

play dawson

CITY OF DAWSON PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



Across the River Consulting
Monarda Communications

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1.0 Introduction

A Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) sets the high-level, strategic direction for how a municipality delivers parks and recreation programs and infrastructure. The City of Dawson undertook an internal master planning exercise in 2007. The community has grown and changed considerably since that time, and the City determined that 2019 was the ideal time to re-examine and confirm its approach to parks and recreation in order to prepare for the next decade.

The PRMP creates a 10-year blueprint for the City of Dawson that:

- Sets out a **vision** and **guiding principles** for parks and recreation consistent with community needs and Council priorities;
- Establishes key **goals** and **objectives** for municipal recreation services, programs, facilities and events;
- Considers City capacity and budget implications; and,
- Sets out a course for **implementation** and **performance evaluation**.

The Plan was developed over a yearlong timeframe and was developed in partnership with the City by a team led by Groundswell Planning of Whitehorse. The team's planning process included compiling background research, engaging the community and stakeholders, working with staff and Council to chart direction and strategy, and drafting the plan document. The project was organized into three phases as follows:

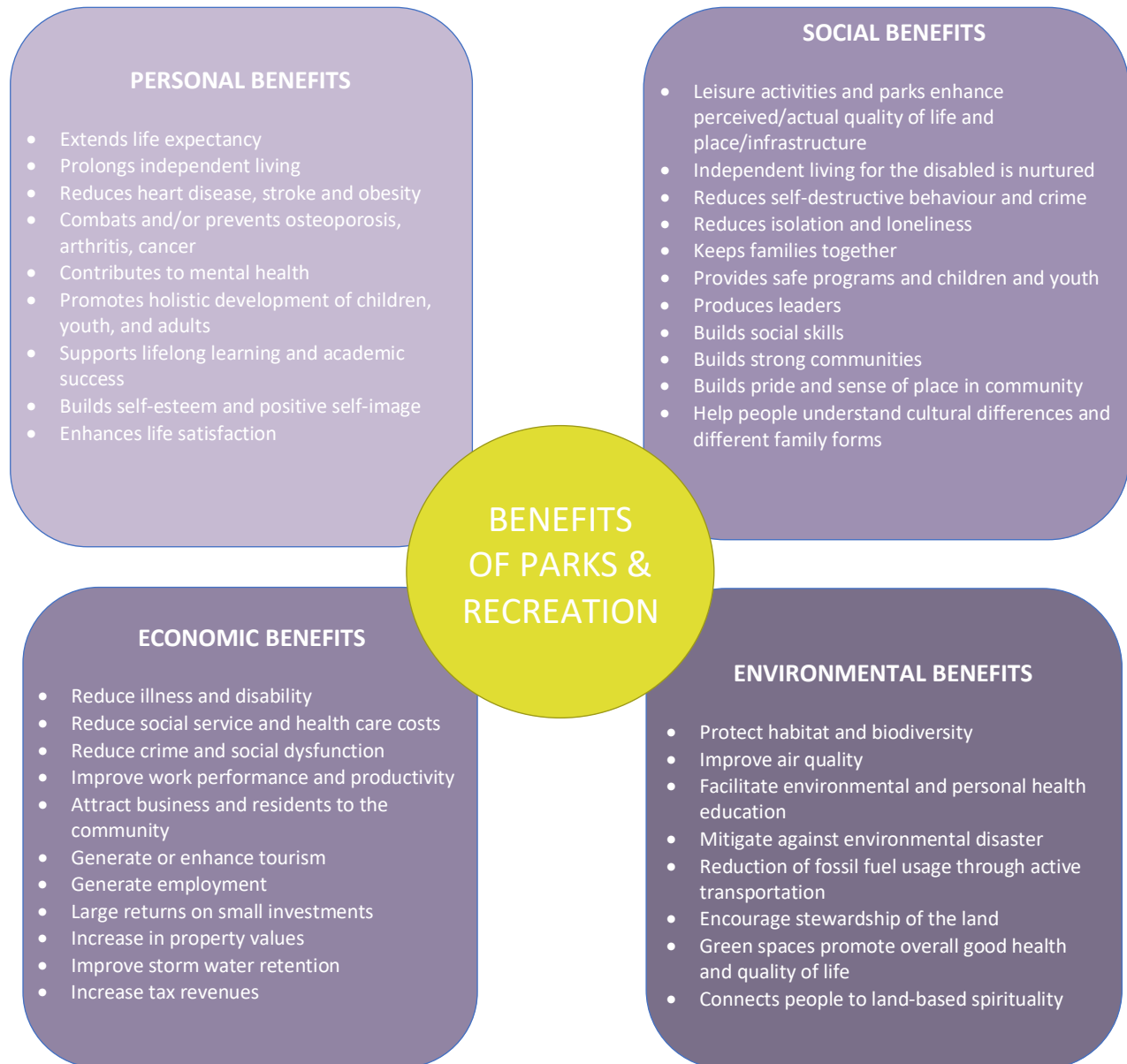


Council adopted the final plan in **TBD, 2020**.

Please note that the background and analysis sections of this document are a summary of the planning team's comprehensive report, entitled "State of Play", which is available from the City of Dawson.

2.0 Why Parks and Recreation Matters

Recreation is defined as “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being.”¹ Governments have a long history of providing parks and recreation to citizens, stemming from a guiding philosophy that views recreation as a “public good” – available to all - akin to schools, roads, drinking water, and law enforcement. This ongoing public investment into recreation has tangible benefits both at an individual and societal level. The graphic below depicts a summary of recreation benefits as compiled by The National Benefits Hub².



¹ Interprovincial Sports and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 2015. Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing.

² National Benefits Hub. www.benefitshub.ca

2.0 Community Context

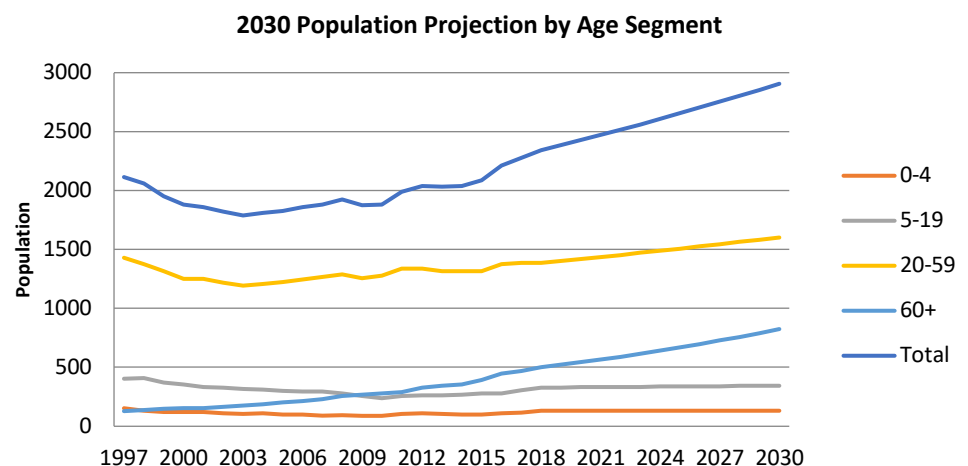
Dawson City is situated in the Traditional Territory of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH), at the culturally, historically, and ecologically rich setting of the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers in central Yukon. The main economic drivers of Dawson are public administration, mining (primarily placer) and tourism. The economy can be characterized as stable and resilient, with the greatest uncertainty currently being the unknown course and impacts (economic, population, and otherwise) of Goldcorp's nearby Coffee Creek mine development.

The built heritage of the Klondike Gold Rush, and indeed the Gold Rush story itself, is a key pillar upon which Dawson City's status as a premier Yukon destination is based. In recent years there have been a number of initiatives aimed at broadening Dawson City's visitor offer for a shifting visitor demographic and interest (i.e. meetings and incentives, outdoor activities, winter tourism, etc.)

The City of Dawson municipality has a population 1,375-strong (Statistics Canada, 2017) and serves a population of 2,341 (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, September 2018) when peripheral rural subdivisions are included. Dawson is by far the fastest growing community in the Yukon, with its population projected to rise by 24% to 2,906 in 2030 and by 49% to 3,480 by 2040, a total further increase of 1,139 people (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

According to census data, the municipality, compared to the Yukon as a whole, has a:

- smaller proportion of First Nation, female and immigrant residents;
- similar age profile;
- much lower average household size; and,
- much lower income and much higher cost of living.



Dawson's population is aging and, combined with broader societal shifts, growth is predicted to occur almost exclusively in 1-2-person adult households. The over-60 segment is projected to increase by 326 people, or 65%, by 2030 and account for 58% of growth over the next 12 years.



3.0 Service Delivery Overview

The City of Dawson's Recreation Department delivers a wide range of both direct and indirect parks and recreation services to community residents, as illustrated below. The department's name is somewhat misleading given its much broader responsibilities around parks, playgrounds, and open spaces.

Department Structure

The City's Recreation Department is overseen by a full-time manager and includes two programmers, an administrative assistant, and numerous facility staff. A six-member Recreation Board reviews recreation-related funding applications.

Policy Framework

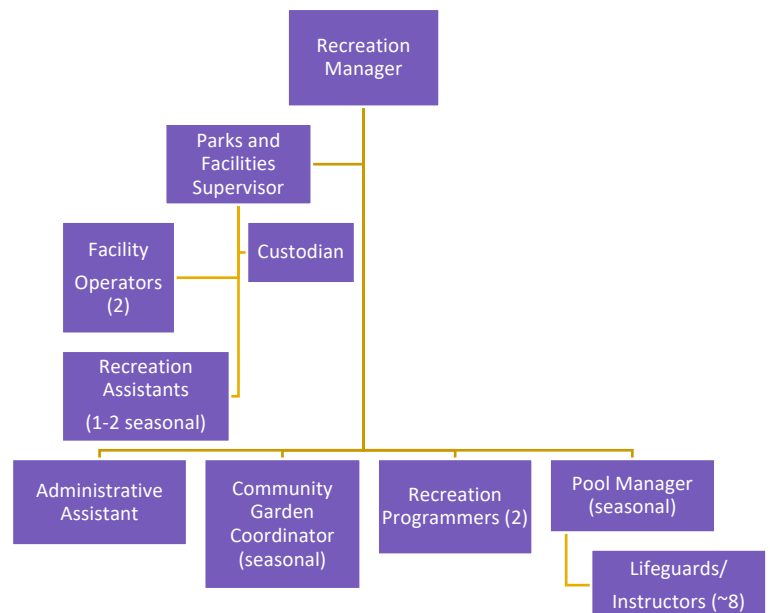
Numerous municipal and Recreation Department policies guide the delivery of recreation in Dawson, including:

- *Official Community Plan*
- *Community Grants Policy*
- *Fees and Charges Bylaw*
- *Fitness Centre Policy*
- *Property and Facility Rental Policy*
- *Recreation Grants Policy*
- *Recreation Board Policy*
- *Recreation Tiered Fee Structure Policy*

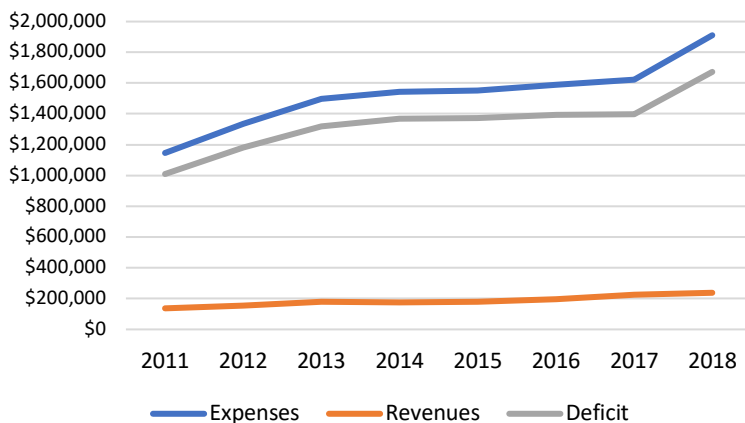
In addition to the City-level policies governing recreation delivery, the Recreation Department has developed and enacted a number of other policies and guidelines, including arena and pool rules, procedures for program delivery and tournaments, and a parent handbook for youth programs.

Financial Resources

The City has spent heavily on recreation in recent years, increasing its budget by 67% to \$1.91 million in the 7 years to 2018, a compound annual rate of 8% that is far in excess of population growth.



Recreation Budget 2011-2018



Recreation consumes 23% of the total municipal budget. Despite a steady growth in user fee revenues, the recreation deficit has continued to rise, reaching a record \$1.67 million in 2018. \$35,000 is set aside annually in recreation reserve funds.

The cost recovery rate for Dawson recreation services is 12%, with only the Fitness Centre generating a surplus. The City's ability to offset recreation costs, even at the current level of service, is limited. For example, a hypothetical general tax rate rise of 1% over inflation and 5% user fee increase would

represent a meagre 1.6% increase to the recreation budget. A substantial increase to levels of service could pose significant financial challenges to the City.

Facilities and Amenities

The City owns and maintains a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities. The two most significant indoor facility assets are the Art and Margaret Fry Recreation Centre (AMFRC) and Dawson City swimming pool, both of which were built about 20 years ago. Unstable subsurface conditions have plagued AMFRC since the beginning; the building has deemed seismically unsound and in 2017 Council voted unanimously to build a new centre (as opposed to spending an estimated \$19.5 million on repairs). The City operates several smaller indoor facilities, including the new (as of 2018) Minto Park concession building and fitness centre, which received continuous upgrades between 2015 and 2018. The pool underwent substantial upgrades over the past four years to extend its operating life.

	Revenues	Expenses	2018 Cost Recovery
Dept Total	\$238,000	\$1,911,000	12%
AMFRC	\$52,000	\$621,000	8%
Pool	\$32,000	\$300,000	11%
Fitness Centre	\$59,000	\$54,000	109%
Programming	\$60,000	\$264,000	23%
Green spaces	\$12,000	\$292,000	4%

Indoor Facilities	Outdoor Facilities/Amenities	
Art and Margaret Fry Recreation Centre (arena, concession, office/meeting room)	Ball diamonds (Minto Park* and Crocus Bluff)	Playgrounds (Minto Park*/community garden)
Fitness centre	Basketball court (shared with tennis)	Skateboard/scooter park
Minto Park concession building*	Community garden	Soccer field (Crocus Bluff)
Swimming pool	Parks - waterfront* (inc. gazebo, picnic shelter), Crocus Bluff day use area*, Victory Gardens, etc.	Tennis court (shared with basketball)
		Trails (9 th Avenue/Dyke/ Dome trails, etc.)

The City also owns and maintains a range of outdoor amenities, including sport fields, a hard surfaced court, playgrounds, parks, and gardens. A 2017 trail management plan established a 35-kilometre municipal multi-use network concept and the City completed its third season of trail development and upgrades in 2019.

*Land leased from the Government of Yukon

City Recreation Facilities and Amenities



Front Street public washrooms



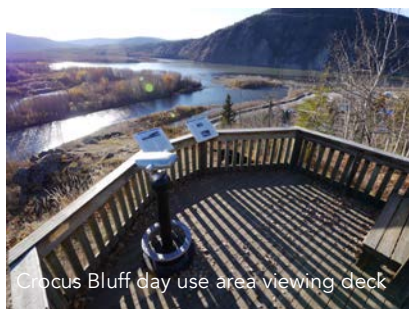
North End playground



Art and Margaret Fry Rec Centre



Crocus Bluff soccer field



Crocus Bluff day use area viewing deck



Front Street/Dyke gazebo



Community garden



Victory Gardens



Arena



Minto Park playground



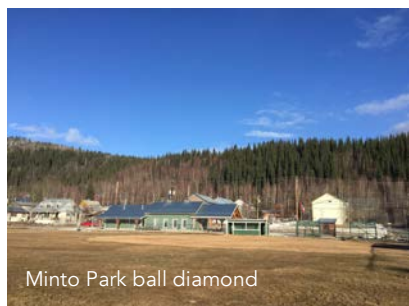
Fitness centre



Tennis/basketball court



Waterfront and fire pit



Minto Park ball diamond



Gazebo park



Moosehide Trail



Front Street picnic shelter



Swimming pool



Crocus Bluff concession building



Skate park



Waterfront building
(administration/Fitness Centre)



Ninth Avenue north trailhead



Minto Park concession building



Crocus Bluff ball field

Other Recreation Facilities & Amenities



Robert Service School playground



Moose Mountain alpine facility



Moose Mountain cross-country trails



Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture



TH Youth Centre

With the second storey of AMFRC never completed, the City has relied on other venues to accommodate programming. The most utilized spaces have been the school gym and ancillary room, the latter of which was lost for programming in Fall 2019 due to conversion to a classroom. Other spaces operated by various community organizations and utilized for recreation purposes include community halls, the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Youth Centre. Community groups also operate cross-country ski trails, an alpine ski facility, golf course, and off-leash dog park (virtually all of which are leased from the City).

The City's larger-scale recreation investments typically rely on territorial and/or federal funding. In addition to annual capital plans, there is a 10-year Equipment Replacement Plan funded by the Recreation Reserve. The City is working to formalize its maintenance activities for parks and open spaces and integrate a new asset management system into its maintenance record keeping and capital planning activities. The City requires liability insurance for third party use of its facilities; this has been a challenge for private bookings in particular.

The arena is well utilized during winter evenings and weekends but highly underutilized during the weekdays; the pool, in contrast, experiences a steadier stream of traffic throughout its summer operating hours. Space at the school gymnasium and (prior to Fall 2019) ancillary room is oversubscribed, and some in the community feel that there is a lack of other "neutral" (i.e. lacking religious or other affiliation) recreation spaces in Dawson.

Programming and Events

The City offers a variety of programs for a broad demographic spectrum of Dawson residents. The City's recreation programmers "scan" the community for recreation-related expertise to develop programs around, try to avoid duplication with other organizations' efforts, and constantly monitor and adapt their efforts based on uptake and feedback. The City views its role as a "leader" for elementary age after-school and summer programming and a "gap filler" for age groups and demographics served by other organizations. The City has been recruiting more third-party instructors to provide specialized programming and expanding its seniors and "5 & under" offerings. Various other groups deliver sports, arts, cultural, and outdoor programs to community members. Dawson's event calendar is full, with the City organizing Canada Day festivities, Discovery Days parade, and Festival of Lights at Christmas, along with other smaller community events.

Community Support, Partnerships and Outreach

The City distributes about \$62,000 in funding to individuals and recreation groups each year, with funding levels and project eligibility considered to be supportive. The process for accommodating informal requests for in-kind support from the City is not clearly established and people can get "bounced around" between departments. The golf course and Moose Mountain alpine ski area receive annual grants from the City, and City staff operates the latter facility during Spring Break. The City conducts outreach primarily via its website, quarterly newsletters, and Facebook page but notes some challenges in getting the word, and the facts, out reliably. User group meetings are held on an annual basis as well.

Departmental Capacity and Training

The City's Recreation Department staff generally feels that they work well as a team and have an "all hands in" approach. An overarching "can do" attitude extends to program and service delivery, City staff generally feels that they have sufficient capacity to continue delivering recreation programs at the current level of service. This structure lends itself to an ongoing reliance on the Manager position for decision-making. In addition, some routine administrative tasks such as third-party contracts, are still under the purview of the Manager.



4.0 What We Heard

Dawson residents actively participated in the development of the 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan via various input opportunities. Resident input was supplemented with surveys and one-on-one interviews with various community organizations to form a complete picture of how Dawson recreation in general, and the City's role specifically, are perceived.

Input Opportunity	Timeline	Participation
User Group Online Survey	March 2019	12 surveys
Household Survey		173 surveys
User Group Drop-in Session		1 group
Graffiti Walls		70-110 ppl
User Group Online Survey	Jan/Feb 2020	TBD
Household Survey		TBD

Household Survey Findings

Participation and Values

- The **majority** of the community's "**Top 10**" activities were **outdoors-based**, including (in order of popularity) hiking/walking, camping, picnicking/gathering, gardening, wildlife/nature appreciation, and cross-country skiing/snowshoeing.
- **Inconvenient times**, **poor/inadequate facilities**, **lack of time and/or awareness**, and **cost** of programs were cited as the "**Top 5**" **barriers** to participation in recreation (ordered from greatest to least).
- Respondents indicated that **recreation is important** to both their own **quality of life** and the **social and economic vitality** of the community as a whole.



Facility Utilization, Quantity and Quality

- **Parks, trails, and greenspaces** received the **broadest visitation** by households of survey respondents, with the Dyke/9th Avenue trails receiving the highest level of frequent use of all amenities.
- The **most broadly used indoor facilities** included the **Robert Service School, arena**, and **facilities** operated by local **non-profit groups**. Single-purpose or more specialized facilities were most likely to receive no use.
- Respondents conferred the **highest overall ratings to parks** and major **trails** (Dyke/9th Avenue).
- The **highest ratings for indoor facilities** were assigned to the **Minto Park concession building, Fitness Centre**, and facilities operated by other groups. The spaces that received the **lowest and most mixed ratings** were the **Recreation Centre's non-arena spaces, swimming pool, and arena**.

Financial Considerations & Investment Criteria

- While **most respondents preferred maintaining** the current **user fees**, one-quarter supported an increase.
- The "**Top 3**" **criteria** for prioritizing **new facilities** included **multiple uses/users, year-round function**, and responsiveness to **resident demands/requests**. **Economic sustainability** took a distant **4th** place.

Comments from the public

"The arena unfortunately needs to be addressed before it is condemned. In my mind this is the number one issue as it serves so many people during a critical time of year that people need to recreate along with creating a major social scene... Indoor gym space would be next on my list."

"We have a darned good recreation dept. We need a full-bore year-round recreation complex!"

"Year-round swimming pool please!"

"I think that the top priority for indoor spaces is multi-purpose gym space that can be used for soccer, fitness classes, yoga, basketball, etc. I think the top priority for outdoor space is continuing to increase the trail network for biking and hiking."

"Dawson needs a space for parents to take their young kids that can't move in the snow in the depths of winter."

"We need to increase our activity level! This reduces health costs long term. Work with what we have and keep things modest. Affordability is important in the long run, which (I think) means focusing more on simple outdoor activities that would not cost much."

"I don't want to sound critical, as I know how hard working the Rec Dept is, but I think the staff has grown complacent and just keep repeating the same stuff. This happens to anyone in a job for a long time...send them out for some training, workshops and give them time to do research on new stuff happening in the rec world! There must be cool stuff being done elsewhere!"

"The town does a great job of programming. We're getting bigger,

though. Might be time to get more staff and more programs."

"This town seems an ideal place to raise children - up to a certain age. After that, families often face making the decision about whether to leave town to see to older children's needs /well-being."

"Many people are not athletes or artists, so I think more passive forms of rec could be implemented (games nights, cards, chess or ???). There is a void."

"Year round (winter specifically) multi-use spaces are what I would emphasize are needed in Dawson."

"You folks are doing a great job. We enjoy great services for a town or size."

"I would say outside of recreation, but within the lens of access, is the ill-graded streets and boardwalks. The inaccess to those with mobility issues or small kids on foot, makes it difficult to get out and access what is already available and being done well."

"Rec dept budget and spending should be included in newsletters and program guides so tax payers can make informed decisions about the value of recreation in town."

"Overall, I think what the rec department offers is pretty impressive given the number of staff they have to run programs."

"0-5 programming is underrepresented big time. It's a very lonely existence during these years"

"Programming should occur on weekends so working parents can attend with their children"

"Sign up system needs to be more accessible...seems like the same families.. are able to access after

school programming as a result of accessibility for sign up and limited space."

"Under 5 and over 60. Both of these groups are very neglected."

"Space and partnerships for early childhood care are very important if families are going to stay in Dawson. I am considering leaving because of care and extra-curricular opportunities for my child, and I have already seen a number of other families make that choice (or are making it.)"

Comments from user groups

"I have found the advertising and communication at times to be slower and more complicated than expected or needed."

"Rec programmers should be working evenings and weekends, not 9-5 weekdays."

"We partner on events all the time and the City's funding programs are easy to access and have a good range of eligible expenses."

"It's challenging to have liability insurance in order to use the City's facilities i.e. the waterfront."

"City requests volunteers to help offer certain programs but City provides no training or support e.g. baseball (kids). Need to host volunteer drives, provide training and structured programs for those activities not directed by a Sport Governing Body..."

"The City has been supportive of our efforts..."

"(City) needs to include user groups in discussions regarding facility usage upgrades/staffing before decisions are made. More effort needs to be made to keep facilities clean and operating efficiently."

Facility Priorities

- Virtually all respondents indicated a **need for new and/or enhanced facilities** within the next decade.
- The “Top 5” indoor facilities that should be more available or enhanced included the **swimming pool, ice arena, fitness/exercise spaces, pool amenities** (i.e. hot tub/sauna) and **indoor playground**. The accompanying “Top 5” outdoor space enhancements and/or additions were **natural surface trails, outdoor aquatics spaces, day use/gathering spaces, outdoor rinks, and event spaces**.



Programming

- The availability and quality of **recreation programs** in Dawson for **adults** was **rated most highly**, followed by elementary age **children’s programming**. Options for **seniors** and **children 5 & under** were rated **lowest**.
- Respondents suggested a **greater variety of options**, more **frequent offerings**, and more **convenient hours** (i.e., to accommodate 9-to-5 workdays and flexibility for parents of young children) as improvements.

Roles of City vs. Others

- Most viewed recreation delivery as a **shared responsibility** between the **City** and **other groups**. A majority felt that the **City** should lead on **community events**, and that **other groups** should lead in **arts and culture**.

User Group Survey Findings

- Most respondent groups predicted **future growth in participation** for the program(s) they deliver.
- **One-quarter** of respondents indicated that their **needs were completely met** by **facilities** while almost **two-thirds** indicated **needs** being **somewhat met**. A strong **majority** felt that **new facilities** would be **needed** within the next decade.
- A **majority** reported being “**satisfied**” or “**very satisfied**” with their interactions with the City.

Interview Findings

- **Facilities** are considered the **primary barrier** to **quality recreation** in Dawson and there is a legacy of frustration and disappointment. The **potential loss** of an **indoor recreation space** for one or two winters is a **concern**. The **needs and expectations** for a new centre are varied.
- The City is making **valued contributions** to recreation and quality of life in Dawson.
- Some **partnerships and relationships** between the Department and other groups are highly **successful**, while others **need more attention**.
- **Pressures** on the Department are **high** and **expectations** can be **unrealistic**.
- The recreation calendar is **busier than ever**, and some non-profits a feeling “**stretched thin**”.
- The Department is perceived as being **isolated** and **unapproachable** by some, and **communications** and **internal/external process** needs improvement.

External Interviewees

City of Dawson Recreation Board
Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre
Dawson City Chamber of Commerce
Dawson City Museum
Government of Yukon – Community Affairs Branch
Government of Yukon – Sport and Recreation Branch
Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture
Klondike Visitors Association
Little Blue Daycare
McDonald Lodge
Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon
Robert Service School (2 interviews)
Royal Canadian Legion
Tr’inke Zho Daycare
Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Health and Social Services (2 interviews)
Tr’ondek Hwëch’in Youth Centre

5.0 Recreation Trends and Best Practices

Health, Fitness and Activity Trends

- Almost 1/3 of children and adults in Canada are obese.
- Only 35% of children and youth and 15% of adults meet recommended physical activity guidelines.
- Almost three-quarters of Canadian children and youth exceed recommended guidelines for screen time.
- Most Canadian youth and adults prefer spontaneous, unstructured recreation pursuits, with walking, bicycling, and swimming landing in the “Top 5” for both groups.
- Recreation participation varies by age, gender and socioeconomic status, with men and youth being more likely to play organized sports, women more likely to participate in exercise classes and wellness pursuits such as yoga, and higher income and education correlating strongly with higher participation.

Policy Guidance

Sport and recreation policy is evolving to reflect a growing recognition of the complex, interrelated societal and individual factors linked to participation. The 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada is the current national guiding document for public recreation providers.



Five pillars of the Framework for Recreation in Canada

Recreation Delivery Trends

Social Determinants of Health – shifting the focus from “how do we get individuals to choose healthier lifestyles” to “how can we create the community environments that make the healthier choice the easier choice”

Physical Literacy and Lifelong Participation - physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, and skills to engage in physical activity and is seen as a pre-condition for lifelong participation; early childhood is the focus

Places and Spaces – evolution of the parks and green space movement to place-making that supports social connections and cohesion with support amenities like Wi-Fi, seating, all ages and abilities design, art, etc.

Multi-Use Functionality and Clustering – continuation of multi-use emphasis for facility investments, accompanied by clustering with complementary services such as community libraries

Revenue Generation – municipal response to fiscal and service delivery pressures through non-traditional revenue streams such as adopt-a-park programs, facility sponsorships, planned giving programs, etc.

Active Transportation - encouraging human-powered travel modes through infrastructure and good design

Changing Volunteerism – overall national decline in volunteerism and shift to shorter commitments that provide participants with work and/or other valued experience

Return to Outdoor, “Adventurous” Play – giving children and youth spaces to explore, play and push limits

Integration of Wellness and Community Development – evolution of the recreation field to include broader wellness and community development aims such as reducing barriers, healthy eating/nutrition, mental and physical health, social inclusion, etc.

6.0 Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) Summary

GOVERNANCE	
STRENGTHS (Internal/City)	WEAKNESSES (Internal/City)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and past Councils strongly support recreation and are willing to make significant investments • Policy and procedures support decision-making • Creation of new Supervisor position better distributes responsibilities across the department • Recreation Board helps administer funding applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department and staff titles are a mismatch with services • Routine administrative tasks reside with the Manager due to organizational structure, office space and task allocation • Collective agreement of department employees disallows last-minute rescheduling required to help groups at times • The mandate for the Recreation Board is vague
OPPORTUNITIES (External)	THREATS (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected population growth will increase revenues and distribute fixed costs across larger population base • Policy and governance advice and support is available • External project-based funding may allow for short-term project management assistance • Residents highly value recreation and potentially support tax/fee increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue generating potential of recreation is limited with a small population and desire for access and affordability • Seasonal worker population and non-City tax paying residents create pressure with low cost recovery potential • Low incomes and high living costs limit disposable spending on recreation; particularly for seniors • New policy development and adaptation
FACILITIES	
STRENGTHS (Internal/City)	WEAKNESSES (Internal/City)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressive mix/variety of outdoor and indoor amenities • Parks, trails and outdoor spaces are well rated and used • Facilities are in generally good condition • Access to capital funding is good • Asset management (AM) system is being implemented and will facilitate better decision-making over time • Staff generally have capacity/skills to maintain assets • Fees and charges are low • Trail investments and planning aligns with resident priorities for parks and open space amenities • Few facility allocation conflicts, even with limited spaces • Facilities are scheduled with a mix of programmed and spontaneous, drop-in opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rec Centre has structural issues and an unknown lifespan • Multi-purpose spaces are in very limited supply • Options for wintertime indoor recreation limited • Residents desire a year-round or new pool despite significant recent investments and high operating costs • Maintenance roles need formalizing and internal agreement among City staff • Issues with existing facilities limit functionality and use • Parks offer is mostly passive (gardens, landscaping, seating) • High costs of construction, operations and maintenance • Front-end effort to integrate AM could be considerable • The arena is heavily underutilized during daytime hours
OPPORTUNITIES (External)	THREATS (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Yukon is committed to helping fund a new recreation centre that can address not only priority gaps in the facility offer but compensate for likelihood that a year-round pool is not financially feasible • Dawson resident criteria for facility investment and top facility priorities align with best practices and likely funding reality (with exception of new pool) • Non-profit groups manage and maintain quality facilities that the City does not have to • TH plans to develop a new Youth Centre • National, territorial and local data points to a strong preference for participation in unstructured activities that require open spaces with lower operating costs as compared to indoor facilities (i.e., arenas and pools) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government expectations around recreation centre and appropriate funding levels may not satisfy all needs/expectations of public and key stakeholders • Land use constraints/topography pose limitations to continued open space development/protection • The potential amenities included in a new recreation centre will be highly site-dependent; trade-offs between location and features should be anticipated • Dawson's built environment poses many physical barriers for an aging population • Climate change policies such as carbon pricing could raise operating costs of large indoor facilities considerably • Dawson residents have high skepticism and negativity around facilities; pressure to "get it right" is equally high

PROGRAMMING	
STRENGTHS (Internal/City)	WEAKNESSES (Internal/City)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City offers a range of programs for all ages and interests • City has experienced, capable programmers • Children's programs are highly rated and utilized • City delivers major family-oriented community events • Third party instructors have improved options available • City programs are very affordable • Quarterly newsletters showcase City offerings as well as other recreation opportunities (i.e., drop-in leagues, etc.) • City adapts to constantly changing circumstances • Inter-agency coordination has been initiated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs for seniors and 5 & under less available • City capacity to deliver programming is limited • Lack of facility space is a key constraint and City sometimes has to "bump" other groups to run its own programs • Programs can be vulnerable to low numbers of participants, conflicting scheduling, availability of instructors, etc. • Specialized programming challenging to sustain due to dependence on instructors in a transient community • Residents cite inconvenient scheduling as a constraint • City's registration system and communications approach may pose barriers to participation/awareness
OPPORTUNITIES (External)	THREATS (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing and more diverse population creates new programming opportunities and new instructors • Other groups provide quality programs in arts and culture and residents feel these groups should lead • There are a wide variety of partners for the City • Participation, lifestyle and population trends point to an increased need for wellness, active living facilitation • Dawson has a full events calendar • A new recreation centre could "spark" new programs • More distance, online training available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many Dawson events have an adult, alcoholic element; not as many family events • Non-profits are feeling "stretched thin" with events in Dawson and an aging population could exacerbate issue • Growing cohort of seniors will create new needs • Time constraints, excessive screen time, and low rates of physical activity are known barriers to participation • It can be difficult for Dawson residents to stay informed of opportunities, with communications stratified and no one shared repository for recreation news
PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	
STRENGTHS (Internal/City)	WEAKNESSES (Internal/City)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is readily available to community groups and individuals, usually within a very short time frame • Direct funding is in place for certain partners • Some partnerships are highly successful and the City has productive, positive working relationships • City has some effective communications channels • There is a mechanism for third party usage of City facilities and rentals are affordable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications capacity and effectiveness is limited • The City does not have a streamlined, effective way of assisting individuals and groups seeking support • Some partnerships and funding relationships are not clearly rationalized/articulated; there may be inconsistent approaches towards major partners • Third party liability issues, such as private rentals, need further clarity and policy work
OPPORTUNITIES (External)	THREATS (External)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawson is an active, engaged community with a strong volunteer ethic • The relatively small number of external groups and partners makes communications easier • A high proportion of Dawson children are in City camps; opportunity to reach families through them • There are numerous successful partnerships to build on • Major partners continue to provide services in Dawson and the City can evolve these relationships • City recreation facilities are well visited and a great venue to share information and seek input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some partnerships need renewed attention; feeling that the City does not value major partners equally • There are some perceptions that the department is isolated from the community and not receptive to residents' ideas • Dawson residents can have unrealistic expectations of service delivery and lack awareness of costs/capacity issues • Non-profits are feeling "stretched thin" with events in Dawson and aging population could worsen situation • City policy and organizational framework may not always "mesh" with a non-bureaucratic community culture

7.0 Vision, Guiding Principles, and Plan Elements

VISION 2030

"Dawson City is home to recreation spaces and opportunities as vibrant and diverse as its people."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Accountability – The City involves and communicates with Dawson residents in regards to key aspects of recreation delivery and facilitates decision-making with facts and best practices.

Diversity – The City encourages and accommodates a wide variety of recreational interests and activities in the community.

Accessibility – The City works to ensure that recreation opportunities are available to all residents of Dawson.

Feasibility – The City recognizes that its own resources and those of the broader community may pose constraints to recreation at times and strives to find practical and innovative ways to meet core needs.

Sustainability – The City strives to ensure that its current delivery of recreation programming and facilities protects the environmental, financial, and other resources needed to maintain and/or increase future levels of recreation service delivery in Dawson.



THE FOUR PLAN ELEMENTS

8.0 City Roles and Service Standards

THE CITY'S ROLES IN RECREATION

<p>Steward – The City cares for the natural and built recreation spaces that are under its jurisdiction and encourage residents to take pride in and care for them.</p> <p>Funder – The City provides direct and indirect financial support to individuals and groups to pursue, provide, and promote recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Facility provider – The City provides safe, functional spaces that accommodate a range of recreational activities for the community and makes these available for both City and other activities.</p> <p>Facilitator/partner – The City works with other individuals and groups to facilitate the delivery of recreational opportunities to Dawson residents.</p>	<p>Program provider – The City designs and delivers programs that offer leisure and opportunities for individual and community well being.</p> <p>Listener/learner – The City strives to listen to and learn from the views of local residents, volunteer groups, and the broader community in its approach to planning and delivering recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Leader – The City helps to create and foster a local culture in which recreation participation and active living are valued and promoted.</p>
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SERVICE STANDARDS

Facilities

Our Service Objective: To provide safe, functional and enjoyable outdoor and indoor spaces in which Dawson residents and visitors can spend their leisure time.

Maintenance Priorities Maintenance Priority by Spaces

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1) Safety | 1) Highly utilized locations, particularly by vulnerable populations (i.e., children, seniors) |
| 2) Functionality | 2) High maintenance requirements due to specific features or amenities |
| 3) Aesthetics | 3) Highly visible locations |
| | 4) Less used and/or visible locations |

Programs

Our Service Objective: To provide, facilitate, and support a range of recreation opportunities for Dawson residents.

Delivery Priorities In-House Programming Priority by Recipient Group

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 1) Safety | 1) Elementary school age children |
| 2) Quality | 2) Demographic and/or other groups not well served by third party programs |
| 3) Diversity | 3) Families |



9.0 Goals and Actions

GOVERNANCE

Goal #1 Continue to restructure the Recreation department to reflect its mandate and improve efficiencies.

Action 1.1 Rename the department and manager position title to incorporate the parks function.

Action 1.2 Consider restructuring current positions to have one Lead Programmer, one Assistant Programmer and one year-round part-time support person.

Action 1.3 Streamline interactions with user groups seeking City assistance (see Action 12.3)

Goal #2 Utilize the Recreation Board more efficiently and effectively.

Action 2.1 Update the Recreation Board policy to:

- Reduce the number of annual meetings to four; and
- Clarify the role of the Board*

Action 2.2 Enable City staff to make Level 1 funding recommendations in between Board meetings.

Goal #3 Develop more tools and capacity to strengthen the Department's community development function.

Action 3.1 Pursue staff training in:

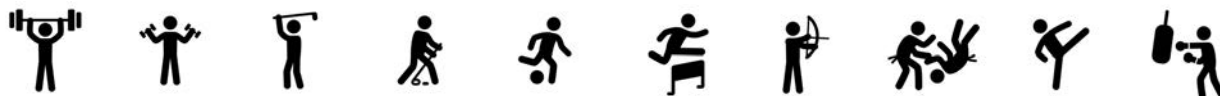
- Communications and marketing;
- Public engagement;
- Administrative and project management skills; and
- Research and policy development.

Action 3.2 Create an image library of City recreation spaces and activities to support communications.

Action 3.3 Develop corporate sponsorship program and expand the commemorative parks program to include planned giving.

**Proposed Recreation Board role to include advising Council and City administration on:*

- Funding requests;
- Incorporating public input into larger planning/policy initiatives; and,
- Annual workplans and achievement of Master Plan goals/objectives; and
- Considering concerns and complaints from the general public and user groups in regards to recreation service delivery.



FACILITIES

Goal #4 Maximize utilization and enjoyment of existing facilities.

- Action 4.1 Replace playground surfacing material at Minto Park.
- Action 4.2 Address heating and acoustics issues in the Minto Park concession building.
- Action 4.3 Consider upgrading skate park surface and features to better accommodate a full range of wheeled uses.
- Action 4.4 Consider opportunities for off-season use of indoor facilities (e.g., arena, curling rink).
- Action 4.5 Provide support as needed to ensure public use of the Moose Mountain ski trails.
- Action 4.6 Improve the multi-sport functionality and safety of outdoor courts.

Goal #5 Build a new, year-round multi-purpose recreation facility³.

- Action 5.1 Continue the facility planning process to confirm both amenities and location with the input of residents and user groups.
- Action 5.2 Work with government partners and Council to secure funding and construct the new facility.

Goal #6 Increase and diversify the City's open space amenities and opportunities.

- Action 6.1 Enhance greenspaces with more year-round active uses and "place making" features (i.e. outdoor volleyball court, natural skating rink, chess/checkers, etc.)
- Action 6.2 Modify and add amenities to support active leisure for seniors (i.e., pickle ball at tennis court, shuffleboard, horseshoes, etc.)
- Action 6.3 Continue to implement the Trail Plan.
- Action 6.4 Ensure new neighbourhoods have convenient access to parks, green space and trails.

Goal #7 Invest in active transportation and universal accessibility infrastructure.

- Action 7.1 Investigate hard surfacing options for the Dyke/Millennium Trail between Callison and Downtown Core and construct accessible ramps from Front Street at key access points.
- Action 7.2 Provide active transportation options for newly developed residential areas.

Goal #8 Increase Departmental capacity to maintain, manage and plan for facilities effectively.

- Action 8.1 Create general maintenance guidelines and procedures for parks and open spaces.
- Action 8.2 Integrate the City's new asset management system into the daily workflow and the annual capital planning process.

³ Refer to Appendix A for consultant facility recommendations.

PROGRAMMING

Goal #9 Continue to facilitate and/or deliver a diversity of recreation for all ages.

Action 9.1 Increase programming focus in the following areas:

- Wellness, healthy living, and active aging;
- Family-oriented programs;
- Outdoor skills and safety programs; and,
- One-day or weekend workshops.

Action 9.2 Provide programming to encourage use of City's outdoor amenities by youth and seniors (i.e., tennis, pickle ball, basketball, mountain biking, skateboarding, etc.)

Action 9.3 Pilot community challenges and mass participation events such as:

- Corporate sport/fitness challenges (involving City, TH, other major employers)
- Active transportation challenges; and,
- Trail network or town scavenger hunts.

Action 9.4 Provide a mix of established and new programs on an ongoing basis.

Action 9.5 Support and/or collaborate with TH to provide quality recreation for youth.

Goal #10 Reduce barriers to participation in recreation.

Action 10.1 Continue to refine the program registration process, with consideration for:

- A lottery system;
- Priority for households residing in the City;
- Maximizing equity (i.e. everyone gets something, not everything);
- Alternatives for individuals not in the community on registration day; and,
- Hosting registration at a comfortable venue.

Action 10.2 Expand communications networks to increase awareness of City programs and registration timelines (i.e., school, TH, seniors, new Canadians, etc.)

Action 10.3 Increase community awareness of other recreation opportunities, including:

- A bi-weekly or monthly Dawson recreation e-newsletter;
- A recreation-specific bulletin board in a high profile location; and,
- Highlighting other programs for specific age groups in City's newsletter.

Goal #11 Support staff to deliver high quality, relevant programming.

Action 11.1 Provide staff training in:

- National/territorial standards and supports (i.e. HIGH FIVE, Yukon Physical Literacy Coordinator, safe sport, etc.);
- Program and curriculum development training; and,
- Increased focus on mental health and wellness support skills.

PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Goal #12 Support and strengthen relationships with community groups delivering programming.

Action 12.1 Schedule inter-agency meetings with other program providers on an ongoing basis.

Action 12.2 Resolve the issue of third party insurance requirements for City property.

Action 12.3 Develop a “one-window” approach (including user-friendly information) for individuals or groups seeking support from or use of City property for recreation.

Action 12.4 Schedule more user group meetings and discussions to identify and resolve issues.

Action 12.5 Make staff available to attend user group meetings on a bi-annual basis to provide information and seek input.

Goal #13 Raise the Department’s profile and facilitate more community input.

Action 13.1 Report annually to the community on key outcomes and statistics – financials, programs, participants - in a user-friendly, accessible format via:

- Posters/displays at recreation facilities
- Recreation newsletter
- Website and social media

Action 13.2 Periodically attend/support other community events (preferably on a rotating basis) as a Department.

Action 13.3 Provide suggestion/comment boards in facilities and online.

Goal #14 Create a fair, efficient framework for City partnerships and recurring support.

Action 14.1 Review direct funding and in-kind arrangements for fairness and consistency.

Action 14.2 Articulate criteria/rationale for direct funding and in-kind arrangements in City policy, and formalize agreements with current (and future) partners accordingly.



10.0 Implementation

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME				EXTRA BUDGET
	SHORT-TERM (0-2 yrs)	MEDIUM-TERM (3-6 yrs)	LONG-TERM (7-10 yrs)	ONGOING	
GOVERNANCE					
1.1 New department and manager titles	✓				
1.2 Consider restructuring program staff	✓				
1.3 Streamline user group interactions	✓				
2.1 Update Recreation Board policy	✓				
2.2 Enable City staff to make Level 1 recommendations	✓				
3.1 Train staff in communications, etc.				✓	
3.2 Create image library				✓	\$
3.3 Develop sponsorship and expand commemorative parks program		✓		✓	\$
FACILITIES & AMENITIES					
4.1 Replace Minto Park playground surface	✓				\$
4.2 Address Minto Park building issues		✓			\$
4.3 Consider upgrading skate park			✓		\$
4.4 Consider off-season facility uses		✓			
4.5 Provide support for XC ski trails				✓	
4.6 Improve multi-sport functionality and safety of outdoor courts	✓				\$
5.1 Continue facility planning process	✓				
5.2 Construct new facility		✓			\$
6.1 Enhance greenspaces with year-round active uses and place making features				✓	\$
6.2 Modify/add amenities to support active leisure for seniors		✓			\$
6.3 Continue implementing Trail Plan				✓	\$
6.4 Ensure access to parks, trails, greenspace for new neighbourhoods				✓	\$
7.1 Investigate surfacing of Dyke Trail			✓		\$
7.2 Provide active transportation options for new neighbourhoods				✓	\$
8.1 Create parks/open space maintenance guidelines and procedures		✓			\$
8.2 Integrate asset management system				✓	

ACTION	IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME			ONGOING	EXTRA BUDGET
	SHORT-TERM (0-2 yrs)	MEDIUM-TERM (3-6 yrs)	LONG-TERM (7-10 yrs)		
PROGRAMMING					
9.1 Increase focus on wellness, active aging, families, outdoors, short offers				✓	
9.2 Provide programming geared to use of outdoor amenities by youth and seniors				✓	
9.3 Pilot community challenges and events that encourage active living	✓				
9.4 Provide mix of established/new programs				✓	
9.5 Work with TH on youth programs				✓	
10.1 Continue to refine City registration process to improve access				✓	
10.2 Expand communications network to increase awareness of City programs	✓				
10.3 Increase awareness of non-City programs	✓				
11.1 Utilize national/international standards and supports				✓	
11.2 Pursue more program and curriculum development training				✓	
PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT					
12.1 Hold inter-agency meetings with other program providers				✓	
12.2 Resolve issue of third party insurance requirements	✓				
12.3 Simplify and streamline process for City support	✓				
12.4 Host more user group meetings to identify and resolve issues				✓	
12.5 Offer to attend user group meetings on a bi-annual basis				✓	
13.1 Report annually to community on Department activities				✓	
13.2 Attend and/or support other community events				✓	
13.3 Provide comment/suggestion boxes		✓			
14.1 Review direct funding and/or in-kind arrangements		✓			\$
14.2 Articulate direct funding/in-kind in City policy and formalize arrangements		✓			\$



Appendix A

Recreation Facility Recommendations

Early in the process, it was determined that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) would not address Dawson's future indoor recreation facility in detail due to the decision to undertake a separate facility planning process. Mayor and Council worked with Stantec Consulting on a preliminary facility planning exercise in 2019, but that effort did not attempt to connect to the PRMP, which was still in progress.

In the interests of connecting the PRMP – specifically the considerable public input and City recreation capacity analysis that underpinned it – to facility planning, Groundswell is including its own recommendations for facility amenities for consideration here. These recommendations did not attempt to factor in facility siting opportunities and constraints (such as appropriate geotechnical conditions); these will obviously impact final decisions.

PRIORITY LEVEL	RATIONALE
High	
<i>Flexible, multi-use spaces</i>	<i>Strong public support; current lack of these spaces a serious recreation constraint</i>
<i>Front desk/office function</i>	<i>Public and user groups need reasonable access to facility staff</i>
<i>Ice surfaces/arena</i>	<i>Strong public support and central to established winter recreation programs</i>
<i>Indoor playground</i>	<i>User groups/public placed high priority on winter options for children and families</i>
<i>Gathering/viewing spaces</i>	<i>Social cohesion and integration functions of facility should be maximized</i>
<i>Sauna/steam room</i>	<i>Strong public support; wellness/therapy benefits (particularly for aging population); provides some benefits of year-round pool without very high capital/O&M</i>
Medium	
<i>Bouldering wall</i>	<i>Strong public support; strategic use of underutilized vertical space</i>
<i>Fitness centre</i>	<i>Co-location with other amenities more convenient for families and builds community</i>
<i>Historic townsite location</i>	<i>Interviewees stressed importance; convenient access promotes walking and use by youth</i>
<i>Recreation staff office space</i>	<i>Could create efficiencies and raise community profile for staff</i>
<i>Sufficient space for pool</i>	<i>Option to build future pool (seasonal or year-round) on same site would be ideal</i>
<i>Walking route/track</i>	<i>Strong public support; safe seniors-oriented exercise option in winter; ideally designed to require minimal additional facility footprint</i>

Given the high priority that the public and some interviewees placed on a year-round pool, the Groundswell planning team undertook a very brief analysis of feasibility utilizing two small Northern communities: Fort Simpson and Inuvik, NWT. The planning team concluded that, at this juncture, it did not support the pursuit of a year-round pool due to the following considerations:

- Based on the projected budget for Old Crow's community centre and a Yellowknife pool in the planning stages, the team's "back of napkin" capital cost estimate for a new year-round pool is \$12 million dollars. Government of Yukon has signalled that a new facility will be planned and constructed in a conservative funding environment. Upgrading the current seasonal pool to a year-round one may come at the expense of other amenities for which there are currently no (seasonal or otherwise) options.
- Even if sufficient capital funding could be secured, it's the operations and maintenance (O&M) burden that ultimately dictates whether a year-round pool is viable for Dawson. The other examples suggest that a \$200-\$300K budget could be required; possibly a 15% increase over current expenses. Dawson's current allocation of municipal budget to recreation is already substantially higher than other Yukon communities.
- Dawson's small population poses an ongoing challenge to the sustainability of both City and volunteer-led programming. In a community with a limited number of participants and a society with increasingly limited time, a winter pool could potentially undermine the viability of winter recreation such as soccer, minor hockey and Moose Mountain. It also questions whether a year-round pool would result in higher overall recreation participation and increased City facility revenues, or simply spread those same revenues across more facilities.