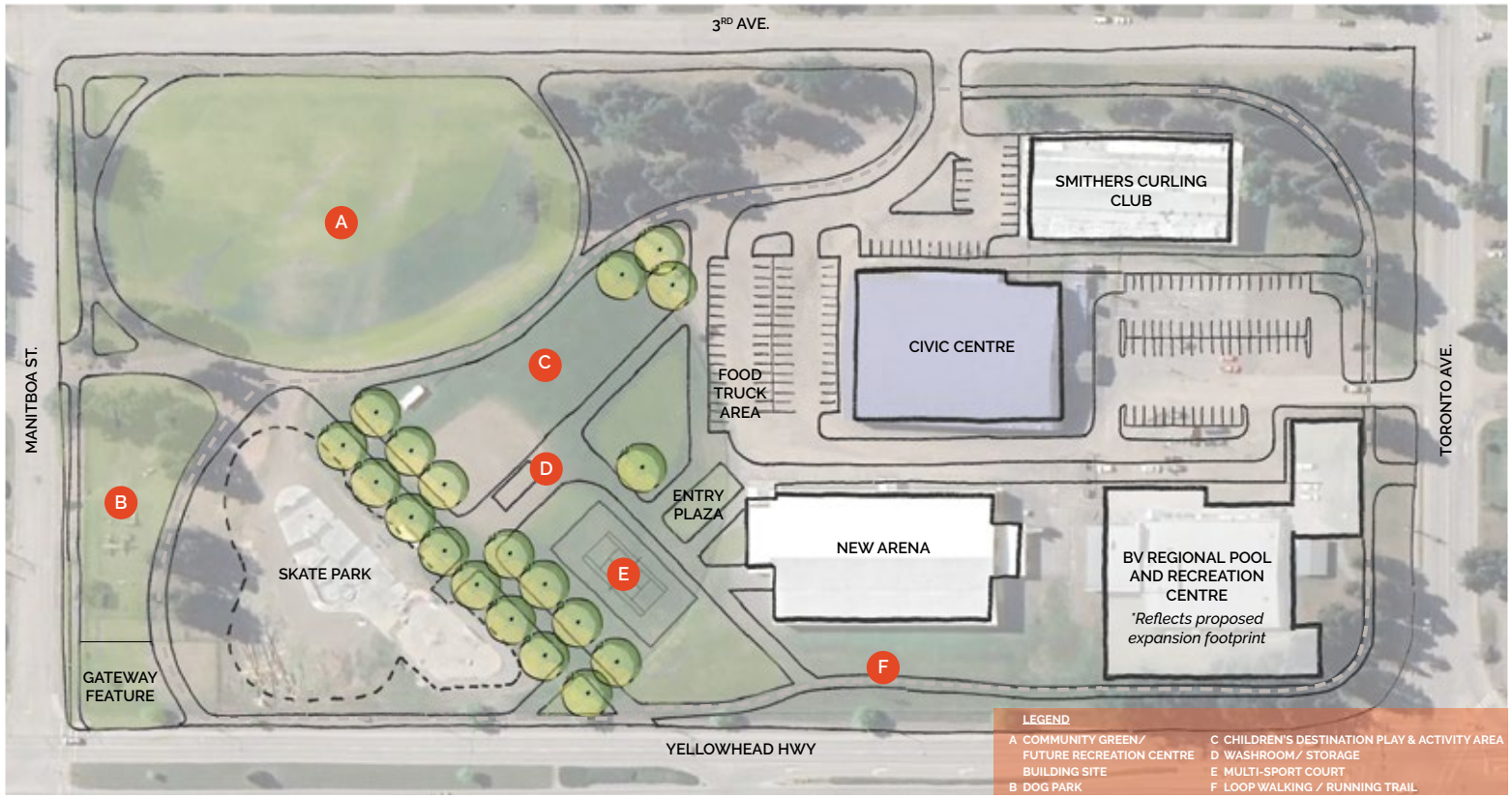
- Sustaining and enhancing existing amenities validated through the engagement and research as being highly used and valued (and in some instances requiring renewal).
- Making optimal use of existing park conditions (e.g. topography, street frontage and access, adjacent facilities and amenities, etc.).
- Current agreements between the Town and groups pertaining to specific amenities and spaces.
- New amenity and space needs identified through the Master Plan engagement and research.
- Leveraging the strong highway access of both sites to generate economic benefits and non-local spending (e.g. creating amenity appeal that can draw visitors and capture drivers passing through the community).

Rationale for this Key Direction:

- Enhanced outdoor amenities and improved park experiences were identified as key needs through the research and engagement.
- Both Heritage Park and Central Park are major outdoor hub spaces in Smithers that are currently under-activated.
- A number of amenities at both Heritage Park and Central Park are in need of renewal, replacement, or decommissioning.

Important Heritage Park Planning Influences

- Removing the underutilized ball diamond and consolidating ball use at Elks Field provides an opportunity to make higher value use of the space within Heritage Park.
- Meeting community needs for sport court space to accommodate emerging activities like pickleball.
- The space identified for Community Green / Future Recreation Centre Building Site (Space A) provides flexibility for spontaneous / casual use in the short term and potential use for new recreation infrastructure in the future.
- The concept image reflects all phases of the potential expansion to the Bulkley Valley Pool and Recreation Centre.
- Meeting identified community needs for more dynamic and diverse play experiences. The space identified as "C" in the concepts reflects an opportunity to create a "destination" type of play area that can attract children, youth, and families to the park and complement other amenities and facilities.
- The loop walking track (space "F") presents an easy win and relatively low cost opportunity to connect site amenities and further enhance active living in the community.



Heritage Park Amenity Example Images

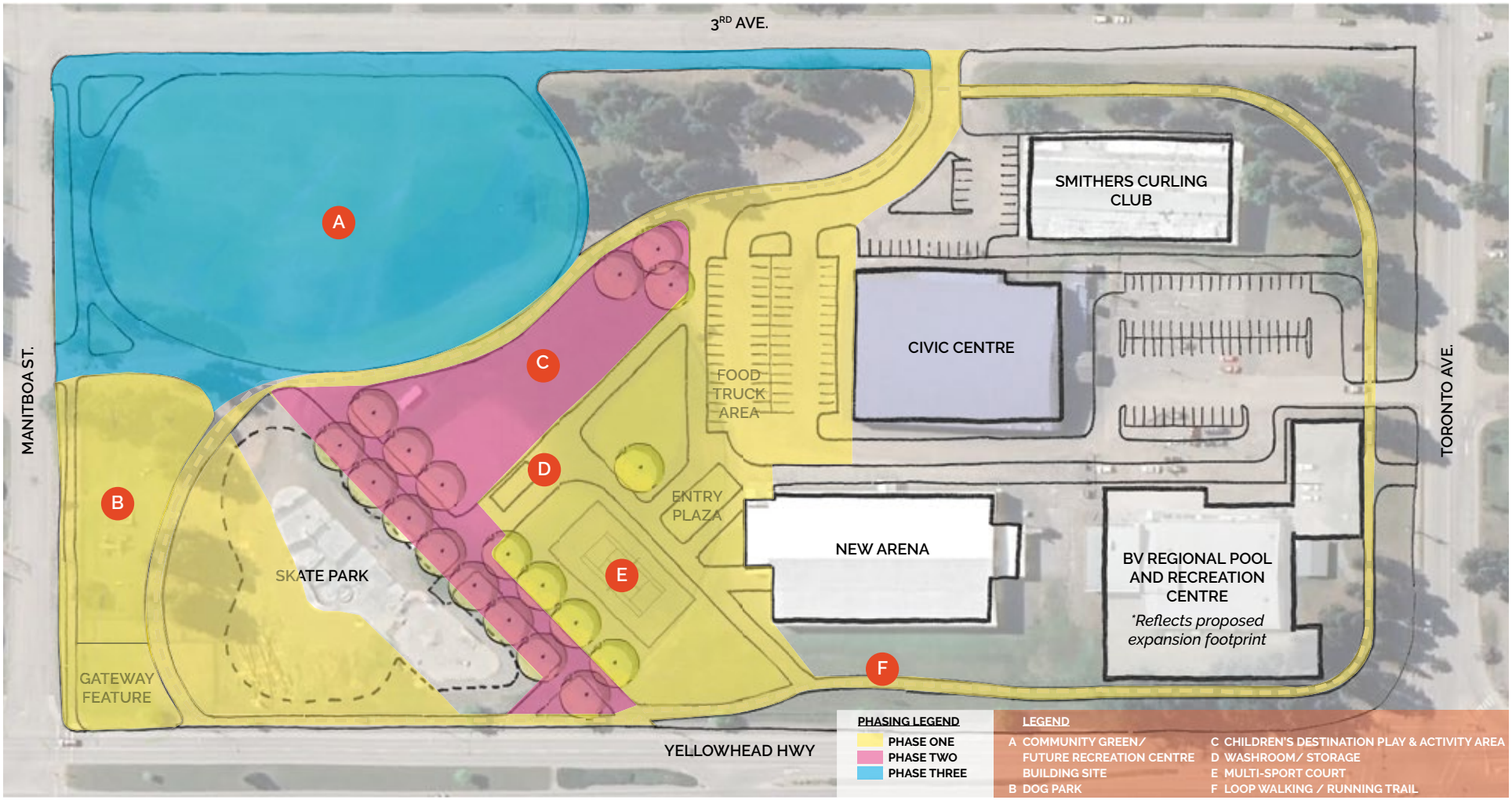
**These images are examples only that reflect potential space characteristics for the amenity types identified. Future engagement, planning and design will be undertaken to refine amenity spaces and characteristics.*

COMMUNITY GREEN	DOG PARK	PLAYGROUND	WASHROOM / STORAGE	MULTI-SPORT COURT

Heritage Park Phasing Plan

The following image reflects a recommended phasing plan for Heritage Park. This phasing plan reflects a logical sequencing of development based on site conditions, identified community needs, and anticipated resource availability. Additional next step considerations are further discussed on page 28.

**Anticipated phasing timelines: Phase 1 (0 – 3 years), Phase 2 (3 – 7 Years), Phase 3 (7+ Years). Phasing may change based on available resourcing and other factors (e.g. further technical site analysis) and will be further reviewed through subsequent planning.*



Important Central Park Planning Influences

- The space concept focused on the overarching objective of re-imagining Central Park as a community hub for festivals, events, and cultural activities.
- Flexibility is a key space design element, recognizing that potential space characteristics, phasing, partnerships, and feasibility requires further exploration by the Town and its partners.
- The outdoor rink has been re-oriented on the site and is envisioned to serve a multitude of purposes, including ice skating / shinny during the winter months, sport court activities during the summer months, and provides the opportunity to also serve as additional market and community event space.
- The boxed in area "A" (Renewed and Expanded Arts and Culture Hub) reflects the potential to create an expanded indoor arts and culture campus within the park. Additional exploration and planning will need to be undertaken to explore options, specific amenity needs, costs, space synergies, etc.

Central Park Amenity Example Images

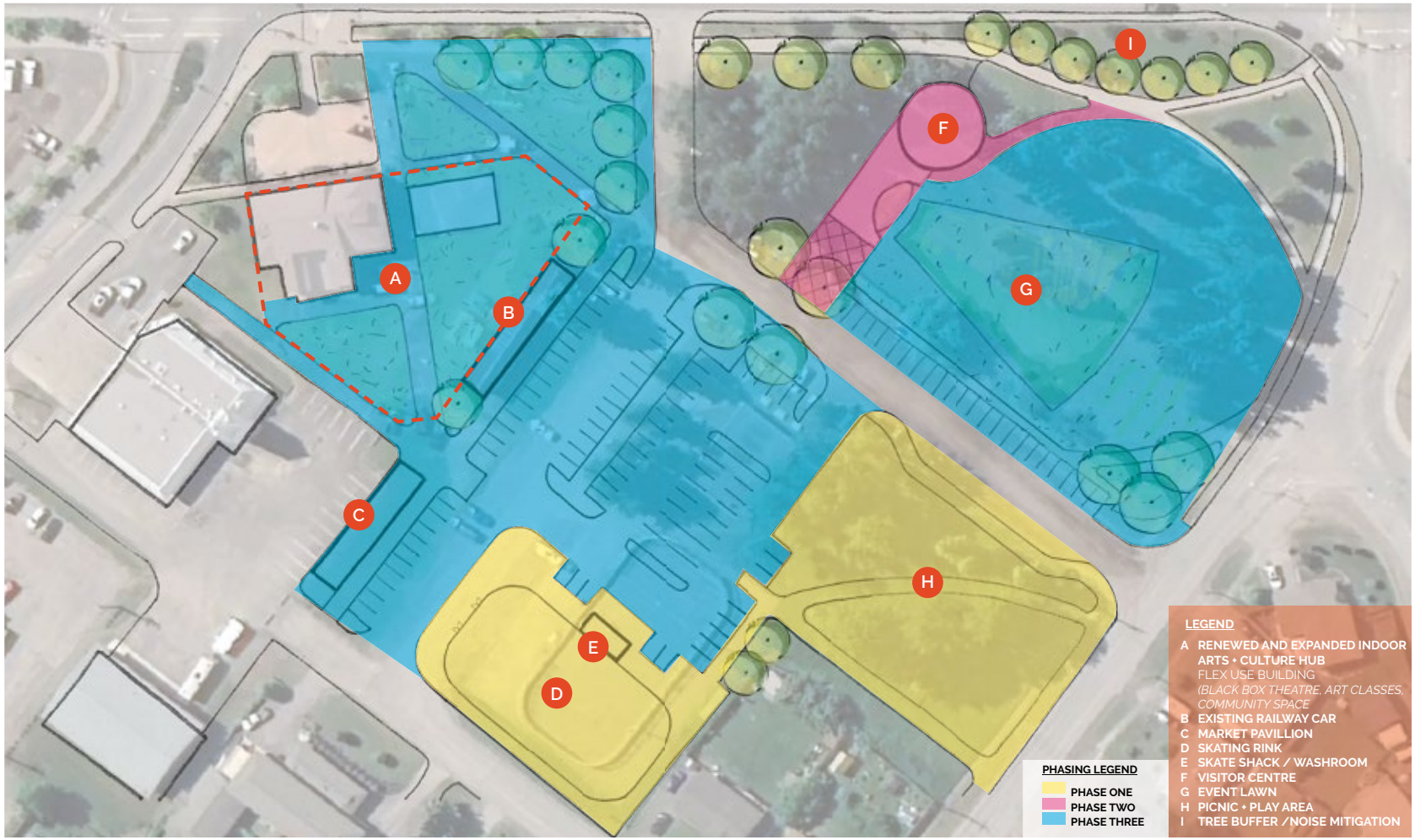
**These images are examples that reflect potential space characteristics for the amenity types identified. Future engagement, planning and design will be undertaken to refine amenity spaces and characteristics.*

RENEWED + EXPANDED INDOOR ARTS + CULTURE HUB		MARKET PAVILLION	VISITOR'S CENTRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, EVENT PAVILLION/STAGE	EVENT LAWN	PICNIC + PLAY AREA

Central Park Phasing Plan

The following image reflects a recommended phasing plan for Central Park. This phasing plan balances the logical sequencing of development based on site conditions, identified community needs, and anticipated resource availability. As further discussed on page 28, several elements of the site require further exploration and refinement through subsequent design, planning, and engagement with the numerous organizations and stakeholder groups.

**Anticipated phasing timelines: Phase 1 (0 – 3 years), Phase 2 (3 – 7 Years), Phase 3 (7+ Years). Phasing may change based on available resourcing and other factors (e.g. further technical site analysis) and will be further reviewed through subsequent planning.*



KEY NEXT STEP AND FUTURE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The concept and phasing plans presented on pages 22 - 27 provide a basis for re-imagining two highly valued park spaces with tremendous potential to create true "destinations" within Smithers that can benefit residents and draw visitors to the community. Future planning and engagement will be required to advance these concepts towards implementation. This more detailed planning and focused engagement will further explore, refine, and update the overarching vision expressed in the concepts while balancing resource realities and technical factors associated with each site.

Noted as follows are additional key considerations pertaining to each park site that will need to be specifically explored through subsequent planning, technical analysis, and/or community engagement.

Heritage Park – Future Planning Considerations

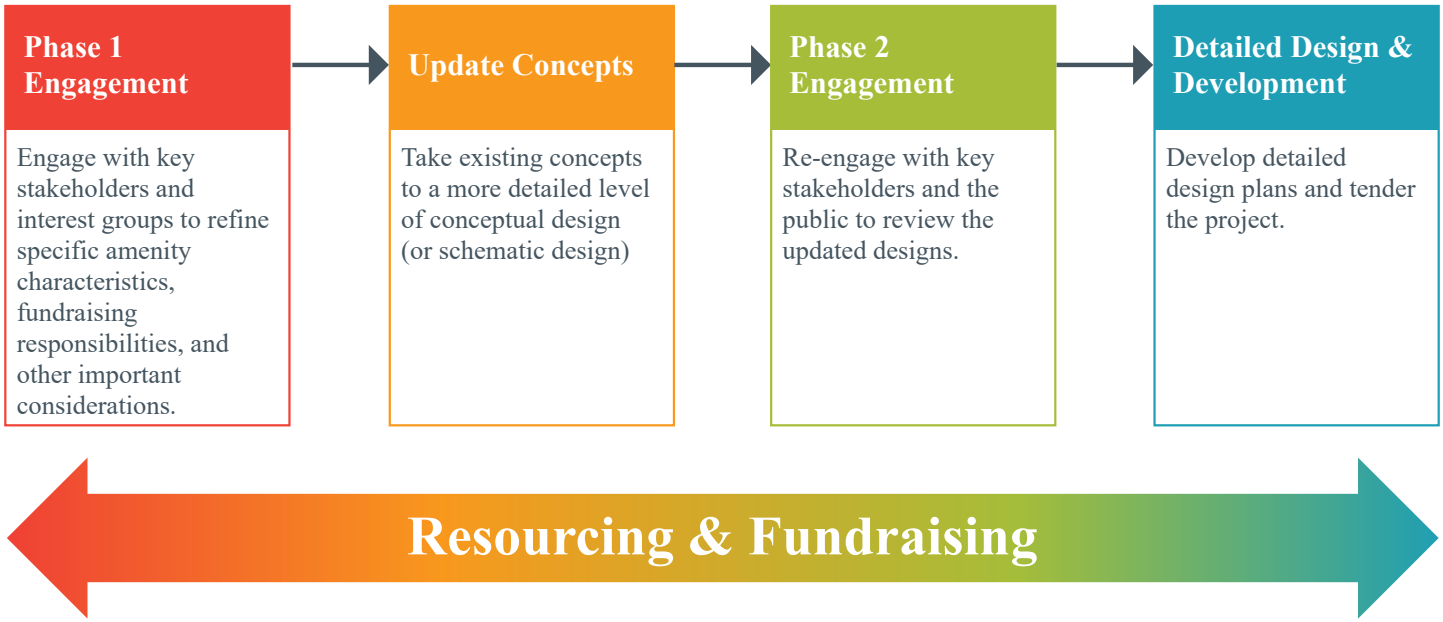
- The Children's Destination Play & Activity Area (identified as "C" on the concept image) requires further definition and refinement based on community engagement, resourcing discussions, and final decision making by Council. This space is envisioned to be the community's primary play space that can accommodate a wide array of ages and play opportunities. Key factors that should be taken into account as this space is further defined include seasonal use, operating costs, lifecycle costs, and synergies with surrounding amenities and spaces.
- Fundraising and resourcing responsibilities for a number of site amenities / spaces will need to be clarified as a next step, in particular those amenities / spaces that may have a consistent user group. The multi-sport court (identified as "E" on the concept image) has been identified as being highly desired by pickleball and collaboration of fundraising between the Town and pickleball community will likely be required to ensure this space is developed in Phase 1 as outlined in the concept image.
- The full expansion footprint of the Bulkley Valley Pool and Recreation Centre is shown in the concept images, however it is important to note this project is being led by the Bulkley Valley Aquatic Centre Management Society and timing for the various phases associated with the expansion remain undetermined. Given the synergies between this facility and others on the site, it will be important for the Town to remain engaged and work with the Society and other entities as the project evolves.

Central Park – Future Planning Considerations

- Characteristics associated with site parking and related amenities (e.g. car charging stations) will need to be explored and refined through subsequent planning.
- Accessibility (physical and social) was identified as a critical element of the opportunity and needs pertaining to future site initiates and re-imagining. Accessibility should remain a core focus and be prioritized as detailed design is undertaken.
- The site is currently home to a sani-station, which is not shown on the concept images. It is recommended that the Town explore the best location within the municipality for this important amenity based on the fit/synergies with other amenities, highway accessibility, trends (e.g. increasingly larger RV units), and cost.
- The Event Lawn (identified as "G" on the concept image) provides an opportunity to create a signature, larger scale festival and concert space. Highway noise is a potential concern that can be mitigated using natural and/or constructed infrastructure and will require further exploration as the characteristics of this space are further designed and explored with key stakeholders.
- The Railway Car (identified as "B" on the concept image) has been identified in Phase 3 to reflect that some placemaking enhancements will occur around the structure to improve aesthetics and accessibility, ensuring that this valued amenity is sustained as a hallmark of the community for future generations.

Potential Future Planning Steps

Both park re-imagining initiatives are likely to take place over several years and will require contributions and collaboration from the Town and numerous community organizations. A number of processes can be used to take large scale projects of this nature from the conceptual level to implementation (development and commissioning). The following outlines one potential process that the Town can use to move the park projects forward. As illustrated in the graphic, multiple engagement phases should be used as the design work is advanced. Resourcing and fundraising discussions will be required throughout the process, however given the costs associated with final detailed design and construction tendering it is suggested that all responsibilities pertaining to the capital costs of the project be determined before this final step in the process is undertaken.



KEY DIRECTION #2: CREATE MORE STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE AROUND PARK EXPERIENCES AND USES.

Rationale for this Key Direction:

- Overall park supply (volume of park space) in Smithers is sufficient, however opportunities to optimize parks and park amenities exist.
- Parks are highly utilized and highly valued by residents.
- Parks provide highly equitable, accessible and inclusive recreational opportunities that are available for all.
- Like most communities, many parks in Smithers have aging amenities that require renewal.

A new Parks Classification system is proposed to guide park planning, management, and design. Implementing this system will help the Town create park experiences and meet a number of the Service Delivery Objectives identified in Section 4. This recommended new Park Classification System should be reviewed every 5 years.

Park Classification	Park Purpose and Key Attributes	Optimal Amenity Provision	Level of Maintenance*	Future Planning Level Recommendations	Examples of Existing Parks
Destination Parks	These parks serve the entire community and include multiple amenities and experiences that draw from the entire town and beyond. These spaces are designed to reflect a strong sense of place and accommodate higher levels of visitation, while protecting sensitive ecosystems (if applicable).	• Washroom (permanent or portable) • Parking • Shelter space or adjacent indoor facilities • Multiple benches, tables, and garbage / recycling bins • High level of wayfinding signage • Accessible via arterial roadways and pathways • Interpretive signage • If applicable, infrastructure to protect conservation areas and sensitive ecosystems (e.g. Riverside Park and Willowvale Wetlands).	Weekly or more during peak seasons of use	Management plan developed every 10 years to review amenity renewal / replacement needs, required adaptation based on park use changes, establish renewed visitor management goals, identify risks and mitigation strategies, and future investment priorities.	Central Park Heritage Park Willowvale Wetlands Riverside Park *Note: Ranger Park has been identified as having Destination Park potential if re-visioned and enhanced.*
Plazas and Specialty Parks	These spaces are typically small in scale with amenities aimed at encouraging social gathering and/or feature key placemaking installations.	• Benches, tables, and garbage / recycling bins • Accessible via major roadway and active transportation routes	Daily monitoring and comprehensive maintenance at least once per week.	Future enhancements and upgrades are reviewed every 5-10 years.	Bovill Square Gordon Williams Rotary Park
Dedicated Sports Parks	These parks are geared towards organized sport use. Surface quality and support amenity provision meet baseline user needs.	• Washrooms • Storage • Parking • Water source or irrigation • Accessible seating and viewing areas • Garbage / recycling bins	Weekly or bi-weekly during peak seasons of use	Ongoing dialogue with major user groups to identify issues and establish priorities for minor works. Sufficient use and trends rationale is required before major upgrade or amenity projects are considered.	Elks Field Chandler Park

Park Classification	Park Purpose and Key Attributes	Optimal Amenity Provision	Level of Maintenance*	Future Planning Level Recommendations	Examples of Existing Parks
Community Parks	These parks are typically 2 -5 ha. and serve a few neighbourhoods within the town. They include amenities like a playground, single sports fields, sport court, community garden, etc. Accessibility to these parks is usually via a mix of vehicular and active modes of transportation.	• May have dedicated or street parking. • Benches and tables • Garbage / recycling bins • Ideally, accessible via major pathways and trails	Bi-weekly or monthly	Formal independent planning is not required unless significant issues or opportunities are identified. Alignment with the park classification system should be reviewed periodically.	All school sites Dogwood Park Montreal Tennis Courts Park Veteran Peace Park
Neighbourhood / Pocket Park	These parks are typically smaller tot lot style parks (less than 2 ha.) with a single amenity such as a smaller playground structure. The majority of use if from adjacent residents that walk to the site for basic, short duration use.	• Benches and tables • Garbage / recycling bins	Bi-weekly or monthly	Only as system planning is undertaken (e.g. future Parks Strategy or updated Master Plan)	Bulkley Valley Drive Park Yorke-Hardy Park Alfred Park

**The Town has established maintenance service levels for parks which provides a more detailed level of service for specific amenities.*

In addition to using the recommended new Parks Classification System, the Town should work towards creating more dynamic park and playground experiences as the renewal and replacement of aging equipment is undertaken. ***Provided in Appendix A is best practice guidance on outdoor play equipment and opportunities.***

The recommended major investments to Central and Heritage Parks present a tremendous opportunity to create enhanced hub sites. Ranger Park, while currently more aligned with the amenity characteristics of a Community Park within the new classification system, has the potential to be upgraded to a Destination Park due to its size, connection to the trail system, topography, and proximity to the Bulkley River. Undertaking a concept plan and visioning exercise for Ranger Park is recommended. ****Additional Strategies for the parks system that can help achieve Key Direction #2 are provided in Section 6.***

KEY DIRECTION #3: PRIORITIZE TRAIL INVESTMENT TO CREATE BETTER CONNECTIVITY AND ALL-SEASON OPPORTUNITIES.

Rationale for this Key Direction:

- Trails are the most used recreation amenity in the town (as validated through the community engagement).
- Trails serve a key active transportation purpose.
- Poor trail management, "rogue" trail development, and misalignment between trail design and uses all pose a safety and conversation risk.
- Smithers has significant trail opportunities due to the natural setting of the community, however barriers also exist (e.g. Highway 16 bisecting the community).
- Opportunities exist to encourage more year-round trail use.

The 13 km Perimeter Trail is a terrific community asset that connects most of the town and enables residents and visitors to enjoy a mix of natural and community settings. While the Perimeter Trail generally serves its intended purpose well, some areas of the trail have condition and accessibility challenges. The trail is also not completely connected with some gaps and missing links to other trails and the pathway network. More broadly across the community, opportunities exist to enhance trail connectivity, wayfinding, and amenity consistency to meet both recreation and active transportation needs.

A better understanding of specific trail gaps, issues, and opportunities can help the Town prioritize investments into projects aimed at completing connections and improving user experience. Furthermore, ensuring that the right types of uses are directed to the right types of trails can not only increase trail enjoyment but also advance conservation (by keeping certain trail uses out of sensitive environments), safety, and mitigate issues such as trespassing and 'rogue' trail building.

While the Master Plan research and engagement was able to garner some broad based insights into trail uses, gaps, and opportunities, there is a need to better understand the current trail inventory at a deeper level. It is recommended that the Town undertake a detailed trail inventory and assessment that includes the following:

- Identification of all formal and informal trails
- Review of trail tread conditions
- Review of wayfinding signage and creation of a Wayfinding Strategy
- Identification of key gaps
- Identification of accessibility barriers

Trail use in Smithers (findings from the Resident Survey):

- 86% hike, walk or run at least twice per month.
- 59% cycle or mountain bike at least twice per month.
- 57% cross-country ski at least twice per month.

This information should then be used to inform specific trail projects and associated actions (e.g. grant applications, partnerships with local trail groups, etc.) as part of a Trails Strategy. Opportunities to enhance accessibility should be a key element of the recommended Trails Strategy and subsequent investment. Accessibility can be achieved by:

- Establishing (within a robust classification system) standards for the types of trails in the community for which universal access should be a target.
- Trail identification and wayfinding signage that aligns with accessibility best practice.
- Addressing concerns of trail safety and knowledge through community partnerships and stewardship.

As a winter community, the Town should also increase its focus on providing year-round trail opportunities. Working with the Smithers Golf and Country Club to identify an assessment and management plan for winter use of the Club's trail networks presents one opportunity to expand use of an existing partner space. The potential for winter ice skating trails should also be explored in future park planning, with pilot projects in existing parks to test interest and opportunities for developing a more extensive skating trail network.

Additionally, trails can be a key driver of economic activity, bringing visitors to the community which in turn can generate non-local spending. Leveraging trail investment to achieve economic benefits can be best achieved by:

- Using trails as a mechanism for individuals to access scenic areas and attractions (e.g. Bulkley River, mountain access, heritage locations, etc.).
- Aligning trails to emerging trends and demands (e.g. single track trails for mountain biking).
- Leveraging the communities location along the highway to create trails that are interesting and appealing for drivers to stop at.

The recommended Trails Strategy provides an opportunity to further explore these opportunities in collaboration with trail user groups, local business, and the broader community.

Penticton's Apex Trail, Photo Source: revelstokereview.com

KEY DIRECTION #4: PRIORITIZE WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS FOR LARGE SPAN MULTI-USE SPACE.

Rationale for this Key Direction:

- Access to gymnasium space in Smithers relies exclusively on school system providers. Access to these gymnasiums by the community is challenging during certain times.
- Large span gymnasium, flexi-haul, and field house types of spaces can support a wide array of program based (structured) and drop-in (casual) uses.
- The continued popularity of sports like basketball, badminton, indoor soccer, volleyball and the emergence of activities like pickleball are driving regional and provincial demands for large span indoor space.
- Large span types of indoor recreation space are highly adaptive and able to easily evolve with new or growing activities.

The lack of available large span indoor recreation space is a key gap in Smithers that has also been identified through previous facility studies, including expansion planning undertaken for the Bulkley Valley Pool and Recreation Centre (BV Pool). The provision of a large span space such as a community gymnasium, flexi-hall, or field house will meet needs for a variety of activities, support the growth of existing user groups, and enable new programs and opportunities to be provided. Opportunities such as the inclusion of an indoor walking / running track, fitness space, and multi-purpose rooms may also be possible to further expand the benefits of this facility.

The BV Pool Improvement Project identifies community gymnasium space as part of the phase 3 expansion. It is recommended that the Town continue to support the advancement of the expansion plans and advocate for the community gymnasium to be prioritized. If the phase 3 expansion plans do not move forward or sufficiently meet community needs, the Town should explore alternative options to develop a new large span recreation facility. As reflected in the concept plans provided for Heritage Park, space has been left on the site should it be needed for future facility development. Specific characteristics of this large span recreation space, including surfacing (e.g. turf, sport court surfacing, or combination) and support amenities will require further exploration with potential user groups and partners.

Recognizing that the development of a community gymnasium as part of the BV Pool phase 3 expansion or separate project encompasses a significant capital cost and is likely a longer term endeavor, the Town will need to work with school partners to maximize community access. Opportunities to make expanded use of the two arenas in the community during the non-ice season should also be explored.

6 STRATEGIES

6.1. AMENITY STRATEGIES

The following Amenity Strategies identify recommended approaches for a number of key types / categories of parks and recreation amenities. These strategies reflect key needs and opportunities identified through the research and engagement and are intended to help the Town plan for the future and achieve the Service Delivery Objectives. **Strategies that directly advance the Key Directions provided in Section 5 are highlighted in blue.**

Amenity type	Strategies
Arenas	A. Sustain two ice sheets over the next 5 - 10 years. B. If Civic Arena re-investment approaches or exceeds 20% of the estimated replacement value (Facility Condition Index rating of Poor to Very Poor), re-evaluate the long-term need for 2 ice arenas and the cost-benefit of replacement or reinvestment versus other recreation priorities. C. **Replace the outdoor rink in Central Park as per the park concepts reflected in Key Direction #1.**
Arts and Cultural Facilities	A. **Enhance and expand arts and cultural space capacity through the recommended revisioning of Central Park.** B. **Further explore indoor arts and culture space needs and the highest benefit amenities to include in the "Flex Use Building" identified in the concept plan.** C. **Continue to support the Bulkley Valley Museum and Art Gallery and work with partners and stakeholders to identify a long-term capital maintenance plan and expansion opportunities.** D. Continue to advance public art provision in parks and recreation facilities. E. Develop a maintenance plan for public art in Smithers.
Ball Diamonds	A. **Remove the ball diamond at Heritage Park and consolidate organized ball groups at Elks Field.** B. Enhance the Elks Field ball diamonds to meet user needs, improve safety, provide an improved experience, and better position diamonds to host tournaments. Prioritize fencing, surfacing (shale and grass), dugout and other capital works in collaboration with user groups.
Campgrounds and Day-Use Areas	A. As part of the recommended Trails Strategy, explore opportunities to better connect Riverside Campground with the community through accessibility and experiential improvements to the Perimeter Trail. B. Develop a Riverside Campground Strategic Plan to guide site management and development for the next 10 years.
Gymnasiums and Other Dry-Floor Indoor Recreation Facilities	A. **Continue to support the BV Pool expansion plan and work with partners to advocate for prioritization of the community gymnasium.** B. **If the BV Pool expansion plan does not move forward or sufficiently meet community needs, identify alternative options and potential partnerships to develop a large span gymnasium or field house facility.** C. In the short to medium term, work with school system gymnasium providers to develop new joint use agreements that can help provide increased school gymnasium access to community groups. D. Identify opportunities to make off-season use of the arenas for dry floor activities.

Amenity type	Strategies
Libraries	A. Develop a Library Facilities Master Plan to further explore specific library space needs and options. B. Consider including a new library as part of a future new indoor recreation facility should one be developed.
Parks	A. **Adopt and regularly update the new Parks Classification System.** B. Develop a more robust playground assessment and renewal schedule. C. **Develop Park Management Plans for all Destination Parks identified in the new Parks Classification System.** D. **As playground renewal occurs over the next 10 years, focus on diversifying play experiences to create increased play opportunities for older children and youth. These efforts should include more integration of natural and adventure play features.** E. **Undertake the recommended steps to advance the Central Parks and Heritage Park concepts.** F. **Undertake a park visioning and concept planning exercise for Ranger Park to further explore options and opportunities to create a new destination park.**
Sport Courts	A. Sustain the existing tennis courts. B. **Increase the supply of courts to meet emerging needs as part of the Heritage Park re-visioning.**
Sports Fields	A. Continue to sustain fields at a quality level. B. Consider funding requests for amenity upgrades if sufficient in rationale and benefits to ensure fundraising contributions with a sustainable with a demonstrated operating plan.
Trails and Trail Related Amenities	A. **Undertake a detailed trails inventory and assessment.** B. **Undertake a Trails Strategy to guide priority investments and projects.** C. **Work with Smithers Golf and Country Club to provide and manage off-season (winter) use of the golf course trails.** D. **Identify creative opportunities to provide increased winter trail opportunities in-town.** E. Utilize the adopt and align future trail planning, design and amenity provision with the **Trans Canada Trails' National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails** for all multi-use trails. *Provided in Appendix B are cut sheets for the recommended Trail Design Parameters for each type of trail activity.
Wheeled Sports	A. Retain professional expertise to re-design and improve the bike skills parks located adjacent to Elks Field. B. **Explore additional opportunities for accessible sports in Town parks and facilities.** C. **Support the expansion of the skate park located in Heritage Park (as outlined in the concept images).**

6.2. SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Provided in this section are additional Strategies and Actions aimed at optimizing the overall service delivery, management and sustainability of parks and recreation. Implementing these Strategies will support parks and recreation system capacity building and ultimately maximize resident access to parks and recreation opportunities. It is important to note that while some of the Strategies suggest changes or adaptations to current practices, others imply embedding those that are already being done and work well.

Strategy	Actions	Rationale and Benefits
A. Increase promotion of available supports available to community organizations.	• Develop an online portal with links to Town and external training, funding, and other supports. • Develop an annual or biannual Recreation Guide.	Community organizations play a critical role in the delivery of parks, recreation and culture opportunities. Provided information on resources can help groups access needed training and funding opportunities. Additionally, findings from the community engagement indicate that a lack of clarity exists on the role that the Town plays in supporting parks, recreation and culture. Sharing successes and examples of how investment occurs can help increase clarity.
B. Ensure renewed and new partnership agreements outline clear roles and responsibilities.	• Create standard definitions for capital repair vs capital maintenance to include in all future partnership agreements. • Develop a partnership agreement evaluation process that integrates the Service Delivery Objectives and includes clear performance measurement metrics.	A number of Town owned community facilities are operated by partners.
C. Continue to focus efforts on reducing financial barriers to participation.	• Continue to promote initiatives and programs like KidSport, Jumpstart, the Bulkley Valley Youth Sport Foundation, Bulkley Valley Community Foundation, and Athletics4Kids. • When considering funding requests from groups, prioritize supporting groups that demonstrate a commitment to financial accessibility.	Parks and recreation services are most effective when they can be enjoyed by all residents. As in every community, some individuals in Smithers face financial barriers to participation.

Strategy	Actions	Rationale and Benefits
D. Enhance the collection, management, and use of data that provides insights into trends and levels of use.	• Conduct a new parks and recreation needs assessment every 5 – 7 years and use this information to update the Master Plan (the engagement methodology used to develop the Master Plan could be replicated to allow for a comparison of results). • Invest in bookings and data software that can support ongoing data collection and management. • Ensure decision making is data driven wherever possible. • Develop and implement a regular user group questionnaire to compile data and track changes / trends in registration numbers, key participant characteristics, and other data points.	Opportunities exist for the Town to make more use of data and compile a database of information that provides key insights into trends (which groups are trending upwards or downwards) and other key data points that can be used to assess future facility needs and inform ongoing programming decision making.

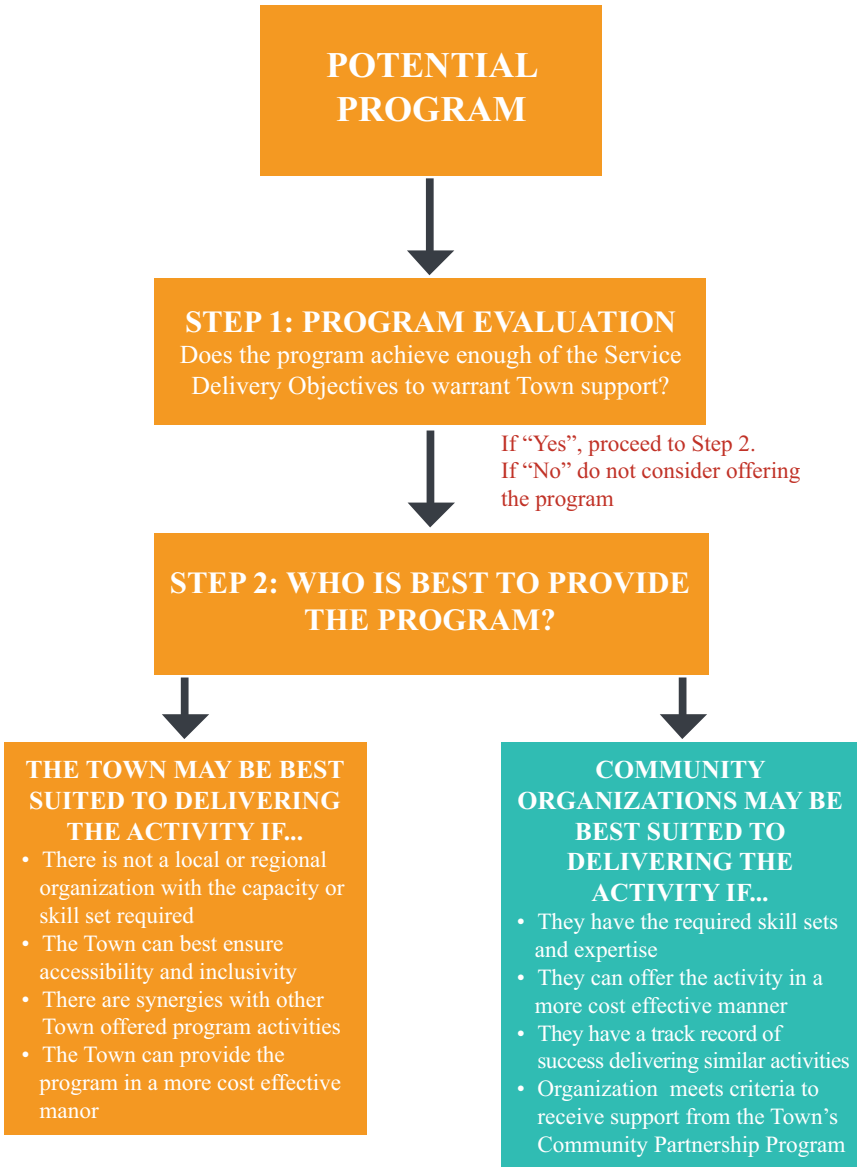
Photo provided by the Town of Smithers (Photographer: Douglas Paul Fine Arts)

6.3. PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING TOOLS

Two tools are provided to help the Town make decisions for programming and major capital planning.

TOOL #1: PROGRAM DECISION MAKING PROCESS

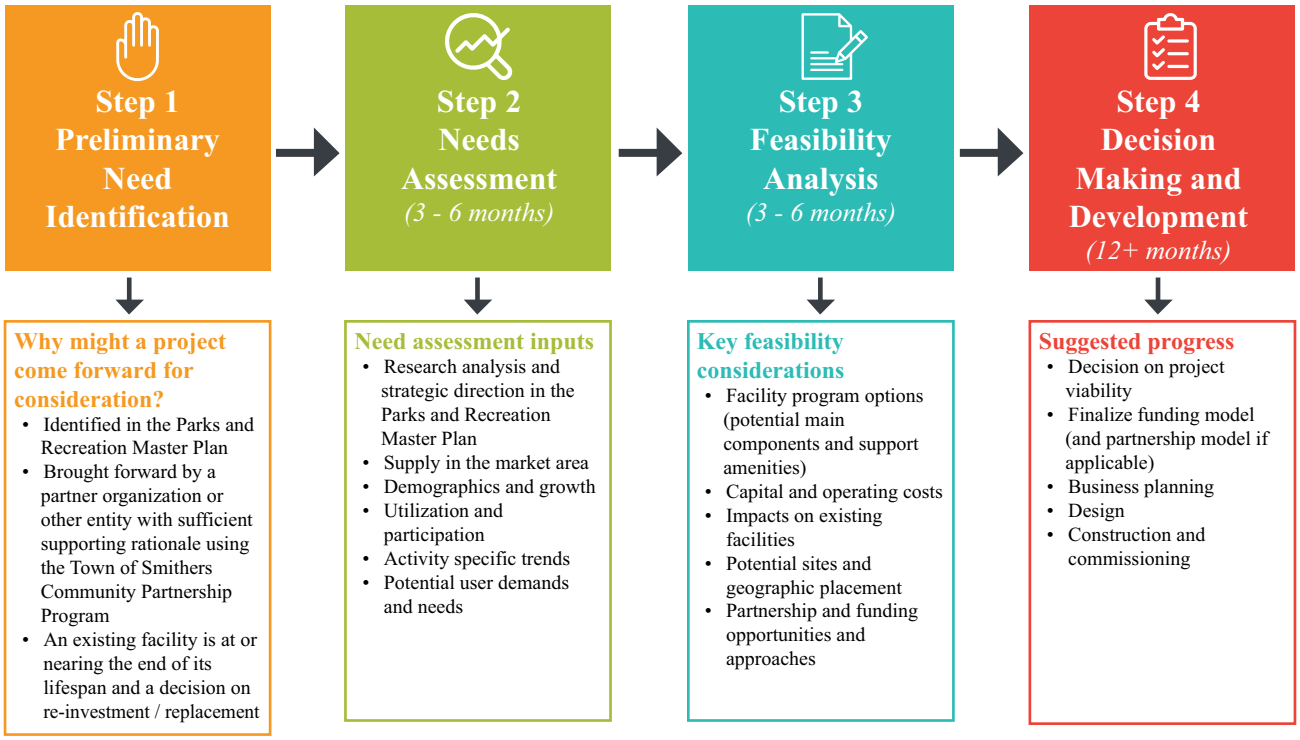
Purpose of this Tool: The Town can use this tool when a new program or activity demand emerges and a decision is made on whether it should be supported by the Town. Using this decision tree can help the Town determine if it's worthy of support at all and who is best to provide the opportunity (Town directly or via a community organization). This tool could also be adapted and used to evaluate existing programs.



TOOL #2: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Purpose of this Tool: This tool outlines a 4 step process to evaluate and execute major capital projects, helping to ensure that these major investments are adequately analyzed and executed in a clear, transparent and data driven manner. In some cases, projects that have been sufficiently analyzed and validated through the Master Plan can proceed to Step 2 of 3 as need has been sufficiently validated. Step 3 provides an opportunity to comprehensively explore all aspects of a project (amenities, costs, sites, partnerships, etc.), recognizing that need and long-term viability are not always symbiotic (e.g. a facility could be an identified need in a community but not one that the tax base can afford to provide). If a project passes Step 3 a final decision will need to be made in Step 4. For projects that proceed through Step 4, fund procurement and business planning will need to be undertaken in alignment / sequencing with design and construction.

Example of where this approach could be used: analysis of a new large span recreation facility.



7 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

7.1. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

The following table identifies high level implementation timing and resourcing for the Strategies contained in Section 6. It is important to note that timing and resourcing will need to be revisited and adjusted on an ongoing basis. Key Directions identified in blue are those that are considered ongoing or require further timing refinement.

Key Direction	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Key Direction #1: Re-image Heritage Park and Central Park.	Over the next 3 years the Town will need to retain the required schematic and detailed design expertise to further refine the park concepts and costs. This work should integrate robust community engagement with residents and key stakeholder groups.	Phase 1 (see phasing plan in Section 5.2)	Phase 2 (see phasing plan in Section 5.2)	Phase 3 Phase 2 (see phasing plan in Section 5.2)
Key Direction #2: Create more structure and purpose around park experiences and uses.	Planning and operations staff to use the new Parks Classification system as a basis and resource to guide capital planning, ongoing enhancements, and maintenance.			
Key Direction #3: Prioritize trail investment to create better connectivity and all-season opportunities.	Undertake the recommended Trails Strategy in the Short-Term (estimated Strategy cost: $75,000 - $100,000) and use the specific gaps and opportunities identified through this process to guide future investment aimed at improving connections, accessibility, and signage. Allocate the required resources to piloting winter ice skating trails and use of the golf course during off-season months in the short term.	Trails Strategy Piloting of increased winter trail initiatives.	Budget for trails projects identified in the Trails Strategy.	Budget for trails projects identified in the Trails Strategy.
Key Direction #4: Prioritize working with partners to meet community needs for large span multi-use space.	In the short term, continue to work with regional partners (RDBN) to explore inclusion of this amenity as part of the pool expansion project (Phase 3). If this project does not come to fruition undertake a feasibility study that explores site options, specific amenity and space needs, site options, and costs (estimated study cost: $50,000).		Conduct study if RDBN project does not occur or meet community needs.	

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Arenas				
A. Sustain two ice sheets over the next 5 - 10 years.	The Town will need to undertake regular condition assessments and prioritize capital maintenance funds accordingly.			
B. If Civic Arena re-investment approaches or exceeds 20% of the estimated replacement value (Facility Condition Index rating of Poor to Very Poor), re-evaluate the long-term need for 2 ice arenas and the cost-benefit of replacement or reinvestment versus other recreation priorities.	Re-evaluate if required in the long-term.			
C. Replace the outdoor rink in Central Park as per the paark concepts reflected in Key Direction #1.	Town to engage with key Central Park stakeholders (including the volunteer firefighters) to advance future design and fundraising for the outdoor rink and related amenities.			
Arts and Cultural Facilities				
A. Enhance and expand arts and cultural space capacity through the recommended revisioning of Central Park.	As per Key Direction #1.	Detailed design	Phase 1	Phase 2
B. Further explore indoor arts and culture space needs and the highest benefit amenities to include in the "Flex Use Building" identified in the concept plan.	As per Key Direction #1.	Detailed design		Develop as part of Phase 2 unless grant funding opportunity becomes available
C. Continue to support the Bulkley Valley Museum and Art Gallery and work with partners and stakeholders to identify a long-term capital maintenance plan and expansion opportunities.	Town to have ongoing dialogue with the Museum and Art Gallery to identify priority capital works. May require a more detailed condition assessment to inform future actions and capital projects.			

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
D. Continue to advance public art provision in parks and recreation facilities.	Requires ongoing financial investment.			
E. Develop a maintenance plan for public art in Smithers.	Allocate staff time to develop the public art maintenance plan in the short term.			
Ball Diamonds				
A. Remove the ball diamond at Heritage Park and consolidate organized ball groups at Elks Field.	Remove in the short to medium term as phasing and timing becomes more clear through detailed design and community engagement.			
B. Enhance the Elks Field ball diamonds to meet user needs, improve safety, provide an improved experience, and better position diamonds to host tournaments. Prioritize fencing, surfacing (shale and grass), dugout and other capital works in collaboration with user groups.	Town to work with ball user groups to prioritize easy win and longer term upgrade projects and funding responsibilities (Town contributions and group fundraising).			
Campgrounds and Day Use Areas				
A. As part of the recommended Trails Strategy, explore opportunities to better connect Riverside Campground with the community through accessibility and experiential improvements to the Perimeter Trail.	Specific priorities and opportunities to be identified through the Trails Strategy.	Review as part of the recommended Trails Strategy.	Allocate resources and undertake work as prioriotized through the Strategy.	Allocate resources and undertake work as prioriotized through the Strategy.
B. Develop a Riverside Campground Strategic Plan to guide site management and development for the next 10 years.	Town to work with operator and other site stakeholders to identify key priorities and needs. These priorities and needs should then be classified as priority 1 and priority 2 projects and integrated into Town budgeting processes.	Develop a Riverside Campground Plan	Undertake priority 1 projects as per the plan.	Review and update plan

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Gymnasiums and Other Dry-Floor Indoor Recreation Facilities				
A. Continue to support the BV Pool expansion plan and work with partners to advocate for prioritization of the community gymnasium.	As per Key Direction #4.			
B. If the BV Pool expansion plan does not move forward or sufficiently meet community needs, identify alternative options and potential partnerships to develop a large span gymnasium or field house facility.	As per Key Direction #4.		Conduct study if BV Pool project does not occur or meet community needs.	
C. In the short to medium term, work with school system gymnasium providers to develop new joint use agreements that can help provide increased school gymnasium access to community groups.	Allocate staff time to working with school partners to explore gymnasium use and access.			
D. Identify opportunities to make off-season use of the arenas for dry floor activities.	Engage in dialogue with potential users / user groups to identify activity needs and opportunities.			
Libraries				
A. Develop a Library Facilities Master Plan to further explore specific library space needs and options.	Allocate $30,000 - $50,000 for further exploration of library needs and opportunities.			
B. Consider including a new library as part of a future new indoor recreation facility should one be developed.	As per results of the library focused planning and potential synergies with community recreation projects.			

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Parks				
A. Adopt and regularly update the new Parks Classification System.	Ensure planning and operational staff are empowered and make use of the recommended new Parks Classification system.			
B. Develop a more robust playground assessment and renewal schedule.	Staff to develop a playground renewal schedule in the short term for feeding into the Town's short, medium and long-term capital and asset planning.	Develop renewal plan.	Allocate appropriate renewal funding as per plan.	Allocate appropriate renewal funding as per plan.
C. Develop Park Management Plans for all Destination Parks identified in the new Parks Classification System.	Target developing / updating 1 plan every 3-5 years for destination parks (as per the Park Classification system).	Develop / update 1 management plan	Develop / update 1 management plan	Develop / update 1 management plan
D. As playground renewal occurs over the next 10 years, focus on diversifying play experiences to create increased play opportunities for older children and youth. These efforts should include more integration of natural and adventure play features.	As renewals are scheduled and executed (as per the recommended renewal schedule), assess opportunities to diversify play through community engagement, review of the existing inventory (potential playground typology over or under supply), and trends.			
E. Undertake the recommended steps to advance the Central Parks and Heritage Park concepts.	As per Key Direction #1.	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
F. Undertake a park visioning and concept planning exercise for Ranger Park to further explore options and opportunities to create a new destination park.	Once further designing and timing / phasing is confirmed for Central Park and Heritage Park, explore opportunities to revision Ranger Park (allocated $25,000 - $50,000 for a site concept plan and community engagement process).		Site concept and community engagement.	Design and site works if validated through concept plan and community engagement.

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Sport Courts				
A. Sustain the existing tennis courts.	Town to assess court lifespan and allocate appropriate re-surfacing and repair funding accordingly.			
B. Increase the supply of courts to meet emerging needs as part of the Heritage Park re-visioning.	Assess on a case by case basis.	Refine key characteristics and development timing as part of the Phase 1 Heritage Park design and engagement (see Section 5)		
Sports Fields				
A. Continue to sustain fields at a quality level.	Ensure that a sufficient annual field maintenance program is followed.			
B. Consider funding requests for amenity upgrades if sufficient in rationale and benefits to ensure fundraising contributions with a sustainable with a demonstrated operating plan.	Assess funding requests using existing grant program rationale and the Master Plan tools to guide decision making.			
Trails and Trail Related Amenities				
A. Undertake a detailed trails inventory and assessment.	Undertake as phase 1 of the recommended Trails Strategy.			
B. Undertake a Trails Strategy to guide priority investments and projects.	As per Key Direction #3.			
C. Work with Smithers Golf and Country Club to provide and manage off-season (winter) use of the golf course trails.	As per Key Direction #3.			

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
D. Identify creative opportunities to provide increased winter trail opportunities in-town.	As per Key Direction #3.			
E. Utilize the adopt and align future trail planning, design and amenity provision with the Trans Canada Trails' National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails for all multi-use trails. *Provided in Appendix B are cut sheets for the recommended Trail Design Parameters for each type of trail activity.	Use the Guidelines on an ongoing basis to guide trail improvement and design projects.			
Wheeled Sports				
A. Retain professional expertise to re-design and improve the bike skills parks located adjacent to Elks Field.	Retain the necessary expertise to review options and associated costs.			
B. Explore additional opportunities for accessible sports in Town parks and facilities.	Identify opportunities on an ongoing basis.			
C. Support the expansion of the skate park located in Heritage Park (as outlined in the concept images).	Phasing relative to other amenities to be determine as per Key Direction #1.			

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Strategy A: Increase promotion of available supports available to community organizations.				
Develop an online portal with links to Town and external training, funding, and other supports.	Staff time and potentially external web development resources.			
Develop an annual or biannual Recreation Guide	Staff time with potential graphic design and/or contracted writing support.			
Strategy B: Ensure renewed and new partnership agreements outline clear roles and responsibilities.				
Create standard definitions for capital repair vs capital maintenance to include in all future partnership agreements.	Staff time.			
Develop a partnership agreement evaluation process that integrates the Service Delivery Objectives and includes clear performance measurement metrics.	Staff time.			
Strategy C: Continue to focus efforts on reducing financial barriers to participation.				
Continue to promote initiatives and programs like KidSport, Jumpstart, the Bulkley Valley Youth Sport Foundation, Bulkley Valley Community Foundation, and Athletics4Kids.	Staff time.			
When considering funding requests from groups, prioritize supporting groups that demonstrate a commitment to financial accessibility.	Staff time.			

Amenity Strategies	Key Next Steps and Summary of Resource Requirements	Timing		
		Short Term (0 - 3 Years)	Medium Term (3 - 7 Years)	Long Term (7+ Year)
Strategy D: Enhance the collection, management, and use of data that provides insights into trends and levels of use.				
Conduct a new parks and recreation needs assessment every 5 – 7 years and use this information to update the Master Plan (the engagement methodology used to develop the Master Plan could be replicated to allow for a comparison of results).	Needs Assessment could be conducted internally if staff resourcing is sufficient or with support from a contractr (estimate: $30,000 - $50,000).			
Invest in bookings and data software that can support ongoing data collection and management.	Investigate enhanced data collection and management resources in the short term.			
Ensure decision making is data driven wherever possible.	Ensure staff are provided with sufficient data literacy training on an ongoing basis.			
Develop and implement a regular user group questionnaire to compile data and track changes / trends in registration numbers, key participant characteristics, and other data points.	Develop questionnaire over the next 0 - 2 years and implement on an ongoing basis.			

7.2. RESOURCING AND PARTNERSHIPS

The potential capital projects identified in the Master Plan will need to be resourced through a combination of municipal funding (taxes), grants, and community fundraising. While grants can be a significant source of funding, when available they are usually highly competitive with a large number of jurisdictions competing for a finite amount of money. Identified below are tactics that the Town can use to best position itself for future grants from senior levels of government:

- Ensure projects for which grant funding is sought are supported by feasibility studies and/or business cases that reflect community support, realistic identification of costs (capital and operating), and acknowledge risks with associated mitigation strategies.
- Work with groups and stakeholders to develop strong fundraising campaigns that can reflect broad community support and viability.
- Align projects with strategic goals of seniors levels of government (e.g. climate and sustainability, Reconciliation and Decolonization, northern community development and economic sustainability, etc.).

Partnerships with public entities (e.g. school and post secondary system, not for profits, etc.) and industry may present another opportunity to leverage available resources and undertake projects or initiatives that are mutually beneficial to town residents and the partner organization. However, partnerships should be carefully evaluated to both ensure that they meet key objectives and have a strong probability of success.

The following framework presents a methodology that the Town can use to evaluate potential capital partnerships with potential public or private sector organizations. This framework could be applied to larger projects (e.g. a new multi-sport/community gymnasium facility, major Central or Heritage Park amenities) or smaller ones (e.g. playgrounds and sport courts).

Step 1: Partnership Pre-Screen

Key Consideration	Pre-Requisites
Current facility / amenity provision	• The town is not oversupplied with the type of infrastructure being proposed. • The potential project would not negatively impact existing town supply or partnerships.
Opportunity to increase level of service	• The potential partnership would provide an enhanced level of recreation, culture or leisure based opportunity (e.g. address gaps and/or provide a significantly better experience).
Current user impacts	• The potential partnership would not displace existing site/amenity/facility users. • The potential partnership will not negatively impact existing not for profit programs.

Step 2: Partnership Requirements

Key Consideration	Pre-Requisites
Cost – Benefit	• The project's benefits are reasonably deemed to justify the financial input (may require assessment through Needs Assessment of Feasibility Analysis as per Tool #2 in Section 6).
Potential Partner Viability Analysis	• The potential partner has developed a business case that sufficiently demonstrates quality, capacity, adequate resourcing, risk identification and mitigation, and other key aspects of viability. • Ideally, the potential partner organization has a track record locally or regionally at operating facilities and providing programming.
Public Access	• The business case demonstrates sufficient levels of public access and mechanisms to mitigate financial and other barriers. • The potential partners demonstrate a commitment to equity and inclusion.

Step 3: Partnership Formation and Measurement

- If Steps 1 and 2 are sufficiently achieved, the Town considers forming a partnership and establishes performance measurement criteria.

7.3. ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Identified below are several additional factors and opportunities that should be strongly considered as the various priorities identified in the Master Plan are implemented.

BEST PRACTICE ALIGNMENT

Design and development of the potential capital projects identified in the Master Plan should strongly integrate and ultimately align with best practice wherever possible. Specific to design, both outdoor park and indoor facility projects should advance accessibility best practices including **Rick Hansen Foundation Universal Design Recommendations and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** recommended approaches and strategies.

Best practices related to sustainability (e.g. reducing water and GHG use, carbon neutrality, etc.) are continuously evolving and are likely to advance throughout the lifespan of this Master Plan. Many jurisdictions are also forced to balance pursuing design best practice related to sustainability (e.g. LEED certification) with financial realities (e.g. weighing the cost escalation of best practice design and construction alignment, payback terms for leading energy reduction technologies, etc.).

ADVANCING MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES AND POLICY

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be optimally successful if it is also able to advance and align with adjacent municipal initiatives, priorities and policies. The Town has strategically identified the importance of increasing economic activity through tourism and creating innovative business opportunities. The Central Park and Heritage Park concepts reflect opportunities to capture more local use and non-local visitors through more appealing experiences as well as integrate enhanced business opportunities (e.g. food trucks, enhanced market space in Central Park, etc.).

Additionally, providing optimal recreation and leisure experiences (including programs and casual/spontaneous use opportunities) will increase the communities abilities to attract and retain residents. Doing so will increase local vibrancy and also better position the community to be dynamic and sustainable over the long-term.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: OUTDOOR PLAY BEST PRACTICES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The playground inventory in Smithers features fairly similar equipment and play experiences. Creating more dynamic play experiences that integrate natural and adventure features will help parks and playgrounds appeal to a broader range of ages, increasing both overall use and advancing physical literacy amongst children and youth in the community.

Like in many communities, the provision of play equipment involves service clubs, developers, the school system, and Town. The Town is well positioned to take on a leadership role in playground diversification by using the following tactics:

- Working with service organizations (and other groups fundraising for new or renewed playgrounds) to identify the types of play experiences and equipment that are most beneficial as well as redundancies that should be avoided.
- When installing playgrounds in new neighbourhoods, assess the play experiences provided at nearby parks and aim to purchase and install equipment that is different.
- Audit playgrounds for an experiential lens every 5 years and use this information to inform renewals, grants, and other playground and park investment.
- Dialogue with school system providers of playgrounds to communicate gaps, potential types of play redundancy, and create awareness of respective playground projects.

NATURAL AND CHALLENGING PLAY

The playground landscape has seen significant expansion in the types of equipment and structures that are available. Leading this trend are "natural play spaces", which are intended to replicate aspects of natural environment such as forests, rocks, crevices, slopes, and other outdoor elements. Societal concerns over children and youth disconnection with nature is also contributing to a desire to replicate aspects of natural play in urbanized and residential environments. In some instances, entire playgrounds are constructed using entirely natural play equipment. Natural playgrounds are also credited with having significant cognitive benefits to children, forcing them to manage complexity as they maneuver around the play space whereas traditional playgrounds tend to be more suggestive.

Nature Inspired Play Structure

Nature Inspired Play Structure

There is a growing recognition that encouraging children and youth to push the boundaries of play can have significant benefits to cognitive and physical development. Researchers have identified that children should be allowed to experience some level of play risk across the following areas:

- Play at heights
- Play at speed
- Play with tools and other implements
- Rough and tumble play
- Play amongst natural elements
- Play where children can "disappear"

Natural and adventure playgrounds are increasingly being designed to provide these types of play experiences.

Bouldering Play Structure

Nature Inspired Play Structure

Park with a variety of Elements including a bouldering rock.

The inclusion of bouldering and climbing features is also increasingly popular. These features can help meet playground needs for older children and provide amenities that balance levels of risk (while falls can of course happen, the nature of bouldering playgrounds is such that the fall is unlikely to involve "catching" on another object). Bouldering playgrounds can be developed as the central theme of a play space or a simple amenity addition within a larger traditional play space.

Obstacle course playgrounds and parkour parks are emerging as another way for children and adults to channel their inner superhero or encourage some friendly competition in their community park. Another form of risky play these structures offer to users is the ability to push boundaries and maneuver creatively through physical activity.

Obstacle course play structure

Parkour park

APPENDIX B: TRANS CANADA TRAILS' NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR CLASSIFYING MULTI-USE TRAILS: TRAIL DESIGN PARAMETERS OVERVIEW

Pedestrian - Walking/Hiking/Running

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Treat Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>1.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	0.3 - 1.0 m	<0.3 m
	TTF - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spands width of trail tread – there is no opt out option
Surface	**Surface Type**	Paved	Aggregate - Firm surface	Natural - Firm surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacles Frequency	None	Occasional	Frequent	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.025 m	0.025 - 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.15 m	> 0.15 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 2.0 m	1.5 - 2.0 m	0.5 - 1.5 m	< 0.5 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.0 m	> 3.0 m	2.5 - 3.0 m	< 2.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 3%	3 - 10%	10 - 15%	> 15%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 7%	7 - 15%	15 - 25%	> 25%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 10%	10 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 2%	2 - 8 %	8 - 15 %	Natural
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 2%	2 - 10%	10 - 15%	> 15%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or Never
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 5 km	5 - 10 km	10 - 30 km	> 30km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Potable Water/Restroom	Parking/Potable Water	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Front Country	Mid-Country	Mid-Country	Back Country

Horseback Riding

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Treat Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>2.5m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	<1.0 m
	TTF - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spands width of trail tread – there is no opt out option
Surface	**Surface Type**	Aggregate/Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate/Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate - Loose surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacles Frequency	None	Occasional	Frequent	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	< 0.05 m	> 0.05 m	> 0.05 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 4.0 m	2.5 - 4.0 m	< 2.5 m	< 2.5 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	< 3.5 m	< 3.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 5%	5 - 10%	10 - 12%	> 12%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 5%	5 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 2%	2 - 5 %	5 - 10 %	> 10%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 5%	5 - 8%	8 - 10%	> 10%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Monthly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or Never
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 10 km	10 - 15 km	15 - 25 km	> 25 km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Potable Water/Restroom	Parking/Potable Water	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Mid-Country	Mid-Country	Back Country	Back Country

Cross Country Skiing

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Treat Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>4.0 m	2.0 - 4.0 m	<2.0 m	<2.0 m
	TTF - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spands width of trail tread – there is no opt out option
Surface	**Surface Type**	Groomed/Track Set	Groomed/Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set
	Obstacles Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	NA	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 4.0 m	2.0 - 4.0 m	< 2.0 m	< 2.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.0 m	> 3.0 m	< 3.0 m	< 3.0 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 5%	5 - 10 %	10 - 15 %	> 15%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 20%	20 - 25%	> 25%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 10%	10 - 15 %	15 - 20 %	> 20%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 5%	< 5%	5 - 15 %	> 15%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a day	Within a month	Annually or Never
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 2 km	2 - 5 km	5 - 10 km	> 10 km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Restroom/ Warming Area/ Potable Water	Parking/Restroom/ Warming Area	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Mid-Country	Mid-Country	Back Country	Back Country

Snowshoeing

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Treat Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>1.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	<1.0 m
	TTF - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spands width of trail tread – there is no opt out option
Surface	**Surface Type**	Groomed/Track Set	Groomed/Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set	Ungroomed/No Track Set
	Obstacles Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	None	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	< 1.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.0 m	> 3.0 m	2.5 - 3.0 m	< 2.5 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 20%	20 - 30%	> 30%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 5%	5 - 10%	10 - 20%	> 20%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 5%	5 - 10%	5 - 10%	> 10%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 20%	> 20%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Immediate	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or Never
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 2 km	2 - 5 km	5 - 10 km	> 10 km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Restroom/ Warming Area/ Potable Water	Parking/Restroom/ Warming Area	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Urban	Front Country	Mid-Country	Back Country

On-Road Cycling

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Subytype	**Subytype**	Bicycle Lane, Advisory Bike Lane	Bicycle Boulevard, Country Lane, Gravel Roads	Shared Lane, Shared Roadways	Bicycle Accessible Shoulder
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Weekly
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 1 km	1 - 5 km	5 - 15 km	> 15km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Restroom/ Potable Water	Parking/Restroom/ Potable Water	Parking/Restroom	None
Geography	**Geography**	Front Country	Front Country	Front Country	Back Country

Leisure Cycling (Off-Road)

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Treat Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	<1.5 m
	TTF - Width	None or technical trail features not permitted	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread
Surface	**Surface Type**	Paved	Aggregate - Firm surface	Natural - Firm surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacles Frequency	None	Occasional	Occasional	Occasional
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	< 0.05 m	> 0.05 m	> 0.05 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	2.0 - 3.0 m	< 2.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	< 3.0 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 5%	<5 %	> 5%	> 5%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 15%	10- 15%	> 15%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 15%	15 - 25 %	25 - 30 %	> 30%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 2%	2 - 5 %	> 5%	> 5%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 8%	8 - 10%	10 - 12%	> 12%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Weekly	Monthly	Monthly	Seasonally
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Within a month	Within a few months	Within a few months
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 5 km	5 - 15 km	15 - 25 km	> 25 km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Restroom/ Potable Water	Parking/Restroom	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Urban	Front Country	Mid-Country	Midcountry

Mountain Biking (Off-Road)

		1 - Easiest - Beginner	2 - Moderate - Experienced	3 - Difficult - Very Experienced	4 - Very Difficult - Expert
Treat Width	**Traveled Surface Width**	>2.5 m	1.5 - 2.5 m	1.0 - 1.5 m	<1.0 m
	TTF - Width	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – must travel off path of travel to engage them – trail tread is opt out option	Permitted – TTF is within path of travel, up to ½ of trail tread – opt out option available along existing trail tread	Permitted – TTF spands width of trail tread – there is no opt out option
Surface	**Surface Type**	Aggregate - Firm surface	Natural - Firm surface	Aggregate - Loose surface	Natural - Loose surface
	Obstacles Frequency	Occasional	Occasional	Frequent	Frequent
	Obstacle Height	< 0.05 m	< 0.05 m	0.05 - 0.25 m	> 0.25 m
Sightline Clearing	**Clearing Width**	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	2.0 - 3.0 m	< 2.0 m
	Clearing Height	> 3.5 m	> 3.5 m	3.0 - 3.5 m	< 3.0 m
Inclines/ Grades	**Trail Grade**	< 5%	5 - 12 %	12 - 20 %	> 20%
	Maximum Grade (short)	< 10%	10 - 15%	15 - 25%	> 25%
	Maximum Grade Proportion	< 15%	15 - 25 %	25 - 30 %	> 30%
Cross Slope	**Target Cross Slope**	< 2%	2 - 5 %	5 - 8 %	> 8%
	Maximum Cross Slope	< 8%	8 - 10%	10 - 12%	> 12%
Oversight	**Maintenance**	Weekly	Monthly	Seasonally	Annually
	Identified Hazard Response	Weekly	Within a month	Within a few months	Annually or Never
Segment Length	**Segment Length**	< 5 km	5 - 15 km	15 - 25 km	> 25 km
Facilities	**Facilities**	Parking/Restroom/ Potable Water	Parking/Restroom	Parking	None
Geography	**Geography**	Front Country	Front Country	Mid-Country	Mid-Country

APPENDIX C: DESTINATION PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

The following process should be undertaken when development management plans for parks classified as "Destination" sites within the new Parks Classification system.

STEPS TO DEVELOPING THE DESTINATION PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Step 1: Exploring the Current State

- Engagement with the community to better understand:
  - Current park uses / activities
  - Valued attributes (what users like and value about the space)
  - Gaps / challenges (what factors, physical or otherwise, prevent users from enjoying the park).
  - Future opportunities
- High level technical review of the site to determine:
  - Lifespan of existing infrastructure
  - Accessibility
  - Safety
  - Access via walking and active transportation modes

Step 2: Exploring the Future of the Site

- Identification of site infrastructure that requires renewal.
- Identification of potential enhancement opportunities.
- If challenges were during Step 2, solutions should be identified. Examples of challenges could include:
  - High levels of use during peak times/seasons (resulting in site access issues, disturbance of sensitive ecological areas within the site, etc.).
  - Public safety concerns.
  - Lack of use / interest.
  - Vandalism or other forms of bad behaviour.
  - Conflicts between users / uses.

Step 3: Develop the Destination Park Management Plan

- The plan should be developed to provide operational and planning guidance for a period of 10 years.

**If significant change is being considered, a second round of engagement may be required to review concepts and the future vision for the site.*

DESTINATION PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

Provided as follows is a sample table of contents for a Destination Park Management Plan.

Section 1: Introduction

- History and context of the park site
- Overview of existing infrastructure
- Overview of utilization (e.g. visits and bookings data if available)

Section 2: Community Engagement

- Findings from the community engagement.

Section 3: Technical Assessment of the Site

- Identification of infrastructure in need of renewal.
- Identification of other key site-specific considerations (e.g. environmental, access, impacts with or on adjacent infrastructure, etc.).
- Challenges.

Section 4: SWOT Analysis

- Findings from Sections 3 and 4 summarized in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Challenges, and Threats).

Section 5: Management Plan

- Identification of tactics to best manage visitation, encourage responsible use, avoid degradation of sensitive areas within the site, address identified challenges or issues, etc.

Section 6: Capital Planning

- Identification of a renewal plan for existing site infrastructure.
- Identification of new or enhanced amenities, site features, etc. (if applicable)
- Concept plan (if applicable and required).

APPENDIX D: DRAFT MASTER PLAN COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

OVERVIEW

The Draft Parks and Recreation Draft Master Plan was shared with the community in June 2024. An open house event was held on June 11, 2024 to share key elements of the plan and give attendees a platform to provide feedback and engage in dialogue with members of the project team and Town staff. The complete draft project documents (Master Plan and background reports) along with an online version of the comment form were also made available online through the project website.

In total, 73 individuals provided feedback via the online comment form or email, and 130 comments were provided at the Open House event which was attend by approximately 70 individuals.

FEEDBACK THEMES

Provided as follows is a summary of the feedback provides

Feedback on the Service Delivery Objectives

The Draft Master Plan identified six Service Delivery Objectives (Section 4 of the draft Master Plan). These objectives provide a foundation that identify what the Town is looking to achieve through its ongoing investment in parks and recreation and articulates key values that guide focus areas and priorities.

Key Themes from the Feedback Provided:

- Most agree that the Service Delivery Objectives are relevant and that it is important to recognize that sport and recreation provide positive health benefits.
- A few comments provided reflected the desire for the Town to provide more recreation programming for all age groups.
- An additional common theme indicated that having quality amenities in the community is an important piece in attracting new residents to Smithers. The desire for pickleball courts was highlighted by some that feel that this an important piece of providing high quality experiences as outlined in Objective #3.

Feedback on the Key Directions

The Master Plan identified four Key Directions. These Key Directions reflect recommended significant focus areas for investment and action over the next 10 years (Section 5 of the Master Plan).

Key Themes from the Feedback Provided for Key Direction #1: Re-image Heritage and Central Park:

The feedback received largely centred around the two park design concepts presented for Heritage Park and Central Park.

Heritage Park Design Concept:

- Most agree that the park needs to be refreshed and better positioned to meet community needs. The feedback provided expressed satisfaction with the new layout of the park and the addition of the walking track and expanded dog park that is further from the road.
- Many respondents are hoping to see more interesting play features at the playground and hope that the playground will be multi-age and include accessible playground features such as a wheelchair swing and plenty of shade.
- A number of respondents expressed their interest and desire in having a splash park at the park.
- Pickleball players are very eager to acquire dedicated court space in Smithers and many see Heritage Park as the appropriate place to do so. A number of specific comments were provided on the need for suitable court surfacing to accommodate pickleball.
- Tennis courts are also desired as the current courts require some maintenance.
- A number of comments supported leaving space for a potential future indoor recreation space.
- A washroom facility is desired for when the arenas are not open/available to the public but the park is in use.
- Some concern over parking was expressed.
- Although there were some comments supporting moving the outdoor rink to Heritage Park, the majority of people indicated that they would prefer the rink remain at Central Park.

Central Park Design Concept:

- The importance of retaining the CICK rail car at its current location was identified as important. Notable rationale for this include visibility into the site and synergies with other park amenities and functions.
- The idea of having an event lawn was mostly well received. However, there is some concern about its location being to close to the road (noisy), and some feel that its purpose overlaps with the Bovill Stage.
- Many people are supportive of making the Visitors Centre more visible from the road. A new building is desired.
- The idea of centring an arts and cultural hub space is well received.
- Many respondents would like to see the outdoor rink stay at Central Park. Some would like to see it covered and used a market pavilion in the summer months.
- The location of the Sani-dump was a concern for some. Proximity to residences and lack of a fit with other park amenities were commonly cited.
- Parking for the museum and art gallery, and the farmers market was a of concern to a number of respondents.
- Some respondents would like to see the library eventually moved to the park near the museum/ art gallery/ potentially part of a larger building.
- The importance of reflecting Indigenous culture in the design/ images was identified as important.
- A few noted that they did not feel accessibility was in mind when the concept design was developed.

Key Themes from the Feedback Provided for Key Direction #2: Create More Structure and Purpose Around Parks Experiences and Uses.

- Several comments requested upgrading all of the existing playgrounds.
- Paved parking lots are desired at recreation and arts facilities as well as field locations such as Chandler Park.
- A number of respondents requested Elk Park ball fields be upgraded and suggested that some of the amenities suggested at Heritage and Central Park be located there instead.
- Setting trails ups for winter use is desired.
- Many used the opportunity to advocate for a splash park and pickleball courts again.

Key Themes from the Feedback Provided for Key Direction #3: Prioritize trail investment to create better connectivity and all-season opportunities.

- More trail signage is desired.
- More collaboration with Cycle 16 and the Town was suggested.
- Connect the Perimeter trail to the path by the golf course.
- Trail connectivity is a priority for many residents, some indicated that connectivity is an important element of encouraging active transportation.

Key Themes from the Feedback Provided for Key Direction #4: Prioritize working with partners to meet community needs for large span multi-use space

- The pool is in desperate need of improvement.
- An indoor court / turf space is desired by a number of respondents.
- Covered outdoor spaces are desired as well.
- The Fire Department should keep maintaining the outdoor rink.
- There are a lot of really good club sport organizations in Town but many are not accessible due to the high cost to participate. The Town should prioritize recreation opportunities that are affordable and low barrier to entry.

Key Themes from Other Feedback Provided

- In general residents are happy with the Master Plan and are eager to see the implementation of Strategies outlined.
- Some concern was expressed around the cost of implementing the Plan.
- Specific site related feedback was provided for a number of parks.
- Keeping trees or replacing trees that require removal for park development is important to a number of residents.