

Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan

Online Public Information Centre



Purpose of the Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan

The Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan (“RCP Plan”) guides services provided by the City of Niagara Falls between the years 2021 and 2031. The scope includes:

- Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities operated through the Recreation & Culture Department;
- Arts and cultural facilities operated through the Recreation & Culture Department;
- Parks and open spaces maintained by the Municipal Works Department; and
- Programs and services offered throughout the municipal recreation, culture and parks system.



Niagara Falls

at a glance

Population Growth

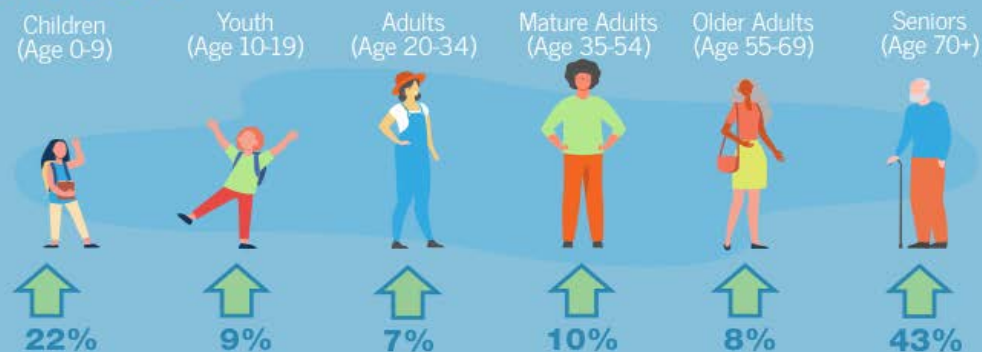


Median household
income in 2015 was
\$60,700



16%
Residents living below
Statistics Canada's Low-
Income Measure After Tax

Projected Population Growth By Age 2021-2031



Where Growth is Occuring

The City will grow through intensification, infill and greenfield developments over the next 10 years. The Garner Road and Grand Niagara Secondary Plans in southwest Niagara Falls are expected to be home to **11,000** new residents by 2031.



1 out of 5

residents were born outside of Canada, the most common countries being Italy, United Kingdom, United States, Philippines and China.



A Plan Shaped by Community

A dynamic consultation approach maximized opportunities for public input through in-person and online initiatives despite the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Let's Talk Niagara Falls



Recreation, Culture and Parks Forums



Saturday Farmer's Market
Pop-Up Booths



Community Survey



MYAC Brainstorming Session



Opinion Leader Interviews



Virtual Open House



City Staff Workshops



Written Comments and Submissions

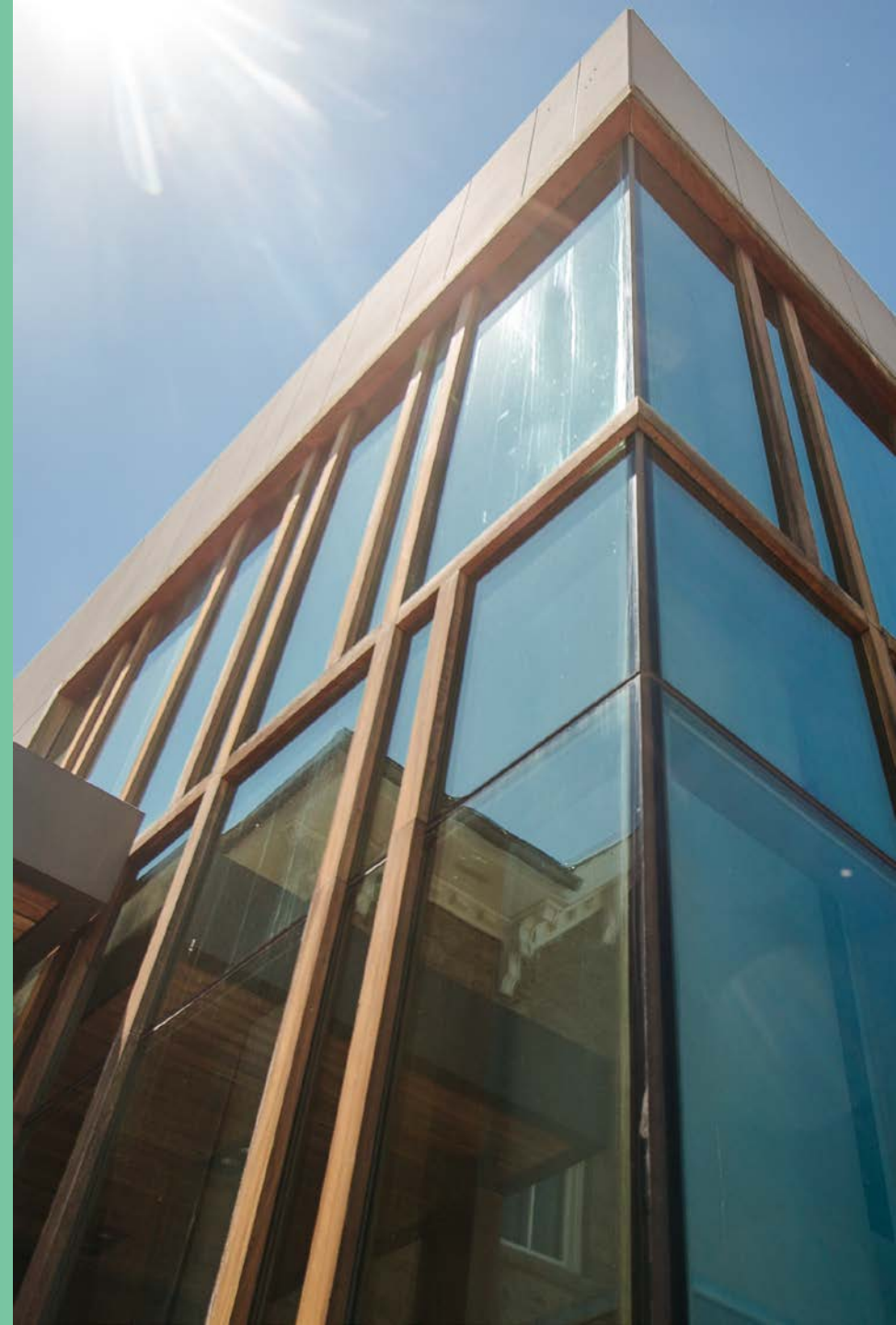
What We Heard

- Niagara Falls' recreation, culture and parks should be inclusive of all residents, regardless of ability, gender, orientation, cultural background and income.
- Strong interest for unstructured, passive activities.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the way people participate in recreation, culture and parks.
- Trails are highly valued amenities and were requested as top priorities for investment.



What We Heard (continued...)

- Planning and reinvestment to address aging infrastructure or expand important community facilities.
- Emerging facilities and programs included pickleball courts, gymnasium space, mountain and BMX biking, indoor and outdoor fitness, arts and cultural space, and special events.
- Support for the City's community development model and continued emphasis on supporting, collaborating and empowering stakeholder groups.
- Request for a diverse marketing strategy to promote recreation, culture and parks opportunities in Niagara Falls.



RCP Plan Goals

Eight goals address local recreation, culture and parks needs while contributing to the City's placemaking, planning and economic development objectives.

1. Bring the Community Together through Recreation, Culture & Parks
2. Reflect Authentic Cultural Experiences & Local History
3. Build & Revitalize Facilities to Reinvigorate Established Neighbourhoods
4. Connect People & Places to the Outdoors
5. Embrace Natural Beauty & Sustainability within our Public Open Spaces
6. Contribute to Complete & Vibrant Communities
7. Improve Access to Facilities & Services Across Niagara Falls
8. Set the Recreation, Culture & Parks System Up for Success



**The RCP Plan contains 97 initiatives
to fulfill the 8 goals**

Goal #1

Bring the Community Together through Recreation, Culture & Parks

- Coordinate the delivery of **older adult** programming at appropriate City facilities and parks including the MacBain Community Centre and the Niagara Falls Exchange.
- Increase the range of programming for **children and youth** through community centres and parks. The Niagara Falls Exchange should include opportunities for youth that have an interest in the arts.
- Partner with **Niagara Falls Public Library** to offer creative programs and services within neighbourhoods.
- Enhance **accessible playground features** across the City, including as part of the Operation Awesome renewal program.



Goal #1

Bring the Community Together through Recreation, Culture & Parks (continued...)

- Develop an **Access and Inclusion Policy and Framework** to identify and support under-represented populations.
- Meet with **Indigenous Communities** to discuss reconciliation through recreation, culture and parks services, as well as to better recognize contributions of Indigenous Peoples through Initiatives articulated in this RCP Plan and other City-led strategies.
- Showcase the culture and history of **Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC)** through public art located within municipal buildings, parks and other civic spaces.
- Meet with representatives for the **LGBTQ2S** community to discuss barriers to participation and programming ideas.



Goal #2

Reflect Authentic Cultural Experiences & Local History

- Develop a **Marketing Strategy** aimed at:
 - promoting the local arts and culture system;
 - building awareness of the City's arts and culture services and programs; and
 - emphasizing areas to elevate the profile of community-based/grassroots services, activities and events.
- Explore the feasibility of moving the **Willoughby Museum** collection to Willoughby Town Hall.



Goal #2

Reflect Authentic Cultural Experiences & Local History (continued...)

- New and existing parks should reflect the City's **heritage** through designating cultural landscapes or buildings in parks under the Ontario Heritage Act, providing interpretive signage, and integrating historical features into park design.
- Incorporate **BIPOC culture** into the design of appropriate parks and public spaces. Initiatives may include:
 - designing selected parks to reflect planning principles used in other cultural communities;
 - naming certain parks after BIPOC individuals; and
 - integrating public art/furniture created by the BIPOC community.



Goal #3

Build & Revitalize Facilities to Reinvigorate Established Neighbourhoods

- Prepare a **Feasibility Study & Conceptual Plan** for a new community centre to replace Chippawa Memorial Arena. The concept should include a new arena, community hall, and program rooms as well as engage Niagara Falls Public Library to discuss potential for a new branch.
- Provide a minimum of **2 gymnasiums** and **2 indoor aquatic centres** in Niagara Falls (includes the MacBain Community Centre and third-party agreements such as the Boys & Girls Club that allow sufficient public access).



Goal #3

Build & Revitalize Facilities to Reinvigorate Established Neighbourhoods (continued...)

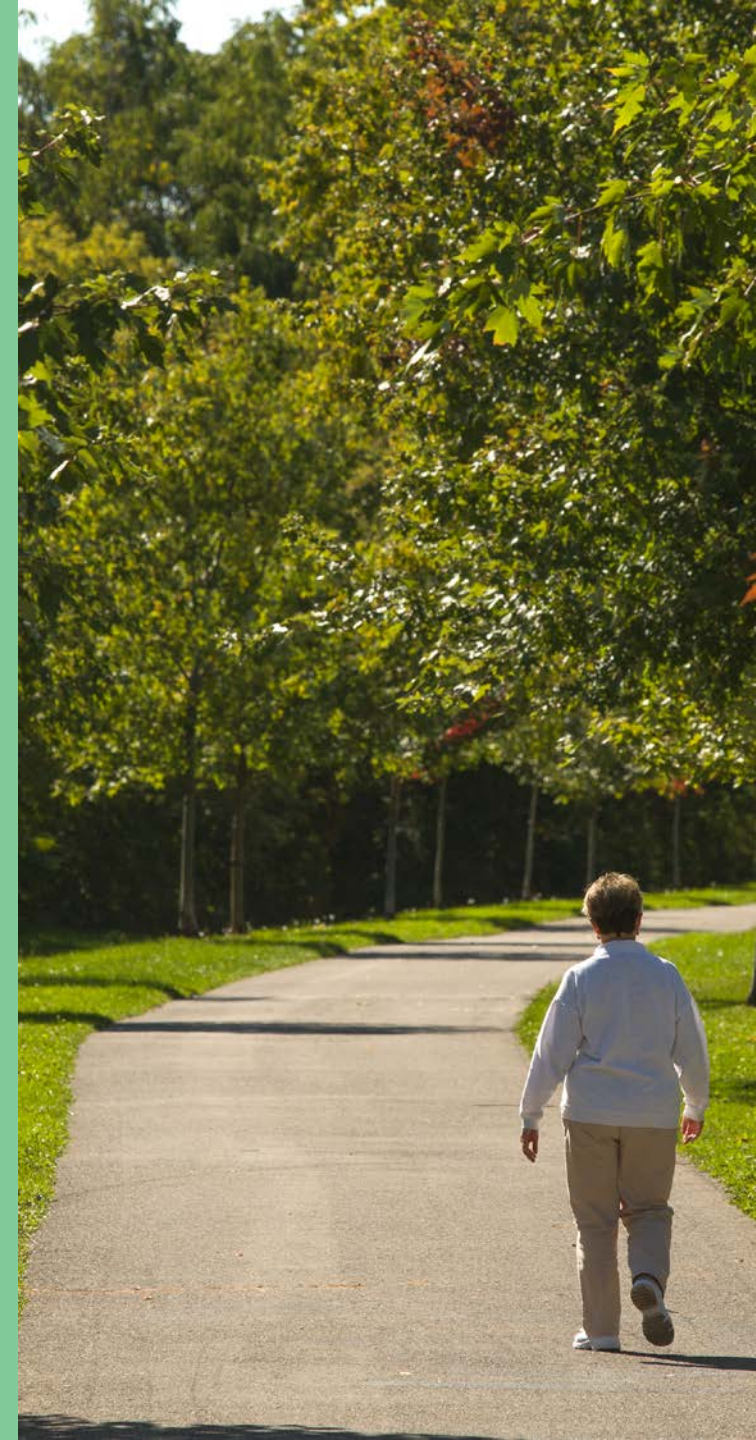
- An **Outdoor Pool Revitalization Strategy** should identify improvements and address barrier-free accessibility to attract greater use of pools.
- Construct a minimum of **2 full-size rectangular fields**.
- Develop new **basketball/multi-use courts** in the Queen Victoria Community Planning District as well as the Garner South and Grand Niagara Secondary Plans.
- Construct **one major splash pad and one minor splash pad** south of the McLeod Road corridor.



Goal #4

Connect People & Places to the Outdoors

- Acquire **124.5 hectares of parkland** by the year 2031, a significant portion of which can be addressed through the Mountain Road Landfill, parks in approved development plans, and future parkland dedications.
- Explore park acquisition opportunities in designated areas of **intensification**.
- Develop a **Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) Policy** to enhance the public realm, particularly in areas where public parkland cannot be readily assembled.
- Initiate site-specific plans for **Firemen's Park** and **George Bukator Park**.
- Develop a **waterfront plan** to address public boating access and improved public access to the Welland River.
- Construct at least one **natural / adventure playground**.



Goal #4

Connect People & Places to the Outdoors (continued...)

Use the RCP Plan's **conceptual trail network** to advance trail planning, emphasizing connecting loops and destinations, and linkages to non-municipal trails.

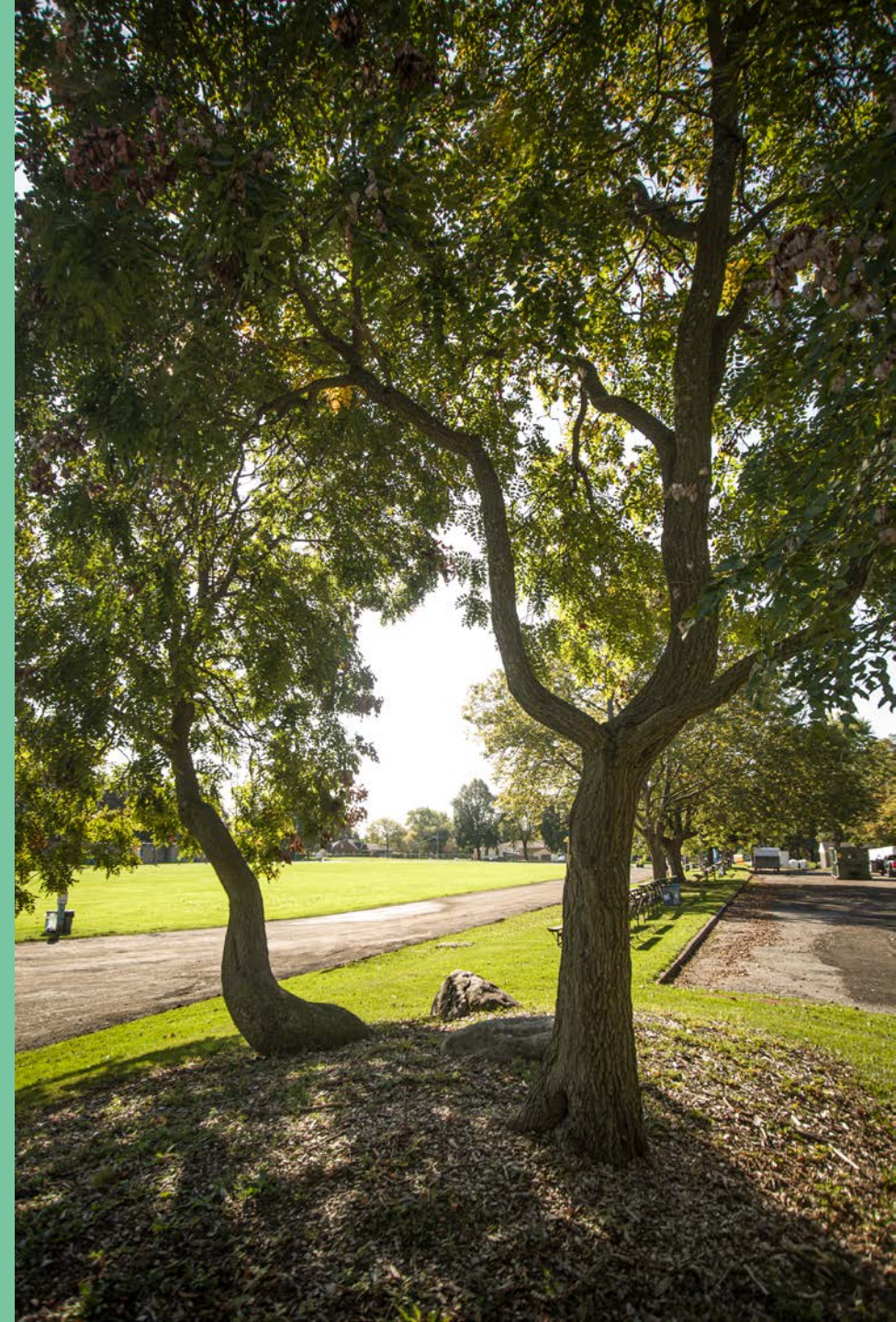
- Formalize the NS&T Trail as a primary multi-use trail.
- Work with the Niagara Parks Commission to strengthen connections to the Niagara River Recreational Trail.
- Investigate secondary trail opportunities (and sidewalks) within future residential development or established areas.
- Bolster park pathways to provide designated circulation areas and to support active uses (e.g., walking, cycling mountain biking, etc.).
- Explore trail opportunities with the goal of increasing and promoting active movement throughout Niagara Falls.



Goal #5

Embrace Natural Beauty & Sustainability within our Public Open Spaces

- Enhance the number of **water fountains and water bottle filling stations** in parks, especially those that are along trails or where moderate to vigorous physical activities occur (e.g. sports fields, sport courts, etc.).
- Develop a **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan** for parks, building on work done for “Niagara Adapts”.
- Conduct an **Urban Forest Study** that includes setting a goal for tree canopy coverage for the City.
- Establish standards for the planting, care, removal and replacement of the City’s **street and park trees**.
- Update the Niagara Falls **Woodlot Management Plan**.



Goal #6

Contribute to Complete & Vibrant Communities

- Formalize the **Public Art Policy** along with a funding program to support the selection, installation and maintenance of public art.
- Investigate ways to increase the ability of independent artists to be engaged in the design and installation of **public art**.
- Establish an **outdoor festival and event space** intended for community-based organizations and is large enough for city-wide gatherings.
- Integrate smaller spaces in appropriate parks and civic spaces that allow neighbourhood and **community-based events and gatherings**.
- Continue collaborating with Niagara Falls Public Library on "**Storywalks**" in parks, wherever possible using the works of local authors as well as stories that showcase the City's diverse cultural communities.



Goal #7

Improve Access to Facilities & Services Across Niagara Falls

- Explore opportunities to acquire a **Community Park** in the Northwest Community Planning District.
- Initiate consultation and design processes for:
 - an **outdoor tennis court complex** that would encourage the formation of a community tennis club;
 - a **dedicated outdoor pickleball complex**;
 - a **dedicated cricket grounds**; and
 - a new **skateboard park** in the north end of the City.



Goal #7

Improve Access to Facilities & Services Across Niagara Falls (continued...)

- Explore the feasibility of providing an **outdoor artificial ice skating trail**.
- Implement a **Volunteer Rink Program** that supports residents who regularly maintain ice rinks in their neighbourhoods.
- Investigate opportunities to provide purpose-built facilities for **BMX and mountain-biking**.



Goal #8

Set the Recreation, Culture & Parks System Up for Success

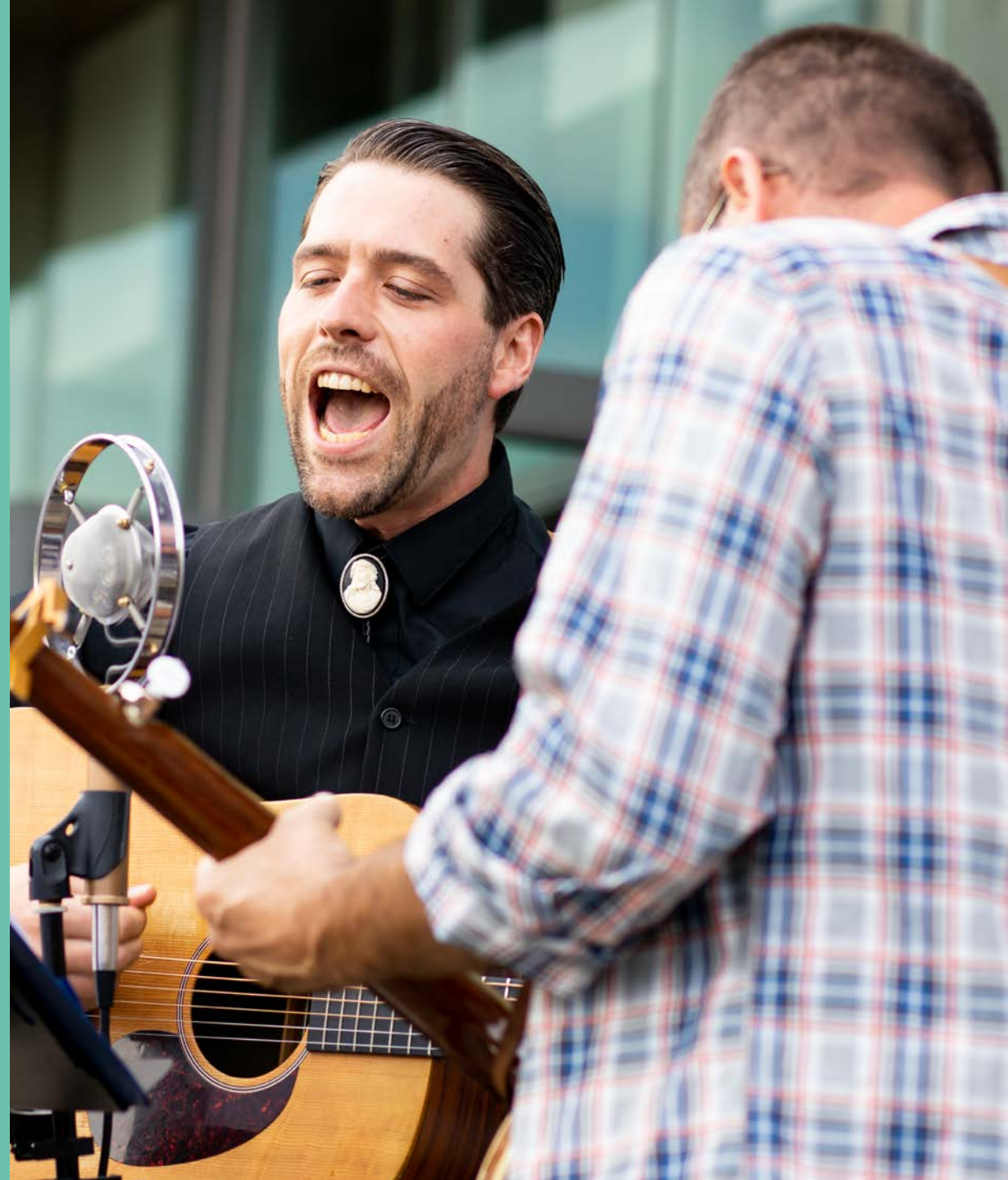
- Measure program and facility **capacity, utilization and satisfaction levels** each year.
- Prepare an **arena tournament strategy** to balancing corporate tourism objectives with the needs of local arena users.
- Establish a **classification system for municipal sports fields** that is accompanied by design standards and maintenance levels.
- Explore staffing refinements to respond to the upcoming opening of the **Niagara Falls Exchange**.



Goal #8

Set the Recreation, Culture & Parks System Up for Success (continued...)

- Prepare a **Festivals & Special Events Strategy** to define the City's role, with an emphasis placed on differentiating financial, staffing and/or other supports available to volunteer, locally-oriented and smaller event organizers.
- Engage the **District School Board of Niagara** and **Niagara Catholic District School Board** to discuss opportunities for shared public access between municipal and school properties and identify surplus school sites, particularly in areas of intensification.



Monitoring & Updating the RCP Plan

- Annual review of Initiatives implemented and accomplishments over the past year.
- Identify potential challenges for the upcoming year.
- Communicate the status of ongoing and future projects with staff, Council, and the public.
- Revise capital budget and seek external funding opportunities.
- Update the RCP Plan after 5 years to reflect continued population growth, changes in trends, and inform/align with other corporate plans (e.g. Development Charges, Official Plan, Strategic Plan, etc.).



Next Steps

- Public feedback can be provided until **October 12, 2021** by clicking [here](#).
- Finalize the Master Plan
- Council Presentation

