



City of Thorold

Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan

DRAFT REPORT JUNE 2019



Community Consultation Results

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Recreation is defined as, “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.”¹

This report documents the findings of the community consultation program for the City of Thorold Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan, which took place in the winter of 2018. It contributes to the information base that will be used to develop a “Master Plan...[which]... will provide a framework based on community values, operational needs and financial realities. The plan will shape decision making over the next 10 years, towards achieving a 2029 vision” (RFP, p. 14).

While this report comprises a stand-alone document, the information presented here will be reproduced or summarized in the Master Plan document, as appropriate, to provide the information base for its analyses and recommendations. The report documents the consultation process and findings, under the following two main headings:

- Consultation activities, participants and process
- Consultation program findings

Appendices to the report contain detailed results on survey components of the consultation.

It is important to note that the report simply documents findings at this stage in the study process. It does not include critical evaluation of the findings to date against background research, and additional inquiries that might be required to clarify/expand on relevant information. As such, the material presented here comprises participants’ opinions only, including contradictory views possible misconceptions; claims that require further investigation; and issues that may be beyond the scope of a high level master plan. Our primary purpose at this point is to faithfully reproduce the input gathered through the various consultation activities.

¹ Canadian Parks and Recreation Association/Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (February 2015). A Framework for Recreation in Canada - 2015 - Pathways to Wellbeing. Ottawa: Canadian Recreation and Parks Association. 40 pages.

2.0 CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES, PARTICIPANTS AND PROCESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The community consultation program comprised a variety of opportunities for all stakeholders in the City to provide input to preparing the master plan in its early stages of development. The program comprised the following components:

- public open house to launch the process and initiate community input
- random telephone survey of residents
- on-line resident survey posted on the City’s website
- web-based survey of organized program/activity providers
- survey of cycling clubs that use facilities in Thorold
- brief survey of community organizations with an interest in parks, trails and recreation services
- interviews with formal internal and external stakeholders
- focus groups with specific interests in/ users of parks and recreation services

Table 1 lists these activities and the number of people and/or organizations participating in each. The following sections detail the consultation process.

Table 1: Summary of Consultation Activities

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE (WEDNESDAY MARCH 20, 2019): 3 ATTENDEES	
SURVEY AND IN-COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES (NOVEMBER 14 TO DECEMBER 19, 2017)	
Surveys	Interviews and Focus Groups
Random telephone survey of residents: 400 completed, community-wide	Meetings with internal and external, formal stakeholders: 35
On-line resident survey: 147 respondents	Focus Groups: 13 sessions with a total of ten attendees
On-line survey of organized program/activity providers: 8 of 61 invited	
Cycling Club Survey: 3 of 6 invited	
Community Organization Survey: 1 of 21 invited	

2.2 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROCESS

2.2.1 PROMOTION AND PARTICIPATION IN PREPARING THE MASTER PLAN

A number of initiatives were undertaken early in the process, and continued as needed, to maximize community awareness and participation in the master planning process. The following summarized the activities conducted to this end:

- postings on the City’s website and Facebook page about the study and how to become involved;

- emailed invitations to individuals, organizations and businesses to participate in interviews and/or focus groups (see Appendix A);
- newspaper ads to solicit participants for focus groups, in cases where there is no organized representation of interests (e.g., households with children, artists/artisans, etc.) (see Appendix A);
- working with municipal and non-municipal stakeholders through their networks to encourage participation in relevant surveys, the public open house, focus groups, etc.

2.2.2 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

A public open house was held the evening of Wednesday March 20, 2019 to launch the

study and begin gathering community input for the plan. The open house comprised mapped displays of the City’s parks, trails and recreation facilities. Consultants were available for participants to engage in informal discussions about their interests in parks and recreation services. Suggestions for new or improved programs and services could also be marked on the maps, and/or provided on comment sheets. Three people attended the meeting. Their comments, suggestions and concerns are included in subsequent sections of the report.

2.2.3 RESIDENT SURVEYS

- Random Telephone Survey of Residents
- On-line Resident Survey

The telephone and on-line resident surveys were designed by the consultant, reviewed by the City, and administered by a survey research firm. The two surveys asked the same questions. The random telephone method was used to provide statistically significant results, capturing population from all areas of the City, and both users and non-users of recreation services. The on-line version was made available to the community-at-large via a link on the City’s website. Respondents self-selected to participate and so were more likely to comprise residents with an active interest in parks and recreation services. The random survey was conducted between April 1 and April 10, 2019, while the on-line survey was posted until April 26, 2019.

The detailed results of each of these surveys are contained in Appendix B.

Together, the surveys generated 547 responses: 400 random telephone and 147 on-line, respectively.

2.2.3 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A series of interviews with internal and external stakeholders were held on February 7 and 8, 2019 and March 7, 2019. These stakeholders represented formal agencies and organizations that deliver recreation services – including parks, trails, facilities and programs – to residents of Thorold. They included City representatives (elected, staff and committee volunteers), other public agencies (e.g., library), not-for-profit/volunteer program providers (e.g., TCAG, Seniors Association), and contracted services (e.g., Venture Niagara). A total of 36 interviews were held, comprising the following numbers:

- Mayor Council (9)
- Staff (9) from the following departments: Planning and Development Services; Operations – Arena and Pool; Parks and Cemeteries; Clerk’s Office/Accessibility; Public Works and Community Services; Finance.
- Committees of Council (12) from the following committees: Parks, Trails and Recreation; Active Transportation Advisory; Tourism Advisory; Age-Friendly; Port Robinson Community Centre; Lake Gibson Corridor Preservation Task Group.
- External stakeholders (6) from the

following agencies/groups: Thorold Community Activities Group (TCAG); Public Library; Santa Claus parade; Thorold Seniors Association; Venture Niagara.

Other agencies/service providers with a potential interest in the Master Plan that were contacted for phone interviews were:

- Niagara Region Public Health
- One Thorold
- Thorold Business Improvement Area (BIA)
- The District School Board of Niagara
- The Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Brock Recreation and Leisure Studies
- Allanburg Community Recreation Centre Board of Management
- Ontario Parks
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Accessibility Consultant

Of these, Niagara Region Public Health, the District School Board of Niagara, the Niagara Catholic District School Board and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority responded, and were interviewed by telephone in May 2019.

2.2.4 ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS

- On-line survey of volunteer recreation program/activity groups
- Community organization survey
- Cycling club survey
- Focus groups on the following topics related to parks and recreation: seniors; youth; households with young children; adults; business sector (2 sessions); arts and heritage; trails, natural areas and environment; special events; public partners; organized park users; arena users; faith-based organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEYS

With some initial direction from the consultant, the City developed comprehensive lists (contact name; agency or organization, if applicable; email or mailing address; phone number) of the groups and organizations to be invited to complete the first two surveys listed above.

For the survey of volunteer recreation program/activity groups that regularly use municipal facilities (hockey, figure skating, lacrosse, ball hockey, soccer, ball, tennis, Allanburg Community Centre users), a letter of introduction about the master plan and the purpose of the survey was emailed from the City to 61 organizations, along with the link to access the questionnaire. The letter was sent on April 11, 2019, with a deadline for completion of April 20, 2019. An email reminder was issued partway through this timeframe and, given a

low response to this point, the deadline was extended to April 26, 2019.

The community organization survey was sent to 21 local groups that, while not major users of municipal facilities, contribute to community-based recreation through the services they provide. The consultant issued this survey on short April 8, 2019, and a reminder email to request participation was sent on April 17, 2019.

After the focus group with trail users, it was decided to administer a separate survey of cycling clubs that use trails and on-road routes in Thorold. The session participants helped identify six clubs to be contacted and requested to complete the survey. The consultant emailed the clubs an introduction to the master plan along with the survey on April 8, 2019. This was followed up with a reminder to on April 15, 2019.

Appendix C contains a list of organizations and agencies that were invited to participate in the surveys, and the survey results.

Table 2: Participation in Surveys

SURVEY	NUMBER INVITED	NUMBER RESPONDING
Organized Program/Activity Providers	61	8
Community Organizations	21	1
Cycling Clubs	6	3
Totals	88	

FOCUS GROUPS

Invitations to focus groups comprised two approaches: 1) direct emails to invite individuals or organization representatives, and 2) invitations to the community at large through newspaper ads, the City’s Facebook page and website announcements. The open invitations were used to solicit participation for unorganized recreation activities such as casual use of trails, and potentially underserved groups (e.g., youth).

The sessions were held over two days - March

20 and 21, 2019 and opened with a briefing on the purpose and process of the master plan study, followed by discussion on the particular interests of each group in parks and recreation service development in the City. Table 3 shows the approach(es) used by session to invite participants and the number that attended each. Participation was low.

Table 3: Participation in Focus Group Sessions

SESSION	INVITATION METHODS	NUMBER ATTENDING/ INVITED
Seniors/retirees	Facebook, website, newspaper ad, direct email to Seniors Association	0
Youth	Facebook, website, newspaper ad	0
Households with young children	Facebook, website, newspaper ad	1
Adults	Facebook, website, newspaper ad	1 (phone call)
Business sector 1: recreation related businesses (e.g., fitness centres, halls, etc.)	direct email to businesses	0 of 7 invited
Business sector 2: beneficiaries of parks and recreation services (e.g. realtors, developers, retailers, BIAs, etc.)	direct email to all members of BIA through coordinator, direct email to external ??? contacts???	2 of 7 invited
Arts and heritage	Facebook, website, direct email to local artists	0
Trails, natural areas and environment	Facebook, website, newspaper ad	2
Special events	direct email	2 of 2 invited?
Public partners (existing or potential)	direct email	0 of ?? invited
Organized park users	direct email to all user groups	0 of 12 invited
Arena Users	direct email to all user groups	1 of 29 invited
Faith-based organizations	direct email to all local churches	1 of 8 invited

A total of ten people engaged in the focus groups, and many sessions had no attendees.

Appendix D contains a list of organizations and agencies that were represented at the meetings. The names of individuals are not provided to maintain anonymity.

FOLLOW-UP TO BOOST PARTICIPATION

To offset the lack of attendance at the focus group sessions, and low participation in the group surveys, follow-up work was conducted in an effort to boost participation in the study. An email was sent out to those invited (for whom addresses were available) who did not attend, to request an opportunity to speak with them on the phone about the Master Plan. Of 15 contacted, four responded to the request and three of these were interviewed by phone.

The following sections report on the findings of the consultation activities.

3.0 CONSULTATION PROGRAM FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings are discussed under the following headings:

- Facilities, parks and trails
- Programs and activities
- Service delivery
- Tourism and Visitors

The findings are consolidated here for the purposes of concise reporting, and to compare input from different sources. Findings are reported as given, with no analyses at this point in the process. The results of the consultation will be integrated in the service needs analyses, and supported by additional required research, in subsequent stages of the study.

The need to organize the consultation findings by topic is sometimes complicated by the reality that each area is part of an integrated system, and so not necessarily mutually exclusive. Service users also often do not distinguish between, for example, a ball diamond as a facility vs. part of a park. Given

this consideration, we have attempted to best place stakeholder input under individual topic areas to eliminate repetition in the discussion.

3.2 FACILITIES, PARKS AND TRAILS FINDINGS

3.2.1 USE OF SERVICES IN THOROLD AND AREA

Resident Surveys

Table 4 shows that both surveys revealed the majority of Thorold households use parks, trails or recreation facilities both locally and in surrounding communities for organized programs and/or unstructured activities.

Table 4: Use of Recreation Services by Community

	THOROLD ONLY	THOROLD & SURROUNDINGS	SURROUNDING ONLY	NEITHER
Random Telephone Survey	18%	61%	6%	15%
Self-selected On-line Survey	10%	86%	3%	1%

The respondents that said they or members of their household use parks, trails and facilities in Thorold, or in Thorold as well as surrounding communities, were asked which of the various facilities and spaces they use in the City. Table 5 shows the responses from both surveys and that both groups reported the same four of the top six most frequently used facilities or spaces.

At the same time, those who responded to the on-line survey are more noticeable users of playgrounds and toboggan hills.

Table 5: Use of Parks, Trails and Recreation Facilities in Thorold and Area

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=315)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=141)
Trails	28%	67%
Parks areas for socializing, informal use (e.g., picnics, socializing, dog walking, frisbee)	24%	69%
Swimming pool	20%	57%
Soccer fields	19%	38%
Ball diamonds	18%	35%
Splash pads	15%	64%
Cycling routes (on-road)	14%	36%
Tennis courts	14%	10%
Playgrounds	13%	71%
None (use indoor facilities)	12%	-
Basketball courts	9%	24%
Horseshoe pits	8%	5%
Toboggan hills	8%	43%
Bocce courts	5%	4%
Skatepark	3%	11%
Off-road vehicle tracks	-	2%
	(661 responses)	(754 responses)

Those telephone survey respondents who reported using trails (28% or 88) were asked about the specific trails they use and how they use them. The five most frequently named trails, by ten respondents or more were: Short Hills, Decew Falls Loop, Welland Canal, Black Walnut, and Terrace Creek. In the on-line survey, those using trails (94 or 67%) most often identified the Welland Canal, Mel Swart Lake Gibson Conservation Park, Short Hills, Beaverdam and Bruce.

As shown in Table 6, trail activities among both telephone and on-line survey respondents are proportionately comparable, with the majority engaging in pedestrian activities (i.e., include walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and with mobility aids such as wheelchairs). One quarter to almost one-third cycle, and small proportions participate in motorized activities (i.e., snowmobiling, ATVing and e-bikes).

Table 6: Trail Activities

	PEDESTRIAN	CYCLING	MOTORIZED
Random Telephone Survey (N=88)	71%	25%	3%
Self-selected On-line Survey (N=94)	67%	31%	2%

As might be expected, trails are most often used in the spring (39% and 29% of telephone and on-line respondents, respectively), summer (33% and 31%, respectively), fall (18% and 28%, respectively).

Ten percent of telephone survey participants and 13% of those completing the on-line survey reported winter use of trails.

Over half (53% or 168) of telephone survey respondents reporting use of parks and trails in the City of Thorold (89 people) think upgrades or improvements are needed. Similarly, the

majority of the on-line survey respondents (70% or 98) think improvements are required. A relatively large proportion of telephone survey respondents (44%) do not see the need for upgrades, while the second largest percentage of on-line survey participants (18%) were uncertain in this regard.

As shown in Table 7, respondents to both surveys were in agreement on the most needed improvements, although: 1) not in the same order of priority, and 2) with the exception of upgraded playground equipment,

which was the fourth most frequently noted by those responding to the on-line survey.

Table 7: Required Improvements to Parks and Trails in Thorold

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=168)	ON-LINE SURVEY (N=98)
Better maintenance	25%	9%
Benches, picnic tables, seating areas	11%	11%
More amenities (water, parking, lighting, bicycle parking, shade structures, etc.)	10%	7%
Washrooms and/or change rooms	10%	10%
Upgraded playground equipment	-	8%
	(484 responses)	(638 responses)

Program/Activity Group Survey

All seven groups use facilities in Thorold and three also use facilities in surrounding communities. Given the groups that responded, arenas and ball diamonds are the facilities that are most often used. Collectively, the groups use: arenas ice (4 groups); ball fields (2 groups), gyms (1 group), the Allanburg Community Centre (2 groups), on-road cycling routes (1 group), meetings rooms/class rooms

(1 group), and office/storage space (1 group). Three groups use facilities outside the City of Thorold, largely to access facilities/time not available locally. Named facilities were Ridley College, Seymour Hanah, Merriton, Gateway, and Gales Centre for ice time; Taylor Field and Bullett Sports Park for ball fields.

3.2.2 USE OF INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES IN THOROLD

Resident Surveys

The respondents that said they or members of their household use parks, trails and facilities in Thorold, or in Thorold as well as surrounding communities, were asked if they use indoor recreation facilities in Thorold. Over half (60% or 188) of telephone survey respondents use indoor recreation facilities. A comparable proportion (64%) of those who responded to this question in the on-line survey (141) also use indoor facilities in the City.

The respondents that said they or members of their household use indoor recreation facilities in Thorold were asked which facilities they use. Table 8 shows the responses from both surveys and that both groups reported

the same five of the top six most frequently used facilities or spaces, with the arenas and the library each reported by the majority of respondents in both surveys. The two local community centres - Port Robinson and Allanburg - each emerged as the fifth or sixth most frequently used space in both surveys.

Table 8: Use of Indoor Recreation Facilities in Thorold

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=188)	ON-LINE SURVEY (N=90)
Thorold Community Arenas	79%	87%
Thorold Public Library	68%	66%
TCAG Basciano Centre	30%	44%
Lock 7 Museum	25%	18%
Port Robinson Community Centre	22%	11%
Allanburg Community Centre	19%	24%
Thorold Community Theatre	13%	3%
Seniors Centre	8%	7%
Fire hall community rooms	5%	9%

Almost three-quarters (72% or 135) of telephone survey respondents who reported using indoor recreation facilities in Thorold think improvements or upgrades are needed. A larger majority (81% or 73) of on-line survey respondents indicated the need for improvements to indoor facilities in Thorold. With the exception of food service improvements noted by on-line respondents, both groups reported the same upgrade requirements most frequently, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Required Improvements to Indoor Facilities in Thorold

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=135)	ON-LINE SURVEY (N=73)
Modern spaces for indoor programming	17%	15%
Food services (e.g., healthier options, café style)	-	12%
Better support facilities/amenities (e.g., bicycle parking, change rooms/washrooms)	14%	11%
Better maintenance/cleaning	13%	9%
More/better located parking	13%	8%
	(276 responses)	(301 responses)

Among those who identified specific locations, the largest proportions of both telephone (18% or 24) and on-line survey respondents (34% or 25) identified Thorold Community Arenas as the indoor facility most in need of improvements.

Program/Activity Groups

The Thorold Amateur Athletic Association indicated need for additional weekly use of facilities but was uncertain about the number

of hours needed since it depends on bookings, timing and teams. The reasons more time is needed by the group is to accommodate additional participants in current programs and to improve opportunities for preferred scheduling.

Improvements that would make facilities better suited to program needs were noted, as follows:

- James Whyte Arena: More appropriate heat for spectators
- Frank Doherty Arena: Internet, larger lobby, proper signage/communication (TVs)

Table 10 shows that both groups of survey respondents most often use the same types of services in communities surrounding Thorold.

3.2.3 USE OF RECREATION SERVICES IN SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Resident Surveys

Over two-thirds (68% or 232) of respondents to the telephone survey reported regularly using parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs outside the City of Thorold, in surrounding communities. A large majority of on-line survey respondents (83% or 120) indicated use of services outside Thorold.

Table 10: Services Used in Surrounding Communities

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=232)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=120)
Arenas	45%	63%
Indoor pools	32%	59%
Program/activity spaces in community centres	20%	41%
Parks	19%	78%
Trails	19%	69%
Sports fields	17%	52%
Fitness facilities/workout gyms	16%	45%
Public Libraries	-	46%
	(470 Responses)	(645 Responses)

Reasons for travel outside Thorold to use recreation services that comprised at least 10% of responses in both surveys are shown in Table 11. Lack of availability locally was the primary reason noted by both telephone and on-line survey respondents, followed by newer/better design and/or quality of facilities and programs elsewhere.

Table 11: Reasons for Service Use in Surrounding Communities

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=232)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=120)
Programs/facilities we use are not available in the City of Thorold	19%	22%
Programs/facilities we use are newer/better design/quality	12%	16%
They are closer to our home than those in Thorold	11%	-
There is more variety to choose from	10%	19%
	(508 Responses)	(389 Responses)

When asked to name the community they most of visit to use recreation services, the Cities of Niagara Falls and St. Catharines were the two most frequent destinations reported by both telephone and on-line survey respondents:

- 46% (106) of telephone, and 22% (26) of online, respondents travel to Niagara Falls.
- 31% (71) of telephone, and 55% (66) of online, respondents travel to St. Catharines.

to use recreation services. It also shows an estimate of maximum drive time, among those who would be willing to spend more time driving to use similar facilities if they were made available in the City.

Table 12 shows the length of time respondents currently travel to destinations outside Thorold

Table 12: Current and Estimated Additional Drive Times

	TRAVEL TIME NOW		MAXIMUM ESTIMATED TIME	
	TELEPHONE (N=232)	ON-LINE (N=120)	TELEPHONE (N=148)	ON-LINE (N=78)
0 to 10 minutes	36%	19%	-	-
11 to 15 minutes	29%	48%	22%	31%
16 to 20 minutes	32%	23%	29%	35%
21 to 30 minutes	3%	4%	31%	27%
Over 30 minutes	-	3%	17%	8%
Don't know	<1%	3%	1%	-

Majorities of both telephone (65%) and on-line (67%) survey respondents currently travel up to 15 minutes to use services in surrounding communities.

Similar majorities of respondents to both surveys (64% or 148 telephone, and 65% or 78 on-line) said they would be willing to increase this drive time to use similar services in Thorold, with most respondents in each case (82% telephone, and 93% on-line) indicating they would travel between 11 and 30 minutes.

Program/Activity Groups

Three groups use facilities outside the City of Thorold. Those specifically identified include Ridley College, Gateway Ice, Merriton Ice, Gales Centre Arena, Taylor Field and Bullett Sport Park. Communities specified were Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland. Other non-local facilities were generally noted as Niagara Region arenas, and ball hockey facilities in St. Catharines.

The most prevalent reason for facility use in surrounding communities is to access facilities/time not available locally.

3.2.4 NEED FOR NEW OR ADDITIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES IN THOROLD

Resident Surveys

Almost half of the respondents to the telephone survey (48% or 193) think a new arena is needed to replace the James Whyte Arena. Over one-fifth (23%) is uncertain / undecided, while those opposed comprised 29%. A larger majority of on-line survey respondents (57% or 84) think a replacement arena is needed. The balance was split between opposition and uncertainty.

Those not in favour of replacing the James Whyte Arena provided reasons for their position. As shown in table 13, these focused on the view that there is no need for two arenas in Thorold, and that there are other recreation needs that should be given priority.

Table 13: Reasons Replacement of James White Arena is Not Needed

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=115)	ON-LINE SURVEY (N=31)
The Frank Doherty arena alone is sufficient to serve the city	26%	18%
More variety in recreation facilities is a greater priority than a new arena	24%	31%
There are enough arenas in surrounding communities to meet demand	22%	31%
Demand for ice is declining as participation in hockey is shrinking	-	12%
The cost/money can be spent on more important things	10%	-
	(125 responses)	(49 responses)

Comparable majorities of respondents to both surveys indicated that the City of Thorold should partner with the City of St. Catharines and Brock University if the proposal to build the 2021 Canada Games Complex proceeds and includes a double pad arena - provided local needs for access to prime-time use are met (60% or 239 of telephone, and 62% or 91 of on-line, survey respondents). Those not in favour comprised 24% (95) of telephone survey respondents and 20% (29) of on-line survey participants. The remaining respondents were uncertain in this regard.

Table 14 shows that, in both surveys, well over half the respondents think that the City of Thorold requires new parks, trails or recreation facilities: 63% (250) telephone survey respondents and 81% (119) on-line survey participants.

Table 14: Need for Other New Parks, Trails or Recreation Facilities

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=400)	ON-LINE SURVEY (N=147)
Other new parks, trails or recreation facilities are needed in the City of Thorold	63%	81%
Other new parks, trails or recreation	30%	13%
Uncertain/don't know	7%	6%

As shown in Table 15, beyond agreement on the need for trails/trail connections and multi-purpose program/activity space, the most frequently reported facility/park interests differed between telephone and on-line respondents. Telephone survey respondents also expressed interest in tennis courts; space for social events/parties; and community meeting, class, kitchen facilities - the latter two are consistent with demand for multi-purpose space and so increase the collective support for these types of facilities. On-line survey respondents expressed relatively greater interest in: weight room/fitness facilities; access to views/spaces along Welland Canal; splash pad; dog park.

Table 15: New Parks, Trails and Recreation Facilities Needed

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=250)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=119)
Trails/trail connections	19%	56%
Tennis courts	18%	18%
Multi-purpose program/activity space	16%	58%
Space for social events/parties	15%	30%
Community meeting, class, kitchen facilities	15%	21%
Access to views/spaces along Welland Canal	14%	40%
Splash pad	14%	40%
Dog park	14%	42%
Soccer fields	13%	17%
Seniors programming space	12%	18%
Pickleball courts	10%	8%
Weight room/fitness facilities	8%	45%
Multi-purpose playing fields	8%	35%
Youth programming space	8%	37%
Beach/sand volleyball courts	6%	29%
Gymnasium	6%	22%
Bicycle pump track/skills area	5%	24%
Studio space for visual arts programs	3%	9%
Indoor pool	-	5%
Skate park	-	4%
Motorsport track	-	1%
	(515 Reponses)	(664 Responses)

The proportions who do not think other new parks, trails or facilities are needed in Thorold comprised 30% (122) of telephone

survey respondents and 135 (19) or those who participated in the on-line version.

As shown in Table 16, the three most frequently cited reasons focus on improving both the physical state and use of what is considered a sufficient supply of these assets.

Table 16: Reasons Additional Parks, Trails or Facilities are Not Needed in Thorold

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=122)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=19)
There are already enough parks, trails and recreation facilities in the area	35%	26%
Existing parks, trails and facilities in the City are not well used now	28%	11%
Additional recreation infrastructure would be too expensive to build and/or operate	25%	11%
Existing parks, trails and facilities should be upgraded or improved instead	18%	42%
Providing additional facilities, parks or trails may cause property taxes to increase	13%	-
	(213 responses)	(27 responses)

3.2.5 KEY FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS²

Indoor facilities

Four overarching themes related to indoor facilities emerged in the interviews:

1. Aging infrastructure needs to be addressed; upgrades / improvements are required to 'catch-up' on backlog.
2. New, multi-purpose facilities are needed to serve growing population and a wider range of interests in recreation programs / activities.

3. There is a need to optimize role of facilities to contribute to a greater sense of community cohesion.
4. An ongoing, formal maintenance program is needed to sustain improved existing, and new, facilities.

Views on how these themes are to be addressed, however, varied among those consulted. Table 17 summarizes the various perspectives on future directions for existing City-owned facilities, and shows the divergent, and sometimes opposing views, held by those who participated in stakeholder interviews.

² See Appendix E for detailed comments

Table 17: Perspectives on Future of Existing City-owned Facilities

FACILITY	REMOVE	REPLACE	UPGRADE	EXPAND	CONSOLIDATE	RELOCATE
James White Arena	X	X				X
Frank Doherty		X	X			X
Library		X		X		X
Port Robinson Community Centre	X	X	X		X	
Allanburg Community Centre	X	X	X		X	

Based on participants’ input, addressing the need for new indoor facilities, in addition to required upgrades / improvements to existing infrastructure, will be influenced by three key variables:

1. the decision regarding the City to partner in the Canada Games Complex, which will determine the need to replace the James Whyte Arena;
2. the future of the Nick Bassiano Centre and the TCAG, which will influence the extent, design and location of additional multi-purpose space provision by the City;
3. the potential for greater centralization of recreation facilities, which will influence the extent to which existing facilities are upgraded and / or expanded at their current locations or replaced in a single, multi-purpose community hub, either downtown or elsewhere in the City.

Parks (including outdoor facilities and amenities)

Five overarching themes related to parks and outdoor facilities / amenities emerged in the interviews:

1. With the exception of a limited number of gaps (e.g., dog park, Port Robinson West, vicinity of St. Johns Conservation Area), the current supply of municipal parks is sufficient to serve existing population.
2. As with indoor facilities, aging parks infrastructure needs to be addressed; upgrades / improvements are required to ‘catch-up’ on backlog.
3. New parks will be needed to serve new residential areas.
4. More varied amenities / landscapes are needed to enhance park experiences, and amenities such as washrooms /

change rooms opening hours need to align with those of park use.

5. As with indoor facilities, an ongoing, formal maintenance program is needed to sustain improved existing, and new, parks and their facilities.

Trails (Community Connectivity)

Three overarching themes related to trails emerged in the interviews:

1. There are many challenges to creating an internally and externally linked, complete network, especially for multi-purposes (e.g., active transportation, recreational uses), to separate motorized and non-motorized uses, and given the political and geographic divisions of responsibility.
2. The need to optimize the unique opportunity that the trail system, combined with other place-based features / products (e.g., Canal and its industrial past, extensive built heritage, music, Niagara Circle Route, Port Robinson ferry) to attract visitors while also improving recreation and active living infrastructure for residents.
3. The need to provide trails that are safe, easily negotiated, pleasant to use, and lead to interesting destinations.

3.2.6 KEY FINDINGS FROM CYCLING GROUP SURVEY

Cycling Group Survey summary for text of Thorold Consultation Report:

Three of six groups responded to the survey: Forza Niagara Cycling Club, Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club, and Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club. Collectively, these groups comprise almost 500 adult members/regular participants in spring, summer and fall or year-round (one group) cycling. All groups anticipate participation to increase over the next five years, based largely on the following reasons: overall population growth in the area, interest in cycling, the quality of their marketing and promotional efforts, and an increasing focus on healthy, active living.

Although a maximum of 10% of the groups' members / participants are Thorold residents, all three indicated that they regularly use the portion of the Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) that runs through the City. Appendix C contains detailed responses on suggested improvements to the GNCR, most of which were indicated as needed along the entire route. Some were identified as Thorold-specific including: remove gravel and clippings; remove stop signs at Port Robinson; remove gates and posts; remove any poles in the centre of the path; reduce steep slopes beside Lock 7, winding path near Seaway, and Welland exit; eliminating blind corner approaching Welland; widen trail at flight locks, near Seaway; restrooms, stops for coffee, services, ferry direction (indicated for both Thorold and entire route).

Two of the three groups regularly use other trails or on-road cycling paths in the City of Thorold, and both suggested improvements to these facilities: adding a trail head and improved signage for Merritt Trail, and increase quantity of bicycle lanes / infrastructure as much as possible.

Two groups host a total of four special events in the spring and summer, which attract approximately 400 participants. Most participants are from Niagara Region but there is some visitor draw for these events.

The groups are interested in improving and better promoting the Circle Route and ferry, as a unique asset; and making the route easier to follow with more seamless transitions from the Route to on-road bike lanes. They are open to suggestions on how they might help with these initiatives.

Detailed survey results are contained in Appendix C.

3.3 PROGRAM AND ACTIVITY FINDINGS

3.3.1 INTEREST PARTICIPATING IN RECREATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Resident Survey

Almost half of the respondents (46% or 183) to the telephone survey reported that there are sports, recreation and/or arts programs or activities in which they or the members of

your household do not now participate, but in which they would like to participate. Over one-third (39%) are not interested in greater participation, and 15% indicated uncertainty. More than half of the respondents (57% or 83) to the on-line survey responded 'yes' to this questions. The balance was split between those responding negatively and those who were uncertain in this regard (22% each).

Table 18 shows the level of interest in all types of programs/activities that were included in the surveys. For the most part, the top five most frequently mentioned were the same for both groups: swimming; wellness; group fitness; individual fitness training.

Social/club activities, which ranked highest among telephone survey respondents, was not one of the top five among on-line survey respondents. At the same time, summer programs/activities was among the top five for on-line survey respondents only.

Table 19 shows that, for both groups surveyed, the top two age groups that would be interested in participating in the programs/activities noted above are adults and children - and particularly adults - at 75% and 74% for telephone and on-line survey respondents, respectively.

Table 18: Activities of Interest

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=183)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=83)
Social/club activities (e.g., youth drop-in, seniors club, new moms)	53%	40%
Swimming (e.g., instruction, recreation, fitness, therapeutic)	51%	64%
Wellness programs (e.g., yoga, tai chi, Pilates, cooking, mental health)	49%	57%
Group fitness classes (e.g., floor hockey, box lacrosse, skate boarding, in-line skate boarding)	46%	55%
Individual fitness training (e.g., weights, treadmills, etc.)	45%	52%
One-day or weekend special events	44%	42%
Outdoor courts sports (e.g., tennis, pickleball, volleyball)	44%	37%
Summer programs/activities (e.g., cycling, nature/ environmental, hiking, fitness, etc.)	43%	52%
Arena ice activities (e.g., hockey, broomball, sledge hockey, skating, curling)	43%	51%
Education/self-improvement/interest (e.g., nutrition, computer, book club)	42%	33%
Visual arts (e.g., painting, photography, digital media)	37%	30%
Community garden projects	36%	24%
Gymnasium sports (e.g., badminton, basketball, volleyball, pickleball)	35%	38%
Volunteering to help provide programs/services	35%	22%
Camps (e.g., day, March break, etc.)	33%	33%
Martial arts (e.g., karate, tae kwon do, jiu jitsu)	32%	18%
Crafts (e.g., quilting, woodworking)	31%	22%
Field sports (e.g., ball, soccer, football)	30%	36%
Winter park/trail programs/activities (e.g., cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, walking club)	25%	37%
Arena non-ice activities (e.g., floor hockey, box lacrosse, skate boarding, in-line skate boarding)	23%	39%
Performing arts (e.g. drama, choral)	22%	24%

Table 19: Age Groups Interested in Participating in Programs/Activities

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=183)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=83)
Preschool (4 years of age and under)	25%	28%
Children (5-12 years old)	34%	49%
Youth/teenagers (13-19 years)	11%	40%
Adults	75%	74%
Older adults/seniors (55 years old+)	19%	16%
Family or inter-generational (all ages)	10%	25%

While the largest proportion of telephone survey respondents (38%) indicated there is nothing that precludes their participation, other over 10% indicated each of the following factors as limits: lack of facilities/programs/activities of interest; lack of time/too busy; lack of awareness of available programs/activities; and use facilities/programs is too expensive. As shown in Table 20, other key factors that emerged in the on-line survey included the inconvenience of program times/facility hours, and a lack of opportunities for parents and children to participate at the same time.

Table 20: Factors Preventing or Limiting Participation in Programs/Activities of Interest

	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=183)	ON-LINE SURVEY (N=83)
There is nothing that limits or prevents us from participating	38%	24%
Facilities/programs/activities of interest are not provided	20%	46%
Program times/facility hours are inconvenient	-	29%
Few opportunities for parents/children to participate at the same time	-	25%
Lack of time/too busy	20%	-
I/we are not aware of available programs/activities	17%	30%
It's too expensive to use facilities/programs	13%	-
	(289 Responses)	(182 Responses)

3.3.2 PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, SERVICES AND PARTICIPATION/ MEMBERSHIP

Program/Activity Groups

Table 21 shows the categories that best describes the organization's MAIN programs, activities or services.

Table 21: Main Program, Activity or Service Category

	# RESPONDENTS (TOTAL 7)
Arena ice activities (e.g., hockey, figure skating)	4
Fitness/wellness (e.g., yoga, aerobics, aquafit)	1
Instruction (e.g., credit or general interest, lectures)	1
Field sports (e.g., soccer, ball, lawn bowling, football)	2
Cycling (on and off-road)	1

Among the seven responding groups:

- they have collectively comprised over 700 members or participants in the past three years.
- the age group that is most frequently served is youth between 13 and 19 years old.
- males are the dominant participants in their program / activities.
- considerable proportions of members/ participants come from outside Thorold. Those who live in Thorold are primarily located in the northern urban area.
- all but one of the groups expect their membership or participation to either remain stable or increase over the next five years - most often reporting interest in their activity and/or availability of facility time as the reason for expected trends.

3.3.3 KEY FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS³

Three overarching themes related to programs and activities emerged in the interviews:

1. While continuing to support existing programs / activities if warranted by demand, there is a need to diversify beyond what is seen as too great a focus on hockey. Program areas requiring further development include arts, culture, heritage self-directed parks-based activities, healthy living/

skills development, special events. Population groups in need of more, and affordable, programs are families, children, youth (including tweens).

2. The City possesses some unique assets that comprise the base for further program / activity development to attract visitors, while not precluding residents the benefit of more opportunities to enjoy locally-based programs. The primary areas for visitor-oriented program development are the Welland Canal, cycling, local heritage, and music, which are amenable to integrated approaches to providing unique experiences. (Section 3.5 summarizes visitor / tourism-related input).
3. Collectively, the primary program providers - Thorold Community Activities Group (TCAG), the Thorold Public Library, the Seniors Association and volunteer sports and recreation groups - offer a range of program services to the community. To a greater or lesser degree, however, they each face obstacles in growing their program supply, particularly in view of increased demand as a result of future population growth and public expectations.

³ See Appendix E for detailed comments

3.4 DELIVERY SYSTEM FINDINGS

3.4.1 WILLINGNESS TO PAY AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Resident surveys

Table 22 shows that respondents to both resident surveys clearly favour user fees as a means of financing service development. Both surveys, however, revealed some support for increased property taxes or a combination of taxes and user fees.

Table 22: Willingness to Pay for Service Improvements

WILLINGNESS TO PAY...	RANDOM TELEPHONE SURVEY (N=400)	SELF-SELECTED ON-LINE SURVEY (N=147)
% more user fees	56	49
% combination of increases taxes & user fees	39	33
% more property tax	37	39

Program/Activity Group Survey

Two organizations indicated that the City of Thorold could better assist them in developing and providing its programs and services. Requested assistance includes help with better facility scheduling and upgrading/improving maintenance of facilities/trails/parks we use.

Six of the seven responding organizations currently pay fees to use the parks, trails and/or facilities it uses. The group that does not pay fees indicated that it contributes in

other ways, specifically by promoting Thorold through tournaments that bring players and spectators from other communities, thus providing economic benefits to local business.

On balance, the groups favour financing service development through methods that would engage them in helping with fundraising rather than paying/paying higher user fees or contributing to capital costs of facilities. At the same time, there is uncertainty among a number of groups regarding involvement in fundraising.

⁴ See Appendix E for detailed comments

3.4.2 KEY FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS⁴

Four overarching themes related to service delivery emerged in the interviews:

1. There are a number of key service providers in Thorold, each assuming a different role in the provision of parks, trails and recreation services, and with more or less collaboration / coordination in their collective efforts.
2. This relatively fragmented approach to service provision has generally worked historically but requires a degree of rationalization to optimally:
1) address aging infrastructure issues,
2) meet the needs of a growing community, and new expectations of municipalities in providing parks, trails and recreation services, and 3) ensure service demand and supply are aligned to make the best possible use of both municipal and non-municipal resources.
3. There are divergent views on the future role of the City vs. non-municipal providers in service provision, ranging from a new, direct municipal program function to retaining the City's current role in enabling / facilitating other providers to meet program needs. Regardless of the role assumed by the City, however, the need for a municipal leadership role was identified.
4. There are divergent views on the

financial capacity of the City to spend on parks, trails and recreation. Some participants indicated the need to spend or borrow against the \$17 million that was generated by selling Hydro, particularly in view of the potential for a CGC partnership and/ or amalgamation with other area municipalities. Others do not think the City is in a position to spend any more on parks and recreation services, and should maintain as limited a role as possible in this area. Any expanded role in service provision, however, will require additional resources to support implementation.

3.5 TOURISM AND VISITOR FINDINGS

The City of Thorold is part of the larger Niagara region in many aspects of recreational tourism and is, to some extent, dependent on broader initiatives to build this market. At the same time, there are local assets that are unique to the community and were considered by participants in consultation activities to offer considerable potential to attract visitors to Thorold.

The key areas of visitor / tourism interest (either currently or potentially) that emerged in consultations were: the Welland Canal, cycling, heritage, and music. Components of this group of existing assets that are wholly or partially located in Thorold include:

- built heritage
- Greater Niagara Circle Route
- Welland Canal, Port Robinson Ferry, and Lock
- special events such as the Canal Bank Shuffle
- natural heritage

Consultation participants noted that all of these assets require some combination of physical improvements, linkages (programmatic as well as physical), and promotion to optimize their attraction and use. One area of potential involvement that was noted as missing is regional initiatives in the wine industry (e.g., Wine and Grape Festival).

Built Heritage

Thorold has 50 designated heritage properties, which won the City the 2017 Prince of Wales Prize for Heritage Leadership. There are clusters of heritage buildings in the downtown core and by the Canal. Generally, it was thought that more can be done to make these features 'must-see' destinations for visitors, and to raise the profile of local heritage in general. Reference was also made to an Ambassador Program, as a pilot to improving a welcoming atmosphere to the downtown for both residents and visitors.

Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR)

The 140km of the GNCR – an extensive, unique resource – is currently well used by cycling groups. Cyclists are a large market looking for new experiences. If fully developed as multi-

use trail throughout the whole Niagara region, in its proper form with appropriate staging areas, rest and repair stations, and wayfinding and destination signage, it would:

- be a national/international attraction for cyclists, runners, rollers, wheelers, walkers, especially as an off-road option;
- contribute significantly to active living and lifestyles and accessible safe transport to facilities/destinations and sufficient services to meet local needs
- direct users to destinations that would benefit local economies (e.g., shops, restaurants, cultural / heritage attractions, accommodations, hiking in / around Short Hills Provincial Park and St. Johns CA, Port Robinson Ferry, etc.)
- seamlessly blend recreational and tourism cycling

Participants indicated that Thorold has been supportive in addressing items to improve the trail (e.g., removing bollards on trail), but needs to be a regional effort to be effective. At the same time, the regional structure in the form of Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee is inactive / not moving forward, and funding that was set aside for work on the Route is not available.

Consultation participants noted opportunities to link the GNCR to on-road cycling routes as well as to areas with unique topography and natural heritage that offer also offer / could offer trails for cycling and / or hiking (e.g., Bruce Trail, Short Hills Provincial Park, St. Johns Conservation Area, Moodie Lake area).

These initiatives would require partnerships with other providers to establish linkages and integrate wayfinding / signage programs, and to divide responsibility for providing amenities. Suggested staging locations included Highway 20 and the Welland Canal, and Beaverdams Park. Integrating trails planning with active transportation in Thorold could provide seamless, safe travel for users. Bike racks on buses could serve both residents and visitors who cycle.

Welland Canal, Port Robinson Ferry, and Lock 7

It was noted that the Canal trail from Lock 7 to Colborne is very beautiful and not heavily used. Lock 7 attracted 8,000 visitors last year from May to October, suggesting an interested market for traveling further along this route. This route also incorporates the Port Robinson Ferry, which is a feature unique to the area.

Other potential opportunities were noted including historic Segway tours along the Canal, and rough camping along the water.

Planning and Decision-making

Suggestion for approaches at the planning / decision making level included:

- consider tourism a ‘real’ industry
- combine regional / local potential
- tourism should be an integral part of decision-making, not an afterthought or supplementary to it; needs to be a municipal position responsible for

keeping it front and centre and for bridging with recreation, economic development, etc.

- as a natural partnership, more communication and coordination between recreation and tourism is needed
- identify other opportunities (e.g., pool is heated; should this facility and feature also be marketed?)
- plan and budget for promotional activities
- creating more print material for promotion and route mapping
- creating accessible experiences and promoting accessibility as part of the attraction to features in Thorold
- monitoring / tracking visitors / users
- ensuring inclusion in regional initiatives (e.g., geopark being considered for Niagara)

3.6 VISION FOR PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION IN THOROLD

Consultation participants were asked about words or phrases they would use to describe their vision for parks, trails and recreation in Thorold. The word cloud on the following page was created using these suggestions.



APPENDIX A

METHODS OF SOLICITING FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION

FOCUS GROUPS	METHOD OF INVITATION/ ADVERTISEMENT	NUMBER ATTENDING
March 20, 2019		
Faith-based organizations	Direct email to all local churches	1
Households with young children	Facebook, Website, newspaper ad	1
Special events	Direct email to organizers	2
Seniors/retirees	Facebook, Website, newspaper ad, direct email to Seniors Association	0
Business sector 1*	Direct email to businesses	0
Organized park users	Direct email to all user groups	0
March 21, 2019		
Business sector 2**	Direct email to all members of BIA through coordinator, direct email to external	2
Trails, natural areas and environment	Facebook, website, newspaper ad	2
Arena users	Direct email to all user groups	1
Arts and heritage	Facebook, Website, direct email to local artists	0
Public partners	Direct email	0
Youth (13-19)	Facebook, Website, newspaper ad	0
Adult recreation	Facebook, Website, newspaper ad	1 (phone interview)



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City of Thorold Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan

The City of Thorold is preparing a Park, Trails and Recreation Master Plan that will serve to guide future planning for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, programs and activities as well as the development and management of parks, trails, and green space that is owned or managed by the City. As part of the study, we are conducting a number of focus groups in the community to identify and discuss residents' interests in park and recreation services. We are interested in hearing from different age groups and various interest groups. If you would like to participate in one of the focus groups listed below, please contact Ginger Derochie at 905-227-6613 ext. 231 or ginger@thorold.com by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 18, 2019. The focus group schedule is:

Topic	Date	Time	Location
Seniors/retirees	Wednesday, March 20, 2019	2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	Committee Room #1 Thorold City Hall
Youth (13 to 19 yrs)	Thursday, March 21, 2019	4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.	Committee Room #1 Thorold City Hall
Households with young children	Wednesday, March 20, 2019	10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.	Committee Room #1 Thorold City Hall
Adults	Thursday, March 21, 2019	6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	Committee Room #1 Thorold City Hall
Arts (performing & visual) and heritage	Thursday, March 21, 2019	12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.	Committee Room #1 Thorold City Hall
Trail users, natural areas and environment	Thursday, March 21, 2019	10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.	Committee Room #1 Thorold City Hall

We look forward to hearing your views on the future need for parks, trails and recreation facilities and programs. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact the undersigned the email address or phone number below. If you are not interested in participating in a focus group, but would still like to share your views, all residents are invited to attend a community Open House for the Master Plan on March 20 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., in Council Chambers.

Ginger Derochie
 Recreation Coordinator
 City of Thorold
 905-227-6613
ginger@thorold.com

LETTER TO VOLUNTEER PROGRAM/ACTIVITY GROUPS:



Thorold

April 10, 2019

Name of Representative
Group
Address

Dear XX:

The City of Thorold is preparing a Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan that will serve to guide future planning for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and programs/activities, and the development and management of parks, trails, and other green space that are owned or managed by the City. It will also guide the municipality in continuing to ensure or increase access to services/facilities of other providers through partnerships or agreements, in instances where this is the most feasible option.

As an organization that uses parks, recreation facilities, trails and/or natural areas in the City or Thorold and/or nearby communities, your needs and expectations are important to ensuring that the Master Plan provides directions that will meet the future requirements of community residents and organized users. Please complete this survey on behalf of your group. We are requesting your participation in an on-line survey of organized user groups in the City of Thorold at the following link, no later than April 20, 2019:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ThoroldMP>

If you wish to forward this invitation to another representative of your organization who will complete the survey, please notify the City. If clicking on the link does not take you to the survey, try copying and pasting it in your browser. If you have any questions about completing the survey, please contact Mary Catherine Mehak at 416-414-7391 during regular business hours, or by email at mc@mehak-kelly.com. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact me at the address or phone number below. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Curtis Dray
Manager of Community Services
T. 905-227-1911
E: Curtis.Dray@thorold.com

City of Thorold
P.O. Box 1044, 3540 Schmon Parkway, Thorold, Ontario L2V 4A7
www.thorold.com
Tel: 905-227-6613

APPENDIX B

PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN: TELEPHONE SURVEY REPORT



*Parks, Trails & Recreation Master
Plan:
Telephone Survey Report*



APRIL 2019

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Methodology & Logistics

Overview

This report documents the findings from a telephone survey of N=400 residents from the City of Thorold conducted by Oraclepoll Research for the City of Thorold on behalf of thinc design, the lead firm for the Master Plan study.

The purpose of the survey was to determine current use of parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs, interest in how to improve municipal recreation services in Thorold, and opinions on the need for future facilities and services.

Within this document is an executive summary of the findings, while an Excel report (submitted under separate cover) contains the results by individual questions.

In addition, an online survey comprising the same questions was made available to allow residents who were not called as part of the telephone survey an opportunity to participate in the consultation. In total, N=148 residents completed the on-line questionnaire and the findings from that survey are presented separately.

Study Sample & Survey Method

A total of N=400 respondents, 18 years of age and older who are permanent residents of Thorold were interviewed. All surveys were conducted by telephone using live operators at the Oraclepoll call centre facility. The survey was conducted using person-to-person interviewing with computer-assisted techniques for telephone interviews (CATI) and random number selection (RDD).

The sample frame included land-lines as well as cell phone-only households. Since cell phone numbers are not tied to location, potential respondents were first screened to ensure their residency in the City of Thorold, before administering the survey. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research supervised 100% of all the calls made.

Logistics

Telephone surveys were conducted by phone at the Oraclepoll call centre using person-to-person live operators between April 1st and April 10th, 2019.

Initial calls were made between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Subsequent call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers were made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 5 times (from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.) until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview

appointments were attempted with those respondents who were unable to complete the survey at the time of contact. If no contact was made at a number after the fifth attempt, the number was discarded and a new one supplemented it.

Confidence

The margin of error for the N=400 sample is $\pm 4.9\%$ 19/20 times. This means that the survey results represent a confidence level that ranges between 4.9% above and 4.9% below the findings shown here, and that this range would remain consistent across the community's entire population if it were surveyed.

Section A

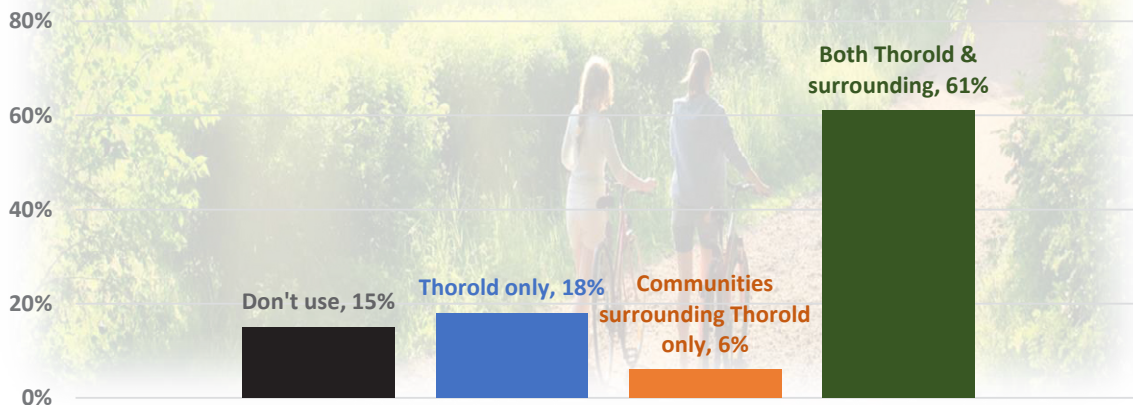
All N=400 respondents were first read the following descriptive preamble after which they were asked the first set of questions related to parks, trails, facilities and programs.

“In this survey, recreation services include all programs and activities/interests that you and the members of your household engage in during their leisure time - sport, fitness, arts, culture, heritage, crafts, skills development, social activities, park/trail use, continuing education, etc.”

“I will first ask you about your use of existing parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs in the City of Thorold and in surrounding communities. Then I will ask your opinions on the need for new or additional parks and recreation services in the City of Thorold.”

“These are questions on your use of existing parks, trails, facilities and programs in the City of Thorold and in surrounding communities.”

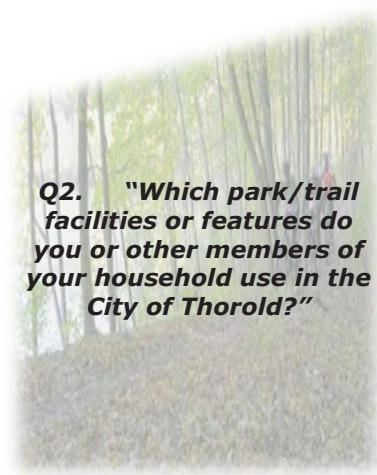
Q1. “Where do you or other members of your household use parks, trails or recreation facilities, either as part of organized programs or for unstructured activities?”



Respondents naming Thorold only (18%, N=72) & both Thorold and surrounding areas (61%, N=243) were asked Q2. Those saying communities surrounding Thorold (6%, N=26) skipped to Q10 and respondents not using (15%, N=59) proceeded to Q16.

Most respondents or 61% use parks, trails and recreation facilities in both Thorold and surrounding communities. Only 6% said they solely use surrounding communities, while 18% utilize only those in Thorold. Fifteen percent do not use or take part in organized programs or unstructured activities – mostly older respondents (60 to 74 – 40%, 75 to 84 – 50% & 85 or older – 67%).

The N=315 respondents saying they or members of their family use parks, trails and facilities in Thorold (N=72) or in Thorold as well as surrounding communities (N=243) were then asked which ones they use.



Q2. "Which park/trail facilities or features do you or other members of your household use in the City of Thorold?"

Facilities	N	%
Trails	N=88	28%
Park areas for socializing, informal use	N=77	24%
Swimming pool	N=62	20%
Soccer fields	N=61	19%
Ball diamonds	N=58	18%
Splash pads	N=48	15%
Cycling routes (on-road)	N=43	14%
Tennis courts	N=43	14%
Playgrounds	N=42	13%
None (use indoor facilities)	N=38	12%
Basketball courts	N=27	9%
Horseshoe pits	N=24	8%
Toboggan hills	N=24	8%
Bocce courts	N=17	5%
Skatepark	N=9	3%

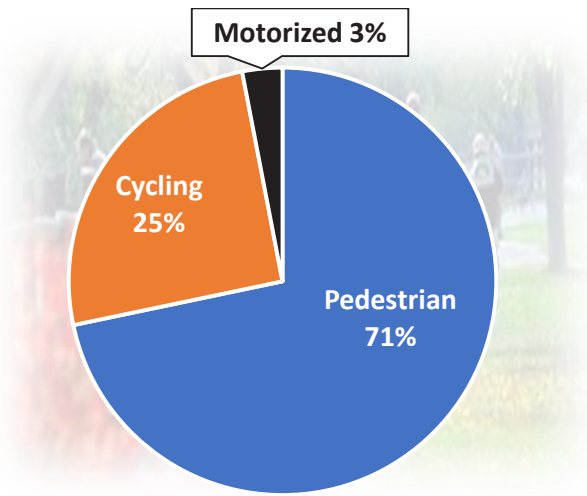
The features and facilities most often used were trails, park areas, pools, soccer fields and ball diamonds, followed by splash pads, cycling routes, tennis courts and playgrounds. The N=88 that stated they use trails were then asked a follow-up question about the ones they use and how they utilize them.

Q3. "You indicated that you or other members of your household use trails in the City of Thorold. We would like to know a little more about which ones you use and how you use them. For each of the trails you use, can you tell me the name of the trail OR the nearest street or intersection from which you get onto the trail; whether you use it for pedestrian activities, cycling, or motorized activities; and the season(s) you use it. Pedestrian activities include walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and mobility aids such as wheelchairs. Motorized activities include snowmobiling, ATVing and e-bikes."

TRAILS USED IN THOROLD (N=88)

Short Hills Trail	N=13	Thorold South	N=3
Decew Falls Loop	N=11	Sullivan Park	N=2
Don't know	N=11	Glenridge Quarry Naturalization Site	N=2
Welland Canal Trail	N=10	Greater Niagara Cycle	N=2
Black Walnut Trail	N=10	DeCew House Heritage Park	N=2
Terrace Creek Trail	N=10	Bert Lowe Side Trail	N=2
Looth Falls	N=9	Woodend Trail	N=1
Swayzee Falls Loop	N=9	Pine Street	N=1
Rockway Falls	N=8	Morningstar Mill	N=1
Millennium Trail	N=8	Between Orchard Hill Rd and Holland Road	N=1
Mel Swart Lake Gibson Conservation	N=8	St. John's Conservation area	N=1
Moodie Lake Trail	N=7	Near Lock 7	N=1
Bruce Trail	N=4	Martin Street	N=1
Canal path / parkway	N=4		

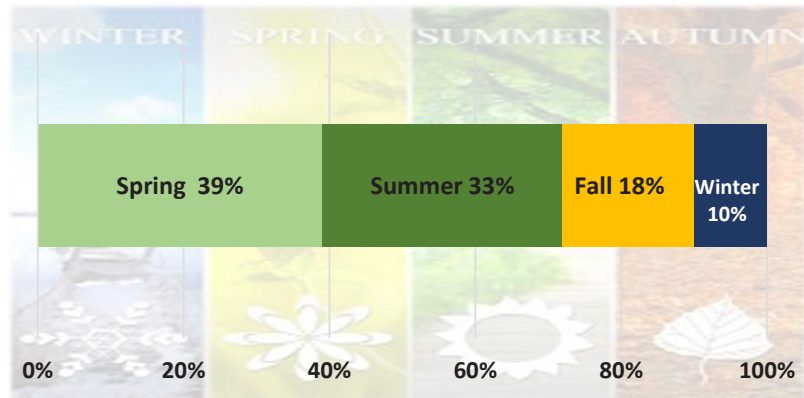
TRAIL ACTIVITY TYPE (N=88)



Pedestrian activity is the most favoured activity on trails, noted by 71% of respondents. One-quarter cycle and only 3% use motorized vehicles.

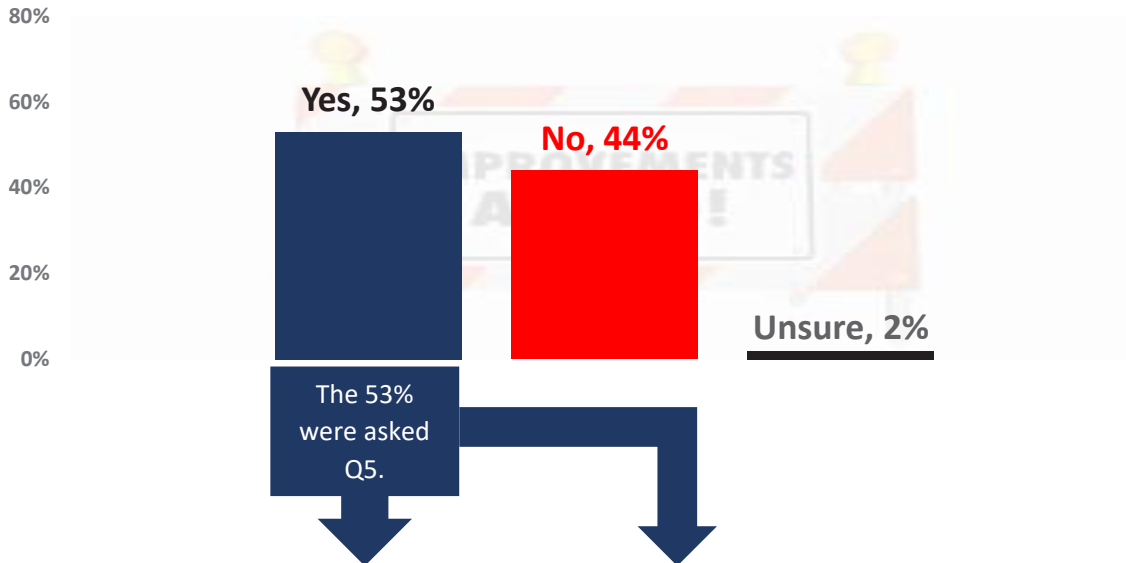
TRAILS – SEASONS USED (N=88)

Respondents tend to frequent trails in the spring (39%) and summer (33%). Eighteen percent named the fall and only 10% the winter.



The N=168 users of trails were questioned about improvements or upgrades they felt were needed.

Q5. "Do you think the parks or trails that you or members of your household use in the City of Thorold require upgrades or improvements?"



Q5a. "Please describe the types of improvements or upgrades you think are needed for existing parks, trails or public green spaces that you use."

Better maintenance	N=121	25%
Benches, picnic tables, seating areas	N=51	11%
More amenities	N=50	10%
Washrooms and/or change rooms	N=47	10%
Trees / shade	N=29	6%
Naturalization / natural plantings	N=24	5%
Gardens / horticultural plantings	N=20	4%
Signage	N=20	4%
More equipment for physical activity	N=18	4%
Food vendors	N=16	3%
Wi-Fi connectivity	N=16	3%
Pathways	N=15	3%
Educational / interpretive signs	N=14	3%
Upgraded playground equipment	N=11	2%
More winter use facilities /access	N=9	2%
Areas for special events	N=7	1%
AODA accessibility needed	N=6	1%
Better trail connectivity	N=5	1%
Trail heads with amenities	N=4	1%
Skatepark	N=1	<1%

Q5b. "Do you have any specific locations in mind for these improvements?"

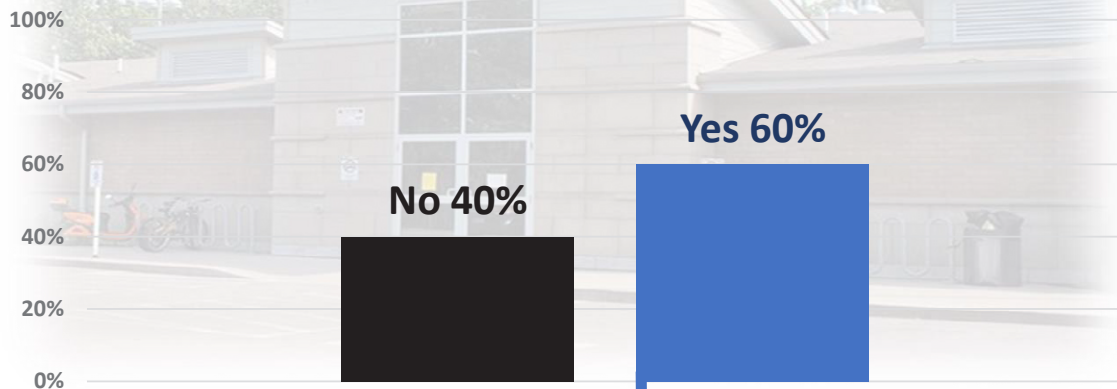
Sports fields / courts (not specific)	N=35
Everywhere	N=34
Don't know	N=20
Not one specific place	N=17
All parks (more shade, more seats, etc.)	N=16
All trails need work (pruning and trimming trees, etc.)	N=13
Rockway Falls	N=3
McMillan Park	N=3
Thorold Community Pool	N=3
Trail by the Canal	N=2
Sullivan Park	N=2
Richmond Street Park	N=2
Beaverdam Park	N=2
Black Walnut Trail	N=2
Decew Falls	N=2
South Confederation Soccer Field	N=2
Mel Stewart Lake	N=2
South Confederation Park	N=1
Confederation Park	N=1
Bruce Trail	N=1
Thorold South	N=1
Main entrance into Thorold	N=1
C.E. Grose Park	N=1
Thorold Community Activities Centre	N=1
Roads need repairs	N=1

Slightly more than half of users (53%) think parks or trails need improvements, with better overall maintenance being most named as the needed upgrade.

The N=315 respondents claiming they or members of their family use parks, trails and facilities in Thorold (N=72) as well as in surrounding communities (N=243) were asked about indoor facility usage.

“Now I am going to ask you about your use of indoor recreation facilities in the City of Thorold.”

Q6. "Do you or other members of your household use indoor recreation facilities in the City of Thorold?"



Sixty-percent (N=188) of those asked use indoor recreation facilities. Usage is higher among 18-24 year old's (62%) and 24-44 (64%) year old's, drops among those 45-54 years old (43%), picks up among those 55-64 years old (63%) and 65-74 year-olds (65%), and falls among the oldest 75-84 years at 56%. (85 or older is 50%, with only a sample of N=2).

{ Respondents answering yes were asked Q7, those saying no skipped to Q10. }

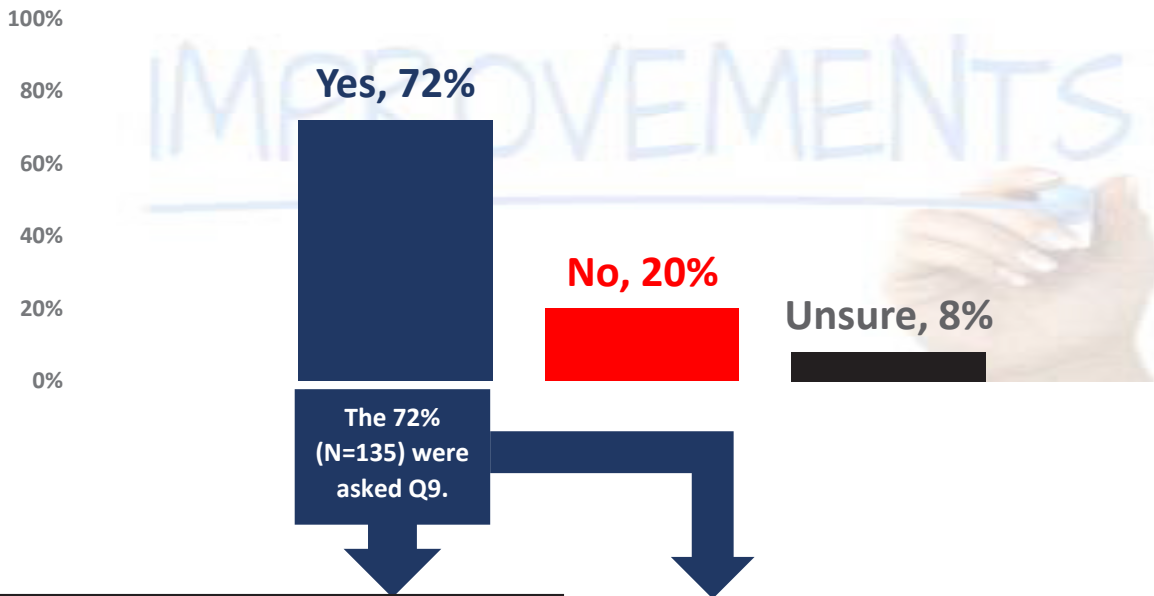
Q7. "Which of the following indoor recreation facilities do you or other members of your household use in the City of Thorold?"

The most frequently used facility is the Thorold Community Arenas by 79%, and the Thorold Public Library by 68%.

79%	Thorold Community Arena
68%	Thorold Public Library
30%	TCAG Basciano Centre
25%	Lock 7 Museum
22%	Port Robinson Community Centre
19%	Allanburg Community Centre
13%	Thorold Community Theatre
8%	Seniors Centre
5%	Fire hall community rooms

The N=188 users of indoor facilities were questioned about improvements or upgrades they felt were needed.

Q8 "Do you think the indoor recreation facilities that you or members of your household use in the City of Thorold require upgrades or improvements?"



Q9a. "Please describe the types of improvements or upgrades you think are needed for existing indoor facilities that you use."

Modern spaces - indoor programming	N=46	17%
Better support facilities/amenities	N=40	14%
Better maintenance/cleaning	N=36	13%
More/better located parking	N=35	13%
More audience/spectator viewing	N=23	8%
More safety features	N=23	8%
Food services	N=19	7%
Better acoustics	N=18	7%
More attractive building exteriors	N=16	6%
Improved accessibility	N=11	4%
New kitchen facilities	N=8	3%
Storage	N=1	<1%

Q9b. "Do you have any specific locations in mind for these improvements?"

Thorold Community Arenas	N=24	18%
All / no one specific place	N=24	18%
Don't know	N=21	16%
Thorold Community Theatre	N=16	12%
TCAG Basciano Centre	N=12	9%
Port Robinson Community Centre	N=9	7%
Allanburg Community Centre	N=8	6%
Thorold Public Library	N=7	5%
Lock 7 Museum	N=6	4%
Seniors Centre	N=5	4%
Fire hall community rooms	N=2	2%
Brock University	N=1	1%

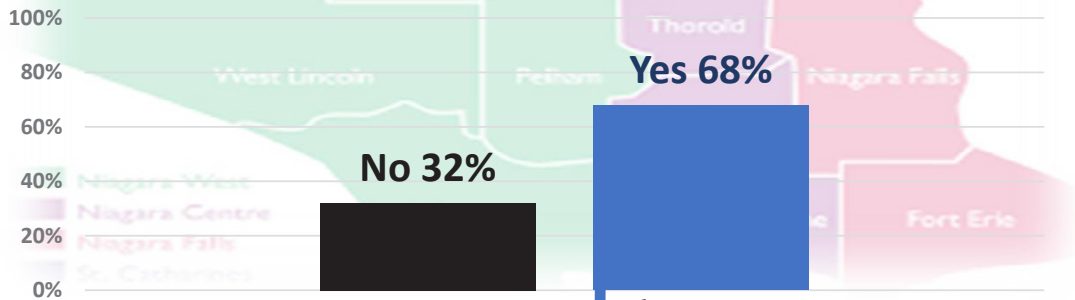
More than seven in ten (72%) think indoor facilities need improvements, with the most named improvements being related to modernizing spaces, better amenities, maintenance and parking.

Section B

The N=341 of respondents using parks, trails or recreation facilities (identified in Q1) in Thorold only (N=72), in both Thorold and surrounding areas (N=243) and in communities surrounding Thorold (N=26) were asked the following set of questions.

“These next few questions ask about your use of recreation services outside the City of Thorold, in surrounding communities.”

Q10. “Do you or other members of your household regularly use parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs in communities around the City of Thorold, either as part of organized programs or for unstructured activities?”



Sixty-eight percent (N=232) of respondents use amenities and facilities in communities around Thorold. Younger respondents 18-25 years old (73%), 25-44 years old (68%), as well as those in the mid-aged cohorts of 45-54 years (69%) and 55-64 years (74%) were most likely to say yes. This compares to a 57% of those aged 65-74 years, 40% of 75-84-year olds and 33% of seniors 85+ years of age.

Respondents answering yes were asked Q11, those saying no skipped to Q17.

Q11. “Please indicate the facilities or services you use in nearby communities?”

Arenas	105	45%
Indoor pools	75	32%
Program/activity-community centre	46	20%
Parks	45	19%
Trails	43	19%
Sport fields	39	17%
Fitness facilities/workout gyms	37	16%
Public libraries	19	8%
Seniors centres	17	7%
Museums	15	6%
Performing arts theatres	10	4%
Art galleries	8	3%
Cultural/heritage centres	8	3%

The most frequently used services in other communities are arenas and indoor pools.

The N=232 users of amenities and facilities in communities around Thorold were asked about their reasons. Multiple responses were accepted, and responses varied, but the most common answer was that these programs or facilities are not available in Thorold, followed by better quality or value elsewhere, being closer to home, and having more variety.

Q12. "What are the reasons you use these parks, trails facilities and programs?"

Programs/facilities we use are not available in the City of Thorold	N=96	19%
Programs/facilities we use are newer/better design/quality	N=61	12%
They are closer to our home than those in Thorold	N=57	11%
There is more variety to choose from	N=50	10%
Better value for money	N=46	9%
Spaces/facilities are not as crowded	N=31	6%
Parking is convenient	N=29	6%
More convenient scheduling	N=28	6%
There are more family-oriented programs/activities	N=24	5%
Membership or use of facility is paid for by employer, school, etc.	N=21	4%
Socialize (go with friends / family)	N=22	4%
Facilities are accessible by wheelchair, scooter, etc.	N=16	3%
Programs/facilities are on the way to work, shopping, etc.	N=12	2%
Programs are adapted to various users' needs	N=10	2%
Don't know	N=5	1%

The N=232 were then asked to name the community they most often visit and the length of time it takes to arrive to their destination. surrounding

Q13. "Where do you go most often to use parks, trails recreation facilities or programs outside Thorold - Welland, St. Catharines, Pelham, Niagara Falls or elsewhere?"

Niagara Falls	46%
St. Catharines	31%
Pelham	20%
Welland	3%
Beamsville	<1%
Niagara on the Lake	<1%

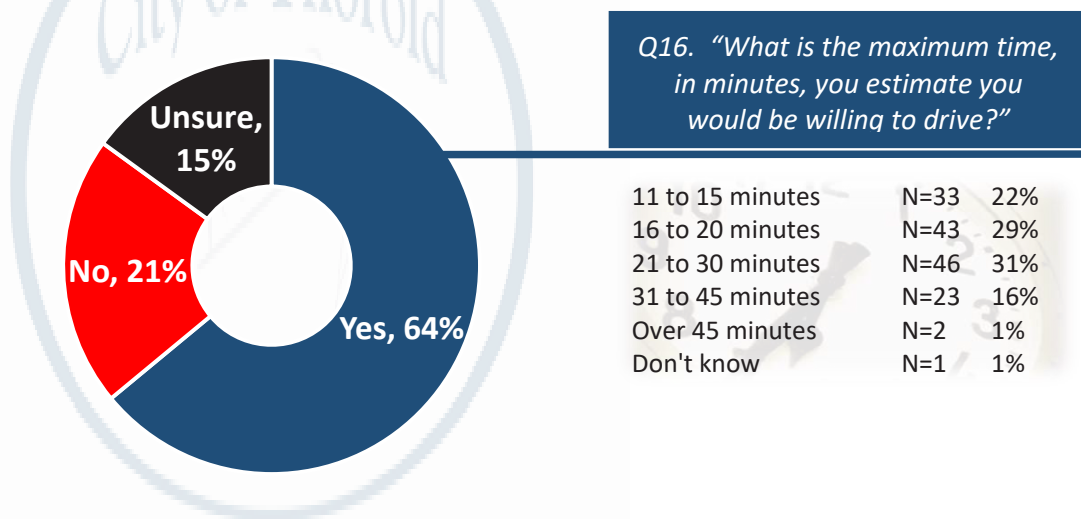
Q14. "When you travel to (LOCATION) to use these services, approximately how many minutes is the trip by car?"
READ LIST

0 to 10 minutes	36%
11 to 15 minutes	29%
16 to 20 minutes	32%
21 to 30 minutes	3%
Over 30 minutes	-
Don't know	<1%

The most visited locations are Niagara Falls, followed by St. Catharines and Pelham, with most naming time categories of under 20 minutes for travel time.

Those using amenities and facilities in communities around Thorold (N=232) were questioned about using these services in Thorold, if they were made available. The 64% (N=148) saying they would be willing to spend more time driving to use similar services in Thorold (in Q15 below) were then asked Q16.

Q15. "If services similar to those you now use outside of Thorold were available within Thorold, would you be willing to spend more time driving than you do now to use them?"



Q16. "What is the maximum time, in minutes, you estimate you would be willing to drive?"

11 to 15 minutes	N=33	22%
16 to 20 minutes	N=43	29%
21 to 30 minutes	N=46	31%
31 to 45 minutes	N=23	16%
Over 45 minutes	N=2	1%
Don't know	N=1	1%

Sixty-four percent (64%) would be willing to drive longer for a similar facility located in Thorold. Fifteen percent were undecided and 21% would not be inclined to drive a greater amount of time. Among those willing to drive further, 60% named times of 16 to 30 minutes, 17% longer than 31 minutes, and 22% 11 to 15 minutes.

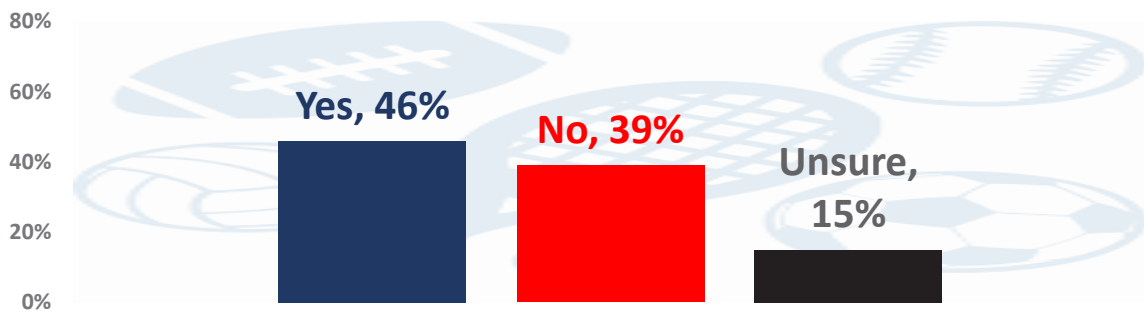
Section C

All N=400 respondents were read the following preamble and were then asked a series of questions about programs in which they would like to participate.

“The following questions are on the need for new or additional parks and recreation services in Thorold.”

“ We would like to hear about your household members’ interest in beginning to participate, or in participating more, in recreation programs and activities.”

Q17 "Are there sports, recreation and/or arts programs or activities in which you or the members of your household do not now participate, but in which you/they would like to participate?"



Forty-six percent (46%) of respondents do not currently use, but would like to participate in programs or activities. While respondents of all ages answered yes there was a higher proportion of 25-44 year olds interested in participating at 61%, followed by those aged 18-25 years at 42%, 45-54 years of age at 39%, and 55- 64 year olds at 34%. (65 to 74 years of age – 29%, 75 to 84 years old – 30%, and 85 years of age or older – 33%).

The 46% or N=183 were then asked a series of follow-up questions.

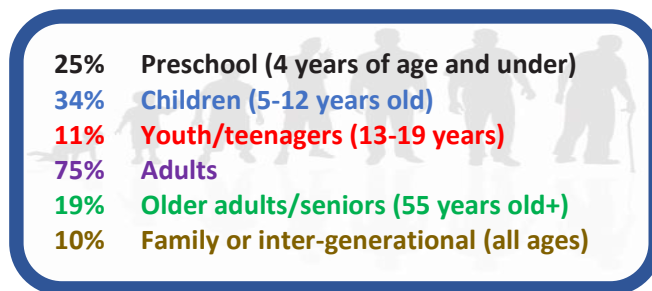
The N=183 claiming they would like to participate in programs or activities were asked the following questions.

Q18. “In which of the following types of sports, recreation, wellness, and/or arts and cultural programs/activities would you or other members of your household like to participate?”

53%	Social/club activities
51%	Swimming
49%	Wellness programs
46%	Group fitness classes
45%	Individual fitness training
44%	One-day or weekend special events
44%	Outdoor Courts sports
43%	Summer programs/activities
43%	Arena ice activities
42%	Education/self-improvement/interest
37%	Visual arts
36%	Community garden projects
35%	Gymnasium sports
35%	Volunteering to help provide programs/services
33%	Camps
32%	Martial arts
31%	Crafts
30%	Field sports
25%	Winter park/trail programs/activities
23%	Arena non-ice activities
22%	Performing arts

The N=183 were then asked about the age cohorts that would be most interested, with the majority (75%) naming adults.

Q19. “Which age groups in your household are interested in the programs/activities you selected?”



A final question to the N=183 saying they would like to participate in programs or activities probed about any factors that limit their participation.

Q20." Which factors, if any, limit or prevent participation in sports, recreation and/or arts programs/activities by you or other members of your household?"

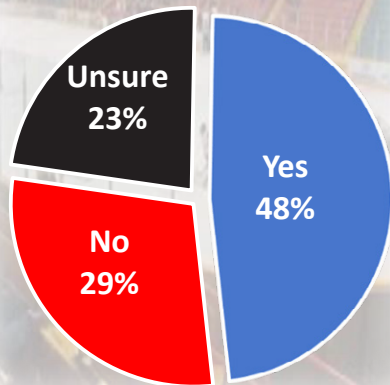
There is nothing that limits or prevents us from participating	38%
Facilities/programs/activities of interest are not provided	20%
Lack of time/too busy	20%
I/we are not aware of available programs/activities	17%
It's too expensive to use facilities/programs	13%
Program times/facility hours are inconvenient	9%
Parks/facilities/trails are too far from home	8%
Health condition(s) prevents participation	7%
Transportation difficulties	6%
Few opportunities for parents/children to participate at the same time	5%
Facilities/programs are too crowded	5%
Facilities are not accessible to people using wheelchairs, etc.	2%
Programs are not adapted to make them accessible	2%
I/we don't have the skills necessary to participate	2%
No one with whom to attend/participate	2%

While 38% of respondents indicated there is nothing that precludes their participation, over 10% indicated each of the following factors as limits: lack of facilities/programs/activities of interest (20%); lack of time/too busy (20%); lack of awareness of available programs/activities (17%); use facilities/programs is too expensive (13%).

All N=400 respondents were read the following preamble and were then asked a series of questions.

“Regardless of whether or not you use these, I would like to ask you some questions on your opinion about the need for additional parks and recreation services in the City of Thorold.”

Q21. “Do you think a new arena is needed to replace the James Whyte Arena?”



Almost half of the respondents or 48% think a new arena is needed to replace the existing facility. Over one-fifth (23%) are unsure or undecided, while opposition is at 29% (N=115).

Those opposed or said no were then asked about their reasons (Q22).

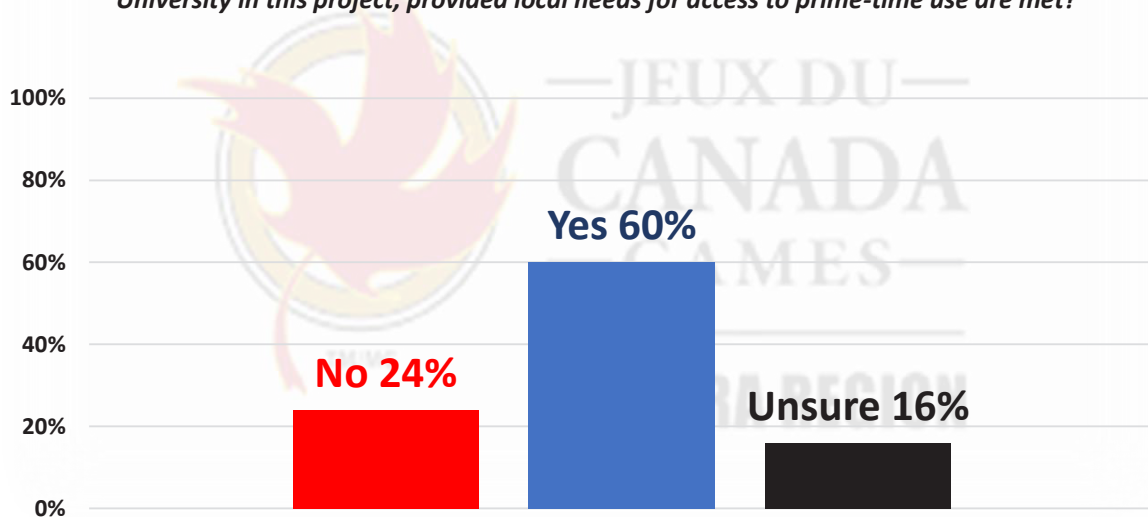
Q22. “Why Not?”

The Frank Doherty arena alone is sufficient to serve the City	N=33	26%
More variety in recreation facilities is a greater priority than a new arena	N=30	24%
There are enough arenas in surrounding communities to meet demand	N=27	22%
The cost / money can be spent on more important things	N=13	10%
Don't know	N=8	6%
Demand for ice is declining as participation in hockey shrinks	N=7	6%
No where to put a new arena	N=4	3%
Current arena is still functional	N=1	1%
Other activities are cheaper than hockey	N=1	1%
Sharing resources & cooperating with neighbour communities should be considered	N=1	1%

Reasons named tended to focus on the belief that the current arena is satisfactory for the needs of the community, that there are other recreation priorities, and there are enough facilities in nearby communities.

All N=400 respondents were then asked about building a new arena in the context of the 2021 Canada Games and partnering with St. Catharines and Brock University.

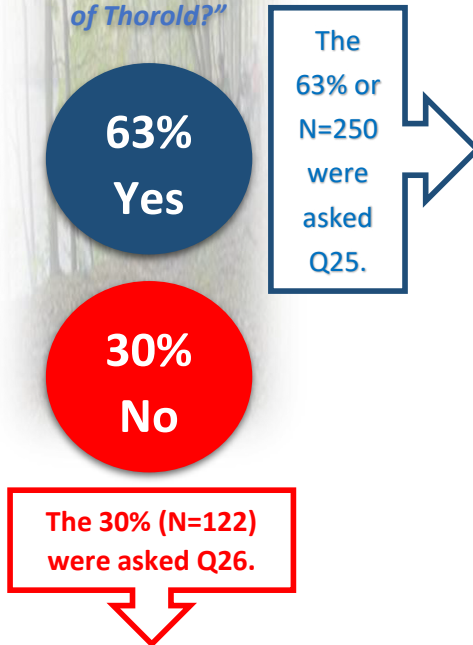
Q23. "If the proposal to build the 2021 Canada Games Complex proceeds and includes a double pad arena, do you think the City of Thorold should partner with the City of St. Catharines and Brock University in this project, provided local needs for access to prime-time use are met?"



Under this scenario, a six in ten majority are in support of a partnership to build a double pad arena, less than a quarter or 24% remain opposed, and 16% are unsure.

All N=400 respondents were asked if other new parks, trails or recreation facilities are needed, of which 63% said yes, 30% no and 7% were unsure. Those answering yes and no were each asked a separate follow-up question.

Q24. “Do you think other new parks, trails or recreation facilities are needed in the City of Thorold?”



Q25. “Please indicate what you think is needed in Thorold to serve City residents?”

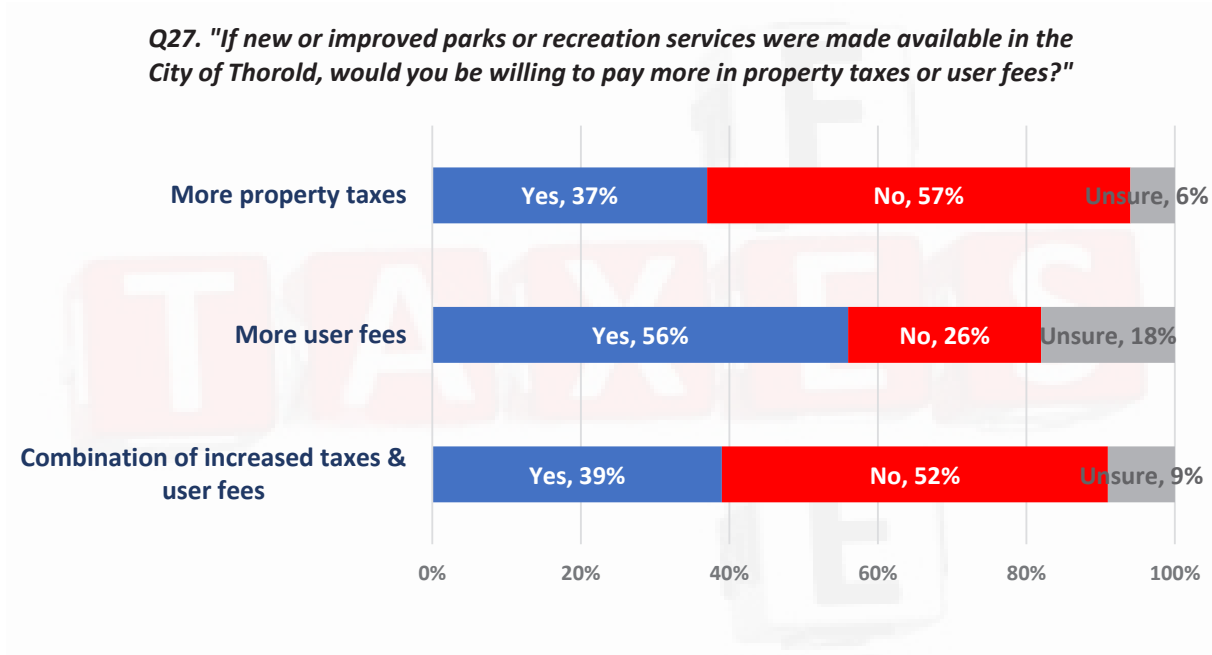
Trails/trail connections	N=48	19%
Tennis courts	N=45	18%
Multi-purpose program/activity space	N=39	16%
Space for social events/parties	N=38	15%
Community meeting, class, kitchen facilities	N=37	15%
Access to views/spaces along Welland Canal	N=36	14%
Splash pad	N=35	14%
Dog park	N=34	14%
Soccer fields	N=33	13%
Seniors programming space	N=29	12%
Pickleball courts	N=25	10%
Weight room/fitness facilities	N=24	10%
Multi-purpose playing fields	N=21	8%
Youth programming space	N=19	8%
Beach/sand volleyball courts	N=16	6%
Gymnasium	N=14	6%
Bicycle pump track/skills area	N=12	5%
Studio space for visual arts programs	N=7	3%
Don't know	N=3	1%

Q26. “Why do you not think additional recreation facilities, parks, or trails are needed?”

There are already enough parks, trails and recreation facilities in the area	N=52	35%
Existing parks, trails and facilities in the City are not well used now	N=42	28%
Additional recreation infrastructure would be too expensive to build and/or operate	N=38	25%
Existing parks, trails and facilities should be upgraded or improved instead	N=27	18%
Providing additional facilities, parks or trails may cause property taxes to increase	N=19	13%
Any new facilities/services would not likely be close to where we live, so won't use	N=13	9%
Don't know	N=3	2%
The City needs to focus on other non-recreation spending priorities	N=1	13%

The N=250 indicating the need for new recreation infrastructure most frequently reported rails/trail connections (19%) and tennis courts (18%). The next three categories, collectively indicate interest in flexible, multi-purpose community space (Multi-purpose program/activity space at 16%; space for social events/parties (15%); community meeting, class, kitchen facilities (15%). The N=122 respondents who do not think additional infrastructure is needed most often indicated that existing assets are sufficient (35%); existing assets are not currently well used (28%); additional recreation infrastructure would be too expensive to build and/or operate (25%).

All N=400 respondents were asked if they would pay more in taxes, user fees or a combination of taxation and user fees for new or improved services in the City.



The tolerance was strongest for user fee increases at 56%, while opposition to property tax increases was highest at 57%.

Respondent Profile

Q28. Which of the following best describes your household?			
		Frequency	Percent
	One adult	97	24.3
	Couple without dependent child(ren)	134	33.5
	Couple with dependent child(ren)	108	27.0
	One parent with dependent child(ren)	41	10.3
	One parent with dependent child(ren) and one or more adults	2	.5
	More than one adult sharing a residence	17	4.3
	Extended family (3+ generations)	1	.3
	TOTAL	400	100.0

Q29. How many people in each of the following age categories (including you) live in your household?					
	None	One	Two	Three or more	Refused
Children 0-4 years	84%	13%	3%	<1%	<1%
Children 5-12 years	76%	18%	6%	<1%	<1%
Teens 13-19 years	91%	7%	1%	-	<1%
Young adults 20-34 years	77%	16%	7%	<1%	<1%
Adults 35-44 years	58%	19%	23%	-	<1%
Adults 55-64 years	84%	12%	4%	-	<1%
Adults 65-74 years	88%	7%	5%	-	<1%
Adults 75 years and older	92%	5%	3%	-	-

Q30. In which of the following age categories do you fit?			
		Frequency	Percent
	18-25 years	62	16%
	25-44 years	157	39%
	45-54 years	59	15%
	55-64 years	58	15%
	65-74 years	35	9%
	75-84 years	20	5%
	85 years or older	9	2%
	TOTAL	400	100%

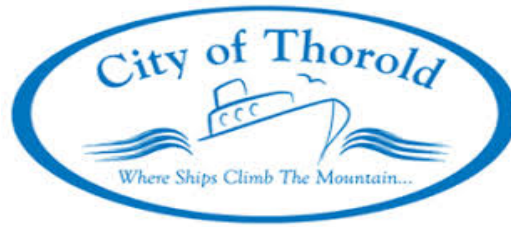
Q31. Does a member of your household have a disability ?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	101	25%
	No	299	75%
	TOTAL	400	100%

Q32. How long have you had a home in the City of Thorold?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Have always lived in Thorold	87	22%
	Less than 1 year	1	<1%
	1 to 5 years	70	18%
	6 to 10 years	38	10%
	11 to 15 years	37	9%
	15 to 20 years	31	8%
	More than 20 years	136	34%
	TOTAL	400	100%

Q33. Do you own or rent your home?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Own	365	91%
	Rent	26	7%
	Refused	9	2%
	TOTAL	400	100%

Q34. In which one of the following areas of the City of Thorold do you live?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Thorold downtown and area	102	26%
	South Confederation	120	30%
	Thorold South	27	7%
	Port Robinson East	28	7%
	Port Robinson West	19	5%
	Allanburg	9	2%
	Rolling Meadows	9	2%
	St. Johns	18	5%
	Elsewhere in Thorold	68	17%
	TOTAL	400	100%

RESULTS FROM THE ON-LINE RESIDENT SURVEY



City of Thorold Results by Question: Online Survey

SECTION A

INTERVIEWER: These are questions on your use of existing parks, trails, facilities and programs in the City of Thorold and in surrounding communities.

Q1. Where do you or other members of your household use parks, trails or recreation facilities, either as part of organized programs or for unstructured activities?				
		Frequency	Percent	
	We do not use these services	2	1.4	Go to Section C
	In the City of Thorold only	14	9.5	Ask Q2
	In communities surrounding Thorold only	4	2.7	Go to Section B
	In both Thorold and surrounding communities	127	86.4	Ask Q2
	Total	147	100.0	

Q2. Which park/trail facilities or features do you or other members of your household use in the City of Thorold? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	Percent of Cases
		N	
	Playgrounds	100	70.9%
	Park areas for socializing, informal use (picnics, socializi	97	68.8%
	Trails	94	66.7%
	Splash pads	90	63.8%
	Swimming pool	81	57.4%
	Toboggan hills	60	42.6%
	Soccer fields	54	38.3%
	Cycling routes (on-road)	51	36.2%
	Ball diamonds	49	34.8%
	Basketball courts	34	24.1%
	Skatepark	15	10.6%
	Tennis courts	14	9.9%
	Horseshoe pits	7	5.0%
	Bocce courts	5	3.5%
	Off road vehicle tracks	3	2.1%
	Total	754	534.8%

Q3. If in Question 2, you indicated that you or other members of your household use trails in the City of Thorold, we would like to know a little more about which ones you use and how you use them. For each of the trails you use, can you tell me the name of the trail OR the nearest street or intersection from which you get onto the trail; whether you use it for pedestrian activities, cycling, or motorized activities; and the season(s) you use it. Pedestrian activities include walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and mobility aids such as wheelchairs. Motorized activities include snowmobiling, ATVing and e-bikes.

Q3. Please record Name or Intersection of trail. (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Don't know	31	19.9%
	Canal path / parkway	25	16.0%
	Mel Swart Lake Gibson Conservation Park	17	10.9%
	Short Hills Trail	14	9.0%
	Welland Canal Trail	12	7.7%
	Beaverdam Park	7	4.5%
	Bruce Trail	7	4.5%
	DeCew House Heritage Park	6	3.8%
	St. John's Conservation area	4	2.6%
	Glenridge Quarry Naturalization Site	4	2.6%
	Greater Niagara Cycle Route	3	1.9%
	Morningstar Mill	2	1.3%
	Thorold South	2	1.3%
	Decew Falls Loop	2	1.3%
	Trails around Brock University	2	1.3%
	Merritt Trail	2	1.3%
	Sullivan Park	1	.6%
	Near Lock 7	1	.6%
	Bert Lowe Side Trail	1	.6%
	Woodend Trail	1	.6%
	Pine Street	1	.6%
	Between Orchard Hill Road and Holland Road	1	.6%
	Richmond street	1	.6%
	Rail Trail	1	.6%
	Allanburg Bridge	1	.6%
	Trail that leads to ferry to Port Robinson	1	.6%
	Keefer	1	.6%
	Canby Park	1	.6%
	Wylie Road	1	.6%
	Niagara River	1	.6%
	Rotary Park	1	.6%
	Water Commission Park	1	.6%
Total		156	100.0%

Q3b. And what type of activities do you use it for? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Pedestrian	144	67.6%
	Cycling	65	30.5%
	Motorized	4	1.9%
Total		213	100.0%

Q3c. And in what season do you use this trail? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Spring	142	28.5%
	Summer	152	30.5%
	Fall	141	28.3%
	Winter	63	12.7%
Total		498	100.0%

Q4. Do you think the parks or trails that you or members of your household use in the City of Thorold require upgrades or improvements?

		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	98	69.5
	No	18	12.8
	Uncertain / don't know	25	17.7
	Total	141	100.0

Q5. Please describe the types of improvements or upgrades you think are needed for existing parks, trails or public green spaces that you use. (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)

		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Benches, picnic tables, seating areas	68	10.7%
	Washrooms and/or change rooms	61	9.6%
	Better maintenance	58	9.1%
	Upgraded playground equipment	48	7.5%
	More amenities (water, parking, lighting, bicycle parking, shade structures, etc.)	45	7.1%
	More winter use facilities or improved winter access	41	6.4%
	Trees / shade	38	6.0%
	More equipment for physical activity (e.g., outdoor workouts)	33	5.2%
	Gardens / horticultural plantings	31	4.9%
	Pathways	29	4.5%
	Areas for special events	27	4.2%
	Naturalization / natural plantings	26	4.1%
	Signage (wayfinding, distance markers or park identity)	26	4.1%
	Better trail connectivity	24	3.8%
	Food vendors	24	3.8%
	Wifi connectivity	23	3.6%
	Educational / interpretive signs	19	3.0%
	AODA accessibility needed	9	1.4%
	Trail heads with amenities	8	1.3%
	Total	638	100.0%

INTERVIEWER: Now I am going to ask you about your use of indoor recreation facilities in the City of Thorold.

Q6. Do you or other members of your household use indoor recreation facilities in the City of Thorold?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	90	63.8
	No	51	36.2
	Total	141	100.0

IF YES ASK Q6 / NO GO TO Q10

Q7. Which of the following indoor recreation facilities do you or other members of your household use in the City of Thorold?

Q7a. Thorold Community Arenas			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	78	86.7
	No	12	13.3
	Total	90	100.0

Q7b. Seniors Centre			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	6	6.7
	No	84	93.3
	Total	90	100.0

Q7c. Allanburg Community Centre			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	22	24.4
	No	68	75.6
	Total	90	100.0

Q7d. Port Robinson Community Centre			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	10	11.1
	No	80	88.9
	Total	90	100.0

Q7e. TCAG Basciano Centre			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	40	44.4
	No	50	55.6
	Total	90	100.0

Q7f. Thorold Public Library			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	59	65.6
	No	31	34.4
	Total	90	100.0

Q7g. Fire hall community rooms			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	8	8.9
	No	82	91.1
	Total	90	100.0

Q7h. Lock 7 Museum			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	16	17.8
	No	74	82.2
	Total	90	100.0

Q7i. Thorold Community Theatre			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	3	3.3
	No	87	96.7
	Total	90	100.0

Q8. Do you think the indoor recreation facilities that you or members of your household use in the City of Thorold require upgrades or improvements?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	73	81.1
	No	11	12.2
	Uncertain / don't know	6	6.7
	Total	90	100.0

IF YES ASK Q9 / NO OR DON'T KNOW GO TO Q10

Q9. Please describe the types of improvements or upgrades you think are needed for existing indoor facilities that you use. (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Modernized spaces for indoor programming	46	15.3%
	Food services (e.g., healthier options, café style)	37	12.3%
	Better support facilities/amenities (e.g., bicycle parking, changerooms/washrooms)	33	11.0%
	Better maintenance/cleaning	28	9.3%
	More/better located parking	25	8.3%
	More audience/spectator viewing	22	7.3%
	New kitchen facilities	22	7.3%
	Improved accessibility (e.g., wheelchair, hearing assistance)	21	7.0%
	More attractive building exteriors	19	6.3%
	Better acoustics	18	6.0%
	Storage	16	5.3%
	More safety features (e.g., night lighting, security)	12	4.0%
Other	2	.7%	
Total	301	100.0%	

Q9b. Do you have any specific locations in mind for these improvements?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
	Thorold Public Library	5	6.8
	Thorold Community Arenas	25	34.2
	Port Robinson Community Centre	2	2.7
	All the facilities / no one specific place	2	2.7
	TCAG Basciano Centre	1	1.4
	Fire hall community rooms	1	1.4
	Lock 7 Museum	1	1.4
	No / none	36	49.3
	Total	73	100.0

Section B

INTERVIEWER: These next few questions ask about your use of recreation services outside the City of Thorold, in surrounding communities.

Q10. Do you or other members of your household regularly use parks, trails, recreation facilities or programs in communities around the City of Thorold, either as part of organized programs or for unstructured activities			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	120	82.8
	No	25	17.2
	Total	145	100.0

IF YES ASK Q11 / NO GO TO Q17

Q11. Please indicate the facilities or services you use in nearby communities. (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent of Cases
	Parks	94	78.3%
	Trails	83	69.2%
	Arenas	75	62.5%
	Indoor pools	71	59.2%
	Sport fields	62	51.7%
	Public libraries	55	45.8%
	Fitness facilities/workout gyms	54	45.0%
	Program/activity spaces in community centres	49	40.8%
	Performing arts theatres	32	26.7%
	Museums	31	25.8%
	Cultural/heritage centres	17	14.2%
	Art galleries	12	10.0%
	Seniors centres	5	4.2%
	School Gyms	2	1.7%
	Dog Parks	2	1.7%
	Off Road tracks	1	.8%
	Total	645	537.5%

Q12. What are the reasons you use these parks, trails facilities and programs? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Programs/facilities we use are not available in the City of Thorold	84	21.6%
	There is more variety to choose from	73	18.8%
	Programs/facilities we use are newer/better design/quality	61	15.7%
	More convenient scheduling	30	7.7%
	Parking is convenient	27	6.9%
	There are more family-oriented programs/activities	26	6.7%
	They are closer to our home than those in Thorold	23	5.9%
	Programs are adapted to various users' needs	14	3.6%
	Better value for money	14	3.6%
	Programs/facilities are on the way to work, shopping, etc.	12	3.1%
	Facilities are accessible by wheelchair, scooter, etc.	8	2.1%
	Spaces/facilities are not as crowded	7	1.8%
	Membership or use of facility is paid for by employer, school, etc.	6	1.5%
	Dog Park	2	.5%
	Socialize (go with friends / family)	1	.3%
	Off road tracks	1	.3%
	Total	389	100.0%

Q13. Where do you go most often to use parks, trails recreation facilities or programs outside Thorold - Welland, St. Catharines, Pelham, Niagara Falls or elsewhere?

	Frequency	Percent
St. Catharines	66	55.0
Niagara Falls	26	21.7
Pelham	14	11.7
Welland	6	5.0
Don't know	3	2.5
Beamsville	2	1.7
Niagara on the Lake	2	1.7
Port Colborne	1	.8
Total	120	100.0

Q14. When you travel to <Q13> to use these services, approximately how many minutes is the trip by car?

	Frequency	Percent
0 to 10 minutes	23	19.2
11 to 15 minutes	58	48.3
16 to 20 minutes	27	22.5
21 to 30 minutes	5	4.2
over 30 minutes	3	2.5
Don't know	4	3.3
Total	120	100.0

Q15. If services similar to those you now use outside of Thorold were available within Thorold, would you be willing to spend more time driving than you do now to use them?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	78	65.0
No	21	17.5
Uncertain / don't know	21	17.5
Total	120	100.0

IF YES ASK Q16 / NO OR DON'T KNOW GO TO Q17

Q16. If yes, what is the maximum time, in minutes, you estimate you would be willing to drive? (Interviewer: Read list; one choice only)

	Frequency	Percent
11 to 15 minutes	24	30.8
16 to 20 minutes	27	34.6
21 to 30 minutes	21	26.9
31 to 45 minutes	5	6.4
Over 45 minutes	1	1.3
Total	78	100.0

Section C

INTERVIEWER: The following questions are on the need for new or additional parks and recreation services in Thorold.

INTERVIEWER: We would like to hear about your household members' interest in beginning to participate, or in participating more, in recreation programs and activities.

Q17. Are there sports, recreation and/or arts programs or activities in which you or the members of your household do not now participate, but in which you/they would like to participate?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	83	56.5
	No	32	21.8
	Uncertain / don't know	32	21.8
	Total	147	100.0

IF YES ASK Q18 / NO OR DON'T KNOW GO TO Q21

Q18. In which of the following types of sports, recreation, wellness, and/or arts and cultural programs/activities would you or other members of your household like to participate? (Interviewer: Listen and record all responses. The examples will help you categorize responses.)

Q18a. Arena ice activities (e.g., hockey, broomball, sledge hockey, skating, curling)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	42	50.6
	No	41	49.4
	Total	83	100.0

Q18b. Arena non-ice activities (e.g., floor hockey, box lacrosse, skate boarding, in-line skate boardin			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	32	38.6
	No	51	61.4
	Total	83	100.0

Q18c. Group fitness classes (e.g., bootcamp, aerobics, aquafit)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	46	55.4
	No	37	44.6
	Total	83	100.0

Q18d. Individual fitness training (e.g., weights, treadmills, etc.)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	43	51.8
	No	40	48.2
	Total	83	100.0

Q18e. Wellness programs (e.g., yoga, tai chi, Pilates, cooking, mental health)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	47	56.6
	No	36	43.4
	Total	83	100.0

Q18f. Performing arts (e.g., drama, choral)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	20	24.1
	No	63	75.9
	Total	83	100.0

Q18g. Visual arts (e.g., painting, photography, digital media)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	25	30.1
	No	58	69.9
	Total	83	100.0

Q18h. Swimming (e.g., instruction, recreation, fitness, therapeutic)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	53	63.9
	No	30	36.1
	Total	83	100.0

Q18i. Gymnasium sports (e.g., badminton, basketball, volleyball, pickleball)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	32	38.6
	No	51	61.4
	Total	83	100.0

Q18j. Crafts (e.g., quilting, woodworking)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	18	21.7
	No	65	78.3
	Total	83	100.0

Q18k. Education/self improvement/interest (e.g., nutrition, computer, book club)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	27	32.5
	No	56	67.5
	Total	83	100.0

Q18l. Social/club activities (e.g., youth drop-in, seniors club, new moms)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	33	39.8
	No	50	60.2
	Total	83	100.0

Q18m. Martial arts (e.g., karate, tae kwon do, jiu jitsu)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	15	18.1
	No	68	81.9
	Total	83	100.0

Q18n. Field sports (e.g., ball, soccer, football)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	30	36.1
	No	53	63.9
	Total	83	100.0

Q18o. Outdoor Courts sports (tennis, pickleball, volleyball)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	31	37.3
	No	52	62.7
	Total	83	100.0

Q18p. Summer programs/activities (e.g., cycling, nature/environmental, hiking, fitness, etc.)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	43	51.8
	No	40	48.2
	Total	83	100.0

Q18q. Winter park/trail programs/activities (e.g., cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, walking club)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	31	37.3
	No	52	62.7
	Total	83	100.0

Q18r. Camps (e.g., day, March break, etc.)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	27	32.5
	No	56	67.5
	Total	83	100.0

Q18s. Community garden projects			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	20	24.1
	No	63	75.9
	Total	83	100.0

Q18t. One-day or weekend special events			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	35	42.2
	No	48	57.8
	Total	83	100.0

Q18u. Volunteering to help provide programs/services			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	18	21.7
	No	65	78.3
	Total	83	100.0

Q18v. Is there any others?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Off road activities	2	2.4
	Frisbee Disc Golf	1	1.2
	Off leash dog park	1	1.2
	No / None	79	95.2
	Total	83	100.0

**Q19. Which age groups in your household are interested in the programs/activities you selected in Question 18?
(Interviewer: Read list and record all responses)**

Q19a. Preschool (4 years of age and under)			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
	Yes	23	27.7
	No	60	72.3
	Total	83	100.0

Q19b. Children (5-12 years old)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	41	49.4
	No	42	50.6
	Total	83	100.0

Q19c. Youth/teenagers (13-19 years)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	33	39.8
	No	50	60.2
	Total	83	100.0

Q19d. Adults			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	61	73.5
	No	22	26.5
	Total	83	100.0

Q19e. Older adults/seniors (55 years old+)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	13	15.7
	No	70	84.3
	Total	83	100.0

Q19f. Family or inter-generational (all ages)			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	21	25.3
	No	62	74.7
	Total	83	100.0

Q20. Which factors, if any, limit or prevent participation in sports, recreation and/or arts programs/activities by you or other members of your household? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	Percent of Cases
		N	
	Facilities/programs/activities of interest are not provided	37	46.3%
	I/we are not aware of available programs/activities	24	30.0%
	Program times/facility hours are inconvenient	23	28.8%
	Few opportunities for parents/children to participate at the same time	20	25.0%
	There is nothing that limits or prevents us from participating	19	23.8%
	It's too expensive to use facilities/programs	15	18.8%
	Lack of time/too busy	13	16.3%
	Parks/facilities/trails are too far from home	8	10.0%
	Transportation difficulties	6	7.5%
	No one with whom to attend/participate	6	7.5%
	Health condition(s) prevents participation	5	6.3%
	Facilities/programs are too crowded	3	3.8%
	Facilities are not accessible to people using wheelchairs, etc.	1	1.3%
	Programs are not adapted to make them accessible	1	1.3%
	I/we don't have the skills necessary to participate	1	1.3%
	Total	182	227.5%

Q21. Do you think a new arena is needed to replace the James Whyte Arena?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	84	57.1
	No	31	21.1
	Uncertain / don't know	32	21.8
	Total	147	100.0

IF NO ASK Q22 / YES OR DON'T KNOW GO TO Q23

Q22. Why not? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	More variety in recreation facilities is a greater priority than a new arena	15	30.6%
	There are enough arenas in surrounding communities to meet demand	15	30.6%
	The Frank Doherty arena alone is sufficient to serve the City	9	18.4%
	Demand for ice is declining as participation in hockey shrinks	6	12.2%
	Sharing resources and cooperating with neighbouring communities should be considered	1	2.0%
	The cost / money can be spent on more important things	1	2.0%
	Would never use it	1	2.0%
	Repair the current arena	1	2.0%
	Total	49	100.0%

Q23. If the proposal to build the 2021 Canada Games Complex proceeds and includes the provision of a double pad arena, do you think the City of Thorold should partner with the City of St. Catharines and Brock University in this project, provided local need			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	91	61.9
	No	29	19.7
	Uncertain / don't know	27	18.4
	Total	147	100.0

Q24. Do you think other new parks, trails or recreation facilities are needed in the City of Thorold?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	119	81.0
	No	19	12.9
	Uncertain / don't know	9	6.1
	Total	147	100.0

IF YES ASK Q25 / NO OR DON'T KNOW GO TO Q26

Q25. Please indicate what you think is needed in Thorold to serve City residents. (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent of Cases
	Multi-purpose program/activity space	69	58.0%
	Trails/trail connections	66	55.5%
	Weight room/fitness facilities	54	45.4%
	Dog park	50	42.0%
	Splash pad	47	39.5%
	Access to views/spaces along Welland Canal	47	39.5%
	Youth programming space	44	37.0%
	Multi-purpose playing fields	42	35.3%
	Space for social events/parties	36	30.3%
	Beach/sand volleyball courts	35	29.4%
	Bicycle pump track/skills area	28	23.5%
	Gymnasium	26	21.8%
	Community meeting, classroom, kitchen facilities	25	21.0%
	Seniors programming space	21	17.6%
	Tennis courts	21	17.6%
	Soccer fields	20	16.8%
	Studio space for visual arts programs	11	9.2%
	Pickleball courts	10	8.4%
	Indoor Pool	6	5.0%
	Skate Park	5	4.2%
	Motorsport track	1	.8%
Total		664	558.0%

Q26. Why do you not think additional recreation facilities, parks, or trails are needed? (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)			
		Responses	
		N	Percent
	Existing parks, trails and facilities should be upgraded or improved instead	11	40.7%
	There are already enough parks, trails and recreation facilities in the area	7	25.9%
	Existing parks, trails and facilities in the City are not well used now	3	11.1%
	Additional recreation infrastructure would be too expensive to build and/or operate	3	11.1%
	The City needs to focus on other non-recreation spending priorities	1	3.7%
	Any new facilities/services would not likely be close to where we live, so we would not use them	1	3.7%
	Providing additional facilities, parks or trails may cause property taxes to increase	1	3.7%
Total		27	100.0%

Q27. If new or improved parks or recreation services were made available in the City of Thorold, would you be willing to pay more in property taxes or user fees? (Interviewer: Read options and record a response for each option)

Q27a. Would pay more property tax			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	57	38.8
	No	62	42.2
	Don't know	28	19.0
Total		147	100.0

Q27b. Would pay more user fees			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	72	49.0
	No	37	25.2
	Don't know	38	25.9
Total		147	100.0

Q27c. Would pay a combination of increased taxes and user fees			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	48	32.7
	No	66	44.9
	Don't know	33	22.4
	Total	147	100.0

Q28. Which of the following best describes your household?			
		Frequency	Percent
	One adult	10	6.8
	Couple without dependent child(ren)	31	21.1
	Couple with dependent child(ren)	81	55.1
	One parent with dependent child(ren)	4	2.7
	One parent with dependent child(ren) and one or more adults	3	2.0
	More than one adult sharing a residence	8	5.4
	Extended family (3+ generations)	7	4.8
	Refused	3	2.0
	Total	147	100.0

Q29. How many people in each of the following age categories (including you) live in your household? (Interviewer: Read list and record numbers in each age group)

Q29a. Children 0-4 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	100	68.0
	1	25	17.0
	2	12	8.2
	3	1	.7
	5 or more	2	1.4
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29b. Children 5-12 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	70	47.6
	1	36	24.5
	2	27	18.4
	3	6	4.1
	4	1	.7
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29c. Teens 13-19 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	102	69.4
	1	28	19.0
	2	9	6.1
	3	1	.7
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29d. Young adults 20-34 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	94	63.9
	1	20	13.6
	2	24	16.3
	3	2	1.4
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29e. Adults 35-44 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	79	53.7
	1	29	19.7
	2	32	21.8
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29f. Adults 45-54 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	100	68.0
	1	16	10.9
	2	23	15.6
	3	1	.7
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29g. Adults 55-64 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	119	81.0
	1	7	4.8
	2	14	9.5
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29h. Adults 65-74 years			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	129	87.8
	1	6	4.1
	2	5	3.4
	Refused	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0

Q29i. Adults 75 years and older			
		Frequency	Percent
	None	142	96.6
	1	2	1.4
	Refused	3	2.0
	Total	147	100.0

Q30. In which of the following age categories do you fit?			
		Frequency	Percent
	18-25 years	3	2.0
	25-44 years	75	51.0
	45-54 years	35	23.8
	55-64 years	24	16.3
	65-74 years	6	4.1
	75-84 years	1	.7
	Refused	3	2.0
	Total	147	100.0

Are you a student who lives in Thorold only during the academic year?			
		Frequency	Percent
	No, I live full time in Thorold	141	95.9
	Refused	6	4.1
	Total	147	100.0

Q31. Does a member of your household have a disability (physical, mental-cognitive, intellectual or developmental, learning, speech or language impairments, visual or hearing)?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	23	15.6
	No	118	80.3
	Refused	6	4.1
	Total	147	100.0

Q32. How long have you had a home in the City of Thorold?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Have always lived in Thorold	39	26.5
	Less than 1 year	2	1.4
	1 to 5 years	26	17.7
	6 to 10 years	13	8.8
	11 to 15 years	20	13.6
	15 to 20 years	12	8.2
	More than 20 years	33	22.4
	Refused	2	1.4
	Total	147	100.0

Q33. Do you own or rent your home?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Own	116	78.9
	Rent	23	15.6
	Refused	8	5.4
	Total	147	100.0

Q34. In which one of the following areas of the City of Thorold do you live?			
		Frequency	Percent
	Thorold downtown and area	51	34.7
	South Confederation	49	33.3
	Elsewhere in Thorold	23	15.6
	Thorold South	12	8.2
	Port Robinson East	4	2.7
	Refused	4	2.7
	St. Johns	2	1.4
	Port Robinson West	1	.7
	Rolling Meadows	1	.7
	Total	147	100.0

APPENDIX C

USER GROUP SURVEY RESPONSES: PROGRAM/ ACTIVITY PROVIDERS SURVEY

SURVEY METHOD

A total of 61 volunteer groups that offer recreation programming to City residents and are major facility or parks/trails users were invited¹ to participate in an on-line survey that requested detailed information on their programs, membership / participation, facility use and needs/interests for improvements, areas of potential municipal support, and ability to help finance future service development. A letter of introduction about the master plan and the purpose of the survey to its preparation was emailed from the City to each organization, along with the link to access the questionnaire. The letters to potential respondents to the survey were issued the week of April 8, 2019 with a deadline for completion of April 8, 2019. An email reminder was issued partway through this timeframe. Given a low response up to April 20, a second reminder was issued with an extension of the deadline to April 30, 2019.

The following report documents the results of the survey. The survey questions are shown in bold type, either in their original form or in the form of a statement that contains the intent of the question.

SURVEY RESULTS

Organization Name and Program Description

Eight (8) groups accessed the survey, and one did not complete it. Table 1 lists the groups and the programs, activities or services each organization provides to the community.

¹ See end of this survey report for a list of invitees

Table 1: Organization Name and Programs/Services Provided

NAME	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM(S)/SERVICES
1. Thorold Amateur Athletic Association	Seasonal Ice Hockey League - Youth Minor Hockey
2. High School Baseball and Baseball Tournaments	High School Baseball games, practices and tournaments
3. Thorold Co-ed Rec Slo Pitch League	We are a recreational ball league for all ages and skill levels to get outdoors for some level of exercise and social interaction.
4. Ugulini (Sunday Night Rental)	none
5. Wormald Sunday Morning Hockey	recreational hockey
6. Niagara Rope Enthusiasts*	-
7. Athletics - Stags Hockey	Currently, we are only a men's hockey team/program. However, I am confident many of us are involved in minor hockey coaching and as our young families grow, we will all only further volunteer for the community hockey and sports teams.
8. Line dance	Line dance instruction

*incomplete survey

Facility Use

Does your organization use indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities in the City of Thorold for its programs? Recreation facilities include playing fields, trails, arenas, gymnasiums, meeting rooms, studios, park space, etc. for community programs and activities. If yes, which of the following recreation facilities does your organization use for its programs or activities? (Please check all that apply).

All seven groups use facilities in Thorold. Table 2 shows the facilities used by the groups. Given the groups that responded, arenas and ball diamonds are the facilities that are most often used.

Table 2: Facilities Used in City of Thorold

FACILITIES	# RESPONDENTS USING
Arena (ice)	4
Space/facilities at Allanburg Community Centre	2
Office/storage space	1
Ball fields	2
Meeting rooms/classrooms	1

Does your organization use indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities or spaces outside of the City of Thorold for its programs/activities (e.g., soccer fields, ball fields, arenas, indoor pools, school gymnasiums, museums, multi-purpose space, etc.)? If yes, please list the facilities you use outside the City of Thorold for your programs/activities, the community in which they are located, and indicate the reason(s) you use them.

Three groups use facilities outside the City of Thorold, largely to access facilities/time not available locally.

Table 3: Use of Facilities Outside City of Thorold

GROUP	FACILITY	LOCATION	REASON(S)
Thorold Amateur Athletic Association	Ridley College	Niagara Region	- Mainly used for additional ice for tournaments
	Seymour Hanah	Niagara Region	- Mainly used for additional ice for tournaments
	Gateway Ice	Niagara Region	- Mainly used for additional ice for tournaments
	Merriton Ice	Niagara Region	- Mainly used for additional ice for tournaments
High School Baseball and Baseball Tournaments	Taylor Field	St. Catherines	- Required as part of league play
- Thorold Amateur Athletic Association -Athletics Stags Hockey	Gales Centre Arena	Niagara Falls	- Mainly used for additional ice for tournaments - Summer ice availability
Thorold Amateur Athletic Association	Niagara Region Arenas	Niagara region	- Required as part of league play
High School Baseball and Baseball Tournaments	Bullett Sports Park	Welland	- Facility does not exist in the City of Thorold
Thorold Amateur Athletic Association	Ball Hockey	St. Catherines	- Facility does not exist in the City of Thorold; teams rent these facilities for winter ball hockey practice (relating to team hockey)

Programs, Activities, Services and Participation/Membership

Table 4 shows the categories that best describes the organization’s MAIN programs, activities or services (up to three selected).

Table 4: Main Program, Activity or Service Category

	# RESPONDENTS (TOTAL 7)
Arena ice activities (e.g., hockey, figure skating)	4
Fitness/wellness (e.g., yoga, aerobics, aquafit)	1
Instruction (e.g., credit or general interest, lectures)	1
Field sports (e.g., soccer, ball, lawn bowling, football)	2
Cycling (on and off-road)	1

Approximately how many members/ participants belonged to your organization in the last three years, excluding coaches, spectators, etc. (If documented figures are not available, please estimate).

Table 5 shows the groups' membership/ participation numbers for the last three years. Only one group has increased its membership.

Table 5: Membership/Participation in the Last Three Years

	LAST YEAR	TWO YEARS AGO	THREE YEARS AGO	% CHANGE
Thorold Amateur Athletic Association	282	305	352	-25%
High School Baseball and Baseball Tournaments	68	68	-	0
Thorold Co-ed Rec Slo Pitch League	300	300	300	0
Ugulini (Sunday Night Rental)	22	22	22	0
Wormald Sunday Morning Hockey	32	32	32	0
Athletics - Stags	24	18	na	33%
Hockey				
Dance	8	9	10	-25%

Which of the following age group(s) does your organization PRIMARILY serve? (Please check all that apply, IF NOT all age groups or families: e.g., a special event for the entire community is covered by checking only the first box).

As shown in Table 6, the age group that is most frequently served by the responding groups is youth aged 13 to 19 years.

Table 6: Age Groups Served

	# RESPONDENTS (7)
ALL AGE GROUPS/FAMILIES OR	2
Children 0-4 years	1
Children 5-12 years	1
Teens 13-19 years	3
Young adults 20-34 years	2
Adults 35-44 years	1
Adults 45-54 years	1
Adults 55-64 years	2
Adults 65-74 years	2
Adults 75 years and older	1

Which of the following categories best describes the male/female split among your group’s participants? (Select one option).

Table 7 shows that males are the dominant participants among the groups that responded.

Table 7: Male/Female Participants

MALE/FEMALE SPLIT	# RESPONDENTS (7)
100% male	2
90% male/ 10% female	3
75% male/ 25% female	0
60% male/ 40% female	0
50% male/ 50% female	1
60% female/ 40% male	0
75% female/ 25% male	0
90% female/ 10% male	1
100% female	0

What percentage of your participants/ member lives in each of the following areas? (Total should add to 100%. If you do not have documented figures, please estimate).

As shown in Table 10, considerable proportions of members/participants in the seven groups that responded come from outside Thorold. Those participants/members who live in Thorold are primarily located in the northern urban area.

Table 10: Location of Participants' Residence

PARTICIPANTS' RESIDENCE	NUMBER OF GROUPS WITH % MEMBERSHIP BY CATEGORY									
	0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
Thorold downtown and area	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
South Confederation	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thorold South	3	1	1							
Port Robinson East	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Allanburg	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rolling Meadows	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
St. Johns	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Elsewhere in Thorold	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outside Thorold	1	1	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	1

Over the next five years, do you expect the number of participants or members in your organization to increase, remain stable, or decrease? (Select one option).

Table 11 illustrates that, with the exception of one group that was uncertain, all anticipate stable or increasing membership/participation in the next five years.

Table 11: Anticipated Participation Trends

MEMBERSHIP TRENDS	# RESPONDENTS (7)
Increase	3
Remain stable	3
Decrease	1

Please identify the factors that you think will contribute to stable or changing membership/participation levels in your organization over the next five years. (Select all that apply).

The six groups responding indicated that the predominant factors that will influence future membership or participation in their organization include interest in the activity/activities they offer, and the availability of facility time.

Table 12: Factors Contributing to Changing Participation Levels

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	# RESPONDENTS (6)
Population growth in the age groups we serve	2
Population decline in the age groups we serve	0
Generally aging community	0
Overall population growth in the area	1
Interest in our activity	4
Availability of volunteers	0
Quality of our marketing and promotional efforts	1
Cost to participate	0
Availability of facility time	3
Design/capacity of facilities	2
Competition from other services providers	0
Increasing focus on healthy, active living	0
Other (please specify)	2

Other:

- Our young male group has begun to have kids and thus participation in sport will shift from self need to supporting family growth and kids' participation

- Improvements made to facility

Collectively, the seven groups use recreation facilities for the following number of weeks in a typical year, to run their programs: 57 weeks in the winter, 42 weeks in the fall, 30 weeks in summer and 22 weeks in spring.

**Detailed Facility Use and Needs/
Interests for Improvements**

For each of the following facilities, please indicate whether or not your organization regularly uses it.

The seven groups responding use a number of facilities for their programs and activities, as shown in Table 15. Due to the limited response from programmers as a whole, however, there is no information on the use of the majority facilities listed in the survey, as well as the full extent to which some of those shown here are used.

Table 15: Regular Use of Facilities

	# GROUPS USING
Arena (ice)	4
Gymnasium	1
Space/facilities at Allanburg Community Centre	1
Office/storage space	1
Ball fields	2
On-road cycling routes	1
Meeting rooms/class rooms	1

One group, the Thorold Amateur Athletic Association, indicated need for additional weekly use of facilities but was uncertain about the number of hours needed since it depends on bookings, timing and teams. The reasons more time is needed by the group is to accommodate additional participants in current programs and to improve opportunities for preferred scheduling.

Whether or not your organization needs more time to operate its programs/ activities, are the facilities you use well suited to your requirements?

One group indicated that facilities used lack of support facilities and amenities. Improvements that would make facilities better suited to program needs were noted, as follows:

- James Whyte Arena: More appropriate heat for spectators
- Frank Doherty Arena: Internet, larger lobby, proper signage/communication (TVs)

Assistance from the City with Service Development

Two organizations indicated that the City of Thorold could better assist them in developing and providing its programs and services. Requested assistance includes help with better facility scheduling and upgrading/ improving maintenance of facilities/trails/ parks we use.

Six of the seven responding organizations currently pay fees to use the parks, trails

and/or facilities it uses. The group that does not pay fees indicated that it contributes in other ways, specifically by promoting Thorold through tournaments that bring players and spectators from other communities, thus providing economic benefits to local business.

We are interested in your organization’s views concerning financial support for parks and recreation services development. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

On balance, Table 24 indicates that the groups favour financing service development through methods that would engage them in helping with fundraising rather than paying/paying higher user fees or contributing to capital costs of facilities. At the same time, there is uncertainty among a number of groups regarding involvement in fundraising.

Table 16: Willingness to Financially Support Service Development

IEWS ON FINANCING SERVICES	AGREE	DISAGREE	UNCERTAIN
	#	#	#
Our organization would start paying/would pay higher user fees to improve the quality of facilities/parks/trails we use	2	0	1
Our organization would contribute to the capital costs of developing new facilities/parks/trails for our use	0	2	4
Our organization would help with fundraising activities for facility/parks/trails development	1	2	1

Are you aware of any obstacles or barriers (e.g., attitudinal, physical/architectural, technology or communication barriers cost, travel distance, scheduling, etc.) that impede residents’ accessing your organization’s programs or activities? If yes, please provide any suggestions you may have to reduce or remove obstacles/barriers to participation.

One group of seven responding indicated barriers to residents’ participation in/use of their programs or activities, and two were uncertain.

Additional Comments

If there are any additional comments you would like to make regarding needs specific to your organization or more generally about future parks, recreation facilities and trails development in the City of Thorold, please provide them below.

Two groups provided the following additional comments:

- Thank you for our Input, with respect to increase fees etc. it is always the considerations of the New Board members at that time
- Upgrades to facilities are required to have greater participation.

The following list the organizations/groups that were contacted to participate in the survey. Those that responded are noted with an asterisk (*).

Arena User Groups (total 43)

99 Hockey	Rowland Hockey
Allen/ Hope	Southern Tier Admirals
Cairn Croft Hotel	St. Amand Hockey
Central Hardware	Sunday Night Hockey
Dagenais Hockey	Taylor - Over 45 Shiny Hockey
DiGiorgio Hockey	The Keg Hockey
DM Girls Hockey	Thorold Adult Hockey
Duomo Hockey	Thorold Amateur Athletic Association*
Early Bird Tournament	Thorold Figure Skating Club
G Cup	Thorold High Hockey
Gigone, Giancarlo	Thorold Mounts
Jr. B Blackhawks	Thorold Royals
Mike Bolibruck Summer Camp	Thorold Sr. AAA Athletics - Stags*
Monday Night Hockey	Thorold Volunteer Fire Fighters
Niagara College	Troyan Friday Night Hockey
Niagara Ice Evolution	Tuesday/Friday Hockey
Niagara Region Hockey	Ugulini Hockey*
Old Kings	Westmount School
Pistols	Woody
Prince of Wales School	Wormald Sunday Morning Hockey*
Rick Green Hockey	Lacrosse
	Ball Hockey

Park/Outdoor Facility User Groups (total 13)

Bullett Proof Baseball	Thorold High Baseball Tournament*
DM Reds Baseball	Thorold High Football
Fantom Senior Baseball	Thorold Legion Minor Baseball
Thorold Co-ed Rec Slo Pitch League*	Thorold Soccer Club
NCDSB	Men's Soccer Senior
Thorold Goodtimers League	Tennis Club
Thorold High Baseball Reg Season*	

Note: both High School Season and Tournaments were included in one survey

Allanburg Community Centre Users (total 5)

Metro Mutz Dog Training	Niagara Detention Centre
Niagara Rope Enthusiasts* (incomplete)	Seaway Kennel Club
Line Dancing*	

CYCLING CLUB SURVEY RESULTS

ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

Name of Organization

1. Forza Niagara Cycling Club
2. Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club
3. Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club

1. Approximately how many members/regular participants belong to your club now, and in the past two years? (If documented figures are not available, please estimate).

NAME OF CLUB	NUMBER OF MEMBERS		
	Currently	Last Year	Two Years Ago
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	~50	40	32
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	310	300	275
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	130	114	109

2. During which seasons of the year does your club operate its regular cycling program/activities? (please check all that apply)

NAME OF CLUB	OPERATING SEASONS			
	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√		√	√
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√		√	√
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√	√	√	√

3. Which of the following age group(s) does your membership comprise? (please check all that apply)

NAME OF CLUB	OPERATING SEASONS								
	0-4	5-12	13-19	20-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Forza Niagara Cycling Club				√	√	√	√	√	
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club						√	√	√	√
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club				√	√	√	√	√	√

4. What percentage of your members/regular participants lives in each of the following areas? (Total should add to 100%. If you do not have documented figures, please estimate).

NAME OF CLUB	PROPORTION OF MEMBERSHIP BY COMMUNITY						
	Thorold	Niagara Falls	St. Catharines	Pelham	Welland	Other Niagara Region	Outside Niagara Region
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	10%	10%	60%	5%	10%	5%	0%
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	4.2%	6.5%	29.4%	0.3%	5.2%	37.4%	17%
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	2%	45%	18%	7%	3%	5%	8%

5. Over the next five years, do you expect the number of members/regular participants in your club to increase, remain stable, or decrease? (Select one option)

NAME OF CLUB	MEMBERSHIP TRENDS		
	Increase	Remain Stable	Decrease
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√		
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√		
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√		

6. Please identify the factors that you think will contribute to stable or changing membership levels over the next five years. (Please check all that apply).

NAME OF CLUB	FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO TRENDS									
	G	D	AG	O	I	A	Q	C	DC	AL
Forza Niagara Cycling Club				√	√		√			√
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√			√	√		√			√
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Other: member referrals

- G: Growth in the size of the age groups we serve
- D: Decline in the size of age groups we serve
- AG: General aging community
- O: Overall population growth in the area
- I: Interest in our activity

- A: Availability of volunteers
- Q: Quality of our marketing and promotional efforts
- C: Cost to participate
- DC: Design/capacity of facilities
- AL: Increasing focus on healthy, active living

A. GREATER NIAGARA CYCLING ROUTE

7. Does your club regularly use the Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR), including the portion that runs through the City of Thorold?

NAME OF CLUB	USE GNCR	
	Yes	No
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√	
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√	
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√	

8. Do you think the Thorold portion of the GNCR requires improvements to more effectively support current and future use of this infrastructure for cycling?

NAME OF CLUB	GNCR REQUIRES IMPROVEMENTS		
	Yes	No	Uncertain/Don't Know
Forza Niagara Cycling Club			√
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√		
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√		

9. Please indicate which of the following improvements/enhancements you think are needed, and where you think they are needed along the GNCR in Thorold. Note: If the improvement/enhancement is applicable to the whole portion of the Thorold route please enter 'entire length'. Otherwise, please note where you think improvements/enhancements are needed.

If they are connections to be added or completed, please identify where they should be provided (e.g., from Point A to Point B).

IMPROVEMENT/ENHANCEMENT NEEDED	YES	LOCATION(S) FOR IMPROVEMENT/ ENHANCEMENT
add/complete sections		
improve directional signage	2	entire route; local restrooms, stops for coffee, services, ferry direction, etc.
improve signage to destinations	2	entire route
provide distance markers on route	2	entire route
emergency contact stations	2	entire route
water stations	2	entire route
bicycle repair stations	2	entire route
lighting	1	
seating		
viewing areas		
clear overgrown areas alongside route		
repair surface	1	some areas
interpretive program		
more access points from residential areas		
add trail heads	1	entire route
improve existing trail heads	2	entire route; certain locations (Welland) challenging to exit path
AODA accessibility	1	
eliminate blind corners	1	approaching Welland
reduce steep slopes	1	Welland exit, and beside Lock 7. Winding pathway near Seaway
widen trail	1	Flight locks, near Seaway
other (please specify)	2	- Thorold-remove gravel and clippings, remove stop signs at Port Robinson; remove gates and posts - remove any poles in the centre of the path

Please explain how the improvements/enhancements you indicated above would benefit your club:

- They would prevent our cyclists from getting injured. Make it more enjoyable to ride the trail. Signs would help cyclists find food and accommodations. If an injury occurs, we could direct EMS to the location.
- Great usage of the GNCR. Additionally, when the route crosses over on the ferry for the '1/2' route distance, NF roads are not marked allowing for ease of meeting up with the Parkway.

Please explain how you think these improvements/enhancements would benefit the City of Thorold and its residents:

- More local cyclists and more tourists will be interested in cycling here. Thorold has done a great job in enhancing it's downtown and the circle route brings people right into the area.
- If cyclists were aware of the proximity of places to stop within Thorold with clear signs, more would stop for a coffee, water break, etc. A bike ride ALWAYS includes a coffee and water stop.

B. TRAILS AND ON-ROAD CYCLING PATHS IN THOROLD

10. Does your club regularly use other trails or on-road cycling paths in the City of Thorold?

NAME OF CLUB	USE TRAILS/PATHS WITHIN THOROLD	
	Yes	No
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√	
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club		√
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√	

11. Do you think these trails or on-road cycling paths require improvements to more effectively support current and future use of this infrastructure for cycling?

NAME OF CLUB	THOROLD TRAILS/PATHS REQUIRE IMPROVEMENTS		
	Yes	No	Uncertain/Don't Know
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√		
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√		

12. Please indicate which of the following improvements / enhancements you think are needed, and where you think they are needed. Note: If the improvement/ enhancement applies to all routes in Thorold, please enter 'all routes'. Otherwise, please note where you think improvements / enhancements are needed. If they are connections to be

IMPROVEMENT/ENHANCEMENT NEEDED	YES	LOCATION(S) FOR IMPROVEMENT/ ENHANCEMENT
add/complete sections		
improve directional signage		
improve signage to destinations	1	Merritt Trail
provide distance markers on route		
emergency contact stations		
water stations		
bicycle repair stations	1	
lighting		
seating		
viewing areas		
clear overgrown areas alongside route		
repair surface		
interpretive program		
more access points from residential areas		
add trail heads	1	@ Merritt Trail
improve existing trail heads		
AODA accessibility		
eliminate blind corners		
reduce steep slopes		
widen trail		
other (please specify)	1	increase quantity of bicycle lanes / infrastructure as much as possible

Please explain how the improvements/ enhancements you indicated above would benefit your club:

Bicycle lanes make cycling safer. Cyclists comfort level and confidence come mainly from feeling safe. The safer people feel, the more they'll ride. That goes not only for avid cyclists but for all types of users. (1)

Please explain how you think these improvements/enhancements would benefit the City of Thorold and its residents:

Reduced motor traffic, increased fitness, environmental impact...(1)

C. SPECIAL EVENTS

13. Does your club host special events, in addition to its regular cycling program/activities?

NAME OF CLUB	HOLD SPECIAL EVENTS	
	Yes	No
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√	
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club		√
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√	

14. In a typical year, how many special events does your club host?

NAME OF CLUB	NUMBER OF SPECIAL EVENTS PER YEAR		
	1-2	3-5	Over 5
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	√		
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club		√	

15. Please list each special event your club sponsors, the month in which it is typically held, how many participants typically participate, and an estimate of the percentage of participants who came from outside the Niagara Region the last time the event was held.

CLUB NAME	EVENT NAME	MONTH HELD	APPROX. NO. PARTICIPANTS	% FROM OUTSIDE NIAGARA REGION WHEN LAST HELD
Forza Niagara Cycling Club	NCAA rides	May-Sept	250+	~10%
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	Shelley Gauthier Fundraiser (2016, 2017)	June	10	0%
	Terry Fox Ride (10th anniversary this year)	Sept	25-75	25%
	Ride of Silence in conjunction with the City of Niagara Falls	May	75	0%

16. Are there other amenities or services that you think are necessary to support the future use of the area's cycling network for visitor / tourism attractions? These could include non-infrastructure items such as promotion, maps, shuttle services, etc.

NAME OF CLUB	ADDITIONAL AMENITIES OR SERVICES REQUIRED		
	Yes	No	Uncertain/Don't Know
Forza Niagara Cycling Club			√
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√		
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√		

17. If yes, what types of additional amenities or services do you think are needed?

- The municipalities need to get onboard along with regional government to plan together for the future of this treasure. You are overlooking the huge economic boost to the region by not coordinating signage and other needs that should be uniform from end to end. Where is the money from the GNCR Committee, which the FWs have contributed to for many years? We meet people from all provinces and many countries on the trail; they love to bike here. Take advantage of that.
- When off the GNCR shared bike lanes are not numerous. Signage to the other routes is limited (e.g., How do I get back onto the GNCR? Where do I find the Merritt Trail? How do I connect to the Greenbelt route? Require more maps/markers/buildboards.

18. Would your club be able to provide support or assistance to the City of Thorold to implement improvements / enhancements to the network of cycling routes in the City?

NAME OF CLUB	CLUB SUPPORT/ ASSISTANCE TO THOROLD		
	Yes	No	Uncertain/Don't Know
Forza Niagara Cycling Club			√
Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club	√		
Amici per la Vita Niagara Cycling Club	√		

19. If yes, what type(s) of support or assistance can you provide?

- What would you like us to do?...our newsletters reach over 350 people... we have Adopted A Road for many years, maybe we could Adopt the Trail. We have been asking the region and municipalities since 2011 to make improvements and this is the first time that one of them has invited us to the table. We appreciate the City of Thorold removing some of the posts and making some improvements at Port Robinson, and asking our opinion.
- Communications, input, volunteers, access to other clubs

20. If no, why is your club unable to provide support or assistance to implement improvements to cycling infrastructure?

21. If there are any additional comments you would like to make regarding needs specific to your club or more generally about cycling infrastructure in the City of Thorold, please provide them below. If you are interested in study updates, please go to: www.Thorold.ca

- I think I have covered this in most of my earlier comments. We ride in many different areas of Ontario and seldom run into (no pun intended) the kinds of posts and impediments that pop up on the length of the GNCR. It has been frustrating to have politicians ignore our suggestions, even though we have taken

engineers from 3 major cities for a bike ride to show them the problems. The ferry is another concern. That is a gem, so quaint and interesting. In August 2017 we hosted a lemonade and cookie party at Port Robinson and over 300 people crossed on the ferry that day. It creates a unique opportunity to start in Port Robinson and ride the north end of the trail one day and return another day to ride the south end. We need to make sure it continues.

Cycling Clubs Surveyed

- St. Catharines Cycling Club
- Amici Niagara Cycling Club*
- Forza Niagara Cycling Club*
- BikeFit Sunflowers Cycling Club
- Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club*
- Energy Cycling Club

* indicates those that responded

APPENDIX D

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW, SHORT SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

DATE	NAME	POSITION/ORGANIZATION/AGENCY
FEBRUARY 7, 2019	Anthony Longo	Municipal Councilor
	Jerry Franceschini	Operation Supervisor - Arena and Pool
	John Kenny	Municipal Councilor
	Ken Sentence	Municipal Councilor
	Mike Williamson	Parks and Cemetery
	Dave Baldoni	Parks Staff
	Penny Palmer	Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee
	Tony Vandermaas	Parks, Trails and Recreation Committee
	Tamara Tannis	Director of Planning and Development Services
	Terry Ugolini	Mayor
	James Symons	Parks, Trails & Rec Committee
	Jennifer Douthwaite	Director of Rec & Leisure, Thorold Community Activities Group
	Joanne DeQuadros	Chief Librarian Thorold Public Library
	Donna Delvecchio	Municipal Clerk/Accessibility
	Carmen DeRose	Municipal Councillor
Maria Mauro	Director of Finance	
FEBRUARY 8, 2019	Curtis Dray	Manager of Community Services
	Fred Neale	Municipal Councilor
	Geoff Holman	Director of Public Works

DATE	NAME	POSITION/ORGANIZATION/AGENCY
	Jean D'Amelio Swyer	Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee
	Jim Handley	Municipal Councillor
	Ginger Derochie	Recreation Coordinator
	Tonya Kornelsen	Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee
	Nella Dekker	Municipal Councillor** (phone)
MARCH 7, 2019	Dan Pelletier	Executive Director, Thorold Community Activities Group
	Marty Wilson	Port Robinson Community Centre
	Judy Gray	Port Robinson Community Centre
	Mike Schofield	Lake Gibson Corridor Preservation Task Group
	Randy Barnes	Lock 7 Museum
	Sarah King Head	Lake Gibson Corridor Preservation Task Group
	Sebastian Soccio-Marandola	Tourism Committee
	Victoria Wilson	Municipal Councillor
	Mary-Clare Cavasin	Active Transportation Advisory Committee
	Leslie Daniels	Age Friendly Committee
	Bob Liddycoat & Tin Sinnett	Canal Bank Shuffle (did not attend)
	Sue Morin	Tourism Manager for City (Venture Niagara)
	Joe Prytula	Tourism Advisory Committee
	Craig Findley	Heritage LACAC
	Joey Hewitt	Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
	Pat Paone	Community Sports (did not attend)
	Lora Vary & Elaine D'Amico	Thorold Seniors' Association
	Caroline Bourque Wiley	Age Friendly Committee

FOCUS GROUPS, SHORT SURVEY AND/OR PHONE INTERVIEWS

	FOCUS GROUP		SHORT SURVEY		OFFER TO CALL	
	Invite	Attended	Invite	Response	Invite	Response
BUSINESS INTERESTS						
Local realtors (2)	X				X	1 regret/2
Local developers (3)	X				X	2Y/3
Chair Niagara Centre Board of Trade	X				X	NR
Joe Fournier's Martial Arts Centre	X				X	NR
Four Points Sheraton	X				X	NR
Club Belvedere	X				X	Y
Club Capri	X				X	NR
John-Michael's	X				X	NR
Fascination Dance Studio	X				X	NR
Chapel Street Designs	X				X	NR
SERVICE CLUBS						
Thorold Legion Br. 17			X		X	NR
Canadian Corps Unit #44				no contact found		
Royal Canadian Legion			X			
Thorold Lions Club			X			
SPECIAL INTEREST						
128 Thorold Flying Dragons Royal Canadian Air Cadets			X			
Girl Guides of Canada			X			
Heritage Thorold LACAC			X			

	FOCUS GROUP		SHORT SURVEY		OFFER TO CALL	
	Invite	Attended	Invite	Response	Invite	Response
Niagara Round Dance Club			X			
PK Hummingbird Steel Drum Orchestra			X	incorrect email		
Scouts Canada				no contact found		
Thorold Community Theatre Group			X	X	only response to short survey	
Thorold Garden Club (Horticultural Society)				X		
Thorold Pipe Band				X		
Thorold Reed Concert Band				X		
Young at Heart Singers				X		
Camp Wetaskiwin				X		
FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS						
Grace Community Church	X	N	X	N		
My Village Church	X	Y	NA	-		
Holy Rosary Catholic Church	X	N	X	N		
St. Andrews Church	X	N	X	N		
Niagara Heights Church	X	N	X	N		
Trinity United Church	X	N	X	N		
Living Water Community Church	X	N	X	N		
First Baptist Church	X	N	X	N		

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

POPULATION GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Interviewees noted the following key socio-demographic characteristics and trends in Thorold:

- Growing, dispersed population, geographically fragmented community
 - Several new subdivisions in areas that are both currently underserved and closer to recreation services in adjacent communities than in Thorold
 - Population is increasingly diverse: retirees; young families; post secondary school students
 - Fewer community ties as long-time residents leave, newcomers arrive, businesses leave, and Thorold begins to increasingly function as a bedroom community
 - Young people and older seniors leaving community due to lack of local employment and suitable housing / proximate services, respectively, to enable them to stay
 - Expectations for high quality comprehensive service system
 - Limited seniors' and affordable housing
 - Many student housing areas in St. Catharines / Thorold urban area
- Need to improve services to vulnerable populations (e.g., lower income groups, disabled)
 - Population fluctuates with part-time student population movement
 - Two Thorolds: older with a strong sense of community; new bedroom community with attentions directed elsewhere

INDOOR FACILITIES

Four overarching themes related to indoor facilities emerged in the interviews:

1. Aging infrastructure needs to be addressed; upgrades / improvements are required to 'catch-up' on backlog.
2. New, multi-purpose facilities are needed to serve growing population and a wider range of interests in recreation programs / activities.
3. There is a need to optimize role of facilities to contribute to a greater sense of community cohesion.
4. An ongoing, formal maintenance program is needed to sustain improved existing, and new, facilities.

Views on how these themes are to be addressed, however, varied among those consulted. The table below summarizes the various perspectives on future directions for existing City-owned facilities, and shows the divergent, and sometimes opposing views, held by those who participated in stakeholder interviews.

Perspectives on Future of Existing City-owned Facilities

FACILITY	REMOVE	REPLACE	UPGRADE	EXPAND	CONSOLIDATE	RELOCATE
James White Arena	X	X				X
Frank Doherty		X	X			X
Library		X		X		X
Port Robinson	X	X	X		X	
Community Centre						
Allanburg Community Centre	X	X	X		X	

Based on participants' input, addressing the need for new indoor facilities, in addition to required upgrades / improvements to existing infrastructure, will be influenced by three key variables:

1. the decision regarding the City to partner in the Canada Games Complex, which will determine the need to replace the James Whyte Arena;
2. the future of the Nick Bassiano Centre and the TCAG, which will influence the extent, design and location of additional multi-purpose space provision by the City;
3. the potential for greater centralization of recreation facilities, which will influence the extent to which existing facilities are upgraded and / or expanded at their current locations or replaced in a single, multi-purpose community hub, either downtown or elsewhere in the City.

Participants' comments related to each of

these themes, are summarized below, under the following headings:

- New requirements/ configuration/ location
- Facilities by Type
- General Comments

New Requirements/ Configuration/ Location

- need to provide multi-use facilities for interests other than arena-based activities (e.g., arts, culture, indoor track, active program space, fitness equipment, community event space, etc.)
- incorporate all community centre space in single multi-use complex
- take a community hub approach to providing needed facilities
- develop hierarchy of community-wide and locally serving facilities / spaces

- need to provide facilities / amenities locally to serve growing population, and attract allow residents to recreate within the community, particularly for outlying neighbourhoods in Thorold that are now served by adjacent municipalities (e.g., Pelham, Niagara Falls, Welland)

Facilities by Type

Arenas:

- Canada Games Complex: will frame discussion on direction for providing other facilities: If proposed Complex goes ahead, and Thorold is a partner, James Whyte Arena will not need to be replaced; if not, replacement of James Whyte becomes a priority
- leave arena in downtown core and expand this complex to incorporate other needed facilities
- both arenas are old and should be replaced with a new facility arena / multi-use complex outside the downtown
- arenas at capacity for ice-related uses; cannot accommodate tournaments
- ice use is declining by about 10% per year

Thorold Public Library:

- need new, larger, modern space as part of multi-use complex in downtown Thorold; current facility is 10,000 square feet smaller than OLS standard for Thorold's size

- may conduct facility feasibility study
- need locations for two to three library kiosks in Thorold

Nick Bassiano:

- facility is too small / limited in its capacity to meet need for more / varied programming and to provide concurrent programs. Therefore: 1) the City should support TCAG to a greater extent by providing new / expanded facilities for the Group to continue / grow programs; 2) TCAG should be retired as the community is at a point where the City should take on a larger role in programming at new, municipally-owned facilities

Allanburg and Port Robinson Community Centres:

- remove, replace or improve two small community centres to serve these areas
- facilities are underused

Lock 7: Museum and Tourist Information Centres:

- consider opportunity to make better use of this space, which overlooks the lock and connects to the cycling trail (e.g., rehouse museum in better facility and lease vacated space for canalside café/ bistro)

Seniors Centre:

- leased to Seniors Association for their exclusive use on weekdays only

- 2nd floor is not used / tenanted
- City pays operating costs

Chestnut Hall:

- former location of the museum, attached to the library and now used for storage / meeting space
- a concept plan for its future use is currently being prepared

General Comments

- house tourism information in a more central location; move from Lock 7
- built heritage needs to be leveraged to a greater extent
- cover Richmond Street pool, if designed to accommodate
- divergent views that: 1) seniors centre is underused and use has declined vs. 2) use is at capacity
- improve access to / use of schools
- all potential facility improvements / new builds, need to consider accessibility as a top priority; conduct accessibility audit
- potential to purchase and upgrade Holy Rosary Hall if / when sold
- modular indoor pump track at arena

PARKS (INCLUDING OUTDOOR FACILITIES AND AMENITIES)

Five overarching themes related to parks and outdoor facilities / amenities emerged in the interviews:

1. With the exception of a limited number of gaps (e.g., dog park, Port Robinson West, vicinity of St. Johns Conservation Area), the current supply of municipal parks is sufficient to serve existing population.
2. As with indoor facilities, aging parks infrastructure needs to be addressed; upgrades / improvements are required to 'catch-up' on backlog.
3. New parks will be needed to serve new residential areas.
4. More varied amenities / landscapes are needed to enhance park experiences, and amenities such as washrooms / change rooms opening hours need to align with those of park use.
5. As with indoor facilities, an ongoing, formal maintenance program is needed to sustain improved existing, and new, parks and their facilities.

Participants' comments related to each of these themes, are summarized below, under the following headings:

- Planning / design
- New components / features needed
- Upgrades / improvements needed
- Opportunities / challenges
- General Comments

Planning/ Design

- Parks should be part of a larger scheme / hierarchy that differentiates by type, identified the components / elements that should be provided in each, and anticipates lifecycle needs
- Ideal would be corridor of parks that link neighbourhoods
- Update design guidelines for trails, parks, sports fields, buildings etc.
- Informal sports fields needed
- All public spaces are part of park network (e.g., boulevards)
- New standards for accessible parks equipment / amenities
- Optimize four season use / activity
- Anticipate park-based programming in design (e.g., outdoor fitness, events)
- Conduct accessibility audit
- Need standards for parks maintenance
- Take risks, be innovative
- Washrooms, especially at larger sports parks
- Soccer field to be able to accommodate tournaments
- Dog park
- Convert one tennis court to pickleball, in view of underuse for tennis
- non-sports, nature spaces
- indoor park / garden (e.g., Allan Gardens in Toronto)
- remote control airplane facility
- ‘official’ mountain biking area (e.g., currently informal at Mel Swarts)

New Components/ Features Needed

- Water parks
- Focal point for gathering
- Public art (includes artistically designed/ fabricated fixtures)
- Community gardens
- Additional soccer fields
- Walking trails for seniors
- Bocce ball court
- Workout equipment / exercise stations

Upgrades/ Improvements Needed

- improvements to existing soccer field
- washrooms need to be open when parks are in use
- many parks are ‘hidden’; low visibility without signage
- improved safety needed at some locations
- improved facility maintenance / repair (e.g., splash pads are great but not if broken for half the season)
- trees; more shade, especially around playgrounds; replace trees lost to disease
- picnic tables, benches
- shade structures and pavilions to permit
- need to be self-directing, active living parks with a variety of amenities

- higher visibility
- accessible seating, washrooms , pathways, etc.
- assign priority to improvements for summer sports (ball, soccer, outdoor beach volleyball)
- well lit
- spend money to shift from ‘lawns’ to landscaped spaces
- generally clean up and re-open access to fenced areas along Canal, to reclaim green space
- repair skateboard park

Opportunities/ Challenges

- underused areas (e.g., could put more on the island)
- ‘eyesores’ are opportunities to do something interesting
- use new subdivisions to plan it right
- consider donations of industrial portions for landscaping within large sites
- transform park spaces into destinations
- wealth of heritage to incorporate with parks
- potential to naturalize dump site
- use of ball diamonds declining; some are unused
- playground upgrades
- Pine Ridge Golf Driving Range available for purchase as a municipal park for this area???

PARK NAME	COMMENT(S)
Port Robinson Park/ Port Robinson Lock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Port Robinson Park is a well-positioned park on Main Street in the middle of town, and the grassed, lock area across the Street includes a partly exposed section of the old Welland Canal stone wall; with appropriate clean-up / improvement, combination offers opportunity to better serve residents and visitors
Thorold South Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - needs considerable improvement - move soccer here
Battle of Beaverdams Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - final concept plan recently prepared for the park, incorporating three draft concepts - plans to implement, beginning next year - Comments from Interviewees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - draw to downtown - place for workers to enjoy lunch outdoors ; picnic tables - lower area could serve as skating rink - reinstate access from Clairmont Street - more parking - waterpark for children in central Thorold to promote equity - playground attraction (e.g., combination 'Canada's biggest beaver dam" sculpture and playground) - needs more use - cycling station - washroom buses and other park users - rough camping on property that City bought from Hydro for this purpose would tie in with cycling as it is right on trail - more use of bandshell

McMillan Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – good maintenance – was beautiful but now in disrepair – no playground
Richmond Street Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – good example of active living park with a variety of amenities underused
Martin Street Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sitting areas
Sullivan Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – upgrades
South Confederation Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – difficult to walk to and not a lot of parking – directional signage needed to find it – well used for baseball and soccer – two tennis courts not well used; consider converting one to pickleball
Hutt Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – current controversy about keeping it passive vs. transitioning to active
Hydro One Parkette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – potential location for bicycle pump track / skills park, with appropriate clean-up and design, when Hydro lease expires and reverts back to City
Mel Swart / Lake Gibson CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – underdeveloped – could use more enhancements
Memorial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – reinstate access from Clairmont Street
Forest Avenue Park (?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – huge piece of land

General Comments

- no dog park in Thorold now; need for one exists; municipal closed dump (Rice Road) suggested as a potential site for an walking area/dog park
- Rolling Meadows subdivision wants a dog park as there are a lot of dogs in the area and currently they go to Fireman's Park in Niagara Falls for recreation
- all potential park improvements/ new provision, need to consider accessibility as a top priority; proposed or redeveloped parks will anticipate these needs; lack of municipal parks in vicinity of St. Johns Conservation and in Port Robinson west precludes accessible playgrounds, etc. of not met by other providers
- property disposal is an unrealistic option
- many passive parks and small spaces with not amenities; not really parks
- have enough ball and soccer fields

TRAILS (COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY)

Three overarching themes related to trails emerged in the interviews:

1. There are many challenges to creating an internally and externally linked, complete network, especially for multi-purposes (e.g., active transportation, recreational uses), to separate motorized and non-motorized uses, and given the political and geographic

divisions of responsibility.

2. The need to optimize the unique opportunity that the trail system, combined with other place-based features / products (e.g., Canal and its industrial past, extensive built heritage, music, Niagara Circle Route, Port Robinson ferry) to attract visitors while also improving recreation and active living infrastructure for residents.
3. The need to provide trails that are safe, easily negotiated, pleasant to use, and lead to interesting destinations. The need for improved, coordinated wayfinding and signage is a key requirement for all trails (and parks) in the community.

Participants' comments related to each of these themes, are summarized below, under the following headings:

- Planning / design
- New features / amenities needed
- Upgrades / improvements needed
- Opportunities / challenges
- General Comments

Planning/ Design:

- conceptualize in terms of connections/ linkages/ cohesion; linking urban and rural areas of City
- 'Parking parks' designed with permeable surfaces, alternative/ recycled materials, design for future; experiment a bit

- connect/ coordinate with adjacent municipalities for cycling routes and pathways
- Integrate pathways in student housing development by City Hall
- Locate design elements/ features of interest along routes
- Separate local from regional routes
- Expand system
- Potential for trails in St. Johns area
- Establish design standards for trails (e.g., lighting, asphalt depth, etc.) and provide design manual for developers base on standards since City assumes responsibility for maintenance, and AODA requirements need to be considered
- Separate motorized (ATVs and snowmobiles) and non-motorized use; direct motorized to specific area of trail network to minimize extent of damage that City is required to address, and that poses risk to safety / enjoyment of non-motorized users
- active transportation master plan shows potential linkages
- optimize provision of multi-use trails/ pathways for both non-motorized recreational and AT use
- safe AT (wide enough, level enough, well lit, good visibility of / at intersections, road crossing etc.)
- both walking and cycling should be considered

New Features/ Amenities Needed:

- Workout equipment
- km markers
- washrooms/fountains/stopping points along the way
- key points of interest featured

Upgrades/ Improvements Needed:

- better directional signage for residents and visitors
- ongoing maintenance
- focus on surfacing / improving rail spur connecting Thorold and Pelham (Steve Bauer Trail)
- improve Port Robinson ferry landing areas
- street leading to the dock area on the east side of the bike / passenger ferry needs in Port Robinson needs design improvements
- canal route surface repairs
- Focus group participants submitted a list of potential improvements to the Niagara Circle Route Trail from a previous report. This list comprises the last pages of this appendix. Participants made it clear, however, that the City of Thorold has been very responsive in working to make the identified improvements, some of which have been completed since the list was published.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NIAGARA CIRCLE ROUTE TRAIL

City of Thorold - Park, Trails and Recreation Master Plan

Summary of Welland Canal Recreation Trail and related Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) issues. These items were extracted from past Niagara Freewheeler and Niagara Cycling Clubs Alliance correspondence on this topic.

1. Trail Hazards and Safety Concerns
 - a. Unnecessary posts or bollards
 - b. Trail Maintenance – washouts, cleanup from grass cutting, etc., gravel from maintenance work
 - c. Construction Work – need detour route notification through signs and websites
2. Handicapped Access

The above issues will also prevent or make access to the trail difficult for mobility challenged individuals
3. Signage
 - a. Need signage to the trail from key distant points
 - b. Need signage on the trail to adjacent community services (restaurants, accommodation, bike retailers, etc.) and some directional signage to key destinations along the trail and off the trail
 - c. Signage needs to be standardized throughout the City and the Niagara Region/GNCR to be effective in any one municipality
 - d. Signage is needed to inform Emergency Medical Service of the location where injuries have happened. E.g. kilometre distance painted on trail
4. Network Interconnections
 - a. It will be important for the Welland Canal Trail in Thorold and the Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan in general to provide network connections for cycling and hiking routes. Achieving this goal will allow continuity of trips both within and to and from outside areas of the City. Examples of key elements providing network interconnections and continuity which should be supported, are as follows:
 - i. Port Robinson Ferry – Fonthill, Thorold, Niagara Falls links

ii. Thorold Fonthill Rail Spur – Thorold, Pelham (and via the Steve Bauer Trail) Welland links. The Fonthill Spur line is on the Town's Official Plan and is identified as a strategic corridor in Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan.

b. A municipal cycling network plan that makes connections to the approved Niagara Region Bicycling Network would also be key to achieving inter-regional connections.

5. Tourism

Cycle tourism is an economic driver for Thorold and the Niagara Region. It will be important to recognize and promote the Welland Recreation Canal and its broader GNCR as critical elements that supports cycle tourism.

6. Governance of the GNCR

The GNCR is a region-wide facility. However, the Region's Greater Niagara Circle Route Committee and related funds has been inactive and not effective in managing the GNCR. The above issues should be addressed through a holistic approach that avoids fragmented municipal management of the entire GNCR. The Region is in a position that could best do this or failing that, a coordinated municipal undertaking should identify the appropriate means (e.g. municipal trail committee).

Michael Menicanin
Treasurer, Niagara Freewheeler Bicycle Touring Club

Dave Hunt
CAN-Bike Instructor
Member Bike Niagara & Niagara Freewheelers Bicycle Touring Club
Alternate Director, Niagara Cycling Clubs Alliance

Opportunities/ Challenges:

- Welland canal could be something much more than a ship route (e.g., potential to grow as major attraction to cyclists, with attractive design, appropriate services/ amenities)
- secure internal pathways as part of development proposals
- difficult to connect dispersed nodes of development
- connecting to Short Hills Provincial Park, Bruce Trail, Lake Gibson, lakes in general
- implementing improvements to rail trail, which is major trail artery through the 'centre' of Thorold
- wealth of heritage to incorporate with trails
- building system for both recreational use and AT to work is challenging
- rough camping on property that City bought from Hydro for this purpose would tie in with cycling as it is right on trail
- division of responsibilities between regional and local municipalities (see Public Health discussion)
- funding to improve, build and connect network is an ongoing issue
- Welland Canal trail built on limited budget; more costly to maintain

General Comments:

- all potential trail improvements/ new development, need to consider accessibility as a top priority
- The Greater Niagara Circle Route has been a wonderful active recreation, utilitarian and tourism-related resource for both residents and visitors alike. Tying into this system is the potential to develop about 10km of the abandoned Thorold-Fonthill Spur line which would link the Welland Canal Trail and the downtown in Thorold, to the Town of Fonthill which then links to the Steve Bauer Trail system that links into Welland. Most of this right of way is owned by the City of Thorold and is identified in the City's Official Plan. Also, it is identified as a strategic cycling corridor in the Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan.

PROGRAMS/ ACTIVITIES

Three overarching themes related to programs and activities emerged in the interviews:

1. While continuing to support existing programs / activities if warranted by demand, there is a need to diversify beyond what is seen as too great a focus on hockey. Program areas requiring further development include arts, culture, heritage self-directed parks-based activities, healthy living / skills development, special events. Population groups in need of more, and affordable, programs are families, children, youth (including tweens).

2. The City possesses some unique assets that comprise the base for further program / activity development to attract visitors, while not precluding residents the benefit of more opportunities to enjoy locally-based programs. The primary areas for visitor-oriented program development are the Welland Canal, cycling, local heritage, and music, which are amenable to integrated approaches to providing unique experiences.

3. Collectively, the primary program providers - Thorold Community Activities Group (TCAG), the Thorold Public Library, the Seniors Association and volunteer sports and recreation groups - offer a range of program services to the community. To a greater or lesser degree, however, they each face obstacles in growing their program supply, particularly in view of increased demand as a result of future population growth and public expectations.

Participants' comments related to each of these themes, are summarized below, under the following headings:

- Areas for program development
- Opportunities to expand provision

Areas for Program Development

- variety at affordable prices
- key areas for tourism: Welland Canal, cycling, heritage

- sport tourism
- special events
- music
- culture
- arts show
- dog show
- home show
- families and young children
- 'tweens' and youth in general
- day camps
- farmers markets
- self-directed
- ethnic diversity
- computers, social media for seniors
- creative pursuits
- non-ice activities at arena
- public education on nature at St. Johns CA and Short Hills
- downtown 'nightlife'
- newcomers
- park-based programs
- crafts
- low income access (e.g., Jump Start)
- seniors

Opportunities to Expand/ Improve Provision

- use existing spaces / venues (e.g., Beaverdams Park, arenas, small halls, etc.) for regular programming and special events

- downtown, old-City based
- more satellite programming in outlying areas
- centralize services and connect with transit
- improvements / enhancements to Welland Canal and trails

SERVICE DELIVERY

Four overarching themes related to service delivery emerged in the interviews:

1. There are a number of key service providers in Thorold, each assuming a different role in the provision of parks, trails and recreation services, and with more or less collaboration / coordination in their collective efforts.
2. This relatively fragmented approach to service provision has generally worked historically but requires a degree of rationalization to optimally:
 - 1) address aging infrastructure issues,
 - 2) meet the needs of a growing community, and new expectations of municipalities in providing parks, trails and recreation services, and
 - 3) ensure service demand and supply are aligned to make the best possible use of both municipal and non-municipal resources.
3. There are divergent views on the future role of the City vs. non-municipal providers in service provision, ranging from a new, direct municipal program function to retaining the City's current

role in enabling / facilitating other providers to meet program needs. Regardless of the approach taken, however, the City will need to expand its role in parks, trails and recreation service provision. At the same time, the role of the City needs to be clarified, formalized and supported by appropriate policies, procedures and practices.

4. There are divergent views on the financial capacity of the City to spend on parks, trails and recreation. Some participants indicated the need to spend or borrow against the \$17 million that was generated by selling Hydro, particularly in view of the potential for a CGC partnership and/ or amalgamation with other area municipalities. Others do not think the City is in a position to spend any more on parks and recreation services, and should maintain as limited a role as possible in this area.

Opportunities/ Strengths

- There is a solid base of community programs / activities on which to build
- Local special events (e.g., Canal Bank Shuffle, Santa Claus Parade) are unique, growing and important to resident involvement and visitor attraction. They need guaranteed support to thrive.

- The City could introduce a municipal recreation programming function, and become a direct program provider, given population growth and expanding program / activity interests
- A single non-municipal body could take responsibility for programming all City facilities in a responsive, coordinated manner
- There is much in the way of unique, Thorold-based assets to build on and promote / advertise to both existing residents, newcomers, and the visitor market
- Established partnerships between the City and other providers (e.g., Library) are working well and there is interest in further developing these arrangements
- Other public agencies that responded to our request for interviews (District School Board of Niagara, Niagara Catholic District School Board, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and Niagara Region Public Health) either have in the past, are currently and / or are open to future collaboration with the City in areas of common interest around recreation / community facilities and services.
- The City has just launched a new website in an effort to improve communication with residents about available services and what is happening in the community, and to provide a more user-friendly on-line experience.
- The community appears to have a good base of volunteers and residents who are interested in making things happen. There may be potential to expand the volunteer base through formal involvement of Brock University students.
- Where the City's cost to support programs is minimal, it should be absorbed to encourage groups to continue to provide / grow services.

Challenges/ Weaknesses

- The City's growth in outstripping the capacity of services to support it.
- Regardless of the direction taken with respect to direct vs. indirect programming, the City will continue to function as an enabler / facilitator in certain areas (e.g., special events, community-based sports leagues). The role of the municipality as a facilitator, therefore, must be clarified and articulated to ensure it is appropriate, consistent, and results in high quality services.
- There is no formal structure, process and limited accountability for use of municipal resources (e.g., funding, facilities, parks, etc.) by non-municipal groups providing services (e.g., TCAG, Mel Swart Lake Gibson Park Committee, Allanburg Community Centre Board, Port Robinson Community Centre Board).

- Many groups operating independently, while depending on the City for support, make it difficult to plan with any confidence based on identified community demand / needs; determining priorities / strategic directions; phasing service provision and budgeting accordingly; and monitoring 'return on investment.'
- It will be a challenge to fund a variety of needs / interests (i.e., reinvestment in parks and infrastructure to 'catch up'; providing expanded or new facilities to close gaps or serve developing residential areas (beyond development charges); expanding program / activity services; investing to serve both residents and visitors simultaneously).
- Lack of resources is a key issue that affects the ability to provide services and to advertise / promote them so people know what's available.
- With the exception of the Niagara District School Board's annual Community Planning Partnership meeting¹, no mechanism exists for joint planning / monitoring / evaluating among service providers.
- There are partnership opportunities that are missed or are opportunistically-driven vs. taking a deliberate approach to creating strong working relationships.
- More partnerships are needed. Examples include the commercial sector (e.g., art galleries) and Brock University (student projects for 4th year students in Recreation and Leisure).
- It is difficult for groups that work with City to fundraise, donate proceeds to a collective account and, in turn, receive grants back a timely manner.
- Current City staffing levels do not provide the human resources required to improve and/or expand services, either as a facilitator or a direct program provider.
- Practices based on tradition as opposed to formal policy are lacking in some areas of service delivery (e.g., special events, volunteer management and support, user fees, advertising /promotion, etc.), and will be needed to support the City's clarified role in service provision. Similarly, contractual, purchase-of-service agreements are required for parks and recreation services that the City pays others to provide on its behalf.
- The structure to address the development of the GNCR is in place, and there is some funding 'on hold' for work on the trail but the Committee is currently inactive.
- Leadership role is lacking
- Lack of structured approach to volunteer recruitment, placement and training
- Balancing service provision across the City
- Establishing a strong Thorold presence/ identity within Niagara Region

¹ The Board present plans to community partners (including municipal representatives) to identify opportunities for co-builds, leasing underutilized space, etc.

