

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS

# RECREATION, CULTURE & PARKS PLAN



DRAFT AUGUST 2021



IT'S TIME

TO

PLAY





City of Niagara Falls

# Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan

DRAFT

August 30, 2021

Prepared by:



## Acknowledgements

Niagara Falls residents have been living in uncertain times over the past year and a half since the COVID-19 pandemic changed nearly every aspect of daily life in Canada and across the world. Community stakeholders and residents that rely on the City's recreation, culture, parks and tourism sectors have been especially impacted as public facilities were temporarily closed, programs and events have been cancelled, and financial pressures have mounted. Despite this, the pandemic has also highlighted how important recreation, culture and parks are to our residents and have showcased the great resiliency of user groups, service clubs, and community providers to adapt to change. Niagara Falls' elected officials and staff have also worked tirelessly to navigate this uncharted territory to ensure continuity of service to the greatest degree possible.

In light of these challenges, the role that all individuals playing a part in the development of this Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan cannot be understated. The collective efforts of all involved in the Plan is sincerely appreciated and we believe has resulted in a strategy that can help the City with its short and long-term recovery. Through recreation, culture and parks, we hope that Niagara Falls can once again find ways to reintroduce a sense of comfort and normalcy as we move forward over the next 10 years. We thank all involved in the Plan for your commitment to making Niagara Falls stronger.

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## Acknowledgement of our Indigenous Communities

The contributions of Indigenous communities to the development of Niagara Falls as a city but also in terms of local history and culture is significant. Some 12,600 years after Indigenous peoples had set foot in Niagara, the first Europeans arrived in the 17th Century. They encountered a group called the Neutral Nation, a group of Indigenous people who populated this region living in bark-covered longhouses, planting corn and tobacco, and having developed a social order in which women played an important role. The largest group called themselves the Chonnonton (Keepers of the Deer). Another, the Onguiaahra (Near the Big Waters, The Strait, or The Neck), populated the southern Niagara Peninsula, and from which the region derives its name.

Niagara Falls holds special significance as a natural world feature possessing great meaning and power for both the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) and Anishinaabek (The People), whose later presence displaced the Neutral Nation and for whom the region became important for hunting, trapping, and trading. Both the beauty of Niagara Falls and its frightful connotations attracted visitors to this location, thereby transforming the Indigenous relationship to this place.

Among the Haudenosaunee, the people of the Seneca Nation (Onondowa-gah, Great Hill People) began visiting Niagara over 1,000 years ago, and fashioned stories about the falls as a place of power. They imagined a world of constant struggle between the forces of darkness represented by giant, horned, serpents that lived under the waters, and the benevolent Thunder Beings who lived behind the falls, who only ventured out whenever the serpents tried to rise to the surface to attack humans. Haudenosaunee oral tradition explains that as more and more travellers began to arrive, the Thunder Beings decided to leave their home behind the falls and head to the western mountains. However, they still return to this region, flying behind the dark thunderclouds and still cast their lightning arrows to the waters to keep the remaining serpents in check.

For the Anishinaabe (Ojibway) people, whose metanarrative recalls their odyssey from their original lands along the east coast west to Wisconsin, their sojourn in Niagara Falls is notable for three occurrences, the first two being conflict and peace with the Haudenosaunee. As recounted by Mississauga of the Credit First Nation historian Darin Wybenga, it was also during their stay at Niagara Falls that the Anishinaabe formed three distinct groups, each with particular responsibilities to the whole nation. "One group took the responsibility for the care of the sacred fire and is now known as the Potawatomi," states Wybenga. "A second group took responsibility for hunting and trade and became known as the Ottawa people. The third group, retained the name Anishinaabe (Ojibway), were the faith keepers of the people. Collectively, the three emergent nations are known as the Three Fires Confederacy."

After the War of 1812, peace was restored to the border region and tourism began to blossom. Niagara Falls eventually became known as a place for honeymooners to visit. As travellers increased so too did the making of souvenirs. On the American side, a series of islands allowed the visitors to stand between the two mighty falls. Because of their faithful service during the



War of 1812, the Porter family, which had acquired most of the land adjacent to the falls on the American side, allowed Seneca and Tuscarora women to sell moccasins, dolls, and heavily beaded purses, picture frames, wall hangings, and sofa pillows. These became highly sought-after souvenirs and provided an important income to the local Indigenous economy, which once thrived on hunting, fishing, and trapping in the region, but became constrained to small "reserves" of land in both Western New York and Southern Ontario.

While few birchbark canoes make their way through the waters of the Great Lakes and the Niagara River today, the legacy Indigenous peoples established remains very much in place. The Tuscarora Nation resides on the Niagara Escarpment, near present-day Lewiston, New York. The Seneca people, still the largest of the original Six Nations, live at Tonawanda (near Akron, New York), Cattaraugus (near Gowanda, New York) and Allegany (at Salamanca, New York). On the west side of the Niagara River, one of the largest communities of Indigenous people within Canada is Six Nations of the Grand River (located near Brantford, Ontario). The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (near Hagersville, Ontario) remains active on this territory. And, as evidenced by the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, the Niagara Regional Native Centre (in Niagara-on-the-Lake), the Métis Nation office (in Thorold, Ontario), along with other Indigenous institutions and programs, there remains a vibrant Indigenous presence in the Niagara Region.

The Haudenosaunee Council Fire still burns. People still make beadwork. Wampum belts continue to inform us of our shared history. The ancient stories are still told. Indigenous languages continue to be spoken. And, we are reminded daily of the voices of the Thunder Beings, which are heard in the rumbling power of the falling water at Niagara Falls.

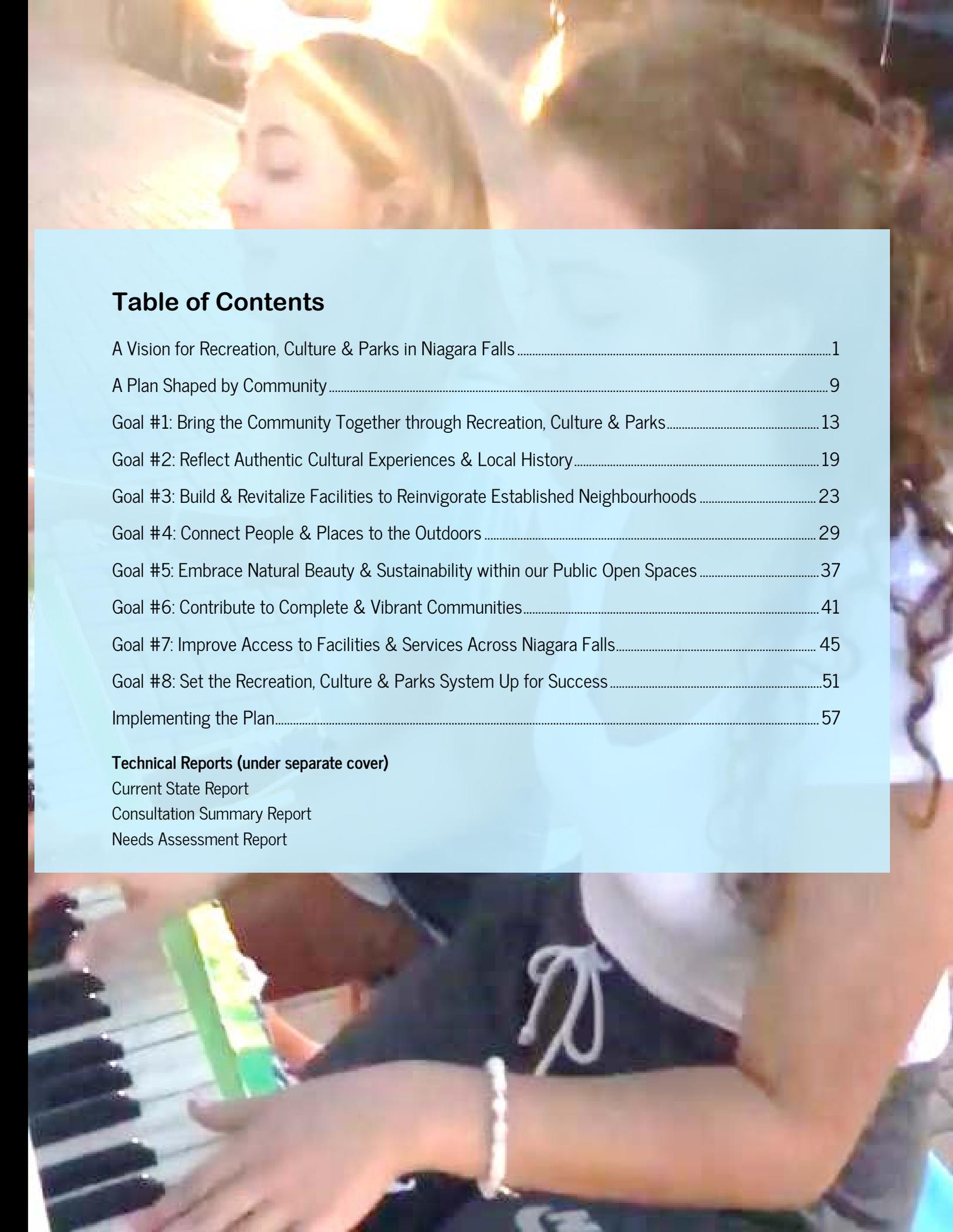
Abridged from [www.empathictraditions.ca](http://www.empathictraditions.ca) by the Niagara Falls Museums

Other resources:

<https://asiheritage.ca/ontario-archaeology-guide>

<https://www.ontarioarchaeology.org/summary-of-ont-arch>





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### Technical Reports (under separate cover)

Current State Report

Consultation Summary Report

Needs Assessment Report



Niagara Falls

STOP

MCDONALD

8

1916

# **A Vision for Recreation, Culture & Parks in Niagara Falls**



## The Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan

Drawing Inspiration from Niagara Falls' World-Class Natural Settings, Prominent History and the Strength of our Community to provide Recreation, Culture and Parks for Every Resident to Thrive.

- Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan Vision

The Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan ("RCP Plan") is based upon the fundamental philosophy that every Niagara Falls resident can draw inspiration from local recreation, culture and parks services in order for them to thrive, both as individuals and as a community. In turn residents - and the City as a whole - can derive the physical, social, economic and creative benefits of these services while building on Niagara Falls' internationally recognized parks system and origins in the formation of Canada that will allow the City of Niagara Falls to advance its corporate Strategic Priorities through recreation, culture and parks.

The Recreation, Culture & Parks Plan (referred to as the "RCP Plan") guides services provided by the City of Niagara Falls between the years 2021 and 2031. The scope of the RCP Plan 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 through the municipal recreation, culture and parks system.

The RCP Plan advances 8 Goals that are intended to address the recreation, culture and parks needs of Niagara Falls residents while contributing to the City's placemaking, planning and economic development objectives as a whole. The RCP Plan Goals – which propose 97 individual initiatives to fulfill them – are as follows:

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 Importance of Recreation, Culture & Parks

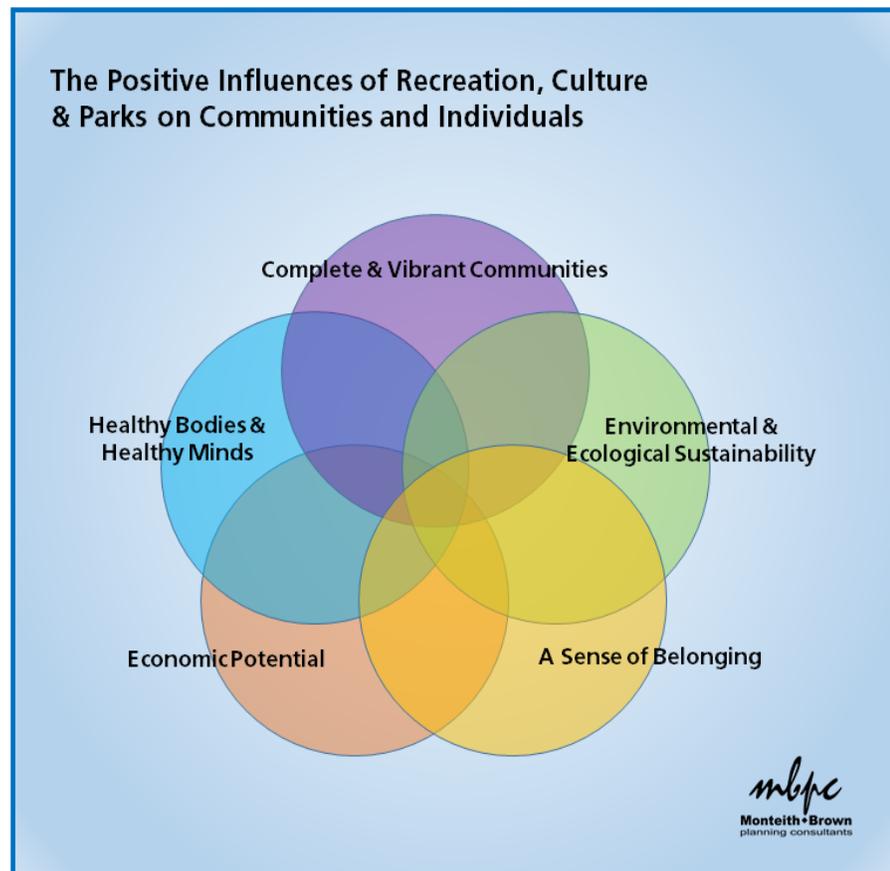
The City of Niagara Falls’ recreation, culture and parks services provide residents with access to a number of benefits. These services are used by the City of Niagara Falls to:

- provide opportunities for healthy living through physical and social activities;
- aid in the planning and design of healthy communities;
- create a sense of place and belonging;
- spur economic development and tourism; and
- promote environmental health and sustainability.

Dating back 135 years and prior to the City’s formation, the Government of Ontario signed the “Niagara Falls Park Act” that established the Niagara Parks Commission in 1885 and made the river corridor between Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie the first provincial park in Ontario. At that time, the area now encompassing Niagara Falls was known as Clifton before incorporating as the City of Niagara Falls in 1901. The City significantly expanded in the mid-1960s through amalgamation of the former Stamford Township.

Over the years, the City of Niagara Falls recreation, culture and parks system has flourished with investments from multiple levels of government and agency support along with a thriving tourism industry. Local parks and recreation are closely intertwined with the cultural sector. The City’s cultural

sector benefits from the diverse mix of urban, agricultural and natural settings where residents and visitors can spend their leisure time learning about the area’s important role in Canada’s historical origins, partake in a successful entertainment industry, enjoy local food and wine, stroll through a number of horticultural gardens throughout the City that showcase art and the considerable skill required to design and maintain them, and experience the majestic of one of the Natural Wonders of the World through the Falls.





## Parks, Recreation & Culture Facilities in Niagara Falls

The Recreation & Culture Department is responsible for a range of services including a number of indoor facilities and selected programming within them, while the Municipal Works Department is responsible for designing and maintaining parkland and trails throughout Niagara Falls. The Municipal Works Department oversees general maintenance and capital repairs for outdoor recreation facilities in parks while the Recreation & Culture Department assumes responsibility for scheduling and permitting, where applicable.

Notable recreation, culture and park assets operated by these two City Departments include the following:

- Two arenas at the Gale Centre and Chippawa Arena
- An indoor aquatics centre, gymnasium and program rooms at the MacBain Community Centre
- Coronation 50 Plus Recreation Centre
- Niagara Falls History Museum, Battle Ground Hotel Museum, Willoughby Historical Museum, and the Lundy's Lane Battlefield
- The Niagara Falls Exchange arts and culture hub (presently under construction)
- 424 hectares across 102 municipal parks
- 36 kilometres of recreational trailways, including the Millennium Trail
- 30 rectangular fields, 30 ball diamonds and 1 cricket pitch
- 28 outdoor basketball courts, 38 tennis courts and 10 pickleball courts
- Playgrounds at 61 parks and 7 splash pads
- 8 outdoor skating rinks

# Overarching Frameworks & Selected Documents that Inform the RCP Plan



# Trends Influencing Recreation, Culture & Parks in Niagara Falls

Advancing social justice and equity through recreation, culture and parks



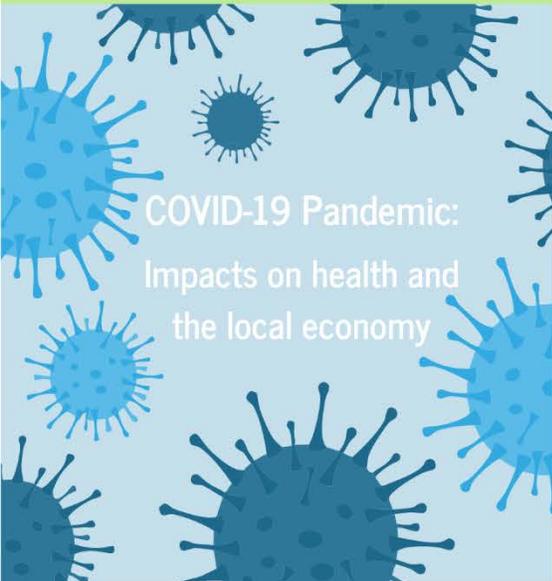
Shift towards multi-use parks and facilities



Aging infrastructure requires reinvestment



Demand for active transportation choices



COVID-19 Pandemic:  
Impacts on health and the local economy



1 in 5 Canadians aged 15 years and over have one or more disabilities relating to physical, sensory, cognitive or mental health

Thriving tourism industry



Sport For Life

"Everyone has the opportunity to participate in quality sport and physical literacy experiences."



Partnerships between municipalities and community organizations

Undertaking the creation of a cultural hub



Refocusing on and revitalizing neighbourhoods



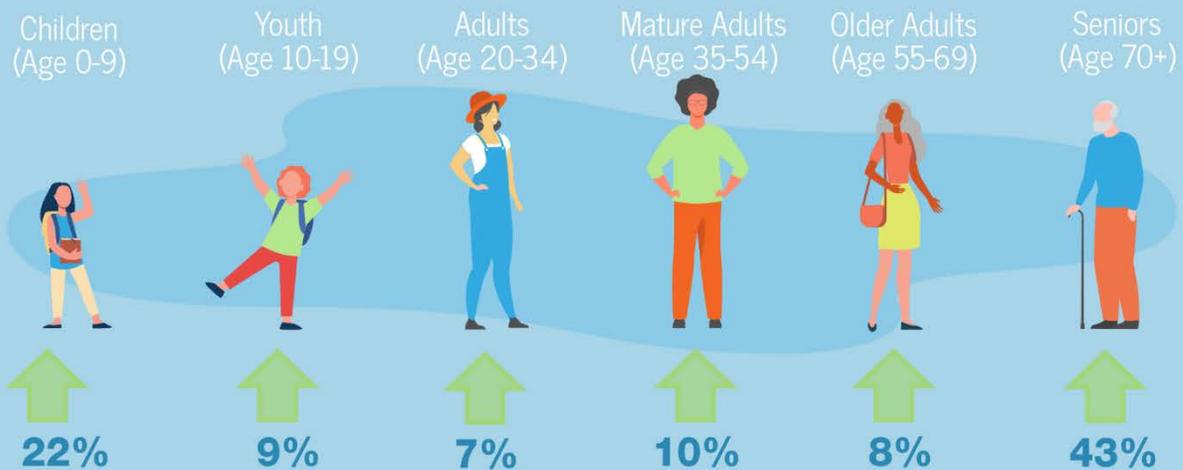
# Niagara Falls

## at a glance

### Population Growth

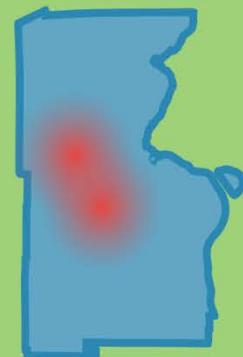


### Projected Population Growth By Age 2021-2031



### 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.





Median household  
income in 2015 was  
**\$60,700**



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

## 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



The RCP Plan is a plan shaped by the community, for the community.

Considerable efforts were made throughout the entire master planning process to engage ALL Niagara Falls residents. In addition to the general public, the consultation process sought input from many stakeholders and population groups including community-based providers for recreation, culture and sport, the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Colour) and LGBTQ2+ communities, residents from a range of income groups, persons with disabilities, and more.

A multi-faceted consultation approach maximized opportunities for the public input through use of in-person, online and email/telephone initiatives despite the unprecedented challenges brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic.



# What We Heard

## A Recreation, Culture & Parks System that Includes Everybody:

Inclusion and accessibility are top of mind priorities among staff and residents. A common theme emerging from the consultation sessions was that Niagara Falls' recreation, culture and parks system should be inclusive of all residents, regardless of ability, gender, sexual orientation, background and income.

Community Forums and Staff Workshops highlighted opportunities to showcase contributions of Indigenous Communities and other ethno-cultural groups through parks, facilities and the public realm as well as programs and initiatives such as public art and special events. The local recreation, cultural and parks system could advance principles of social justice to serve marginalized populations such as persons experiencing low income or homelessness, racialized communities, the LGBTQ2S community and persons with disabilities.

## Demand for Self-Scheduled Activities:

Strong interest exists for unstructured, passive activities among all age groups. The community survey found that the most popular activities (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) was walking and hiking; enjoying parks; cycling or mountain biking; fitness and dog walking.

## Influences of COVID-19:

The COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the way people participate in recreation, culture and parks. Staff and the public have noticed an increase in passive outdoor activities such as walking and a decline in participation/membership among certain sports during the pandemic. The public's connection with parks has become especially important to mental health during periods of isolation and there is a keen interest to see how COVID-19 will impact the future of recreation, culture and parks facilities, programs and services.

## Support for Trails:

Trails are highly valued amenities in Niagara Falls and were reported as the top priorities for investment through the community survey. The significance of the Millennium Recreational Trail was frequently mentioned throughout consultations along with a desire to strengthen trail connections to major destinations across the City.

# What We Heard

## Reinvesting in Aging Facilities & Parks:

Revitalizing aging infrastructure and establishing a long-term strategy for facility investment was identified for key assets such as the Chippawa Willoughby Memorial Arena and the Coronation 50 Plus Recreation Centre. Proactive planning and reinvestment is required to carry out replacement, renovation and/or expansion of important community facilities.

## Distribution of Facilities & Services:

With growing populations in south Niagara Falls, investments targeted to the MacBain Community Centre & Library, the Boys & Girls Club of Niagara, and a number of parks have been good for people living in these areas. However, certain populations in north and central Niagara Falls face challenges in being able to reach these spaces (distance and cost of travel are barriers for some residents).

## Emerging Interests:

A number of emerging facilities and program opportunities were identified including, but not limited to, pickleball, gymnasium space, mountain and BMX biking, indoor and outdoor fitness, arts and cultural space, and special events.

## Empowering Community Providers to Deliver Services:

Stakeholders support the City's community development model of delivering recreation, culture and parks opportunities. Groups would like continued emphasis placed on targeted support, collaboration, and empowerment while discouraging duplication of locally available programs and services. Broad community support exists for partnerships between the City and other providers to share resources and provide many opportunities for Niagara Falls residents.

## Building Awareness of Recreation, Culture & Parks Opportunities in Niagara Falls:

A number of residents indicate that they are not aware of many program and facility offerings in the City. Most programs are offered by dozens of community providers operating in Niagara Falls which makes it difficult to streamline information compared to if the City was acting as the central source of programming. In addition, reaching specific populations such as older adults, youth, ethno-cultural groups, non-residents, tourists and others often requires using targeted approaches that are often different, thereby requiring a diverse marketing strategy (e.g. social media, print media, multi-lingual communications, etc.).

**RCP Goal #1:  
Bring the Community Together  
through Recreation, Culture & Parks**





## EVERYONE is Welcome!

Whether infants or the elderly and everyone in between, there is ample and compelling evidence that speaks to the importance of lifelong participation in recreation, culture and outdoor pursuits. Participation in recreation and cultural activity is a critical part of Early Childhood Development, providing exposure to children and teens to continue with healthy activities into adulthood, and encouraging positive physical, social and mental health outcomes of older adults to prevent onset of chronic disease and isolation. The RCP Plan supports providing recreation, culture and park-based activities for residents of "all ages and stages" so that they can lead healthy lives for as long as they live in Niagara Falls.

RCP Plan consultations strongly emphasized the role of recreation, culture and parks in bringing Niagara Falls residents together while promoting tolerance and inclusion. Through these spaces and services, people from all backgrounds have a chance to receive the various physical, social, and economic benefits that the sector offers regardless of their level of income, ability or disability, cultural background, or beliefs. Recreation, culture and park spaces are also an excellent stage to showcase local history including contributions from the Indigenous Peoples, the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) community at large, in addition to showcasing history from post-colonial times.

Bringing people together and making them feel welcomed in the community goes beyond simply building, designing and programming space. RCP Plan focus groups indicated that certain residents, particularly those from marginalized communities, are less likely to participate because of service-related barriers that pertain to organizational policies and practices, diversity and training of municipal staff that work with such populations, etc.

## Initiatives

The RCP Plan Goal to “Bring the Community Together through Recreation, Culture & Parks” includes 23 Initiatives. The majority of these actions will be led by the Recreation & Culture Department and many are targeted for implementation in the next 5 years.

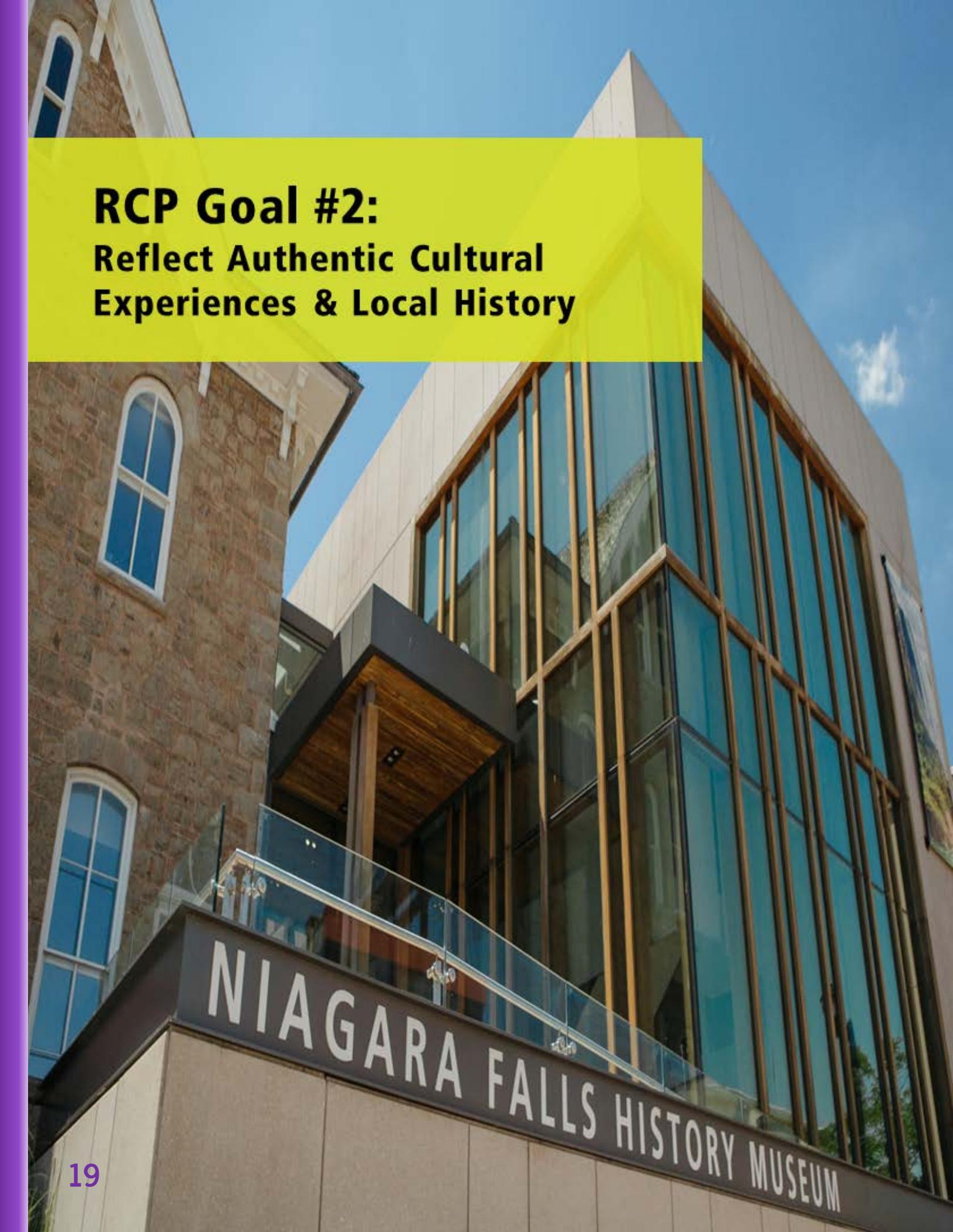
LEGEND	
<b>Initiative ID Format:</b> RCP1-XX	<b>Implementation Lead Department</b> RC – Recreation & Culture Dept. MW – Municipal Works Dept. HR – Human Resources Dept.
<b>Timing</b> Short-Term (2022 to 2024) Medium-Term (2025 to 2027) Long-Term (2028 to 2031) Ongoing (2022 to 2031)	<b>Capital Implications (Est.)</b> \$ Less than \$100,000 \$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999 \$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>All Ages &amp; Stages</b>				
<b>RCP1-1</b> Coordinate the delivery of older adult programming at appropriate City facilities and parks including, but not limited to, the MacBain Community Centre and the Niagara Falls Exchange. The City should set a goal of capturing a minimum of 10% of its 50+ population in programs delivered through its community partners and/or the municipality itself.	Short to Medium-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time Program Costs
<b>RCP1-2</b> Explore opportunities to increase the range of programming for children and youth through the City’s existing community centres and parks. In particular, ensure that programming at the Niagara Falls Exchange includes opportunities for youth that have an interest in the arts.	Short to Medium-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time Program Costs
<b>RCP1-3</b> Include provisions within the City of Niagara Falls Corporate Communications Strategy that are aimed to improve youth-specific communication and awareness of the recreation, culture and parks services available in Niagara Falls for this age group.	Short-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time Marketing Costs
<b>RCP1-4</b> Consider Niagara Falls Public Library as a partner in offering STEM, and creative programs and services within neighbourhoods to all age groups.	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP1-5</b></p> <p>As part of the City's planned transition to a digital version of the MyCity Guide, Recreation &amp; Culture Department opportunities should be listed by age group to improve ease of access and awareness for residents.</p>	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-6</b></p> <p>Work with all providers of recreation and culture services within Niagara Falls to determine the range of opportunities and participation by age group. Report out on the availability of opportunities, gaps, and participation rates annually to Council.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-7</b></p> <p>Enhance accessible playground features to ensure equitable availability across the City, including as part of the Operation Awesome playground renewal program.</p>	Ongoing	MW	\$\$	Not Applicable
<b>Marginalized / Under-Represented Communities</b>				
<p><b>RCP1-8</b></p> <p>Develop an Access and Inclusion Policy and Framework that speaks to the City's role in identifying and supporting under-represented populations.</p>	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-9</b></p> <p>Identify potentially marginalized groups in Niagara Falls in order to better understand needs and to work collectively to address gaps in service provision.</p>	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-10</b></p> <p>Ensure that Recreation &amp; Culture Department and the Municipal Works Department staff and volunteers are trained and are "Diversity Competent" in supporting the work of recreation, culture and parks.</p>	Short-Term	HR	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-11</b></p> <p>Work with community partners to determine the participation rate of persons experiencing low income in parks, recreation and cultural programs and opportunities.</p>	Medium-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP1-12</b></p> <p>For all community-based and Council-approved advisory committees that inform municipal recreation, cultural, and parks matters, the City should consider the importance and process of ensuring these committees are representative of the community they serve.</p>	Ongoing	Clerks	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-13</b></p> <p>Work to ensure that Recreation &amp; Culture Department and the Municipal Works Department staff, along with volunteers affiliated with the City, are representative of the diverse community that they serve.</p>	Ongoing	RC, MW & HR	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-14</b></p> <p>Convene focus group meetings to identify barriers that residents may have in participating in recreational pursuits.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-15</b></p> <p>Convene meetings with Niagara Falls-based organizations that support persons with disabilities in order to review the support that the City provides and determine any enhancements that would increase participation rates.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-16</b></p> <p>Train staff working at parks, community centres, and museums to provide Positive Spaces and supports for the LGBTQ2S community.</p>	Ongoing	HR	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-17</b></p> <p>Meet with representatives and support groups for the LGBTQ2S community to discuss barriers to participation and programming ideas.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP1-18</b></p> <p>Complete regular visits to identify who is using public spaces and who is not, with the aim of ensuring users of public programs and spaces reflect community demographics.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Black, Indigenous &amp; Persons of Colour</b>				
<p><b>RCP1-19</b></p> <p>Meet with Indigenous Communities and support organizations to discuss opportunities to advance opportunities for reconciliation through the City's, recreation, culture and parks services, as well as to better recognize contributions of Indigenous Peoples to the City of Niagara Falls through Initiatives articulated in this Recreation, Culture &amp; Parks Plan and other City-led strategies.</p>	Short-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time  Variable costs by project
<p><b>RCP1-20</b></p> <p>Engage local BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) communities to explore opportunities through which their culture and history can be showcased through public art located within municipal buildings, parks and other civic spaces.</p>	Short-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time  Variable costs by project
<p><b>RCP1-21</b></p> <p>Review all named facilities, public art, and statues to ensure that they are relevant to current social norms and public standards.</p>	Short-Term	RC & MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<b>Females / Persons Identifying as Females</b>				
<p><b>RCP1-22</b></p> <p>Complete a review of the number of females and persons identifying as females that are participating in local recreation, parks, sports, and cultural pursuits by age group. With the involvement of community partners, address gaps through community discussions with females and those who identify as female to overcome barriers to participation.</p>	Medium-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time  Project-specific costs TBD
<p><b>RCP1-23</b></p> <p>Collaborate with organizations supporting female participation to work towards increasing continued participation of females in leisure pursuits.</p>	Ongoing	RC	\$	Staff Time

A photograph of the Niagara Falls History Museum building. The building features a mix of architectural styles, including a historic stone structure with arched windows on the left and a modern glass and wood facade on the right. A prominent sign on the building reads "NIAGARA FALLS HISTORY MUSEUM".

**RCP Goal #2:  
Reflect Authentic Cultural  
Experiences & Local History**



**“The first step to controlling your world is to control your culture. To model and demonstrate the kind of world you demand to live in. To write the books. Make the music. Shoot the films. Paint the art.”**

~ Chuck Palahniuk,  
American novelist and journalist



The lands now encompassed by the City of Niagara Falls played a prominent role in Canadian history. Indigenous and post-colonial communities shaped the founding of the country and Niagara Falls itself. RCP Plan consultations highlighted the balance between celebrating a local history that is older than Canada itself, acknowledging positive and negative events that have occurred in the past, and recognizing that a “new culture” is being carved out as Niagara Falls evolves into the future. Together, Niagara Falls’ past, present and future collectively create a unique cultural identity that the community can showcase through providing authentic cultural experiences.



The RCP Plan supports the strong tourism infrastructure that makes Niagara Falls an international destination centred upon the natural beauty of the Falls along with the vibrant food and entertainment opportunities. However, the RCP Plan also recognizes the dichotomy that exists in conveying a locally authentic experience that is based on the City’s history and community-based cultural service providers. To help build the profile of volunteer and grassroots organizations that co-exist with multi-national corporations that also serve the arts and entertainment sector, the City is encouraged to focus resources on strategic creative clusters referred to as the Main & Ferry Cultural District, the Historic Downtown Cultural District and a number of localized pockets of arts and culture that offer services, programs and events throughout Niagara Falls.



## Initiatives

The 5 Initiatives proposed to “Reflect Authentic Cultural Experiences & Local History” will be led by the Recreation & Culture Department to increase opportunities for awareness and collaboration, as well as the Municipal Works Department through the design of parkland and public spaces. These Initiatives are intended to improve efficiencies while costs of incorporating local history and culture into public spaces can vary from simple to larger-scale investments depending on the projects.

<b>LEGEND</b>	
<b>Initiative ID Format:</b> RCP2-XX	<b>Implementation Lead Department</b> RC – Recreation & Culture Dept. MW – Municipal Works Dept. COM – Communications Dept. BLD – Building Services Dept. NFPL – Niagara Falls Public Library
<b>Timing</b> Short-Term (2022 to 2024) Medium-Term (2025 to 2027) Long-Term (2028 to 2031) Ongoing (2022 to 2031)	<b>Capital Implications (Est.)</b> \$ Less than \$100,000 \$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999 \$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Increasing Awareness &amp; Efficiency in Delivering Arts &amp; Culture Services</b>				
<b>RCP2-1</b> Engage the Corporate Communications Department to develop a Communications Plan / Marketing Strategy that guides internal and external efforts aimed at: promoting the benefits of 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 that are available in Niagara Falls.	Short-Term	COM	\$	Staff Time  Marketing Costs
<b>RCP2-2</b> Engage Niagara Falls Public Library to discuss opportunities to collaboratively work in concert with the Recreation & Culture Department and reduce areas of potential duplication in service, including through programming and collections.	Short-Term	RC & NFPL	\$	Staff Time with Costs / Savings TBD
<b>RCP2-3</b> Explore the feasibility of moving the Willoughby Museum collection to Willoughby Town Hall.	Long-Term	BLD & RC	\$\$	TBD

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Natural &amp; Cultural Heritage in the Design of Parks &amp; Open Space</b>				
<p><b>RCP2-4</b></p> <p>Continue the long tradition of designing new and existing parks in a manner that reflects the strong ties to the natural and built heritage of Niagara Falls. Doing so can involve a variety of means ranging from designating cultural landscapes or buildings in parks under the Ontario Heritage Act, use of interpretive signage, and conserving and integrating such historical features into parkland design.</p>	Ongoing	MW	Variable by project	Variable by project
<p><b>RCP2-5</b></p> <p>Incorporate culture and traditions of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) into the design of appropriate parks and public spaces to promote Reconciliation and showcase the positive contributions of these communities. Initiatives to be considered include (but are not limited to) designing and orienting selected parks to reflect planning principles used in other cultural communities, naming parks after BIPOC individuals, and integrating public art and/or park furniture created by BIPOC artists and designers.</p>	Ongoing	MW & RC	Variable by project	Variable by project



# RCP Goal #3: Build & Revitalize Facilities to Reinvigorate Established Neighbourhoods





**“You can't rely on bringing people downtown, you have to put them there.”**

~ Jane Jacobs  
Author & Activist



Niagara Falls' population is projected to increase from 97,300 to 112,000 persons by the year 2031, adding nearly 15,000 new residents (+15%) over the next 10 years. The City will need to keep pace with this level of growth by building upon infrastructure and services that are needed to promote healthy living and social connections. Previously expressed themes about revitalization of existing space and creating new types of services is also linked to population growth.



Many of the City's recreation, culture and park-based facilities have served multiple generations of Niagara Falls residents. Some of these spaces are now at a point where they are showing signs of their age or no longer meet the needs of the community as effectively as they did in the past. In conjunction with a city-wide asset management plan, rejuvenation through reinvestments in City-owned parks and facilities can breathe new life into these spaces, act as catalysts for neighbourhood revitalization for lands that surround them, and position the City's infrastructure to meet needs for future generations.



The City is in the midst of constructing the Niagara Falls Exchange to create a dynamic cultural hub and revitalize the Niagara Falls Farmer's Market. The 21,000 square foot building will offer shared spaces where artists, musicians, food vendors and patrons, and local businesses can come together and create. Within parks, the Operation Awesome initiative has rejuvenated play structures and improved barrier-free accessibility to provide modern, inclusive play experiences. The RCP Plan recognizes other aging facilities such as Chippawa Memorial Arena, the Coronation 50+ Centre, outdoor pools, etc. and proposes initiatives to ensure community needs continue to be met.

## Initiatives

There are 11 Initiatives that are intended to “Build & Revitalize Facilities to Reinvigorate Established Neighbourhoods” across Niagara Falls. Indoor recreation and culture facility initiatives will be primarily led by the Recreation & Culture Department while the Municipal Works Department will coordinate a number of parks and outdoor facility developments.

LEGEND	
<b>Initiative ID Format:</b> RCP3-XX	<b>Implementation Lead Department</b> RC – Recreation & Culture Dept. MW – Municipal Works Dept.
<b>Timing</b> Short-Term (2022 to 2024) Medium-Term (2025 to 2027) Long-Term (2028 to 2031) Ongoing (2022 to 2031)	<b>Capital Implications (Est.)</b> \$ Less than \$100,000 \$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999 \$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Indoor Facilities</b>				
<b>RCP3-1</b> Prepare a Feasibility Study & Conceptual Plan for a new community centre to replace Chippawa Memorial Arena at its current site. The conceptual plan should include a new single pad arena (designed in a manner to allow future expansion, if needed) and community hall at a minimum, but also consider the inclusion of program rooms and engage Niagara Falls Public Library to determine co-location of a new branch to serve the community.	Medium-Term	RC	\$  (Study & Concept)	Operating costs to be determined through Study
<b>RCP3-2</b> Ensure that a minimum of 2 gymnasiums are available to serve Niagara Falls residents, which may include one or more gymnasiums that are consistently accessible through agreements with third-party operators.	Ongoing	RC	Variable (TBD)	Variable (TBD)
<b>RCP3-3</b> Ensure that a minimum of 2 indoor aquatic centres are available to serve Niagara Falls residents, which may include one or more facilities that readily facilitate sufficient public access through agreements with third-party operators.	Ongoing	RC	Variable (TBD)	Variable (TBD)

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP3-4</b></p> <p>Adapt space within the MacBain Community Centre in order to deliver active, social, educational and other programming in response to the diverse interests and abilities of the 50+ population. The adapted space should be designed in consultation with local older adult representatives.</p>	TBD pending MacBain CC plans	RC	\$\$	Variable (TBD)
<b>Outdoor Facilities</b>				
<p><b>RCP3-5</b></p> <p>Prepare an Outdoor Pool Revitalization Strategy that engages communities surrounding each outdoor pool and aquatic stakeholders to confirm outdoor pool needs, determines appropriate improvements that could enhance the user experience, addresses accessible facility design requirements, and encourages greater use of the outdoor pool system through desired amenities and programming.</p>	Medium-Term	RC	\$ (Study)	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP3-6</b></p> <p>Construct a minimum of 2 full-size rectangular fields.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$\$	Booking & Upkeep
<p><b>RCP3-7</b></p> <p>Develop new basketball/multi-use courts in the Queen Victoria Community Planning District as well as the Garner South and Grand Niagara Secondary Plans. Design specifications (i.e. court size and surfacing materials) should be determined based on park configuration blocks and alignment with other park design elements.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$	Not Applicable
<p><b>RCP3-8</b></p> <p>Construct one major splash pad and one minor splash pad to service residential developments located south of the McLeod Road corridor, preferably within the Westlane and Drummond Community Planning Districts.</p>	Medium to Long-Term	MW	\$\$	Staff Time & Utilities Costs

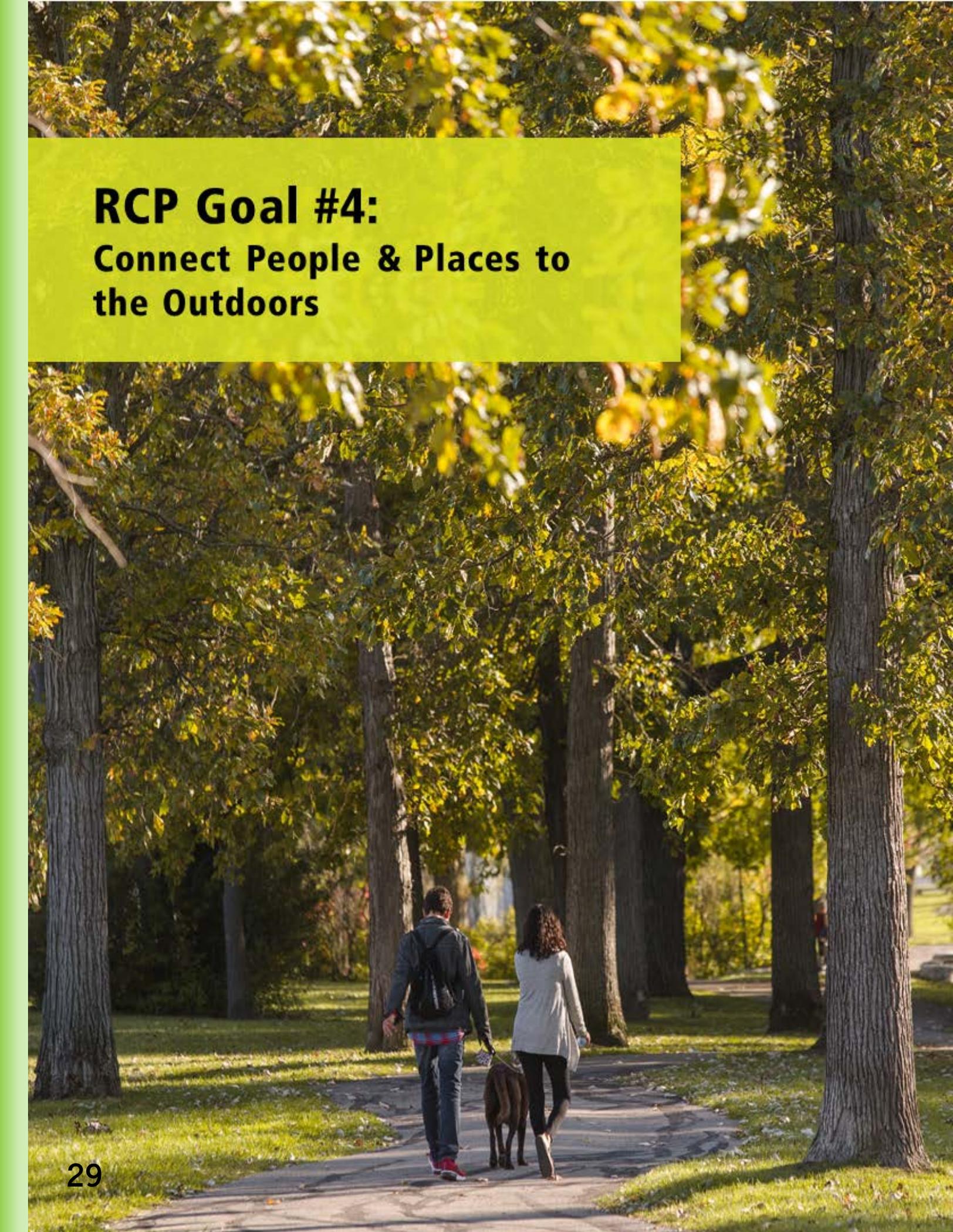
	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP3-9</b></p> <p>Monitor future demand for Leash Free Dog Areas in the City of Niagara Falls based on use of the two existing off-leash areas as well as examining alternative designs/models with a view of accommodating dog owners more locally and in the City’s urbanized areas.</p>	Medium to Long-Term	MW	Variable (TBD)	Variable (TBD)
<p><b>RCP3-10</b></p> <p>Expand the number of “adult playgrounds” through outdoor fitness equipment and Bench Fit stations in order to provide affordable opportunities for residents to exercise and encourage Niagara Falls’ residents in pursuit of improved individual and community health objectives.</p>	Ongoing	MW	Variable by project	Variable by project
<p><b>RCP3-11</b></p> <p>Target a total tennis court supply of 25 to 30 courts, including tennis/pickleball combination courts, thereby requiring a reduction of 8 to 13 tennis courts in total. Surplus courts should be those that are located in close proximity to other courts, do not receive an optimal level of use, are highly advanced in their lifecycle, and/or are located in a residential or commercial area where other park-based amenities are identified as a higher need/better use.</p>	Ongoing	MW	To Be Determined	To Be Determined



WILLOUGHBY TOWNSHIP HALL

1877





**RCP Goal #4:  
Connect People & Places to  
the Outdoors**



**“Live in each season as it passes;  
breathe the air, drink the drink,  
taste the fruit, and resign yourself  
to the influence of the earth.”**

~ Henry David Thoreau  
19<sup>th</sup> Century Naturalist, Poet & Philosopher



The City of Niagara Falls is internationally renowned for its parks system. The City has many partners in this regard including Niagara Parks, Ontario Power Generation, and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority whose lands and management practices result in the parks system that generations of Canadians and international visitors have come to know. The RCP Plan supports continued investment in the prominent parks found along the Niagara River corridor while also recommending a number of Initiatives that are intended to bolster the amount and quality of parkland for residents living across Niagara Falls.



The City is anchored by a strong trail system along the Niagara River as well as more recent investments in the Millennium Trail. Trails advance many positive outcomes including health through physical activity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, social equity and sustainable transportation by providing convenient connections to destinations for people that do not use an automobile, and environmental benefits of conservation and climate change resiliency. The RCP Plan supports continued investments that improve access and connectivity within the trails system, and provides experiences along trails that encourage residents and visitors to use them for both utilitarian and recreational purposes.



## Initiatives

“Connecting People & Places to the Outdoors” involves 19 Initiatives over the next 10 years and beyond. The Municipal Works Department will take the lead in implementing this goal through parks and trail planning and development, with assistance provided by other Departments to promote healthy living, sustainability, economic development, active transportation and civic placemaking.

### LEGEND

#### Initiative ID Format:

RCP4-XX

#### Timing

Short-Term (2022 to 2024)

Medium-Term (2025 to 2027)

Long-Term (2028 to 2031)

Ongoing (2022 to 2031)

#### Implementation Lead Department

RC – Recreation & Culture Dept.

MW – Municipal Works Dept.

PB – Planning & Building Dept.

#### Capital Implications (Est.)

\$ Less than \$100,000

\$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999

\$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Parks Planning &amp; Acquisition</b>				
<p><b>RCP4-1</b></p> <p>The Municipal Works, Recreation &amp; Culture and Planning &amp; Development Departments should collectively revisit the City of Niagara Falls parkland classification system and parkland service level targets to ensure alignment and consistency in park acquisitions as the City moves to address the needs of community recreation and culture, sport, residents living in areas of infill and intensification, and furthering to civic placemaking objectives.</p>	Short-Term	PB	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP4-2</b></p> <p>Form a multi-disciplinary staff team from the Municipal Works, Planning &amp; Development, Finance, and the Recreation &amp; Culture Departments to explore parkland acquisition opportunities in designated areas of intensification. In addition to identifying prospective park locations, other elements to explore include the type and amount of parkland required, how to fund acquisitions, and the potential for integrating Privately Owned Public Spaces and other strategies identified in the Recreation &amp; Parks Plan.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	To Be Determined	Staff Time  Operating costs variable by amount and type of parkland

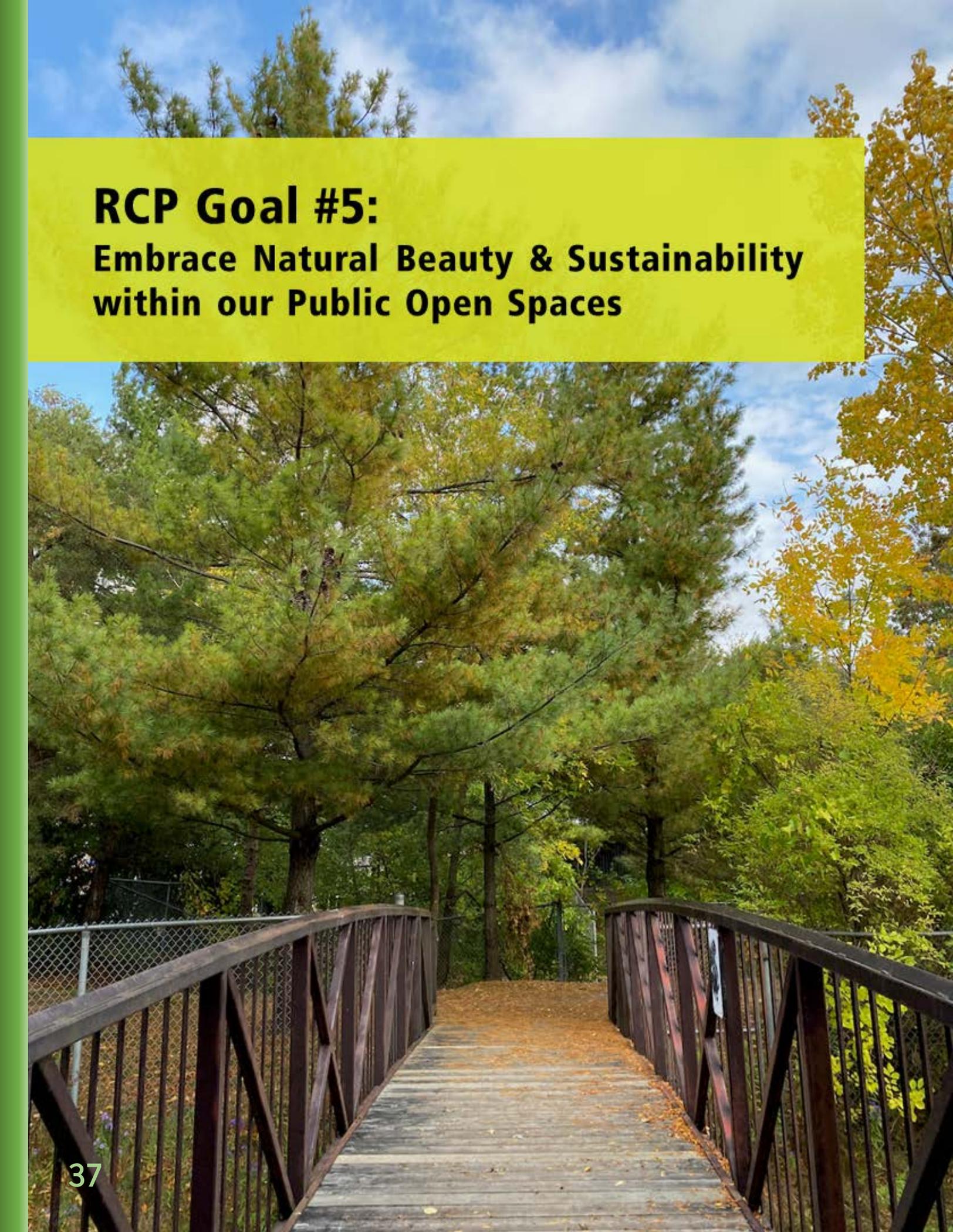
	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP4-3</b></p> <p>Develop a policy to address the provision of Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) to enhance the public realm, particularly in areas where public parkland cannot be readily assembled. In addition, criteria should be prepared to guide the provision of parkland on rooftops or other built structures.</p>	Medium-Term	PB	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP4-4</b></p> <p>Target a minimum total parkland supply of 549 hectares by the year 2031, thereby necessitating the acquisition of 124.5 hectares of which a significant portion will be acquired through the Mountain Road Landfill, parklands presently identified in approved land development plans, and future parkland dedications received through the Planning Act.</p>	Ongoing	MW	To Be Determined	Operating costs variable by type of parkland
<b>Parks Development</b>				
<p><b>RCP4-5</b></p> <p>Initiate a site-specific Master Plan for Firemen's Park that includes redevelopment of the adjacent Mountain Road Landfill and 2430 Mewburn Road properties to park uses, subject to receiving the requisite approvals from the Region of Niagara and carrying out the necessary landfill decommissioning activities.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Operating costs to be determined through study
<b>Strengthening Access to Waterfront Parks</b>				
<p><b>RCP4-6</b></p> <p>Carry out a review of publically-owned locations along the Welland River that are suitable for fishing and angling, and designate these sites where appropriate to do so.</p>	Short-Term	MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP4-7</b></p> <p>Develop a waterfront plan based on an assessment of public boating access possibilities and needs within the City of Niagara Falls. Included in this plan should be an identification of sites along the Welland River at which to improve access..</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP4-8</b> Develop a plan for George Bukator Park to provide better water access and associated amenities.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time
<b>Park &amp; Trail Amenities</b>				
<p><b>RCP4-9</b> Construct at least one natural / adventure playground to test community interest and support for these types of structures.</p>	Short-Term	MW	\$\$	Inspection & Upkeep
<p><b>RCP4-10</b> Establish standards for appropriate park elements, park furniture and amenities such as benches, picnic tables, lighting design, bike racks, water fountains / filling stations, and waste receptacles. These standards may vary depending upon park classification but should address both design and placement, and should be applied to future park development and redevelopment projects.</p>	Short-Term	MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP4-11</b> Install bike racks in parks, especially those located on major trails and parks that have amenities which attract younger users.</p>	Short-Term	MW	\$	Not Applicable
<p><b>RCP4-12</b> Develop criteria to guide the provision of shade structures and shelters in park development and redevelopment projects as well as standards for their placement, design and the facilities which they should be associated with (e.g. heavily used sports fields to provide shade for players).</p>	Short-Term	MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP4-13</b> Carry out a washroom study to determine demand (including during the winter months) and to establish criteria for the building of permanent washroom and the placement of portable washrooms. The study should also develop design criteria for one or more standard washroom buildings and carry out a building assessment for current washrooms to determine any needed renovations, including those that ensure washroom and changeroom buildings in parks are accessible for persons with disabilities.</p>	Short-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	To Be Determined through study

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP4-14</b></p> <p>Install signage consistent with the Parks and Trail Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan and regularly repair, replace or remove any signs that are in poor condition.</p>	Ongoing	MW	To Be Determined	Staff Time & Maintenance
<b>Trail Planning &amp; Development</b>				
<p><b>RCP4-15</b></p> <p>Develop a Trails Master Plan to provide a renewed vision, a detailed trails classification system, and a comprehensive evaluation of trail development opportunities. The review should incorporate and build upon past planning exercises including the Sustainable Transportation Master Plan (2011), Trail Network Proposed Plan (2019), the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (2017), and the Initiatives contained in in this Recreation, Culture &amp; Parks Plan.</p>	Short-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time (study)  Costs To Be Determined through study
<p><b>RCP4-16</b></p> <p>Utilize the conceptual trail network proposed in the RCP Plan to bolster trail opportunities in the City of Niagara Falls, with an emphasis placed on creating walking loops and connecting users to key destinations, as well as linkages to existing municipal and non-municipal trails. Specifically, consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Formalizing the NS&amp;T Trail as a primary multi-use trail to strengthen east to west linkages;</li> <li>b. Working collectively with the Niagara Parks Commission to strengthen connections between municipal trails to the Niagara River Recreational Trail;</li> <li>c. Investigating secondary trail opportunities (and sidewalks) within future residential development or established areas where possible;</li> <li>d. Bolstering internal pathways within parks (such as at Firemen’s Park and surrounding open spaces) to provide designated circulation areas and to support active uses (e.g., walking, cycling mountain biking, etc.); and</li> <li>e. Exploring new trail opportunities with the goal of increasing and promoting active movement throughout Niagara Falls.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	MW	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP4-17</b></p> <p>Establish and promote guidelines for trail user etiquette and courtesy (e.g. keep right, pass on the left, cyclists to alert pedestrians (use of bell) when passing, cyclists or other faster moving users yield to pedestrians, dogs on leash and close to owner).</p>	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP4-18</b></p> <p>As part of the City's trail wayfinding initiatives, include a system of trail distance markers that show kilometres or consecutive numbers. This will assist trail users in orienting themselves and tracking distance, and will help City staff in documenting maintenance work.</p>	Short-Term	RC	\$	Not Applicable
<p><b>RCP4-19</b></p> <p>Consider the following through the planning, design, development and redevelopment of trails that are under the ownership or direct management of the City of Niagara Falls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishing minimum design standards for trail rights of ways for both open areas and areas which are restricted such as woodlands.</li> <li>b. Reviewing rights of way along existing trails to ensure that sight lines avoid blind turns and promote user safety from a CPTED perspective. Where required, a maintenance standard for vegetation control adjacent to trails should be established.</li> <li>c. Integrating design features and comfort amenities to promote use, safety and traffic-management, such as trail markings, gates or barriers, signage, seating, public art, shade, outdoor fitness equipment or bench exercises, pavement markings, parking, washrooms, and other features to promote and support trail usage. Automated trail counters may aid in determining high traffic routes which may benefit from these types of amenities.</li> </ul>	<p>Short-Term</p> <p>Short-Term</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	MW	<p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Not Applicable</p> <p>Variable by project</p>	<p>Staff Time</p> <p>Staff Time</p> <p>Variable by project</p>





**RCP Goal #5:  
Embrace Natural Beauty & Sustainability  
within our Public Open Spaces**



**“Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction.”**

~ Dr. Edward Osborne Wilson,  
Biologist, Naturalist & Author



With the inspiration provided by the Falls and the beauty exemplified through the horticultural practices of City staff and community partners, the parks system allows residents to recognize the value of the beauty provided by nature, inspire them to embrace sustainability, and encourage them to become stewards of the environment in which we live. The City of Niagara Falls has long understood the importance of parks, both in manicured and natural forms, and is a champion of natural heritage.



The City of Niagara Falls recognizes the need to address the future impact of climate change and to build an urban structure that is both resilient and sustainable. Parks and natural areas help cities mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change because they provide areas with permeable surfaces that slow down runoff and alleviate flooding. In addition, shade provided through trees and other vegetation creates microclimates that reduce the urban heat island effect and offers carbon sequestration.



The RCP Plan identifies a number of Initiatives that continue to promote principles of sustainable development and encouraging the City to lead by example through investments, implementation of policies and targets, and encouraging stewardship through waste reduction and conservation of natural resources.

## Initiatives

In order to “Embrace Natural Beauty & Sustainability with Our Parks & Open Spaces”, the RCP Plan proposes 7 Initiatives to be implemented by the Municipal Works Department primarily over the short and medium term. These are aimed to bolster sustainability, resiliency and proactive, urban forestry practices.

### LEGEND

#### Initiative ID Format:

RCP5-XX

#### Implementation Lead Department

RC – Recreation & Culture Dept.

MW – Municipal Works Dept.

#### Timing

Short-Term (2022 to 2024)

Medium-Term (2025 to 2027)

Long-Term (2028 to 2031)

Ongoing (2022 to 2031)

#### Capital Implications (Est.)

\$ Less than \$100,000

\$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999

\$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Sustainability &amp; Resiliency</b>				
<p><b>RCP5-1</b></p> <p>Formalize an approach to the design, placement and management of waste and recycling receptacles for parks. At a minimum, this should involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating standards for receptacles for each classification of park, and implement these standards as the current inventory of containers is replaced.</li> <li>Establish a plan for placement of waste receptacles in parks taking into account user convenience and access for emptying containers. Placement of receptacles should also be mindful of the need to collect waste during the winter months.</li> <li>Exploring the feasibility of expanding the availability of recycling receptacles in City-wide parks to other park classifications and outdoor recreation facilities.</li> </ol>	Short-Term	MW	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
<p><b>RCP5-2</b></p> <p>Enhance the availability of water fountains and water bottle filling stations in parks, especially those where water servicing exists or can reasonably be installed, as well as parks that are situated along trails or adjacent to sports fields, sport courts and other areas where park users are engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activities.</p>	Short to Medium-Term	MW	\$\$	Variable by project

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP5-3</b></p> <p>Initiate the development of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan for parks and open spaces to address future impacts in a comprehensive way. This should occur after a similar Plan has been completed for the City’s critical infrastructure and facilities, and can build on the work already done under “Niagara Adapts”. The City should also consider partnering with other agencies such as the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and Niagara Region to develop and implement the plan.</p>	Long-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP5-4</b></p> <p>Explore enhanced stormwater management facility designs through the Municipal Works Department – including considerations regarding public safety and liability – to incorporate a greater degree of naturalized and/or passive recreational features as well as design solutions to retaining stormwater onsite inside park boundaries, within traditional subdivision and future intensification settings.</p>	Ongoing	MW	Variable by project	Variable by project
<b>Urban Forestry</b>				
<p><b>RCP5-5</b></p> <p>Conduct an Urban Forest Study that includes an examination of existing tree canopy conditions in the City of Niagara Falls in order to set a goal for tree canopy coverage for the City.</p>	Short-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP5-6</b></p> <p>Review and establish standards for the planting, care, removal and replacement of street and park trees in the City.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP5-7</b></p> <p>Conduct a review and update to the Niagara Falls Woodlot Management Plan.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time



**RCP Goal #6:  
Contribute to Complete &  
Vibrant Communities**



**“Places that succeed in attracting and retaining creative class people prosper; those that fail don't.”**

~ Richard Florida  
Writer & Journalist



People make places great. Recreation, culture and park services are an important part of creating liveable communities. People seek neighbourhoods where they can live, work, play, and express themselves creatively. The successful design of vibrant public spaces is inextricably linked to things such as natural beauty, interesting architecture, public art and open spaces, and other elements that animate the streetscape.



Such considerations become even more important when considering the trend towards infill, intensification and transit-oriented development of residential and employment lands in well-established areas of the City. Public and private sector investments can bring thousands of new residents and workers into an area, and the potential to attract additional investment often hinges on factors that makes people want or choose to be in the area. Complete communities with a mix of residential, education, employment, recreational, and active transportation opportunities that function as self-sustaining and connected neighbourhoods will be most desirable.



## Initiatives

The Recreation & Culture and Municipal Works Departments will assist other City Departments to “Contribute to Complete & Vibrant Communities” through recreation, culture and park services. The RCP Plan advances 6 Initiatives in this regard, many of which are considered to be relatively cost-effective undertakings to be targeted within the next 5 years.

### LEGEND

#### Initiative ID Format:

RCP6-XX

#### Implementation Lead Department

RC – Recreation & Culture Dept.

MW – Municipal Works Dept.

#### Timing

Short-Term (2022 to 2024)

Medium-Term (2025 to 2027)

Long-Term (2028 to 2031)

Ongoing (2022 to 2031)

#### Capital Implications (Est.)

\$ Less than \$100,000

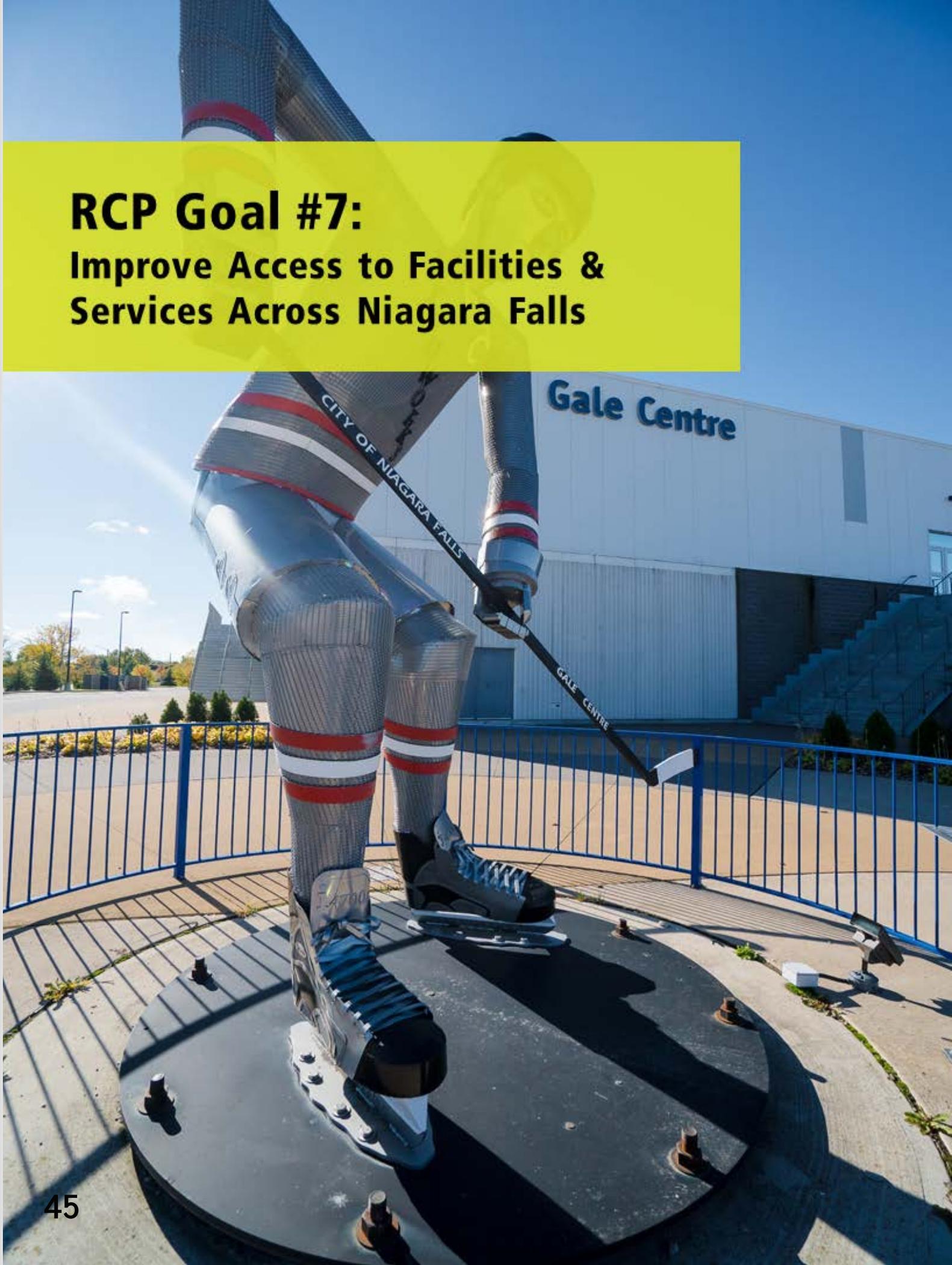
\$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999

\$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Festivals, Events &amp; Gatherings</b>				
<p><b>RCP6-1</b></p> <p>Formalize the Niagara Falls Public Art Policy along with a public art funding program that can be used to support decisions regarding the selection, installation and ongoing maintenance of public art. In addition, the funding program should involve consultation with the Planning &amp; Development and Finance Departments including exploring a “One Percent for Public Art” and/or Community Benefits Charge policy approach, as well as establishing consistent funding envelopes for maintenance.</p>	Short-Term	RC	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
<p><b>RCP6-2</b></p> <p>Identify the number of events executed in public spaces, the municipal investment, the number of attendees and the cost per attendee as well as the return on the investment to the community and businesses. This should be completed to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from public investment.</p>	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	To Be Determined
<p><b>RCP6-3</b></p> <p>Investigate ways in which to increase the ability of independent artists to be engaged in the design and installation of public art, particularly among artists that may not have the City’s minimum liability insurance, WSIB certificates, and/or potential barriers that would otherwise prevent them from bidding on municipal public art projects.</p>	Medium-Term	RC	To Be Determined	Staff Time

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP6-4</b></p> <p>Establish an outdoor festival and event space in Niagara Falls that is primarily intended for the use of community-based organizations and is large enough for city-wide gatherings.</p>	Medium to Long-Term	RC & MW	\$\$\$	To Be Determined
<p><b>RCP6-5</b></p> <p>Explore the integration of smaller spaces through parks and other civic spaces that are conducive to neighbourhood and community-based events and gatherings, where appropriate.</p>	Ongoing	RC & MW	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
<b>Public Art &amp; Storytelling</b>				
<p><b>RCP6-6</b></p> <p>Continue to collaborate with Niagara Falls Public Library on the development of additional "Storywalks" at an appropriate park(s). Where possible, the works created by local authors as well as stories that reflect the history and diverse cultural communities that are represented in Niagara Falls should be considered.</p>	Ongoing	RC & NFPL	\$	Staff Time

**RCP Goal #7:  
Improve Access to Facilities &  
Services Across Niagara Falls**





## “When Everybody is Included, Everybody Wins.”

~ Rev. Jesse Jackson

Trends and interests influencing the types of facilities and services people are seeking are constantly evolving. The City has a role in understanding how changing demographics and interests affect the types of recreation, culture and parks experiences that residents are seeking. The decision to build the Niagara Falls Exchange is but one example of the City exploring ways to improve the quality of life for its residents, and encourage new types of activities to occur locally.

RCP Plan consultations emphasized the need to provide an equitable balance of recreation, culture and park spaces across Niagara Falls. Residential growth in the south will require services where they do not currently exist while established areas in the north and central areas of the City will require similar consideration.

With current and planned population growth in the south leading to developments such as the MacBain Community Centre and the Boys & Girls Club of Niagara Community Centre, recent investments such as the Niagara Falls Exchange and playground redevelopments in the City’s core will continue to be important. A balance will need to be struck when funding new growth-related services and reinvesting in existing spaces found in established neighbourhoods.



## Initiatives

The RCP Plan Goal to "Improve Access to Facilities & Services Across Niagara Falls" is advanced through 13 Initiatives through a mix of low-cost and more capittally-intensive actions. The Recreation & Culture Department will focus on indoor spaces and services while the Municipal Works Department will take the lead on ensuring appropriate distribution of outdoor amenities.

### LEGEND

#### Initiative ID Format:

RCP7-XX

#### Implementation Lead Department

RC – Recreation & Culture Dept.

MW – Municipal Works Dept.

#### Timing

Short-Term (2022 to 2024)

Medium-Term (2025 to 2027)

Long-Term (2028 to 2031)

Ongoing (2022 to 2031)

#### Capital Implications (Est.)

\$ Less than \$100,000

\$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999

\$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

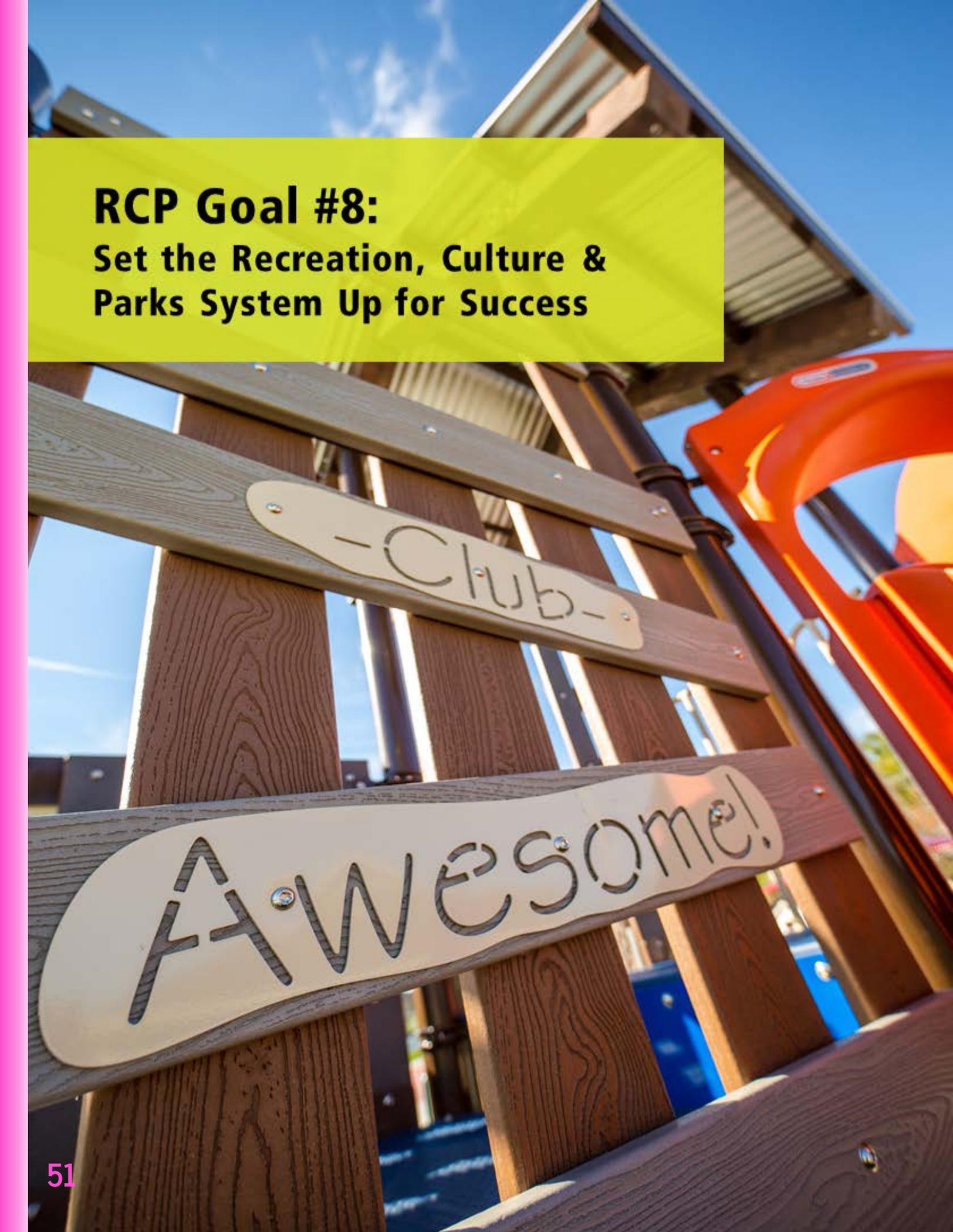
	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Indoor Facilities</b>				
<b>RCP7-1</b> Prepare a budget and operating model based on the Recreation & Culture Department assuming all or portions of operations for the MacBain Community Centre, should the search for a partner to operate the community centre not come to fruition.	Short-Term	RC	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
<b>RCP7-2</b> Engage Niagara Falls' sports field users to determine their interest and capacity to operate an indoor turf field while quantifying the local market and financial implications through an Indoor Turf Feasibility Study & Business Plan.	Short-Term	RC	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
<b>RCP7-3</b> Ensure that all Purchase of Service Agreements sufficiently detail expectations surrounding quality assurance, safety mechanisms, access and inclusion, performance measures and legislative compliance at a minimum and providing a range of services per age group.	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Variable by Agreement

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Outdoor Facilities</b>				
<p><b>RCP7-4</b> Implement a Volunteer Rink Program that encourages residents to take an active role in the daily maintenance of ice rinks in parks located in their neighbourhoods, with certain supports provided by the City.</p>	Short-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time & Hydro Rebates
<p><b>RCP7-5</b> Construct a dedicated cricket grounds in consultation with local cricket organizations to confirm elements such as location, design, funding and fundraising responsibilities, maintenance practices, and allocation of time.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$\$	To be determined based on design
<p><b>RCP7-6</b> Initiate a consultation and design process for a new skateboard park in the north end of the City, potentially as part of consideration through the planned Firemen’s Park Master Plan process (refer to RCP4-5). Development and redevelopment of parkland across the city should also consider “skate spots” to improve geographic distribution by way of adding a few basic skateboarding elements into an appropriate park.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$\$	To be determined based on design
<p><b>RCP7-7</b> Initiate consultations and subsequent design for an outdoor tennis court complex that would encourage the formation of a community tennis club. The design and amenities, including the number of courts and their surfacing, should be determined in consultation with the local and regional tennis community.</p>	Medium-Term	MW & RC	\$\$\$	To be determined based on design
<p><b>RCP7-8</b> Construct a dedicated outdoor pickleball complex in consultation with the local pickleball community to explore potential sites, number of courts to be included, and how to fund the facility. To increase the potential for financial economies of scale and other operating efficiencies, consideration should be given to co-locating this complex with the proposed tennis court complex (see RCP7-7) to create a city-wide destination for outdoor racquet sports, and/or by repurposing tennis courts that are identified as surplus.</p>	Short-Term	MW & RC	\$\$	To be determined based on design

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP7-9</b> Explore the feasibility of providing an outdoor artificial or synthetic ice skating trail through a site selection and business plan that determines an appropriate location and potential to align with civic placemaking projects.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$\$\$	To be determined based on design
<p><b>RCP7-10</b> Initiate a study to investigate the possibility and opportunity of providing purpose-built facilities for BMX and mountain-biking within Niagara Falls.</p>	Long-Term	MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time
<b>Parks &amp; Trails</b>				
<p><b>RCP7-11</b> Explore opportunities to acquire a Community Park in the Northwest Community Planning District to reconcile the geographic gap that presently exists for that classification of parkland.</p>	Short-Term	MW	To Be Determined based on site	To Be Determined based on site
<p><b>RCP7-12</b> Work with the Park in the City Committee and local/regional stakeholders to raise awareness of parks and trails, promote their usage, and work collectively to improve connectivity within Niagara Falls. Initiatives and programs include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. walking, hiking and cycling groups;</li> <li>b. educational story walks (See RCP6-6);</li> <li>c. education on trail etiquette, safety and permitted uses; and</li> <li>d. establishing a mobile application – or work with others such as All Trails, Heartland Forest, Niagara Parks, etc. – to map the City’s trails, permitted activities, accessibility details, and interactive features (e.g., photo contests).</li> </ul>	Short-Term	RC	\$	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP7-13</b> Review all gravel roadways and parking lots located in parks to determine locations which would benefit by conversion to an asphalt surface, or vice-versa.</p>	Medium-Term	MW	\$\$	To Be Determined

  
Niagara Falls  
CANADA





**RCP Goal #8:**  
**Set the Recreation, Culture & Parks System Up for Success**



**“Innovation is not the product of logical thought, although the result is tied to logical structure.”**

~ Albert Einstein



With finite resources available to a municipality along with many competing priorities for other services, it is important to identify and establish consistent funding streams to build parks and facilities, operate and maintain them, and deliver needed services or programs. Dedicating the appropriate resources to recreation, culture and parks infrastructure is critical so that current and future generations of Niagara Falls residents have access to these services and derive the many benefits from them. Adequately resourcing the sector, whether through financial or other means, also allows community partners to thrive and reduces reliance placed on the City to deliver the same.



Building the capacity of the Recreation & Culture Department and the Municipal Works Department is a critical aspect of the RCP Plan. In order to be a high functioning, progressive provider of recreation, culture and parks services, the two Departments (and the City as a whole) must be aligned in their vision to deliver services effectively, intentionally, and efficiently. To do so, emphasis should continue to be placed on addressing gaps in service through community development efforts and staffing supports, quality assurance, performance measurement, and monitoring and compliance evaluations.



## Initiatives

In order to “Set the Recreation, Culture & Parks System Up for Success”, the RCP Plan proposes 13 Initiatives oriented to service excellence. By adopting effectiveness and efficiency within Departmental service delivery practices, the Recreation & Culture and Municipal Works Departments can continue to generate strong value for Niagara Falls residents.

LEGEND	
<b>Initiative ID Format:</b> RCP8-XX	<b>Implementation Lead Department</b> RC – Recreation & Culture Dept. MW – Municipal Works Dept.
<b>Timing</b> Short-Term (2022 to 2024) Medium-Term (2025 to 2027) Long-Term (2028 to 2031) Ongoing (2022 to 2031)	<b>Capital Implications (Est.)</b> \$ Less than \$100,000 \$\$ \$100,000 to \$999,999 \$\$\$ \$1,000,000+

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Setting Recreation Up for Success</b>				
<b>RCP8-1</b> Prepare a strategy to guide how the City accommodates tournaments in its arenas, with the goal of balancing corporate tourism and economic development objectives with the needs of local arena users.	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<b>RCP8-2</b> Establish a hierarchy or classification system for sports fields in the City based on level of sport played, field size, soil profile, irrigation and drainage, amenities, and lighting. The athletic field classification developed by the Sports Turf Association may be used as a basis for this system. The classification system should be accompanied by a set of design standards and specifications for each type of sports field (including layouts, lighting criteria, surface materials and construction, player and spectator seating designs, etc.) along with maintenance levels and hours of field use.	Short-Term	RC & MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Setting Culture Up for Success</b>				
<p><b>RCP8-3</b></p> <p>Explore the following staffing refinements to respond to the upcoming opening of the Niagara Falls Exchange and service ongoing service requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Supervisory and Part-time staff requirement for the Niagara Falls Exchange;</li> <li>b. Staff resources required for the MacBain Community Centre;</li> <li>c. The need for centralized Operational Supports; and</li> <li>d. Building existing staff capacity for Special Events and Sport Tourism.</li> </ul>	Short-Term	RC	Not Applicable	To Be Determined
<p><b>RCP8-4</b></p> <p>Form a Special Events Team comprised of City Staff to establish a special event application procedure, and to designate a team-lead that will be the primary point of contact with event organizers and community organizations in order to coordinate their events.</p>	Short-Term	RC & MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-5</b></p> <p>Prepare a Festivals &amp; Special Events Strategy to define the City's role in such initiatives, with a particular emphasis placed on differentiating financial, staffing and/or other supports available to volunteer, locally-oriented and smaller event organizers.</p>	Short-Term	RC & MW	\$ (Study)	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-6</b></p> <p>Establish a per-capita funding target for municipal investment in the local arts and cultural sector by way of the Niagara Falls Cultural Development Fund, public art initiatives, and other appropriate streams for external organizations. This target should be regularly benchmarked with municipalities across Ontario with progressive arts and cultural policies and practices.</p>	Short-Term	RC	\$	Annual Operating Grant To Be Determined

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<b>Setting Parks Up for Success</b>				
<p><b>RCP8-7</b></p> <p>Implement seasonal documented inspections of all City-owned playgrounds and ensure that certified Playground Inspectors (in-house or contractors) are in place to carry out this work. In addition, the City should review winter maintenance and inspection practices of playgrounds so that these facilities are available and safe for users throughout the year.</p>	Short-Term	MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-8</b></p> <p>Review the types of amenities found in Niagara Falls parks and the way these amenities are maintained to ensure that the need for casual, non-programmed uses in parks is being met on a year-round basis.</p>	Short-Term	MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<b>Progressive Systems &amp; Internal Performance</b>				
<p><b>RCP8-9</b></p> <p>Confirm the Service Levels for each discipline in parks, recreation and culture and determine the annual work hours and other resources required to meet community expectations.</p>	Short-Term	RC & MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-10</b></p> <p>Regularly 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 identification of surplus school sites, particularly in areas of intensification.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-11</b></p> <p>Ensure that the cost of providing services, the value of the service and a comparison to the market is considered in the setting of a fair-minded fee structure.</p>	Ongoing	RC	Not Applicable	To Be Determined

	Timing	Lead	Capital	Operating
<p><b>RCP8-12</b></p> <p>Measure program and facility capacity and utilization as well as service satisfaction levels on an annual basis. Seek to improve these satisfaction levels by addressing the areas where residents and visitors are least satisfied.</p>	Ongoing	RC & MW	Not Applicable	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-13</b></p> <p>Carry out regular inspections of recreation, culture, parks and trail facilities based on compliance with legislation, quality assurance standards, and best practices to ensure municipal spaces are safe, enjoyable and well documented to inform infrastructure planning.</p>	Ongoing	RC & MW	To Be Determined based on inspections	Staff Time
<p><b>RCP8-14</b></p> <p>Review the Municipal Works Parks staffing implications resulting from the recommendations of the RCPMP.</p>	Short-Term	MW	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

# Implementing the Master Plan





## Monitoring & Updating the RCP Plan

The City should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the RCP Plan's Initiatives in order to ensure that they remain reflective of community needs. This may require monitoring activity levels, utilization, demographics, and continuing dialogue with community organizations. The development of annual work plans and year-end reporting should be undertaken to track achievements and lessons learned in order to determine the success of the RCP Plan. Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustment in resource allocations and priorities may be required. The following steps should be considered to conduct an annual review of the RCP Plan.



- Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success of new and existing initiatives, changes in participation levels, areas for improvement or adjustment, etc.).
- Review the RCP Plan to identify and/or confirm short-term initiatives based on staff reviews and consideration (e.g., trends, consultation, usage data, funding, partnerships, etc.).
- 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 purpose external funding opportunities, as necessary.



## Financial Considerations

Due to the City’s historical investments in its recreation, culture and parks system, the RCP Plan’s Initiatives have largely been able to focus upon leveraging ongoing works and existing infrastructure. Major capital expenditures are attributable to the redevelopment of Chippawa Memorial Arena, developing the Mountain Road Landfill with a yet-to-be-determined end-use(s), adapting space within the MacBain Community Centre for additional municipal programming, continuing to update playground infrastructure and developing outdoor infrastructure such as sports fields, playing courts, and splash pads to keep pace with population growth. Certain initiatives require further consultation and design-based work to be completed prior to understanding their respective capital implications.

All Initiatives that have a capital requirement would be brought forward on an annual basis through the budgeting process once the City has the information it needs to develop costs (e.g. amount of parkland being conveyed, site selection, design characteristics, financial contributions from non-municipal sources, etc.). For the purposes of providing a preliminary estimate of capital cost implications for selected Initiatives, Table 1 indicates that the City can expect to expend a minimum of \$4.2 million of which a portion would be eligible for Development Charge / Community Benefit Charge funding under provincial legislation. It is envisioned that a number of service-delivery focused Initiatives centred upon communications, policy development and volunteer supports can be worked into existing staff workloads.

**Table 1: Preliminary Capital Implications of Selected Recommendations**

Major Capital Item Recommended	Estimated Cost
Chippawa Memorial Arena Redevelopment	To Be Determined
MacBain Community Centre Space Adaptations	
Festival & Special Event Space Development	
<u>Recreation Facility Developments</u>	
Outdoor Skating Trail*	\$750,000
Rectangular Fields (x2)	\$750,000
Cricket Grounds (field only)	\$500,000
Natural Playground*	\$125,000
Tennis Court (assume 4 courts)	\$250,000
Pickleball Complexes (assume 6 courts)	\$125,000
Basketball Courts (x3)	\$125,000
Splash Pads (x2)	\$700,000
North-End Skateboard / Bike Park	\$400,000
Outdoor Fitness Equipment / Adult Playgrounds*	\$125,000
<u>Consulting / Design Studies</u>	
Outdoor Pool Revitalization Strategy	\$50,000
Festivals & Events Strategy	\$30,000
Waterfront Plan	\$75,000
Urban Forest Strategy	\$50,000
Woodlot Management Plan Update	\$50,000
RCP Plan Update	\$100,000
<b>Preliminary Capital Implications</b>	<b>\$4,205,000</b>

\* Denotes suggested cost allocation for budgeting purposes noting that the actual cost will depend upon final design

Notes: Costs for RPMP major capital items exclude purchases of land and assume optimal site development conditions. Costs are order of magnitude, preliminary in nature based on experience in other municipalities, and should be confirmed by the City through detailed analyses prior to integration into budgets/work plans. All costs stated in 2021 dollars and exclude adjustments for future escalation.

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