

Executive Summary

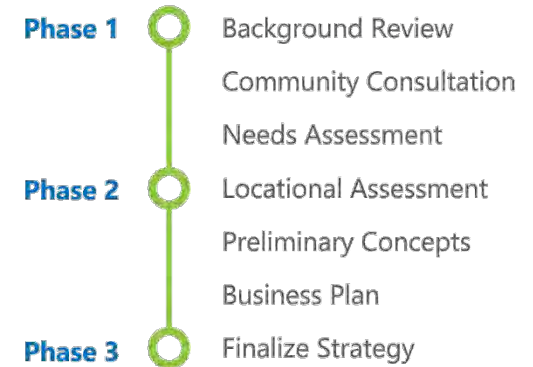
Report Overview

Through past studies and stated Council Priorities, Haldimand County has expressed an interest in expanding the variety of community and recreation services through the development or redevelopment of facilities. These opportunities contribute in a significant way to the County’s social, economic, and environmental priorities and are vital to individual and community wellness.

The purpose of this Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy (the “Strategy”) is two-fold:

- 1) to examine community interest in major community and recreation facilities and activities in light of new information (including growth projections and leisure trends) and updated community input; and
- 2) to provide County Council with a series of prioritized facility provision options and realistic financial estimates to guide future decision-making, budgeting, and the pursuit of outside funding over the next twenty years.

Community & Recreation Facilities Strategy Planning Process



Facility Types under Consideration

- Gymnasiums and multi-purpose spaces
- Fitness and wellness spaces
- Youth spaces
- Older adult and seniors centres
- Indoor artificial turf sports fields
- Creative arts spaces
- Indoor swimming pools
- Outdoor pools and splash pads

Items Beyond the Scope of this Study

- Indoor ice arenas
- Community halls
- Outdoor sports fields
- Neighbourhood park features
- Trails
- Other items not listed at left

Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles are core directional statements that are intended to guide the development and implementation of this Strategy and the County's future decision-making relating to the provision of major community and recreation facilities.

- 1. Build a healthy and engaged community, foster active lifestyles, and promote skill development.**
- 2. Provide inclusive, affordable, and accessible recreational opportunities for all Haldimand residents, especially youth and seniors.**
- 3. Ensure that major facilities are multi-use, multi-generational, programmable year-round, and responsive to the needs of our local communities.**
- 4. Foster and support partnerships that create synergies, leverage resources, and allow the County to maintain core services.**
- 5. Make decisions that are financially responsible and sustainable for the County and its residents.**

Local Context

The County's Draft Parks & Recreation Service Plan Update (August 2018) recommended that a Multi-Use Recreation Complex Feasibility Study be prepared to consider the feasibility of an indoor aquatic centre in conjunction with an indoor multi-purpose recreation facility. To complete this exercise, this report examines community growth and demographics, trends in participation and service provision, and community input.

Haldimand is poised for future growth, which is driven by new housing opportunities in the County's urban areas, as well as local and regional economic opportunities. Over the next 20 years, Haldimand County is projected to add 17,600 new residents, reaching a population of 68,000 by 2041. All age groups are expected to increase over this time period. This level of population growth is likely to place pressure on Haldimand County's community and recreation facilities to meet demand and respond to emerging interests and activities.

To inform this Strategy, socio-economic data was assessed for each of the County's four largest settlement areas (Caledonia, Cayuga, Dunnville and Hagersville) based on travel times from key locations in each community. These

travel times represent primary markets (15-minute travel) and secondary markets (25-minute travel) for any major community and recreation facility within the County. In most cases, this also incorporates residents living outside of Haldimand County who may be willing to travel to the County to use major facilities. As shown in the following table, the Caledonia market is twice the size of any other settlement area in Haldimand County (with 27,500+ persons) and also represents the County's largest future growth area (an additional 11,700 persons by 2041).

Primary Market (15-minute travel)

| Community | Existing Population (2022) | Projected Growth to 2041 |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Caledonia | 27,500 to 31,500* | +11,700 |
| Cayuga | 8,000 | +1,100 |
| Dunnville | 14,500 | +1,000 |
| Hagersville | 14,500 | +3,400 |

*~27,500 south of Twenty Rd. in Hamilton

Sources: EnviroNics Analytics, 2022; Haldimand County Growth Analysis Update, 2020.

To date, the community has been engaged through a survey, public open houses, and a stakeholder committee. **2,000 responses** were received to the community survey (representing about 7,000 residents) and approximately 70 residents also attended the in-person consultations.

Nearly all (97%) of survey respondents agreed that "The development of indoor community and recreation facilities should be a high priority for Council". Strong demand was expressed for an indoor swimming pool (95%), fitness/wellness centre (95%), multi-purpose space (91%), gymnasiums (88%), and splash pads (84%).

Additional questions were posed to better understand the demand for indoor pools:

- Since 2019 (pre-pandemic), 28% of respondents indicated that they had made regular use (once a month or more) of indoor swimming pools in the region; however, 78% of pool users noted that the travel time to these facilities is unreasonable.
- If Haldimand County were to develop an indoor pool, nearly half (48%) of all respondents indicated that they would be very likely to use the facility at least once a month or more, while just under one-third (28%) indicated that it would depend on location and other factors.
- When considering location for a potential indoor pool, opinions were mixed. Overall, a location in Cayuga was slightly preferred (40%) over other communities.
- 83% believe that Haldimand County should pursue the development of an indoor swimming pool.
- 62% are very or somewhat willing to pay higher property taxes to financially support new community and recreation facilities.

Key Findings

Resident needs and expectations are rising – community and recreation facilities and services are vital to the high quality of life that Haldimand County envisions for its residents and are critical to supporting the County's continued growth. With a population of 50,400 (growing to 68,000 by 2041), new and renewed recreation facilities are required.

The analysis contained in this report clearly indicates that residents are seeking local opportunities for indoor swimming, both instructional and recreational. There are also many other types of recreation activities that are traditionally provided by communities with populations similar to Haldimand County, such as municipal gymnasiums, general programming space, and space to engage key populations (e.g., youth and older adults). The County's current complement of recreation facilities is largely structured around arenas, halls and parks, which offer little opportunity for expanded programming or repurposing, although expansion potential exists at certain locations (e.g., Dunnville Memorial Arena).

Due to the County's size, one location will not be suitable to address the needs of all Haldimand communities. Participation rates are reduced the farther one has to travel, thus population centres and availability of services in nearby municipalities must be given strong consideration. Facility options for Haldimand County's four largest settlement areas (Caledonia, Cayuga, Dunnville and Hagersville) have been proposed, aligned with the specific needs and demographics of each community.

For the County's small urban and rural communities, the Strategy recommends that the County better utilize and revitalize existing facilities to offer close-to-home programming for residents in partnership with local organizations such as Community Halls partners. Additionally, improvements to active transportation networks are recommended in small urban/rural areas, including the Selkirk Waterfront Way enhancements (Lake Erie parkette and connection to the pedestrian bridge) and the Jarvis to Townsend trail (feasibility and implementation).

This Strategy outlines an evidence-based approach to planning for major community and recreation facilities over a long-term planning horizon (twenty years). Investment should be phased and generally aligned with population, growth-related needs, and financial capacity. The guiding principles and decision-making framework identified in Section 4 will provide ongoing direction to the County as it invests in community and recreation facilities through implementation of this Strategy.

Recommendations by Facility Type

| Facility Type | Recommendation |
|--|---|
| Programming | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="499 363 1713 570">1. To assist with the transition toward new major community and recreation facilities, prepare a Community Programming Strategy that will initiate the gradual and purposeful expansion of programming to core markets using available spaces (e.g., community halls, parks, schools, etc.) across all of Haldimand County. The strategy should also explore opportunities to better utilize existing facilities, including in rural communities and smaller urban centres (e.g., Jarvis, Townsend, etc.). |
| Indoor Swimming Pools | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="499 607 1713 781">2. Continue to monitor and evaluate the longer-term need for an indoor aquatics centre as a second phase of a proposed multi-use recreation centre in Caledonia (Caledonia Gateway lands on Highway 6), the County’s largest community and future growth centre. Consideration may be given to a 25-metre, rectangular tank with up to six lanes and supporting amenities including a smaller warm water tank (separate or combined), viewing area, universal change rooms and other features. <li data-bbox="499 802 1713 862">3. Explore partnerships to support an indoor therapeutic pool in Dunnville that would complement other aquatic services offered and contemplated by the County. |
| Outdoor Pools & Splash Pads | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="499 904 1713 997">4. Plan for the replacement of the Dunnville and Hagersville outdoor pools as they approach the end of their lifespan. Involve the community in the planning, design, and fundraising of these two outdoor pool projects. <li data-bbox="499 1018 1713 1127">5. Continue with plans to decommission the outdoor wading pool and install a splash pad in Dunnville Lions Park. Continue to work with community groups to install a splash pad in Cayuga and further explore opportunities and interest in a splash pad in Jarvis. |
| Gymnasiums & Multi-Purpose Spaces | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="499 1164 1713 1224">6. Work with local school boards and other organizations to maximize municipal and community access to school gymnasiums to support programming and group activities. <li data-bbox="499 1245 1713 1305">7. Consider the provision of a municipal gymnasium (or gymnasium-like spaces) and a minimum of two multi-purpose spaces as part of all future community/recreation centres. |

| Facility Type | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| Fitness Spaces | 8. Consider the provision of fitness spaces at future community/recreation centres. Examples include: (a) a conditioning room/fitness studio space (unstaffed, with no weight-training equipment) and an indoor walking track as part of a future multi-use recreation facility in Caledonia; and (b) a small unstaffed fitness centre (with some weight-training equipment and studio space) associated with the proposed recreation facility in Dunnville |
| Youth Spaces | 9. Consider the provision of multi-purpose space that can accommodate youth drop-in and programming at a future multi-use recreation centre in Caledonia and investigate program models for smaller urban and rural communities. Consultation with the Youth Advisory Committee and the broader public is encouraged to confirm space components (e.g., lounge, study space, gaming area, pool table/table sports, music room, etc.). |
| Older Adult & Seniors Spaces | 10. Establish dedicated space for older adults and seniors in Dunnville, potentially through an expansion of the Dunnville Memorial Arena. The preliminary vision for this space includes a casual lounge with inviting amenities and activity space for fitness, games, meetings, classes, and more. Options for broader community use of the space should also be considered. |
| Indoor Artificial Turf Fields | 11. Consider the installation of a domed turf-field (with perimeter walking track) within a future recreation centre in Caledonia. The financial sustainability of the project is significantly enhanced if the County partners with one or more major local user groups (e.g., Haldimand Youth Soccer). Potential field requirements should be revalidated through the facility design process to ensure that the space is adequately sized and programmed. |
| Arts & Cultural Spaces | 12. Encourage local cultural organizations to grow their programs and maximize use of existing spaces and potential new facilities (e.g., the Hagersville Library & Active Living Centre and those proposed through this Strategy for Caledonia and Dunnville). Should the need be demonstrated, the County's Heritage & Culture Unit should work with community organizations and stakeholders to prepare a Public Arts & Culture Strategy to explore the establishment of an arts and cultural hub in the County. |

Recommended Facility Options

Below is a summary of the identified needs and options for future consideration as the County seeks to support community needs through existing and new major community and recreation facilities.

| Caledonia | Dunnville | Cayuga | Hagersville | Small Urban/Rural Areas |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| “Recreation & Sports” | “Wellness & Seniors” | “Parks & Youth” | “Active Living” | “Active Transportation and Programming” |
| <p>Multi-use Recreation Centre with Aquatics Centre (location is Gateway site on Hwy 6)</p> <p><u>Phase 1 (core components):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Double gymnasium (divisible) - Multi-purpose program room, activity lounge - Indoor turf field (divisible into 2 small-sided fields) – air supported dome - Indoor walking track (around perimeter of field) - Small fitness/wellness centre and studio - Passive outdoor amenities – trails, picnic areas, playground, etc. <p><u>Phase 2 (optional components):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aquatic centre (6-lane 25M pool and warm-water teaching tank) | <p>a) Community Wellness Centre (location is Dunnville Memorial Arena)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single gymnasium - Seniors lounge/social gathering space - Small fitness/wellness centre and studio - Multi-purpose rooms, specialized spaces (games, arts, crafts) - Outdoor patio <p>b) Outdoor Aquatics Hub (location is Lions Park)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outdoor pool replacement - New splash pad | <p>Park Improvements (various sites)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - skate park - multi-use court - 2 tennis courts - splash pad - and more | <p>Library & Active Living Centre (Grant Kett Park; approved by Council)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gymnasium/hall - kitchen - library <p>Outdoor Pool Replacement (Hagersville Park)</p> | <p>Active Transportation Selkirk Waterfront Way enhancements and the Jarvis to Townsend trail feasibility and implementation will be addressed as part of the Trails Master Plan Update</p> <p>Programming Identify opportunities to repurpose/revitalize existing County facilities to support objectives of the Strategy and collaborate with Community Halls partners to offer close-to-home programming for rural residents</p> |

Business Plan and Estimated Costs

The Caledonia Multi-use Recreation Centre is proposed to be located at 350 Argyle St. North on lands to be purchased by the County from Empire Communities (former Georgia Pacific lands, also known as Gateway). These lands are suitable for facility construction and have the potential to offer an expanded recreational and park campus within this growing community. Phase 1 of the facility is estimated to be approximately 77,073 square feet, with a total project cost of \$29.43 million. The addition of an indoor aquatics centre through Phase 2 (future option) would add approximately 31,590 square feet at a total project cost of \$32.20 million.¹

The Dunnville Community Wellness Centre is proposed as an expansion to the Dunnville Memorial Arena. This site is large enough to support the facility, would bolster the facility as a community destination, has the potential to generate economies of scale in operation, and has available parking and site services. The proposed expansion is estimated at approximately 19,925 square feet, with a total project cost of \$17.73 million.

Council has not allocated funds to these projects at this time. The costs presented below will inform long-range planning and budgeting.

| Proposed Project | Annual Operating Cost (expenses minus revenues) | Total Project Cost (construction & soft costs) |
|---|--|---|
| Caledonia Multi-use Recreation Centre (Phases 1 & 2) | \$504,000 to \$616,000 (avg. tax impact = 0.65%) | \$61.63 million |
| Caledonia Multi-use Recreation Centre (Phase 1) | \$176,000 to \$215,000 (avg. tax impact = 0.22%) | \$29.43 million |
| Caledonia Multi-use Recreation Centre (Phase 2 - pool) | \$328,000 to \$401,000 (avg. tax impact = 0.42%) | \$32.20 million |
| Dunnville Community Wellness Centre | \$225,000 to \$274,000 (avg. tax impact = 0.29%) | \$17.73 million |

All costs are in 2024\$ and not escalated for inflation. **Operating cost estimates exclude capital replacement contributions.**

Capital cost estimates exclude land acquisition, environmental remediation, project management, and capital financing.

Average tax impact is based on the 2024 Tax Supported Levy where 1% equals \$861,000. The tax impact of these projects cannot be fully defined until a funding strategy is in place, including a determination of total project costs and amounts to be financed (if any).

¹ Notes: All building sizes are noted in gross square feet. All capital costs include construction, site costs, fees, and contingencies. All costs are estimated in 2024 dollars and are not escalated for inflation.

The estimated costs and conceptual layouts (see Section 7) are for illustrative purposes only and would be refined through further public engagement and design processes should the County proceed toward implementation. All figures are presented in 2024 dollars and are not escalated for inflation, nor has capital financing (if required) been estimated at this stage.

It should also be noted that the analysis anticipates that the County would be responsible for managing, supervising, and programming both proposed facilities. The prospect of direct program delivery would be a new and elevated level of service for the County and several of the components proposed for the new facilities are not included in the current municipal inventory. The proposed operating models will require County staff to be more intimately involved with the design, development, and delivery of leisure programs and recreation services. Equally important will be the County's ability to actively manage participant experiences and to adapt to the increased level of operational sophistication required to ensure the County meets the needs and expectations of the communities these facilities serve.

Implementation

At this time, the County does not currently have sufficient financial reserves to implement all of the options presented in this report. To move forward, it is recommended that the County:

1. Consider the findings of this report and identify potential sequencing and target dates for initiation of the recommended projects (the implementation process is likely to take a minimum of five years for each project).
2. Prepare a financial strategy that leverages a range of funding sources, the scope of which will depend on the option(s) that the County endorses.
3. Seek infrastructure funding and capital grants from government and non-government sources to assist with capital development costs.