

**CITY OF HAMILTON**

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
Recreation Division**

<b>TO:</b> Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b> CITY WIDE
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b> November 12, 2012	
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons With Disabilities (CS12013)(City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)	
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b> Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Mary Jo Harris 905-546-2424 Ext.4755 Laura Kerr 905-546-2424 Ext. 5015
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the Recreation Needs Assessment Study prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants (attached as Appendix A to Report CS12013), be received;
- (b) That staff be directed to bring all Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons With Disabilities recommendations requiring funding, back to Committee for approval as part of the annual operating and capital budget submissions of priority projects starting in 2014;
- (c) That Recreation staff be directed to implement the recommendations attached as Appendix B to Report CS12013 – Action Plans and to report on the progress to the Committee annually; and,
- (d) That the outstanding business item identified as “Recreation Access Policy (Needs Assessment)” be removed from the outstanding business list.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Persons with disabilities often face unique barriers to participation, which can limit their ability to engage fully in all Hamilton has to offer. Current estimates suggest that there

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are approximately 106,000 Hamiltonians with disabilities, a number that is expected to grow to 132,000 or beyond by 2031.

In 2009, capital funding was approved to do a recreation needs assessment for persons with disabilities at the request of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities and in compliance with the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ADOA).

The *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities* (the Study) identifies current programming as well as current and future needs for recreational programs and activities for persons with disabilities. The Study recommends improvements for service delivery, ways to remove barriers to participation, provides a list of current recreational opportunities accessible for persons with disabilities in the City of Hamilton, and recommends new program development on page iii of Appendix A to Report CS12013.

The Study includes information on the extensive stakeholder consultation, promising practices and an inventory of service providers in the Hamilton area in the support areas of leisure, sport and recreation, advocacy, physical activity support and research as well as other support groups serving the specialized community of persons with disabilities.

Led by a Reference Group comprised of local advocates for persons with disabilities, the study engagement process included consultations with community organizations, service providers, agencies, persons with disabilities, the general public and City staff.

It was found that current programming gaps include:

- fitness programs
- programs for children in the summer
- ongoing programs for 18-35 year olds
- opportunities in Lower Hamilton

To address these gaps and improve recreation services to persons with disabilities the Study focuses on recommendations organized in five key result areas:

### ***Service Improvement***

Within Service Improvement 16 recommendations are staff based initiatives that strengthen staff skills, expertise and networking. They also expand the “Fit for Everyone” culture of the Recreation Division to greater inclusiveness and more innovation.

### ***Partnership Development***

The four partnership recommendations focus on expanding work with existing partners, developing new partnerships and linking Recreation more closely with existing community networks.

***Public Awareness and Marketing***

One of the key messages from the engagement work done for the Study stressed that many people find it difficult to know what is available to them. The ten recommendations identify effective ways to improve Recreation’s publications, by making them easier to find and easier to understand. They also recommend new marketing initiatives and incorporating new inclusiveness thinking into project communication plans.

***Programs and Facilities***

The 21 recommendations suggest a renewed commitment to capital projects supporting accessible facilities and specific improvements to facilities. In addition, program funding, design and delivery, program grants, volunteer service and success acknowledgement are also considered priorities.

***Performance Measures and Evaluation***

A report based on performance measures will be completed annually to track progress and plan for future successes.

All 53 Study recommendations are summarized in Appendix B to Report CS12013.

The recommendations have been organized into actions plans, one for each focus area and have been prioritized, mapped out over a five-year time line and an implementation lead identified. The plans were developed by considering sequencing, foundational policies, training, resources and achieving important “quick wins”.

The implementation of the action plan relies on monitoring and progress reporting, as well as allowing for adjustments and improvements. As recommendations are completed, the Recreation Division will continue to expand its ability to embrace inclusion and reinforce its position as a welcoming community.

This Recreation Division initiative will increase the number of high quality services for persons with disabilities supported by a community by providing a wide range of choice, an increase in program options and more accessible facilities.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable***

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:** The Study’s 53 recommendations will be part of the preparation of future annual Capital and Operation budget forecasts for Council approval.

**Staffing:** There are no staffing implications associated with Report CS12013.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications associated with Report CS12013.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

2009 - Capital funding was approved to conduct a recreational needs assessment for persons with disabilities at the request of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities and in compliance with the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ADOA).

January 2011 - Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, in collaboration with Tucker Reid & Associates, were retained to conduct the study under the supervision of City-Wide Services staff in the Recreation Division and with guidance provided by an Expert Reference Group.

May 18, 2011 - Frontline staff workshop

July and August 2011 - Participant focus groups

September 26 and 28 - Key informant interviews

November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 - Stakeholder and public meeting

Feb 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities presentation

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Action Plan has no immediate implication on existing policies. As staff implements the recommendations, any new policies or significant changes to existing policies would be formalized by the responsible department's management and brought before Council for approval as needed.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

In order to gather input from a variety of stakeholders, a number of consultation efforts have been undertaken, including:

**Frontline staff workshop** (Appendix A to Report CS12013, Section 3.1); May 18, 2011; 13 participants.

Findings included the need for more training, involvement with developing new strategies, sharing resources and knowledge corporately and programming guidelines.

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**Stakeholder group questionnaire** (Appendix A to Report CS12013, 3.4); sent to 100 organizations; 30 responses.

The findings provide insight into the mandates and primary roles of the responding organizations, the primary types of disability served, types and affordability of programming/services/activities offered, type of support needed from the City, partnerships, service gaps (geographical and by disability), communication, trends, and priorities regarding recreation for persons with disabilities.

**Key informant interviews** (Appendix A to Report CS12013, Section 3.3); September 26 and 28, 2011; three (3) focus groups; 25 people and follow-up interviews.

Issues included ability to pay, mental health challenges, program promotion, volunteer challenges, staff training, target age groups and partnering with other support agencies.

**Participant focus groups** (Appendix A to Report CS12013, Section 3.2); July and August 2011, 15 organizations representing a variety of areas, including: mental, physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities; physical therapy providers and respite providers; sport organizations; and networking groups.

**Online feedback form** (Appendix A to Report CS12013, Section 3.5); 60 responses.

Respondents identified 30 unique recreation opportunities that are currently available for persons with disabilities, including a variety of sports (e.g., soccer, Challenger baseball, bowling, sledge hockey, swimming, etc.), camps (e.g., Kidaca, Teen Venture, City day camps, McMaster Sports Fitness School), community organizations (e.g., YMCA/YWCA, Saltfleet Soccer, Stoney Creek Disabled Sport Association, Salvation Army, TEAD, Club GAIN etc.), and rehabilitation programs (e.g., MacWheelers).

Comments included the need for more advertising and communication, partnership with other support organizations, adult services, specialized equipment as well as more accessible facilities.

**Public information Centre**; November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, at the Hamilton Public Library Central Branch; attended by 32 members of the public, including representatives of 19 organizations.

A number of assistive measures were taken to ensure the meeting was welcoming to all, including real time closed captioning, sign language interpretation, offering fm stereo units and speakers and magnifiers to those that required them, ensuring the space was fully physically accessible, and the provision of both comment sheets and information sheets in large print. The information sheet was also available in Braille.

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Suggestions raised at this meeting included the need for more promotion available services, the need for specialized equipment at recreation facilities, physical accessibility to facilities and the need for more cooperative partnerships.

**Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities Reference Group;** Six (6) meetings.

Dr. Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos – Research Associate in the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University

Joanne Brohman – Professor in the Recreation and Leisure Services program at Mohawk College

Sandi Mugford - Information and Referral Counsellor, the Disability Information Service Helpline, Hamilton Public Library

Lisa Schumph - Program Manager, Salvation Army Lawson Ministries

Maxine Carter - Access & Equity Coordinator, Access and Equity, Corporate Services

The Reference Group provided leadership and guidance throughout the project from the terms of reference to the completion of the report. In addition they advised on trends and best practices.

**Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD);** Two (2) meetings chaired by Aznive Mallett.

The ACPD provided guidance on importance of inclusive recreation for all and advised on communication and accessibility issues.

**Other**

Transportation, Energy and Facilities, Public Works – Don Hull

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

In developing this Needs Assessment, significant efforts were made to consult with interested parties, service deliverers, and key leaders in the field. The recommendations in the *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities* are based on these consultations, identification of gaps, as well as analysis of key strengths and opportunities for improved and inclusive delivery of recreation services to persons with disabilities in Hamilton.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Not applicable

**CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

***Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization***

- ◆ A culture of excellence
- ◆ A skilled, adaptive and diverse workforce, i.e. more flexible staff
- ◆ More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- ◆ An enabling work environment - respectful culture, well-being and safety, effective communication
- ◆ Council and SMT are recognized for their leadership and integrity

***Intergovernmental Relationships***

- ◆ Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

***Growing Our Economy***

- ◆ A skilled and creative labour pool that supports new employers
- ◆ An improved customer service

***Social Development***

- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services
- ◆ People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

***Healthy Community***

- ◆ Plan and manage the built environment
- ◆ An engaged Citizenry
- ◆ Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

**APPENDICES / SCHEDULES**

Appendix "A" to Report CS12013: Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities – Study

Appendix "B" to Report CS12013: Actions Plans





Hamilton

# Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities

October 2012



Monteith + Brown  
planning consultants

Tucker-Reid  
& Associates









CITY OF HAMILTON  
**Recreation Needs Assessment for  
Persons with Disabilities**  
October 2012



Tucker-Reid  
& Associates





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all of the residents, organizations, Reference Group and staff and who took time to be part of the consultation for this Study to improve and increase recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities in the City of Hamilton.

It is also recognized from various studies that there is a strong link between education, economic well-being, quality of life, and participation in recreational opportunities. The more individuals the City can involve in recreation, the greater the level of empowerment and individual and community health.

Improving recreation access will begin to strengthen individuals and communities alike.





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, capital funding was approved to do a recreation needs assessment for persons with disabilities at the request of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities and in compliance with the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Persons with disabilities often face unique barriers to participation, which can limit their ability to engage fully in all Hamilton has to offer. Current estimates suggest that there are approximately 104,000 Hamiltonians with disabilities, a number that is expected to grow to 132,000 or beyond by 2031.

The *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities* (the Study) identifies current programming opportunities for persons with disabilities, as well as current and future needs for recreational programs and activities. The Study recommends improvements for service delivery and ways to remove barriers to participation.

Led by a Reference Group comprised of local advocates for persons with disabilities, the study has included a number of consultations with community organizations, service providers, agencies, persons with disabilities, City staff, and the general public. Several common themes emerged from the public consultation process, including:

- Persons with disabilities have a right to be respected and included in the community, including recreational opportunities.
- There is limited awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities within the community.
- Coordinated communication efforts within and across sectors need improvement.
- Cost of some recreation programs is a common barrier to participation for persons with disabilities, many of whom are on fixed incomes.

No one organization alone can meet the recreational needs of all persons with disabilities in Hamilton, so the action plan includes collaboration with support groups to reduce duplication of efforts and utilize our limited resources most effectively.

The following is a list of current recreational opportunities accessible for persons with disabilities in the City of Hamilton.

**Current Recreation Programming (Registered) – City of Hamilton**

Program Name	Description	Frequency	Cost	Location(s)
<b>Kidaca Support Day Camp</b>	Support workers provided (at 1:1 camper or 1:2 camper ratio) for preschool, school age, youth, and teen camps	Up to 2 weeks in the summer	No additional cost above camp fees	All day camp locations
<b>TeenVenture Fall/Winter</b>	Specifically designed for teens and young adults between the ages of 16 to 25 to participate in recreation activities at a ratio of 1 worker to 5 participants	Weekly for 3 hours	\$135.00 for 9 weeks	Recreation centre in West Hamilton
<b>Friday Framers</b>	Bowling activities for adults (16+) with disabilities	Weekly for 2 hours	\$22.80 for 9 weeks	Sherwood Bowling Lanes

**Current Recreation Programming (Drop-in Swimming) – City of Hamilton**

Program Name	Description	Frequency	Cost
<b>Special Needs Swim – Huntington Park Recreation Centre</b>	Swim times dedicated to persons with disabilities	Twice weekly from 10:30 – 11:15 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays	Same rates apply as to open swims, although caregivers are admitted free of charge
<b>Special Needs Swim – Norman Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre</b>		Twice weekly from 10:15 – 11:15 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays	

The City also offers hundreds of integrated programs (registered and drop-in) that are available to residents of all abilities, all across the City, including sports, camps, aquatics, dance, fitness, general interest, etc.

**Current Recreational Programming – Other Agencies**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Target Audience</b>	<b>Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities</b>
Accessible Sports Council	All ages	Advocate for sport organizations that serve persons with disabilities and their individual participants
Autism Ontario, Hamilton Chapter	Children, youth, adults with Autism	General support (incl. recreation camps)
AbleLiving	Adults age 16+	Long term care facility for adults with disabilities, various recreation programs, swimming/general recreation
Behaviour Institute	Children with Autism	General support (incl. social skills and play)
Best Buddies Canada	High school students with intellectual disabilities	School based sport, recreation and social events: Varied recreation opportunities; individuals with intellectual disabilities are paired with student peer volunteers (elementary, high school and university)
Beth Tikvah Foundation of Hamilton, Passport	Developmental disabilities	Direct funding and funding for agency services (incl. leisure)
Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, Adult Day Program	For adults and older adults with varying physical and/or cognitive disabilities	Social, recreational, intellectual and physical activities. Arts and crafts, fitness, pet therapy, games, etc.
Brain Injury Services	Ages 16+ Brain Injury	Community Resources, various social, recreational and group learning
Canadian Council of the Blind Hamilton Association	All Ages, Blind and Visual Impairments	Weekly social functions General support (incl. social and recreation)

Organization	Target Audience	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
Catholic Youth Organization, Camp Marydale and Urban Hoops Basketball Program	Youth with Disabilities	<p>Unique 'One-to-One' program in C.Y.O. camping program; emphasizes life skills by providing opportunities for peer-to-peer relationship building with the other able-bodied children.</p> <p>Inclusive basketball camp</p> <p>Day camp activities including: Hiking, swimming, archery, camp fires and sing-a-longs; Sports; Field Games; Arts and Crafts</p>
Catholic Family Services of Hamilton	All Ages, Developmental Disability	Assistance in accessing recreation, community opportunities
Choices Assoc Incorporated – Links for People, Westfield	18 years of age and up	<p>Recreational opportunities</p> <p>Continuing Education</p> <p>Leisure Programs - runs days, evenings and weekends</p> <p>General support (incl. recreation)</p>
Christian Horizons West District, Hamilton Day Program	Adults with a developmental disability	<p>Recreation, life skill development and volunteering program.</p> <p>Offered on an individual basis, including support to participate in other agency programs.</p>
Civitan Place	18 years of age and up	Program includes academics, recreation, crafts, and office work.
Club Gain	Ages 14 to 26 years with disabilities	Dances and social events (including bowling) for adults with disabilities in a worker and parent free environment
Community Living Hamilton	18 years + with an intellectual disability	Drum corps, events, supported lodge and cottage vacations

Organization	Target Audience	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
Contact Hamilton (now Developmental Service Organization)	All ages	Central information and referral site for children and youth with disabilities
Cottage Studio	Adults recovering from mental health	Membership is open to any individual recovering from mental illness
Dundas Learning Centre and Civitan Place	Adults with disabilities	General support for adults with disabilities (incl. recreation)
Hamilton Challenger Baseball Association	Membership in the HCBA is open and available to any person ages 5 years and up with special needs	Junior and senior level teams playing inter-league or house-league games at local community baseball parks in the Greater Hamilton area. Baseball rules are adapted as required to match players' abilities so that participation and teamwork are emphasized.
Hamilton & District Extend a Family	Children and Youth with special needs	The Buddy Program/Junior Buddy Program: an individual volunteer (over age 19) befriends a child with special needs and provides respite to their families by taking the child on regular outings in the community
Hamilton & District Extend a Family	Children and Youth with special needs	The Program Buddy: A volunteer (over 16 years of age) befriends a child with special needs by meeting them at the ASD/Recreation Program on a regular basis. The volunteer makes arrangements with the child's family to meet the child at a mutually convenient outing and helps to supervise and engage the child during the event.



Organization	Target Audience	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
Hamilton & District Extend a Family	Autism	The ASD/Recreation Program: various recreation events, including swimming and bowling, are offered at least six times a month in the community or at our facility. The activities are planned and supervised by our ASD/Recreation Coordinator, with the assistance of volunteers.
Hamilton & District Extend a Family	Children and Youth with special needs	The Host Program: A volunteer family befriends a child with special needs and takes this young person out of the home on a regular basis to provide respite for parents and siblings while offering enriched social experiences for the child.
Hamilton & District Extend a Family	Children and Youth with special needs	The Summer Support Program: Summer Support Workers help to supervise group activities throughout the summer in addition to working with children one-on-one. Events are planned in the community with a focus on outdoor activities. Parents receive many hours of respite through the support offered during the challenging summer months.
Hamilton and District Sledge Hockey Association		Sports league, sledge hockey team
Hamilton Handicap Club	Adult	Social activities
Hamilton School of Martial Arts	Adults with developmental disabilities	Classes to support overall health and wellness
Hamilton Steel City Wheelers	10 years and up	Varied recreation activities, including dance

Organization	Target Audience	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
Hamilton Health Sciences, Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program	Children	Medical care and general support (incl. recreation)
Home for Independent Living and Learning	Adults with acquired brain injury	Residential services for adults with acquired brain injuries (incl. recreation)
Immanuel Christian Reform Church	Youth	Friendship group for developmentally challenged
L'Arche Hamilton	Adult	Residential services (incl. recreation)
McMaster University, Dept. of Athletics and Recreation, the Pulse Centre, Special Needs Assistance Program	Child & Adult	Children's Movement Camp; SNAP; STRIVE for Health Program (Adult); Superhero Training Academy
MacWheelers Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program	Adults with spinal cord injury	Medical care and general support (incl. recreation)
Ontario Lung Association, Hamilton Branch, Breathworks Program	Child & Adult	Exercise group meets twice a week, the benefits are to increase lung capacity and give a better quality of life
Ontario March of Dimes	All ages, persons with a disability	General support (incl. recreation and integration services)
RYGIEL Supports for Community Living	Persons with developmental disabilities as well as other disabilities	Individual and Family Supports: leisure and recreational endeavors

Organization	Target Audience	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
RYGIEL Supports for Community Living	Persons with developmental disabilities as well other disabilities	Blossom Club: Non-profit fitness and wellness centre catering to all women with disabilities regardless of age or interests Classes include Strength and Movement, Laughter Yoga, Zumba, Tabata, Pilates, Interval Training, and more
Salvation Army Lawson Ministries Hamilton,	Adults with developmental disabilities	STRIVE: Skills Training Recreation Integration Vocation and Employment
Stoney Creek Disabled Sports Association	All Ages	Various sports
Saltfleet Soccer Special Teams	For children and youth with cognitive disabilities	Highly structured, and allows time for members to learn basics soccer drills and game instruction followed by non-competitive scrimmages
Starlite Dance Studio	All ages	'McMaster Class' jazz class that will give students with special needs the opportunity to dance and express themselves through movement.
Special Olympics Ontario, Hamilton	2 – 88 years of age with an intellectual disability	Provides sport training and competition for people with an intellectual disability. Sport training and competition in such sports as basketball, swimming, bowling, figure skating, softball, and more.
TEAD Equestrian Association for the Disabled	All ages	Horseback riding
VON Hamilton, Adult Day Centre & Overnight Respite Program	Adult	Music, physical activity, arts, gardening, etc.

Organization	Target Audience	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
Woodview Children's Mental Health and Autism Services	Children with Autism	Bowling league, fitness night, sports program and an after-hours drop-in program. Occasionally special weekend activities. Day Treatment Recreation Programs
YWCA – Developmental Services	Developmentally handicapped adults over 18 years of age and their families	Provides residential, day programs and support services. Example: recreation day program Y'Art - Therapeutic Art
Yogabilities	Birth to early teens	Adapted yoga program

The above survey is guided by Inform Hamilton and outlines programs/ services that are specific to persons with a disability in the City of Hamilton. In addition, there are service providers within the City who can accommodate some special needs on a request basis, although these providers have not been included in this table.

Current **program gaps** include:

- fitness programs;
- programs for children in the summer;
- ongoing programs for 18-35 year olds; and
- opportunities in Lower Hamilton.

To improve recreation services to persons with disabilities, the Study focuses on recommendations organized in **five key result areas**:

- service improvement;
- partnership development;
- public awareness and marketing;
- programs and facilities; and
- performance measures.

## Action Plans

Each of the five action plans, one per key result area, contained in the body of this *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities* has been prioritized, mapped out over a five-year time line, and had an implementation lead identified. These plans were developed by considering sequencing, foundational policies, training, resources, and achieving important 'quick wins'.

The implementation of the action plans relies on monitoring and progress reporting, allowing for adjustments and improvements. As recommendations are completed, the Recreation Division will continue to expand its ability to embrace inclusion and reinforce its position as a welcoming community.

All of the Study's recommendations are summarized in Section 6 of this report.

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
<b>Service Improvement Action Plan</b>				
1. Communicate the City's role in the provision of recreation services for persons with disabilities to provide accessible facilities, integrated programs, communications, promotions and marketing, and capacity building with support agencies who can provide specialized/adapted programs.	X			Director of City Wide Services

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
<p>2. Develop, revise and implement policies and procedures supporting equitable access to recreation services for persons with disabilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AODA and its application in recreation services and facilities;</li> <li>• allocation of public spaces;</li> <li>• access for person from low income backgrounds;</li> <li>• the provision of support workers;</li> <li>• behaviour management/zero tolerance; and</li> <li>• an intake policy.</li> </ul>	X			Program Development
<p>3. Continue the reference group made up of representatives of support organizations, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups with quarterly meetings to discuss the progress on the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i>, collaboration, program and service development, and performance measures, producing an annual report on progress.</p>	X			Program Development



	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
4. In City Wide Services rename the Supervisor of Special Needs position to a Supervisor Social Inclusion in Recreation Services, and broaden the position scope over time to address all underserved populations.	X			Program Development
5. Participate in the Municipal Networking Group of recreation practitioners serving persons with disabilities.	X	X	X	Program Development
6. Establish a project team lead by the Supervisor Social Inclusion with both Program Development and District Operations staff to implement the actions as outlined in the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> .	X			Program Development
7. Under the guidance of the City's Human Resources Department seek to increase the numbers of employees and volunteers with disabilities. Consider providing paid internship to staff through the Ability Edge program and local opportunities such as Ableworks.		X		Division Director

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
8. Ensure that all Division advisory committees and reference groups are representative of the community, including persons with disabilities.		X		Division Director
9. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to work directly with organizations serving persons with disabilities to increase their individual awareness.			X	Division Director
10. Develop a staff training and professional development program to build staff and volunteer skills in welcoming and providing services for persons with disabilities (e.g., self study resources and materials, training manuals and staff/volunteer support sessions and touring specialized facilities).	X			Program Development
11. Establish staff procedures to handle situations of intolerance, addressing issues of safety within facilities and at special events.	X			Program Development
12. Where applicable add the subject area of 'providing services to persons with disabilities' to performance evaluations. Each Recreation Section to develop annual objectives and monitor progress.		X		Division Director

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
13. Work with partner organizations to develop and deliver professional development and training to staff, volunteers and community groups. Work with groups to develop training tools on specific disabilities in order for staff and volunteers to best understand the disability and possibilities with respect to inclusion and recreation programs and services.	X			Program Development
14. Staff appropriately to provide leisure counselling and assistance to participants requiring this service. Where needed revise job descriptions to include required skills.		X		Recreation Directors
15. Monitor and report to the Community Services GM on the Division's compliance with the requirements of the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities legislation.	X	X	X	Program Development
16. Create a stronger partnership with the Hamilton Public Library system to better understand city-wide and neighbourhood initiatives that have the potential to serve persons with disabilities.	X			Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
<b>Partnership Development Action Plan</b>				
17. Through the Inform Hamilton web site maintain and expand the inventory of recreational programs and services available to persons with disabilities.		X		Program Development
18. Host annual focus groups with organizations who serve participants with disabilities to determine the success of current programming and what improvements are needed.	X	X		Program Development
19. Identify partners able to assist in service delivery and develop standardized partnership agreements which include deliverables, risk, contributions from each party, forecasted service levels and a performance review process.		X		Sport & Community Development
20. Do a cost/benefit assessment for each partnership to determine participant satisfaction levels and performance gaps.		X		Program Development
<b>Public Awareness and Marketing Action Plan</b>				
21. Ensure inclusive images representing the diversity of the City including persons with disabilities are used to promote City programs and services.		X	X	Business Support

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
22. Include and highlight a pull-out section in the Recreation Guide that summarizes all programs and services for persons with disabilities (including links to programs provided by service and support agencies).		X		Business Support
23. Distribute the Recreation Guide directly to support agencies for persons with disabilities. Consider providing Guides to schools.	X			Business Support
24. Consider providing an audio version of the Recreation Guide on compact disc for persons with visual impairments.	X			Business Support
25. Use the international symbol of accessibility on print materials where possible.	X			Business Support
26. Work with the Inform Hamilton web site partners to provide a link on the Recreation web site to Inform Hamilton for easy access to recreation services and supports for persons with disabilities. With the partnership explore communication enhancements. Post the <i>Recreation Needs Assessments for Persons with Disabilities</i> on the City's website.	X			Business Support

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
27. Consider appropriate and alternate methods of messaging (e.g., text, pictures and symbols, sign language, Braille, voice, etc.) to ensure effective and open communication for all, in each Recreation communication plan associated with an initiative and/or project.	X			Business Support
28. Produce a separate resource document that depicts how recreation and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, how best to access programs and services, and links to all related service agencies and their programs.		X		Program Development
29. In accordance with the corporate policy on social networking promote recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities throughout Hamilton, accompanied by Recreation branding.	X	X		Business Support
30. Ensure that all print materials are in Arial (size 14) or Verdana (size 12) font, with no glossy print/pictures and no shaded colours, as per adopted standards.	X			Business Support

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
<b>Programs and Facilities Action Plan</b>				
31. As part of the annual capital budget process continue to aggressively fund the capital program upgrading recreation centres and arenas. Ensure the locations of the upgrade projects are equitably distributed on a geographical basis or in areas of greatest need. To complete the current Recreation Facilities and Capital Program upgrade program an annual allocation of \$2 million is needed for the next 5 years.	X	X	X	Facilities and Capital Programs
32. Revise the current Capital budget forecast on a complete upgrade requirement audit of all recreation facilities, in keeping with the barrier-free design guidelines and AODA standards, placing priority on facilities and amenities where there is a higher concentration of existing recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities. Ensure facility maintenance staff participate in the audit.	X	X	X	Facilities and Capital Programs
33. Create a program to introduce warmer water pools into the swimming and aquatic exercise pools to increase the comfort level of persons with physical disabilities and older adults.	X			Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
34. Consider the expanded provision of therapeutic pools and better equipped change rooms to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities as pools are refurbished.		X	X	Facilities and Capital Programs
35. Complete a ward or neighbourhood-specific inventory of available meeting spaces (including City facilities, schools, not-for-profit spaces, and spaces in businesses) capable of hosting localized recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.	X			Program Development
36. Host an annual staff training forum to introduce assistive devices for persons with disabilities and their uses.	X	X	X	Sport & Community Development
37. Ensure that each accessible facility offers specialized programs for persons with disabilities based on demonstrated need.		X	X	Program Development
38. Plan and deliver programs on a geographical basis to provide choices and a range of opportunities throughout the City.	X	X	X	Program Development



	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
39. Plan and deliver programs are equitably distributed between age groups and disability types and throughout the City.	X	X	X	Program Development
40. Plan and deliver new recreation and fitness programs and services including wheel chair sports for persons with disabilities in Lower Hamilton in the 18-35 year bracket.	X	X		Program Development
41. Create new initiatives targeted at welcoming persons with disabilities under 55 years of age, in all facilities with special consideration to senior facilities that may be uniquely suited to assist in this area.	X	X		Program Development
42. Ensure that transportation continues to be a critical consideration in program planning; meet twice a year with transit and DARTS management staff to discuss current and planned service levels.	X	X	X	Program Development
43. Plan for new programs based on an annual review of existing sport and recreation groups, schools, service clubs, and other community stakeholders existing inclusion practices.		X		Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
44. Request that the criteria for grants through the Community Partnerships Funding Program include criteria for groups to include persons with disabilities and not just culturally diverse populations.	X			General Manager Community Services
45. Provide start-up funding through the Community Partnerships Funding Program for programs for persons with disabilities; when programs become financially sustainable re-allocate funding to new opportunities.	X	X	X	General Manager Community Services
46. Provide simplified instructions to groups in completing the Community Partnership funding application and work with the lead of the Community Partnership to simplify the application.	X	X	X	General Manager Community Services
47. Track the number of program opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities to ensure the demand/need is met or gaps identified.	X			Program Development
48. Do an annual quality assurance user survey for programs for persons with disabilities to inform new and improved programs.		X		Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
49. Develop and implement a training program for volunteers to assist persons with disabilities to get the maximum benefit from recreation services.		X		Program Development
50. Develop and implement a buddy system where volunteers partner with participants with disabilities by assisting them to access and participate in recreation programs.		X		Program Development
51. Annually recognize and celebrate volunteers, staff and leaders who have increased the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.		X		Program Development
<b>Performance Measures Action Plan</b>				
52. Report on the completion of the Action Plan's recommendations in the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> on an annual basis; plan the next year's deliverables based on progress and report to Recreation and Community Services management.	X	X	X	Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
53. Report annually to Recreation management on each Action Plan according to the performance measures in the following table (see Section 6.5).	X	X	X	Program Development

This Recreation Division initiative will provide additional high quality services for persons with disabilities, supported by a community that would like to see a wide range of choice and an increase in program options and accessible facilities.



## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities provides analysis, assessment, and recommendations to guide the City of Hamilton in the provision and support of recreation services for its residents with disabilities. The range of disabilities considered through this report is broad and includes physical, sensory, developmental, and intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges. The focus of analysis is on recreational opportunities for children, youth, and adults with disabilities.

The City of Hamilton has recognized the importance of investing in recreation services for all residents to foster long-term benefits, including lower health care costs, improved mental health, and lower crime rates. The needs of residents with disabilities should be considered not only with respect to physical access, but also to provide the proper mix of programs as well as appropriate service delivery approaches.

As identified in the Terms of Reference, the purpose of this Study is to *“assess the recreational needs of the greater Hamilton community for persons with disabilities with a view to present future programs and activities as well as identify constraints that may hinder participation.”* This includes the:

- review of local needs, recreational service gaps, service interests and barriers to recreation for those with disabilities;
- identification of opportunities for improvement; and
- development of recommendations to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The scope of this Study focuses on Hamilton’s recreational needs, services, programs and activities for persons with disabilities, with the following objectives:

- build organizational capacity to enable the integration of services;
- create a community profile, including an inventory of recreation partners, and inclusion practices, programs and activities (see Appendix D);
- identify considerations for an awareness plan;

- examine evidence-based strategies and policies to increase participation;
- suggest an approach for developing support services; and
- identify opportunities for filling gap areas and removing barriers.

Specific improvements to parks, facilities, and infrastructure are outside the scope of this Study.

## 1.2 Planning Process

This Study was commissioned by the City of Hamilton Community Services Department. A Reference Group comprised of five local advocates for persons with disabilities was formed to provide input and insight into the needs of this community, to provide guidance on community consultation methods, and to review drafts of project documents and consultation tools. The Reference Group has met with staff from the City and Consulting Team throughout the project to ensure that the Study is well informed and relevant to the City of Hamilton. Short biographies for the Reference Group members are included in Appendix A.

Following the creation of the Reference Group, the planning process has included the following key tasks:

- A review and analysis of relevant City and Provincial policies, procedures, studies and documents related to persons with disabilities (e.g., *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* [AODA], *Vision 2020*, etc.);
- An analysis of trends and population data to develop a community profile that may influence the direction of recreation programs for persons with disabilities;
- A review of Hamilton's current inventory of non-municipal service organizations that provide recreation programs and services to persons with disabilities to understand the current environment and potential gaps;
- A wide-reaching consultation program through which persons with disabilities, caregivers, service providers, and City staff were able to provide meaningful input into this Study and its future directions;
- The creation of a goal and guiding principles for the City of Hamilton's Community Services Department to apply to recreational services for persons with disabilities;

- The development of a policy, program and service delivery (including considerations of partnership opportunities); and
- The development of an implementation plan that will serve as a framework to guide the City's provision of recreation programs and services for persons with disabilities.

The Consulting Team of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, Tucker-Reid & Associates, and The JF Group was retained to assist the City of Hamilton with this project.

### 1.3 Definitions

A number of key terms are used throughout this report and are defined as follows:

**Active Living** is a holistic approach to personal well-being that combines physical activity with mental, spiritual, and social engagement into a wide range of passive and gentle active leisure pursuits (e.g., yoga, stretching, walking, cycling, etc.).

**Disability**, as defined within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act<sup>1</sup>, means:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Ontario. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Act, S.O. 2005, c.11. (2005).



(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

Individuals may be affected by disability to varying degrees; for example, someone who is hard of hearing is not deaf, nor is someone who has reduced vision blind. In some cases, an individual may be affected by more than one disability, thus compounding the need for enhanced accessibility. Across Canada, the most prominent disabilities relate to pain, mobility, and agility.

**Programs** can be scheduled or drop-in opportunities that are offered at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, monthly) or as one-off events. Programs may be provided by the City or by its partners and may have costs associated with them or be offered at no cost.

**Recreation** involves participation in leisure activities, including physical (e.g., sports, hiking), cultural (e.g., dance, painting) and passive (e.g., cards, reading) pursuits.

**Services** are the non-programmatic offerings that are provided by the City and its partners and benefit persons with disabilities and/or their caregivers (e.g., employment assistance, financial assistance, Ontario Disability Support Program [ODSP] administration, housing assistance, etc.).

## SECTION 2: PLANNING CONTEXT

This section examines the currently municipal delivery system for recreational services for persons with disabilities in Hamilton, as well as existing policies and reports that are relevant to the subject. The current community demographic profile is reviewed, as is the City's requirements relative to legislation for persons with disabilities.

### 2.1 Current Municipal Role in Serving Persons with Disabilities

The City of Hamilton's Recreation Division is "committed to ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities and their families to access programs, services and opportunities."<sup>2</sup> Programs offered by the City of Hamilton are open to all residents, which reflects the Recreation Division's commitment to an integrated programming approach. To facilitate participation, fees are waived for support persons that are attending a program to assist persons with disabilities. In addition, the Recreation Division strives to provide a welcoming and accessible environment for those who use assistive devices (e.g., crutches, white canes, walkers, hearing aids, oxygen tanks, etc.), as well as for persons with guide dogs or service animals in all facilities, unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises (e.g., places where food is prepared, stored or sold, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> City of Hamilton. (2011). Fall 2011 Recreation Guide, p.98.

The City offers both adapted programs for persons with disabilities, including the following registered options:

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Location(s)</b>	<b># of Participants</b>
<b>Kidaca Support Day Camp program</b>	Support workers provided (at 1:1 camper or 1:2 camper ratio) for preschool, school age, youth, and teen camps	Up to 2 weeks in the summer	No additional cost above camp fees	All day camp locations	58 families in Summer 2011; over 25 participants per week
<b>TeenVenture Fall/Winter program</b>	Specifically designed for teens and young adults between the ages of 16 to 25 to participate in recreation activities at a ratio of 1 worker to 5 participants	Weekly for 3 hours	\$135.00 for 9 weeks	Recreation centre in West Hamilton	10 participants registered per session; Fall 2011 program has 5 waitlisted participants
<b>Friday Framers program</b>	Bowling activities for adults (16+) with disabilities	Weekly for 2 hours	\$22.80 for 9 weeks	Sherwood Bowling Lanes	Open to 20 participants each session; Fall 2011 has 17 registered participants; many bowlers come with their own worker

The following drop-in swimming opportunities are also provided by the City:

Program Name	Description	Frequency	Cost	# of Participants
<b>Special Needs Swim – Huntington Park Recreation Centre</b>	Swim times dedicated to persons with disabilities	Twice weekly from 10:30 – 11:15 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays	Same rates apply as to open swims, although caregivers are admitted free of charge	40 – 60 participants of all ages and abilities per session
<b>Special Needs Swim – Norman Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre</b>		Twice weekly from 10:15 – 11:15 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays		25-30 participants per session; primarily adults with cognitive or developmental disabilities

The City also offers hundreds of integrated programs (registered and drop-in) that are available to residents of all abilities, all across the City, including sports, camps, aquatics, dance, fitness, general interest, etc.

In addition to programs that are run by the City of Hamilton's Recreation Division, a number of community partner programs regularly operate at City community centres, including:

- The Community Activities Program (CAP) is run by Community Living and makes use of Central Memorial Recreation Centre;
- The Schizophrenia Society of Ontario – Hamilton/Niagara Region runs a volleyball program at Central Memorial Recreation Centre;
- Special Olympics groups utilize Bennetto Community Centre;
- The Hamilton Challenger Baseball Association utilizes Inch Park; and
- Hamilton Sport Challengers and Rygiel Supports for Community Living operate out of Norman Pinky Lewis Recreation Centre.

See Appendix D for an inventory of non-profit organizations and agencies that serve persons with disabilities.

By the end of 2012, Hamilton will have 10 recreation centres (out of a total of 18), 4 arenas (out of a total of 20) and 2 senior centres (out of a total of 7) that the City identifies as being highly physically accessible, with an additional 21 leisure facilities classified as providing medium accessibility.

These levels of accessibility are defined by the City as follows:

- low accessibility facilities are lacking accessible features, aside from perhaps accessible parking;
- medium accessibility facilities may have accessible parking, automatic doors, accessible washrooms, and chair lifts in pools; and
- highly accessible facilities incorporate all of the aforementioned features, as well as accessible service counters, ramp entry into pools, and universal changerooms.

The City provides chair lifts at 7 of its swimming pools and will have ramps at 7 pools by the end of 2012, which increases accessibility for persons with physical disabilities. There are also 3 outdoor pools with ramps.

In 2011, the Recreation Division introduced a new position – Supervisor, Inclusion Programming – to assist the City in ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are respected and addressed.

## 2.2 Existing Policies, Directions, and Reports

A listing of the documents reviewed for this report – and summarized below – is contained in Appendix B.

### Relevant Plans and Reports

The City of Hamilton has completed several plans and reports in recent years that are pertinent to persons with disabilities and/or service delivery in general, including:

- City of Hamilton Strategic Plan;
- Vision 2020;
- Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan (2002);
- Policy Statement of Commitment to Accessibility and Persons with Disabilities;
- Use, Renovation and Replacement Study for Hamilton Recreation and Public Use Indoor Facilities (2008);
- Barrier-Free Design Guidelines (2006);
- Social and Health Issues Report (2005);
- Web Accessibility Statement; and
- Consultation with Persons with Disabilities Project (2005).

Brief summaries of the key issues or findings from these documents follow.

### City of Hamilton Strategic Plan

The City's Strategic Plan includes a mission statement that promotes engagement of its citizens and promotion of a fair, diverse and accepting community. In addition, pertinent focus areas of the Strategic Plan include the desire to promote a 'skilled, innovative and respectful organization', 'social development', and 'healthy community'.

### Vision 2020

The first 'Vision 2020' document was adopted in 1992 as a basis for regional decision making in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. Since amalgamation, the Vision 2020 documents (updated every 5 years) have continued to provide the City of Hamilton with a mission, principles, and key theme areas surrounding its vision of a "strong, healthy, sustainable Hamilton shared by citizens, City Council, business and organizations." Of the 14 key theme areas that address issues such as safety and security, education, the local economy, etc., the key theme area of 'community well-being and capacity building' directly addresses many of the issues raised within this Recreation Needs Assessment. Specifically, this key theme area discusses the importance of supporting participation by citizens in community activities and organizations, as well as government and local funder support for capacity building within the community and dedication to "overcoming social issues which are barriers to public participation and affect community well-being."

### City of Hamilton Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan (2002)

The 2002 Master Plan identified 15 strategic directions, some of which are still pertinent today: "enhance the City's capacity for communicating with its citizens, user groups and partners in terms of all leisure opportunities available to residents"; and "increase community capacity through partnerships with other public sector, non-profit sector and private sector partners." In addition, the 2002 Master Plan recommended the identification of a staff position to address the needs of persons with disabilities and the development and implementation of cohesive management information systems.

### Policy Statement of Commitment to Accessibility and Persons with Disabilities

The City of Hamilton adopted this policy statement to ensure that *"Council, all levels of corporate management and staff, plan, implement and evaluate strategies and opportunities that sustain and maintain the rights of persons with disabilities and their families to barrier-free programs, services and opportunities."* The policy statement further outlines the City's commitment to providing integrated (wherever possible) customer service that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, as well as ensuring *"reasonable efforts are made to provide equitable opportunities to accessing goods and services."* The policy statement reiterates the City's commitment to adhering to AODA legislation and the Human Rights Code.

### Use, Renovation and Replacement Study for Hamilton Recreation and Public Use Indoor Facilities (2008)

Although this Study focused primarily on facilities, the directions presented under the guiding principle of 'meeting the needs of the diverse community and ensuring accessibility' included moving towards "eliminating barriers to participation related to age, income, language, culture, transportation and physical abilities."

### City of Hamilton Barrier-Free Design Guidelines (2006)

The City's original barrier-free design standards were completed in 1994 and address built form only; the 2006 document builds upon these standards to include visual and audible accessibility guidelines as well as customer-service related design guidelines (e.g., sight lines, counter heights, PA announcements, etc.).

### Social and Health Issues Report (2005)

This report was released by the City's Public Health and Community Services Department and discusses issues of income, disability, and health. Salient findings include the higher prevalence of many diseases and/or their effects in Hamilton than provincially (e.g., stroke, asthma, etc.).

### Consultation with Persons with Disabilities Project (2005)

Focus groups and qualitative questionnaires were used to gather input regarding the City's provision of opportunities (not just recreation) for persons with disabilities and others who feel marginalized. The greatest barrier mentioned was low economic status, and priority areas were



transportation, sidewalks, recreation, crosswalks, buildings, and community services. The City's website was found to be difficult to navigate for persons with visual impairments, as well as generally not being user-friendly. Recommendations that emerged from this project included: involving persons with hearing, visual and communication disabilities in consultation efforts; providing City staff with training regarding disabilities; and considering providing free or discounted tickets to individuals with disabilities when events are not sold out.

## Relevant Policies

The City has an Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities, for which the Vision Statement is as follows: "Hamilton is an inclusive community where ALL people can live, work, play and participate fully, free from barrier or discrimination."

As part of the implementation of the AODA Customer Service Standards, the City of Hamilton's Access and Equity Office developed the following policy statements, which the organization is currently implementing:

### Communication Policy

The City of Hamilton's Mayor, Councillors and staff will communicate with persons who have disabilities in ways that are respectful and take into account the person's disability.

### Disruption Policy

The City of Hamilton will, in advance, where possible and in a timely manner, provide notice when services are temporarily disrupted, particularly those services used by or relied upon by persons who have disabilities.

### Assistive Devices Policy

The City of Hamilton welcomes and provides equitable access to all goods, services, programs and opportunities to persons with disabilities who use personal assistive devices. They must be permitted to use their personal assistive devices unless prohibited by law. Persons with disabilities must be made aware of any assistive devices, services and service methods, supplied by the City of Hamilton that may assist with the provision of goods, services, programs and opportunities. Staff must know how to use the devices and equipment available in their specific areas. Assistive devices must be offered in a manner that respects a person's dignity and independence.



#### Service Animals Policy

The City of Hamilton welcomes and provides equitable access for persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal to all facilities. The person will be permitted to enter the facility with the service animal and will be permitted to keep the animal with her/him unless the animal is excluded, by law, from the premise.

#### Support Persons for Persons with Disabilities Policy

The City of Hamilton welcomes and is committed to ensuring equitable access to all goods, services, programs and opportunities for persons with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons. There may be a need to require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with disability or the health and safety of others on the premise. There will be no fees charged for support persons.

#### Resident and Visitor Feedback and Complaints Policy

The City of Hamilton will establish an accessible two-way process for receiving and responding to feedback and complaints about the manner in which goods, services, programs and opportunities are provided to persons who have disabilities. The process will be made known to the public, including what happens to complaints or feedback when they are received.

#### Training Policy

The City of Hamilton will ensure that the Mayor and Councillors, all staff, individuals who develop policies and procedures, volunteers and third parties acting on behalf of the City are appropriately trained, knowledgeable and skilled in providing goods, service, programs and opportunities to persons with disabilities. Training will be provided in an ongoing manner as long as there are changes to policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

## 2.3 Community Profile

Hamilton is a community with both significant urban and rural communities, formed as a single-tier municipality on January 1, 2001 through the amalgamation of six former municipalities.

The 2011 Census population for the City of Hamilton is 519,949 persons, growing to approximately 595,000 persons by 2021 and 660,200 persons by 2031<sup>3</sup>. This represents a twenty-year growth rate of 27% (approximately 140,000 new residents), which is higher than the 15% growth rate the City experienced over the past 20 years.

The City estimates that 20% of its total population has a disability<sup>4</sup>, which is higher than the provincial and national rates. This high disability rate could be attributed to the high poverty rate in Hamilton in which there is a correlation between the level of functioning and income (as of 2006, 29% of Hamilton's total population living in poverty was persons with disabilities).

**Applying this percentage (20%) to the City of Hamilton's 2011 population of 519,949, it is estimated that there are approximately 104,000 citizens with a disability at present.** By 2031, this figure could grow to 132,000 residents (or beyond, if the proportion increases due to the aging population as expected). As a result, the demand for recreation services and support systems is expected to rise considerably over the coming years.

In accordance with Provincial planning policy and the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, Hamilton's growing population will be accommodated through intensification and redevelopment of existing urban areas and, where necessary, new development through urban expansion. The City's long-term growth strategy targets a vibrant, compact, transit-supportive form of development that facilitates the efficient delivery of social services and efficient use of existing infrastructure. The benefit of this plan for persons with disabilities is that social and recreation services, as well as transit and medical needs will become more physically accessible, potentially making participation and access more likely.

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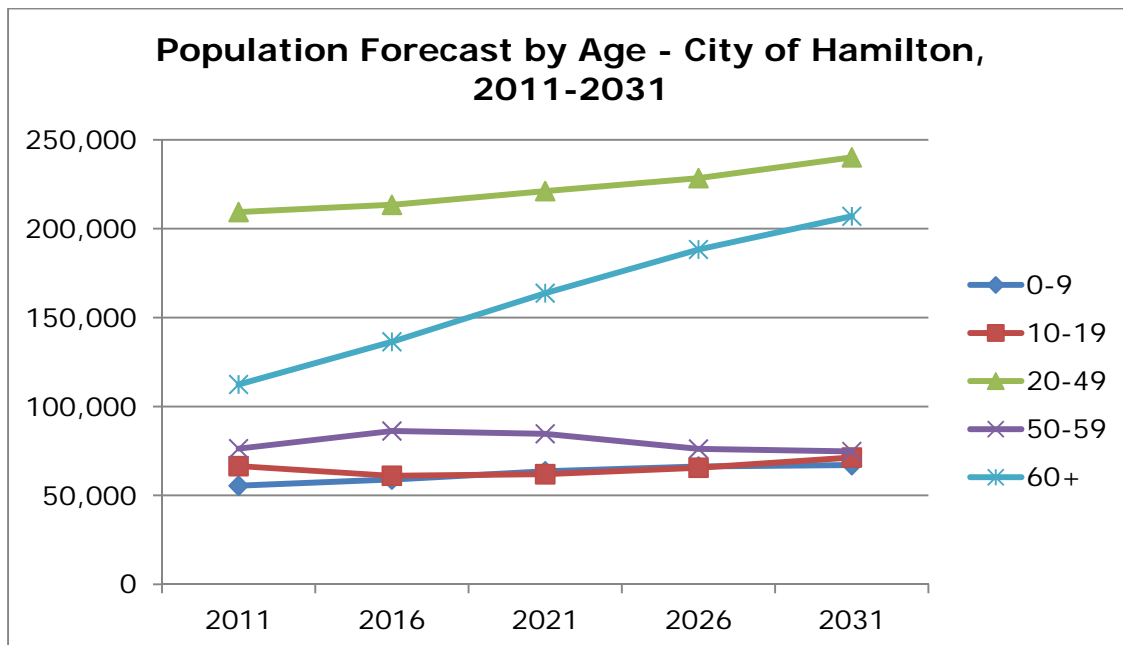
<sup>3</sup> City of Hamilton, Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> City of Hamilton. (2010). Disability Demographics: Gender, Poverty and Age. Accessed from: <http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/1DF82911-B4FC-4080-AF43-112B2C5239CF/0/2006DisabilityDemographics.pdf>.

Data from the 2006 Census identifies the following disability rates for the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area<sup>5</sup>:

- Children (ages 0-14) – 6.3%
- Teens/Adults (ages 15-44) – 16.7%
- Seniors (ages 65+) – 50.6%

The only age group forecasted to increase at a rate greater than the overall population over the next twenty years is those age 60 and over. This category of older adults and seniors is expected to grow by 84%, accounting for 67% of Hamilton’s overall growth. Natural growth is also forecasted for younger age categories (particularly 0-9, 10-19, and 20-49 years of age), however, the rate of growth is much slower. The following figure illustrates the current and projected age composition of Hamilton’s population by five year cohort.



Sources: 2011 data adapted from: Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 98-316-XWE, 2011 Census. Projections: City of Hamilton, 2007 (GRIDS).

<sup>5</sup> City of Hamilton. (2010). Persons with Disabilities: 2006 Facts and Figures. Accessed from: <http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/F36B6446-A429-414D-9536-F4C291F218AE/0/2006ProfileofPersonswithDisabilitiesFactsandFigures.pdf> on September 27, 2011

For many, age can be a significant factor in determining what kinds of recreation services are desired. However, for persons with cognitive and/or developmental disabilities, chronological age may not play as much of a role as developmental stage in the selection of recreation programs. As such, the age composition of Hamilton's population of persons with disabilities may not be as integral to program planning as with other groups of residents.

Although the age of residents with disabilities may be less influential on the provision of programs and services than type of disability, the City of Hamilton's population is aging. As a result of considerable growth in the number of older adults, there is a greater likelihood of growth in the number of persons with age-related disabilities. Therefore, the percentage of residents with disabilities will increase with the aging population.

Income is another key determinant in recreational participation. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities often have lower incomes as they can have difficulty securing employment, are unable to work, or have greater expenses due to their disability. In Hamilton, the 2006 Census data indicates that average employment income for adults 15 years and over with disabilities was \$29,969, which was 32% lower than the average income for adults without disabilities. While subsidies are available to assist lower income households in gaining access to municipal recreational programs and facilities, there are often barriers to the use of the subsidies, such as awareness of available subsidies and the application process itself. In addition, subsidies typically address only one component of the cost of the program or activity (i.e., user fees) while the total cost is often affected by other factors such as equipment, assistive devices, support workers, transportation, etc.

The City's 2005 *Social and Health Issues Report* indicates that, compared to Ontario, a substantially higher proportion of the population in the City of Hamilton live below the low income cut-off (18.8% in the City of Hamilton vs. 13.6% in Ontario) and that this is true for all age groups, but is worse for those aged 75 years or older (28.3% in Hamilton vs. 17.7% in Ontario). With Hamilton having one of the highest poverty rates in Ontario, the needs of the low-income community of persons with disability will have to be considered. Greater communication of low-cost/free programs, facilities available, and subsidies are also ways to increase participation of lower-income households.

Lastly, it should be noted that basic (e.g., age, gender, household characteristics) 2011 Census data has been released, but detailed information is not yet available. In addition to the short form mandatory

Census, the optional National Household Survey includes the two following questions relative to disabilities that should be considered upon the release of the data:

- Does this person have any difficulty hearing, seeing, communicating, walking, climbing stairs, bending, learning or doing any similar activities; and
- Does a physical condition or mental condition or health problem reduce the amount or kind of activity this person can do at home, at work or at school, or in other activities (for example, transportation or leisure)?

## 2.4 Legislative Compliance

The *Ontario Disabilities Act* (ODA) received Royal Assent in 2001 and took effect in 2002, while the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) received Royal Assent and came into effect in 2005. Both legislative acts seek to reduce barriers and comply with Human Rights legislation with respect to receiving services equitably regardless of one's background. The ODA will continue in force until repealed in whole or part and upon completion and approval of all standards.

### Key Requirements of the ODA

#### 1. Establishment of an Accessibility Advisory Committee

The City of Hamilton has an Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities which, among other things, reviews accessibility issues and provides input into City of Hamilton projects and initiatives and ensures that there is compliance with the ODA and AODA (2005).

Many committees have assisted the municipality in developing the accessibility design guidelines, respective policies and procedures as well as to raise issues to ensure full and equal access. One of the requirements of the committee is to review and comment on access issues as they relate to site plans and buildings under the municipality's purview.

#### 2. Establishment of Barrier Design Guidelines

Municipalities are required to develop and update the Barrier-Free Design Guidelines to ensure that the built form is fully accessible. Most municipalities have completed facility audits and have developed

long range capital plans to address inadequacies in the buildings in terms of accessibility.

### 3. The Development of Accessibility Plans

Municipalities are required to develop and post Accessibility Plans to ensure barriers are being addressed to ensure full and equal access to goods and services

## Key Requirements of the AODA

### 1. Establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee

As discussed above, the City of Hamilton is compliant with this requirement.

### 2. Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The accessibility standards for customer service were required to be in place in municipalities by January 1, 2010, and include the following requirements:

- a) Deliver customer service training to all staff that deal with the public and/or develop customer service training.
  - Customer service training will include at a minimum:
  - Every staff member or a representative must be trained as soon as is practical upon employment in terms of communications with persons with disabilities;
  - How to interact with persons using assistive devices or service animal;
  - How to use assistive equipment and devices;
  - Ongoing and updated training; and
  - A summary document must be provided that captures the content of the training.
- b) Ensure that all policies, procedures and practices are developed and available to the public.
- c) Receive and respond to all complaints in writing or electronically.
- d) Notify the public of disruption of facilities or services.
- e) Establish policies for the use of assistive devices.
- f) Grant service animals and support persons access to buildings.
- g) File an annual accessibility report.

The AODA Customer Service Policy Manual created by the Access and Equity Office has been disseminated throughout Recreation Services, with staff training being undertaken as required. Standards for communication are slowly being implemented by Marketing with staff in Recreation Services, with the option for print materials to be converted upon request to large print. Since implementing this, however, more gaps have been uncovered. Staff were not consistently making the link of how these standards impact their daily work and still want more information. Furthermore, not all new staff are receiving the required training, also leading to gaps in information and service delivery. In response, Recreation Services created an internal Inclusion Supervisor position to identify gaps between policy and delivery, and to develop Recreation-specific policies on the service delivery guidelines. From these specific policies, procedures will then be implemented through training and evaluation. This remains a work in progress, and this Recreation Needs Assessment will help provide the foundation for future analysis.

### 3. Other Standards

In addition to the standards for customer services, the AODA will include additional categories of standard, all but one of these standards have been approved by the Province of Ontario:

- built environment (currently awaiting approval); and
- Integrated Accessibility Standards (comprised of employment, information and communication, and transportation).

The Integrated Accessibility Standards were introduced for mandatory compliance on July 1, 2011. Once the Built Environment Standards is approved, these standards will be expected to be fully implemented with Ontario being fully accessible by 2025.



## SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

In order to gather input from a variety of stakeholders, a number of consultation efforts have been undertaken, including:

- Frontline staff workshop;
- Key informant interviews;
- Participant focus groups;
- Stakeholder group questionnaire;
- Online feedback form;
- Stakeholder and public meeting;
- Meeting with the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities; and
- Meetings with the Reference Group and staff.

Each of these forms of consultation has sought to gather input from specific stakeholder groups to ensure representation from a broad range of residents with disabilities and the organizations that serve them.

### 3.1 Frontline Staff Workshop

A staff workshop was held on May 18, 2011 to solicit input from front-line staff in the City of Hamilton's Recreation Division. In developing a strategy to improve the delivery of recreation services for persons with disabilities, it is important to hear from staff that will be directly affected as part of the study consultation process. A total of 13 frontline staff members attended the session; all were highly engaged in providing their observations, input, advice and sharing of their expertise.

The following points capture the more salient points arising from the workshop with City staff:

- The City offers a baseline of program offerings to persons with disabilities (see section 2.1 of this report for a summary), which will serve as a good starting point.
- The program model to date is to offer integrated programs where possible and rent out facilities for adapted programming.
- Many programs and services are left to the initiative of the various staff members within a facility versus following a planned approach. A City-wide strategy with centralized leadership and expertise is a welcomed project.



- Training and equipment needs require review and need to be part of future strategies (this recognizes the fact that there is equipment available corporately and that guidelines are currently being developed).
- Staff would like exposure to promising practises in other jurisdictions.
- Many approaches to serving persons with disabilities are in place corporately, but have not reached the staff level in recreation services.
- Need a communications plan to support the delivery of services to persons with disabilities and ongoing feedback mechanisms.
- Use staff input and keep us updated – communications during the strategy development process (to all levels of staff).
- Ongoing monitoring of the plan is needed so that there is accountability and the plan is implemented.
- Development of an annual and ongoing training program will be critical (all staff including operational staff).
- Determine what the community of persons with disabilities need before introducing new programs and services.
- Place an equal emphasis on all types of disabilities.
- Ensure that the plan prioritizes the steps that need to be taken and consider the resources that are needed.

### **3.2 Participant Focus Groups**

On September 26 and 28, 2011, a total of three focus groups were held for persons with disabilities. The focus groups, held at Bennetto Community Centre and Sackville Hill Seniors' Centre, were conducted to solicit input from individuals that are the focus of the Needs Assessment. Participants were asked to discuss their personal experiences in accessing recreation in the City of Hamilton, as well as any challenges they face and gaps in the opportunities available. Group discussions were centred on addressing these challenges and gaps.

During interviews with stakeholder groups undertaken for this Recreation Needs Assessment, several key informants expressed an interest in assisting with securing participants for the focus groups; as such, these organizations were tasked with soliciting participation from clients/members/participants for one focus group each. Each focus group was designed to gain insight from a specific family of disabilities.

Type of Disability Represented	Participants	Key Informant Stakeholder Group
Mental Health Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 participants, including 2 peer support volunteers and 4 clients of MHRC; all participants have mental health challenges</li> </ul>	Mental Health Rights Coalition
Physical Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 participants, including 1 Children’s Rehabilitation Program staff member, 5 parents of children with physical disabilities, 5 persons with physical disabilities, and 1 representative from Hamilton Sports Challengers</li> </ul>	Hamilton Health Sciences Children’s Rehabilitation Program
Sensory Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 participants, including 1 staff member from CNIB – Hamilton, 4 persons with visual impairments, and 2 sighted partners</li> </ul>	Canadian National Institute for the Blind – Hamilton
Cognitive Disabilities	This focus group was not held due to scheduling conflicts; follow-up interviews with local organizations were conducted to ensure that input was received regarding the needs of persons with cognitive and developmental disabilities.	

The following is a high level summary of common issues of importance emerging from all three focus groups:

- Respect and equal treatment of persons with disabilities is a fundamental requirement.
- There is a need to better connect with community groups within the City.
- Financial costs of participation can be a significant barrier for many.
- The City should ensure that recreation opportunities and facilities are welcoming to persons with disabilities.

- There is a need to raise awareness about opportunities provided by the City and other stakeholder groups.
- Accessible transportation is a barrier for many participants; DARTS is a valued service, but its restrictions are frustrating to many.

Specific issues and opportunities raised through the focus groups have been instrumental in developing the goals and actions.

### 3.3 Key Informant Interviews

In July and August 2011, interviews were conducted with 15 organizations representing a variety of areas, including: mental, physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities; physical therapy providers and respite providers; sport organizations; and networking groups. Each of these organizations provided valuable feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of local programming and services for persons with disabilities. Also discussed were areas in need of improvement, as well as opportunities to explore these further. The list of organizations interviewed is contained in Appendix C.

Although a wide range of groups representing various interests were interviewed, there was some consistency amongst the responses. The following is a high level summary of common themes emerging from this consultation method:

- Persons with disabilities are often isolated and on fixed incomes;
- New definitions have emerged for disabilities, and the population is aging;
- Persons with mental health challenges and other invisible disabilities are in need of more opportunities and support;
- New programs could benefit from City assistance when starting up;
- Greater promotion of opportunities is required;
- Funding and difficulty attracting and retaining volunteers make offering programs challenging;
- Connecting agencies that serve persons with disabilities is crucial;
- City staff need training on how to best serve and treat persons with disabilities;
- Persons with disabilities have few opportunities for recreation once they are past high school age;

- Transportation can be a barrier to participation; program times need to consider available transportation options; and
- There is support for inclusive programs for persons with disabilities, although exclusive/specialized programming was also suggested in some cases.

Specific issues and opportunities raised through the interviews have been incorporated into the analysis sections of this report, and have been instrumental in developing the goals and actions.

### **3.4 Stakeholder Group Questionnaire**

In an effort to gather data from as many organizations that provide services to persons with disabilities as possible, a questionnaire for stakeholder groups was developed and emailed to approximately 100 organizations. The listing of community organizations that were distributed the questionnaire was compiled by the Reference Group, which was based on information from Contact Hamilton (now Developmental Services Organization) and other sources, including internet searches. The survey, which was available online as well as in hard copy, was open for the duration of September 2011. A total of 30 surveys were completed by the deadline.

The questionnaire was designed in part to assist the City in compiling a comprehensive database of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The questionnaire also provides insight into the mandates and primary roles of these organizations, the primary types of disability served, types and affordability of programming/services/activities offered, type of support needed from the City, partnerships, service gaps (geographical and by disability), communication, trends, and priorities regarding recreation for persons with disabilities.

A summary of findings from the stakeholder group questionnaire is provided below, with the more detailed responses being contained in Appendix C.

The main findings of the stakeholder survey are as follows:

- Of the 30 organizations that completed the survey, 70% identify as not-for-profit organizations, 22% identify as government agencies, and 3% identify as schools or educational institutions.
- 77% of respondents consider their organizations to be service providers, 27% identifying as a service coordinator, and 20%

identifying as an advocate (note: organizations could select more than one option).

- Half (47%) of the organizations provide health, medical or therapeutic services (treatment) as their primary area of service, followed by 27% providing recreation, 20% providing social services (e.g., counselling, job search assistance, transportation, etc.), and 7% providing educational services.
- 59% of the organizations provide recreation services or programs specifically to persons with disabilities (both exclusive to persons with disabilities and inclusive programming), including camps, advocacy activities, sports, music programs, outings, skill development, social activities, etc.
- The percentage of each organization's services that is associated with persons with disabilities and their caregivers ranged from less than 10% through 100%, with 19 of the 30 organizations reporting that all of their services are geared towards this community.
- Many of the organizations reported serving more than one type of disability.
- The number of members, participants, clients, or residents that are directly served by the organizations ranged from 8 to 30,968 (the latter being the Catholic Youth Organization, which represents a wide clientele).
- All ages are represented by organizations that responded to the stakeholder survey.
- 56% of organizations plan to expand their services over the next 5 years.
- 43% of organizations stated that they require additional support from the City of Hamilton for the provision or coordination of recreational programs, activities or services to persons with disabilities, including funding, information, suggestions for activities, greater number of recreation programs for persons with disabilities, etc.
- 71% of organizations currently have partnerships with the City or other agencies, including rate reductions/subsidies, programming and event partnerships, etc.
- 57% of organizations offer financial assistance for those who may not be able to afford a program or service. The City of Hamilton offers a Financial Assistance Policy, of which only 43% of organizations are aware.

- Organizations employ a variety of methods to minimize the cost of programs for their clients with disabilities, including fundraising, collecting donations from private companies, charging limited fees, and offering subsidies.
- Through open-ended responses, the following priorities were mentioned (listed in order of most mentions to least mentions):
  - Accessible facilities;
  - Awareness;
  - Reduced cost / increased funding;
  - Transportation;
  - Staff training and respect for persons with disabilities;
  - Options in programming;
  - Operational assistance for boards and organizations (incl. volunteers);
  - Accessibility adaptations;
  - Welcoming in all areas;
  - Communication;
  - Good locations;
  - Volunteers;
  - One-to-one support for individuals;
  - New grassroots programs;
  - Reduced barriers to applications;
  - Age-appropriate activities;
  - More spots for camps;
  - Accessible signage;
  - Availability of spaces at programs; and
  - Assistance for signing up for programs.

### 3.5 Online Feedback Form

An online feedback form was created for posting on the City's website. The form included 6 questions:

- What recreation and sport activities are currently provided to persons with disabilities within Hamilton that you know of?
- How well are the City and community organizations meeting the recreational needs of persons with disabilities?
- In your opinion, how well communicated are recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities?
- How do you think that recreation opportunities could be better communicated?

- What are the primary barriers for persons with disabilities in participating in recreational activities?
- Are there specific recreational activities, programs, or services for persons with disabilities that you feel are missing in your area?

60 responses to the online feedback form were received, predominantly from City residents caring for a family member or friend with a disability; some responses were also received from community organizations offering services to persons with disabilities. The results are summarized below and have been considered in the needs assessment and analysis process. Please see Appendix F for a full summary of the input received.

Respondents identified 30 unique recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities, including a variety of sports (e.g., soccer, Challenger baseball, bowling, sledge hockey, swimming, etc.), camps (e.g., Kidaca, Teen Venture, City day camps, McMaster Sports Fitness School), community organizations (e.g., YMCA/YWCA, Saltfleet Soccer, Stoney Creek Disabled Sport Association, Salvation Army, TEAD, Club GAIN etc.), and rehabilitation programs (e.g., MacWheelers).

When asked how well the City and community organizations are meeting the recreational needs of persons with disabilities, one of the primary responses was that more advertisement and promotion is required, in addition to the suggestion of partnerships with community organizations and the private sector. Increased recreational opportunities for younger populations and adults (20s-50s), and more family changerooms and adaptive equipment were also mentioned as potential areas of improvement. Physical and financial barriers reduce the ability of some to participate, as do the frequency and locations of program opportunities. Respondents felt that summer camp support staff are great, and would like to see them run social groups year round, as well as suggesting the addition of a snoezelen room to the City's inventory of recreational spaces.

With respect to communication, 32 respondents explicitly stated that opportunities are not communicated well, 14 suggested that communication was fair, and 1 commented that the City was communicating very well regarding recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities. Some found it difficult to filter information down to what is relevant to persons with disabilities, suggesting that the City's website is in need of improvement and that using simple language and pictures could help persons with disabilities find out about opportunities. The need for staff at recreation centres to be able to help persons with disabilities was mentioned, as was an appreciation for the City's Access and Equity Office as a point of contact. Many



respondents reported that they hear about programs through parents, educational assistants, and community associations, rather than directly from the City.

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions for ways in which the City could better communication about opportunities for persons with disabilities; these included print and other forms of media (e.g., flyers, posters, newspapers, radio, television, etc.), digital/electronic media (e.g., email, City website, etc.), word-of-mouth (e.g., recreation therapists at hospitals, informed staff at recreation centres), community partners (e.g., school boards, government subsidy agencies, community groups, etc.), and improvements to the leisure guide (e.g., separate program guide for persons with disabilities, arranging the guide by interest, not by centre, etc.).

Barriers mentioned by respondents were categorized as physical and systemic/other barriers. Physical barriers included the need for assistance in transferring from a wheelchair, automated doors, snow cleared, and the limitations of utilizing DARTS and other forms of transportation. In addition, the times at which programs are offered was mentioned as a barrier. Systemic barriers included a lack of awareness of persons with disabilities and the resulting stigma, lack of funds, confidence to participate and age/ability appropriate options. Communication methods were mentioned as a barrier as well as the need for support workers and supportive staff at recreation centres.

Respondents were asked to identify specific recreational activities, programs and services for persons with disabilities that are missing and in what areas of the City (where applicable). The following activities, facilities and programs were mentioned:

- More sensory stimulating programs (e.g., music, snoezelen, drum therapy);
- Fitness rooms;
- Dance programs;
- Summer camps for older youth (16+);
- More programs like Teen Venture;
- Programs for adults 20-50;
- More sports programs;
- Specific programs for persons with disabilities;
- Aquatics;
- More bowling spots;
- Affordable fitness programs with peer support;
- Restore the ski hill in Hamilton-Wentworth;



- Adult art programs, adult language programs, and affordable and accessible exercise programs in South Central Hamilton;
- Programs in Ancaster;
- Bowling, swimming, and basketball in Stoney Creek;
- Seniors physical activities in Stoney Creek;
- More programs in Stoney Creek;
- Swimming (including one-to-one instruction) in Dundas;
- Segregated kids sports programs on the Hamilton Mountain;
- Gymnastics, yoga, soccer, and basketball on the East Mountain;
- Team sports in East Hamilton;
- More programs on the Hamilton Mountain;
- More programs on the West Hamilton Mountain (e.g., dance, swimming, karate, crafts, exercise);
- Programs at Dominic Agostino Recreation Centre;
- More sports at community centres in Ancaster in the early evening and on the weekends; and
- Theatre and drama programs in Ancaster, Dundas or West Hamilton.

### 3.6 Public Information Centre

A public information centre was held on the evening of November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Hamilton Public Library Central Branch, and attended by 32 members of the public, including representatives of 19 organizations. The meeting included a presentation of the draft report, including a description of the study and consultation efforts undertaken, as well as an overview of the strategic framework and associated recommendations. A number of assistive measures were taken to ensure the meeting was welcoming to all, including real time closed captioning, sign language interpretation, offering fm stereo units and speakers and magnifiers to those that required them, ensuring the space was fully physically accessible, and the provision of both comment sheets and information sheets in large print. The information sheet was also available in Braille. The comments from the meeting have been incorporated into the report where applicable.

## SECTION 4: TRENDS & PROMISING PRACTICES

The City of Hamilton has a legal obligation and a strong organizational commitment to include all residents in the delivery of services. Special efforts must be made to seek opinions, understand needs and provide and enable programs and services in an inclusive fashion. While the City's Recreation Division provides some services in an inclusive manner to persons with disabilities, much can be done to provide staff and stakeholder groups with the tools to excel in this area.

This section identifies some trends and factors affecting the participation of persons with disabilities in recreational activities. Further, successful practices that other Canadian communities have adopted to engage persons with disabilities in recreation services and programs are reviewed.

### 4.1 Factors Affecting Recreational Participation by Persons with Disabilities

#### Accessibility

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) mandates that each municipality in Ontario must update their Accessibility Plan every year. The purpose of the Act is to "improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province"<sup>6</sup> (c.32, s.1). Barriers are defined to include anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, attitudinal, technological, or policy/practice barriers. Possible ways to address physical barriers may include ramps to building entrances, proper lighting, removal of barriers from the pedestrian path (e.g., garbage bins) and hand rails. Informational barriers may be addressed by providing clearly marked identification signs with the appropriately sized font, and offering multiple methods through which an individual can access information (e.g., online, Braille, TTY, etc.). Attitudinal barriers are best broken down through building awareness about the needs of persons with disabilities, a process that will be informed and enhanced by this Needs Assessment.

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<sup>6</sup> Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

## Local Context

The City of Hamilton has an established Access and Equity office, for which the mandate includes “review, development and implementation of policies, practices, programs, services and opportunities, ensuring that equity and access are key considerations in the way we deliver service and to remove and prevent further barriers to the equitable participation of our diverse communities.”<sup>7</sup> This office supports a number of Advisory Committees (including an Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities), with the goal of ensuring that Committees of Council include representation by residents with disabilities.

## **Stigma of Disability**

Unfortunately, many people think of a person with a disability as being ‘unable’ rather than ‘differently abled’. Many times, disabilities simply alter the way in which an individual completes a task, participates in a recreation activity or practices a life skill, rather than making something impossible. This stigma of being unable to participate is one that stems from a societal attitudinal barrier that is in need of elimination. In fact, the United Nations estimates that 10% of the world’s population live with a disability, which is equivalent to approximately 650 million people and makes this group the world’s largest minority group.<sup>8</sup> The BC Recreation and Parks Association created a resource supplement that outlined the prime issues and benefits that can help eradicate barriers from sport and recreation for children with disabilities. For example, using words with dignity (e.g., ‘person with a disability’, rather than ‘physically challenged’) and adapting equipment and materials (e.g., using large crayons for a child with decreased physical dexterity or using a larger ball instead of a baseball for a child with a visual impairment) are simple attitudinal and action shifts that can be made to make a person with a disability feel included and not ostracized. The benefits of recreation (e.g., active living is a key determinant of health status, reducing health care costs, essential to quality of life, etc.)<sup>9</sup> can be especially important for persons with disabilities who may also be facing compounding issues of poverty, isolation and secondary disabilities.

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<sup>7</sup> City of Hamilton. (2011). Access and Equity Office. Accessed from: <http://www.hamilton.ca/CityDepartments/CorporateServices/AccessEquity> on March 23, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations. (2006). Enable – Facts About Persons with Disabilities.

<sup>9</sup> Alberta Recreation & Parks Association. (2010). The Benefit Messages. Accessed from: <http://benefitshub.ca/the-benefit-messages/> on April 14, 2011.

## Local Context

The City of Hamilton has created living documents that embrace diversity, accessibility, and the right to participate for all its citizens. For example, *Vision 2020 Hamilton* identifies a number of key themes, one of which is 'community well-being and capacity building'. Within this theme, one of the goals calls for "dedication to overcoming social issues which are barriers to public participation and affect community well-being." The City of Hamilton commissioned the *Consultation with Persons with Disabilities Project* in 2005 which involved focus groups and qualitative questionnaires that sought to gather input about the City's provision of opportunities to persons with disabilities and others who feel marginalized by society. The recommendations that emerged from this report included the need for City staff to receive training on disabilities, expanding marketing and awareness of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and increasing representation of persons with hearing, visual and communication disabilities in consultation efforts in the future.<sup>10</sup> Undertaking projects such as the 2005 consultation project and the current Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities illustrates the City of Hamilton's dedication to ensuring its residents with disabilities are afforded the benefits of equal access.

## **Affordability**

Level of income can be a significant barrier to participation in leisure pursuits, particularly organized, structured activities. Municipalities are facing increasing pressure to offer affordable recreation programs and subsidies to promote participation among all user groups. In general, older adults have more disposable income to spend on leisure pursuits, while young families, youth, and economically disadvantaged individuals may find it more difficult to afford to pursue a healthy lifestyle through participation in recreation. As such, "low to no cost" programming options may be offered alongside programs that charge the regular price. Often, persons with disabilities find it difficult to acquire and maintain employment, which limits their income to government programs, such as the Canada Pension Plan – Disability benefits (CPP-D) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). CPP-D benefits are provided to individuals that have a severe disability that prevents them from working, a prolonged disability, or a disability likely to result in death, and have made sufficient contributions to

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<sup>10</sup> The Herrington Group, Ltd. (2005). Consultation with Persons with Disabilities Project – Final Report.

the Canada Pension Plan and are under the age of 65<sup>11</sup>. ODSP provides income and employment supports to people with disabilities who are in financial need.<sup>12</sup>

### Local Context

Up to 20% of Hamiltonians currently live with one or more disabilities and this ratio is expected to increase as the population ages. The financial situations of many residents will be compounded by their disability, suggesting that a large number of individuals would benefit from “low to no cost” programming opportunities. The City of Hamilton currently offers a variety of payment options for its recreation programming, but according to the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Hamilton has the highest poverty rate (one in five Hamiltonians live in low-income households) in Ontario. In 2002, the *Social Vision for the New City* report was released, which identified that “the impact of providing recreational services alone resulted in a 10 percent greater exit from social assistance compared to the parents of children who did not receive this service”. This suggests that the City’s low-income residents (including those with disabilities) would benefit greatly from access to affordable recreational opportunities. Since a number of residents with disabilities fall into this category, the importance of recreation as a social need has been recognized through the undertaking of this Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities and its implementation represents an ongoing commitment to community well-being.

### **Free Time**

Free time is increasingly at a premium for many Canadians, and may serve as a barrier to participation. However, for many persons with disabilities, the opposite is often true. Inability to work outside the home, difficulty travelling to facilities that offer recreation opportunities, mobility issues (particularly in poor weather conditions), etc. can all contribute to persons with disabilities being somewhat housebound. As such, many persons with disabilities may find themselves with a great deal of ‘free time’ and few

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<sup>11</sup> Office of the Worker Advisor. (2006). OWA Fact Sheet 38: Applying for CPP Disability Benefits. Accessed from: [http://www.owa.gov.on.ca/fact\\_sheets/applying\\_CPPD\\_benefits.htm](http://www.owa.gov.on.ca/fact_sheets/applying_CPPD_benefits.htm) on April 4, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Community and Social Services – Government of Ontario. (unknown). Evolution of Government Policy and Legislation: 2000 and Beyond.

options to fill it. Isolation can be a key factor leading to depression, as an individual may not have an opportunity to build a social network. Persons with disabilities may not be physically able to attend a recreation opportunity on a scheduled day due to their physical, mental and/or emotional state, which may affect decisions to participate in a program with multiple classes, suggesting that drop-in opportunities may be well-suited to this population. In programs that utilize drop-in models, the participant is able to make a decision to attend based on their state that day, thus reducing anxiety and potentially increasing participation.

### Local Context

There are a number of organizations within the City of Hamilton that provide drop-in and/or day programs for adults with disabilities, including (but not limited to) the YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, Blossom Club, Rygiel Supports for Community Living, VON Hamilton, and various day programs. Aside from adapted swims, the City of Hamilton does not currently offer any drop-in opportunities specifically oriented to persons with disabilities. The City is, however, striving to ensure its staff is able to accommodate persons with disabilities in its existing recreation programs.

### **Aging Population**

Between 2011 and 2031, the number of Ontario seniors (age 65+) is expected to double and similar trends are anticipated for Hamilton.<sup>13</sup> Many members of the 'Baby Boomer' demographic (generally between the ages of 45 and 64) are quickly reaching retirement age, contributing to a significant 'greying' of the population and placing greater demand for programs and activities aimed at older adults. Along with the limited mobility and health issues that are common in an otherwise healthy older adult and senior population, individuals that have been living with disabilities prior to entering this age cohort may have compounding concerns due to a mental, physical or learning disability that can limit their ability to participate in recreation opportunities. Although new seniors may generally be shifting away from traditional seniors' activities and towards more active recreation, instead of seeking quality wellness and active living opportunities, there will be a need to continue offering passive options for those with greater limitations.

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<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Finance. 2011. Ontario Population Projections Update, 2010–2036.



## Local Context

With the local older adult population increasing in number, there will be greater demand for services for this age group, including appropriate recreation opportunities. The network of service providers within the City of Hamilton will be crucial to the provision of these opportunities for seniors with disabilities. There are currently several municipal and non-profit seniors' centres and clubs in Hamilton that operate out of dedicated buildings or multi-use recreation centres. Examples of programs offered by senior clubs include billiards, euchre, bridge, bingo, cribbage, knitting, ballroom dancing, exercise, shuffleboard and tai chi. However, there are currently no municipally provided programs specifically for seniors with disabilities.

## **Increased Inactivity and Obesity**

The *Canadian Fitness Survey* (CFS) was first undertaken by the Federal Government in 1981, providing data that was updated in early 2010 through the *Canadian Health Measures Survey* (CHMS). Comparisons made between the two studies showed that overall results were "more favourable in the earlier survey, implying that the fitness of the nation has declined over the past two decades."<sup>14</sup> The fitness levels of young Canadian adults have decreased between 1981 and 2009; only 5% of men and 6% of women between the ages of 20 and 39 were considered at high risk for health problems in 1981, but those percentages had increased to 21% of men and 31% of women by 2009.<sup>15</sup>

In 2006, it was reported that the proportion of obese children had increased threefold in the preceding 25 years, and less than half of all Canadian children were active enough to achieve optimal growth and development<sup>16</sup>. From a municipal perspective, the alarming rates of childhood and youth obesity provide a strong basis for ongoing support of programs which foster improved levels of activity for residents of all abilities.

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<sup>14</sup> Shields, M., Tremblay, M.S., Laviolette, M., Craig, C.L., Janssen, I., and Gorber, S.C. (2010). Fitness of Canadian adults: Results from the 2007-2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 82-003-XPE, Health Reports, 21(1), 1-15.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006). It's Your Health. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/obes-eng.php>. Accessed: March 29, 2011.

The number of overweight and obese Canadians has tripled (quadrupled in some age groups) between 1981 and 2009<sup>17</sup>. Health risks of obesity include Type 2 diabetes, stroke, mental health challenges (e.g., depression, low self-esteem), high blood pressure and stroke.<sup>18</sup> Regular physical activity and sport participation can serve as preventive measures for these diseases, and help reduce health care costs, as physical inactivity costs Canadians \$5.3 billion annually in direct and indirect costs<sup>19</sup>.

For persons with limited mobility, physical activity can be difficult to pursue, particularly without access to a support person that can assist the individual with chair transfers, changing, transportation, etc. In addition, an individual with a severe mental challenge may not be cognizant of the benefits of physical activity, thus requiring their support network to act on their behalf to ensure that recreation and physical activity are part of the individual's routine. There is a body of research that examines the relationship between obesity and disability, often from a causal perspective (i.e., obesity leading to disability due to limited mobility, onset of other medical conditions such as diabetes, etc.). The increasing number of obese Canadians (threefold the level seen in 1981) is a concern with respect to the potential for a proliferation of individuals with obesity-related disabilities.

### Local Context

The *Canadian Community Health Survey* (2005) found that 53.2% of adults 18 years and over in the City of Hamilton self-reported as being overweight or obese, higher than the provincial average of 48.5%<sup>20</sup> (although both figures are frighteningly high). Data is not available to differentiate between residents with disabilities and those without, but the propensity to be more sedentary if one has a physical or severe mental challenge suggests that obesity could be a factor facing many of Hamilton's persons with disabilities. Local recreation service providers offer some physical activity programs specific to people with disabilities (e.g., Hamilton and District Sledge Hockey Association, Hamilton

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<sup>17</sup> Statistics Canada. (2010). Canadian Health Measures Survey.

<sup>18</sup> Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006). It's Your Health. Available from: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/obes-eng.php>. Accessed: March 29, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> The True Sport Report. (2008).

<sup>20</sup> City of Hamilton. (2007). Community health status report: Overweight and obesity and Hamilton. Accessed from: [http://www.hamilton.ca/HealthandSocialServices/Research/CHSR\\_OverweightObesity.htm](http://www.hamilton.ca/HealthandSocialServices/Research/CHSR_OverweightObesity.htm) on April 18, 2011.



Challenger Baseball Association, Royal Hamilton Yacht Club, Ontario Lung Association Breathworks Program, Stoney Creek Disabled Sports Association, etc.); in addition, the City offers a small number of programs specifically geared towards persons with disabilities, as well as integrating persons with disabilities in its mainstream programming.

## Neighbourhood-Based Facility Planning

The goal of neighbourhood planning is “to build social capital, which is the ability of the neighbourhood to organize itself to identify problems and solve them in partnership with elected officials, businesses, and public agencies.”<sup>21</sup> Neighbourhood planning can provide an impetus for community building by fostering an identity and making it easier for residents to come together to undertake community/neighbourhood development activities. In the case of persons with disabilities, this form of planning may need to go beyond physical locations and consider the ideological communities of persons with varying types of disabilities (e.g., mental, physical, emotional, learning, etc.) to ensure their needs are being met. Many persons with disabilities are disengaged from their communities due to a lack of mobility, support or awareness of existing opportunities.

### Local Context

The successful management of the projected growth and intensification of the City of Hamilton’s population may require any number of planning strategies, including a direct focus on the needs of individual neighbourhoods as they relate to the municipality as a whole. For example, the Beasley Neighbourhood Association created a neighbourhood charter in the summer of 2011 that intended to “improve the quality of life for people who live, work and play in the Beasley neighbourhood.”<sup>22</sup>

Given the limited mobility of many persons with disabilities, the lack of local facilities and/or nearby public transportation routes can serve as major barriers to participation. The majority of the City of Hamilton’s

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<sup>21</sup> Colombo, L. & Balizer, K. (2005). Introduction to Neighborhood Planning. Available from: [http://www.neighborhoodplanning.org/topic1\\_intro.htm](http://www.neighborhoodplanning.org/topic1_intro.htm). Accessed: April 28, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Beasley Neighbourhood Association. (2011). The Official Beasley Neighbourhood Charter. Available from: [http://www.ourbeasley.com/new/filemgmt\\_data/files/beasley\\_charter\\_final.pdf](http://www.ourbeasley.com/new/filemgmt_data/files/beasley_charter_final.pdf). Accessed November 3, 2011.

recreation facilities are accessible by public transit, as are a number of the facilities at which non-municipal services are provided to persons with disabilities. The City's Accessible Transportation Services division of the Hamilton Street Railway public transit system offers accessible low floor buses on its routes, as well as shared ride service through DARTS (Disabled and Aged Regional Transportation System). Difficulties exist for residents with disabilities that live in more rural areas of the City that are not serviced by the HSR (e.g., Greensville, Beverly, Glanbrook, and parts of Waterdown). The City is currently engaged with the Salvation Army Lawson Ministries Hamilton in a pilot program (Community Access to Transportation – CAT) to provide specialized public transportation training to adults with developmental disabilities.

## Partnerships

Many communities are pursuing partnership approaches that dramatically differ from traditional service delivery mechanisms. Partnerships, alliances, and collaborative relationships of varying types are required in today's economy to effectively and efficiently provide for the leisure needs of citizens. There is growing interest in public-private partnerships (P3s) including arrangements wherein municipalities share formal operating or cost sharing relationships with community organizations and/or school boards. The challenge is to create relationships that provide mutual benefit to those involved in the partnerships while protecting the interests of those affected by them. The inclusion of organizations that cater to specific disabilities can help to ensure appropriate representation and benefits to the community.

### Local Context

There are a number of organizations within the City of Hamilton that specifically offer services for persons with disabilities with whom the City may be able to forge relationships. The provision of recreation services through partnership is a common practice (e.g., sports leagues using City arenas and fields, camps using City parks, etc.), one that should be continued and built upon.

## Provincial Legislation

As discussed earlier, the provision of services for persons with disabilities is governed by the AODA, which was enacted in 2005. The AODA requires the public, not-for-profit and business sectors, as well as people with disabilities and/or their representatives, to develop, implement and enforce mandatory

accessibility standards. This legislation has been put in place to ensure persons with disabilities are afforded the same access to goods and services in Ontario as those without.

The accessibility standards are divided into five categories: customer service; built environment; employment; information and communication; and transportation. The goal of the AODA is for Ontario to be full accessibility for persons with disabilities by 2025. To achieve this important goal, the standards will be implemented in phases. The AODA customer service standard became mandatory for public sector organizations on January 1, 2010 and will become mandatory for private and non-profit sector organizations on January 1, 2012. The Built Environment Standard is currently awaiting approval, and the Integrated Standards (including employment, information, and communication) were introduced on July 1, 2011 for mandatory compliance. The requirements for meeting this standard are discussed in further detail earlier in this report.

#### Local Context

As a public sector organization, the City of Hamilton was required to comply with the Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2010. Other non-municipal organizations that provide services to persons with disabilities were required to comply by January 1, 2012.

## **4.2 Promising Practices**

In developing a plan to increase recreational opportunities for residents with disabilities in Hamilton, it is important to review what other institutions and service providers are doing to reduce barriers and increase access to leisure pursuits. These can be considered promising practices and can be defined as any course of action that has proven to be effective over time to increase the quality and quantity of recreation services for persons with disabilities. This information will serve to prompt some thinking about what is already in existence in Hamilton and what could be achieved as part of the planning exercise.

The compilation of promising practices (Appendix E) has been gathered through site visits, a Hamilton staff workshop, expert interviews, and journal and article reviews, and provides Hamilton with some food for thought as the Consulting Team completes an analysis of strengths and gaps in the current delivery system (see Section 5).

The City of Hamilton has much to be proud of in how it has improved accessibility to its services and facilities for persons with disabilities in recent years. In addition to some of the strengths identified in the following sections, the City has accomplished a number of key initiatives, including:

- The Department worked in concert with the Challenger Baseball Association to develop a barrier-free baseball diamond, play area and shelter (with an increase in participants as a result).
- Recreation Services has received capital funding and has partnered with Corporate Facilities Division to update the audit of recreation facilities and parks to identify barriers and develop a multi-year capital plan to address the gaps.
- Recreation Services has phased the renovation work to ensure that concession counters are accessible in arenas.
- The Department has increased support to youth with disabilities in ensuring their full participation in summer camps. This program has been well received and is at capacity.
- The Department has increased its support to ensure better access for sledge hockey players at Chedoke Arena (green rink) through the modification of benches, rink access, width of doors and change rooms.
- Training programs are being refined to strengthen staff's ability to provide services effectively to persons with disabilities through awareness and customer service training.
- The Department continues to coordinate facility tours with the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities of Hamilton to continue to improve accessibility for participants with disabilities.

No one municipality undertakes every identified promising practice – and it is likely not feasible for the City of Hamilton to adopt every one – but this information provides a sampling of key ideas and practices that the City may consider when prioritizing strategies to implement.

Promising practices are contained in Appendix E. They have been categorized into meaningful key result areas which are reflective of the strengths and gap areas as previously identified: organizational effectiveness; staff development, marketing and communications; programs and services; stakeholders and partnerships; and volunteers.

## SECTION 5: POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Summary of Delivery System Strengths & Gaps

In developing this Needs Assessment, significant efforts were made to consult with interested parties, service deliverers, and key leaders in the field. A high level summary of consultations identifies key strengths, gaps, and opportunities in the delivery of recreation services to persons with disabilities within Hamilton. These are summarized below, and will guide the Project Team and Reference Group on key issues and help determine which actions/recommendations are most relevant to the Hamilton context.

#### Strengths

- There is a willingness of many strategic partners to work better together to decrease barriers and increase access to recreation opportunities for Hamiltonians with disabilities.
- There is evidence that recreation benefits social, physical, spiritual, physiological and emotional health of Canadians and equally those with disabilities.
- There are many groups that offer opportunities for persons with disabilities – Special Olympics, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Stoney Creek Disabled Sports Association, Challenger Baseball, Club Gain, Community Living, Sledge Hockey, among many others.
- The newly formed Accessible Sports Council serves to coordinate groups providing opportunities, discuss and act on resourcing gaps.
- The City has a policy whereby caregivers / support workers gain free access to recreational opportunities and an access policy for persons with low incomes.
- There is evidence that neighbourhood hubs / support groups are effective in identifying and acting on needs at the local level.
- The Recreation Division has recently hired a Supervisor of Special Needs that will address inclusion practices involving persons with disabilities within recreation services and programs.

## Gaps

- There seems to be a lack of coordination between the City and expert stakeholder groups. There is some coordination, but more is desired to improve benefits for participants and the wise use of resources. It would be helpful to have one source of information on all opportunities and supports for persons with disabilities.
- There appears to be an inequitable distribution of services throughout the City and a lack of an overall strategy.
- There is a City subsidy program for which the perceived difficulty of filling out the required forms is potentially a barrier to access.
- Common barriers to participation include transportation, isolation, financial means, diversity, aging population, etc.
- Not all facilities providing recreation for persons with disabilities in Hamilton are accessible.
- There seems to be a greater need to deliver services to people in recovery with addiction issues, such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, and for mental health challenges.
- Staff is not well trained to welcome persons with disabilities and some have a fear of reaching out without these skill sets.
- There are insufficient resources (but an identified need) to work with families to offer recreation counselling and ensure that they know what is available and what supports exist.
- There is little to no recognition that people on disability benefits spend a greater amount on equipment and assistance and have less discretionary income left over for recreational pursuits.
- Volunteer groups fundraise to offer programs, and this inconsistent funding stream can cause long-term uncertainty in resourcing and programming.
- There are people on waiting lists and travelling to outside communities for services; gym and recreation program space is also an issue.
- There are very few recreational opportunities for young adults.
- There is a need to work with local agencies to provide additional and regular training for City staff.
- Greater coordination of volunteers, training and promotion of volunteer opportunities is required.

- Assistance is needed with rent-free meeting rooms, volunteer coordination, stakeholder coordination, program offerings coordination and gap analysis, start up grants, awareness, education, coordinated training opportunities, ongoing professional development and training, providing a central clearing house of information and available opportunities, etc.

## 5.2 Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework is the guiding foundation for the Action Plans and includes a goal and principles to be considered in the implementation of each recommendation.

### Goal

*Hamilton is a community where all persons are enabled to participate fully in the recreation and sport activities of their choosing – in a safe environment that values equity, respect, communication, and cooperation.*

### Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles support the aspirational Goal and provide ideological focus for Recreation management and staff in the implementation of each key result area.

#### 1. Understanding and Guidance

A policy framework will guide staff and community partners in understanding their legal requirements and provide common guidance in providing recreational opportunities to Hamiltonians with disabilities.

#### 2. Support and Training

Staff and volunteers will receive the needed training and support in order to fully understand needs and best serve residents with disabilities.



### **3. Inclusive and Adaptive Programs**

It is understood that in providing/enabling services and programs for persons with disabilities, adapted approaches may be taken. A program delivery model will consider both inclusive and adapted programs as appropriate.

### **4. Meeting Needs**

Recreation programs and services will be reflective of the interests of residents with disabilities and supportive of their right for dignity, independence, and respect.

### **5. Equity**

Efforts will be made to consider the equitable distribution of opportunities for all age groups across Hamilton.

### **6. Eliminating Barriers**

Efforts will be made to understand and reduce barriers to participation in designing programs and services.

### **7. Partnerships and Fun**

Strong collaboration and partnerships will result in a fulsome network of expertise and meaningful opportunities for residents.

### **8. Sharing Knowledge**

Ongoing communications and promotions will serve to keep residents informed of opportunities and offer ongoing input into the quality of programs and services.

### **9. Measuring Success**

Success will be defined and performance measures will serve to demonstrate the progress that is being made year over year.



## SECTION 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The intention of the Recreation Division to provide additional high quality services and to include persons with disabilities has been well received by the community. The community would like to see a wide range of choice and an increase in program options and accessible facilities. Staff members are eager to increase recreational opportunities, and gain more knowledge and skills in order to meet expectations in welcoming, safe settings. A common goal both municipally and within the community is to continue to encourage participants to be active.

The plan to provide better recreation services to persons with disabilities focuses on five key result areas:

- service improvement;
- partnership development;
- public awareness and marketing;
- programs and facilities; and
- performance measures.

### 6.1 Service Improvement – Recommendations

The Service Improvement recommendations are staff-based initiatives that strengthen staff skills, expertise and networking. They also expand the “Fit for Everyone” culture of the Recreation Division to allow for greater inclusiveness and more innovation. See Appendix G for Service Improvement Action Plan Background.

1. Communicate the City’s role in the provision of recreation services for persons with disabilities to provide accessible facilities, integrated programs, communications, promotions and marketing, and capacity building with support agencies who can provide specialized/adapted programs.

2. Develop, revise and implement policies and procedures supporting equitable access to recreation services for persons with disabilities, including:
  - AODA and its application in recreation services and facilities;
  - allocation of public spaces;
  - access for person from low income backgrounds;
  - the provision of support workers;
  - behaviour management/zero tolerance; and
  - an intake policy.
3. Continue the reference group made up of representatives of support organizations, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups with quarterly meetings to discuss the progress on the *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities*, collaboration, program and service development, and performance measures, producing an annual report on progress.
4. In City Wide Services rename the Supervisor of Special Needs position to a Supervisor Social Inclusion in Recreation Services, and broaden the position scope over time to address all underserved populations.
5. Participate in the Municipal Networking Group of recreation practitioners serving persons with disabilities.
6. Establish a project team lead by the Supervisor Social Inclusion with both Program Development and District Operations staff to implement the actions as outlined in the *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities*.
7. Under the guidance of the City's Human Resources Department seek to increase the numbers of employees and volunteers with disabilities. Consider providing paid internship to staff through the Ability Edge program and local opportunities such as Ableworks.
8. Ensure that all Division advisory committees and reference groups are representative of the community, including persons with disabilities.
9. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to work directly with organizations serving persons with disabilities to increase their individual awareness.
10. Develop a staff training and professional development program to build staff and volunteer skills in welcoming and providing services for

persons with disabilities (e.g., self study resources and materials, training manuals and staff/volunteer support sessions and touring specialized facilities).

11. Establish staff procedures to handle situations of intolerance, addressing issues of safety within facilities and at special events.
12. Where applicable add the subject area of 'providing services to persons with disabilities' to performance evaluations. Each Recreation Section to develop annual objectives and monitor progress.
13. Work with partner organizations to develop and deliver professional development and training to staff, volunteers and community groups. Work with groups to develop training tools on specific disabilities in order for staff and volunteers to best understand the disability and possibilities with respect to inclusion and recreation programs and services.
14. Staff appropriately to provide leisure counselling and assistance to participants requiring this service. Where needed revise job descriptions to include required skills.
15. Monitor and report to the Community Services GM on the Division's compliance with the requirements of the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities legislation.
16. Create a stronger partnership with the Hamilton Public Library system to better understand city-wide and neighbourhood initiatives that have the potential to serve persons with disabilities.

## 6.2 Partnership Development – Recommendations

Partnership development recommendations expand the City's work with existing partners, develop new partnerships and link Recreation more closely with existing community networks. See Appendix H for Partnership Development Action Plan Background.

17. Through the Inform Hamilton web site maintain and expand the inventory of recreational programs and services available to persons with disabilities.

18. Host annual focus groups with organizations who serve participants with disabilities to determine the success of current programming and what improvements are needed.
19. Identify partners able to assist in service delivery and develop standardized partnership agreements which include deliverables, risk, contributions from each party, forecasted service levels and a performance review process.
20. Do a cost/benefit assessment for each partnership to determine participant satisfaction levels and performance gaps.

### **6.3 Public Awareness and Marketing – Recommendations**

One of the major messages from the Study's public engagement work phase was that many people find it difficult to know what is available to them. These recommendations identify effective ways to make Recreation's publications better, by being easier to find and easier to understand. They also recommend some new marketing initiatives and incorporating new inclusiveness thinking into project and initiative communication plans. See Appendix I for Public Awareness and Marketing Plan Background.

21. Ensure inclusive images representing the diversity of the City including persons with disabilities are used to promote City programs and services.
22. Include and highlight a pull-out section in the Recreation Guide that summarizes all programs and services for persons with disabilities (including links to programs provided by service and support agencies).
23. Distribute the Recreation Guide directly to support agencies for persons with disabilities. Consider providing Guides to schools.
24. Consider providing an audio version of the Recreation Guide on compact disc for persons with visual impairments.
25. Use the international symbol of accessibility on print materials where possible.
26. Work with the Inform Hamilton web site partners to provide a link on the Recreation web site to Inform Hamilton for easy access to

recreation services and supports for persons with disabilities. With the partnership explore communication enhancements. Post the *Recreation Needs Assessments for Persons with Disabilities* on the City's website.

27. Consider appropriate and alternate methods of messaging (e.g., text, pictures and symbols, sign language, Braille, voice, etc.) to ensure effective and open communication for all, in each Recreation communication plan associated with an initiative and/or project.
28. Produce a separate resource document that depicts how recreation and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, how best to access programs and services, and links to all related service agencies and their programs.
29. In accordance with the corporate policy on social networking promote recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities throughout Hamilton, accompanied by Recreation branding.
30. Ensure that all print materials are in Arial (size 14) or Verdana (size 12) font, with no glossy print/pictures and no shaded colours, as per adopted standards.

## 6.4 Programs and Facilities – Recommendations

The following recommendations suggest a renewed commitment to capital project supporting accessible facilities and specific improvements to facilities as well as program funding, design and delivery, program grants, volunteer service and success acknowledgement. See Appendix J for Programs and Facilities Plan Background.

31. As part of the annual capital budget process continue to aggressively fund the capital program upgrading recreation centres and arenas. Ensure the locations of the upgrade projects are equitably distributed on a geographical basis or in areas of greatest need. To complete the current Recreation Facilities and Capital Program upgrade program an annual allocation of \$2 million is needed for the next 5 years.
32. Revise the current Capital budget forecast on a complete upgrade requirement audit of all recreation facilities, in keeping with the barrier-free design guidelines and AODA standards, placing priority on facilities and amenities where there is a higher concentration of

- existing recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities. Ensure facility maintenance staff participate in the audit.
33. Create a program to introduce warmer water pools into the swimming and aquatic exercise pools to increase the comfort level of persons with physical disabilities and older adults.
  34. Consider the expanded provision of therapeutic pools and better equipped change rooms to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities as pools are refurbished.
  35. Complete a ward or neighbourhood-specific inventory of available meeting spaces (including City facilities, schools, not-for-profit spaces, and spaces in businesses) capable of hosting localized recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.
  36. Host an annual staff training forum to introduce assistive devices for persons with disabilities and their uses.
  37. Ensure that each accessible facility offers specialized programs for persons with disabilities based on demonstrated need.
  38. Plan and deliver programs on a geographical basis to provide choices and a range of opportunities throughout the City.
  39. Plan and deliver programs are equitably distributed between age groups and disability types and throughout the City.
  40. Plan and deliver new recreation and fitness programs and services including wheel chair sports for persons with disabilities in Lower Hamilton in the 18-35 year bracket.
  41. Create new initiatives targeted at welcoming persons with disabilities under 55 years of age, in all facilities with special consideration to senior facilities that may be uniquely suited to assist in this area.
  42. Ensure that transportation continues to be a critical consideration in program planning; meet twice a year with transit and DARTS management staff to discuss current and planned service levels.
  43. Plan for new programs based on an annual review of existing sport and recreation groups, schools, service clubs, and other community stakeholders existing inclusion practices.

44. Request that grant criteria through the Community Partnerships Funding Program include criteria for groups to include persons with disabilities in addition to culturally diverse populations.
45. Provide start-up funding through the Community Partnerships Funding Program for programs for persons with disabilities; when programs become financially sustainable re-allocate funding to new opportunities.
46. Provide simplified instructions to groups in completing the Community Partnership funding application and work with the lead of the Community Partnership to simplify the application.
47. Track the number of program opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities to ensure the demand/need is met or gaps identified.
48. Do an annual quality assurance user survey for programs for persons with disabilities to inform new and improved programs.
49. Develop and implement a training program for volunteers to assist persons with disabilities to get the maximum benefit from recreation services.
50. Develop and implement a buddy system where volunteers partner with participants with disabilities by assisting them to access and participate in recreation programs.
51. Annually recognize and celebrate volunteers, staff and leaders who have increased the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

## **6.5 Performance Measures and Evaluation – Recommendations**

A report based on performance measures will be completed annually to track progress.

52. Report on the completion of the Action Plan's recommendations in the *Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities* on an annual basis; plan the next year's deliverables based on progress and report to Recreation and Community Services management.



53. Report annually to Recreation management on each Action Plan according to the performance measures in the following table.

**Suggested Performance Measures**

Key Result Area	Performance Measures
<b>Service Improvement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of training hours received per employee per year on better serving residents with disabilities</li> <li>2. Number of outreach initiatives</li> </ol>
<b>Partnership Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of partnerships and the total number of persons with disabilities served</li> <li>2. Overall satisfaction levels of partners</li> </ol>
<b>Public Awareness and Marketing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of communication pieces promoting opportunities for persons with disabilities including those with partners</li> <li>2. Number of visits on the dedicated portal on the website</li> </ol>
<b>Programs and Facilities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of neighbourhood programs and initiatives and the resulting participation (compare equitable distribution throughout Hamilton)</li> <li>2. Number of registrants with disabilities in programs</li> <li>3. Number of new programs and participants welcomed</li> <li>4. Satisfaction levels (with program quality and staff resources) of participants in specialized programs</li> <li>5. Percent of recreation facilities meeting the Barrier-Free Design Guidelines</li> </ol>





## **APPENDIX A: REFERENCE GROUP**

### **Dr. Kelly Arbour-Nicitopoulos – Research Associate in the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster University**

Dr. Arbour-Nicitopoulos' research expertise lies in the area of health promotion and chronic disease prevention through physical activity interventions. Specifically, Dr. Arbour-Nicitopoulos' research has focused on identifying salient psychosocial and environmental determinants of physical activity and examining the efficacy of theory-based interventions for promoting physical activity in persons with disabilities. Currently, Dr. Arbour-Nicitopoulos is involved in a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)-funded research-community initiative which synergizes the expertise of university-based researchers, knowledge mobilization specialists, service providers and consumers to advance physical activity knowledge and participation among Canadians living with spinal cord injury. As one of the co-investigators on this project, she is leading the development and evaluation of the first-ever physical activity guide for persons with spinal cord injury. Additionally, Dr. Arbour-Nicitopoulos conducts research that examines the use of physical activity as a strategy for facilitating multiple health behaviour changes in persons with severe and persistent mental challenges. Dr. Arbour-Nicitopoulos has published over 25 peer-reviewed papers, 2 book chapters and over 40 published abstracts and presentations since beginning her career in 2003. Her research has been published in some of the highest impact journals in the areas of behaviour change (*Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *Psychology and Health*, *Preventive Medicine*), rehabilitation (*Rehabilitation Psychology*, *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*), and mental health (*Schizophrenia Research*), and has been highlighted in *Allure* magazine and on CBC News -The National.

### **Joanne Brohman – Professor in the Recreation and Leisure Services program at Mohawk College**

Joanne Brohman has been involved and active in the field of Inclusive and Therapeutic Recreation for the past 25 years as an educator, practitioner, and advocate. Ms. Brohman is a graduate of Brock University's Recreation and Leisure Studies program as well as Mohawk College's Recreation and Leisure Services Program, and is currently a professor for the latter. She has sat on many boards, including those for *Leisurability Publications*, *Get Active Now*, *Parks and Recreation Ontario*, and *Therapeutic Recreation Ontario*. Through all of these experiences, Ms. Brohman has been a strong

and committed advocate for all individuals to have access to opportunities that will enhance their quality of life and ultimately their leisure.

### **Maxine Carter**

Maxine Carter is currently the Access and Equity Coordinator for the City of Hamilton. The responsibilities of this role include managing the Access and Equity Office with a mandate to oversee and implement the Equity and Inclusion policies for the City, as well as providing advice to City Council and staff regarding implementation and interpretation of the AODA (2005) legislation and its regulations. The office also led the development and implementation of the Customer Service Standard policies and procedures and is responsible for: assisting with and providing tools for staff regarding identification of barriers within City services, programs and opportunities; making recommendations to eliminate barriers to ensure equitable participation of residents (including community outreach and capacity building); providing relevant research for staff and the community; and tracking community trends. The Access and Equity Office is also responsible for: the provision of training and support with respect to equity, diversity, accessibility, and anti-racism; investigating human rights complaints from residents; and resourcing 8 volunteer advisory committees to Council.

### **Sandi Mugford**

Sandi Mugford has been an information and referral counsellor with the Disability Information Service Helpline, Hamilton Public Library since 1989. Providing appropriate and timely information to persons with disabilities, families, caregivers, clinicians and students is vital to making informed and knowledgeable decisions. Over her career, Sandi has worked for the MS Society of Hamilton, Ontario March of Dimes, Hamilton Harbour Commissioners Sailing School, Participation House Hamilton and District and currently splits her time with Hamilton Health Sciences, Regional Rehabilitation Resource Centre, and DISH. She has been a two-time member of the Hamilton Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities. As a long time consumer with a disability, Sandi has shared her experiences with committees, boards and service providers around the delivery of enhanced services and accessibility options to accommodate persons affected by systemic barriers.

## **Lisa Schumph**

Lisa Schumph is a Program Manager with The Salvation Army Lawson Ministries. Lawson Ministries is an agency that works with adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities in Hamilton. Lisa has worked in the field of Development Services in Hamilton since 1995, as a developmental service worker, program developer and manager of support services. Lisa has focused on developing and supporting community networks that improve access to services, supports and opportunities. Lisa has been a member of Hamilton's ATS Eligibility Project Steering Committee since 2007 and a former Hamilton United Way Citizen Reviewer from 2001-2010.

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The following documents (prepared by the City of Hamilton or community partners) were reviewed as part of the creation of this report:

- 1) Strategic Plan – City of Hamilton
- 2) Vision 2020 – City of Hamilton (2003)
- 3) Use Renovation & Replacement Study for Hamilton Recreation & Public Use Indoor Facilities – City of Hamilton (2008)
- 4) Parks, Culture and Recreation Master Plan – City of Hamilton (2002)
- 5) Barrier-Free Design Guidelines – City of Hamilton (2006)
- 6) Recreation Service Study – City of Hamilton (2005)
- 7) Social and Health Issues Report – City of Hamilton (2005)
- 8) Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, various documents – Hamilton Community Foundation (2005-2008)
- 9) Social Vision for the New City of Hamilton – Caledon Institute of Social Policy (2002)
- 10) Accessibility Statement – City of Hamilton
- 11) Consultation with Persons with Disabilities Project – City of Hamilton (2005)
- 12) Code Red articles – Hamilton Spectator (2010)
- 13) Recreation Access for Children and Youth of Hamilton's Diverse Communities: Opening Doors, Expanding Opportunities – Sport Hamilton (2006)

## **APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

### **Interviews**

As discussed in Section 3, small group interviews were held with the following organizations:

- Accessible Sports Council
- Boys and Girls Club – Adult Day Program
- Club G.A.I.N.
- Community Living Hamilton
- Contact Hamilton (now Developmental Service Organization)
- Disability Action Networking Group
- Hamilton & District Extend-a-Family
- Hamilton and District Sledge Hockey Association
- Hamilton Challenger Baseball
- Hamilton Health Sciences – Children’s Developmental Rehabilitation Program
- Lawson Ministries – Salvation Army
- McMaster University Student Accessibility Services
- Mental Health Rights Coalition
- Special Olympics
- Stoney Creek Disabled Sports Association
- YWCA Community Access Services

### **Stakeholder Questionnaire**

Stakeholder questionnaires were submitted by the following organizations:

- AbleLiving
- Alzheimer Society of Hamilton and Halton
- Best Buddies Canada
- Brain Injury Services
- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Hamilton Branch
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)
- Catholic Family Services of Hamilton – St. Martin’s Manor
- Catholic Youth Organization
- Club G.A.I.N.
- Conway Opportunity Homes
- Flamborough Information and Community Services
- Hamilton Challenger Baseball Association
- Hamilton Health Sciences – Children’s Developmental Rehabilitation Program

- Hamilton Health Sciences – McMaster Children’s Hospital Special Needs Services
- Hamilton Sports Challengers
- Hamilton Steel City Wheelers
- Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre
- Hamilton Wentworth District School Board
- HILL Program – transitional living
- Mental Health Rights Coalition
- North Hamilton Community Health Centre
- Private social worker
- Scleroderma Society of Ontario
- Social worker – Hamilton Health Sciences, Chedoke site
- Special Olympics Hamilton
- Specialized Developmental and Behavioural Service – McMaster Children’s Hospital, Chedoke Site
- The Canadian Hearing Society

The following is a summary of input received through the stakeholder group questionnaire during the month of September 2011. Responses have been taken verbatim from the questionnaires (edited only for spelling and grammar).

**Describe your organization’s mandate and purpose.**

- Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Hamilton Branch - to inform and educate the community of the need to communicate clearly to persons with hearing loss, those wearing hearing aids and those with hearing implants (cochlear implants). To encourage participation and not isolate themselves because of hearing loss.
- Hamilton Sports Challengers – to offer sport and recreation programs and activities to assist individuals with disabilities.
- North Hamilton Community Health Centre – non-profit organization that responds to the health needs of individual patients and their families, as well as to the health concerns of the community. Health is defined broadly at the Health Centre. We are committed to providing accessible services, the empowerment of individuals and communities, wellness and illness prevention, and comprehensive care. Vision: No obstacles to health. Mission: Enabling health through healing, hope and wellness.
- Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre – to provide primary health care services, health promotion programs, education, counselling, support and advocacy for individuals, families and

communities who experience barriers in accessing the health and health-related services and supports they need for their good health and well-being.

- Special Olympics Hamilton – sport and competition for people with disabilities.
- Conway Opportunity Homes – to provide care, support accommodation and rehabilitation services to persons needing the same to improve their quality of life, human dignity, independence and opportunities subject to any restrictions imposed by law on the authority to operate any health facility.
- Alzheimer Society of Hamilton and Halton – to alleviate the personal and social consequences associated with Alzheimer disease and related dementias in the region of Hamilton and Halton.
- Flamborough Information and Community Services – empowers residents through Information and Referral Services and enhances community quality of life by identifying unmet needs, liaising with the community and facilitating social services.
- Canadian Hearing Society – not-for-profit agency and the leading provider of services, products, and information that remove barriers to communication, advance hearing health, and promote equity for people who are culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. CHS offers a complete roster of essential services, including sign language interpreting; one-on-one language development for deaf and hard of hearing children using play as the medium of learning; employment consulting; sign language instruction; speech-reading training; hearing testing; hearing aids; counselling; and, the most complete range of communication devices that assist and augment communication including TTYs (text telephones), visual smoke detectors, baby monitors, signalling devices and alarm clocks.
- Club GAIN – to provide a safe fun independent atmosphere for persons 14-26 with developmental disabilities
- Best Buddies Canada – to create friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities, promoting inclusion and accommodation in our schools and communities, and providing leadership and learning opportunities for students.
- Catholic Youth Organization (C.Y.O.) – one of the oldest, strongest and most effective non-profit agencies in the Hamilton community. Over the past 50 years, the C.Y.O. has come to realize that raising a child is difficult, but raising a child with a profound physical or developmental disability can be beyond our imagination. That is why the C.Y.O. has now made it our mission to break down barriers - whether they are

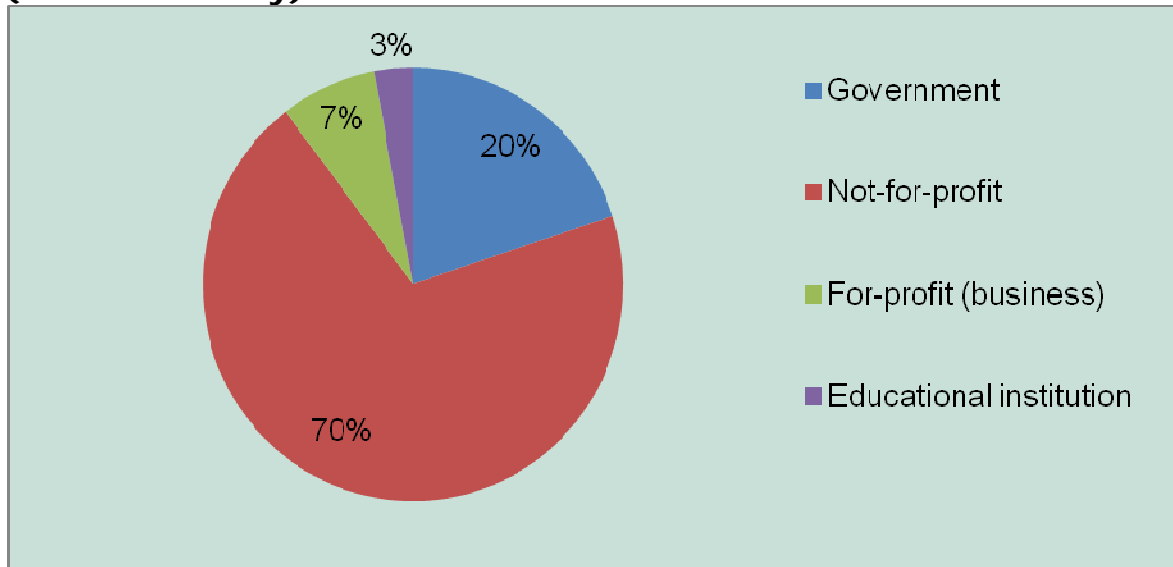


physical, behavioural, or even financial - because we truly believe that every child deserves to play. Rooted in Catholic values and participating in the mission of the Church, the Catholic Youth Organization (C.Y.O.) serves children, teens and families through a variety of programs and services (e.g., training, resources and consultation to parish communities to assist in the development of Youth Ministry initiatives, specific programs for children, teens and families in Youth Ministry, Christian Leadership development programs for teens, and ensuring that marginalized children, teens and families have access to all C.Y.O. programs and services).

- Hamilton Wentworth District School Board – providing relevant and responsive education so that each student becomes a lifelong learner and contributing citizen in a diverse world. Values: Respect, Creativity, Excellence Citizenship.
- CNIB – nationwide, community-based, registered charity committed to research, public education and vision health for all Canadians. We provide rehab service to our clients.
- Private practitioner – social work services for the very old or persons with an intellectual disability.
- Hamilton Health Sciences Special Needs Services – to provide one to one support to individuals in our community with a developmental and/or physical challenge. To provide opportunities for our clients to participate in community, social, and recreational activities.
- Hamilton Steel City Wheelers – to provide a social and recreation for adults with disabilities.
- Hamilton Health Sciences Children’s Developmental Rehabilitation Program – we are an outpatient children's treatment center for children and youth (birth to 18 year 11 months) with a physical disability.
- Scleroderma Society – committed to raising public awareness, advancing patient wellness and research.
- Brain Injury Services – provides a full range of rehabilitation programs and services for individuals living with the effects of acquired brain injuries. We offer everything from supervised 24-hour-a-day complex residential care, to transitional living arrangements, to independent living supported by an extensive community services program.
- Hamilton Challengers Baseball – to provide high quality athletic and social activities for physically and/or cognitively challenged youth and adults in an encouraging, supportive atmosphere.

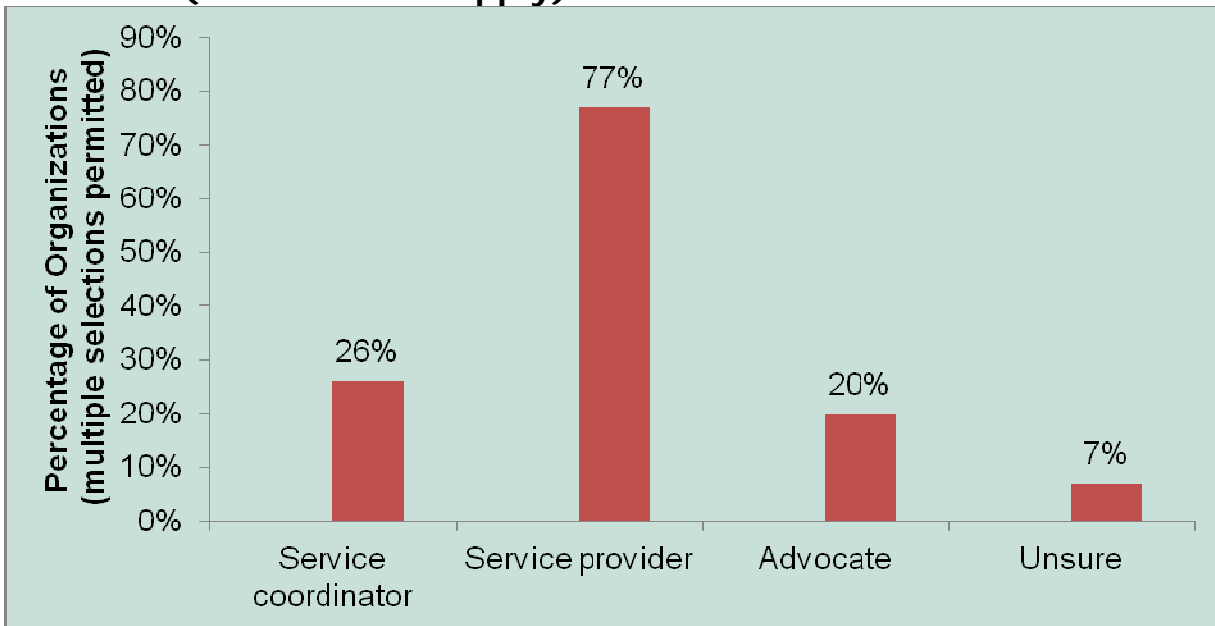
- Hamilton Health Sciences Specialized Developmental & Behavioural Services –multi-disciplinary program supporting families who have children (up to age 18 yrs) with intellectual disabilities; behaviour consultation for children with developmental delay and their families.
- Mental Health Rights Coalition – to encourage, enable and empower the voice of consumers in the mental health system and this accomplished by reducing stigma, reducing isolation, increasing accessibility, supporting reintegration and promoting participation.
- Hamilton Health Sciences Children’s Developmental Rehabilitation Program – to provide outpatient rehabilitation services for children with neuro-developmental needs for the Hamilton region. Clients range in age 0-19 years.
- St. Martin’s Manor – Catholic Family Services of Hamilton (CFS) is guided by Catholic values and principles, exists so that the quality of life of ALL individuals and families\* in our diverse community may be improved and strengthened. Services are delivered regardless of faith, race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, gender, age, physical and/or intellectual ability. Mission of St. Martin’s Manor is to strengthen the lives of pregnant and parenting youth and their children.
- Hamilton Health Sciences – to provide excellent health care for the people and communities we serve and to advance health care through education and research and to be leaders in exemplary care, innovation and academic excellence.
- AbleLiving – to provide support to individuals so that they can remain in their own homes.
- HILL Program – provides rehabilitation for youth and adults with an acquired brain injury.

Which of the following best describes the type of your organization?  
(select one only)



- 70% identify as not-for-profit organizations;
- 20% identify as government agencies;
- 7% identify as businesses; and
- 3% identify as educational institutions.

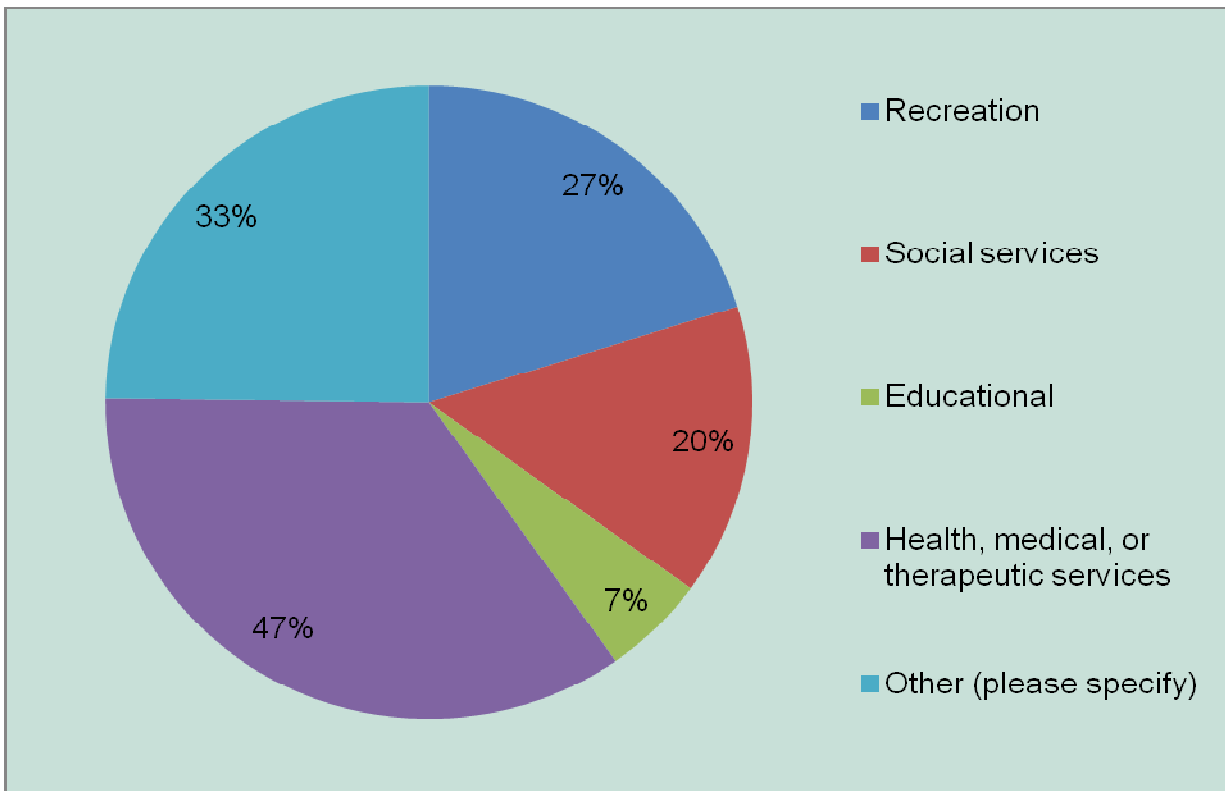
Are you primarily a service coordinator, service provider, or advocate? (select all that apply)



- 77% of respondents consider their organizations to be service providers;
- 26% identify as a service coordinator;
- 20% identify as an advocate; and
- 7% were unsure what the primary role of their organization is with respect to persons with disabilities.

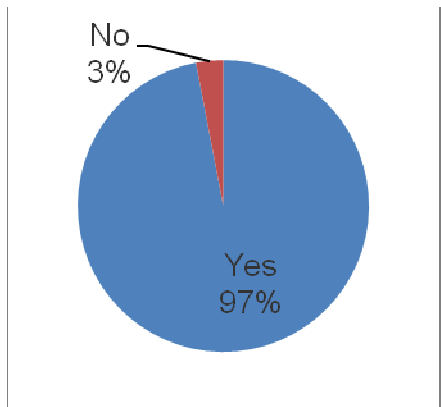
**Which of the following best describes your organization's primary area of service (select one only)?**

- 47% of the organizations provide health, medical or therapeutic services (treatment) as their primary area of service;
- 27% provide recreation as their primary area of service;
- 20% provide social services (e.g., counselling, job search assistance, transportation, etc.) as their primary area of service; and
- 7% provide educational services as their primary area of service.

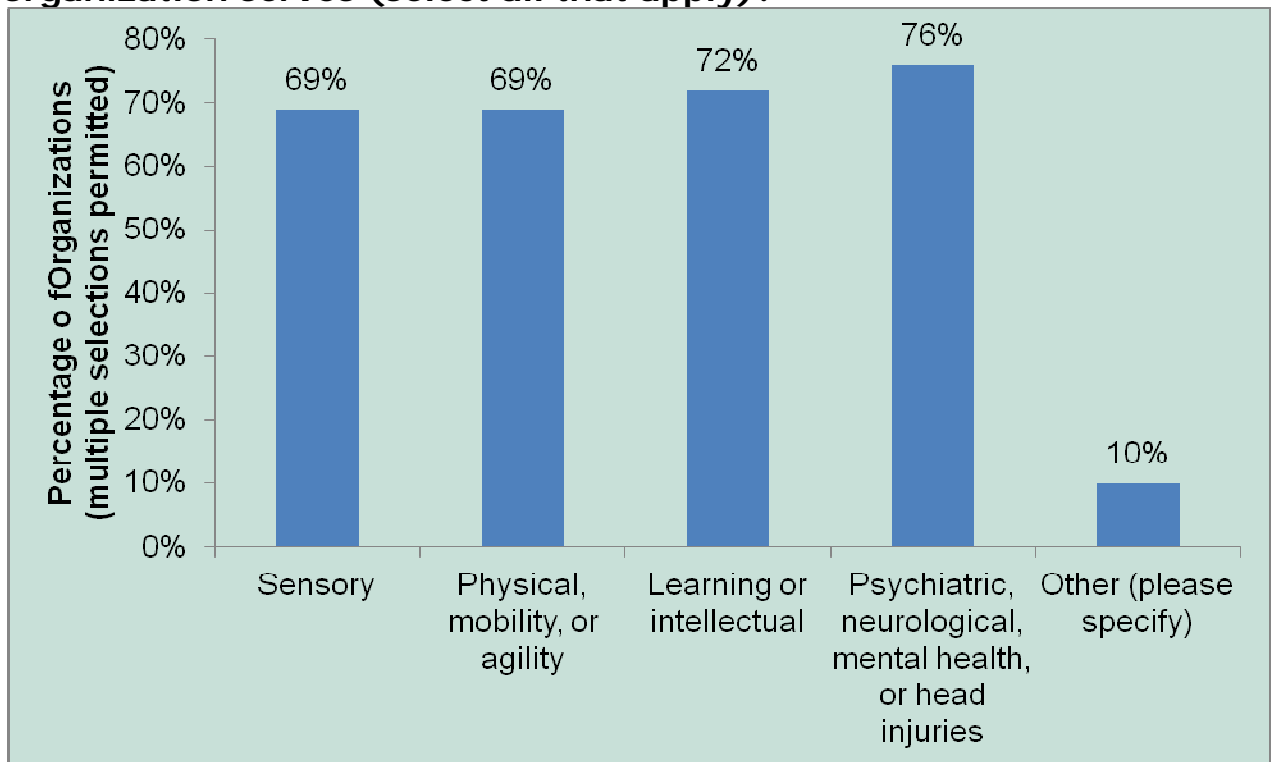


**Does your organization provide services of any kind to persons with disabilities (or their caregivers)?**

- 97% responded 'yes'; and
- 3% responded 'no'.



**Which of the following disabilities affect the people that your organization serves (select all that apply)?**



- 76% serve persons with psychiatric, neurological, mental health challenges, or head injuries;
- 72% serve persons with learning or intellectual disabilities;
- 69% serve persons with physical, mobility, or agility disabilities;
- 69% serve persons with sensory disabilities; and

- 10% serve persons with other disabilities (e.g., dementia, dual diagnosis, etc.).

Note: Organizations were able to provide multiple responses.

**In total, how many members, participants, clients, or residents are directly served by your organization?**

- The number of members, participants, clients, or residents that are directly served by the organizations ranged from 8 to 8,589 (C.Y.O. and Hamilton Wentworth District School Board are excluded).

**Of these, how many are persons with disabilities?**

- The percentage of each organization's services that is associated with persons with disabilities and their caregivers ranged from less than 10% through 100%, with 19 of the 30 organizations reporting that all of their services are geared towards this community.

**What is the primary age group served by your organization (persons with disabilities)?**

- All ages are served by organizations that responded to the stakeholder survey;

**Does your organization provide recreation services or programs to persons with disabilities? Note: 'recreation' is defined as activities of a leisure, sport, art, or social nature that may be drop-in, self-directed, or instructional, or providing skill development in a particular leisure pursuit.**

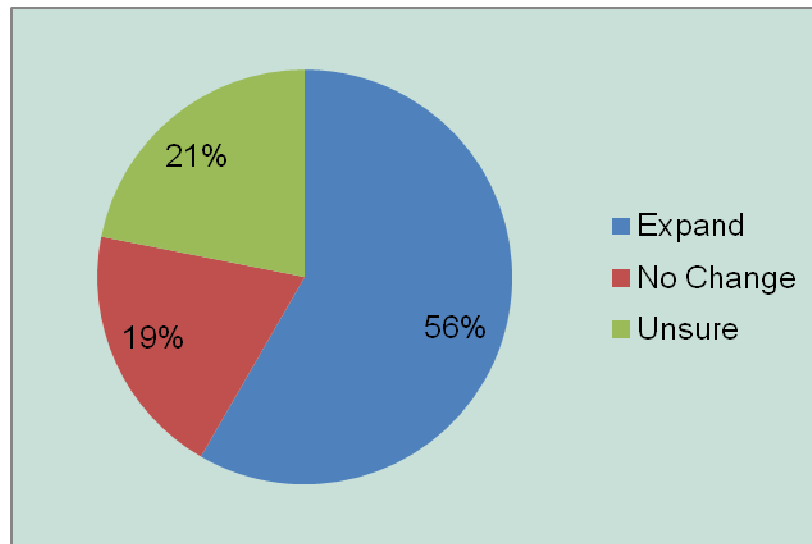
- 59% of organizations do provide recreation services or programs to persons with disabilities;
- 35% of organizations do not provide recreation services or programs to persons with disabilities;
- 7% of organizations were unsure if they provide recreation services or programs to persons with disabilities.

**Please identify the specific recreation programs, activities and services your organization offers for persons with disabilities and/or their caregivers, including any available details about the number and composition of participants.**

- Programs, activities and services mentioned include seniors club, hearing help classes, socials, peer support, sports, volunteering, community outings, drop-in programs, skill programs, day camps, music programs, games, etc.
- Many organizations provide services to persons with any disability, but specific groups mentioned include: seniors; hard of hearing adults; persons with developmental, intellectual, mental health, physical, and neuro-developmental disabilities; persons who are Deaf; persons with acquired brain injury; persons with multiple disabilities; and persons with visual impairments.
- The number of participants or clients per program ranges from 10 to 6,500.
- Locations where programs or services are offered vary and include the following:
  - Sealey Park Scout Hall in Waterdown;
  - Canadian Hearing Society office;
  - Hamilton high schools;
  - Hamilton Health Sciences;
  - Mountain Lanes;
  - Brain Injury Services office;
  - Inch Park;
  - Mental Health Rights Coalition office;
  - St. Stephen's Church;
  - St. Stephen on the Mount Anglican Church;
  - Mohawk College;
  - Residential homes;
  - Norman Pinky Lewis Community Centre;
  - Community Lanes; and
  - Varied communities outside of Hamilton.
- Some organizations require participants to be members in order to access programming.
- Programs and services are a variety of those offered solely to persons with disabilities and integrated programming.

**Over the next five years, does your organization have plans to expand or reduce its recreational services to persons with disabilities?**

- 56% of organizations anticipate expansion of recreational services for persons with disabilities;
- None of the organizations anticipate reduction of recreational services for persons with disabilities;
- 19% of the organizations anticipate maintaining their current level of service; and
- 21% of organizations are unsure.



- Reasons given for expansion of recreation services include:
  - Increased marketing and self promotion;
  - Hope for a seniors centre in Flamborough;
  - Increased social networking for Deaf seniors;
  - Construction of Marydale Park to allow for greater use and more participants;
  - Creation of a development fund for expansion of services; and
  - Expanded hours.



**Please comment on the affordability of your recreation programs or services to persons with disabilities.**

- Hamilton Sports Challengers – We have a set fee but will look at individuals on a one-to-one basis if the cost is prohibitive.
- North Hamilton Community Health Centre – all programs and services at North Hamilton Community Health Center are offered free of charge. Some programs offer assistance with transportation costs as well (bus tickets). Need is assessed on an individual basis.
- Special Olympics Hamilton – fundraising to support programs, plus a small fee charged to athletes for accountability.
- Flamborough Information and Community Services – the clients pay nothing for the services.
- Canadian Hearing Society – Hearing Help Classes - nominal fee to cover refreshments; Seniors Support Network - anticipate that this will be a low cost activity; Sign Language for Parents - cost recovery considerations.
- Club Gain – the GAIN program is affordable as long as private companies/service groups donate the \$3,000 yearly rental fee.
- Best Buddies Canada – the program is free to get involved in, but participants are required to pay for their own costs when participating in group activities or outings with their peer buddies.
- Catholic Youth Organization (C.Y.O.) – all of our programs/services for persons with disabilities are subsidized in part or full. We waive all additional fees for persons with disabilities to ensure that registration fees are equal for all participants regardless of ability. We also have a funding account set up for any person who needs financial assistance beyond what is already offered.
- Hamilton Health Sciences Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program – we don't run programs that are available to the general public. Our programs that we offer to clients are extremely affordable and no child/ youth is turned away if they cannot afford it.
- Brain Injury Services – our clients are able to take part in most programs free of charge. There are some exceptions to programs that have a higher cost. These include lunch programs and outings. On average 80% of our programs are free to clients attending. Costs associated with programs are written on the calendar. Clients choose the programs they attend. Clients can either be receiving government funding and therefore do not pay to come to our service or they are Fee for Service meaning they do not meet government funding and

pay for the services provided on an hourly basis. This is a set cost for those clients.

- Hamilton Challengers Baseball – we think the Registration Fee is reasonable and we also have a few options available to assist people on fixed incomes.
- Mental Health Rights Coalition – free with the exception of some outside events (i.e., annual boat cruise and lunch, and trips to museum/art gallery), if there is a cost. We try to keep costs minimal.
- Hamilton Health Sciences Children’s Developmental Rehabilitation Program –minimal charge with subsidy available.
- Hamilton Health Sciences – very expensive due to nursing staff and additional support staff.

**Do you offer any financial assistance for those who may not be able to afford a program or service?**

- 57% offer financial assistance; and
- 43% do not offer financial assistance.

**Are you aware of the City of Hamilton’s Financial Assistance Policy?**

- 57% are aware of the City’s Financial Assistance Policy; and
- 43% are not aware of the City’s Financial Assistance Policy.

**Does your organization require additional support from the City of Hamilton for the provision or coordination of recreational programs, activities or services to persons with disabilities?**

- 43% of organizations require additional support from the City;
- 43% of organizations do not require additional support from the City; and
- 14% of organizations are unsure if they require additional support from the City.
- When asked to explain their answer, the following responses were received:
  - Need support to develop programs and services for a new seniors’ recreation centre;
  - Difficult to find donations to pay rent;

- Information or suggestions on activities clients and volunteers can participate in together;
- Space for meetings and activities;
- Gaps in recreation for persons with disabilities need to be filled;
- Partnership to allow clients to more readily access City recreation programs; and
- Process for recreation passes – certain price, and payment can be handled by case workers.

**Does your organization currently have any partnerships with the City or other agencies for the development or delivery of recreational programs or services for persons with disabilities?**

- 71% of organizations have partnerships with the City or other agencies; and
- 29% do not have partnerships with the City or other agencies.
- Examples of partnerships include:
  - Reduced rates;
  - Event partnerships (e.g., Ontario Senior Games with the City of Hamilton and the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton by Flamborough Information and Community Services);
  - Work with Community Living Hamilton, L'Arche Hamilton, Christian Horizons and school boards to implement Best Buddies program;
  - CYO works with Good Shepherd Centre, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, McMaster Children's Hospitals, Community Living Hamilton, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, and the City of Hamilton;
  - Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program currently works with the YMCA, Hamilton Challengers Baseball Association and the Hamilton Accessible Sports Council; and
  - Fitness programs with the YMCA.

**What type of new or expanded partnerships (if any) would your organization be willing to consider with the City or other agencies for the development or delivery of recreation programs, activities or services for persons with disabilities?**

- Hamilton Sports Challengers expressed an interest in perhaps amalgamating with a larger club to assist at the introductory level of sport and recreation to persons with disabilities, and offer our sport diversity to their club;

- Flamborough Information and Community Services would like to develop a partnership with the City that would support offering an expanded social and recreational program for seniors in Flamborough;
- Canadian Hearing Services is open to partnerships;
- Club GAIN is seeking rent money and would be willing to educate other organizations about running an efficient program on a minimal budget;
- CYO hopes that Marydale Park will be a community centre for all persons through partnership with the City;
- Many families at McMaster's Children's Rehabilitation Program are seeking basketball for children with physical disabilities who are ambulatory;
- Partnerships to cover costs of programs;
- Need for a one-stop service for clients and families of where these service are and what they offer;
- A larger voice for the city to utilize and respect through the Hamilton Accessible Sports Council;
- City is invited to attend Hamilton Accessible Sports Council meetings;
- Fitness and sports recreation for children with neuro-developmental disabilities;
- Pooling volunteers and resources; and
- Provision of space free of charge.

**If resources were available, what training (if any) could you provide to the City's recreation staff in order to better serve your persons with disabilities in the City?**

- Hamilton Sports Challengers is willing to do sessions to ALL centre staff on working with persons with disabilities, to offer a better understanding from the view point of the person with the disability;
- Special Olympics Hamilton has an in house National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) course that trains new coaches and volunteers and is based on coaching persons with disabilities;
- The Canadian Hearing Society is able to provide training in Deaf awareness, access awareness for people with hearing loss, sign language instruction, and built environment assessment;
- Club GAIN is entirely volunteer run and many of its volunteers have gone on to full and part time positions in developmental services;

- Through the process of building Marydale Park, CYO has come to strongly understand the differences between "accessible" and "barrier free", we would be able to provide specific training on how to ensure all persons can independently participate in all programs or services without the barriers everyday life can provide. Our agency was also one of the first camps in Ontario to fully integrate children with disabilities into our camping programs. We can assist and train staffs to understand, as well as receive advice on how to run a successful integrated program;
- The Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program excels at adapting activity, working with individuals with a disability, lifts and transfers, Back Ed. sensitivity training, and training on a variety of physical diagnoses;
- Brain Injury Services currently does a lot of different trainings for in house staff, which may be able to be used to train City Recreation staff;
- Hamilton Challenger Baseball Association and Hamilton Accessible Sports Council are currently partnering with the City and Sport Hamilton to provide Governance training for any board. Other possibilities include volunteer training and review of policies and lessons learned for working with volunteers and with people with disabilities; and
- Hamilton Health Sciences is willing to provide training regarding how to communicate with a child with a communication disability and how to support the physical needs of a child with a physical disability, as well as behaviour management.

**In your opinion, what gaps or barriers exist that make participation in recreation programs and activities challenging for persons with disabilities, if any? Please be specific.**

- Transportation, including more accessible transit vehicles to increase passenger load;
- Language;
- Mental health challenges;
- Location
- Lack of volunteers;
- Lack of facilities;
- Lack of long-term fundraising system;
- Program times are not suitable;
- Programs are not fully accessible or are targeted at only one type of disability;

- Perceived lack of importance of leisure by caregivers;
- Financial costs of participation;
- Limited overnight recreation programming;
- Social isolation;
- Fatigue;
- Lack of interpreter services;
- Need for clear signage and communication;
- Lack of visible information for persons with hearing impairments;
- Need for proper equipment;
- Need for staff training on how to work with persons with disabilities;
- Geographical gaps (e.g., Stoney Creek);
- Communicating with the public about organization's activities and existence;
- Ambulatory basketball;
- Programs for teens, children, immigrant families;
- Assistance understanding forms and filling them out to register in programs;
- Stigma regarding the downtown core versus the mountain;
- Need for one-to-one support;
- Lack of awareness about opportunities in the community;
- Limited DARTS availability and access; and
- Little choice in programming for persons with disabilities.

**What strategies or solutions would you suggest to mitigate these gaps or barriers?**

- Improved partnerships;
- Increased information made available;
- Reduced costs;
- Put resources in the community;
- Offer fully accessible programs;
- Work with seniors' programs to allow younger persons with disabilities to join;
- Transportation that is dementia-friendly;
- More accessible and affordable transportation;
- Work with persons with disabilities to see what accommodations they require;
- Changes to built environment;
- Ready access to adaptive devices (e.g., FM systems, amplified phones, wheelchairs, sleds, etc.);
- Educate presenters and activity leaders in accessible communication;
- Coordination of carpooling;
- List recreation programs for adults with disabilities;

- Create new options and programs for exclusive access by persons with disabilities and their families (as opposed to integrated programs);
- Reduce noise and sound in the area of listening; and
- Publicize the Financial Assistance Policy more readily.

**Are there any specific areas of the City that may be underserved in terms of recreation for persons with disabilities?**

- Specific areas mentioned include:
  - Flamborough (3 mentions);
  - Winona (2 mentions);
  - Inner City (2 mentions);
  - Rural areas;
  - West end;
  - Mountain;
  - Waterdown;
  - Binbrook;
  - Stoney Creek;
  - North end; and
  - West Mountain.
- In addition, some groups mentioned the need for accessible transportation across the City.

**Are there any specific disabilities that may be underserved in terms of recreation?**

- Seniors with physical disabilities;
- Deaf and hard of hearing consumers of all ages;
- Almost all disabilities;
- Head injuries;
- Individuals who require one-to-one support;
- Children with severe developmental delays;
- Children with disruptive behaviours;
- Persons with extreme disabilities;
- Autism;
- Persons with multiple disabilities and
- Visual impairments.

**What opportunities does your organization see (if any) to provide recreational services or programs to persons with disabilities in the future?**

- Continue to offer sport/recreation introduction earlier (i.e., to the early education centres throughout the City), including some segregated programming to encourage mentoring by others with disabilities but have opportunities to involve able-bodied youth;
- Less assumption that messages were heard correctly (always check);
- Maintaining programs and promote as much as possible;
- Collaborating with other recreation service providers to access their expertise for program delivery;
- Hoping to develop a partnership with the City to provide social and recreational programs in the new library complex planned for Flamborough (Flamborough Information and Community Services);
- Canadian Hearing Services is open to partnership with the City of Hamilton and other organizations to provide accessible activities, services and programs;
- A drop-in centre for persons with mental challenges, and a separate drop-in centre for people with developmental disabilities;
- CYO hopes that Marydale Park will create a rippling effect, setting a new mandate for recreational centers. Marydale Park will offer the opportunity for people to have full independence when participating in any and all activities provided;
- CNIB – Hamilton runs a local summer camp for children with vision loss as well as a camp called Lake Joseph;
- Hamilton Health Sciences McMaster Children’s Hospital Special Needs Services provides information on locations of activities;
- Hamilton Steel City Wheelers is seeking new dancers and volunteers;
- Children’s Developmental Rehabilitation Services clients should be in the community, rather than participating in recreation at a hospital;
- St. Martin’s Manor has space and often has volunteers come on site; and
- AbleLiving provides some recreation opportunities at some of their projects and run some classes such as cooking classes. We try to assist our clients to be involved in the community as much as possible.



**How can the City of Hamilton improve its communication with residents regarding recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities?**

- Public education;
- Establish advisory groups;
- Deliver brochures to group homes highlighting specific appropriate programs;
- E-bulletins;
- Senior friendly website / simplified website / website specific to recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- Canadian Hearing Society is available as a network to be a conduit for communication to the community as they are connected to various disability populations in Hamilton;
- Website for carpooling to activities;
- Using all methods of communication (e.g., text, picture, sign language, Braille, and voice) to ensure that all persons are able to understand regardless of their ability;
- Information sessions;
- Mail-outs;
- Include in Leisure Guide as own section;
- Bring back role of Recreation Coordinator / Manager for individuals with a disability;
- Write and communication through schools, newspapers, recreation centres, and libraries; and
- Speak at community agencies and provide them with brochures, recreation guides and program descriptions.

**What trends are you seeing that could impact the future recreational needs of persons with disabilities?**

- Increased immigrant and refugee population;
- Poverty rates;
- More people are trying to get into generic sports and by the time they realize they don't fit into the sports they could be lost and not wanting to join Special Olympics Hamilton;

- Support networks are becoming more comfortable at advocating for their family member techno savvy persons with disabilities technology opening opportunities (GPS systems);
- People with disabilities are getting out more if there is ways and means (i.e., transportation);
- Our aging population will result in higher incidences of hearing loss. According to research, 27% of all adults have some measurable hearing loss (however, not all are impacted). Once the population reaches 65, 44% of the population has a hearing loss; after 75, 66% and after 85, 86%;
- There are basically almost no recreational opportunities for people/kids/youth with developmental disabilities. Club GAIN has an age limit to 26 and is constantly being begged by parents saying things like my son is 32 but he acts 10 please please can't he come to GAIN. A couple of GAIN attendees met at GAIN and were recently married - The Hamilton Spectator covered the story and misquoted our organization as another organization with a youth program. All GAIN parents were asking us where this other group was so they could sign up their kids and were disappointed to learn we are still the only non denominational group;
- There is already an increase in awareness and a demand that all persons be treated equal. If the next generation is raised not only hearing, but seeing, the equality of all persons, - change will be made;
- Because people can stay longer in the community, because of existing services and new treatment services, the number of persons with disability will greatly increase;
- More and more persons with disabilities are looking for programs of a recreation and social background to partake in;
- Desire for opportunities that are exclusively for persons with disabilities (especially in childhood);
- Should be a shift in partnerships and sharing resources;
- Slight improvement of awareness/importance;
- Trend toward less government funding (e.g., Special Services at Home program) as no new applications have been approved in the past three years;
- Internet and smart phone communication; and
- Focus on aging, but not one for the people who are adults and need some options to be involved in meaningful activities.

**In your opinion, what are the top five priorities that must be addressed to better provide or enable recreation services for persons with disabilities in Hamilton?**

- The following priorities were mentioned (listed in order of most mentions to least mentions):
  - Accessible facilities;
  - Awareness;
  - Reduced cost / increased funding;
  - Transportation;
  - Staff training and respect for persons with disabilities;
  - Options in programming;
  - Operational assistance for boards and organizations (incl. volunteers);
  - Accessibility adaptations;
  - Welcoming in all areas;
  - Communication;
  - Good locations;
  - Volunteers;
  - One-to-one support for individuals;
  - New grassroots programs;
  - Reduced barriers to applications;
  - Age-appropriate activities;
  - More spots for camps;
  - Accessible signage;
  - Availability of spaces at programs; and
  - Assistance for signing up for programs.

**Additional Comments**

- Kudos for doing the Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities;
- Treating everyone with respect and dignity is imperative;
- 'All people deserve to play...and they deserve to play equally!'
- Communicating opportunities to people and organizations is important;
- Appreciation for being involved in the Study;
- Need for well-informed information persons by phone, email, websites, in-person, and advertising; and
- Hamilton Steel City Wheelers would like to become a City recreation program.

## APPENDIX D: INVENTORY OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

The inventory presented herein is a listing of organizations within the City of Hamilton that provide some type of service to persons with disabilities. This list is by no means exhaustive, but represents those groups that have identified by the project's Reference Group. Many organizations may provide more than one key function, but have been categorized below according to primary purpose; it should be noted that most of the organizations listed provide some form of recreation opportunity to their members and/or clients.

### Leisure, Sport and Recreation

Organization	Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities
Accessible Sports Council	Advocate for sport organizations that serve persons with disabilities and their individual participants
Best Buddies Canada	Varied recreation opportunities; individuals with intellectual disabilities are paired with student peer volunteers
Blossom Club	Non-profit full integrated 30-minute circuit fitness facility
Boys and Girls Clubs of Hamilton, Adult Day Program	Social, recreational, intellectual and physical activities for adults and older adults with varying physical and/or cognitive disabilities (e.g., arts and crafts, fitness, pet therapy, games, etc.)
Catholic Youth Organization, Camp Marydale and Urban Hoops Basketball Program	Inclusive basketball camp
Christian Horizons West District, Hamilton Day Program	Recreation, life skill development and volunteering program for adults with a developmental disability
Club Gain	Dances and social events for adults with disabilities (worker and parent free environment)
Community Access Services - YWCA	Recreation day program
Community Living Hamilton	Drum corps, events, supported lodge and cottage vacations

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Sample Recreation Offerings for Persons with Disabilities</b>
Flamborough Information & Community Services	Computer training for seniors, special events
Hamilton & District Extend a Family	Bowling, movies, laser tag, special events, group activities
Hamilton and District Sledge Hockey Association	Sledge hockey
Hamilton Challenger Baseball Association	Baseball
Hamilton Handicap Club	Social activities
Hamilton Seniors Active Living Centre, YWCA	Dance, fitness, cards, computer courses, day trips, special events
Hamilton Steel City Wheelers	Varied recreation activities, including dance
Jewish Community Centre of Hamilton and Area	Various sport and recreation activities
Ontario Lung Association, Hamilton Branch, Breathworks Program	Exercise group
Royal Hamilton Yacht Club, Youth Sailing Program, Day Camp Programs	Sailing and day camps
Special Olympics Ontario, Hamilton	Track, curling, soccer, bocce, bowling
Stoney Creek Disabled Sports Association	Various sports
TEAD Equestrian Association for the Disabled	Horseback riding
VON Hamilton, Adult Day Centre & Overnight Respite Program	Music, physical activity, arts, gardening, etc.
YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford Helping Hands Day Camp Program	Day camp

## Advocacy, Physical Activity Support and Research

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
Acquired Brain Injury Services of Hamilton	General support
Alzheimer Society of Hamilton and Halton	General support, including respite and social opportunities
Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability	Created an accessibility training and professional development tool (Moving to Inclusion) and offer accessibility workshops
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of Ontario	General support
Autism Ontario, Hamilton Chapter	General support (incl. recreation and camps)
Behaviour Institute	General support (incl. social skills and play)
Canadian Association for Williams Syndrome	Education and research
Canadian Council of the Blind Hamilton	General support (incl. social and recreation)
Cystic Fibrosis Canada	Fundraising, awareness, general support
Canadian Diabetes Association, Hamilton District Branch	Financial assistance, education, advocacy, policy
Canadian Hard of Hearing Association	Education, awareness, technical devices
Canadian Hearing Society	Advocacy, education, interpreting and teaching sign language
Canadian Mental Health Association	Housing, recreation, legal, skill development, advocacy
Canadian National Institute for the Blind	General support
Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario	Research, advocacy, general support (incl. recreation)
Canadian Red Cross Society	Swimming, water safety, homecare, health equipment loans
Catholic Family Services of Hamilton, Developmental Services Family Support	General support for persons with developmental disabilities
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	Research, general support, intensive treatment programs

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation</b>
Charlton Hall Child and Family Centre	General support
CHOICES Association Incorporated	General support (incl. recreation)
Contact Hamilton (now Developmental Service Organization)	Central information and referral site for children and youth with disabilities
<i>Conversations in motion</i>	Workshops on reciprocal benefits between physical activity and positive mental health
Crohns and Colitis Foundation of Canada, Hamilton and Area Chapter	General support
Diabetes Hamilton	Research, information, advocacy
Disability Action and Networking Group	Housing education, awareness and peer support
Dundas Community Services for Seniors & People with Disabilities	Education, counselling, social visits
Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton	Information, education, social events
Dundas Learning Centre and Civitan Place	General support for adults with disabilities (incl. recreation)
Epilepsy - Seizure Disorder of Greater Hamilton	Education, support and advocacy
Family Counselling Centre of Brant, Developmental Services, Deafblind Outreach	General support
First Place Hamilton, Seniors Community Centre	General support (incl. recreation)
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Hamilton Region	Education, awareness, fundraising
Mental Health Rights Coalition	Advocacy for the rights of persons with mental health challenges and peer support
Mohawk College, Disability Services Office	General support for students at Mohawk with disabilities
MS Society of Canada	Fundraising, awareness, general support
Muscular Dystrophy Canada	Education, advocacy, funding for medical equipment
Ontario March of Dimes	General support (incl. recreation and integration services)

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
Parkinson Society Canada, Hamilton Chapter	General support and education
Psychiatric Patients Advocate Office	Advocacy
Salvation Army, Lawson Ministries Hamilton	General supports for adults with dual diagnosis including developmental disabilities and psychiatric issues
SCI Action Canada	Evidence-based resources for physical activity support
St. Joseph's Villa	Residential and general supports (incl. recreation)
Stroke Recovery Association of Hamilton Wentworth	Information and general support
Woodview Children's Mental Health & Autism Services	General supports for ASD (incl. recreation)

## Support Group

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
Caring Bears	Support group for persons with diabetes
Children Having Attention Deficit Disorder	Support group, education
Hamilton Brain Injury Association	Support groups
The Arthritis Society	Support groups and fundraising
Scleroderma Society of Ontario, Hamilton Scleroderma Support Group	Support group
St. Joseph's Hospital, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Programme	Support groups and skills development



## Therapeutic Support

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
Early Words	Speech and language support
Hamilton Health Sciences, Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program	Medical care and general support (incl. recreation)
MacWheelers Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program	Medical care and general support (incl. recreation)
McMaster University Centre for Student Development	General support for students at McMaster University with disabilities
Seniors Activation Maintenance Program of Hamilton	General supports (incl. recreation)
Gregory School for Exceptional Learning	School and summer camps

## Health Services

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
De Dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre	Health services
Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre	Culturally sensitive health services and programs
Hamilton Health Sciences	Medical care and varied supports
MacWheelers	Spinal cord injury rehabilitation
Metis Nation of Ontario Aboriginal Healing & Wellness Strategy	Health services
North Hamilton Community Health Centre	Health services
Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative	Health services and prevention
St. Peter's Hospital - Rehabilitation Program	Medical care and varied supports
St. Joseph's Health Care	Medical care and varied supports

## Funding

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
Beth Tikvah Foundation of Hamilton, Passport	Direct funding and funding for agency services (incl. leisure)
Canadian National Autism Foundation	Education, fundraising, awareness

## Housing and Employment

Organization	Link between Persons with Disabilities and Recreation
AbleLiving Services, Inc.	Housing and in-home support
Conway Opportunity Homes Inc.	Housing
Crazy Daisy Floral Productions Organization	Employment and advocacy
Good Shepherds Non-Profit Homes	Housing
Hatts Off Specialized Services, Dundas Location	Youth group homes and day programs; care for adults with acquired brain injuries
Helen Zurbrigg Non-Profit Homes	Housing
Home for Independent Living and Learning	Residential services for adults with acquired brain injuries (incl. recreation)
Homestead Christian Care	Housing
L'Arche Hamilton	Residential services (incl. recreation)
PATH Employment Services	Employment
Rygiel Supports for Community Living	Residential, respite and day supports
Shalom Village	Long term care facility (incl. recreation)

## APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF PROMISING PRACTICES

As referred to in section 4.2, this compilation of promising practices has been gathered through site visits, staff workshop, expert interviews, and journal and article reviews, and provides Hamilton with some food for thought as it moves forward with the implementation of the Study.

<b>PROMISING PRACTICES – ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS</b>
Developing a policy that speaks to the legislative requirements, accessibility, inclusion and the need to provide equitable services for all residents of the community, with specific principles and directions surrounding the provision of services to persons with disabilities.
Establishing an internal staff team that can ensure that staff have the tools to confidently develop, offer/enable and evaluate (e.g., through performance measures) recreation services for persons with disabilities.
Removing systemic barriers and discriminatory practices from employment policies and procedures.
Centralizing expertise as well as decentralizing leaders to fully implement programs/services with common guidance. Centralizing a position called “Advocate for Persons with Disabilities”.
Defining a program model in concert with stakeholders (e.g., a blended model of integrated programs and adapted programs, where appropriate).
Offering employment opportunities and requirements that are barrier free for applicants with disabilities.
Annually planning and reporting on the requirements and compliance with the <i>Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> .
Developing targets and performance measures to demonstrate inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and effectiveness in providing services. Performance measures may include (at a minimum): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of programs and opportunities;</li> <li>• Increased participation;</li> <li>• Increased satisfaction (participants and stakeholders);</li> <li>• Increased number of retained participants; and</li> <li>• Increased staff confidence in supporting programs and program development.</li> </ul>

<b>PROMISING PRACTICES – ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS</b>
Ensuring that all advisory committees serving the municipality are representative of the community including persons with disabilities.
Creating a leadership assessment tool to allow employees to assess the accessibility of the work environment and work culture.
Regularly providing sensitivity and awareness training with reference materials on access, equity and human rights issues to all persons involved with service provision within the governance and delivery structure. This training may include (but not be limited to) Human Rights, Liability and Risk Management, <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act</i> , and Inclusion and Support Policies.
Including access and equity approaches in all training (e.g., customer service and service provision training at all levels of the organization, etc.).
Ensuring that equal opportunity standards are met and all accommodations will be made in the workplace to provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to become employed and /or volunteer.
Encouraging employees and senior staff to contribute their expertise to stakeholder organizations in order to allow staff to gain a better understanding of issues facing persons with disabilities and aiding organizations to navigate government offices.
Ensuring procedures are in place and staff are trained and knowledgeable on how to handle incidents of intolerance, as well as addressing issues of safety and access at public events.
Communicating emergency systems to all employees including procedures to support persons with disabilities.
Providing a variety of self study materials that are available to all employees through an intranet web portal.
Providing opportunities for staff to tour programs provided by other service providers.
Hosting a conference on latest developments in providing recreation services to persons with disabilities.
Partnering with Community Colleges and Universities for providing co-op placements for students with disabilities.

<b>PROMISING PRACTICES – ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS</b>
Developing and implementing a ‘buddy system’ for new hires to provide support for both able bodied and staff with disabilities.
Providing paid internships to staff with disabilities through the “Ability Edge” program.
Examining the interview process to ensure that there are opportunities for candidates to demonstrate needed skill in adaptive fashions.
Promoting recreational opportunities through local distribution channels (e.g., internet) and through support organizations.
Ensuring that all communications are in plain language, printed in 12 font size and Arial font with no glossy paper stock.
Reviewing all related documents and communications to determine which ones would be more helpful if translated into predominant languages.
Developing a portal on the City website regarding opportunities provided within the City and through other respective supports for persons with disabilities.
Including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) with audio podcasts on the City’s website.
Providing all public documents in alternate formats (if requested), including Braille, large print, and electronically, based on the needs of the public.
Informing external bodies, including consultants and contractors, about related policies and requirements.

<b>PROMISING PRACTICES – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>
Ensuring that all accessible locations (parks, trails and facilities) are listed in the recreation guide.
Ensuring that accessible playgrounds and amenities are listed in parks and trails maps and guides.
Developing a City-wide directory of all services and support organizations including key dates for registration, information sessions, etc.

<b>PROMISING PRACTICES – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>
Providing resource support (such as meeting space, information sessions, and research information) to community organizations to assist them in providing services.
Providing support workers (both paid and volunteer) to assist participants in integrating into programs.
Developing a complaints/praise mechanism to promote continual dialogue.
Developing programs and services with full input from local groups and individuals.
Piloting programs and providing for expansion as demand exceeds capacity.
Taking advantage of existing programs provided through support organizations (i.e., Special Olympics, para-sports, etc.).
Keeping well informed on equipment developments that allow persons with disabilities to participate fully in programs and services.

<b>PROMISING PRACTICE – PROGRAMS AND SERVICES</b>
Ensuring that programs and facility allocation policies include dedicated time for persons with disabilities within facilities for segregated/integrated programming.
Tracking the demand and usage of integrated and segregated services for planning and evaluation purposes.
Ongoing customer satisfaction polling after each program session.
Hosting annual focus groups engaging the thoughts and contributions of persons with disabilities and their caregivers/parents.

**PROMISING PRACTICES – STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Developing and maintaining an inventory of all support organizations, listing all recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Developing and supporting a City-wide recreation accessibility committee for persons with disabilities.

Establishing partnerships which can assist in building the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities.

Ensuring that a grants program includes specific initiatives that support the provision of opportunities inclusive of persons with disabilities.

**PROMISING PRACTICES – VOLUNTEERS**

Developing a volunteer manual that speaks to the recruitment, training, supervision, retention and recognition of volunteers supporting persons with disabilities.

Developing and soliciting volunteer opportunities to local youth groups and schools.

Providing ongoing training opportunities and current resources to volunteers.

Providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to volunteer.

Ensuring that the volunteer recognition program rewards volunteerism involving persons with disabilities.

## APPENDIX F: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO ONLINE FEEDBACK FORM

An online feedback form was posted on the City's website from August to November 2011. The form included 6 questions:

- What recreation and sport activities are currently provided to persons with disabilities within Hamilton that you know of?
- How well are the City and community organizations meeting the recreational needs of persons with disabilities?
- In your opinion, how well communicated are recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities?
- How do you think that recreation opportunities could be better communicated?
- What are the primary barriers for persons with disabilities in participating in recreational activities?
- Are there specific recreational activities, programs, or services for persons with disabilities that you feel are missing in your area?

60 responses to the online feedback form were received, predominantly from City residents caring for a family member or friend with a disability; some responses were also received from community organizations offering services to persons with disabilities. The full results are detailed below.

- What recreation and sport activities are currently provided to persons with disabilities within Hamilton that you know of?
  - Taoist tai chi
  - Soccer
  - YMCA programs
  - Hospital outpatient programs
  - Special Olympics
  - Seniors centre programs
  - Challenger baseball
  - Hamilton Sports Challengers
  - Bowling
  - Basketball
  - Saltfleet soccer
  - Kidaca
  - Floor hockey
  - Salvation Army
  - Aquatherapy
  - Swimming
  - TEAD
  - YWCA programs
  - Sledge hockey
  - Day programs
  - Teen Venture
  - Club GAIN
  - Charlton House
  - Track and field
  - McMaster Sports Fitness School
  - Ancaster Phoenix Soccer
  - Day camps
  - Stoney Creek Disabled Sport Assoc.
  - MacWheelers
  - City programs are modified



- How well are the City and community organizations meeting the recreational needs of persons with disabilities?
  - Cost is a barrier, but subsidies help
  - More staff are required
  - Programs are of good quality, but are not offered often enough or in enough locations
  - More advertisement and promotion is needed
  - Work with community organizations and private sector in partnership
  - More programs are needed for younger populations and for adults between 20 and their 50s
  - Need more family changerooms and adaptive equipment
  - Support staff at camps are great, and it would be nice to have them run social groups year round
  - Snoezelen room
  - Growing number of persons with disabilities
  - Many feel needs are not being met very well
  - Physical barriers limit participation
  - Staff should receive Allergy Aware training
  
- In your opinion, how well communicated are recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities?
  - 32 respondents explicitly stated that opportunities are not communicated well, 14 suggested that communication was fair, and 1 commented that the City was communicating very well regarding recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities
  - Difficult to filter information
  - Website needs improvement
  - Programs are only discovered when they are being removed or cancelled
  - Hear about programs through parents, educational assistants, and community associations
  - Need staff at recreation centres to be able to help persons with disabilities
  - Marydale Park does a good job communicating
  - Use simple language and pictures
  - Appreciate having the Access and Equity Office as a point of contact

- How do you think that recreation opportunities could be better communicated?
  - Community information sites
  - Flyers
  - Posters
  - Ads
  - Free trials
  - City website
  - Newspapers
  - Radio
  - Inclusive marketing
  - Separate program guide
  - Paper and electronic formats
  - Increase public awareness
  - Through recreation therapists at the hospitals
  - Mailing list
  - Email
  - School board newsletters
  - Links on main City website
  - Notify people who receive government subsidies (e.g., ODSP)
  - RSS feed
  - Have informed staff at all community centres
  - Find a more politically correct term than 'disability'
  - DSO
  - Arrange the information guide by interest, not by centre
  
- What are the primary barriers for persons with disabilities in participating in recreational activities?
  - Physical barriers
    - Need for transfer assistance
    - DARTS and other transportation options are limited
    - Location of facilities and programs
    - Times at which programs are offered
    - Need automated doors
    - Need snow cleared
  
  - Systemic and other barriers
    - Lack of awareness of persons with disabilities
    - Stigma
    - Lack of funds
    - Lack of confidence to participate
    - Lacking age and ability appropriate options

- Lack of support workers at programs
  - Communication methods may not reach all persons
  - Need supportive staff
  - Staff and volunteers need to be flexible in dealing with behavioural issues
  - Finding programs
  - Language
  - Lack of integration
- Are there specific recreational activities, programs, or services for persons with disabilities that you feel are missing in your area?
    - Restore the ski hill
    - Fitness rooms
    - Adult art programs, adult language programs, and affordable and accessible exercise programs in South Central Hamilton
    - Programs in Ancaster
    - Dance programs
    - Summer camps for older youth (16+)
    - More programs like Teen Venture
    - Bowling, swimming, and basketball in Stoney Creek
    - Swimming (including one-to-one instruction) in Dundas
    - Programs for adults 20-50
    - Segregated kids sports programs on the Hamilton Mountain
    - More sports programs
    - Seniors physical activities in Stoney Creek
    - Specific programs for persons with developmental disabilities
    - Programs at Dominic Agostino Recreation Centre
    - Aquatics
    - Gymnastics, yoga, soccer, and basketball on the East Mountain
    - More sports at community centres in Ancaster in the early evening and on the weekends
    - Theatre and drama programs in Ancaster, Dundas or West Hamilton
    - More sensory stimulating programs (e.g., music, snoezelen, drum therapy)
    - More programs in Stoney Creek
    - Team sports in East Hamilton
    - Affordable fitness programs with peer support
    - More bowling spots
    - More programs on the Hamilton Mountain
    - More programs on the West Hamilton Mountain (e.g., dance, swimming, karate, crafts, exercise)

## **APPENDIX G: SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN BACKGROUND**

Delivering and enabling recreation services for persons with disabilities requires a thoughtful and collaborative approach coupled with the right tools and resources. The most effective service delivery models utilize:

- foundational policies and procedures;
- direct and indirect service delivery;
- centralized expertise with de-centralized service delivery;
- collaboration with partners and stakeholders;
- training, professional development and ongoing support to staff;
- adaptive, inclusive and specialized programs and services;
- a normalized and confidential intake process;
- volunteer and paid support workers;
- ongoing input from participants; and
- compliance with legislative requirements.

### **Foundational Policies and Procedures**

The Corporation of the City of Hamilton has developed an Access and Equity Office that ensures equitable access to services, programs, and opportunities, including employment for all, and pays particular attention to those groups and individuals in the community that are considered underserved. The Corporation has identified the following groups as requiring better focus and resources:

- persons with disabilities;
- Aboriginal and First Nations;
- gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals;
- seniors;
- women;
- racialized individuals;
- youth;
- persons of all creeds; and
- immigrants and refugees.

Specific policies have been developed to articulate the City's role in better serving these populations, recognizing that a person with a disability could have a background in one or more of these groups. The City has developed and approved policies on Equity and Inclusion, Racial Equity, and Accessibility. As a first step, staff in the Recreation Division will need to review these policies and ensure that any subsequent departmental policies are aligned with the intent and role outlined within the stated corporate policies.

Further work on policy development should centre on (at a minimum):

- the delivery of programs and services for persons with disabilities (vision, guiding principles and the service delivery model);
- an intake policy for recreation participants requiring assistance (referencing the protection of privacy legislation);
- support worker policy (support workers gain free access to facilities when assisting a person with a disability);
- the AODA and its application within recreation facilities and the provision of programs and services;
- inclusive behaviour management as it pertains to Hamilton's zero tolerance policies; and
- allocation of facility spaces considering adapted and specialized programs, sports, and activities for persons with disabilities.

## Direct and Indirect Service Delivery

The City's Recreation Division currently offers programs and services to persons with disabilities utilizing two distinct but collaborative program approaches – direct and indirect program delivery. **Direct** program and service delivery promotes and provides opportunities for persons with disabilities to attend and participate in all programs that are being offered and organized by staff to the public (e.g., arenas, camps, fitness facilities, aquatics etc.). The Division also collaborates with community groups and external organizations – referred to as **indirect** service delivery – to facilitate the delivery of programs and services. The indirect approach witnesses staff working with organizations and associations in providing public spaces so that programs can be offered by the external organizations. This is appropriate as the City would like to maximize the use of public spaces and recognizes that staff cannot be everything to everyone. It is fitting that organizations specializing in supporting persons with disabilities would have the current knowledge and support mechanisms in place to offer these programs.

## Centralized and De-Centralized Expertise

In order to enable quality and informed service delivery, centralized expertise and knowledge is critical. The Division has recently hired a **Supervisor of Special Needs** to provide this centralized support and act as a point person within the community to address the reduction of barriers to participation, develop foundational policy, procedures and training, prepare staff and volunteers, and develop and grow meaningful programs and services. This central expertise is critical in order to develop the skills and competencies

needed by decentralized frontline staff to deliver the programs, work with groups at the grassroots level, and most importantly, confidently welcome persons with disabilities into their centres. Frontline staff must be trained and supported at all levels to strengthen local relationships, understand local needs, develop local partnerships and programs and ensure that barriers are addressed that may be facility or neighbourhood specific.

## **Adopting a Community Development/Engagement Approach**

Over the years, the City has fostered some productive connections with a variety of partners such as sport groups, service clubs and community organizations serving persons with disabilities. Generally speaking, these relationships have been shaped by the mandates and needs of each group and, therefore, there has not always been uniformity in the nature of the relations between the Division and its various partners. To resolve this situation, the Division could adopt a standard approach to involve community groups in the development and delivery of recreation services and programs for persons with disabilities.

Community development is highly dependent on citizen participation. Overall, community development aims to empower individuals and local communities through involvement, education, and skill development, in order to change existing conditions. These aims are achieved through such practitioner roles as research, education, group development, facilitation and advocacy.<sup>23</sup>

Key characteristics of a well functioning community development approach include the following:

- *Joint participation* in planning, implementation and evaluation. Staff and members of the volunteer or community organization determine the issues and goals and then make a collective commitment to implement the solutions.
- *Partnerships, networking, collaboration and fun* at all levels of program development and implementation. Partnering groups support each other's efforts to produce results and to seek out ways to share resources in pursuit of common goals.
- *Shared decision making* between professional staff, community leaders and key stakeholders. Decisions affecting programs, policies and resources are made collectively instead of by one or two individuals within either the Department or the community group.

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<sup>23</sup> Hutchison, P., & Nogradi, G. (1996). The concept and nature of community development in recreation and leisure services. *Journal of Applied Recreation Research*, 21, 93-130.

- *Empowerment*, self-reliance and peer leadership are fostered throughout the process. It builds on community members' strengths. Relationships with the municipality are negotiated such that professional staffs "do with" instead of "do for".
- *Shared beliefs* in the benefits of collective action. Activities are grounded in a set of values articulating the worth and capacity of people to work together for mutual goals.
- The effects of *socio-economic considerations* such as the issue of poverty and lack of access due to financial constraints.

Effective community development approaches involve proactively engaging groups in most phases of program planning, design, delivery and evaluation. Community groups help to identify issues and goals and then make collective commitments to produce positive solutions. Functional community development approaches produce partnerships, networks and collaboration at all levels of program design and delivery.

As the demand for increased programming expands, community organizations could assume a more significant role in certain aspects of Hamilton's recreation and culture service delivery system. Applying the principles of a community development approach would strengthen the Division's relationship with its partners and increase community capacity.

Throughout the province, recreation departments have far more relationships with local community organizations than with any other type of partner. Usually, departmental service priorities speak to nurturing these relationships by employing a community development approach. Within certain boundaries, staff assists community groups to become valuable players in the success and sustainability of the leisure delivery system.

## **Collaborative Approach with Partners and Stakeholders**

No one organization can aptly meet the recreational needs of all persons with disabilities in Hamilton. It will take a coordinated and thoughtful approach to keep focussed on the vision and develop plans and actions that will address these needs. Staff must work in collaboration with support groups to reduce duplication of efforts and utilize limited resources most effectively.

Staff's role is to work collectively with support organizations to:

- understand current needs and trends through continuous research and providing communication and input opportunities for persons with disabilities;

- keep abreast of current issues and work together to develop appropriate recreational opportunities;
- remove barriers within staff's purview;
- provide public spaces that are accessible, close to public transportation and in proximity to users;
- promote all available recreational opportunities; and
- continue to evaluate grow quality programs for persons with disabilities.

## **Adapted Programs and Services**

Human Rights legislation and the City of Hamilton's Access and Equity policies articulate that barriers are to be removed in order to provide and facilitate adapted programs and services for all persons. It should be noted that staff cannot provide programs and services equally to all patrons because needs and abilities may differ. Staff and support organizations should have the mandate to provide programs equitably to persons with disabilities, thus allowing for differing approaches to ensure that all residents have access. While this concept may be a given in the development of this report, it must also be recognized that there is often a need to adapt programs to the needs of participants – possibly through specialized equipment (e.g., sledges for ice skating or sledge hockey) or program expectation changes – as well the need for some programs to be specialized or exclusive to those with disabilities.

It is suggested as a general guideline that staff work toward offering fully inclusive programs with adaptations where required in a direct fashion. This should be the primary responsibility of the City in that all its programs and services are offered to all residents in an equitable fashion. For example, a swim class would be offered to all residents, with adaptations made by the staff who would determine the need and feasibility of adapting the program or service in consultation with the affected or underserved community. Specialized programs would be best offered in partnership with support organizations through the provision of space, accessible facilities, or possibly the provision of specialized equipment.

## **Intake Process**

Participants that might require assistance in order to participate in programs and services are best served by discussing specific needs with staff prior to attending the program. This intake approach has served participants well in that recreational counselling can occur to discuss opportunities, best locations, assistance required, and prepare staff to provide the best experience possible.



The intake process can be provided at any time of the year and will allow staff and support organizations to track trends and needs within the community.

## **The Provision of Paid and Volunteer Support Workers**

The City of Hamilton has a current policy that allows for free admission to recreation facilities and programs for support workers assisting a person with a disability. This is an excellent way to ensure full access to facilities and more meaningful participation. Many municipalities are utilizing paid and volunteer support workers to enable full access to programs where a support worker cannot be provided through a participant's network of family, friends or paid support. This is considered necessary in order for the municipality to provide equitable access for all residents.

## **Ongoing Input from Participants**

Meeting the recreational needs of persons with disabilities requires strong relationships and ongoing dialogue with participants and potential participants. This communication can take many forms, such as annual focus groups, a reference committee to test new ideas and better understand current trends and needs, an email address for the lead City staff person in order to register complaints and concerns, and an open door policy for all staff. These mechanisms can only serve to prevent Human Rights concerns and provide better advice to providers of programs and services.

## **Compliance with the Requirements of the Accessibility Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

The full requirements of the AODA are discussed previously in this report and remain a very important element of service delivery. Ongoing review to monitor any changes can be obtained at the Lifestyle Information Network website (<http://www.lin.ca>), home of Canada's National Recreation Database. The legislation database provides all of the current requirements affecting the provision of recreation and cultural services in Ontario. Further, an audit tool describes in plain language the requirements and allows service providers to identify any gaps.

## Implementation

In re-evaluating the organizational effectiveness of its program and services delivery, the Recreation Division recognized a gap in providing centralized expertise for persons with disabilities. The Division has elected to include this expertise via the renewal of the position of **Supervisor of Special Needs**, which has been a welcome addition by staff and the community alike, as the provision of programs and services for persons with disabilities had taken a decline as a result of the elimination of this position in years past. The Division is currently embracing the direct and indirect model to a certain extent by offering camps and adapted programs, while also working in concert with community groups and organizations. The results of the consultations to support this study have found that the delivery model requires strengthening, promotion, and improved resources.

## **APPENDIX H: PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN BACKGROUND**

Hamilton's Recreation Division is under increasing pressure to provide quality leisure facilities, programs and services within limited capital and operating budgets. It is likely that these pressures will continue for the foreseeable future or even intensify. To meet increasing expectations while keeping costs in check, it will be important that the City establish a sustainable approach to delivering programs and services to persons with disabilities.

Many departments cultivate and maintain relationships with community groups that in turn participate in the recreation and leisure service delivery process. In some cases, departments support their partners to help build capacity to provide their own programs and services. These types of relationships are most effectively achieved through the implementation of a vision, guiding principles, a common plan, and a focus that all organizations buy into, with each providing their own program/service type.

### **Standardizing Service Provision Decisions**

Departments that have successfully implemented partnership arrangements suggest that a standardized framework is helpful in choosing the most appropriate delivery strategy as well as measuring the capacity of potential service providers. Furthermore, a pre-set process allows for the Division to proactively pursue and cultivate relationships with community groups based on the needs of the residents.

Municipalities generally utilize a similar thought process to decide upon the most appropriate service delivery approach and the most suitable relationship with community groups. However, the process is often not documented and, therefore, it is difficult to ensure that it is uniformly applied to each group or candidate project.

Hamilton's relationships with its community partners are important to the process of fulfilling the Division's service delivery goals in the most financially responsible fashion. Although it is likely the City will remain the primary provider of recreation facilities to accommodate leisure activities, the Division could choose from a number of service delivery approaches to ensure appropriate programs and services are available to residents with disabilities.

Municipalities often use logic models or decision frameworks to determine the most appropriate service delivery approach for new or existing programs and services in consultation with underserved or affected communities. Effective frameworks provide answers to several important questions:

- Is the proposed service needed in the community?
- Is the proposed service consistent with municipal values?
- Who is best equipped to deliver the service?
- Will municipal interests be protected within the selected approach?

A sample of a standardized alternative service provision framework is presented in the following table. The criteria could be customized in accordance with the nature of the service or program in question (e.g., its complexity, target audience, risks, and public demand).

## **Planning to Partner**

The City's expansion of recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities can be thoughtfully grown through the use of partnerships. Not all programs and services can be, nor should they be, provided directly through City staff. Staff and key stakeholders should engage in a review process to consider a City-wide response to the provision of needed programs and services for persons with disabilities, including the following questions:

- How will potential partners be expected to align with municipal values and philosophies (for example access and equity principles)?
- What are the minimum legal attributes, resources and security requirements a partner must bring to the relationship and what mechanisms will be necessary to validate the partner's true capacities?
- How will quality assurance be determined?
- Under what conditions will the City absorb risk and what will determine the municipality's risk tolerance and should this be any different from other sport and community groups?
- How (if at all) will stakeholders and other with a vested interest in the provision of programs and services be included in deliberations regarding the partnership?
- What will be the municipality's financial and other expectations for a partnership and under which conditions will certain types of investments to a partnered program be considered?
- How will success be measured over time?

## Opportunities Audit

An opportunities audit is a series of steps that act as a filtering process in helping the City define suitable programs and services for which partnerships could be considered. The audit is also a useful method to identify existing or new projects for which the City could proactively seek a partner for. This will involve determining the range of services and/or facilities that may be considered for a partnership. The following steps are generally included in the audit process:

- consider the range of recreational programs and services provided for persons with disabilities in each age group and directed toward underserved populations (as articulated through the City of Hamilton Access and Equity Policy). The exercise is to ensure an equitable range of active and creative programs and services;
- identify the gaps in service provision and the identified needs;
- identify a range of services that may be potential partnership candidates to meet these specific needs and which community and support groups could assist in the provision of the program;
- determine cost/revenue implications of the traditional municipal model;
- identify a range of potential partners and determine the partner contributions to the project;
- determine appropriate public sector contribution to the project – consideration of grants (declining over three years to allow growth and sustainability) is often an excellent way of expanding programs with limited resources;
- identify potential stakeholder concerns and mitigating factors;
- identify service delivery mechanisms and potential gains that fit within the partnership arrangement;
- determine potential costs to the system by with implementing the model;
- identify the priority of the opportunity within the recreation services continuum; and
- identify procedures and desired timetable for the pursuit of partners.

## Methods of Locating Partners

There are four basic means of locating potential partners:

- negotiation with known City-wide support organizations;
- tender call process;
- consideration of proposals submitted to the City by outside groups; and
- requests for proposals (RFPs).

Negotiations with known City-wide support organizations are generally most appropriate when dealing with not-for-profit groups, community associations or other public sector organizations in the City and in neighbouring municipalities. Sole sourcing may also be appropriate when there is only one provider of the desired product or service available in the marketplace, which is typically the case.

The tender call process is appropriate when the City is seeking a well-defined product, service or commodity and detailed specifications are available. It should be understood that the tender process generally limits the potential for creativity and discussion on the part of candidate partners.

The Request for Proposal process is appropriate when the City identifies a need or opportunity, but the means to achieve the desired outcomes are not readily known and creative solutions are expected.

## **Elements of a Successful Partnership**

Each potential partnership must respond to specific needs and be structured consistent with the requirements of the programs or service. However, several common elements are usually inherent with successful partnerships, including:

- the venture will be mutually beneficial to the partners;
- clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- project and financial plan;
- performance evaluation methodology by determining outcome upfront;
- shared commitment to serve the needs of those affected by the venture;
- a commitment to improve; and
- fair and honest recognition of each partner's contribution.

It is imperative that the Recreation Division expand the number and range of recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities. A lack of opportunities was clearly an issue and a common theme taken from the consultation process. Staff will need to be creative as they grow these opportunities to work with community partners and be cognizant of limited resources.

## **APPENDIX I: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MARKETING ACTION PLAN BACKGROUND**

A public awareness and marketing plan to promote current recreational opportunities to persons with disabilities is integral to ensuring that residents and participants have opportunities to provide input and volunteer to assist with the provision of services.

The current approach that the Division has taken in creating public awareness and promoting opportunities for persons with disabilities includes one page in the back half of the Recreation Guide that speaks to the commitment to include persons with disabilities, a description of the Support Worker Policy, Assistive Devices Policy and asks participants to fill in a form that requests additional assistance during programs. Further, the Recreation Guide describes in chart form the facilities that are accessible and partially accessible (without a written clear description of the categories) and that offer adapted and specialized programs.

While this is a good start and promotes what is available, more can be done to better promote and market services, such as increasing marketing and communications to include:

- dedicated portal on the website;
- dedicated publication to describe services and support policies and accessible facilities and amenities;
- the use of social media;
- sharing of programs and services on the websites of community agencies; and
- greater representation of persons with disabilities in all City publications.

The result should lead to a better informed public and service agency network as well as and – most importantly – increased participation in recreation programs and services.

## APPENDIX J: PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES ACTION PLAN BACKGROUND

The development of this Needs Assessment identifies some clear needs from participants and support organizations in two key areas of service provision: (1) facilities; and (2) and programs and services. These findings include:

- All facilities are not fully accessible, providing difficulty to patrons who have that expectation. Further, staff is not fully trained in welcoming persons with disabilities consistently in all facilities.
- It should be noted that the Division has completed an accessibility audit of its 15 major centres in keeping with the facility design guidelines. \$11 million of refurbishments have been identified in these major centres. Smaller recreation facilities and amenities have not been audited, nor has a budget amount been identified in the capital budget. During construction, accessibility requirements are addressed in new and renovated centres.
- The facility chart in the Recreation Guide leads much to the interpretation in terms of the definitions of low, medium and high accessibility standards. It would be helpful to have a map of the amenities and a clearer understanding of their respective accessibility.
- Program expansion would be achievable with some start up funding that could be reduced once the programs are sustainable.
- Program gaps include fitness programs, programs for children in the summer, ongoing programs for 18-35 year olds, and opportunities in Lower Hamilton. In addition, public input received through the online feedback form noted the following program/activity requests:
  - Restore the ski hill
  - Fitness rooms
  - Adult art programs, adult language programs, and affordable and accessible exercise programs in South Central Hamilton
  - Programs in Ancaster
  - Dance programs
  - Summer camps for older youth (16+)
  - More programs like Teen Venture
  - Bowling, swimming, and basketball in Stoney Creek
  - Swimming (including one-to-one instruction) in Dundas
  - Programs for adults 20-50
  - Segregated kids sports programs on the Hamilton Mountain
  - More sports programs



- Seniors physical activities in Stoney Creek
  - Specific programs for persons with developmental disabilities
  - Programs at Dominic Agostino Recreation Centre
  - Aquatics
  - Gymnastics, yoga, soccer, and basketball on the East Mountain
  - More sports at community centres in Ancaster in the early evening and on the weekends
  - Theatre and drama programs in Ancaster, Dundas or West Hamilton
  - More sensory stimulating programs (e.g., music, snoezelen, drum therapy)
  - More programs in Stoney Creek
  - Team sports in East Hamilton
  - Affordable fitness programs with peer support
  - More bowling spots
  - More programs on the Hamilton Mountain
  - More programs on the West Hamilton Mountain (e.g., dance, swimming, karate, crafts, exercise)
- There is some acceptance of adult with disabilities in senior's centres; however, participants that are not at least 55 years of age do not feel welcome.
  - 62% of the groups asked indicated that they were aware of the City of Hamilton's fee assistance policy. It was felt that there should be recognition that some persons with disabilities must spend additional funding on adaptations and assistive devices and therefore have a greater financial burden. Special considerations should be made in the fee assistance policy.
  - 67% of the groups that responded to the survey have partnership arrangements with the City and benefit through reduced rates for facilities and access to space. Those groups wishing to create and expand their partnerships were interested in greater access to public spaces, reduced fees for rental of facilities and greater communications.
  - Many groups were willing to provide needed training components to the City staff and partners including training in deaf awareness, national coaching certification for Special Olympians, access and reducing barriers, adapting activities, lifts and transfers, back education, sensitivity training, brain injuries, governance training, policy review, and communications with persons with communication challenges; Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability have created an accessibility training and professional development tool and offer accessibility workshops.
  - Groups identified the following issues as program and service gaps and barriers: transportation, language, locations, mental health issues, lack of volunteers, fundraising and start-up dollars, programs are not fully

accessible or serve one type of disability, social isolation, fatigue, equipment, need for one-on-one support, training, promotion of support organizations, equitably distributed opportunities, and little choice.

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
<b>Service Improvement Action Plan</b>				
1. Communicate the City's role in the provision of recreation services for persons with disabilities to provide accessible facilities, integrated programs, communications, promotions and marketing, and capacity building with support agencies who can provide specialized/adapted programs.	X			Director of City Wide Services
2. Develop, revise and implement policies and procedures supporting equitable access to recreation services for persons with disabilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AODA and its application in recreation services and facilities;</li> <li>• allocation of public spaces;</li> <li>• access for person from low income backgrounds;</li> <li>• the provision of support workers;</li> <li>• behaviour management/zero tolerance; and</li> <li>• an intake policy.</li> </ul>	X			Program Development
3. Continue the reference group made up of representatives of support organizations, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups with quarterly meetings to discuss the progress on the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> , collaboration, program and service development, and performance measures, producing an annual report on progress.	X			Program Development
4. In City Wide Services rename the Supervisor of Special Needs position to Supervisor Social Inclusion in Recreation Services, and broaden the position scope over time to address all underserved populations.	X			Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
5. Participate in the Municipal Networking Group of recreation practitioners serving persons with disabilities.	X	X	X	Program Development
6. Establish a project team lead by the Supervisor Social Inclusion with both Program Development and District Operations staff to implement the actions as outlined in the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> .	X			Program Development
7. Under the guidance of the City's Human Resources Department seek to increase the numbers of employees and volunteers with disabilities. Consider providing paid internship to staff through the Ability Edge program and local opportunities such as Ableworks.		X		Division Director
8. Ensure that all Division advisory committees and reference groups are representative of the community, including persons with disabilities.		X		Division Director
9. Provide professional development opportunities for staff to work directly with organizations serving persons with disabilities to increase their individual awareness.			X	Division Director
10. Develop a staff training and professional development program to build staff and volunteer skills in welcoming and providing services for persons with disabilities (e.g., self study resources and materials, training manuals and staff/volunteer support sessions and touring specialized facilities).	X			Program Development
11. Establish staff procedures to handle situations of intolerance, addressing issues of safety within facilities and at special events.	X			Program Development
12. Where applicable add the subject area of 'providing services to persons with disabilities' to performance evaluations. Each Recreation Section to develop annual objectives and monitored progress.		X		Division Director

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
13. Work with partner organizations to develop and deliver professional development and training to staff, volunteers and community groups. Work with groups to develop training tools on specific disabilities in order for staff and volunteers to best understand the disability and possibilities with respect to inclusion and recreation programs and services.	X			Program Development
14. Staff appropriately to provide leisure counselling and assistance to participants requiring this service. Where needed revise job descriptions to include required skills.		X		Rec Directors
15. Monitor and report to the Community Services GM on the Division's compliance with the requirements of the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities legislation.	X	X	X	Program Development
16. Create a stronger partnership with the Hamilton Public Library system to better understand city-wide and neighbourhood initiatives that have the potential to serve persons with disabilities.	X			Program Development
<b>Partnership Action Plan</b>				
17. Through the Inform Hamilton web site maintain and expand the inventory of recreational programs and services available to persons with disabilities.		X		Program Development
18. Host annual focus groups with organizations who serve participants with disabilities to determine the success of current programming and what improvements are needed.	X	X		Program Development
19. Identify partners able to assist in service delivery and develop standardized partnership agreements which include deliverables, risk, contributions from each party, forecasted service levels and a performance review process.		X		Sport & Community Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
20. Do a cost/benefit assessment for each partnership to determine participant satisfaction levels and performance gaps		X		Program Development
<b>Public Awareness and Marketing Action Plan</b>				
21. Ensure inclusive images representing the diversity of the City including persons with disabilities are used to promote City programs and services.		X	X	Business Support
22. Include and highlight a pull-out section in the Recreation Guide that summarizes all programs and services for persons with disabilities (including links to programs provided by service and support agencies).		X		Business Support
23. Distribute the Recreation Guide directly to support agencies for persons with disabilities. Consider providing Guides to schools.	X			Business Support
24. Consider providing an audio version of the Recreation Guide on compact disc for persons with visual impairments.	X			Business Support
25. Use the international symbol of accessibility on print materials where possible.	X			Business Support
26. Work with the Inform Hamilton web site partners to provide a link on the Recreation web site to Inform Hamilton for easy access to recreation services and supports for persons with disabilities. With the partnership explore communication enhancements. Post the <i>Recreation Needs Assessments for Persons with Disabilities</i> on the City's website.	X			Business Support

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
27. Consider appropriate and alternate methods of messaging (e.g., text, pictures and symbols, sign language, Braille, voice, etc.) to ensure effective and open communication for all, in each Recreation communication plan associated with an initiative and/or project.	X			Business Support
28. Produce a separate resource document that depicts how recreation and support services are provided to persons with disabilities, how best to access programs and services, and links to all related service agencies and their programs.		X		Program Development
29. In accordance with the corporate policy on social networking promote recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities throughout Hamilton, accompanied by Recreation branding.	X	X		Business Support
30. Ensure that all print materials are in Arial (size 14) or Verdana (size 12) font, with no glossy print/pictures and no shaded colours, as per adopted standards.	X			Business Support
<b>Programs and Facilities Action Plan</b>				
31. As part of the annual capital budget process continue to aggressively fund the capital program upgrading recreation centres and arenas. Ensure the locations of the upgrade projects are equitably distributed on a geographical basis or in areas of greatest need. To complete the current Recreation Facilities and Capital Program upgrade program an annual allocation of \$2 million is needed for the next 5 years.	X	X	X	Facilities and Capital Programs

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
32. Revise the current Capital budget forecast on a complete upgrade requirement audit of all recreation facilities, in keeping with the barrier-free design guidelines and AODA standards, placing priority on facilities and amenities where there is a higher concentration of existing recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities. Ensure facility maintenance staff participate in the audit.	X	X	X	Facilities and Capital Programs
33. Create a program to introduce warmer water pools into the swimming and aquatic exercise pools to increase the comfort level of persons with physical disabilities and older adults.	X			Program Development
34. Consider the expanded provision of therapeutic pools and better equipped change rooms to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities as pools are refurbished.		X	X	Facilities and Capital Programs
35. Complete a ward or neighbourhood-specific inventory of available meeting spaces (including City facilities, schools, not-for-profit spaces, and spaces in businesses) capable of hosting localized recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.	X			Program Development
36. Host an annual staff training forum to introduce assistive devices for persons with disabilities and their uses.	X	X	X	Sport & Community Development
37. Ensure that each accessible facility offers specialized programs for persons with disabilities based on demonstrated need.		X	X	Program Development
38. Plan and deliver programs on a geographical basis to provide choices and a range of opportunities throughout the City.	X	X	X	Program Development
39. Plan and deliver programs are equitably distributed between age groups and disability types and throughout the City.	X	X	X	Program Development



	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
40. Plan and deliver new recreation and fitness programs and services including wheel chair sports for persons with disabilities in Lower Hamilton in the 18-35 year bracket.	X	X		Program Development
41. Create new initiatives targeted at welcoming persons with disabilities under 55 years of age, in all facilities with special consideration to senior facilities that may be uniquely suited to assist in this area.	X	X		Program Development
42. Ensure that transportation continues to be a critical consideration in program planning; meet twice a year with transit and DARTS management staff to discuss current and planned service levels.	X	X	X	Program Development
43. Plan for new programs based on an annual review of existing sport and recreation groups, schools, service clubs, and other community stakeholders existing inclusion practices.		X		Program Development
44. Provide start-up funding through the Community Partnerships Funding Program for programs for persons with disabilities; when programs become financially sustainable re-allocate funding to new opportunities.	X			General Manager Community Services
45. Provide start-up funding through the Community Partnerships Funding Program for programs for persons with disabilities; when programs become financially sustainable re-allocate funding to new opportunities.	X	X	X	General Manager Community Services
46. Provide simplified instructions to groups in completing the Community Partnership funding application and work with the lead of the Community Partnership to simplify the application.	X	X	X	General Manager Community Services
47. Track the number of program opportunities and participation for persons with disabilities to ensure the demand/need is met or gaps identified.	X			Program Development

	Years 1 & 2	Year 3	Years 4 & 5	Lead
48. Do an annual quality assurance user survey for programs for persons with disabilities to inform new and improved programs.		X		Program Development
49. Develop and implement a training program for volunteers to assist persons with disabilities to get the maximum benefit from recreation services.		X		Program Development
50. Develop and implement a buddy system where volunteers partner with participants with disabilities by assisting them to access and participate in recreation programs.		X		Program Development
51. Annually recognize and celebrate volunteers, staff and leaders who have increased the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities.		X		Program Development
<b>Performance Measurement and Evaluation</b>				
52. Report on the completion of the Action Plan's recommendations in the <i>Recreation Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</i> on an annual basis; plan the next year's deliverables based on progress and report to Recreation and Community Services management.	X	X	X	Program Development
53. Report annually to Recreation management on each Action Plan according to the performance measures in table below.	X	X	X	Program Development