



# Recreation and Parks

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2020-2025

November 2020



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# Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan

The Halton Hills **Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan** sets out 10 Strategic Actions for the next five years. These Strategic Actions are aimed at increasing the ability of residents to live active and healthy lifestyles while being connected as a community through Halton Hills' recreation and parks system.

The Strategic Action Plan sets priorities for the Town to provide inclusive programs and facilities, empower community volunteers and service providers, and connect residents to nature. In developing the Strategic Actions, the Town has carefully considered opinions of Halton Hills' residents, demographic characteristics of our community, trends and best practices in providing recreation and parks services, and builds upon studies that have been previously carried out.

## Vision Statement

# Recreation for All

## Mission Statement

**Provide services to enhance the quality of life and well-being for Halton Hills residents through physical, mental and social health benefit.**

## Values

**Welcoming and safe environments for everyone**

**Diverse, inclusive and affordable services**

**Volunteerism**

**Innovation**

**Healthy and active lifestyles**

**Community engagement and collaboration**

**Nature awareness and preservation**

**Quality customer experiences**



# Guiding Frameworks

The Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan was developed with consideration given to key frameworks and documents, including the Framework for Recreation in Canada, Town of Halton Hills 2019–2022 Council Strategic Plan, and the Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy.

## Framework for Recreation in Canada

The Framework for Recreation in Canada is a nationally-supported framework that redefines recreation, articulates its benefits, and explores the recreation challenges that Canadians face today. The Framework aims to improve the well-being of individuals, communities and the built and natural environment through five evidence-based goals for communities across Canada to strive towards. The Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan has been developed to align to each of the five goals of the Framework for Recreation in Canada.



### Goal 1: Active Living

Foster active living through physical recreation.



### Goal 2: Inclusion and Access

Increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation.



### Goal 3: Connecting People and Nature

Help people connect to nature through recreation.



### Goal 4: Supportive Environments

Ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments that encourage participation in recreation and build strong, caring communities.



### Goal 5: Recreation Capacity

Ensure the continued growth and sustainability of the recreation field.

# Town of Halton Hills 2019–2022 Council Strategic Plan

The Town of Halton Hills 2019–2022 Council Strategic Plan identifies key priorities and outcomes for the current term of Council. The Strategic Plan positions the Town to deliver a broad range of public services. Key themes in relation to Council’s priorities include:

- Shaping growth
- Transportation
- Climate Change and the Environment
- Fiscal and Corporate Management
- Local Autonomy and Advocacy
- Ensure a Vibrant Agricultural Community
- Youth and Seniors Initiatives

**Halton Hills is a vibrant and distinctive community in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.**

- Characterized by its spectacular countryside, natural heritage, cultural heritage, and small town feel;
- Enriched by its unique blend of urban and rural interconnected communities and neighbourhoods; and
- Supported by its prosperous employment areas.

*Community Vision  
Town of Halton Hills 2019–2022 Council Strategic Plan*

## Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy

The Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy (ICSS) is a long-term vision that establishes priorities, and guides decision-making in Halton Hills with a sustainability lens. The ICSS identifies a number of focus areas that achieve four key pillars of sustainability:

- Cultural Vibrancy
- Economic Prosperity
- Environmental Health
- Social Wellbeing

In 2060, the urban and rural communities of Halton Hills balance economic prosperity with a **deep commitment to the natural environment**, while retaining a viable local agricultural and small-town feel, and being socially equitable, culturally vibrant and strongly connected.

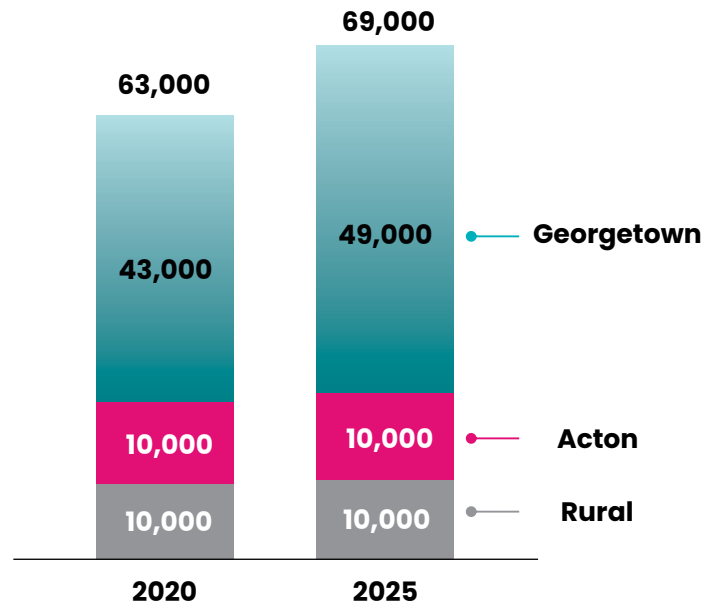
*Vision for 2060  
Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy*

# Halton Hills at a Glance

The characteristics of people living in Halton Hills shape the way in which we deliver recreation and parks services. The Town is continually evaluating who lives in our community, how characteristics may change in the future, and how needs for recreation and parks might change as a result.

## Population Growth

Halton Hills population is currently estimated at **63,000** residents, representing a 3% growth to just four years prior. The population is forecasted to reach **69,000** by 2025.



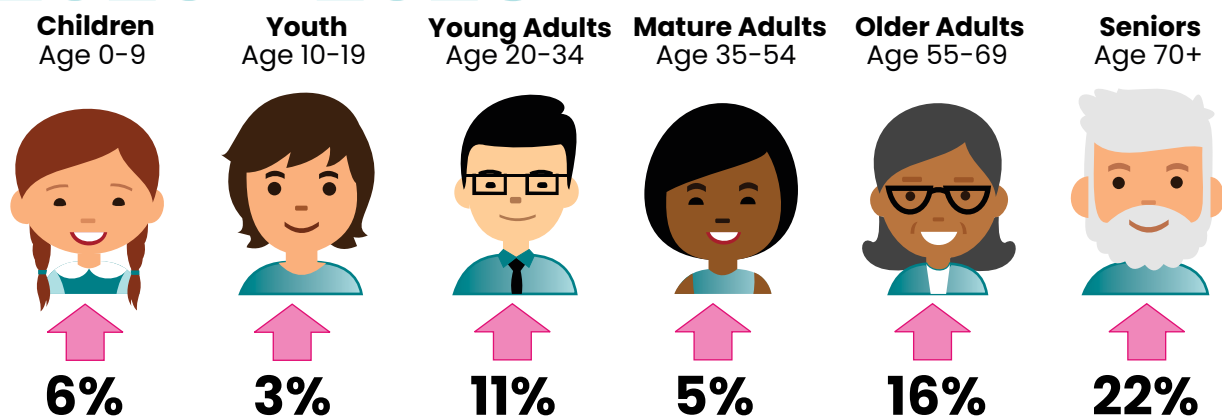
## Where Growth is Occurring

Approximately **two out of every three** Halton Hills residents live in Georgetown. Over the next five years, much of the Town's growth will be directed to Georgetown where more than **6,000** new residents are expected to arrive.

## Age of the Population

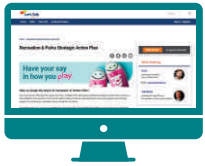
All age groups are expected to increase over the next five years. Population forecasts indicate that by 2025, the population of seniors will increase by **22%**. With all other age groups expected to increase between **3%** and **16%**, a balanced offering of recreation and parks programs is vital to provide activities for all ages and abilities.

## 2020 – 2025



# How residents were engaged

The perspectives of residents, stakeholders, Town staff and Council helped to shape the Strategic Action Plan and the priorities moving forward. Input was received through an Imagination event, workshops, surveys, conversations, and written submissions.



**1,000+**

Let's Talk Halton Hills  
Visitors



**100**

Community Imagination  
and  
Launch Event Participants



**53**

Town Staff and Councillors  
Engaged in Workshops  
and Interviews



**402**

Random Sample  
Household Telephone  
Survey Respondents



**106**

Virtual Open House  
Submissions



**42**

Hometown Hockey  
Pop-up Survey Respondents



**102**

Online Community Survey  
Respondents



**84**

Virtual Open House and  
Community Conversation  
Participants

**1,800+**  
Participants Engaged

# Imagination Event

Residents who attended the Imagination Event conceptualized priorities for recreation and parks in Halton Hills and highlighted the benefits that these opportunities bring to the community. Attendees were asked to respond to three key questions to understand: why they feel recreation and parks are important; how the Town can ensure that all residents can participate; and how they picture recreation and parks in the next five years. The input received is illustrated in the graphic below.

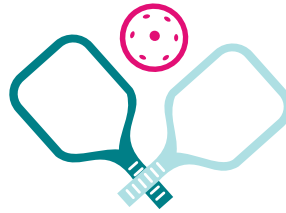


# Top Facility & Activity Requests

The following are some of the top facility or activity requests that were heard during the consultation process.



**Soccer  
Fields**



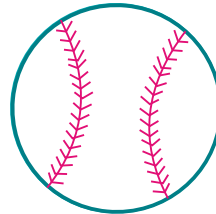
**Pickleball**



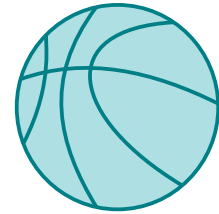
**Fitness**



**Gymnastics**



**Ball  
Diamonds**



**Gymnasiums**



**Parks and  
Trails**



**Indoor  
Pools**



**Walking  
Track**





# Goal 1 Active Living

The importance of being **physically active** is well documented yet not all Canadians are aware of the benefits of doing so, or able to be as physically active as they want. Physical activity has been shown to positively contribute to the physical, social, mental and emotional health of people while reducing risks associated with chronic disease. The Framework for Recreation in Canada reinforces the need for people of all ages to be engaged in unstructured and structured forms of physical activity.



The Town's Recreation and Parks Department is primarily responsible for implementing the Town's Active Living Strategy (also known as "Active Easy"). The Active Living Strategy supports and fosters active community objectives in Halton Hills where the healthy choices are the easy choices at work, home, and play (consistent with the Framework for Recreation in Canada). Strategic Action Plan consultations indicate that residents continue to look for ways to be active throughout the year, finding ways to "get people off screens", and maintaining their overall wellbeing.

More than **one out of five residents** are not able to participate in recreation and parks activities as often as they would like; the most common barrier being the **lack of free time**.

*Random Sample Household Telephone Survey*

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that children and youth engage in 60 to 180 minutes of physical activity each day, while adults should be moderately to vigorously active at least 150 minutes every week. The Town of Halton Hills provides many opportunities for residents to engage in active lifestyles through its recreation and parks facilities, program offerings, awareness efforts, and coordination with like-minded partners in the community.



Residents of Halton Hills are visibly **more active** and community partners are engaged to make it happen.

*Active Living Strategy Vision for the Town of Halton Hills*

# Strategic Action #1

**In response to changing lifestyle preferences, provide opportunities for regular and convenient access to participation that reaches the largest population at a basic, general and introductory level.**

Active Living opportunities encompass a full range of recreation and parks activities and experiences for residents in Halton Hills. The Town of Halton Hills places an emphasis on developing strategies that increase active living – and decrease sedentary behaviours – by providing broad choices that consider residents' interests, ages, abilities, and other socio-economic considerations.

Halton Hills residents are able to explore new interests and expand on activities that they already engage in through active, creative, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) and general interest programs available in the community. The Town has a strong tradition of working with other community stakeholder organizations to collectively provide access to a wide range of interests. The Recreation and Parks Department's Service Delivery Continuum, which describes roles and relationships of the Town and community providers, remains an appropriate model to follow.

Local participation rates by age groups in programs and opportunities show a similar trend to that of other municipalities. In Halton Hills, there is a growing preference toward “on-demand” opportunities including drop-in classes and other flexible options that do not lock people in to set times or pre-determined number of classes. While there is still a need for structured programs and registered sessions, the Town should offer a balanced range of opportunities while still being cognizant of increasing participation.

Capacity and utilization of opportunities offered by community organizations is not understood as well as it can be. It will be important to understand participation rates in recreation and parks opportunities to ensure that the residents are well served, and that staff are proactive and responsive.

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Enable participation in a wide range of recreation and parks experiences for all ages.
- Incorporate physical literacy to support lifelong engagement and enjoyment of active opportunities.
- Address current trends and pent up demands together with community partners.
- Monitor and respond to demographics, recreation and parks needs, and work collaboratively to deliver a full range of quality experiences.
- Maintain quality and safety standards.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE WERE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that the intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number of participants by age
- Number of registered and drop-in programs
- Number of new and returning customers
- Number of memberships purchased/renewed
- Program fill rates by age



## Goal 2 Inclusion and Access

The Framework for Recreation in Canada advocates the need to engage all people, bring them together through recreation, and to celebrate the rich diversity that exists among us. Certain populations face barriers to participation that must be addressed in order to deliver full access to all residents; barriers to recreation can be experienced by persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada and people from diverse cultures, persons from low income backgrounds, indigenous persons, females, and the LGBTQ2S community.

**Recreation and parks opportunities should be inclusive for everyone**, regardless of age, orientation, background, ability, and income.

*Consultation findings from the Imagination Event*

Input provided by Halton Hills residents emphasized inclusivity in a variety of ways. People expressed a need for recreation services to be **affordable, safe, available to persons with disabilities, and welcoming of the changing ethno-cultural characteristics** of the community.

Working with specific populations and support organizations to understand and remove barriers is critical in order to serve all residents. The Recreation and Parks Department is committed to providing services to residents from all walks of life through the ways that its parks and facilities are designed, the programs that are offered, and the way in which Town staff are trained to interact with the public.



## Strategic Action #2

Work collaboratively with support organizations to identify, attract and intentionally include an increased number of participants from populations facing constraints accessing recreation and parks services.

The Recreation and Parks Department is continually striving to strengthen programs and services to address the needs of all Halton Hills residents. Working collectively with supporting organizations that serve marginalized communities helps to achieve positive outcomes. The leadership to create a forum for discussion tends to be the role of a municipality, and is an important role that the Town of Halton Hills can play to build a long term and sustainable commitment amongst stakeholders.



Multi-level interventions are ongoing to include underrepresented populations through promotion of opportunities, partnerships, rental of public spaces for specific groups as well as supports for those with lower incomes, females and persons with disabilities. The Town of Halton Hills Inclusion Policy and the Recreation and Parks Affordability Framework are excellent examples aimed at including marginalized populations.

### Key Facts to Consider

Approximately 5% of residents live in **low income households** and may not be able to afford fees, transportation or equipment.

About 2% of Halton Hills' population identify as having an **Indigenous background**.

By 2025, 20% of residents are estimated to have some form of **disability**, requiring modified service delivery models.

Various studies indicate that approximately 5% of a community identify as part of the **LGBTQ2S community**, which could mean upwards of 3,000 individuals in Halton Hills.

Females from age 10 to 19 are **less likely to participate** in recreation and sports – this could have an impact on the 4,600 female youth in Halton Hills.





The Town and community stakeholders require a greater understanding of the types and numbers of under-represented residents living in the municipality, as well as their level of participation in recreation and parks activities available throughout Halton Hills. Understanding what exists to support under-represented populations is paramount for the Town and its partners to become more accessible and inclusive. Current capacity and utilization levels will be key in understanding the percentage of such residents that are currently being included in local services, and measures that can be put in place to strengthen participation in the future.

### **Suggested approach to ensure that all under-represented residents have access to recreation and parks activities**

1. Inventory and gather key stakeholders representing all current and identified under-represented populations in Halton Hills.
2. Ensure that under-represented residents have a say in decision making - Develop a Charter of Commitment developed by all stakeholders.
3. Understand overall gaps and barriers in service delivery and develop a strategy to address these gaps.
4. Track and report on increased participation, shared resources and outcomes.

## **HOW WE'LL DO IT**

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Broaden the Inclusion Policy to encompass additional under-represented populations, as well as defining what the Town will do to be more inclusive and support the principles of health equity.
- Identify predominant populations that may be under-represented in Halton Hills and meet with representative organizations and residents to identify their needs.
- Identify existing barriers to access/participation along with ways to remove them.
- Form relationships with diverse groups within the community.
- Create welcoming and safe environments for all under-represented residents.

## **HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL**

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number of subsidies
- Number of subsidy recipients
- Number of new clients
- Percent of population facing constraints that access Town programs and services through the subsidy



## Goal 3 Connecting People and Nature

The Framework for Recreation in Canada clearly illustrates that people have an inherent need to connect with the natural world. **Connecting with nature** is associated with improved cognitive, mental and physical health along with enhanced creativity and positive social behaviors. The recreation and parks system plays a vital role in meeting that need.

The Recreation and Parks Department connects people to nature through the provision, programming and stewardship of outdoor spaces along with providing policy guidance for natural environments and the creation of healthy communities. More recently, appreciation and exposure to nature has gained greater prominence due to enhanced awareness of our role as stewards of our planet, and the benefits that nature offers to us.



Halton Hills' residents have historically valued their connection to the outdoors, due in part to the Town's agricultural heritage and the presence of important natural features such as the Niagara Escarpment, the Credit River, Hungry Hollow, woodlots, and wetlands. The connection to nature and **"being outside"** continues to be important as reaffirmed through public feedback provided at the Community Imagination Event. Sustainability remains front and centre in the minds of residents as shown by the nearly 70% of household survey respondents that state **recreation and parks services should consider the impact of climate change and the environment.**

Since 2013, the Town of Halton Hills has been guided by an Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy. The Recreation and Parks Department is striving to increase awareness of the outdoor recreational activities that are available in Halton Hills, taking a leadership role in environmental stewardship by collaborating with other municipal departments such as the Climate Change Implementation Team and like-minded community partners such as the local Conservation Authorities, and promoting a greater understanding the benefits of the natural environment.



[The Town should] develop programs to **increase awareness** of the environment, how we can reduce our carbon footprint, and make the world a better place for future generations.

*Resident suggestion on how recreation and parks can address climate change and sustainability.*

# Strategic Action #3

Recreation and Parks Department operations and initiatives should support the goals of the Halton Hills Climate Change Adaptation Plan.

Halton Hills' recreation and parks system plays a role in environmental sustainability, ecological resilience, climate change adaptation, and natural disaster mitigation. Changing climatic conditions are resulting in extreme weather events that have impacted Canadian cities in a variety of ways including flooding, severe storms, higher water levels in lakes and coastal areas, forest fires, and prolonged periods without rainfall.

Halton Hills' parkland forms part of a green infrastructure system that helps to **retain stormwater** onsite, contributes to the local **tree canopy**, allows for **carbon sequestration**, provides trails and linkages for non-polluting forms of **active transportation**, and can **buffer** built-land uses from flood-prone areas.

In May 2019, Town Council declared a climate emergency, as has been done by more than 470 Canadian municipalities, and created a Climate Change and Asset Management Division shortly after to coordinate corporate actions aimed at climate change mitigation.

The Town is presently developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) that will provide actions and strategies to reduce its vulnerability to climate change and improve its resiliency in the face of climate change. Given the importance of sustainability and climate change mitigation and the Town's commitment to addressing it, the Recreation and Parks Department should align its operations and service delivery to complement the CCAP, the Integrated Sustainability Plan, and other related frameworks.

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Continue to implement energy efficient building and park features, possibly using renewable energy sources such as solar powered and LED park lighting.
- Support for agency/community-led initiatives through park design such as the Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan (SNAP), partnerships with Willow Park, POWER, etc.
- Incorporate stormwater retention/ filtration/flood mitigation elements through design of sports fields and other park facilities, berms, rain gardens, etc.
- Provide educational programs and signage about sustainability and climate change mitigation features within parks.
- Encourage green roofs and/or parkland on top of built structures.
- Continue to promote local tree planting initiatives in parks and open spaces.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Percentage of parks with climate change mitigation features

# Strategic Action #4

Enhance the number of innovative and meaningful initiatives that connect Halton Hills residents to nature.

People have an instinctual connection to nature. Parks Canada's Connecting Canadians with Nature report documents the growing body of research that suggests personal contact with nature can mitigate many of the ill effects of modern life. Access to the outdoors is an important part in addressing "nature deficit disorder" which is a term coined to highlight the negative behavioural and social effects of spending less time outside.

For municipalities, the Parks Canada report notes the pivotal role that nature plays in nurturing relationships by **bringing people together**. Urban residents living near natural environments have a more positive view of their neighbourhood while community gardens, trails, outdoor running clubs are emerging as way to bring families and neighbours together.



The Town of Halton Hills is committed to creating enjoyable and engaging outdoor spaces through multiple Departments and Divisions including Recreation and Parks, Planning and Sustainability, Library Services, and Transportation and Public Works. The Recreation and Parks Department should continue to coordinate planning, design and programming opportunities for outdoor spaces with other Departments and community partners.

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Implement the Town of Halton Hills Parkland Acquisition Strategy (ongoing).
- Increase tree plantings, naturalization efforts and horticultural gardens in parks, boulevards, and other civic spaces.
- Support for community allotment gardens, particularly at Gellert Community Park and/or in areas of higher density residential development.
- Construct parks with natural playgrounds that encourage adventure-based play, shaded areas for comfort, and water-bottle refilling stations where appropriate.
- Creation of eco-parks, nature preserves or other areas that allow public access and education.
- Increase the number of nature-based program choices such as geocaching, orienteering, stewardship events, etc.
- Work with conservation-focused partners to promote public access and program nature-based experiences in Halton Hills.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number and total size of parks and open spaces
- Percent of participation in outdoor recreation programs





## Goal 4 Supportive Environments

The Framework for Recreation in Canada strives to make “healthy choices the easy choices” by providing supportive physical and social environments to help people adopt healthy, active lifestyles. Recreation takes place in many settings, including homes, schools, neighbourhoods, community spaces and places, rural places and the natural and built environments.

There is a growing demand for recreation and parks facilities, programs and services that appeal to a **variety of interests**. Offering **different times** where people can participate in activities was also suggested to fit today’s busy lifestyles.

*Consultation findings from the Imagination Event*

There is a strong legacy of support for recreation facilities and parks in the Town of Halton Hills, including prior to amalgamation of the former municipalities of Georgetown, Acton and Esquesing in the mid-1970s. Creating **supportive physical environments** for residents not only involves building and maintaining these spaces but also maximizing their use. Since 2007, the Town has invested over \$35 Million in recreation facilities and park development through new construction or renewal projects. The Town has been upgrading its arena infrastructure with investments in the Mold-Masters SportsPlex and Acton Arena & Community Centre, while the Gellert Community Centre exemplifies the Town’s shift towards multi-use hubs. Prospect Park and Trafalgar Sports Park are important gathering places, while investment in active transportation infrastructure – such as on and off-road trails – has contributed to the Town’s sustainability and active recreation goals. Notable investments in older adult and youth-oriented spaces such as seniors’ centres and skateboard parks has also taken place over the past five years.

In addition to providing recreation and park facilities for its own programs, the Recreation and Parks Department’s community development efforts help to coordinate recreation and active living initiatives in many settings across Halton Hills. Creating **supportive social environments** has many dimensions including implementation of policies and guidelines, innovative programming, social action, education and funding. All of these mechanisms contribute to the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive mix of quality recreation experiences.

Today, the provision of supportive environments for recreation is as important as ever for residents in Halton Hills. Consultations re-affirm a desire for multi-use spaces, new and innovative program choices, trail connectivity, and more facilities and times to participate. The Household Survey found that **three out of four residents** rate indoor recreation facilities as being important to them while nearly **four out of five residents** feel the same way about outdoor facilities.



# Strategic Action #5

Ensure sufficient capacity exists in the Town's recreation programs to reflect changes in community demographics, participation rates, and evolving interests of Halton Hills residents.

The Recreation and Parks Department provides valuable recreation programs that are commonly found in leading Canadian municipalities such as skating and swimming opportunities, day camps, group fitness classes, and much more. The Department is continually exploring new and emerging programs that arise from changing demographics and trends in the recreation and parks sector. Community service providers and the private sector operators are also adapting their programming in response to changing trends.

The ability to provide programs that reflect the needs of the diverse community starts with an understanding of who lives in Halton Hills and local activity preferences. Recreation and Parks Department staff monitor provincial and local trends to be prepared for new requests while tracking interest and satisfaction levels in existing programs. With such information in hand, the Department is well positioned to adjust program offerings to respond to what residents are seeking.



## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Monitor program trends and interests in the recreation and parks sector to inform offerings.
- Track program participation and fill rates.
- Scan the local market for services offered by community and private sector providers to determine areas where program duplication can be avoided and where the Town may be able to fill program gaps.
- Optimize program offerings based on needs and satisfaction rates (e.g. adjusting program schedules to meet areas of greatest need).
- Test demand for innovative/alternative program choices, including within underused facilities, parks, or non-peak times.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Facility utilization data
- Facility foot traffic
- Percentage of usage for each facility type
- Number of program participants by type

# Strategic Action #6

**Parks, community centres and other recreation facilities should be constructed, expanded, and/or refurbished as required to meet local needs, operate effectively, and to function as multi-use hubs where possible.**

Residents of Halton Hills are looking for quality recreation facilities that they can access at desirable times and fees. With 10,000 new residents expected over the next five years, additional pressures will be placed on Halton Hills' existing recreation facilities.

The Town has made investments to make sure that residents have access to high quality facilities while balancing fiscal responsibility. Capacity at aging or underperforming facilities such as arenas, seniors centres, and outdoor pools has been transitioned to new or substantially redeveloped facilities such as the Mold-Masters SportsPlex, Acton Arena & Community Centre, Gellert Community Centre, and Trafalgar Sports Park. The Gellert Community Centre and Dufferin Rural Heritage Community Centre were also built to respond to new recreational interests that emerged over the past decade and now provide residents with access to indoor aquatics, group fitness and indoor turf programs.

Proactive facility and asset management planning will continue to be important to address future needs. The purpose of long-range planning is to understand / anticipate such needs, determine what facilities will be needed and where they will go, and having funding in place to build and operate them.



## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Proceed with the planned expansion of the Gellert Community Centre (Phase 2) and Gellert Community Park.
- Address needs for land-intensive sports fields at the Trafalgar Sports Park, Gellert Community Park, and future Town-wide and Community Parks, and other park development opportunities that emerge (e.g. Acton Quarry).
- Implement the Collegiate Pools Revitalization Strategy (ongoing), Acton Youth Centre Feasibility Study, Cedarvale Community Centre Feasibility Study and Facility Optimization Study.
- Continue to implement proactive asset management practices to ensure that recreation and parks infrastructure is maintained to the quality that residents expect and need.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Average annual facility investment
- Operating cost per square foot

Population growth and participation trends will create needs for recreation facilities. The Town has two existing sites that are poised to accommodate land-intensive facility needs such as community centres and sports fields. The planned second phase of construction for the **Gellert Community Centre** and development of the **Gellert Community Park** will address a significant portion of future needs generated through the potential addition of:

- Gymnasium and/or fitness
- Seniors and/or youth spaces
- Program rooms
- Rectangular sports fields
- Picnicking and event space

**66%**

of households would use the Gellert Community Centre **more often** if it was expanded.

*Random Sample Household Telephone Survey*



Revitalization of the **two high school pools** in Georgetown and Acton will retain capacity for programs and aquatic sport clubs, while new opportunities may be considered such as creating a youth centre in Acton. Sports fields should also be explored at **Trafalgar Sports Park** and potentially in partnership with local school boards. Hard surface courts, splash pads, skateboard parks, playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment and other outdoor recreational infrastructure should be explored when building new Community and Neighbourhood Parks, as well as when the time comes to rejuvenate existing parks.

**69%**

of households supported renovating the **Georgetown Indoor Pool** and keeping it open.

**67%**

of households supported renovating the **Acton Lion's Indoor Pool** and keeping it open.

*Random Sample Household Telephone Survey*

# Strategic Action #7

Explore service delivery, partnerships, community group support and sponsorship opportunities that are aligned with the existing service delivery continuum (standardized assessment tools).

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Embracing the partnership framework principles, as follows:
  - There is an articulated need for the proposed service in the community.
  - The outcome and approach to the work is aligned with the municipal values, mandate and priorities.
  - The financial risks to the municipality are shared or reduced.
  - The partner is equipped and qualified to co-deliver a service through identified efficiencies and the ability to reach an identified segment of the population.
  - The quality of the service provided meets municipal quality assurance, safety and industry standards as well as complies with legislative requirements.
  - Accountabilities and responsibilities can be clearly defined and complied.
  - Annual reporting will capture participation numbers, expenditure reductions and or revenue enhancements.
  - Any unsolicited for-profit partnership proposals are transparently addressed through a competitive process and according to corporate procurement policies.

Community connectedness through recreation and parks places emphasis on relationships and finding the alignment between various community service providers, including the Recreation and Parks Department. The connection finds common ground and ways to work better together, facilitates better sharing of resources, and ultimately leads to a desired end goal of building stronger community outcomes. For example, the development of the Halton Hills Active Living Strategy (Active Easy) brought together like-minded stakeholders that helped to form the plan but also to take ownership in its implementation.

The Framework for Recreation in Canada suggests actions such as strengthening partnerships with schools, social service groups, community groups and the private sector. The Framework encourages municipalities to adopt a strategic approach to community building that align with other community initiatives, much in the same way that the Recreation and Parks Department dedicates substantial efforts to community development.

The Department supports efforts of the community and local organizations in enabling recreation and parks services. A core intent of doing so is to strengthen community capacity and self-sufficiency, while building community pride and cohesion. Continued collaboration with other community partners is emphasized within Goal #1 of the Strategic Action Plan, in line with the Service Delivery Continuum and other Departmental practices.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number of Hillsview Active Living Centre users and members
- Renewal rates and level of membership update



## Goal 5 Recreation Capacity

To align with the Framework for Recreation in Canada, the Recreation and Parks Department is committed to ensuring **the continued growth and sustainability of Halton Hills' recreation sector**. The Town's intentional efforts to champion the benefits of recreation and parks, its delivery of related services, and its support for community development and volunteerism provide residents and stakeholders with ongoing support to attain active and healthy outcomes.

Residents who participated throughout the public consultation process felt that **the Town of Halton Hills should consider establishing new, or strengthening existing partnerships** to share roles, responsibilities, and resources related to recreation and parks opportunities.

The Department meets legislative requirements and many industry standards to ensure quality, consistency and safety through its operations. This goes a long way in providing meaningful recreation and park experiences for residents and volunteers to encourage ongoing participation, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the sector. As legislative and industry standards evolve, so must Town staff involved in the delivery of recreation and park services in order to best serve Halton Hills residents.



# Strategic Action #8

Increase public awareness of recreation and parks services through the use of technology along with expanded marketing, communication, and engagement efforts that enhance the customer experience.

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Continue to promote the benefits of healthy, active living to the general public using digital solutions (e.g., website, social media, etc.), together with other resources such as information booths at events, signage in parks and facilities, etc.
- Utilize Let's Talk Halton Hills for recreation and parks-related projects/input opportunities.
- Continue to use technology to enhance the dissemination and collection of information with the public and partners.
- Connect with community organizations to share information and/or resources that increase their awareness of programs and services available throughout Halton Hills.
- Ensure consistent and coordinated messaging with the Corporate Communications Department.
- Tailor advertising methods used by market segments (e.g. by age, interests, place of residence, language, etc.) where possible.

Active transportation signage, wayfinding, and education was suggested to raise awareness about the trails and pathways that are available in Halton Hills.

*Consultation findings from the Imagination Event*

Communicating available recreation and parks services is a priority for the Town. The Recreation and Parks Department marketing staff work with the Corporate Communications Department to spread the word about Town offerings and how residents can become involved. Recreation and parks services are promoted in a variety of ways including traditional print materials, social media and recent introduction of the Let's Talk Halton Hills online platform.

The Town's efforts appear to be successful as just 3% of surveyed households reported a lack of awareness as preventing them from participating in recreation and parks activities, and over 50% of households stating that the Town does a good job of informing them about its services. That said, household survey results and other input received suggest that there is room to improve the effectiveness of communications through more marketing, greater use of social media, and outreach through local schools.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number of web page visits
- Number of social media followers
- Number of positive social interactions
- Correlation between traffic and sales
- Measure of interaction rate

# Strategic Action #9

Work collectively with other service providers to promote volunteerism and engage more volunteers in the delivery of service.

12.7 million Canadians volunteer annually, donating the equivalent of 1 million full-time jobs. Statistics Canada reported that 44% of the Canadian population volunteered in 2013, which was a 3% decline from 2010. The greatest percentage of volunteers comes from youth – most likely those meeting a requirement for their secondary education. Not surprisingly, 10% of volunteers account for 53% of the volunteer work.

Volunteerism is at the heart of the work of recreation and parks in Halton Hills – the testimonies from volunteers indicate that their experience is rewarding by forming strong social connections, gaining higher levels of confidence, and obtaining new skills that can also lead to future employment.



Recreation and Parks Department staff engaged over 700 volunteers in 2019 for events, programs and initiatives; however, the growth expected in Halton Hills will likely lead to more volunteers being needed. The Town's comprehensive approach to volunteerism is defined through policy and practice. The Volunteer Management Policy speaks to what volunteerism can do for individuals and the community and adopts the standards of the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. Engaging youth at an early age can encourage lifelong volunteering. Volunteer promotional efforts include a brochure that is available in municipal facilities to drive potential volunteers to a dedicated section of the Town's website that speaks to the benefits and current volunteer opportunities.

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Quantify the annual rate of retention of volunteers in Halton Hills to assist with planning for turnover and setting recruitment targets.
- Quantify the need for additional volunteer resources that are required to implement the Strategic Actions of the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan.
- Meet with representatives of existing volunteer groups to determine the strengths and opportunities in recruitment, selection, training, supervision and recognition.
- Address gaps and opportunities in recruiting volunteers and improving the volunteer experience.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number of volunteer applicants
- Number of applicants who become volunteers
- Number of returning volunteers
- Number of volunteer hours



# Strategic Action #10

Continue to build capacity in the area of Community Development focusing on the physical, social and mental wellness of residents for an improved quality of life.

Community development is a methodology that engages and supports the community in providing recreation and parks opportunities, either in tandem with or independently from the Town. The Recreation and Parks Department offers support where it is required and provides many different types of public space that enable use by community providers and residents. The community development model embraced by the Department shares a common purpose of engaging residents in active and passive recreation and parks pursuits.

Community development is an important element of Halton Hills' recreation and parks service delivery system; it embodies the philosophy that our community is stronger when it is self-determining and has the tools to develop and deliver recreation and parks opportunities independently yet in partnership with the municipality.

The partnership between Halton Region, local municipalities (including Halton Hills) and others in the Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative is one example of using the community development model to working together it improve the quality of life for residents.

## A Community Development Process

1. A shared purpose
2. Build interest and participation
3. Formalize organization
4. Seek partners and support
5. Develop group and implement the plan
6. Evaluate impacts and outcomes





The Halton Hills Municipal Assistance Policy demonstrates municipal commitment to investing in the community. Financial assistance and other supports including facility use and staff support are provided to groups that apply for assistance whether starting up as a new organization or proposing a new initiative. The Municipal Assistance Policy encourages groups to apply for funding and resources for projects that will benefit a significant number of residents in the community. The criteria for application are aligned with the priorities as indicated in Council's Strategic Plan. The application criteria are updated as Council's strategic plans are updated. In 2019 over 45 community groups received approximately \$132,000 in funding to support community events, recreation and parks related projects which impacted over 77,000 residents and attendees.

The Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan brings with it recommendations for future actions with respect to active living, access and inclusion, volunteerism, community supports and the continuation of engaging a growing population. Community development will continue to play a strong role in the delivery of active opportunities and services.



## HOW WE'LL DO IT

Initiatives that the Recreation and Parks Department may consider include:

- Development and implement a Community Development Strategy.
- Analyze current supports that are being provided, along with the types of supports and resources that will be required in the future.
- Assess the potential of community group participation in each of the Strategic Actions in the Recreation and Parks Strategic Action Plan.
- Meet with community groups to discuss how Strategic Actions could be strengthened through collective action(s).
- Discuss and develop a joint implementation plan.
- Determine if additional supports are needed to enable groups to respond to the needs of the community.
- Review the Municipal Financial Assistance Policy and staff resource levels to address any additional supports that may be needed such as training, enhancing awareness efforts, etc.

## HOW WE'LL KNOW WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

Performance indicators will be evaluated regularly to ensure that intended outcomes are being met, including:

- Number of community and registered organizations
- Funding allocated to support organizations
- Percent of community events supported by the Town

# SUMMARY OF TEN Strategic Actions

The ten Strategic Actions are identified as a priority for the Recreation and Parks Department.

These Strategic Actions align with the five key goals of the **Framework for Recreation in Canada**, which are defined as:

**Goal 1:** Active Living

**Goal 2:** Access & Inclusion

**Goal 3:** Connecting People to Nature

**Goal 4:** Supportive Environments

**Goal 5:** Building Capacity



**1** Provide basic recreation opportunities for all



**2** Minimize barriers to participation



**3** Support climate change initiatives



**4** Connect residents with nature experiences



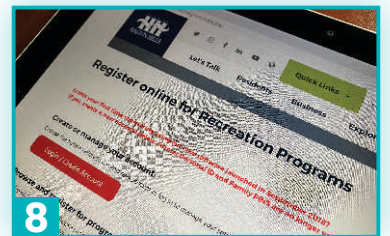
**5** Respond to evolving recreation interests



**6** Support the use of new and existing facilities



**7** Review effectiveness of program and facility resources



**8** Improve operations and customer experiences



**9** Increase volunteers



**10** Prepare a Community Development Action Plan

