WINNIPEG PARKS STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2021

Winnipeg

Winnipeg
Recreation & Parks
Strategies

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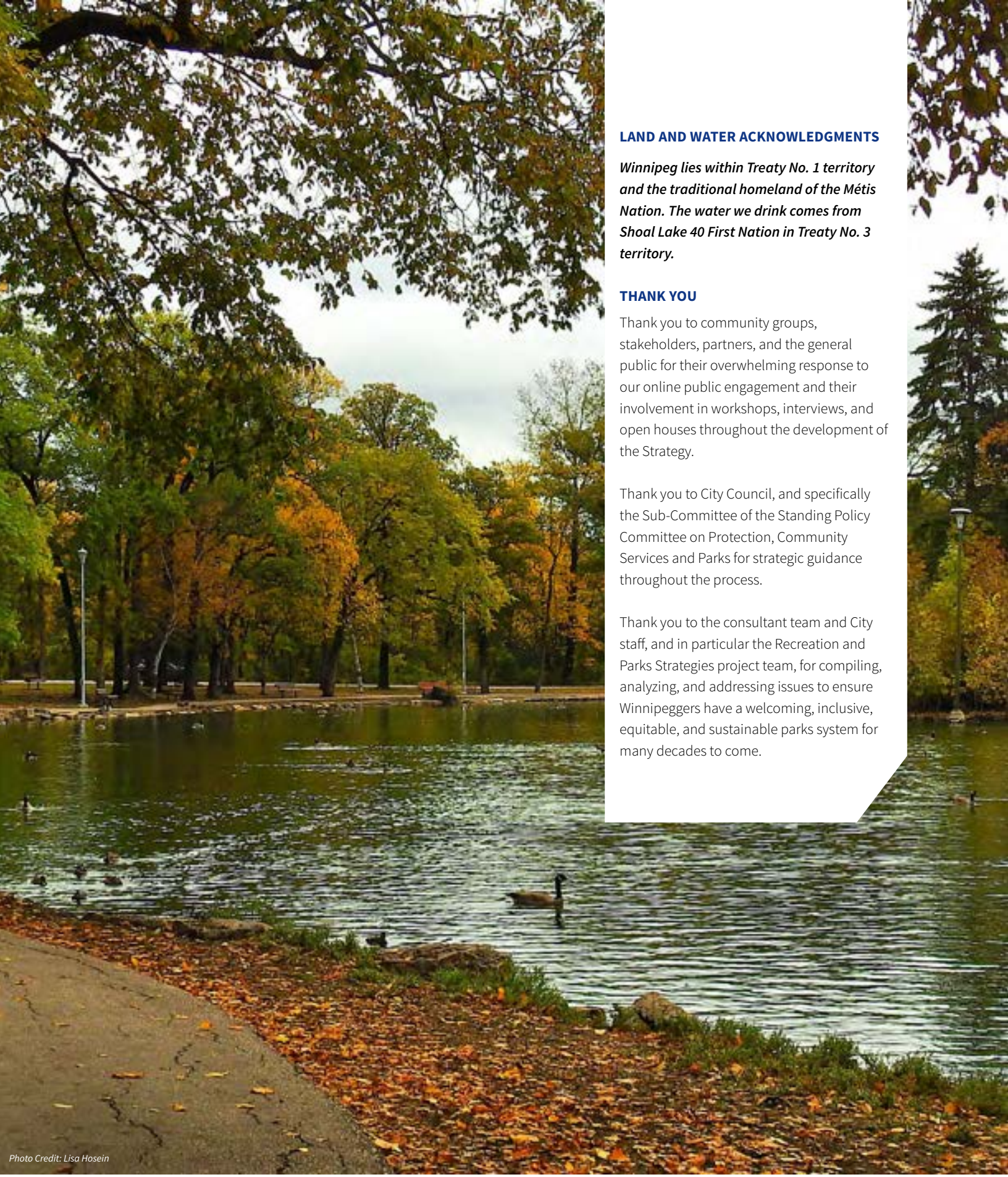


Photo Credit: Lisa Hosein

LAND AND WATER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Winnipeg lies within Treaty No. 1 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation. The water we drink comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Treaty No. 3 territory.

THANK YOU

Thank you to community groups, stakeholders, partners, and the general public for their overwhelming response to our online public engagement and their involvement in workshops, interviews, and open houses throughout the development of the Strategy.

Thank you to City Council, and specifically the Sub-Committee of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks for strategic guidance throughout the process.

Thank you to the consultant team and City staff, and in particular the Recreation and Parks Strategies project team, for compiling, analyzing, and addressing issues to ensure Winnipeggers have a welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable parks system for many decades to come.

Executive summary

Winnipeg is often described as a 'prairie oasis' connected by its rivers, a title earned by the beautiful network of parks and open spaces distributed across the city. These parks preserve some of the area's incredible prairie, meadow, wetland, riparian and forest landscapes and facilitate a range of leisure, gathering, and recreational opportunities. From large destination regional parks to small local neighbourhood spaces, the city's parks are invaluable to residents and tourists alike. They also make important contributions to the city as a whole, creating tangible environmental and economic benefits.

Across Canada, parks are appreciated as an essential component of complete and walkable communities where people can live, work, and play. Parks are essential to the ecological function of the urban landscape, and help mitigate the effects of climate change. They are important contributors to the aesthetic character of our city, and increase the health and mental wellbeing of residents by supporting an active outdoor lifestyle.

The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* (the Strategy) presents a vision for Winnipeg's parks, and reflects the above benefits by recognizing the parks system's role as an integral part of Winnipeggers' way of life. The vision directly shapes the Strategy's values, operating principles, and goals, and sets a framework to achieve five strategic objectives.

Strategic objectives:

1	***Meeting community need*** **Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in parks service delivery needs and emerging trends by implementing transparent and defendable decision-making processes.**
2	***Building partnerships*** **Respond to communities' unique challenges and opportunities by supporting existing and fostering new partnerships with community groups and private organizations.**
3	***Adapting to change*** **Improve the functionality, sustainability, responsiveness, and ecological integrity of the parks system by updating design guidelines and management practices.**
4	***Improving access*** **Broaden the reach of the parks system by coordinating improved connections, enhancing safety and expanding opportunities for sharing park information.**
5	***Formalizing service delivery approach*** **Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities.**

This framework *(Fig. 01)* enables the Strategy *to* provide direction and policy for the ongoing provision, renewal, operations, maintenance, and development of the City of Winnipeg's parks system. This will help ensure all Winnipeggers are provided with parks services as an important component of complete communities for years to come.

Winnipeg's Parks Strategic Framework

The Strategy is supported by the foundation elements of a vision, values, operating principles, and goals that create a framework to guide policy recommendations and the development of defined levels of service. The strategic parks framework is discussed in detail in *Section 2* of the Strategy and also outlined below (*Fig. 01)*. The framework was developed in conjunction with the *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* and aligns to *A Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing,* which is a best-practice template for Canadian municipalities.

VISION				
Winnipeg's parks system fosters the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and natural environments by enabling all to engage in meaningful, accessible outdoor experiences and activities.				
VALUES				
Public good	**Inclusion & equity**	**Sustainability**	**Lifelong participation**	**Innovation**
OPERATING PRINCIPLES				
Outcome-driven	**High quality & relevant**	**Evidence-based**	**Supported by partnerships**	
GOALS				
Active living	**Inclusion & access**	**Connecting people with nature**	**Supportive environments**	**Capacity building**
Winnipeggers of all ages and abilities have opportunities for outdoor physical recreation, leisure, play, sport, and active transportation.	Access to parks, amenities, and participation is not limited by physical, social, economic, communication or systemic barriers.	People can connect with nature in their communities, have opportunities to learn, and value ecological systems and the functions they provide.	Parks spaces are designed to connect people to civic amenities and systems, foster socialization and participation, and help build strong, caring communities.	The parks system is sustainable, able to support growth, and adaptable to changing needs.

Fig. 01: *Vision, values, operating principles, goals, and policies which provide the framework for the* Winnipeg Parks Strategy.

The importance of the Strategy

While the value and benefits the parks system provides to Winnipeg and its people is evident, parks are often overlooked when the time comes to fund and support their sustainable management and maintenance. This Strategy confirms the parks system as a vital physical, social, spiritual, and ecological asset for the city and provides clear guidance on how to prioritize and equitably distribute limited resources. This prioritization and distribution is imperative in addressing changing community needs, mitigating barriers to accessing parks services, and ensuring the parks system equitably serves all Winnipeggers.

An increasing proportion of Winnipeggers identify as visible minorities, and almost a quarter of the population has immigrated to Canada from elsewhere in recent years, bringing with them new pastimes and ways of interacting in outdoor spaces. This population growth and diversification highlight the need for a parks system that can adapt and respond to changing community needs for services and amenities. Planning must include meaningful engagement and decision-making criteria to ensure a consistent city-wide response.

Many Indigenous families and communities continue to face barriers in accessing recreation and space for cultural practices. The parks system has an opportunity to support reconciliation and the rebuilding of community relationships through collaborative placemaking with Indigenous communities.

Defining levels of service

At the heart of the Strategy is the need to establish defined levels of service, with a framework and methodology to measure and evaluate effect and success. The Strategy breaks down the Winnipeg parks system by five service categories and four park components, and identifies target levels of service for these four park components.

Service categories

The five key service categories clarify what experiences the parks system provides. These services are the key reasons that most Winnipeggers visit our parks, which makes them priorities for the City to continue to deliver effectively:

Park components

The parks system is comprised of four inter-related components: parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities. These are essentially the building blocks that together provide Winnipeggers with access to high quality outdoor recreation opportunities and nature experiences:

Target levels of service

Parkland

Parkland is defined as public open space intended for park use. This includes five key park classes: regional (and regional-sport), community, neighbourhood, nature, and linkage parks.

Parkland - target level of service	
1	All Winnipeggers have access to a park within walking distance of home (600 m)
2	Winnipeggers have access to an average of 50 m^2 of parkland per person across the City
3	Downtown has at least 30 m^2 of parkland per person, which will require parkland acquisition as the population grows

Natural features

Natural features are important natural elements in our city. These include remnant natural habitats (especially along our waterways), portions of our urban forest, and areas sometimes too small to be classified as nature parks. Natural features also include naturalized areas.

Natural features - target level of service	
1	All Winnipeggers have access to a natural feature within walking distance of home (600 m)

Connections

Connections are the modes of transportation and means that link to people to parks, and enable travel between and within them. While the Strategy identifies opportunities to build and improve infrastructure within parks and along waterways and active transportation routes, there is no specific target level of service. This will be considered in the City's *Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*, *Transportation Master Plan* and any future waterway access studies.

Amenities

Amenities are purpose-built components of many parks, such as structures, furniture, and other constructed features that are programmed and maintained to provide specific services and opportunities to the surrounding communities. The Strategy prioritizes the City's provision of amenities into tiers identified as: core; secondary; tertiary; supportive; and specialty amenities.

The Strategy sets a target level of service for core and secondary amenities. Secondary amenities will generally be provided at a wider catchment level (further distance apart) than core amenities. Tertiary amenities will be provided on an opportunity basis. Specialty amenities are not a priority for the City to provide in the future. Supportive amenities, such as benches and parking stalls, will be provided as needed to support the use of other amenities.

Core amenities - target level of service	
PLAYGROUND	
1	1 per 1,000 people (incl. school-owned)
2	100% of people within walking distance (600 m)
3	Less than 5% in poor or very poor quality
PICNIC & GATHERING SPACES	
1	1 per 2,500 people
2	100% of people within 2-km distance
3	Less than 5% in poor or very poor quality
MULTI-USE GREENSPACE	
1	1 per 2,000 people
2	100% of people within 1.2-km distance
3	Less than 5% in poor or very poor quality

Implementation and sustainability

To ensure high-quality parks and open spaces are available for future generations of Winnipeggers, the parks system must be sustainably managed and operated. To this end, the Strategy establishes **policies** to direct decision-making and define levels of service for each of the components of the parks system, along with **implementation strategies** which outline actionable directions and tasks to facilitate and guide effective implementation of the policies. Lastly, the plan identifies specific **actions** to be undertaken to fulfill the Strategy's goals and objectives. The Strategy is an essential step towards providing Winnipeggers with an equitable and sustainable provision of parks services, and continued viability of the parks system overall for the next 25 years.

How to use this Strategy

The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* is presented in five main sections. The following diagram (*Fig. 02*) explains how each of these sections work together to provide direction on the different components of the parks system.

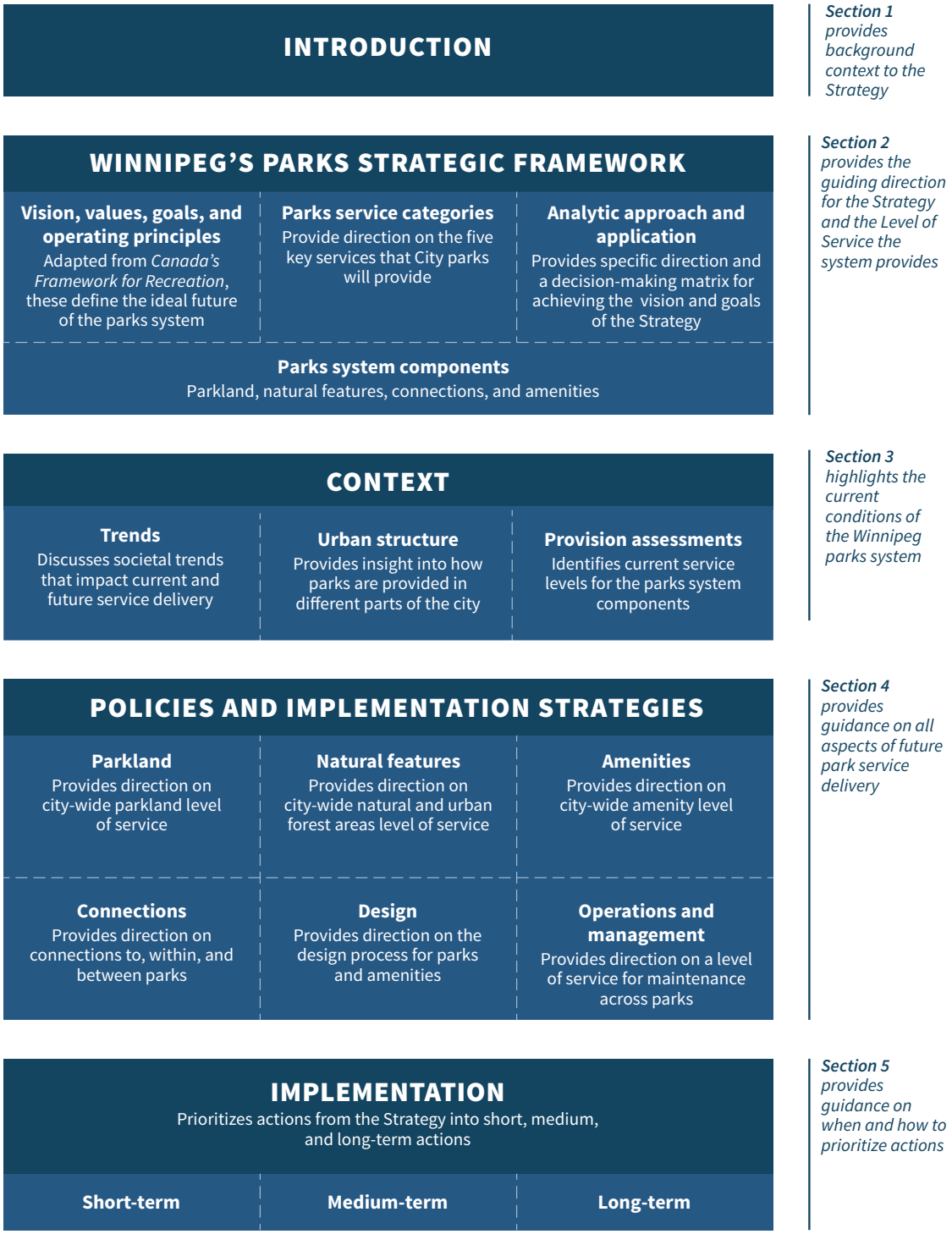


Fig. 02: *How to use this Strategy*

1 Introduction

Winnipeg is often described as a 'prairie oasis' connected by its rivers, a title earned by the beautiful network of parks and open spaces distributed across the city. These parks preserve some of the area's incredible prairie, meadow, wetland, and forest landscapes, and provide a range of leisure, gathering, and recreational opportunities. From large regional parks to small and local neighbourhood spaces, each of the city's parks plays a role in both the wider parks network (*Fig. 03*) and the functions the network provides. Put simply, parks are an integral part of Winnipeggers' way of life.

Winnipeg has historically recognized that parks add incredible value to the social, economic, and environmental systems that support the city. The recreation and social opportunities they provide contribute to peoples' physical and mental health.

Parks also provide a sense of connection to natural environments and fulfill a variety of ecosystem functions that make communities healthier, more resilient, and more diverse. Furthermore, across Canada, parks are recognized as a critical component of complete and walkable communities where people can live, work, and play. As a steward of these invaluable spaces, the City is committed to protecting their community benefits for future generations.

This *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* provides direction and policies for the next 25 years of park provision, development, and operation in the City of Winnipeg, aiming to ensure Winnipeggers have such spaces as a part of their complete communities for years to come.

PARKS VS. OPEN SPACE

In this Strategy, **park** and **parkland** both refer to publicly accessible property owned, maintained, or managed by the City of Winnipeg that is identified within the Parks Inventory and is mainly used for public recreation, leisure, sports, and/or preserving natural areas.

Public **open space** includes parks, and also other spaces such as boulevards, road verges, and utility corridors, as well as spaces leased to other operators (golf courses, etc.). These other open spaces are not included in the Strategy.

Winnipeggers also benefit from some of the more significant **privately-owned publicly accessible open space (POPS)**, such as the Forks and Fort Whyte Alive, and joint-use sites (such as schoolyards) that provide recreation functions considered in but not directed by the Strategy.

Existing parks system

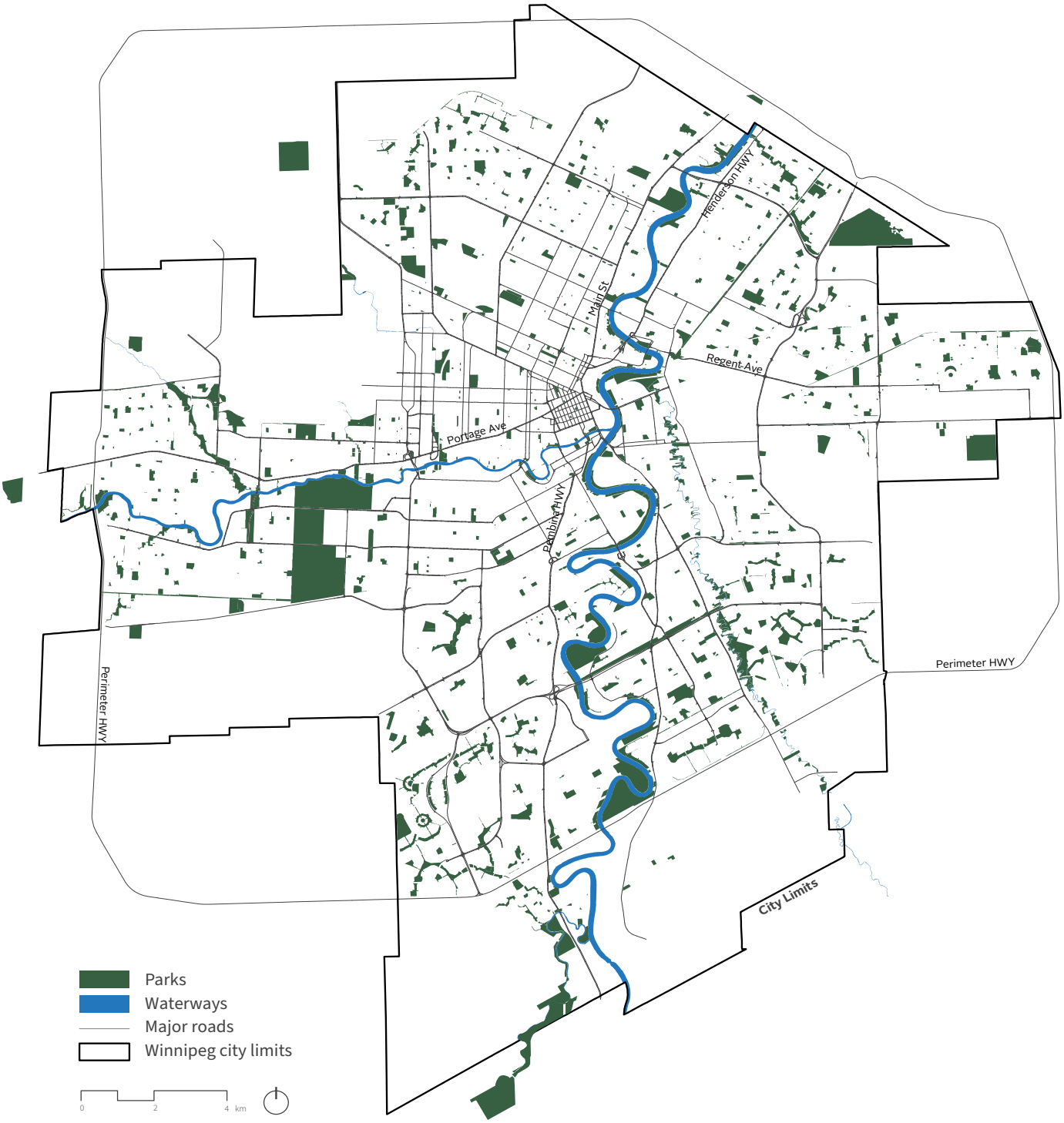


Fig. 03: *Winnipeg's existing parks system including regional parks, community parks, neighbourhood parks, nature parks, and linkage parks which provide value to the city and its residents.*

1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* (the Strategy) provides strategic direction and policy for the ongoing provision, renewal, operations, maintenance, and development of the City of Winnipeg's parks system.

The Strategy directs:

- Where parkland should be provided and how it will be connected
- How City-provided park amenities will be prioritized
- Which park amenities and services will be provided through partnerships with other organizations
- How to protect and enhance Winnipeg's natural areas
- How the parks system will be sustainably managed

In putting the Strategy's framework, direction, and priorities into practice, the City will be able to rely upon concrete guidance to effectively prioritize resources and support population and geographic growth, ensuring Winnipeggers can access parks beyond the next 25 years.

1.2 Structure of the Strategy

The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* is organized into five main sections:

1. **Introduction:** Discusses the purpose of and justification for the Strategy, and the overall objectives it aims to achieve.
2. **Winnipeg's Parks Strategic Framework:** Establishes the strategic decision-making framework for the City of Winnipeg parks system, which includes the vision, values, operating principles, and goals. This section further explains how the components of the parks system support the framework.
3. **Context:** Provides an overview of factors affecting parks, including growth projections, urban structure implications, and current levels of service.
4. **Policies and Implementation strategies:** Provides detailed policies and implementation strategies that address objectives of the Strategy and guide the City in achieving the level of service, and intent established in *Section 2.*
5. **Implementation:** Prioritizes the actions of the Strategy into short-, medium-, and long-term phases.

PARKS SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Winnipeg's **parks system** is made up of four components:

- **Parkland**
- **Natural features**
- **Connections**
- **Amenities**

The Strategy directs the coordinated provision of all four components. These components are discussed in more detail in *Section 2.6 Parks system components*.

1.3 Benefits of parks

Parks provide many valued services that contribute significantly to quality of life. By providing opportunities for leisure, gathering, sport, play, and connecting with nature, parks improve physical and mental health, strengthen social connections within communities, and protect our natural environments. These outcomes make Winnipeg a more attractive place to live, work, play, and visit.

For those who lack access to private yards, parks serve as an opportunity to enjoy outdoor space in the urban environment. Parks offer essential spaces to relax, socialize, retreat, and recreate. They are key areas for community gathering, providing Winnipeg with spaces for outdoor recreation, cultural events, and informal opportunities to gather and improve community health. They can reduce social isolation and help foster more cohesion. Worldwide, parks have been shown to increase participation in physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour, thus reducing the occurrence of chronic illness. This directly impacts every aspect of a Winnipegger's life.

From an ecological perspective, parks are incredibly valuable assets. They provide opportunities for people to connect with nature, foster environmental learning, and support responsible stewardship of our natural assets. They also provide habitat for a range of species, playing an important role in supporting biodiversity within the city.

Further, parks contain a variety of forested stands and other native vegetation, as well as a host of planted and maintained species. These vegetated areas provide permeable groundcover, helping to capture and absorb stormwater and reducing the potential for flooding. Plant life in parks can also filter air and water pollution, sequester carbon, and mitigate the impacts of the urban heat island effect. Parks are ultimately an essential component of the City's *'green infrastructure'.* They save municipalities significant amounts of energy, flood mitigation, and water treatment costs by naturally providing these functions.

THE BENEFITS OF PARKS

- Provide amenities and spaces for **active living and sports**.
- Provide **leisure and recreation** opportunities that contribute to **personal wellness**.
- Provide inclusive public gathering places to **celebrate** and foster **community connections**.
- Provide natural environments that help instill a **connection with nature**.
- Provide a range of **ecosystem services** that help clean our air, retain and filter stormwater, reduce the urban heat island effect, and build **resilience** to the impacts of climate change.
- Support **biodiversity** by providing important habitats for wildlife and vegetation.
- Support **tourism** and **economic development**.
- Make Winnipeg **a good place** to live, work, play, and visit.

Parks systems also provide tangible economic benefits and serve as destinations. Regional parks and other outdoor civic spaces are attractive destinations for tourists and residents alike, because they serve as venues for multiple recreational experiences, festivals, and other major events. A visit to one of these high-profile parks is one of the most place-specific experiences in the city and can create unique and lasting memories. It is easy to see why parks are an essential part of a thriving city.

While it would be difficult to overstate the value the parks system provides to Winnipeg and its people, city parks have often been overlooked, particularly when the time comes to fund and support their sustainable management and maintenance. This Strategy provides the context, framework and strategic guidance to create a viable, sustainable and adaptable parks system that is recognized, governed and funded as a priority asset for the City.

1.4 Why is the Strategy important?

The Strategy comes at a critical time. Winnipeg's current parks system is economically unsustainable and provides an inconsistent level of service. Within this context and as Winnipeg continues to grow and evolve, the Strategy will provide strategic direction and a framework for ensuring the delivery of high-quality parks services for the next 25 years and beyond.

1.4.1 Setting the stage for a consistent and strategic approach to service provision

Over the last 30 years, park development and acquisition has largely occurred on a case-by-case basis as new communities are built, or as opportunity or funding arises. In addition to this, investment in parks and recreation has been inconsistent across the city and without a transparent and strategic approach that considers parks as part of an overall system that serves all Winnipeggers. The sporadic park-specific reinvestment has exacerbated existing deficiencies in the parks system and widened inequities in parks service quality and distribution throughout the city. Some of the most highly used amenities and spaces in the city are in the poorest condition.

One of the greatest challenges in providing parks service is balancing the needs and expectations of the public with limited resources. There also exists a gap between perception of service levels and reality, and many Winnipeggers feel their area is underserved regardless of actual provision. To counteract this, the City needs a consistent and clearly communicated approach to the way it prioritizes the allocation, provision and quality of parks services. A clear, strategic approach and well-defined levels of service will help to clarify expectations as well as allow the City to prioritize resources where they are needed to address current service gaps.

1.4.2 Responding to unprecedented growth

Demand for parks is increasing as Winnipeg grows both in population and total developed area. After decades of little to no growth, the population increased by six percent to more than 700,000 between 2011 and 2016. In 2020, Winnipeg's population was 766,900. It is expected that an additional 200,000 people will be living in Winnipeg by 2049. As new communities are continually developed with new park spaces, added pressures are being placed on the parks system and will continue to impact it over time.

Existing amenities will likely see increased pressure from additional users, particularly in areas that are redeveloping and increasing in density (as many of their amenities would have been designed for use by a smaller local population). This creates an increase in maintenance and operating requirements, and without corresponding funding increases, a greater need for efficiency of service delivery (see *Fig. 04).*

Similarly, newly established parkland in more recent developments has not been accompanied by a comparable increase in operating budget. This has led to a situation where new communities have not seen the same degree of service as communities with older parkland and has led to an overall city-wide decline in service levels.

Unprecedented growth has also led to an increased demand for space by other City services and facilities. With park land dedication as the only mechanism to set aside civic land other than direct acquisition, parks are pressured to accommodate libraries, recreation facilities and other City services such as police and fire. This highlights the need for an integrated process to acquire and allocate land to accommodate parks for the overall needs of the city.

The Strategy must consider increasing usage and demand for parks and park services in newly developed communities but also in more mature areas that are evolving and redeveloping. This includes providing a more consistent distribution of parks and

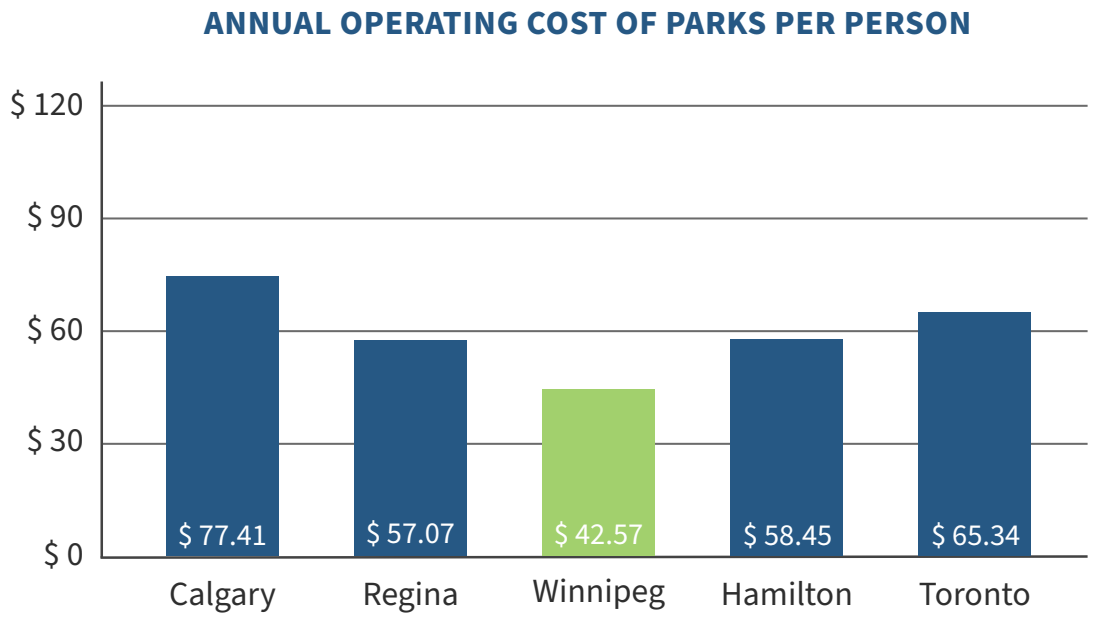


Fig. 04: *Municipal comparison of annual operating of parks per person. At $42.57 per person, Winnipeg is providing park services at a lower cost when compared with other Canadian cities. The City must reconcile how to use fewer resources in maintaining a parks system that is comparable in scale to other cities with greater dedicated resources.*
Source: MBNCanada Performance Measurement Report (2019).

amenities between mature and new neighbourhoods, while also applying an equity-based planning approach that addresses geographic areas of higher poverty.

There is an increasing gap between the maintenance and renewal costs of the parks system and operating and capital budgets. Correspondingly, there is a need for the City to strategically coordinate growth of and reinvestment in its parks system to ensure it can sustainably provide services throughout the city. As identified in the *State of the Infrastructure Report* (2018), the capital infrastructure deficit for parks alone is estimated at $190 million *(Fig. 05)*. This covers only the capital investment required over the next 10 years to bring all park assets up to a basic level of service and does not account for the current operating deficit.

1.4.3 Supporting a changing city

Winnipeg's demographics are changing and so too are Winnipeggers' expectations of what parks should provide. The city is diversifying as its population grows, with an increasing proportion of people who identify as a visible minority. New Canadians account for almost a quarter of the city's population, and have introduced to the city new pastimes, new expectations, and new ways of interacting in outdoor spaces.

We are a human rights city that strives to be barrier free and age friendly. The parks system must adapt to the changing community need for services and amenities that the population change demands. While not all demands can be accommodated, there is a need for a framework within which to evaluate and respond to community interests and needs.

Generally, Canada's population is aging, and the socioeconomic gap is widening – both factors which impact access to parkland. These disparities impact recreation needs and create barriers, such as cost, language, transportation, and accessibility, that often prevent individuals and families from accessing parks and recreational opportunities. Locally, these barriers can be mitigated through planned modifications and more flexibility built into the parks system.

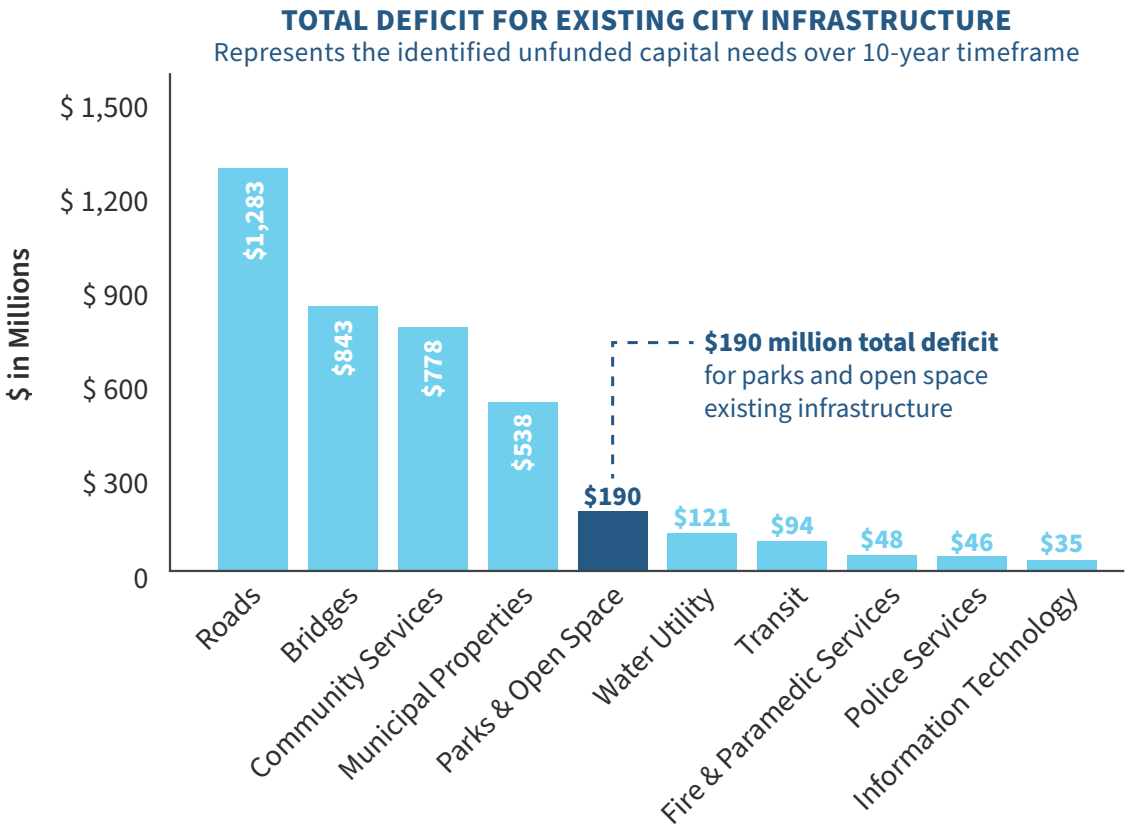


Fig. 05: *Total deficit for existing city infrastructure*
Source: City of Winnipeg (2018), State of the Infrastructure Report.

1.4.4 Fostering reconciliation

Winnipeg lies within Treaty No. 1 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation. Our drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation in Treaty No. 3 territory. Winnipeg is also home to the largest proportion of Indigenous people among major cities in Canada, with 12 percent of the population identifying as Indigenous and a growing population of Indigenous youth.

Canada shares a legacy of systemic discrimination towards Indigenous cultures and communities. Because of this, many Indigenous individuals and families often face greater socio-cultural, geographic, and economic barriers to participating in recreation than non-Indigenous communities. Additionally, Indigenous culture and heritage is underrepresented in parks, and there are limited spaces for participating in cultural activities. Recognizing the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples, the City seeks to ensure more comprehensive representation of Indigenous viewpoints.

The Strategy recognizes the need to provide leadership in reconciliation with Indigenous communities. A critical first step is recognizing the historic and present-day significance of land to First Peoples. The City is currently seeking opportunities to work with Indigenous communities in the development of interpretive elements, art, events, and programming within parks, and co-stewarding park spaces and elements that could support traditional activities.

Some examples of reconciliation in action and Indigenous placemaking in Winnipeg include the Healing Forest at St. John's Park, the Indigenous Gardens at City Hall, and Ogimaa Gichi Makwa Gitigaan Park (aka Chief Grizzly Bear's Garden). The Strategy identifies further opportunities for collaboration and

engagement with Indigenous communities to reduce barriers to participation in recreation and cultural activities, as well as to elevate Indigenous presence and placemaking in parks.

1.4.5 Promoting a coordinated and collaborative approach

There are various policies, procedures, and plans for differing aspects of Winnipeg's parks system, from maintenance standards to park master plans; however, with no formal comprehensive plan to provide direction across the entire parks system, there is often a lack of consistency in approach and priority.

There are also other providers, both public and private, that deliver recreation and park-like services to Winnipeggers on City lands. These relationships are governed by joint use agreements, stakeholder leases, adopt-a-park programs, and sweat equity agreements with community centres. The Strategy recognizes that these partnerships can play an important role in building a sustainable and high-quality parks system by building on the strengths or assets of other stakeholders and service providers. Generally, partnerships with these service providers have been negotiated on a case-by- case basis, and not strategically coordinated to provide a wide range of services without duplications. A clear, consistent, and coordinated approach to service delivery is needed to maximize how these systems serve Winnipeggers.

1.4.6 Building resilience

Global climate change will have a host of consequences for Winnipeg, including increasing flooding and severe weather events. Parks and natural areas have significant, untapped potential for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and also increase the city's overall resilience and sustainability.

Naturalizing parkland will not only reduce operational costs but will increase the city's ecological function by minimizing impervious surfaces, providing integrated water management to reduce overland flow, and encouraging the use of native plants (especially those requiring less upkeep and maintenance or those providing important habitat to local species). As the climate shifts, Winnipeg's species composition and local biodiversity will also shift, leading to the loss of organisms historically found in the area and the introduction of new species. Biodiversity monitoring (by the City, by academia, and by citizen science initiatives) can help to identify these changes and ensure that municipal maintenance efforts are well-directed.

1.5 Strategic objectives

A practical set of objectives must guide management and programming of the parks system both to facilitate long-term and sustainable parks amenities and service provision and to ensure Winnipeggers are able to continue enjoying benefits of the system. The Strategy sets out five objectives, which guide its policies and implementation strategies.

Fulfilling these objectives will ensure that Winnipeg's parks system remains a diverse and beneficial resource for Winnipeggers to enjoy for many years to come.

1 ***Meeting community need***

Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in parks service delivery needs and emerging trends by implementing transparent and defendable decision-making processes.

2 ***Building partnerships***

Respond to communities' unique challenges and opportunities by supporting existing and fostering new partnerships with community groups and private organizations.

3 ***Adapting to change***

Improve the functionality, sustainability, responsiveness, and ecological integrity of the parks system by updating design guidelines and management practices.

4 ***Improving access***

Broaden the reach of the parks system by coordinating improved connections, enhancing safety and expanding opportunities for sharing park information.

5 ***Formalizing service delivery approach***

Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities.

Fig. 06: *Strategic objectives*

1.6 Relationship to existing City policies and plans

The Strategy fits within a hierarchy of City plans and policies. It is directed by The *City of Winnipeg Charter Act, OurWinnipeg2045 Development Plan,* and *Complete Communities 2.0*, and is further informed by several other city-wide policies and plans (*Fig. 07*). The Strategy, in turn, informs several strategies and policies that provide specific direction on aspects of the parks system in the City of Winnipeg.

Fig. 07: *City of Winnipeg policy hierarchy*

The City of Winnipeg Charter Act

The *City of Winnipeg Charter Act* recognizes the City as a responsible, accountable government, and grants the City municipal powers from the Province. The Act enables the City to deliver programs and services, including passing by-laws regarding the dedication, establishment, and operation of parks and other public spaces.

OurWinnipeg 2045 Development Plan

OurWinnipeg 2045 Development Plan (OurWinnipeg) is the City's development plan which sets the City's vision for the next 25 years. The pillars of *OurWinnipeg* are six distinct but connected goals that are essential to sustainability and long-term quality of life for all residents:

1. Leadership and good governance
2. Environmental resilience
3. Economic prosperity
4. Good health and wellbeing
5. Social equity
6. City building

The objectives and policy directions contained within *OurWinnipeg* inform all secondary plans and strategies, including *Complete Communities 2.0: An* OurWinnipeg *Direction Strategy* and the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy*. The Strategy aligns with and directly responds to *OurWinnipeg*'s six goals and specific policies that provide guidance on how parks should be considered as a component of our communities.

Complete Communities 2.0: An *OurWinnipeg* Direction Strategy

The *Complete Communities 2.0: An* OurWinnipeg *Direction Strategy (Complete Communities)* is a city-wide secondary plan that guides growth, development and land use in the City of Winnipeg. Its primary focus is to describe Winnipeg's physical characteristics and provide a framework for future physical growth and development based on two key pillars: the development of complete communities and articulation of an urban structure. The Strategy provides direction that aligns with *Complete Communities* to ensure that parks are incorporated as a functional component of all communities in Winnipeg. Additionally, the Strategy accounts for the different contexts of each of the urban structure areas *(Section 3.3 Urban structure)*.

Other preceding plans and policies

In addition to the *Charter*, *OurWinnipeg*, and *Complete Communities*, the Strategy is informed by several additional city-wide policies and plans, including:

- *Age Friendly Winnipeg Action Plan*
- *Asset Management Policy*
- *Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan*
- *Go to the Waterfront*
- *Green Building Policy*
- *LiveSAFE*
- *Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak, Winnipeg's Indigenous Youth Strategy*
- *Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy*
- *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy*
- *Winnipeg Transit Master Plan*
- *Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan*
- *Universal Design Policy*
- *Welcoming Winnipeg*
- *Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*

The Strategy adheres to the direction provided in these documents and directly references several of them in *Section 4 Policies & implementation strategies*. Refer to *Section 6.4 Existing City-wide policies*, for information.

Subsidiary policies and strategies

The Strategy provides direction enabling policy for several subsidiary policies and strategies, including:

- *Athletic Field Review*
- *Community Garden Policy*
- *Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy*
- *Development Agreement Parameters*
- *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands (ESNL) Strategy and Policy*
- *Joint-Use Development Policy*
- *Land Dedication Reserve Policy*
- *Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan*
- *Park By-law*
- *Regional Parks Investment Strategy*

1.7 Process

The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* was developed using an evidence-based decision-making approach, combining community and stakeholder engagement with needs-assessment processes. Using a variety of methods and data sources, the overall intent was to identify and forecast gaps and opportunities impacting the City's parks system over the next 25 years. The preceding section on 'Why the Strategy is Important' *(Section 1.4)* highlights some of the most pressing needs and opportunities that the Strategy seeks to address.

The process of developing the Strategy employed a variety of analysis and methodologies:

- An environmental scan of municipal parks plans offered insight on trends and best practices across Canada.
- A plan and policy review of current City of Winnipeg documents identified opportunities to create better policy alignment by updating documents and developing new plans and policies. Further detail can be found in *Section 1.6* and the appendix.
- Assessment of existing park component provision and condition came from the Parks and Open Space division's Parks Asset Registry, Tree Inventory and Natural Areas Inventory.
- Demographic and population analysis helped to inform what types of amenities and services may be needed in the future. Population projections are based on current census information combined with economic and growth forecasts.
- Spatial analysis using GIS mapping was used to identify parkland, natural features, connections and amenities in relation to where people live and community demographics. Spatial analysis enabled assessment of provisioning and helped shape the parks levels of service. More detailed descriptions of the methodology can be found in *Section 2 Winnipeg's Parks Strategic Framework*.

1.8 Public engagement

A robust public engagement process was critical to understanding Winnipeggers interests and needs in order to identify current and future service priorities. The Strategy was developed through two phases of public engagement: Phase 1 – Learn; and Phase 2 – Review. Both phases of public engagement informed the creation of the overall strategic framework and policies. Public engagement also assisted in developing the levels of service for each component type. The public engagement process and findings are highlighted below.

1.8.1 Phase 1

Phase 1 involved engagement with a diverse range of Winnipeggers to help the City understand how people participated in recreation and how they envisioned the future recreation system. This engagement was conducted in partnership with the *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* (under the banner of *The Winnipeg Recreation & Parks Strategies*) which allowed the two similar, yet separate, areas to collect information from their shared audiences and stakeholders.

In early to mid-2018, the public was invited to participate in an online survey and three public open houses. Interest and participation were very high with more than 9,400 individuals participating on behalf of hundreds of others in their respective households and community organizations. Winnipeggers were asked about their current leisure and recreation activities along with their vision for the future of recreation and parks in Winnipeg.

Stakeholders were invited to participate in three stakeholder specific workshops; invitees included community centres, community recreation providers,

sport organizations, stewardship groups, social development organizations, school divisions, Indigenous organizations, academics, planning and development professionals and other related community organizations. In addition to City-led activities, the project team also attended several community-led meetings to generate awareness about the project.

The information from Phase 1 was incorporated into the analysis of the overall opportunities and challenges of the parks system, informing the prioritization of the services it provides.

Common themes expressed during consultations are outlined below:

- **Quality & supply:** Increase the number and improve the quality of recreation facilities and parks.
- **Services & programming:** Improve the operations of recreation and parks.
- **Access & transportation:** Increase the ease of access to recreation and parks amenities.
- **Natural preservation:** Restore and increase natural areas.
- **Community & inclusivity:** Ensure amenities are accessible, welcoming, and safe for everyone to gather.
- **Funding:** Invest in recreation and parks.

As illustrated in *Fig. 08*, thirty-five percent of respondents ranked spending time with family as their number one reason for visiting parks and participating in recreation, followed by being active (20 percent of respondents), and spending time in nature (15 percent of respondents). Additionally, the top activities that people indicated they take part in, in parks spaces, are trail-based activities (e.g. walking, biking, hiking, cross-country skiing), playgrounds, and connecting with nature.

Reasons for Park Visitation

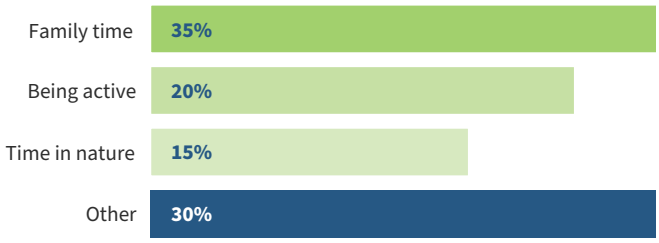


Fig. 08: *Phase 1 Engagement respondents ranked their reasons for visiting parks and participating in recreation.*

1.8.2 Phase 2

After hearing from Winnipeggers in Phase 1, a draft *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* and draft *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* were developed. In 2021, Phase 2 public engagement gathered feedback on the draft strategies to confirm they reflect Winnipeggers' values and priorities and identify any concerns with the draft documents.

Adjustments to the intended in-person techniques of the engagement plan were made as the project evolved and prevailing COVID-19 safety measures prevented the ability to host larger indoor events.

The Phase 2 program included:

- Project website with informational video and surveys
- Stakeholder conversation guides
- Virtual public workshops using the Zoom platform
- Stakeholder presentations
- Stakeholder interviews

Overall, respondents want recreation and parks that provide local and regional access, are equitably distributed across the city, and are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. The majority of respondents agree recreation and parks contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities, and are 'must-have' City services.

The following bullets summarize key themes heard during the engagement.

- **Regional and local service:** Respondents felt there was value in both local and regional parks and recreation facilities. Respondents wanted to see existing recreation facilities maintained to provide local recreation opportunities and investment in multi-use centres to meet the broader needs of many people and activities. Similarly, respondents wanted to see local parks maintained, highlighting their importance for mental, social, and physical health of communities. There was also support for prioritizing regional park maintenance, as the City's signature parks and amenities, but not at the cost of local parks. Winnipeggers want a careful balance of both local parks and facilities with multi-use centres and regional parks.
- **Improve access and transportation:** Overall, respondents wanted to see equitable access to parks and recreation opportunities. Respondents indicated their preference for distributing

recreation facilities, parks, and natural features equitably across the city to ensure each community has local access to recreation and nature. Respondents noted the need to consider trails and bike paths as recreation opportunities that also serve as connection paths to facilities and parks. Several also noted the need to consider future transit connections to parks and recreation facilities.

- **Protect natural areas:** Winnipeggers highly value their connections to nature. Respondents wanted to ensure that existing natural areas remain protected. Some wanted to see the City prioritize the acquisition of additional natural areas and re-naturalization, particularly for grasslands and riverfront/riparian areas.
- **Enhance inclusivity:** Respondents indicated they want recreation facilities, park amenities, and programs that are accessible for people of different ages, needs, and abilities. They want to ensure facilities consider universal design standards and provide programs that are safe and welcoming for everyone throughout all seasons.
- **Suggestions for budgets:** When it comes to funding priorities for recreation, respondents felt the highest budget priority should be focused on maintaining existing recreation facilities and amenities. Most felt that more funding is required for parks.
- **Enhance amenities and programming:** Respondents felt recreation programming could be enhanced by providing more diverse program options, offering alternative time slots, improving registration processes, while maintaining low costs. Special consideration should be given to certain groups of people, like seniors, low-income residents and children who may require special pricing or targeted programming options. For parks, most respondents agreed with the core amenity prioritization and emphasized the need for individual neighbourhoods to be involved in determining their local needs for other amenities.
- **Volunteer enhancements:** Winnipeggers recognize the value volunteering has on their community. Respondents would be more inclined to volunteer if promotion of available opportunities increased, more incentives were offered and flexible, short-term volunteer commitments were introduced.

PHASE 2 PARKS SURVEY RESPONSES:

› **98%** agree parks are a 'must-have' City of Winnipeg service

› **84%** agree that all Winnipeggers should have access to parks within a 10-minute walk

› **92%** agree there should be a variety of park types and sizes to accommodate various needs

› **Many** commented on the importance of natural areas, rivers and pathways/trails

- 88% want to see more integration of parks with active transportation networks
- Protecting, enhancing, and restoring existing natural areas was identified as a key priority

› **86%** agree with the prioritization of the three core amenities:

- playgrounds
- picnic and gathering spaces
- multi-use spaces

› **77%** agree that secondary amenities should be provided consistently across the City

- outdoor skating surfaces were the highest priority, followed by rectangular athletic fields and off-leash dog areas

Fig. 09: *Sample of parks survey responses from the second phase of public engagement.*

2 Winnipeg's Parks Strategic Framework

A vision statement, supporting values and guiding principles are critical foundational elements that guide the policies and recommendations within the Strategy. Along with public and stakeholder input, the vision, values and guiding principles have been informed by *A Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing*, which serves as a best practice template for Canadian municipalities. This ensures that Winnipeg's planning, priorities and implementation strategies address the local context but also aligns with other jurisdictions across Canada.

A Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing

Developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and other stakeholders, this Framework outlines key goals, priorities, and considerations for parks and recreation service delivery in Canada. More information about the Framework can be found at *www.cpra.ca/about-the-framework*

2.1 Vision

The **vision**, developed in conjunction with Winnipeg's *Recreation Strategy*, is a tangible description of the desired future state of parks and recreation in Winnipeg. It guides all the policies and strategies contained within the Strategy and can be used to measure the effectiveness of future decision-making.

Winnipeg's parks system fosters the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and natural environments by enabling all to engage in meaningful, accessible outdoor experiences and activities.

2.2 Values

The **values** provide guidance on how the City's park service aspires to conduct itself. These values directly align with the vision for Winnipeg's parks system, providing a compass for decision-making.

- **Public good:** Recognizing that parks provide significant public benefit, are essential to quality of life, and should be available to all.
- **Inclusion & Equity:** Welcoming all individuals and groups and ensuring access to park services for all Winnipeggers.
- **Sustainability:** Providing parks services that are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.
- **Lifelong participation:** Supporting and encouraging recreation for all ages and abilities.
- **Innovation:** Embracing creativity, ingenuity and collaboration to provide a high-quality parks system that is relevant to Winnipeggers.

2.3 Goals

The following **goals** articulate the cornerstones of the parks system; they indicate areas of focus and the related outcomes the Strategy should achieve. In developing the Strategy, these goals guided the identification of service key service areas, policy recommendations and implementation strategies that help focus future efforts and resource allocations.

Active living

Winnipeggers of all ages and abilities have opportunities for outdoor physical recreation, leisure, play, sport, and active transportation.

Inclusion and access

Access to parks, amenities, and participation is not limited by physical, social, economic, communication, or systemic barriers.

Connecting people with nature

People can connect with nature in their communities, have opportunities to learn, and value ecological systems and the functions they provide.

Supportive environments

Parks spaces are designed to connect people to civic amenities and systems, foster socialization and participation, and help build strong, caring communities.

Capacity building

The parks system is sustainable, able to support growth, and adaptable to changing needs.

2.4 Operating principles

The **operating principles** reflect how our values are incorporated into operations. They directly informed development of the Strategy's strategic objectives. They provide a benchmark for determining the appropriateness of day-to-day actions and decisions and should inform the development of future parks plans and initiatives. These operating principles provide rationale for the robust spatial analysis and decision-making frameworks described in the subsequent sections.

Ultimately, they direct the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy*, and the parks system as a whole, to be:

- **Outcome driven:** Striving to help individuals and communities attain the outcomes they are seeking, such as improved health and wellbeing, and focusing on indirect benefits - such as enhanced community cohesion and green environments - that will serve generations to come.
- **High-quality and relevant:** Offering safe recreation experiences of the highest possible quality, while addressing the unique needs, and capacities, and economic situations of individuals, families, and communities.
- **Evidence-based:** Making decisions based on facts and evidence, including information gained from best practice research characteristics. These decisions will be further informed by an understanding of the needs, capacities, values, and data, alongside an understanding of those affected by decisions.
- **Supported by partnerships:** Nurturing partnerships and collaboration among public, not-for-profit, and private providers of recreation and parks experiences. Key partners include communities, Indigenous partners, developers, all orders and levels of government, stakeholders, and stewardship groups.

2.5 Parks service categories

The City of Winnipeg's parks system provides a variety of services which can be grouped into five categories: play; leisure and gathering; sport; nature experience; and trail-based recreation. These services are the key reasons most Winnipeggers use the parks system, and form the lens through which the system is evaluated and recommendations are prioritized.

Outdoor play

Supporting outdoor play opportunities for all ages and abilities is an important function of the parks system. Play refers to unstructured active and imaginative activities. Play is an important component of children's lives, supporting their subsequent development and fostering problem solving, creativity, and social skills. Play is also a great way for families to connect with each other. Parks provide a range of play opportunities, from playgrounds to skateboard parks. Adults and older adults also benefit from play opportunities, such as lawn bowling and bocce.

To prioritize this service, the City will:
Foster self-directed outdoor fun, energetic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of inclusive, safe, year-round play environments for people of all ages and abilities.

Leisure & gathering

Parks are the stage for public life in Winnipeg. Parks are where people gather with family and friends to socialize, participate in cultural activities and celebrate, while also providing spaces for quiet reflection or passive observation. They also serve as an important outdoor space for many people who may not have access to private greenspace. And, as key places that define the City's sense of place and make it a popular destination for visitors, parks also offer a unique opportunity to build capacity and shape the beliefs and behaviours that underly cultural experiences.

To prioritize this service, the City will:
Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional gathering and event spaces.

Outdoor sport

The parks system supports a variety of organized and self-directed sports activities from athletic fields and courts to trails used for walking and running. Participation in these sports opportunities helps to develop various skills such as physical literacy, leadership, and teamwork, and helps citizens stay active for life.

To prioritize this service, the City will:
Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

Nature experience

Parks function as important spaces for people to connect with nature. Winnipeg boasts many naturalized areas of prairie meadows, forests, and wetlands. Many of Winnipeg's parks are also located along its rivers. The benefits of exposure to nature are well studied; just spending a short amount of time outside can have lasting positive effects on stress and anxiety. In addition to the benefits of for human wellbeing, natural areas provide a range of ecosystem services and habitat which contribute to overall environmental health, biodiversity, and resilience.

To prioritize this service, the City will:
Improve people's access to nature and support ecological functioning through the restoration and preservation of natural systems.

Trail-based recreation

Winnipeggers love to walk, ride, ski, and snowshoe their way to and through parks. Public engagement has shown that trail-based recreation is the most participated in activity. Some use trails and multi-use paths to get to destinations in their communities, such as work or school, while others ride bikes, jog, run, or walk their dogs. Participation in trail-based recreation is a great way to stay active, get outside, and connect with nature, all activities that have positive effects on physical and mental health and wellbeing. These are also activities that can be conducted solo, or with one's family and friends.

To prioritize this service, the City will:
Support and improve year-round opportunities for walking, cycling, skiing and other active transportation activities through the provision of a connected multi-use path and trail network that provides greater access to natural spaces, parks, communities, waterways and destinations.

2.6 Parks system components

Winnipeg's park services are supported through the provision of the four key components which form the parks system: parkland, natural features, connections and amenities. All four inter-related components are essential for providing a fully-functional parks system that allows Winnipeggers access to high quality outdoor recreation opportunities and nature experiences.

2.6.1 Parkland and park classification

Ensuring that all Winnipeggers have access to parkland is a primary priority of the Strategy, and the key step in enabling the delivery of all primary service areas. Parkland refers to property owned or managed by the City that is publicly accessible and mainly used for public recreation, leisure, sports, and/or preserving natural areas. There are several different classifications of parks, each serving different purposes. These are described in greater detail later in this section.

There are also several other public lands in addition to parks that the City maintains including boulevards, road verges, and utility corridors, as well as spaces leased to other operators. These spaces either do not have significant recreational value or serve a specific, tertiarily-related function (such as cemeteries and golf courses), so they are not considered as parkland for the purposes of this Strategy.

In addition to City parkland, Winnipeggers also benefit from other publicly accessible lands which are not City-owned, such as the Forks, Fort Whyte Alive, and joint-use spaces such as school grounds. These other public spaces provide recreation functions and value, so their role in the provision of the service areas is considered in the Strategy to better assess the true range of current opportunities in areas where City services are not necessarily present. Since they are neither owned nor maintained by the City, the Strategy does not provide direction for these spaces.

The classification of parkland is an important consideration in focusing the planning, development and management efforts vital to balancing public recreation opportunities and resource integrity city wide. This structure differentiates the varying types of parks, clearly conveying the opportunities they provide and identifying the management intent which guides the structure and implementation of management policies. It is primarily used to shape new communities, but helps organize the balance of park space in the city, with the qualifier that the definitions are more loosely applied to existing spaces that have been created prior to this specific classification structure.

The Strategy provides an updated parks classification, informed by historical management and revised to better suit the objectives of the parks system. The parks system includes five primary types of park, each of which contributes to the parks service areas in different ways: **regional (and regional-sport), community, neighbourhood, nature,** and **linkage** parks, shown in *Fig. 10*. The total number and total area of each park class is summarized in *Fig. 11*. The parks system also includes a variety of public lands that are managed to provide a variety of important functions for the city (undeveloped greenfield lands, fragments, buffers, and stormwater retention ponds).

These classifications provide clarity on the roles of the different types of park spaces, and accordingly provide some general expectations of appropriate uses and associated amenities. They also allow the City to establish a sustainable maintenance framework that considers the levels of service for each type of park, based on levels of use. As individual parks are each faced with unique opportunities and challenges that may influence what amenities are possible or desirable, the distinctions between classifications should be seen as guidelines of intent, which may be influenced by local conditions.

Park Classification

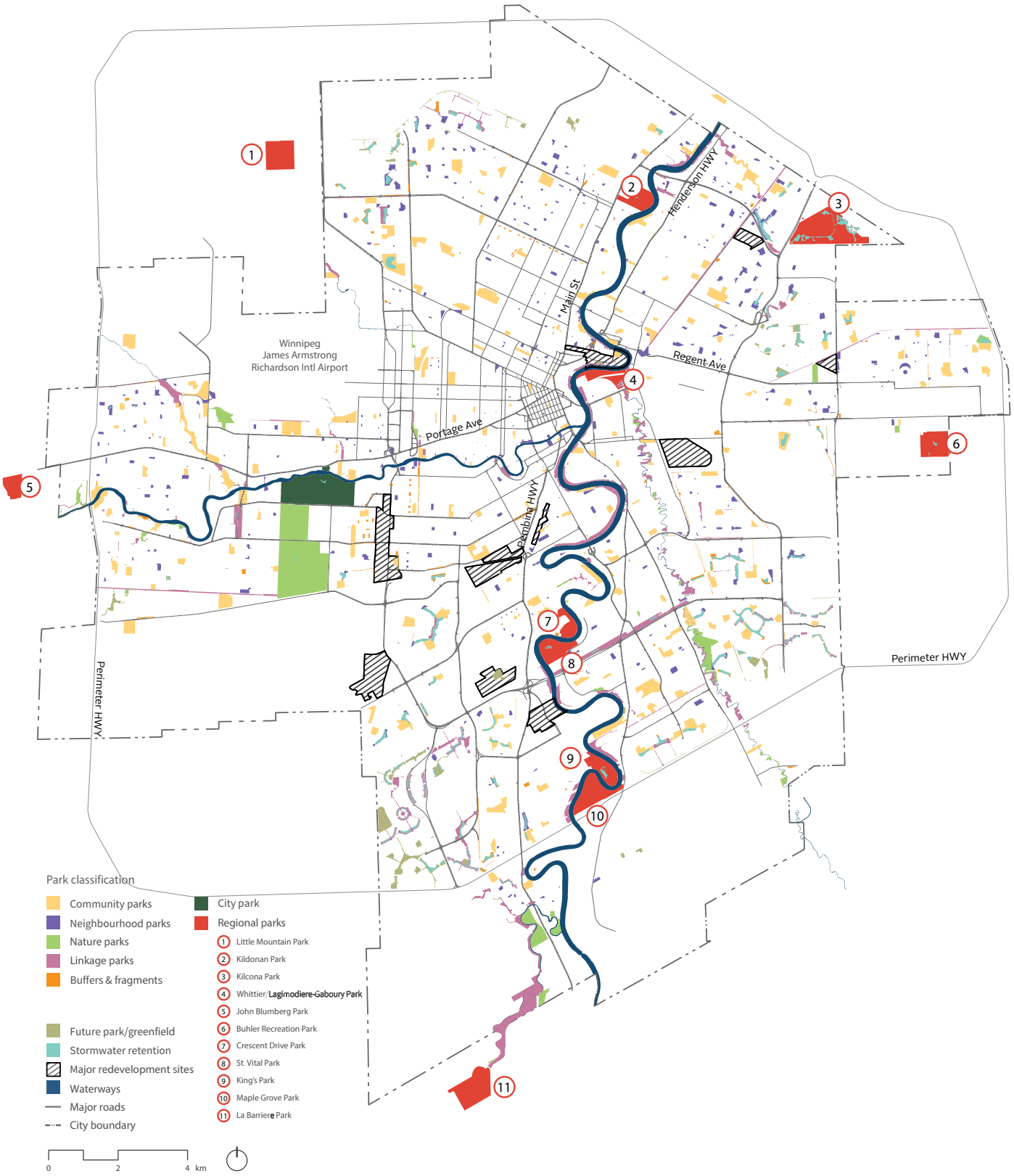


Fig. 10: *Park classification*

Regional parks

Large and iconic destination parks (typically greater than 40 ha), regional parks provide unique experiences, serving as gathering spaces for the City as a whole. They are typically characterized by a significant cultural or environmental feature. Most regional parks are located along waterways, or incorporate a significant water element.

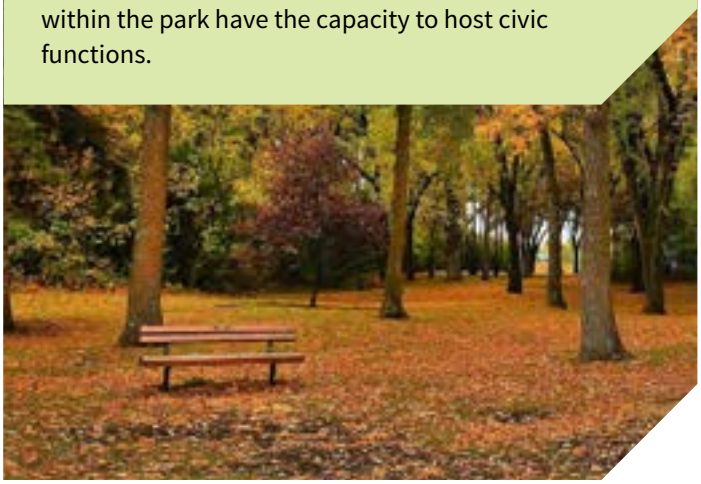
Regional parks were some of the city's first parks and serve as the anchors and backbone of the parks system. Many are located near the periphery of the city and, as such, draw people to travel distances to these locations; because of this, they should be equally accessible by car, transit, bike, or pedestrian modes. This multi- modal access is not consistent throughout the city, making some parks less available to those lacking access to a vehicle.

Regional parks are provided at a frequency of approximately one site per 100,000 people; each has a unique feature or quality that creates its own draw and distinguishes it from the others. These large, high-profile, heavily-used (yet typically pastoral) sites serve as destinations for both locals and visitors to recreate and experience some of the Winnipeg's quiet beauty. To those that live nearby, they can also function as a neighbourhood park.

With space to accommodate the greatest variety of amenities, activities, and events, they understandably attract people from all areas and all walks of life. Their size allows longer and more complex trail networks, providing multiple ways for people to explore the park. It is not uncommon for people to plan a full day at these locations. The scale of these parks, the number of concurrent visits they generate, and the potential for longer stays make supportive amenities such as parking, bike stands, and washrooms a necessity.

ST. VITAL PARK

Established in 1928, St. Vital Park is among the oldest and largest regional parks in Winnipeg. Positioned along the banks of the Red River, this regional park was the third developed in Winnipeg. St. Vital Park functions as a play, nature, sport, and leisure and gathering park by catering to a broad range of park visitors. A large public art piece located adjacent to the park's duck pond provides a civic function. While sports tournaments and private gatherings occur in the park, there are currently no events, festivals or performances, although the duck pond pavilion and other areas within the park have the capacity to host civic functions.



Regional sports parks are a sub-class of regional parks and, while still considered destination sites, exist for the exclusive purpose of providing dedicated space for organized sports. They provide a high density of sporting amenities and are suited to host regional tournaments, events, and other important draws to the city.

As key destinations for recreation and tourism, regional parks must be maintained to the highest standard. Recognizing the large size of regional parks limits their distribution, important consideration needs to be given soon as to if, how, and where the regional parks system needs to expand. Regardless, seeking to improve access to the existing or potential future parks through transit network, as well as pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, is necessary to ensure all Winnipeggers have the opportunity to experience these destinations.

ASSINIBOINE PARK – WINNIPEG'S SIGNATURE PARK

Did you know? Assiniboine Park has long been considered Winnipeg's signature park. Its central location and unique and extensive amenities and features make it a popular gathering place for all who enjoy outdoor activity, beautiful gardens, trips to the zoo, and opportunities to be active and play.

While owned by the City of Winnipeg, and previously operated as a regional park by the City, since 2012 it has been managed by the Assiniboine Park Conservancy Inc. (APC). APC is a not-for-profit, charitable organization with a mandate to lead, manage, fundraise, restore and redevelop the overall park and its amenities. The park receives part of its funding directly from the City through annual capital and operating grants, however its operations and maintenance are outside the jurisdiction of the Public Works department - Parks and Open Space division. As such, Assiniboine Park has been classified separately as a *City Park*.

Collectively, regional parks are an invaluable resource for the city in supporting a diverse range of potential events, activities, and partnerships. They help bring energy and opportunity into the city, foster community spirit, and draw visitors, thus helping support the local economy. Their scale also provides for important ecological benefits such as carbon sequestration and reducing air pollutants. Under-utilized open areas within the regional parks provide an opportunity to both fill existing service gaps in built-out areas and support unique activities which cannot be accommodated elsewhere.

Major open space

Along with golf courses and large natural areas, regional parks are designated as major open space (MOS) within *Complete Communities Direction Strategy.* The major open space designation is given to the large contiguous open space areas within the city that have a public function and provide an aesthetic, recreational, or ecological value to the city as a whole. These areas contribute significantly to the health and resiliency of the city, emphasizing the preservation of waterways, natural features, habitats, and trees as a priority. As such, the major open space designation establishes an added level of protection to these lands that have often been under pressure to redevelop.

St. Vital Park toboggan slide and shelter.

Community parks

Often associated with community centres, these larger parks serve a cluster of neighbourhoods, providing important picnic and gathering spaces. These parks play a key role in the provision of valued secondary amenities such as athletic fields, baseball diamonds, and basketball courts.

Community parks provide a wide range of park services to surrounding neighbourhoods and should be well-connected with the City's active transportation network to allow safe and easy access for bikes and pedestrians. Community parks must generally be of larger size to accommodate community centre facilities, sports courts, bookable athletic fields, and outdoor skating opportunities. They should also support more flexible playgrounds, picnic sites, and multi-use greenspaces.

Intended to serve approximately 10,000 people and typically greater than 5 ha in size (with numerous exceptions to this guideline in older communities), these parks should be well-maintained to provide all core amenities and a well-managed set of appropriate secondary amenities. Above all, these parks must continue to support the changing needs of the community they serve.

These parks provide an important community destination and contain sporting amenities which require specialized maintenance equipment, therefore vehicle access is essential. As such, being adjacent to a collector road is important and parking lots are a desired feature. Washroom facilities may be available in an associated community centre but are not an amenity provided by the park itself. Some community parks contain large forest stands, providing residents of surrounding neighbourhoods with opportunities to experience more natural settings and serene spaces.

KIRKFIELD-WESTWOOD

Kirkfield Westwood Community Centre Park, established in 1955, is indicative of a typical community park. It is relatively central to the area being served, and is flanked by middle and high school sites thus providing a significant focal point for the surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition to the Community Centre facility and arena, this location supports a variety of outdoor activities: skating, tennis, pickle ball, basketball, baseball, a play area, and has access to soccer on the adjacent school lands. It provides ample parking, and is easily reached by multiple transportation modes.

Neighbourhood parks

Providing local access to open space, these smaller parks are intended to serve single neighbourhoods of approximately 1,000 people. Their smaller size (typically less than 2 ha) make them more appropriate for passive and less intense uses.

Winnipeggers can expect neighbourhood parks to provide core amenities such as playgrounds and gathering spaces. Their size makes them unsuitable for larger events and gatherings, or other uses requiring larger footprints; however, their unprogrammed and flexible nature provides an important resource for people seeking a place for informal active uses, or smaller scale events.

These parks provide higher density neighbourhoods with outdoor play spaces and opportunities that may not be available at home. Similarly, they provide serene, quiet spaces in which residents may relax and enjoy the outdoors. Apart from playground equipment, most neighbourhood parks will have few permanent structures and amenities and require less upkeep to maintain. As these parks are intended to serve local residents, they may be more isolated from the road and transit network. Where possible they should be accessible from the active transportation network.

WHITEGATES PARK

Whitegates Park is a good example of a neighbourhood park, providing a small open greenspace and an accessible playstructure where nearby families can come to relax, play, and enjoy the outdoors in a safe environment.

Nature parks

Dominated by high-quality natural vegetation, these parks prioritize the preservation of natural environments, providing ecological values to the city and an opportunity to experience natural spaces to its residents.

The primary intent for these parks is to preserve, protect, enhance, maintain and celebrate the remaining high-quality natural areas in Winnipeg.

Preserving and enhancing riparian vegetation along the riverbanks is one of the City's priorities, not only because of the important safeguards the riverbank vegetation provides against flooding events but also because these areas provide important habitats and movement corridors for wildlife. The acquisition of new natural areas, including those designated as ecologically significant lands (in accordance with the City's *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy and Policy*), will be opportunistic by necessity as privately held natural lands become available for purchase.

Primary amenities will include trails (with a preference for permeable, natural tread trails where possible), viewpoints, interpretive signage, and small-scale picnic areas. Constructed amenities such as playgrounds, sports courts, or athletic fields should not be considered. Non-native species should not be introduced into these areas, and ongoing maintenance efforts should target invasive species removal.

Education-focused partnerships with schools, universities, and regional experts should be explored to encourage Winnipeggers to learn more about the great value provided by intact natural spaces. Awareness of the value of these lands should inform land use decisions in the surrounding areas. Wherever possible, connections should be developed and maintained between nature parks and other remaining native vegetation in the surrounding landscape.

LIVING PRAIRIE MUSEUM

The Living Prairie Museum is a 13 hectare tall grass prairie preserve in Winnipeg. Set aside in 1968, the preserve is home to more than 150 different grass and wildflower species and an array of prairie wildlife, providing residents with an opportunity of experiencing an ecosystem which once dominated the North American landscape, now all but lost to agricultural expansion. This natural prairie ecosystem is managed by the City to preserve its natural function. This management approach often involves prescribed burns which are an essential aspect of the prairie. Butterfly walks and other guided interpretive activities are popular events.

Linkage parks

These are important ecological and recreational corridors with a primary focus on enhancing connectivity and trail-based movement. They are characterized as long, linear open spaces that serve as off-road corridors connecting a neighbourhood. They may link parks system components together to provide a continuous park network, or provide a passage between residential and commercial areas. Many also serve as important wildlife corridors, particularly those adjacent to our rivers and creeks.

Some linkage parks capitalize on the naturally occurring green corridors along or leading up to waterways. Others are created, either from previously existing features such as roads, rail or utility corridors, or as part of new developments. Each strive to provide a safe and scenic natural or landscaped thoroughfare, serving to connect wildlife, people and places.

Some linkage parks are also referred to as linear parks or greenways, and important segments along our prime waterways have been uniquely identified as part of the parkway network (see *Section 3.6.2*). The incremental acquisition of these riverbank lands coincided with a shift in philosophy on the best value of riverbanks from one capitalizing on development, to one prioritizing their reclamation for public use and enjoyment, reactivating and celebrating the rivers that formed the city's birthplace and shaped its economy and growth. This includes providing access to the waterways themselves as important paddling and boating corridors, as well as spaces for urban fishing or other recreational activities.

Given their configuration, linkage parks are considered ideal for trail-based activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, or cross-country skiing. It is known that natural settings with good access and amenities encourage people to use alternate modes of transportation. When combined with other pedestrian and cycling networks established in the right-of-way, linkage parks become important components of a larger city-wide active transportation network.

Some of the most effective linkage parks form an important green spine that stitches neighborhood activity nodes together, connecting parks to each other, to schools, or to the City's residential and commercial areas. They are especially valued for providing a distinct pedestrian environment that is separate from, and minimizes intersections with, vehicular traffic.

STURGEON CREEK GREENWAY

The Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail runs adjacent to Sturgeon Creek from Woodhaven Park to Saskatchewan Avenue. The biodiversity of fish species in Sturgeon Creek is quite high, with at least 30 different species identified. Molluscs, crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals also use the creek as habitat. The area contains a Royal Canadian Air Force T-33 jet airframe adorned in the Red Knight aerobatics team colours, a gift to the City of St. James in 1967 to commemorate Canada's centennial. The historic Grant's Old Mill provides a glimpse of a real working watermill. It is maintained and operated by the St. James Assiniboia Pioneer Association.

Other park classes

In addition to formal parks, a variety of other open space types fall within the maintenance responsibility of the City. These spaces can hold intrinsic park value, but may provide limited recreational use. These include:

- **Buffers:** The main purpose of these open spaces is to separate typically residential-use land from more intensive uses such as industrial areas or high-speed roadways. Buffers are frequently long corridors and may provide opportunities for active transportation pathways. But - unlike linkage parks - do not serve a primary connectivity purpose. These lands are maintained by the City, and are frequently planted with sod or ornamental vegetation. They may incorporate a barrier wall to provide additional screening and noise attenuation. While they are not typically places that people will frequent, they do provide important visual and aesthetic benefit, and also help support our urban forest.

Fig. 11: *Primary park classification numbers and total area*

- **Fragments:** These small, open spaces are often associated with right-of-ways such as road verges or lots at the end of blocks. They are too small to support core or secondary amenities and also too small to be considered a buffer. Moderate improvements increase the aesthetic of surrounding neighbourhoods, so their upkeep is an important park service.

Stormwater retention ponds

These open-water areas are often located within parks and provide an important stormwater service to the City. They can - as a result of new naturalized basin-edge design criteria - also serve an ecological function as habitat and add to the aesthetic of the surrounding neighbourhood. The ponds themselves present safety concerns when related to recreation, but have become significant neighbourhood and park design-defining elements. Developers often strive to site these ponds and their associated park space in a way that creates a linkage park network, complete with integrated walkways, and also often enhance the perception of open space by creating vistas across or along the ponds.

The ponds are identified as public reserve and perceived to be part of the associated park, but the impoundment area, comprised of the pond plus a prescribed shoreline edge area, fall within the jurisdiction of Water and Waste Department. Thus, an additional level of coordination is required within the public service to align infrastructure and recreation priorities.

Future parks/greenfields

These open spaces in new communities have been, or are being developed as parks, but have not yet become the responsibility of the City. Once they are transferred to the City, these lands will be formally recognized by a specific park classification.

2.6.2 Natural features

This parks system component celebrates the value of natural and urban forest areas, in contrast to purpose-built amenities. These features may not all be of a habitat quality or size to earn the designation of nature park, but it is important for each to be recognized for the natural heritage and environmental benefit they provide.

Natural features are defined as natural areas, rated as grade 'C' or higher by the preliminary habitat assessment/evaluation of natural areas, as well as any continuous forest canopy cover greater than 0.5 ha. This would therefore include the natural areas located within formally classified nature parks. The size and condition of these natural areas vary substantially, but even small natural areas can play an important role in maintaining the natural ecological functioning of the city and are equally invaluable in providing Winnipeggers with more immediate access to nature.

Parks with urban forest areas are often the result of planned planting and maintenance of patches of tree cover. All continuous forest patches with a canopy greater than 0.5 ha are considered natural features. These natural assets may have less ecological importance than true natural areas, but still function as habitat for local species, help keep neighbourhoods cool during the summer heat, help to sequester carbon and other pollutants from the atmosphere, capture water run-off and provide residents with serene spaces in which to explore and relax.

Natural areas and our urban forest require a balanced management approach that allows people to connect with their natural environment while ensuring that habitat and ecological integrity are protected from degradation and over-use. Natural assets are harder to re-establish than purpose-built assets once they have been lost. Therefore, it is important that these existing natural features are protected and preserved as the city continues to grow and develop.

Unfortunately, in an established urban setting, many original natural habitats have long since been displaced by development. This component recognizes the value and many benefits that can be derived from naturalization practices (the process of restoring disturbed areas to include more native plant life and terrain, improving the natural functioning of these lands). Naturalizing portions of parkland have proven to reduce maintenance costs of the parks system over the long-term, providing a more robust and resilient green infrastructure, and fostering native biodiversity within the city.

Collectively, these natural features contribute to the wellbeing of the city by providing habitat for local animals and pollinating insects, providing stormwater mitigation and carbon sequestration, and mitigating the urban heat island effect, while providing serene spaces for people to enjoy the wonders of our prairie environment.

NATURAL AREA HABITAT GRADING

The identification of these natural areas comes from aerial photos, field survey, interdepartmental request or public notification. Once a site is identified as a possible natural area it is ground-truthed using a method known as the Preliminary Habitat Assessment/ Evaluation of Natural Areas. This method, developed in the 1980s and currently in use by the Manitoba Conservation Data Centre, allows the surveyor to rate characteristics of the natural habitat.

The final outcome of this method is a habitat grade of A, B, C, or D, "A" being the highest and "D" being the lowest grade for natural habitat. Inventories, both past and present, have been conducted on City owned land and on lands for which landowner permission was previously acquired.

Source: Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy & Policy (2007).

2.6.3 Connections

An effective and accessible parks system must provide year-round routes for people to travel to, within and between parks. These routes must provide for safe and efficient connections through multiple modes of travel.

In support of connectivity, an important focus is on enhancing linkage opportunities and removing barriers.

Connections in the context of parks covers a variety of aspects including:

- improvements to how people get to parks
- consideration of parks as a connecting element in a neighbourhood as well as to a broader community as part of a transportation system
- recognition of the value of paths within parks to support travel-based activity
- consideration of supportive elements that aid access and connections

Improving the ability for people to access and connect to parks as a destination addresses the variety of transportation modes used by the public to get to parks. This includes driving, taking public transit, cycling, walking and even paddling. Connections considers the roads that support personal vehicles and transit, the paths, sidewalks and trails that support biking and walking, and the infrastructure that supports waterway access. Each transportation mode requires specific infrastructure and amenities, such as signage, parking and lighting to better serve transportation access and opportunity.

Park types (classifications) and the activities they support have expected intensity levels that can govern the type of access required. For example, regional parks must be accessible and accommodate all transportation modes, where as neighbourhood parks focus on pedestrian and cycling access. From a planning perspective, park types have an impact on how parks are sited to capitalize on connectivity. In support of connectivity, the type of network, number of modes options, knowledge of the system, and condition of the infrastructure can impact choices people make on where or how frequently they visit parks.

LINKAGE PARKS

Linkage parks are a specific park classification that serve to support connectivity, however other parks can also support this connective function. When combined in a series of contiguous parks or a combination of park and non-park paths (on and off-road), over a relatively long distance, these collectively represent important linear networks for the city.

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING STRATEGIES

As a connecting element, parks also play an important role within the transportation network, providing trails and multi-use paths that are part of a network of pedestrian and cycling routes. The Council-approved *Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies* (PCS) have been instrumental in increasing and enhancing the city-wide pedestrian and cycling network. Highlighting connections as a parks system component is not intended to replicate or replace the PCS, but - in the interest of promoting equitable access, active mobility, and healthy living - the parks system relies on, supports and complements that transportation network.

Parks as connecting elements considers both the paths that pass through parks - supplementing and complementing the pedestrian and cycling transportation network - and the placement of parks to create passageways that help people move through their neighbourhood. Strategically placed parks can provide short cuts to improve access to transit stops or to other neighbourhood features and destinations.

Paths within parks serve an important role in facilitating activity and experiences. They are the infrastructure that guides and provides ease of access to activities and areas to be explored within the park. Paths and trails can also be the activity and destination, providing places for people to walk just for the sake of walking for example.

Many cues and elements aid in directing people to and within parks, and can further enhance opportunities for connectivity. Situating parks within clear site lines and increasing the number and location of access points, lighting, signage, and the elements that denote

‘park’ are important to drawing people in and aiding them in finding parks. It is important to make access and movement as intuitive, comfortable, and safe as possible. Directional signage and visual cues placed beyond park boundaries, especially at regional and large community parks, will enhance public awareness of parks and help people navigate to them. Wayfinding can extend to other publicly available information about parks, including data and maps on the City’s website.

Improved connections from neighbourhoods to parks, through appropriate infrastructure as well as enhanced information, will support greater and more equitable access for people, providing the health and wellness benefits that come from spending time in parks and nature.

2.6.4 Amenities

Amenities are purpose-built components that are programmed and maintained to provide specific services and opportunities to the surrounding communities. Amenities include the structures, furniture, and other built features that contribute to the City’s ability to support the service categories of play, sport, leisure and gathering while also improving the overall park experience. Amenities provide and support a variety of recreational opportunities, from more active recreation such as sport and outdoor play to more passive recreation such as picnicking, sunbathing, fishing, and quiet contemplation. Amenities include benches, lighting, playgrounds, athletic fields, sport courts and other structures that serve as attractions for park use.

A single amenity may be made up of several inter-related assets, as when a single playground is typically composed of some combination of play equipment and safety surfacing. As well, the components necessary for an amenity to function (such as goal posts for a soccer field) are considered intrinsic to and part of the overall amenity.

Amenities are often costly built structures that require ongoing upkeep and maintenance, resulting in significant recurring cost to the City. Determining the specifics of what the City can and should support, along with where and how much to provide is an ongoing challenge. In order to rationalize the delivery of the service areas under existing funding constraints, these amenities must be prioritized to maximize the impact of investment. To aid in the prioritization process, amenities have been organized into tiers: core, secondary, tertiary, supportive and specialty *(Fig. 12)*. This structure helps provide clarity to the prioritization process, and gives some assurance of what will be universally available throughout the City, and what will be found less frequently.

Not all amenities are suited to every park classification. *Table 01* provides an overview of which amenities are appropriate for each park class, based on either the amount of space required or in consideration of which amenities complement or conflict with others.

Amenity Categories and Prioritization

DESCRIPTION	TYPES
Core amenities Core amenities are the highest priority for the City to provide and maintain for the use of all. These amenities provide a greater range of parks system functions and bring the greatest quality of life improvements for Winnipeggers. Winnipeggers regularly list these amenities as important for their enjoyment of the parks system. Therefore the City will prioritize its resources to ensure all Winnipeggers have access to at least one of each of these amenities. Core amenities will be primarily provided directly by the City and complemented with what is provided through schools.	› Playgrounds › Picnic and gathering spaces › Multi-use greenspaces
Secondary amenities Secondary amenities are the City's second level of provision. These amenities are regularly used by many Winnipeggers. They add diverse functionality to the parks system and support various organizations in providing popular recreational activities. These amenities typically have large footprints and high maintenance costs, and often preclude other activities within parks dedicated to their use. As such, they are not universally appropriate for all park spaces and should be located only in areas where they make practical sense and see active community use and need supporting their maintenance. The City will strive to provide these amenities consistently throughout Winnipeg, but people will generally have to travel further to access them than they would for core amenities. Secondary amenities may be provided directly by the City, but may also be provided through schools, or indirectly through a partnership with another organization or provider.	› Tennis and pickleball courts › Basketball courts › Baseball/softball diamonds › Rectangular athletic fields › Outdoor skating rinks and areas › Skateboard parks/spots › Off-leash dog areas

Fig. 12: *Description of park amenity categories and related amenity types that will aid in the prioritization process to maximize the impact of investment.*

DESCRIPTION	TYPES
Tertiary amenities Unlike core and secondary amenities, the provision of tertiary amenities is opportunity-based or place-specific. Tertiary amenities are additional unique elements that would benefit a subset of Winnipeg's population, but are not deemed integral to the overall function of the parks system. These will be provided as resources permit. Winnipeggers will not have the same access to these amenities across the city. Tertiary amenities may be provided directly by the City or indirectly through a partnership with another organization or provider. **direction for provision provided by the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy*	› Toboggan slides › Special event/performance venues › Spray pads/Wading pools/ Outdoor pools* › Plazas › Public art/monuments › Community gardens › Beach volleyball courts › Fitness equipment › Disc golf courses › Cricket pitches › Canoe and kayak launches › Boat launches › Viewing platforms and lookouts › Lawn bowling, pétanque, bocce › Track and field amenities
Supportive amenities Supportive amenities are the infrastructure components of parks that increase the usability of other recreational amenities or the parks themselves. These include washrooms, storage or maintenance facilities, and park furniture or aesthetic elements such as benches, litter bins or decorative garden beds. Supportive amenities are directly provided by the City across all parks as needed. Larger, more maintenance intensive supportive amenities will be concentrated in the City's regional parks and other heavily used parks.	› Interpretive signage › Aesthetic features (planters, fountains, etc.) › Public washrooms › Roads/bridges/parking lots › Park furniture (benches, litter bins, lighting, bike racks, BBQ pits, etc.) › Maintenance/storage facilities
Specialty amenities Specialty amenities serve very specific functions and user groups. Though several existing specialty amenities are currently provided on City land and managed by the City, the City will not prioritize providing land for these in the future. New specialty amenities will not be provided by the City in the future and will instead be provided and maintained by another organization or provider.	› Speed skating ovals › Bike tracks › Archery ranges › Radio controlled racing areas › Ice climbing towers

Table 01: *Appropriate siting of amenities by park classification. Some may be appropriate in only specific circumstances, as outlined in Section 4.4 Amenities.*

		APPROPRIATE PARK CLASSIFICATION						LOCATION SPECIFIC
		REGIONAL	REGIONAL-SPORT	COMMUNITY	NEIGHBOUR-HOOD	NATURE	LINKAGE	
CORE AMENITY	Playgrounds	•	•	•	•	•		
	Picnic & gathering spaces	•	•	•	•	•		
	Multi-use greenspaces	•	•	•	•			
SECONDARY AMENITY	Tennis/pickleball courts		•	•				
	Basketball courts	•	•	•	•			
	Baseball/softball diamond	•	•	•				
	Rectangular athletic fields	•	•	•				
	Outdoor skating rinks/areas		•	•	•			
	Off-Leash dog areas	•		•	•			
	Skateboard parks/spots		•	•	•			
TERTIARY AMENITY	Toboggan slides	•		•				
	Special event/performance venues	•						•
	Spray pads/wading pools			•				
	Outdoor pools	•		•				•
	Plazas							•
	Public art/monuments							•
	Community gardens							•
	Beach volleyball			•	•			
	Fitness equipment							•
	Disc golf courses							•
	Cricket pitches	•	•	•				
	Canoe/kayak launches							•
	Boat launches							•
	Viewing platforms and lookouts					•		
	Lawn bowling, pétanque, bocce							•
	Track and field amenities							•
SUPPORTIVE AMENITY	Interpretive signage					•		•
	Aesthetic features (planters, etc.)	•	•					•
	Public washrooms	•	•					•
	Roads/bridges/parking lots	•	•	•				•
	Park furniture (benches, garbage, lighting, bike racks etc)	•	•	•	•	•	•	
	Maintenance/storage facilities							•
SPECIALTY AMENITY	Speed skating ovals							•
	Bike tracks							•
	Archery ranges							•
	Radio controlled racing areas							•
	Ice climbing towers							•

2.7 Defining parks levels of service

Parks *levels of service* (LoS) specify how the City intends to advance the objectives of the Strategy in order to provide value to residents and ensure the parks system is sustainable in the future. Their definition and documentation helps drive decision-making relating to the services provided. Levels of service incorporate clear targets relating to the provision and quality of parks system components. The development of *key performance indicators* (KPIs) can then support efforts to achieve the target level of service by measuring progress and identifying improvement areas.

WHAT IS LEVEL OF SERVICE?

As consumers we make choices about levels of service all the time. When we book a hotel room, we base that decision on the hotel's rating and the associated cost. We expect a higher level of service from a five-star hotel than a one-star hotel, but understand that a higher quality hotel room will likely come at an increased cost.

This same principle can be applied to the services that cities provide including parks services.

The City needs to balance between an acceptable level of service that reflects residents' priorities and a cost that is affordable for Winnipeggers.

2.7.1 Provision

Establishing levels of service for provision - access (distribution) and capacity - is centred on a clear understanding of what we have now and where we strive to be, based on how to best serve the interests and demands of Winnipeggers. Spatial mapping allows us to analyze the data in many ways and provides the ability to create visual representation of how the system is performing. The Strategy relies on analytical mapping technology to understand current park provision with respect to distribution and capacity.

Distribution is used to assess the coverage of the parks system as a basis of determining how available or accessible parks are to their users. To assess distribution in a LoS context, we are evaluating the park services available to people within prescribed areas, or *catchments (Fig. 14)*.

Existing level of service was determined by combining the catchment around individual parks system components with Winnipeg's population census. Catchments for each component are calculated using the target level of service distance, and the overlapping distribution of catchments highlight how many instances of that component type are currently available to residents. This analysis further identifies areas that are outside of the component catchment. These areas are either too far away, or have a physical barrier that prevents access. Prescribed catchments for each component and through mapping visualizations quickly highlight where there are gaps and overlaps.

The maps of current service provision for parks system components are included in *Sections 3.4 to 3.7* of the Strategy. Each illustrates the current level of access in a variety of ways as described in *section Fig. 13.*

The catchment analysis allows the City to calculate how many instances of a facility or amenity are currently available to residents at every point in Winnipeg. The addition of population figures from the 2016 Canadian Census to the catchment analysis also allows the City to assess capacity by calculating the number of people served by a parks system component type. Using the travel distance that defines the catchment areas for each type, two key metrics are highlighted within the Strategy's current level of service sections *(Sections 3.4-3.7)*:

- The percentage of Winnipeggers within the catchment distance of the park component type
- The average number of park components of each type available to Winnipeggers

Assessing access

Meets base level of service

The minimum level of service for each park component is the access to at least one instance of that component. Thus, populated areas that fall within the catchment of at least one component meet the level of service for that amenity. The focus in these areas is to maintain existing provision and potentially improve the condition of existing parks, amenities, or features.

Average level of service

This is intended to capture the average distribution of a component by comparing the distribution of each component to the distribution of people across the City. By calculating the average number of components of each type available to Winnipeggers, the average level of service can be calculated for each component type.

Above-average level of service

Some areas of the city have more access to parkland or a type of amenity or feature than average. In above-average level of service areas, usage monitoring should be targeted to understand whether the existing service provision is being fully utilized, or whether any of the parks or amenities in these areas warrant consideration for divestment or repurposing to other uses.

Potential service gaps

Potential service gaps indicate where populated areas are outside of the recommended catchment, and thus have no easy access to a given type of component. These areas should be assessed for future community need to determine if provision of missing parkland, amenities, or natural features is required.

Fig. 13: *Categories used in assessing the current level of access for each parks system component type in provision maps (Section 3.4 to 3.7).*

2.7.1.1 Network catchment analysis

The City's approach to evaluation relies on walkable access to parks, and the premise that everyone should have at least one park within walking distance. Walkable streets were combined with off-street pedestrian paths and trails to define Winnipeg's walkable network. Using this network and the road network, a catchment was defined around locations of individual parks system components based upon a target level of service distance. This catchment shows the areas that are within a specified distance of each location considering the modes of travel and paths that would be taken. The catchment is also used to determine the amount of people who are served by a specific component type. *Fig. 15* shows the influence of the road network on the resulting park catchment, and how park provision is calculated.

Catchments versus buffers

The City has traditionally relied on a buffer-based approach to assess access to parks system components, measuring a radius from park perimeter to assess the service area. However, with significant river and rail systems, buffers tend to overestimate the number of people who can access a given area. A catchment reflects barriers to movement and shows the functionally accessible area surrounding a parks system component. *Fig. 15* highlights the value of adopting a catchment-based approach, producing a more accurate assessment of availability.

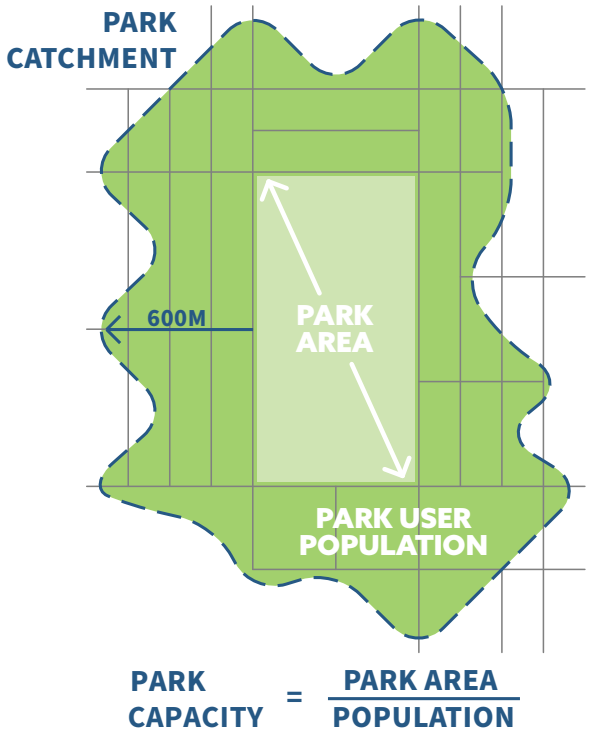


Fig. 14: *Park entrance points and the walkable network that emanates from these points are used to define a catchment around each park or amenity. The total population contained within each catchment is calculated, and used to calculate the level of service provided.*

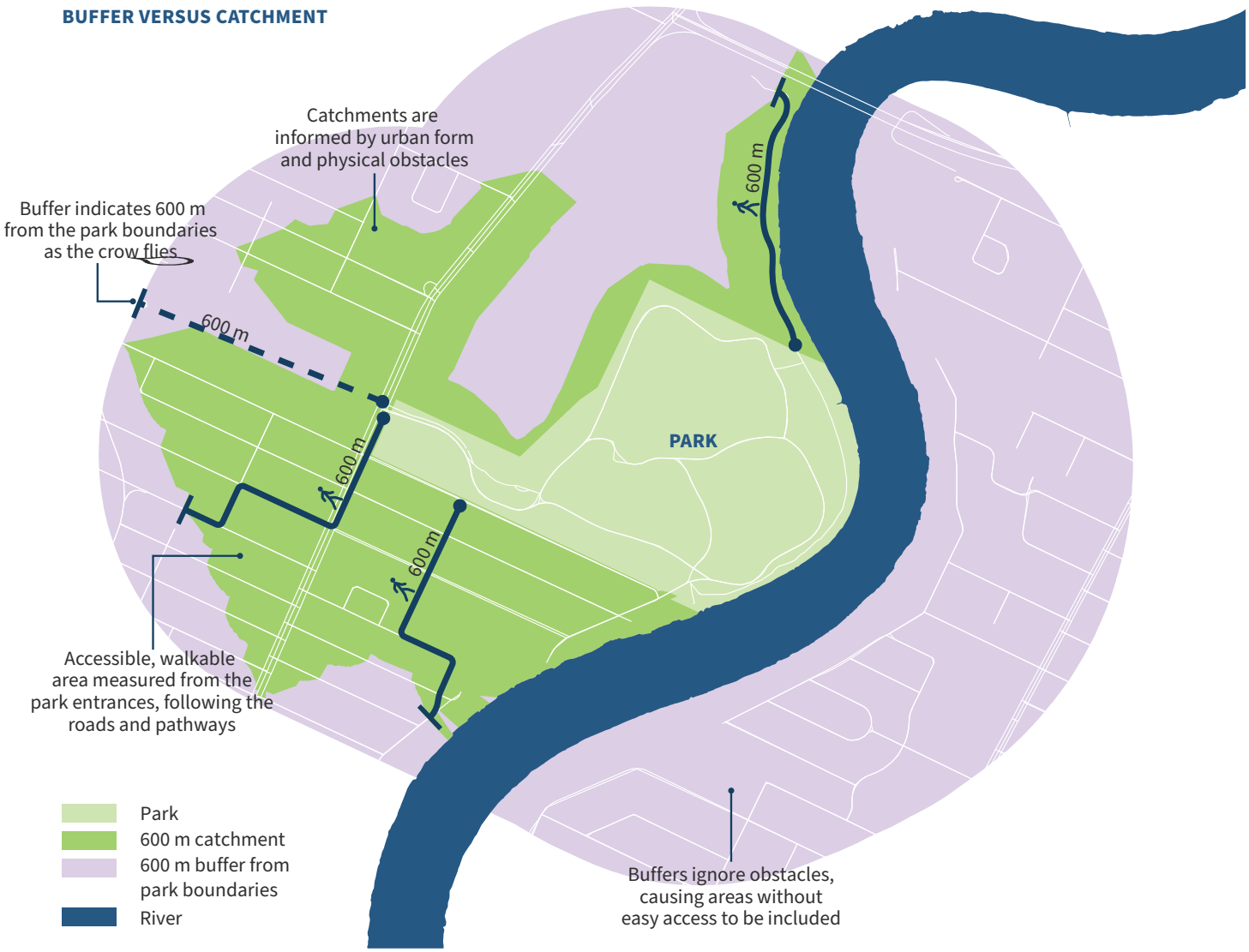


Fig. 15: *The benefit of a catchment-based assessment approach. Catchments produce better estimates of the true area served by a park or amenity. In comparison, buffers tend to overestimate access, especially near features such as rivers, where areas on the opposite shore are included. A catchment more accurately reflects the true service area and user experience.*

2.7.2 Quality

Assessing the level of service for quality of a parks system component requires knowledge and understanding of the condition and functionality of its physical infrastructure. This, along with an understanding of expectations of use, will help to determine whether the infrastructure is still meeting its purpose, and continues to provide value.

Winnipeg's parks vary in age; many were designed and built in the mid to late 1960s as part of Canada's Centennial program, and still have original elements. There are also several others that pre-date that period. By capturing reliable age and condition data for our park infrastructure, the remaining useful life of park infrastructure can be determined, allowing more accurate planning for repair, renewal or replacement. With the exception of natural areas, park infrastructure condition is currently assessed using a five-point rating scale that aligns with the *Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (Fig. 17)*. This allows the City to use a consistent approach that enables benchmarking with other Canadian municipalities. The overall quality of each amenity type is expressed as percentage in very good to very poor condition within *Section 3* of the Strategy.

In addition to age and condition, a separate rating scale will be adopted to capture functionality *(Fig. 16)*.

FUNCTIONALITY RATING SCALE	
VERY GOOD(1)	Meets service delivery needs in a fully efficient & effective manner
GOOD (2)	Meets service delivery needs in an acceptable manner
FAIR (3)	Meets most service delivery needs with some inefficiencies and ineffectiveness
POOR (4)	Limited ability to meet service delivery needs
VERY POOR (5)	Is critically deficient; does not meet service delivery and is neither efficient or effective

Fig. 16: *Proposed functionality rating scale*

This assessment of functionality, in combination with condition ratings, will help identify where an asset meets service delivery needs in a fully efficient and effective manner, is critically deficient, or lies somewhere else along that continuum.

CONDITION RATING SCALE		
VERY GOOD	The infrastructure is generally in very good condition, typically new or recently rehabilitated. A few elements may show general signs of deterioration that require attention.	**1**
GOOD	The infrastructure is in good condition. Some elements show general signs of deterioration that require attention. A few elements may exhibit significant deficiencies.	**2**
FAIR	The infrastructure is in fair condition. It shows signs of deterioration and requires attention. Some elements exhibit significant deficiencies.	**3**
POOR	The infrastructure is in poor condition and mostly below standard, with many elements approaching the end of their service life. Significant deterioration throughout.	**4**
VERY POOR	The infrastructure is in unacceptable condition with widespread signs of advanced deterioration. Many components exhibit signs of imminent failure, which is affecting service.	**5**
NOT ASSESSED	This category is reserved infrastructure where data is missing, requires updating, or cannot be considered reliable.	**N/A**

Fig. 17: *Condition rating scale*

2.8 Decision-making matrix

The next key aspect of the Strategy framework is establishment of a decision-making matrix to aid in the analysis of the data derived from the maps and to enable the City to make transparent and defendable management decisions about the parks system. This matrix provides a structure for inputing the mapping results into an evaluation and decision tree process.

With the addition of other evaluation criteria (such as usage, condition and demand, or acquisition and rationalization factors) decision makers are guided to possible actions. These high-level assessments provide a necessary triage through which to direct limited funds and resources towards investments in our parks system and deliver the greatest value to Winnipeggers.

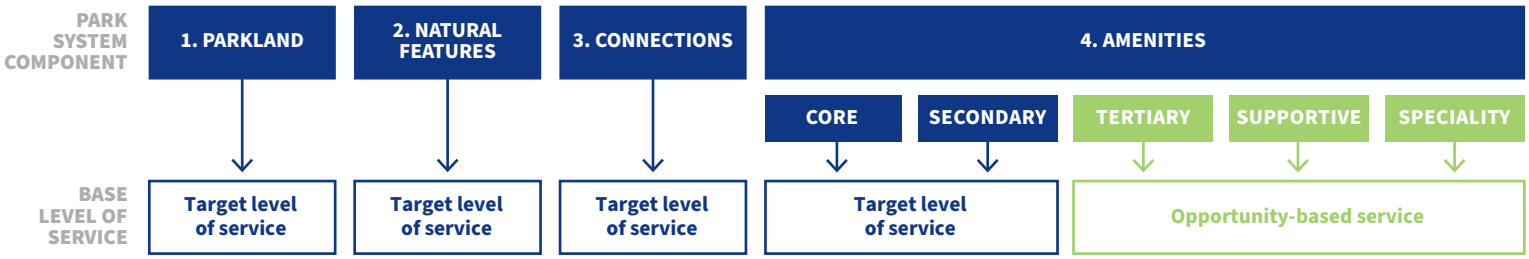


Fig. 18: *Framework showing how the level of service is determined for each component of the parks system, which impacts how decisions are made about the parks system*

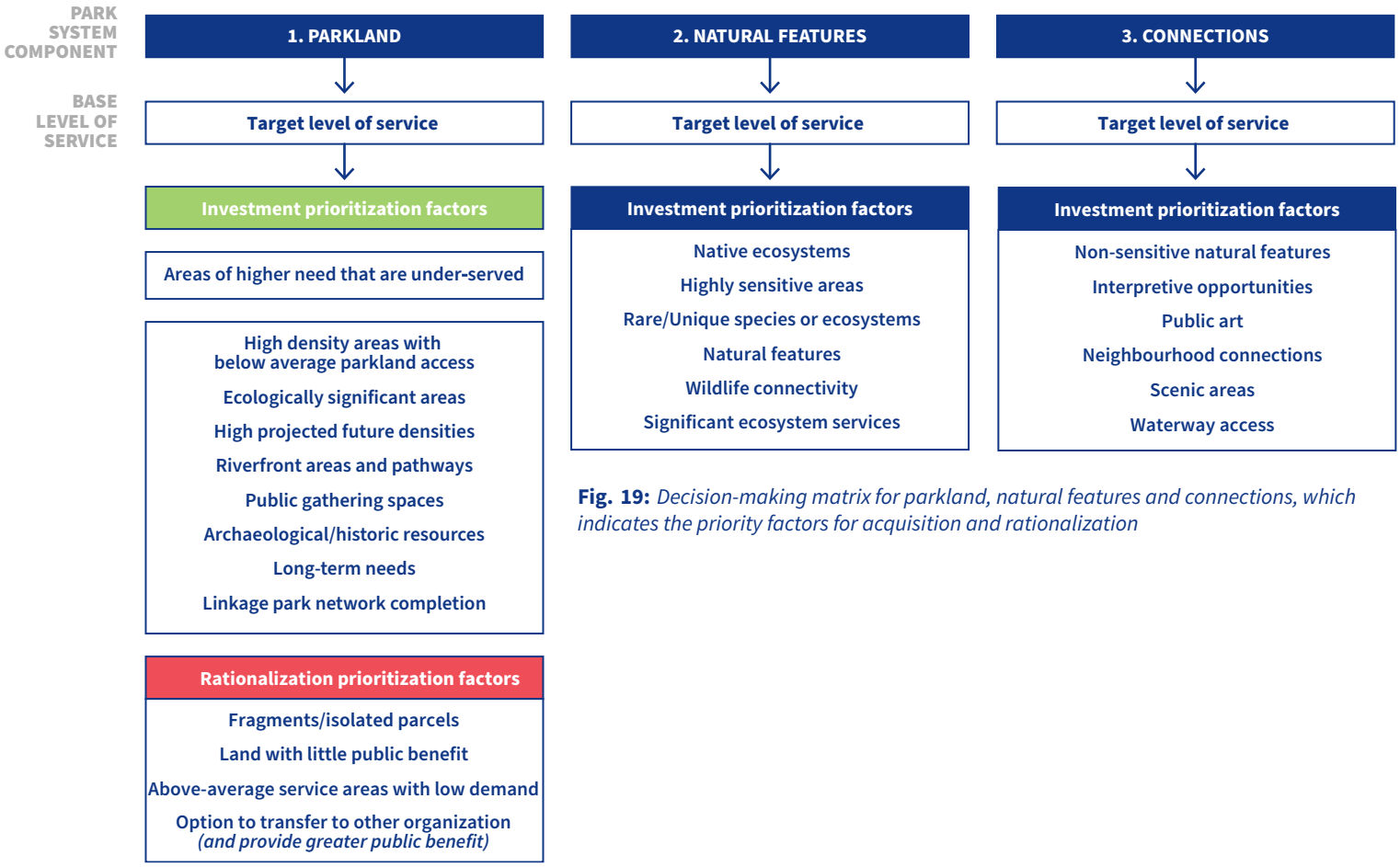


Fig. 19: *Decision-making matrix for parkland, natural features and connections, which indicates the priority factors for acquisition and rationalization*

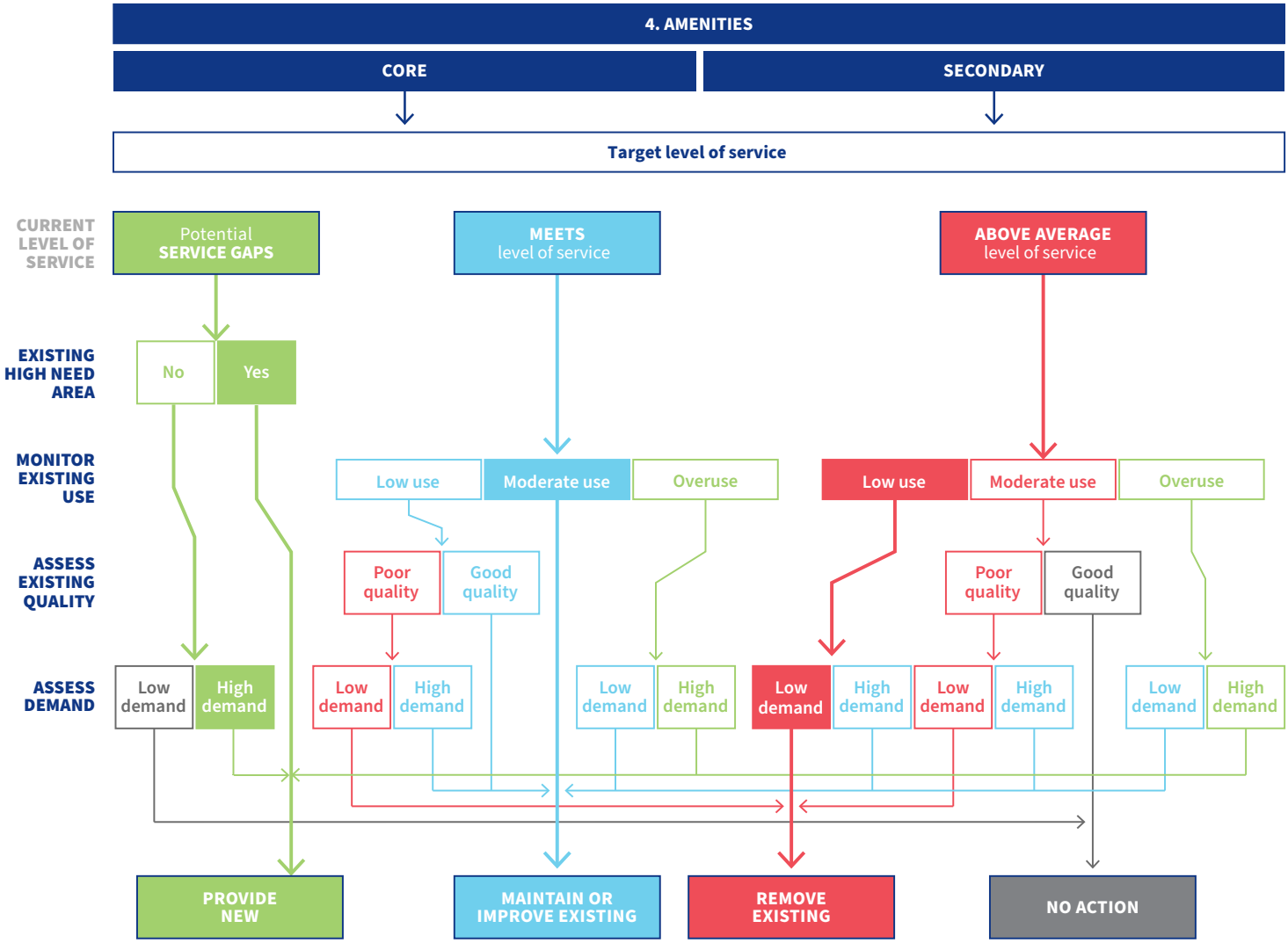


Fig. 20: *Decision-making matrix for amenities, showing how the Target Level of Service is used to determine existing areas of need, areas that meet the level of service, above-average level of service areas. Those areas are then used to prioritize next steps and information gathering to inform final decisions on where to provide new amenities, maintain or improve existing amenities, remove existing amenities, or not respond.*

2.8.1 Applying the matrix

Given all the considerations that shape a level of service, it is not feasible for the City to provide exactly the same parks system components in each of its neighbourhoods or communities. The City must endeavour to provide residents with consistent, equitable access (without financial, geographic, or physical barriers) to parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities. Equitable access means recognizing that these parks system components support a system of services offered to residents and that individual components should not be considered in isolation of the whole.

Building a high-quality and sustainable parks system will require balancing level of service and cost to ensure city-wide delivery of services. The Strategy proposes an iterative approach to service planning built upon a coordinated continuous cycle of *assessment, planning and implementation*. Its focus is to provide sustainable parks services that are effective in responding to community needs, by encouraging collaborative planning, the sharing of resources, and ongoing assessment that is supported by data. These steps are not meant to be prescriptive, but rather to serve as a guideline for the decision-making process.

Step 1: **Assess current provision**

The process of identifying potential service gaps and above-average levels of service is the first step in the decision-making process. The mapping results which highlight these areas of focus are intended as a triage tool to direct limited resource capacity towards assessing those areas of most pressing need. Geographic areas of higher poverty are to be flagged for initial prioritization.

Step 2: **Assess usage data**

Once a potential service gap or area of above-average service is identified, assessing the usage of existing park components in this area allows the City to gain a better picture of functionality and whether usage warrants a change to the level of service provided. This can be done by using counters, conducting on-site usage surveys, or undertaking online engagement with communities regarding current use. In more highly populated areas where access meets the specified target level of service, there may be only one asset providing that service. Depending on the level of need, it could be over-used. On the other hand, park assets in areas that have above-average access may not be used, but must still be maintained by the City. In these cases, monitoring existing usage will help the City continually prioritize its resources to provide additional service in areas of over-use and to consider removing service in areas where there is minimal or no use.

Step 3: **Assess quality**

An assessment of quality based on condition and functionality allows the City to understand at what stage a park asset is in its lifecycle, and whether it needs to be removed or replaced. Asset condition also tends to go hand in hand with an evaluation of usage, as poor condition can reduce functionality and over-use can cause accelerated deterioration. Assets

that are highly used but in poor condition should be improved, while those that are in poor condition and are under-utilized with no perceived demand may potentially be removed.

Step 4: **Assess community need**

A targeted assessment is required for areas identified in Step 1 to determine whether there is a present community need or demand. Above-average provision may be entirely appropriate, provided those park components are well used. Under-used assets may be repurposed if community need is low. If community need for that asset type is high, but usage is low, then other reasons for low usage must be explored, such as park safety, amenity condition, and barriers to access.

Assessing future community need

Assessing future community need is critical in prioritizing improvements to current level of service, since usage and condition does not account for anticipated shifts in recreational trends, city growth, and other changes within communities. Thus, an assessment of future community need should not only look at population projections, but also involve a nuanced understanding of individual communities, and their anticipated needs. As the City creates a more comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics of each community within Winnipeg, this information will provide a better foundation with which to define the level of service required in each urban structure area. When a potential development is established in an identified area of need, this understanding of the community will reflect the needs for specific park components in the new development. This is true of both new developments in outlying portions of the city, but also in Major Redevelopment Areas, which have the potential for substantive improvements to the urban fabric and should be seen as key opportunities to improve overall service levels.

Step 5: **Plan appropriate action**

Upon completion of Steps 1 – 4, additional information will have been gathered to help make an informed and evidence-based decision when planning an appropriate action. Specifically, the City can decide whether to expand, maintain, or reduce service for the various components of the parks system. Additional considerations related to the type of park component under review include:

Parkland

Parkland provision in Winnipeg should initially focus on responding to those areas lacking access to any parkland at all (gaps in service), followed by those areas with access to only small areas of parkland. In areas with few opportunities for new parks, opportunities for partnerships with private landowners should continue to be explored.

Approaches to parkland provision will vary across the city, depending on how extensively built-out the area is (see *Section 3.3* for further discussion of Winnipeg's existing urban structure). In older, more built out areas, parkland acquisition will be challenging, and improvements to the parks system will need to focus on the quality and diversity experiences and park amenities provided by existing parks.

The acquisition of new parkland in greenfield communities should be aligned with the expected population of the new development. Since there is yet no neighbourhood to consult, the planning process must ensure that parks offer enough flexible space to accommodate a variety of potential uses and amenities. To help address this, some basic measures have been proposed based on an evaluation of current provisions and perceived demand, and an assessment of amenity metrics applied in other similar municipalities, and actual expressions for local demand.

Natural features

The City has prioritized enhancing its natural capital and nature experiences within parks, thus areas lacking access to natural spaces are considered a high priority for attention. However, as truly natural areas are rare within Winnipeg, any opportunity to acquire lands containing native vegetation should be capitalized upon. Where acquisition of additional natural areas is not possible, parks dominated with non-native vegetation within potential service gaps may be good candidates for naturalization. Though sometimes more challenging to establish, the naturalization effort will provide the added benefit of reducing upkeep and maintenance costs over time.

Connections

Connection gaps within parks may be addressed in a variety of ways. In parks that provide amenities to a wide variety of people, there may be value in maintaining pathway and trail separation between potentially conflicting uses. Commuter pathways may see high use, and at high speeds, posing safety concerns. These concerns may warrant formal separation of the trail system within the park, and the pathway system which connects the park to the surrounding community. In larger parks, nested loops and branching trail networks provide a greater range of options to park visitors, allowing more diverse experiences.

In high traffic event-focused parks (such as regional sports parks holding competitive events), access between parking facilities and the surrounding road network must allow for time-sensitive spikes in traffic volume. Available parking opportunities must be sufficient to meet peak demand.

Gaps in connections between parks and surrounding communities will require coordination with the City's active transportation network, Winnipeg Transit, and the Public Works department's transportation and engineering divisions. As road and pathway construction is costly, when possible it should be aligned with other construction and maintenance efforts.

Amenities

Allocating limited resources requires an understanding of where amenities are currently available, compared to the distribution of potential amenity users. Areas which lack access to an amenity are only a concern if there is a local need for that amenity from the community.

The Strategy prioritizes the City's provision of different amenities through a multi-tiered approach *(Fig. 20* and *Fig. 21)*. This approach identifies which amenities are intended to be more readily available to residents across the city, and which ones will be more opportunistically provided as space and funding permit. This sets a clear level of service that individuals can expect to receive from the parks system. It is also intended to help avoid duplicating services provided by other organizations, and recognize the valuable work done by schools, non-profit organizations and private recreation operators to support service delivery in Winnipeg.

Step 6: **Implement**

Once the appropriate action is determined, the necessary steps must be undertaken to move towards implementing. If the action is to expand or maintain service, additional financial resources outside of existing operating and capital budgets may be required. As such this need would be identified in the investment planning process for city-wide prioritization. If funding is not approved, further assessment is required, and alternative options explored, to help manage the existing service gap.

Amenity prioritization and City partnerships

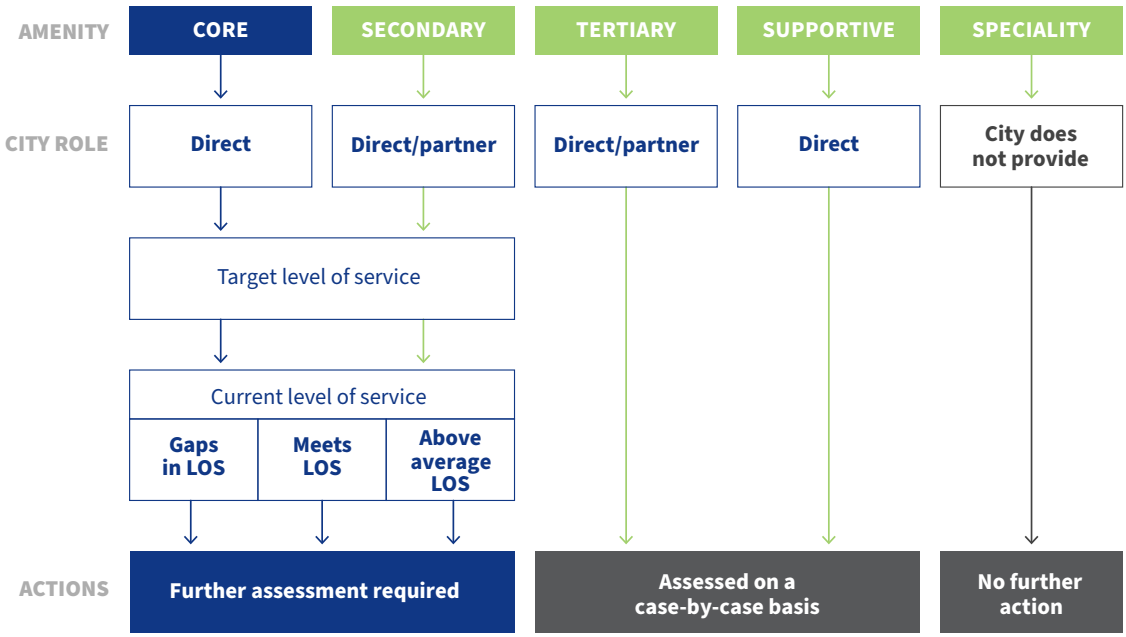


Fig. 21: *Amenity prioritization and City partnerships. Further assessment required as detailed in Fig. 16*

3 Context

To truly understand parks service delivery needs, we must first examine our current state and gain an awareness of key factors that may influence demand for park services both now and in the future. These findings inform the need to provide flexible and adaptable service provision, and highlight the importance of reducing barriers to access. Changing trends also point to a need for our services to adjust and evolve in order to provide Winnipeggers the high-quality parks services they have come to depend on. They also shine a spotlight on the need for the parks system to be broad and inclusive. Parks are for everyone.

As Winnipeg has developed over time, its neighbourhoods have taken on different characteristics, contexts, and forms, making up what is referred to as the *urban structure*. Through this lens, the Strategy further recognizes areas of the city which have greater numbers of Winnipeggers living with poverty, and adopts these focus areas as a triage tool to prioritize the City's attention to address gaps in parks service delivery in these neighbourhoods.

These insights will combine to shape and focus policy and implementation strategies to help the City address gaps in parks service delivery, accomplish level of service targets, and ultimately provide parks that meet the needs of the communities they are serving.

3.1 A changing city

3.1.1 Population and demographics

The demographics of Winnipeg are changing as the city grows. The provision of services and amenities should consider these demographic changes to ensure parks and open space are accessible to and inclusive of all.

Winnipeg has seen steady population growth since the early 2000's, largely as a result of international immigration. Between 2001 and 2016 the city's population grew by nearly 86,000 people. In 2020, Winnipeg's population was 766,900 – a number that is expected to grow to over 900,000 by 2040 (*Fig. 22)*.

It is anticipated that future growth will occur through densification of Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods, as well as the continued expansion of new communities on the edge of the city. Population growth in existing neighbourhoods, through densification and infill development, will place increasing pressure on existing parks and amenities, potentially creating demand for new ones. The increasing demand for parks services throughout Winnipeg will require additional funding to acquire parkland, operate and maintain facilities, and provide new programming.

The parks system must be adaptable to shifting demographics, and the accompanying shifts in preferred or required recreation and leisure activities. With deteriorating infrastructure and amenities, staffing reductions, and insufficient capital and operating funds, the City will need to implement creative solutions in order to both serve changing populations and reinvest in appropriate amenities and services.

Cultural diversity

Winnipeg is becoming more diverse. In 1996, approximately 10 percent of Winnipeggers identified as a visible minority; this proportion grew to 28 percent in 2016. More than a quarter of Winnipeggers have come to Canada from elsewhere, and approximately 60 percent of new Canadians have arrived in the City since 2001. Consequently, the City must consider strategies to reduce barriers to use of parks services such as cost and language. Future park planning should also account for culturally specific considerations such as shifting interest in specific sports and leisure activities, emerging social practices, increased community gathering. Restrictions that religious or cultural beliefs have on facility use and participation must also be considered.

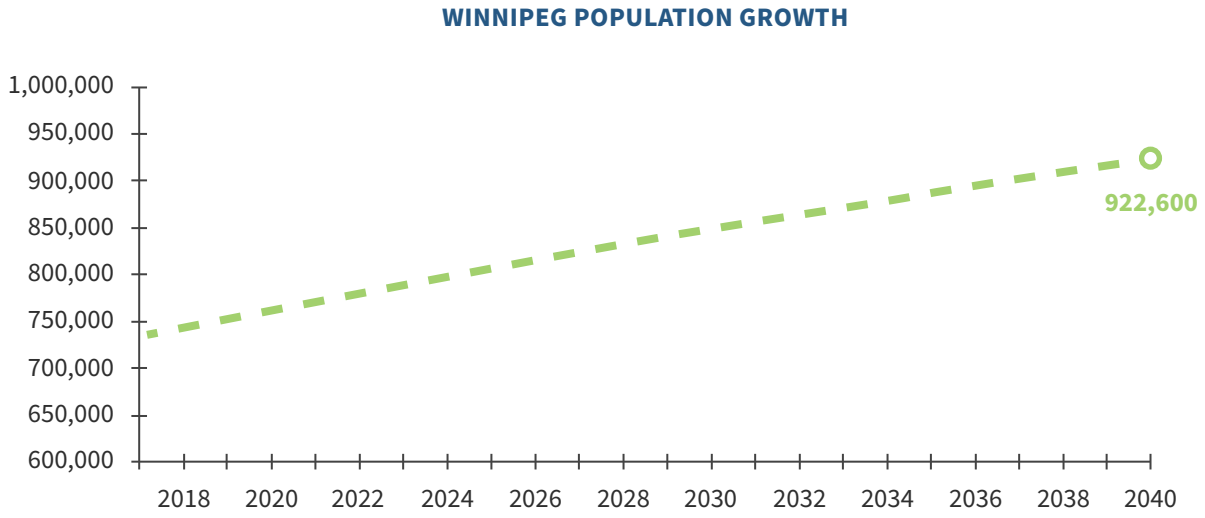


Fig. 22: *Winnipeg population growth*
Source: City of Winnipeg (n.d). Community Trends and Performance Report, Vol. 1 for 2020 Budget Report.

Indigenous communities

Winnipeg has the largest proportion of Indigenous people among major cities in Canada, with 12 percent of the city's population identifying as Indigenous. The city is home to people of a wide diversity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ancestry, as well as a growing population of Indigenous youth, all of whom have distinct cultural and recreation needs. Indigenous people are generally less likely to participate in organized sport than non-Indigenous people due to socio-cultural, geographic, and economic barriers that limit their ability to access organized sport and recreation activities. Additional collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations is needed to address these barriers. An example of this would be developing ways that Indigenous youth and their families can participate in decision-making for recreational use of parks space.

When planning, designing, and programming parks, it is also important to acknowledge that the lands upon which Winnipeg is now situated are in Treaty No. 1 territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation. In the spirit of reconciliation, Indigenous communities should be included in park planning process, and Indigenous place-making considered in park design, public art, and programming.

Age and life stage

Canada's population is aging. However, Winnipeg has a higher population of working-age adults and young families than the rest of the country in part due to its steadily growing immigrant and young Indigenous populations. The largest age cohort, representing 7.4 percent of the overall population in Winnipeg, is made up of people between the ages of 25 and 29.

Winnipeg is part of a global movement to create age-friendly cities. Recognizing the importance of age in the planning of parks amenities and services means ensuring that parks remain accessible and inclusive of all. Although the Winnipeg population is younger than the Canadian median, the proportion of children (aged 0 - 14) has been decreasing since 2001. At the same time, the proportion of seniors (over age 65) has been increasing. The number of people aged 85 and greater has also increased twelvefold over the past 10 years. With that demographic shift, parks and open spaces must be planned in a way that accommodates varying levels of mobility and provides amenities for all ages and abilities.

Income and personal economics

Winnipeg is one of the most affordable cities in Canada based on the cost of housing versus household income. At the same time, Winnipeg also has some of the lowest median wages in the country, being 10 percent lower than the national median. Unemployment rates are relatively low compared to the national average (Winnipeg's unemployment rate was around 6.5 percent, compared to Calgary at 9.1 percent and Quebec at 4.6 percent.); however, trends are showing that Winnipeg's unemployment rate is increasing while Canada's decreases. This should also be considered in the provisioning of parks.

While parks are one of the city's few amenities that families and individuals of all socioeconomic backgrounds can enjoy free of charge, barriers such as transportation access remain and may influence utilization. People rely on parks being walkable; distance can be prohibitive for those without access to a personal vehicle – particularly children, youth, and seniors – and should be a key factor in determining how to equitably provide parks service.

Sources:
City of Winnipeg (n.d). Community Trends and Performance Report, Vol. 1 for 2020 Budget Report.
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3.1.2 Other influences on demand for parks

Increase in sedentary behaviour

Physical activity and physical literacy (*Fig. 23*) are key contributors to health and happiness. Living an active lifestyle makes people happier, improves confidence, and increases overall physical and mental health and wellbeing. Access to parks make living an active lifestyle easier by providing residents with a shared public resource they could not otherwise access.

Unfortunately, Canadian children and adults are becoming increasingly sedentary and, in turn, are experiencing increasing rates of obesity and mental health issues. Studies show sitting still for too long can make it harder to focus on mentally challenging tasks and can have a negative impact on mood. Unstructured play, particularly outside, teaches children and youth many skills and increases creative capacity.

Creating enticing and engaging spaces that stimulate a desire to live in active life is key to combating sedentary behaviour and increasing quality of life for all. Additionally, providing a range of structured and unstructured opportunities can help ensure the parks system offers an activity for all. A key challenge for the parks system is to provide a diverse and sustainable range of amenities and activities, allowing people from all walks of life to participate in an active lifestyle.

Changing participation and preferences

Participation in traditional sport and leisure is generally dwindling across Canada, largely due to an aging population. Statistics Canada's *General Social Survey* shows participation in organized sport has declined nearly 20 percent in the last 20 years. In their 2019 report card on physical activity, ParticipACTION reported that 18 percent of Canadian adults and 65 percent of those aged 5-17 do not achieve the recommended amount of daily activity.

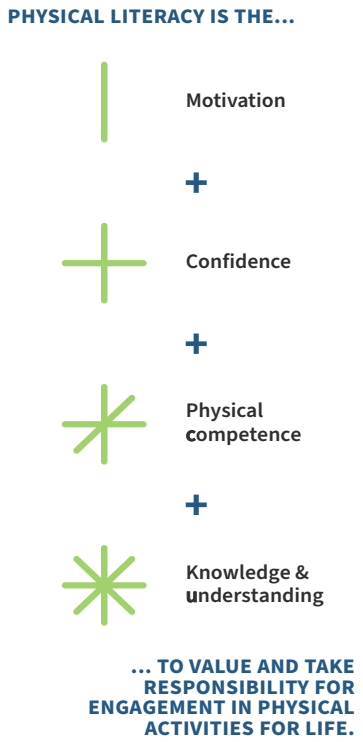

Fig. 23: *Understanding physical literacy*

Fortunately, Winnipeggers' participation in some sport and leisure activities is trending upwards; this growth is seen in basketball, soccer, and cricket is a result of shifting interests among young people and an influx of newcomers who bring interest in activities with them from "home." Pickleball is gaining popularity among older adults, while interest in ultimate frisbee and skateboard parks has increased among younger Winnipeggers. Self-directed and casual recreation activities such as fitness classes, running, yoga, walking, and cycling are also seeing an upswing. Greater flexibility and convenience of these activities drive popularity among those with busier lifestyles and less free time.

Delivering these services will challenge the City and its service delivery partners to find the best use of limited resources to support changing sport participation and preferences both now and into the future. This requires the City to actively seek input from Winnipeggers about the kinds of activities they would like the parks system to provide. Creating a robust, ongoing community consultation process will allow the City to better assess community need for park services, and better identify the parks that require improvement to meet those needs.

Sources:
Department of Canadian Heritage, Policy Research Group. (n.d.). Environmental Scan 2010: Trends and Issues in Canada and in Sport. Retrieved from: http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/sport/sport/EScan_SportCanadaFinal.pdf
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Nature deficit

With an increase in busier lifestyles comes an unfortunate side effect – lack of time spent outdoors and in nature. In fact, at this point in history, we spend more time indoors than any previous generation. This phenomenon is so profound that it now has a name *nature deficit disorder*. While this is not a technical medical term, it was coined to describe some staggering data that shows Canadians are not spending time outside at the rates they once were. It is not uncommon for people to spend the majority or all of their recreation time in human-made environments.

Studies have shown that spending time in parks and nature has significant and wide-ranging health benefits. Exposure to greenspace can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, stress, and high blood pressure, while improving mental health. This year in Canada, 1.1 million Canadians were diagnosed with Vitamin D deficiency, though the daily recommended amount of Vitamin D can easily be accrued by spending a small amount of time outdoors during the midday hours. It is estimated that Canadians spend 90 percent of daily time indoors and that the play radius of the average 9-year-old has decreased by 90 percent since the 1970s.

As areas of the Winnipeg continue to densify, demand on recreation and parks services will also increase. With small or no backyards, people living in higher density dwellings rely heavily upon public spaces to meet their needs. With such a growing dependence upon public areas and services to provide opportunities for personal enjoyment, recreation, and connection to the natural world, it is not simply about providing space but rather establishing programs and facilities that provide a sense of place and connection.

Sources:
Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Well-Being of Our Citizens. Canada Parks Council, 2014.
Connecting Canadians with Nature: An Investment in the Well-Being of Our Citizens. Canada Parks Council, 2014.

3.2 Responding to areas of higher poverty

Poverty can be a significant barrier to achieving individual and familial good health, wellbeing and social equity. Families living with poverty may not have the same transportation and financial means to access private amenities that others enjoy, such as backyards, athletic programs, and summer vacation homes. For many, parks provide their sole opportunity to experience nature, community events, or friendly gathering spaces. Gaps in service provision in these neighbourhoods must be seen as a high priority to address. Additionally, the nature of service delivery in these areas may require unique approaches to help to address and compensate for the existing social and economic barriers which may limit park access and program availability. Stakeholder engagement around gaps and opportunities is required in order to better understand community and resident needs.

As the full assessment of socio-economic needs is beyond the scope of this document, the Strategy draws on existing City efforts to highlight priority neighbourhoods. Although poverty exists throughout Winnipeg, areas of higher poverty were identified by the 2020 *Defining Higher Needs Neighbourhoods* report to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks. The report uses 2016 Census data using a *Market Basket Measure* of low income. Initial higher poverty areas are identified and prioritized at the Dissemination Area (DA) level of the Census, then a focus neighbourhood category is used to identify a large geographic area that includes the high priority DAs, as well as other nearby neighbourhoods which include a significant number of Winnipeggers living with poverty.

The Strategy adopts these focus areas as a triage tool to prioritize the City's attention to address gaps in service delivery in these neighbourhoods (*Fig. 24*). This process is ongoing and adaptive to changing socio-economic pressures as the city progresses. These neighbourhoods are denoted on the map as 'areas of higher poverty' (*Fig. 25*).

The *Defining Higher Needs Neighbourhoods* report includes the following recommendations, which are consistent with the Strategy.

- Rather than developing a specific equity formula for how this information will inform all decisions and priorities, an approach to service delivery will use these higher poverty areas as a lens for special consideration in planning and decision-making processes.
- In areas of overlapping and intense need, such as the identified focus neighbourhoods, the City may choose to lead the development of multidisciplinary community plans, which focus on developing a deeper understanding of the multifaceted challenges facing a neighbourhood and engaging with the community to identify opportunities for improvement across service areas.
- This type of planning program can help align municipal programs, services, regulations, policies, and strategic support with community priorities, as well as with other government partners and agencies, in a coordinated and strategic manner.
- Engagement will include outreach to community and neighbourhood organizations, residents, and other stakeholders. Input from these groups will also be sought on gaps and opportunities in these areas, and how the City may integrate an understanding of higher poverty areas into City programs, service delivery, and investment priorities.
- Using higher poverty areas as a lens for decision-making may also help target areas for service review and special program development (i.e. designation of staff positions for Indigenous hiring, development of recreation and sport leadership programs for youth, partnerships and shared governance opportunities). Ensuring enhanced community collaboration in these areas will help the City understand and unique and place and people-specific needs and opportunities in each priority area.

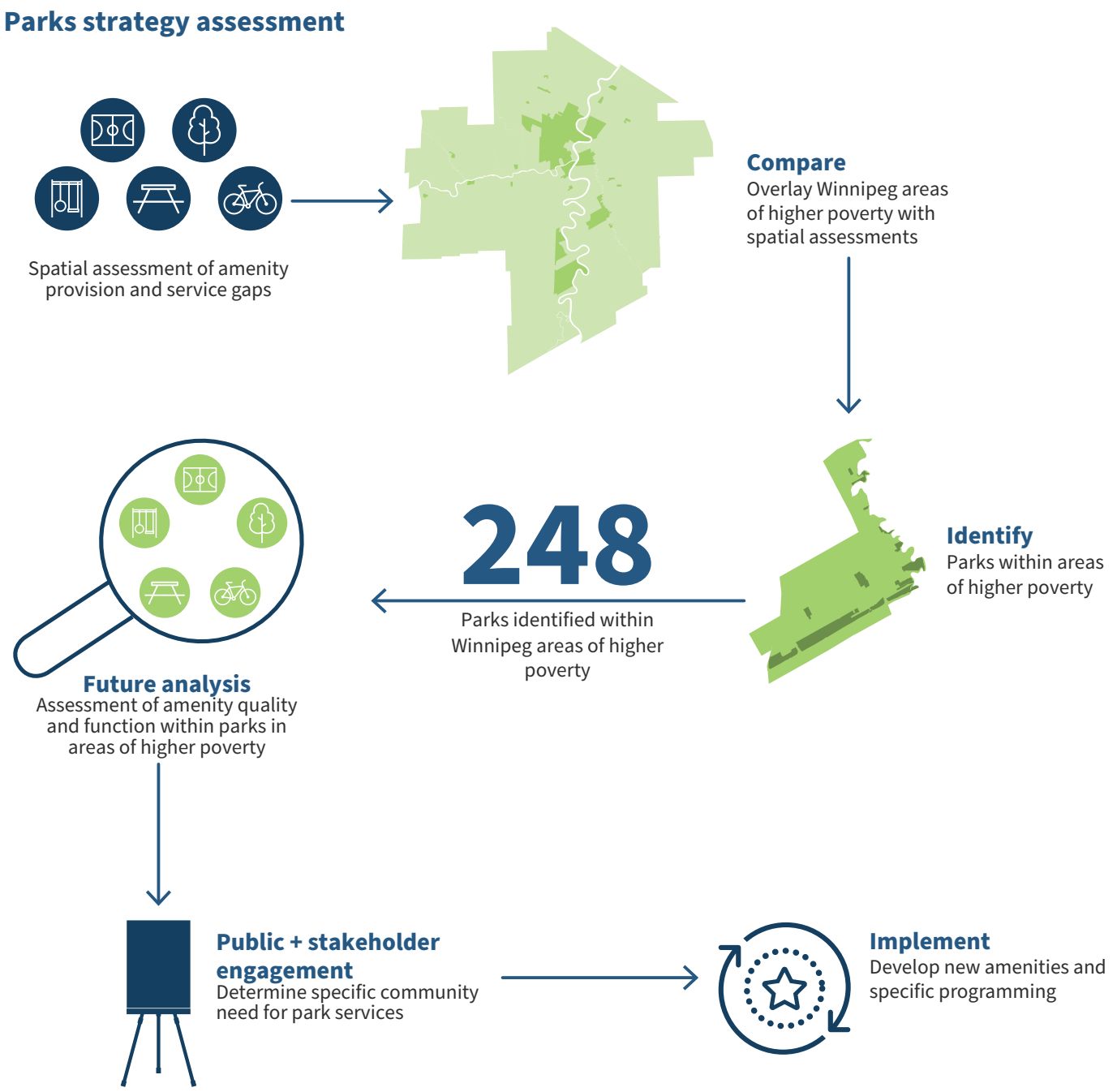


Fig. 24: *Identifying and prioritizing park investment in areas of higher poverty. The identified higher poverty areas are "... intended to serve as a foundation for future analysis of more targeted needs using other criteria, as required." (Defining Higher Needs Neighbourhoods, 2020).*

3.3 Urban structure

Winnipeg's urban landscape is as diverse as its people. Practical recommendations of the Strategy must take this into account, as recommendations fit for one area of the city may be unsuitable for another.

Some communities are newer, actively growing in response to development pressure. Others were established many years ago and are more constrained in how they change over time. The long and varied history of development has left Winnipeg with neighbourhoods exhibiting substantially different densities, housing patterns, and connections to surrounding lands. These differences influence the shape and built form of communities, making up what is referred to as Winnipeg's *urban structure*.

Recognizing this urban structure helps to understand the existing constraints and opportunities found in each community, and influences the character and services provided by parkland in these areas. Urban structure has a direct linkage to the existing supply of parkland and influences how parks can be developed in the future. A comprehensive city-wide parks strategy must account for local constraints and needs as well as city-wide service priorities.

Recognizing the fundamental differences in existing conditions and future opportunities in different parts of Winnipeg will allow the City to manage expectations about what the parks system can provide. This will allow local residents and parks planners to better understand parks service delivery and capitalize on unique opportunities as they arise.

For parks, the areas of greatest interest are predominantly residential. The urban residential structure of Winnipeg is differentiated in *Complete Communities* into the following areas (*Fig. 25*):

- Downtown
- Established neighbourhoods (which includes mature communities & recent communities)
- New communities
- Major redevelopment sites

When considering park provisioning there are two other areas within the Urban Structure where park land allocation can be expected, and therefore need to be anticipated and planned for:

- Rural and agricultural lands
- Employment lands

The following provides an explanation of some of the different characteristics that influence parks planning within each urban structure area.

3.3.1 Downtown

Total area *(ha)*	# of residents *(2016 Census)*	Park provision	
		Number	Area *(ha)*
347	**15,690**	**15**	**13.3**

Winnipeg's Downtown is the oldest urban area of the city, the commercial core, and home to many major arts, entertainment, cultural, and heritage attractions and institutions. The area is expected to diversify from a primarily commercial hub to a higher density, mixed-use community (as envisioned by *Complete Communities*). With that residential growth comes an increased demand for supporting public park space. But with opportunities for additional parkland acquisition likely to remain rare, the focus for parks service will tend to be more on quality than quantity of parkland.

Improved amenity provision along with an increased emphasis on providing highly multi-functional areas will govern decisions for the upgrades to existing parks and shape the establishment of new ones. The provision of naturalized spaces and urban tree canopy are also important Downtown where much of the area is covered by impervious surfaces, and residents have less access to their own private open space. The well-connected grid pattern of development in the

Parks and urban structure

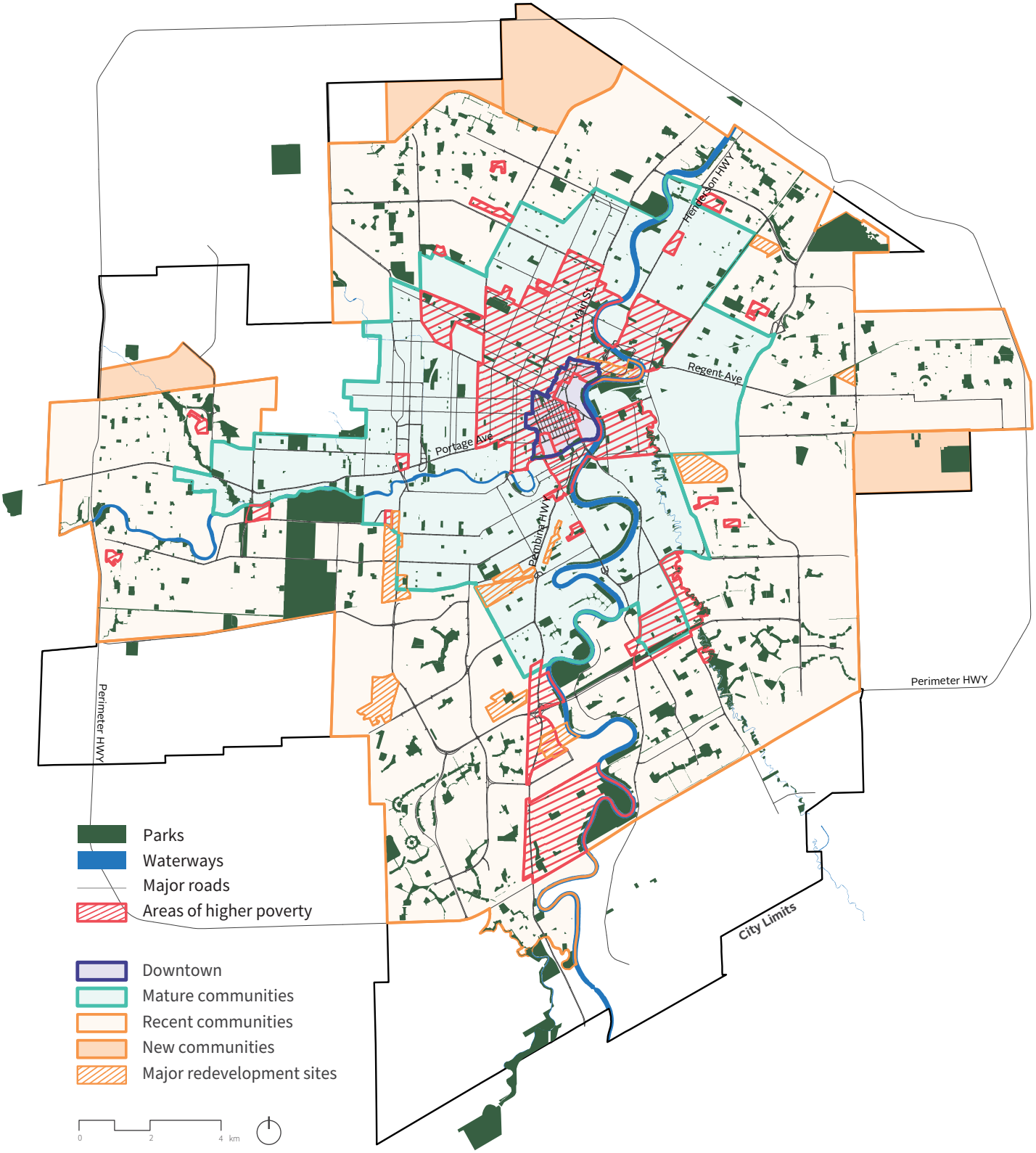


Fig. 25: *Winnipeg's parks in the urban structure context*

Downtown makes the area particularly walkable, and public streets provide another resource to increase the amount of vibrant public space in the area.

3.3.2 Established neighbourhoods

Established neighbourhoods are where most Winnipeggers live. They are predominantly residential areas with complementary commercial, employment, educational and recreation uses. They are considered stable but not static. These areas are expected to see contextually sensitive growth as well as changes related to differing housing options, affordability, and efficiencies in land use and services. Changes within established neighbourhoods should reflect the form and character of the area to enhance what makes these neighbourhoods unique.

Established neighbourhoods can be subdivided into two categories based on when they were established in the city: mature communities and recent communities. These communities have distinct urban forms and characteristics that influence how parks were and can be established in these areas.

Mature communities

Total area *(ha)*	# of residents *(2016 Census)*	Park provision	
		Number	Area *(ha)*
11,047	**308,711**	**414**	**618**

Winnipeg's mature communities were mostly developed prior to 1950. These earliest neighbourhoods include lands growing outward from the Downtown, as well as the Transcona lands. They are characterized by grid networks of streets and backlanes, with tree-lined sidewalks providing walkable access throughout most neighbourhoods. Winnipeg's mature communities contain a broad spectrum of different park types that provide diverse services to residents. In line with the street grid, parks in these areas tend to be rectangular, which typically makes aligning size with supported amenities easier. While these neighbourhoods generally have good

access to parks, especially around the riverbanks, the range of services provided by these parks is quite varied from area to area.

Neighbourhoods in mature communities are substantially built-out, limiting the ability to acquire suitable lands for new parkland development in response to changing community needs and increasing population densities. A disproportionate number of Winnipeg's higher poverty areas are found in mature communities, where access to parks and open spaces provide valuable social and recreational purposes. To meet the growing need for park services, parks in these areas should focus on the quality and diversity of services provided.

Of course, opportunities for acquisition of land to expand existing or establish new park sites should be considered. One opportunity to keep abreast of, is the closures of schools; these sites offer the benefit of preserving existing open space and established amenities. Another source of additional park space will be through the development of any of the four major redevelopment sites, located within Mature areas.

More realistically, bolstering the provision of parks in these neighbourhoods will arise from site specific redevelopment plans. Underused parkland in some neighbourhoods present an opportunity for their repurposing to support future intensification and infill development in order to secure revenue to upgrade parks within the area that are seeing higher use and demand.

Recent communities

Total area *(ha)*	# of residents *(2016 Census)*	Park provision	
		Number	Area *(ha)*
22,558	**374,470**	**510**	**2,271**

Winnipeg's more recent communities were generally planned and developed from the 1950s to the turn of the century to support low- to medium-density residential properties, as well as supportive commercial uses. They include a variety of urban forms, predominantly defined by curvilinear street networks. The non-uniform neighbourhood block shapes result in irregular park shapes that add interest but make it more challenging to efficiently accommodate park amenities that are defined by more rigid geometric forms, such as sports fields or tennis courts. Many newer communities lack sidewalk infrastructure, requiring pedestrians to share the road with automobiles. This impacts the ability to provide safe, walkable access to core park amenities and leads to an increased focus on driving to access recreation. In recent communities, parkland, though well provided, is generally less accessible by multiple modes of transportation when compared with older communities. This is particularly true in communities that are further-removed from the rivers. Some recent community developments do support internal park linkages by way of linkage parks and paths through parks, in combination with street to street walkway connections, to designate pedestrian (and cycling) networks.

Although a large amount of parkland is available to these communities, the services offered by the parks system in these areas tend to lack diversity considering the size of populations it is serving. This is in some ways due to the abundance of linear and non-contiguous parks that make it hard to allocate sufficient space to support larger amenities. Many residents in these communities value the green networks but express concerns about their inability to easily access to the breadth of amenities and opportunities provided elsewhere. Neighbourhoods in recent communities are generally stable, with limited redevelopment potential over the next 30 years other than planned major redevelopment sites (see *Section 3.3.4*), which are located in the northeast and southwest. Given recent communities are unlikely to see additional development in the near future (outside of identified major redevelopment opportunities), service gaps will require innovation to introduce amenities at suitable existing locations. Higher poverty areas are currently less densely distributed in recent communities, the few that do exist are found in the southern neighbourhoods.

Emerging communities are a subset of recent communities, and describe residential areas that have very recently been developed or are under development.

3.3.3 New communities

In new communities, parkland is provided by developers through a subdivision parkland dedication process required under the *City of Winnipeg Charter* and governed by the City's *Development Agreement Parameters*. Currently public open space land dedication requirements within the City's by-laws and Charters are general and do not address the practicalities of amenity design and functional requirements of parkland and parkland access to meet the needs of the community.

Trends in new community development have tended to be predominantly car-centric in design and layout with curvilinear road networks that provide minimal pedestrian and cyclist connectivity. As well, there is a

growing tendency to develop extremely narrow linkage parks in an effort to support a desire for more pedestrian opportunities. These linkage parks often also serve stormwater retention functions and are not configured to provide flexibility of recreation service capacity.

One challenge of the city's unprecedented growth is the demand for space for other civic facilities, such as community centres or libraries. With parkland dedication as the only mechanism to set aside civic land (other than through direct acquisition), park reserves are often pressured to accommodate other facilities and sometimes other civic services such as police and fire. This highlights the need to coordinate the parks system with other civic services to ensure that the key needs of the city are effectively met.

Improvements to the City's requirements for park provision in new communities are necessary. Structural changes to growth plans, development bylaws and regulations, and new community planning processes will help to ensure that parkland acquisition produces functional and consistent improvements to the services and experiences offered in new communities. The creation of new communities, and the allocation of parkland within them, is guided by secondary plans that establish the framework for development. These secondary plans tend to focus on servicing (utilities and roads) and larger land uses, with parks considered after-the-fact. This can lead to a poorly considered park lands, with little regard for the distribution of people and how new parks will align with the surrounding community's interests. A more holistic set of policies surrounding parkland provision will help direct allocation in emerging communities and ensure more sustainable parks development that meets the needs of Winnipeggers.

As the city grows towards its boundaries, opportunities to preserve existing natural areas and develop additional community parks must be sought out. Opportunities to create parkland should be a product of the existing landscape and the intended structure of the new communities. Opportunities for collaboration and cost sharing practices between developers, other levels of government, and various City departments is critical in effectively achieving the objectives of the Strategy. Recognizing parks as a key component of future developments is essential to ensure these areas are planned as complete communities that are well-served by parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities.

3.3.4 Major redevelopment sites

In addition to infill development within existing urban areas, Winnipeg continues to grow and expand not only through new (greenfield) community development, but also larger infill initiatives. These major redevelopment sites, are essentially large underutilized areas where the existing land use is no longer desirable, so are poised to be revitalized into new uses in the future (see *Fig. 25* for specific areas designated). While the development of parkland in these areas is challenging due to existing land use constraints and other demands for real estate, these sites provide an important opportunity to address potential service gaps through the acquisition of new parkland, and the establishment of new amenities in response to community needs. These sites are found in areas that are otherwise built-out, so they present a chance to improve and expand the parks system to provide better service to surrounding communities.

3.3.5 Rural and agricultural lands

Rural and agricultural areas are the large tracts of undeveloped land that currently support and accommodate a mix of agricultural activities (food production), rural living and supportive uses, within the fringes of the city limits. These areas are primarily located in the south end of the city. Some are anticipated to remain rural or agricultural lands in perpetuity due to inadequate flood protection and servicing limitations; others represent the long-term supply for future greenfield lands. Until population levels warrant re-designation however, they will be maintained as large parcels for agricultural and compatible uses.

Complete Communities Direction Strategy identifies these areas as sectors which will be planned at a high level in anticipation of further development. Policies set a minimum lot area of 40 acres (16 ha) in order to restrict redevelopment in an effort to prevent fragmentation of these land. This serves to promote and encourage a well-planned, organized and efficient development for agriculture and other low intensity uses, which are vital to Winnipeg's economy.

The extent of large private yards diminishes the need for public parks, at this time. Aside from park parcels acquired along the four waterways (the Red, Assiniboine, La Salle and Seine Rivers), there are currently only a handful of other small park properties in rural and agricultural areas. Of those, only a few sites have been developed and improved as park to serve the area – this was primarily driven by a community appeal, but deemed worthy of investment because the sites were located in high visibility areas therefore expected to draw greater use. Sites that have yet to be developed for parkland are being held for future consideration, to be developed, expanded, preserved as natural areas or traded for other lands, if and when warranted.

Park provisioning in rural and agricultural areas could occur through purchase of land, but is most likely to be associated with dedication of park land as part of a future new community development process. Since the latter must be preceded by a secondary plan, and must have servicing capacity, a new community development is not expected for quite some time. Acquisition of parkland in rural and agricultural areas will focus on locations comprised of high-quality natural habitats in an effort to be proactive in protecting these areas in advance of development pressures. Larger tracts of these areas may be suited for regional parks. Strategic acquisition of land or reserve of City-owned property, in some instances, may be considered as assets to negotiate land swap for future parkland that may ultimately be more desirable as park space.

3.3.6 Employment lands

The employment lands designation refers to all scales of industrial land use, including business parks and major institutional establishments. This designation aims to promote competitiveness and economic diversity of Winnipeg and the surrounding region by accommodating and supporting existing and future employment growth.

Employment lands are not considered a priority location for park space since they are generally not located in proximity to residential communities. Water retention ponds are becoming more prevalent in industrial areas, as they by design, include a sloped landscaped embankment around their edge. In many cases, public reserve areas have been incorporated to provide usable public park for use and enjoyment by the area workers. There is opportunity for these reserve areas to support more active park and recreational functions and amenities, and/or to potentially complement the pedestrian and cycling network. Decisions to designate functional park reserve areas are made on a case-by-case basis, with consideration to the ease of site access and intensity of industrial operations in the vicinity. Appropriate recreational amenities may be sited in a low intensity industrial area and based on the amount of entitled park land dedication.

Major institutional areas, such as educational institutions and hospitals, often include residential components. To date the provision of open space at established institutional areas has typically been the responsibility of the institution to provide. Municipal considerations are given to support the passive recreational needs of patrons, by the establishment of new parks or investment in improvements to parks in close proximity to the institutional lands.

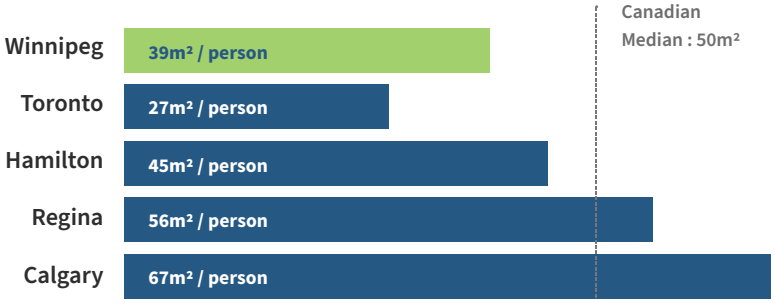
3.4 Parkland

At a city-wide level, Winnipeggers are generally well-served in terms of the amount and access they have to parkland, however this will change if parkland provision is not better aligned with population growth. Winnipeg contains 3,300 ha of parks, and about 200 ha of other city-owned lands that function as public open spaces. Almost all residents are already within a 10-minute walking distance (600 m) of a park (*Fig. 27*). Overall, there is approximately 39 m² of parkland per person in Winnipeg. This is below the Canadian median of 50 m² of parkland per capita. Winnipeg has greater provision per person than Toronto, but lower than Regina, Hamilton, and Calgary (*Fig. 26*).

The World Health Organization states the minimum Urban Green Space value should be 9 m² per capita but the ideal is 50 m² per capita. Urban Green Space is any private or public greenspace, not just City parks.

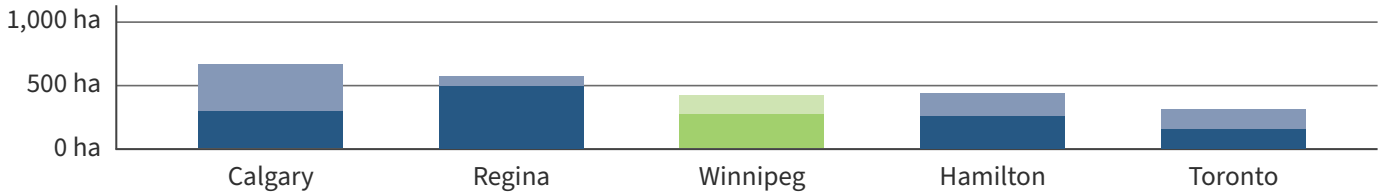
When this data is viewed through the lens of the urban structure, differences in distribution and capacity appear (*Fig. 27*). This is primarily due to historical development patterns and the different population and density characteristics of the urban structure areas (*Fig. 28* shows parkland provision and potential service gaps for parkland across the city).

Source: World Health Organization Urban Green Space Interventions and Health (2017) .



HECTARES OF PARKLAND PER 100,000 PEOPLE

Total parkland



	Calgary	Regina	Winnipeg	Hamilton	Toronto
Natural	367	65	142	214	124
Maintained	298	491	250	235	149
Total	665	556	392	449	273

Natural parkland
Maintained parkland

Fig. 26: *Per capita parkland provision comparison to other large Canadian municipalities. Nation-wide median is 50m² per person*
Source: MBNCanada Performance Measurement Report (2019).

PARKLAND PROVISION WALKABLE ACCESS

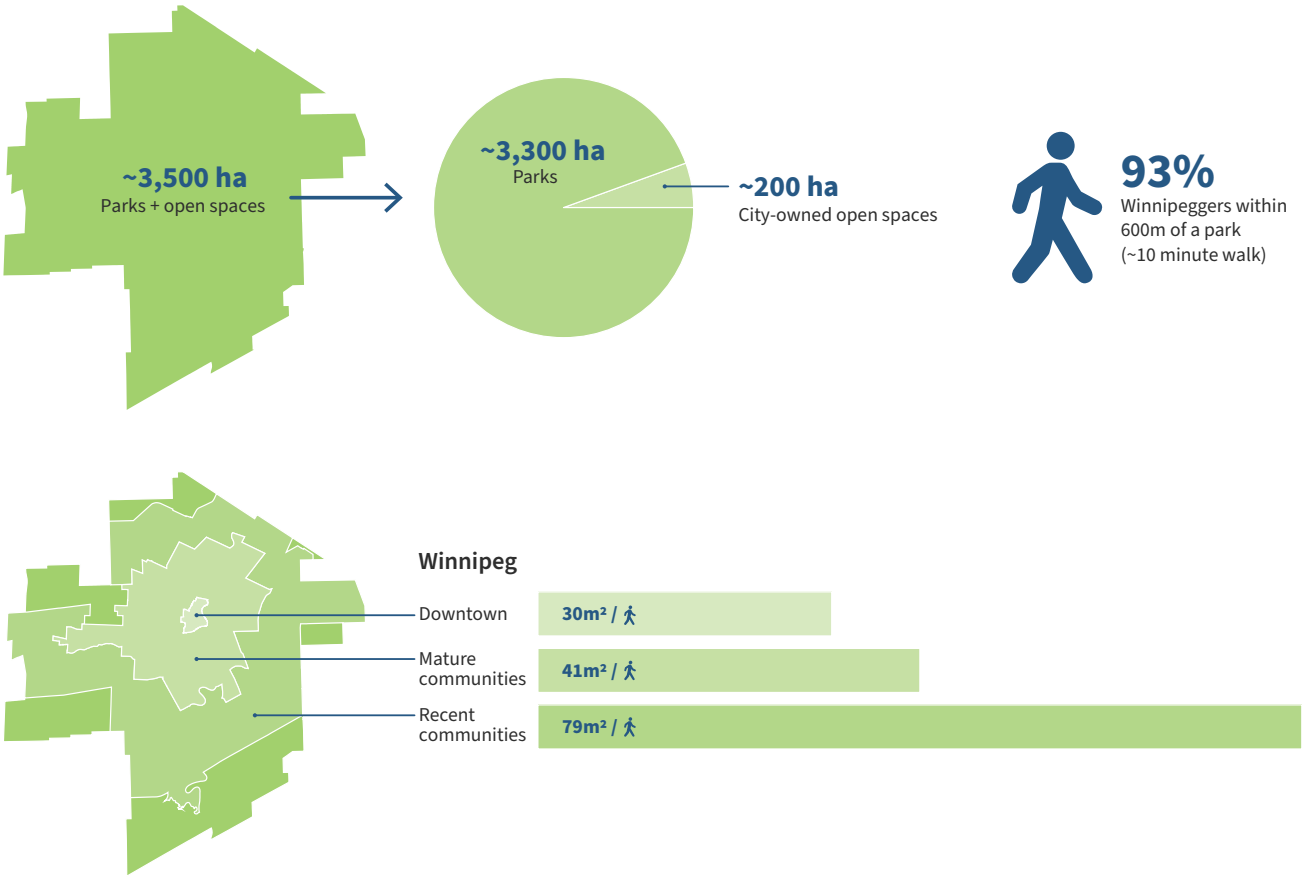


Fig. 27: *Parkland provision within walking distance for the City of Winnipeg (includes regional, community, neighbourhood, linkage and nature parks). One hectare (ha) is approximately equal to the size of a football field.*

3.4.1 Parkland provision across Winnipeg's urban structure

	Average walkable parkland area per person *(within 600 m)*	Number of parks
Downtown	30 m^2	15
Mature	41 m^2	414
Recent	79 m^2	510

Downtown

Downtown has the lowest provision of city parkland per person within walking distance (30 m^2/person) and, given its unique development, will likely continue to do so. As the city's most urban area, Downtown parks are smaller than in the rest of the city and there are no regional parks. However, all current residents do have walkable access to at least one park, and the grid network of Downtown makes these easy to access. With anticipated residential growth, and additional demand for park spaces from employment uses, the overall provision rate of parkland per person will decrease unless some additional parkland is acquired, particularly in the southwest quadrant. As it is difficult to acquire and consolidate land for parks Downtown, smaller acquisitions will likely be needed to fill gaps. Decisions around increasing parkland provision should also account for non-City owned park spaces, such as the Forks National Historic Site and Upper Fort Garry Provincial Park, which provide additional recreation value and connections to the riverfront. Streets can also be designed to serve as vibrant public spaces that add additional recreation and leisure value to the Downtown park network.

Mature communities

Mature communities have a similar parkland provision to the city's overall average per capita (41 m^2/person). Community and neighbourhood parks are well-distributed, with larger parks found more commonly along the rivers or centred around athletic complexes. Residents in the west and southeast have higher-than-average access because they are closer to the larger riverfront parks. Correspondingly, several areas in the north, south and centre have below-average provision, as they are further from the riverfront. As most of Winnipeg's mature communities have a grid system of streets, it is relatively easy to walk to existing parks. Over time, it is anticipated that mature communities will see more infill development, which will increase population density and put pressure on existing parks. Additional park spaces may be required to maintain the same level of provision.

Recent communities

Recent communities have the overall highest parkland provision at 79 m^2/person - almost double that of the city-wide average per capita. This is due to the much lower population density in recent communities, and better access to the larger regional parks, which are primarily located towards the edges of the city. Even with these factors, there are some recent community areas with poor walkable park access and provision.

These provision gaps are primarily due to the more disconnected and less accessible nature of the areas; the road and pathway design of these communities makes it difficult for residents to access existing park spaces.

PARK PROVISION BY URBAN STRUCTURE

PARK CLASS	DOWNTOWN	MATURE	RECENT	MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT SITES	NEW / OUTSIDE THE CITY
	# of parks (ha)	*# of parks (ha)*	*# of parks (ha)*	*# of parks (ha)*	*# of parks (ha)*
Regional & City	–	2 (57.9 ha)	6 (504.3 ha)	–	4 (239.4 ha)
Community	5 (5.3 ha)	86 (320.7 ha)	119 (720.6 ha)	–	5 (36.7 ha)
Neighbourhood	7 (3.9 ha)	221 (106.3 ha)	224 (249.8 ha)	–	2 (3.0 ha)
Nature	–	11 (13.5 ha)	22 (388.5 ha)	–	10 (49.8 ha)
Linkage	3 (4.1 ha)	94 (119.4 ha)	140 (408.1 ha)	–	7 (96.03 ha)

Parkland

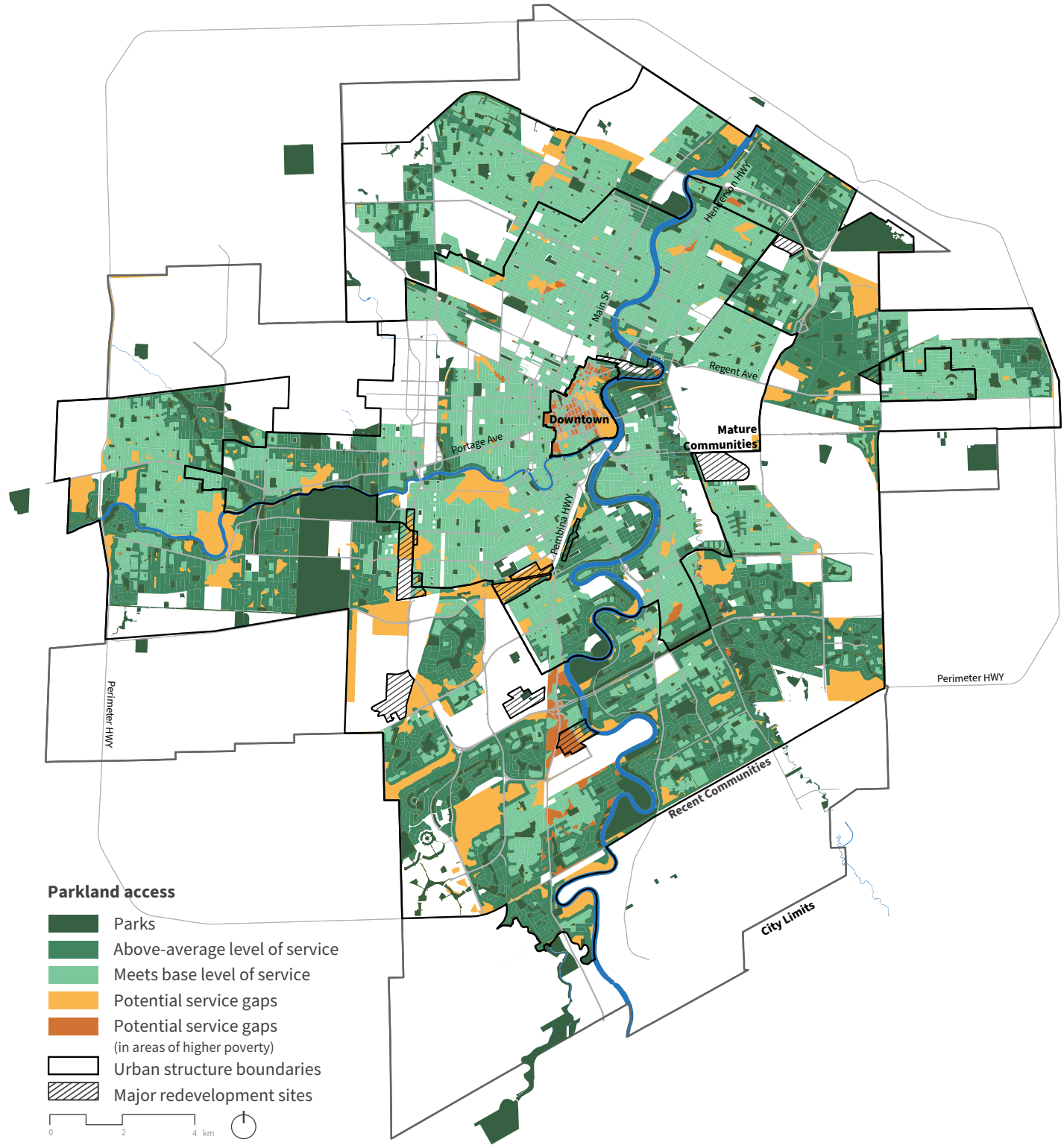


Fig. 28: *Parkland access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average parkland provision, compared to the average provided in each urban structure area, indicate where large amounts of parkland are available to residents. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have walkable access to any park within 600 m.*

3.5 Natural features

Service area:
Nature experience

Improve people's access to nature and support ecological functioning through the restoration and preservation of natural systems.

Analysis of City lands determined that 64 percent of Winnipeggers are within walking distance of natural features: remnant natural areas grade 'C' and higher, contiguous forest canopy areas 0.5 ha or larger, and designated naturalized areas (as defined in *Section 2.6.2*). Much the western, eastern, and southern neighbourhoods are considered well-served by natural features while service gaps exist in northern neighbourhoods, where few natural areas and little continuous forest stands are available for residents to enjoy.

The river valleys are a key source of access to this component, with some of Winnipeg's most prominent natural features found along the riparian habitats that line our waterways - most notably the Red, Assiniboine and Seine Rivers. There are also other equally valued pockets of mature deciduous forest stands (the result of long-term planting and maintenance of tree cover), native prairie grasslands and wetlands that dot our parks.

Retaining and enhancing these remaining pockets of native habitat and stands of planted forest demonstrates the City's commitment to preservation and contributes greatly to the sustainable operation of the city. The City has recognized that parks dominated by built structures and turf areas are more labour-intensive, and therefore tend to be more costly to maintain while healthy natural areas are generally self sustaining. With all this and the myriad of other benefits in mind, the City has already implemented a broader program of naturalization.

Having access to green infrastructure is good for mental health and provides an oasis within the urban environment of the city.

The current level of service for natural features is summarized in *Fig. 29*.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• A total of 449 publicly accessible natural features are found within the parks system
Access	• 64% of the population is within walking distance of a natural feature • The average Winnipegger has access to one natural feature within walking distance of their home • Above-average level of service is found nearby to the rivers, as well as in recent communities to the northeast, southeast, south and west
Quality	• 79% of Winnipeg's natural areas received a habitat condition grade of 'C' or higher.

Natural features

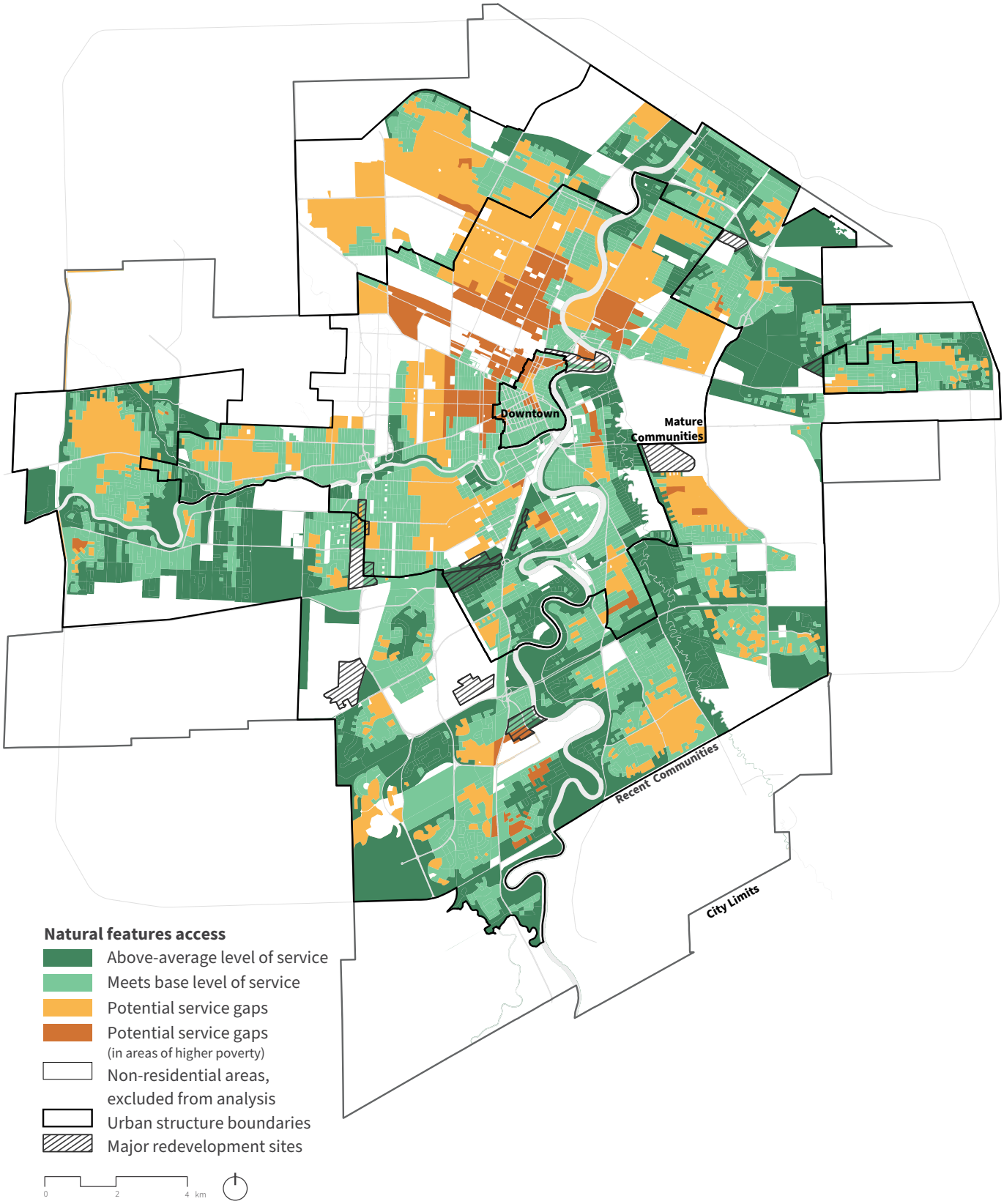


Fig. 29: *Natural features access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the citywide average) indicate where residents have a variety of different accessible natural features. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have walkable access to any natural area within 600 m.*

Natural versus maintained parkland

Currently, the city has significantly more maintained (manicured) than natural parkland compared to other cities (*Fig. 26*). In areas that are currently well-serviced with parkland there is an opportunity to naturalize or restore areas to reduce long-term maintenance costs, provide essential habitat, conserve soil fertility, support biodiversity, and provide additional human and ecological benefits. Some of these benefits include:

- Water conservation by using native, non-invasive species with lower, or no watering requirements
- Providing food and habitat for pollinators and wildlife
- Enabling people to gather, sit, play and picnic in fields and meadows by planting lower-maintenance passive grass mixes
- Decrease surface water runoff and erosion
- Restore soil water infiltration and stormwater capacities
- Reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides
- Provide aesthetic value for parks visitors

NATURAL VERSUS NATURALIZED

Natural areas are examples of intact, natural vegetation and landforms, dominated by native vegetation. They are critical resources for the City's biodiversity. Naturalized areas have previously been covered in non-natural land cover (agriculture, industry, or other impermeable disturbances), and then restored to permeable vegetation. Ideally, naturalization will include native plantings and more natural topography.

Controlled Burn at Assiniboine Forest

3.6 Connections

Service area:
Trail-based recreation

Support and improve year-round opportunities for walking, cycling, skiing and other active transportation activities through the provision of a connected pathway and trail network that provides greater access to natural spaces, parks, communities, waterways and destinations.

Most Winnipeg parks are considered reasonably well-connected within neighbourhoods by available pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. However, there are still parts of the city where walkable or bikeable access to parks is restricted by physical and natural barriers such as rivers, railways, and major roadways, by gaps and incomplete networks, or by not being as well supported by transit service. It was quickly recognized that some regional parks and large active community parks are not adequately supported by the desired range of multi-modal access, to align with their status as destinations and activity hubs.

Connections to, through, and within parks emphasizes the importance of active modes that align with parks goals for promoting health and active living, and with the city's goal of decreasing reliance on personal vehicles. The Strategy asserts that all parks should be accessible by walking or biking and supported by a network of sidewalks, trails, bike-ways and multi-use paths. As a most-basic service, parks should promote and support active mobility with an adequate supply of paths and trails within parks. As park size, intensity of activity, and service catchment increases, access by transit and vehicles becomes increasingly more important. Analysis of connections aims to identify where there are gaps in the transportation network that may limit how people access parks by multiple modes of travel, with consideration to the catchment of the park category. Connections also considers how active mobility within parks is supported by year-round access to trails, multi-use paths, sidewalks and other active transportation routes. Efforts to analyze the extent and quality of connections from these perspectives highlighted some gaps in our current data that made deriving solid metrics challenging. Mapping analysis of connections (*Fig. 30)* summarizes analysis based on available data, and supplemented by knowledge, observation and feedback.

3.6.1 Pathways and trails within parks

The trails and multi-use paths developed within parks provide functional space for trail-based activity, and also enable ease of access to amenities and natural areas in parks. They support connectivity within parks as well being an integral part of a larger transportation network that supports walking, cycling, skiing and other modes of active transportation. The city supports universal design by continuing to expand pathways in parks and ensuring compliance with Universal access standards. Enabling year-round opportunities for walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, paddling and other modes of active transportation activities is a priority of parks.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• A total of 305.7 km of trails and pathways are found within the parks system, along with 15.9 km of cross country ski trails.
Access	• 96% of the population is within walking distance of a trail. • The average Winnipegger has access to ~1 km of trails within walking distance of their home. • Above-average level of service is found nearby to the rivers, around key regional parks, as well as in recent communities to the northeast, southeast, south and west.
Quality	• 40.8 km of trails (13%) are rated in *poor* or *very poor* condition.

Park trails and multi-use paths

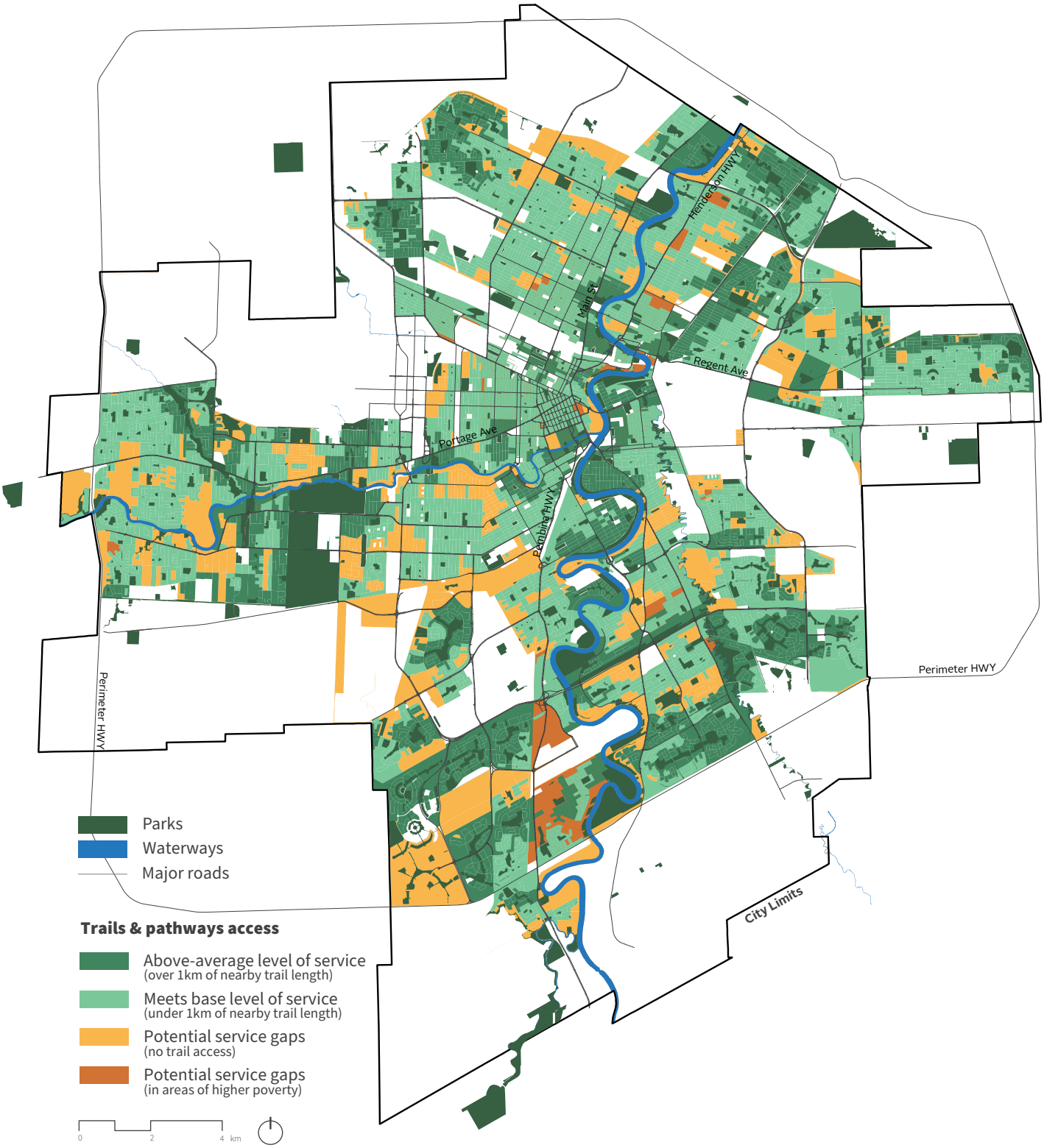


Fig. 30: *Access to trails and pathways within the parks system*

A comparison of areas of the city suggests a tendency for parks in mature communities to have less internal park paths when evaluated against recent communities. This may be related to the existence of significantly more pedestrian routes surrounding parks, but does not negate the value in adding pathways within parks to enhance park experiences.

Recently, developers have embraced the public's increased demand for walkable and connected neighbourhoods by planning parks with connectivity in mind. This includes a larger proportion of linkage parks being proposed, complete with the construction of pathways as part of initial improvements. Where possible, parks are located to enhance connections between communities or areas within a neighbourhood, and are planned in collaboration with the on-street pedestrian and cycling networks to maximize the provision of infrastructure related to non-vehicular options for travel.

A summary of the length of trails and pathways *(Fig. 30)* shows Winnipeg has over 300 km of trails and multi-use paths within parks, and that 96 percent of Winnipeg homes are within walking distance (10 minutes) of paths within parks that collectively total 1 km in length. Current data is not structured to identify lengths of continuous paths, so the 1-km length may represent a continuous loop in one park or a series of shorter paths within multiple parks. Updates to the data configuration will be necessary to better assess the type of paths available. Approximately 30 percent of these paths are found within linkage parks, 25.5 percent within community parks, 17.5 percent within regional parks, 15.8 percent in neighbourhood parks, and 7.8 percent in nature parks.

3.6.2 Multi-modal connections to and through the parks system

The Strategy's focus for improving connections to and through parks promotes and relies heavily on collaborative planning efforts for multi-modal transportation and transit, championing parks as a destination and contributor to all networks. Parks in proximity to Winnipeg's river system present the unique opportunity to promote and support water-based activity and connections. There are three launches suitable for motorized boats, and a handful of locations that provide infrastructure to support hand launching of canoes and kayaks. Expanding opportunities for year-round river access, which includes supporting access to winter trail-based activity on rivers, and improving awareness of existing opportunities will further enhance multi-modal connections to the parks system. The current transit service to parks is generally considered adequate, with exception of regional parks on the periphery of, or beyond City limits.

Generally community and neighbourhood parks are well-connected in mature communities, supported by the pattern of gridded roads and sidewalks. In these areas, gaps in service may be less about provision and more about quality of infrastructure, which may make ease of movement more challenging. Conversely, in many recent communities, the curvilinear road configurations, lack of sidewalks on local streets, and lack of shared roadways for pedestrians and cyclists contribute to gaps in access.

City-wide connectivity is improving every year due to the continued focus and investment on enhancements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and transit service network upgrades, which respectively consider their network's role in increasing access to parks.

Winnipeg's *Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies (PCS)* provide city-wide direction to improve walking and cycling as attractive, convenient and accessible transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities. Included in the PCS is a proposed priority network of bike lanes and multi-use paths to support a continuous connection of cycling routes throughout the city. Sidewalk improvements and multi-use paths are also recommended to make walking a more attractive and accessible travel option. These transportation improvements support both commuter and recreational opportunities to connect to key destinations throughout the city, including to parks. Many multi-use paths supporting walking, cycling and other modes of active transportation identified in the PCS are part of the parks system.

PARKWAYS, GREENWAYS & TRAILS

The first coordinated effort towards an integrated pedestrian and cycling network was the *Winnipeg Riverbank Parkway System*. First prioritized in 1993 under the direction of *Plan Winnipeg,* its purpose was to promote the use and enjoyment of the City's two primary rivers and riverbanks through the facilitation of public access to the waterways and adjacent lands for non-vehicular transportation and recreation. The *Parkway System* originally identified sixteen sections of riverbank for priority recreation and transportation usage. In 2006, these were consolidated into six routes, renamed in relation to their geographic location, as follows:

- North Assiniboine Parkway
- South Assiniboine Parkway
- North Winnipeg Parkway
- Kildonan Parkway
- South Winnipeg Parkway
- Bonivital Parkway

Numerous other connections have been established throughout the City, identified as *greenways* or *trails*. These connections often provide more recreational experiences, with many unreliant on roadways. They may be located along a secondary waterway, or take advantage of large areas of connected green spaces flanking right-of-ways or utility corridors. There are many greenways and trails, and the network continues to expand. This currently includes:

Bishop Grandin Greenway	River Park South Trail
Bois-des-Esprits	Seine River Greenway
Bunn's Creek Trail	Sentier Cloutier Trail
Cordite Trail	St. Norbert Heritage Trail
Fermor Trail	South St. Vital Trail
Harte Trail	Sturgeon Creek Greenway Trail
LaSalle River Greenway	Towering Cottonwood Trail
McPhillips Greenway	Transcona Trails
Niakwa Trail	Truro Creek Greenway
Northeast Pioneers Greenway	Yellow Ribbon Greenway Trail
Omand's Creek Greenway	

Photo credit: Paul Mutch

Bois-des-Esprits

There is an opportunity to improve connections to parks, both in neighbourhoods and city-wide, by implementing the routes proposed by the *Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies* (PCS) that lead to, or pass through, parks.

Figure 27 primarily focuses on routes that facilitate access to our regional parks and waterways, denoting these as priority connections. It maps some of the strategic existing (red) and proposed (orange) routes from the PCS that are key to enhancing access to these locations. It also identifies additional segments (notionally in green) that are not identified in the PCS, but are considered key to completing or enhancing these priority connections. A description of these segments are also provided in *Table 02*.
**note that the PCS segments are subject to change pending the 2021 PCS review and update as part of* Transportation Master Plan 2050

Table 02: *Cycling and multi-use path connections*

		ROUTE	PROPOSED PRIORITY PARKS SYSTEM CONNECTIONS	
			Parks Strategy	Pedestrian & Cycling Strategies
NORTHEAST QUADRANT	1	Transcona Trail to Provencher Bridge via Whittier Park		●
	2	Plessis Rd to Kilcona Park via Cordite Rd corridor		●
	3	Horse Pond Park to Buhler Recreation Park via Ravenhurst St, Dugald Rd and Murdoch Rd	●	●
	4	Plessis Rd to Buhler Recreation Park via Dugald Rd and Fuller Ave	●	●
	5	Kildonan Parkway from Disraeli Freeway to Whittier Park via Midwinter Ave and Archibald Rd	●	●
	6	Kildonan Parkway from Disraeli Freeway to Chief Peguis Trail via Glenwood Cr, Bredin Dr, Henderson Hwy, and Kildonan Dr	●	●
	7	Horse Pond Park and Millennium Park to Cordite Rd corridor via McMeans Ave and Redonda St		●
NORTHWEST QUADRANT	8	Chief Peguis Trail West - west of Main St		●
	9	Keewatin St to Little Mountain Park via Farmers Rd	●	
	10	North Winnipeg Parkway from Louise Bridge to McBeth House & Grounds via Rover Ave, St. John's Park, Scotia St, and Kildonan Park; and Cathedral Ave extension to Machray Ave		●
	11	Powers St to Kildonan Park via Leila Ave		●
	12	Pacific Ave to Burrows Ave via Keewatin St	●	●
	13	Gaps in Church Ave, Machray Ave and Cathedral Ave to North Winnipeg Parkway		●
	14	Bluestem Nature Park to McPhillips Athletic Grounds via Westview Park	●	●
	15	Assiniboine North Trail from Sherbrook St to Kenaston Blvd		●
	16	North Assiniboine Parkway from Sturgeon Creek to John Blumberg Park	●	●
	17	Assiniboine Forest to Roblin Blvd via Grant Ave		●

Cycling and multi-use path connections

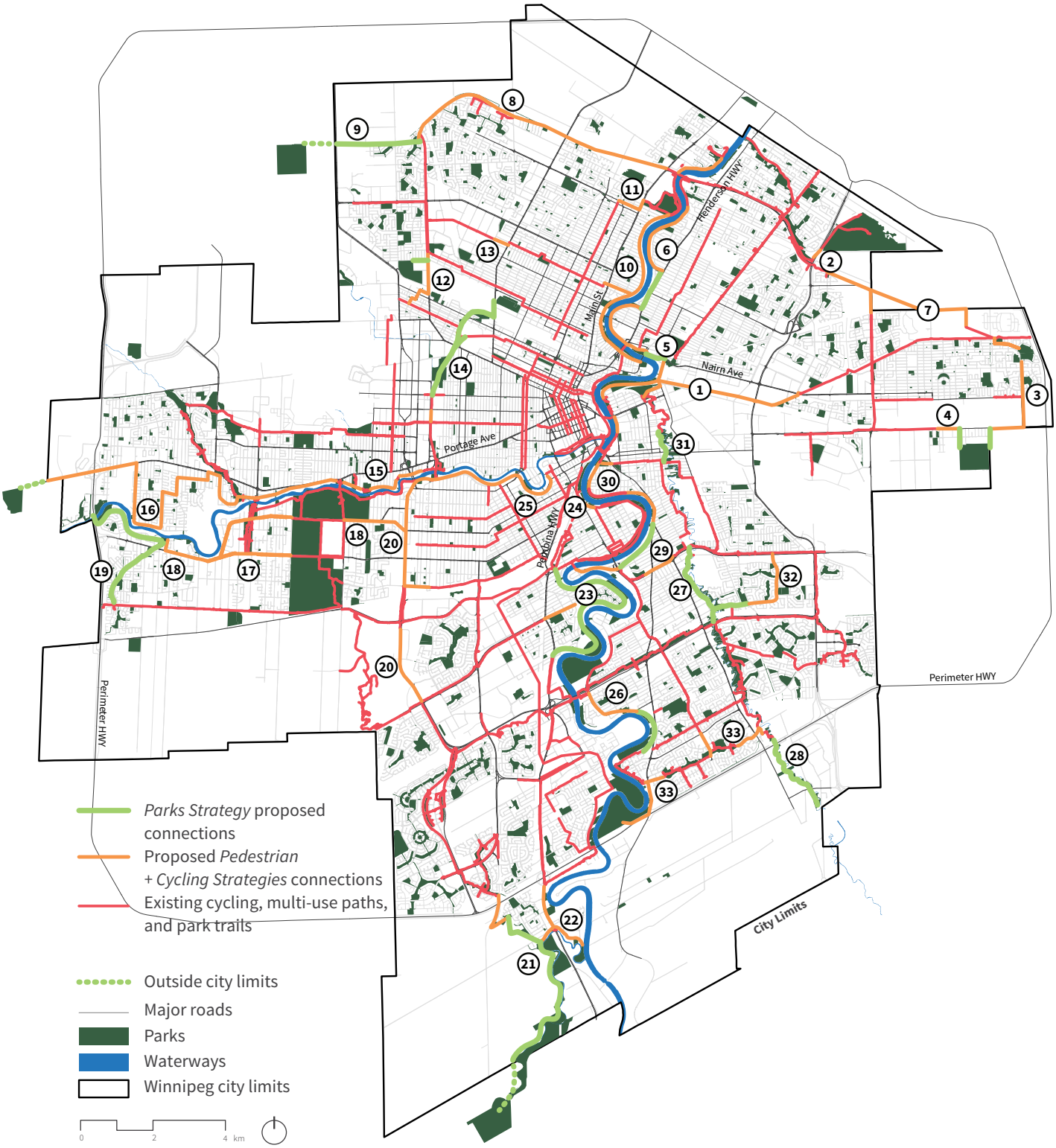


Fig. 31: *Opportunities to increase access to the parks system through expansion of the existing cycling and multi-use path network*

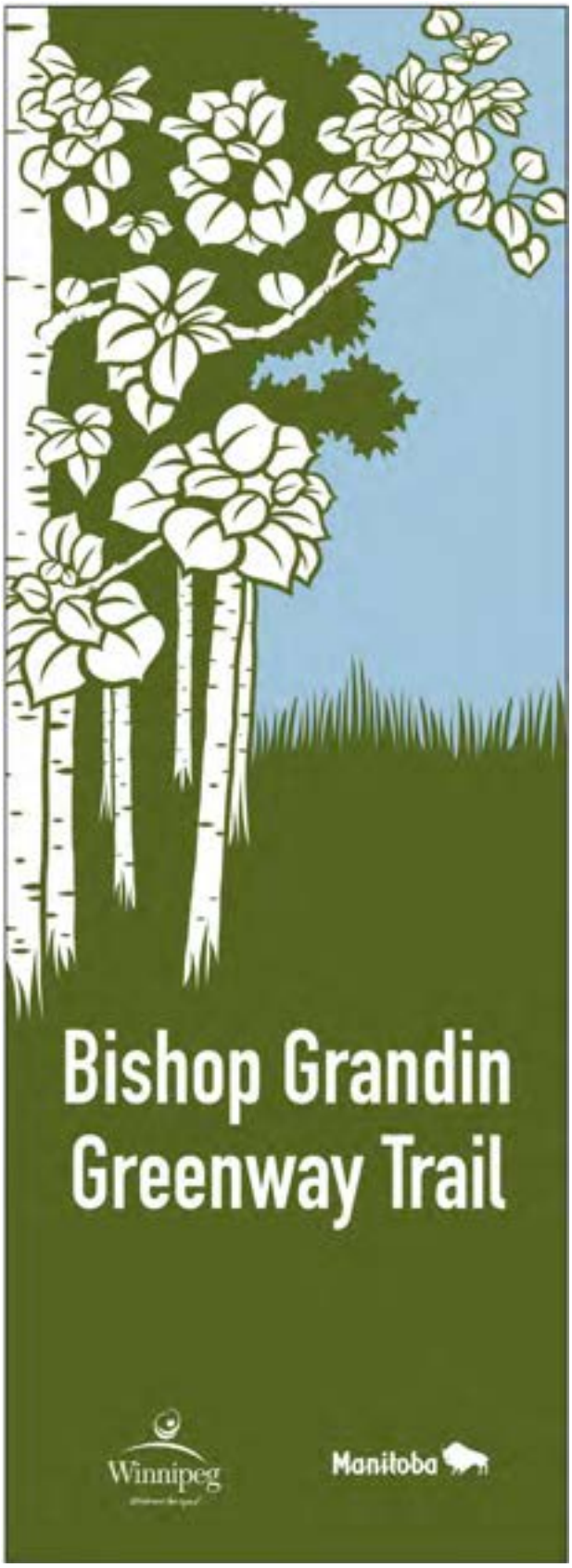
		ROUTE	PROPOSED PRIORITY PARKS SYSTEM CONNECTIONS	
			Parks Strategy	Pedestrian & Cycling Strategies
SOUTHWEST QUADRANT	18	South Assiniboine Parkway from Kenaston Ave to Caron Park via Roblin Blvd, Shelmerdine Dr and various streets paralleling the river		●
	19	Beaverdam Creek Trail from Southboine Dr to Ridgewood South Park	●	
	20	Kenaston Blvd from McGillivray Blvd to Academy Rd		●
	21	Ken Oblik Parkway to La Barriere Park via Waverley St, Parc Trottier, La Salle River Greenway, Camp Amisk, and extends via Trappistes St	●	●
	22	Pollock Island Park to Cloutier Drive via Pembina Hwy		●
	23	South Winnipeg Parkway from Pembina Hwy to Churchill Dr via Crescent Drive Park, South Dr, Riverside Dr, and Jubilee Ave	●	
	24	South Winnipeg Parkway from Brandon Ave to Togo Ave		●
	25	Wellington Cres from River Ave to Kenaston Blvd		●
SOUTHEAST QUADRANT	26	Bonivital Parkway from Normand Park to Bishop Grandin Greenway via Henteleff Park, River Road Park, River Rd	●	●
	27	Seine River Greenway from Bishop Grandin Greenway to Fermor Ave	●	
	28	Seine River Greenway south of Perimeter Hwy	●	
	29	Fermor Ave connection from St. Anne's Rd to Dunkirk Dr		●
	30	Bonivital Parkway from Kingston Cres to Tache Promenade via Kingston Row, Lyndale Dr, Lyndale Drive Park	●	●
	31	Seine River Greenway from St. Catherine-Tremblay Riverbank to Lagimodiere-Gaboury Park	●	
	32	Seine River Greenway to Fermor Ave corridor via Beaverhill Blvd	●	●
	33	Bonivital Parkway from Maple Grove Park and Normand Park to Seine River via linear parks and Aldgate Rd, extending north along Dakota St		●

3.6.3 Wayfinding and communication tools connecting people to parks

Improving public awareness of the parks system plays an important role in supporting and increasing park use. Wayfinding signage, maps, apps, and other information mediums are some of the communication tools used to increase awareness of the parks system and help people locate themselves within the system. The City has developed a digital wayfinding tool, *ParkMaps*, to inform the public about city-wide parks, open spaces, and featured amenities. The City will continue to refine and expand upon this initiative, making it more accessible to the public, which also serves to help market and promote parks.

Standardized park entry signage incorporates the park name and address, that not only helps demarcate the site as park but also aids response time for emergency services. The City makes only few exceptions to waiver from standardize signage, typically in larger new communities where developers desire to create a unique identity is supported. The City has also standardized such park features as fencing, lighting and site furnishings, not only to save costs but also to provide a consistency of treatment that helps identify sites as being public parks. Wayfinding within parks also plays a role as a linkage within the larger transportation system that supports biking, walking and other modes of active transportation. Consistent directional signage and mapping, both physical and digital, as well as well laid out paths to desired amenities, help support park connections. Their use can be enhanced by increased promotion and awareness of these resources.

Several of the city's *greenway* and *trail* routes have adopted the design style of the *parkway system* signage and trail heads, though each with their own unique illustration.



3.7 Amenities

Analysis confirms distribution of amenities within the parks system is inconsistent city-wide. This variation is due, in part, to the city being an amalgamation of several communities, each of which previously had their own methods for determining park amenity provision. Since amalgamation, the provision of amenities has also been primarily opportunity-based and tied to upgrades within single parks, rather than viewed from the lens of providing consistent access across the city. This means that some communities have above-average provision of certain amenities, while others may not have adequate or any access to them. Changing trends in recreation and participation in sports also influence whether certain amenities are in popular demand. These trends must also be considered when determining whether an amenity service gap should be viewed as a priority.

In addition to inconsistent distribution, existing amenities across the parks system are in a wide variety of conditions. This is due in part to limited coordinated city-wide approach to renewal and replacement of amenities, and ambiguity on what services are the priority for the City to be directly providing. These issues are compounded when operating budgets are not increased to support the operation and maintenance of new amenities. As upkeep is costly, triage is necessary to direct maintenance efforts towards heavily used amenities.

To better align the City's efforts and set clear expectations of the level of service provided across Winnipeg, all amenities have been prioritized in the Strategy (as per *Section 2.6.4 Amenities*). The Strategy also establishes a level of service catchment for core and secondary amenities to ensure their consistent provision across the city. These catchments will be used to identify potential service gaps, or areas that do not currently have access to the identified amenities. The following sections describe and detail the distribution and condition of amenities.

3.7.1 Core amenities

The following summarizes the distribution of the parks system's core amenities, both across the city and through the lens of the urban structure. *Fig. 32* shows the overlapping potential service gaps for all core amenities. Each core amenity is described in subsequent sections, detailing the current level of service for that amenity, a summary of their condition, the city-wide distribution, and any potential service gaps.

CORE AMENITIES

- Playgrounds
- Picnic and gathering spaces
- Multi-use greenspaces

Core amenity distribution

Downtown

Much of Downtown has an above-average level of service for picnic areas, however, part of the area is under-served by playgrounds and a significant area is under-served by multi-use open space.

There are four playgrounds located within the boundaries of Downtown. One of these playgrounds is within a city park, two are on school property, and the fourth is provided at the Forks. A small area of central Downtown and along the Red River does not have reasonable walkable access to any playgrounds. As there are no pedestrian bridges providing access across the Red River in this area, playgrounds on the other side are inaccessible to residents of the Downtown.

The gap in playground level of service also overlaps with the gap in multi-use greenspace in most of Downtown. It is a priority to investigate the intersection of these two gaps to determine additional opportunities to improve level of service for both amenities. There are not currently any parks directly

Core amenities – potential service gaps

» Multi-use greenspaces
» Picnic and gathering spaces
» Playgrounds

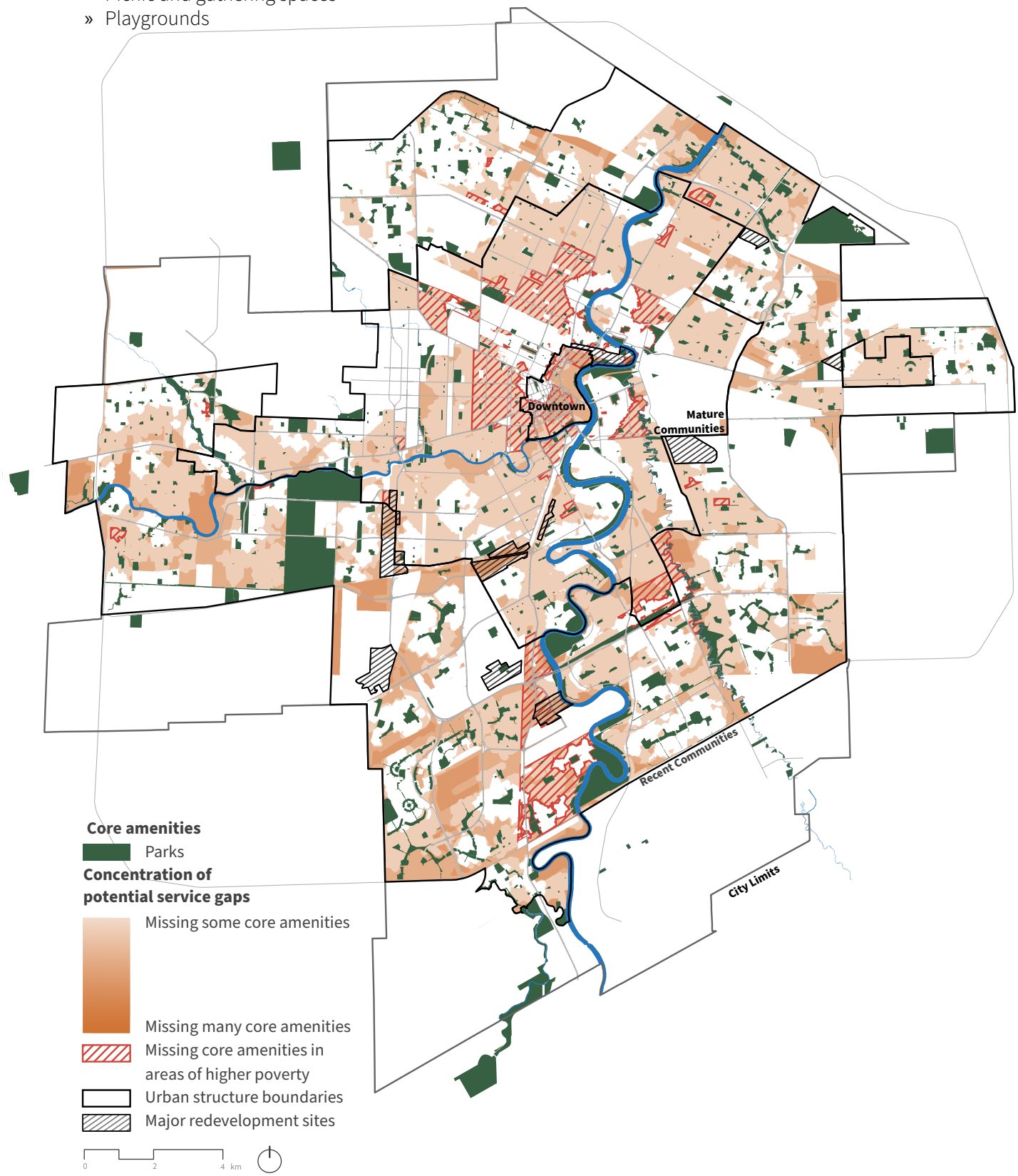


Fig. 32: *Potential service gaps for core amenities. Shown in orange, darker areas indicate where multiple core amenities are not currently provided*

within this area, therefore acquisition of parkland may be required to provide these amenities. This gap will be particularly important to address as the population of Downtown grows.

Large portions of Downtown are identified as areas of higher poverty. Addressing amenity service provision gaps in these areas should be considered a high priority.

Mature communities

Mature communities are for the most part well-served by core amenities. However, apart from lands around Sturgeon Creek and the Red River, mature neighbourhoods lack adequate access to multi-use greenspaces. As additional public lands to support these larger-footprint spaces are of limited availability, the focus must be to identify appropriate existing lands to be repurposed. They can be changed from their current use to provide more general-use amenities. Community Parks such as Archwood Community Centre, Silver Heights, Westview, Chalmers and Anderson may be appropriate locations.

Playgrounds are well-served throughout much of the mature area, with the areas of largest need found in the west and southeast. Pockets of above-average level of service are located west and north of Downtown. Picnic amenities are likewise well-distributed throughout all of the mature area.

Recent communities

Access to core amenities is inconsistent across recent communities, with sufficient level of service in some areas and substantial gaps in broader areas of the city. As seen in other communities, access to multi-use greenspace is generally lacking in most of the recent communities. Playground amenities are broadly distributed, but at an insufficient density to ensure access for all residents. Picnic amenities are predominantly well-served, with small gaps distributed around the periphery of the area.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds provide an important play function in the parks system. Made up of various components such as swings, slides, nature play areas climbing structures, they are essential recreation amenities for families, providing spaces for unstructured and imaginative play which is critical to early childhood development. Because these amenities serve the youngest population of Winnipeggers, it is important to provide them within safe walking distance of residential areas. Many of Winnipeg's schools provide playgrounds, which are included in this assessment to provide a fulsome overview of playground access. The current level of access of playgrounds is summarized in *Fig. 33*.

Service area:
Outdoor play

Foster self-directed outdoor fun, energetic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of inclusive, safe, year-round play environments for people of all ages and abilities.

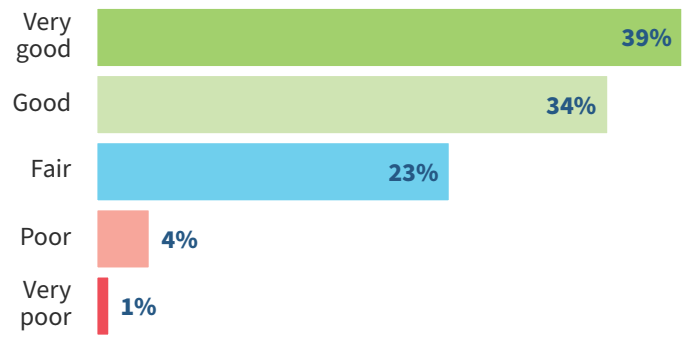
CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• A total of 806 playgrounds are found in the city (roughly one playground per 1,000 people), with 511 found in parks, and 295 found on school sites. A handful of additional private play structures are also found in the city, including the Variety Heritage Adventure Park found at The Forks
Access	• 83% of the population is within a 10-minute (600 m) walk of a playground • The average Winnipegger is within a 10-minute walk of two playgrounds • Some areas have access to more than two playgrounds (above-average level of service), primarily in mature communities and in the north and the west of Downtown • Gaps in level of service are distributed throughout the city
Quality	• Approximately 5% of playground amenities are recorded in *poor* or *very poor* condition • This quality assessment only relates to City-owned playgrounds

806
PLAYGROUNDS

83%
of Winnipeggers are within a 10-minute (600 m) walk

QUALITY



Playgrounds

Core amenity

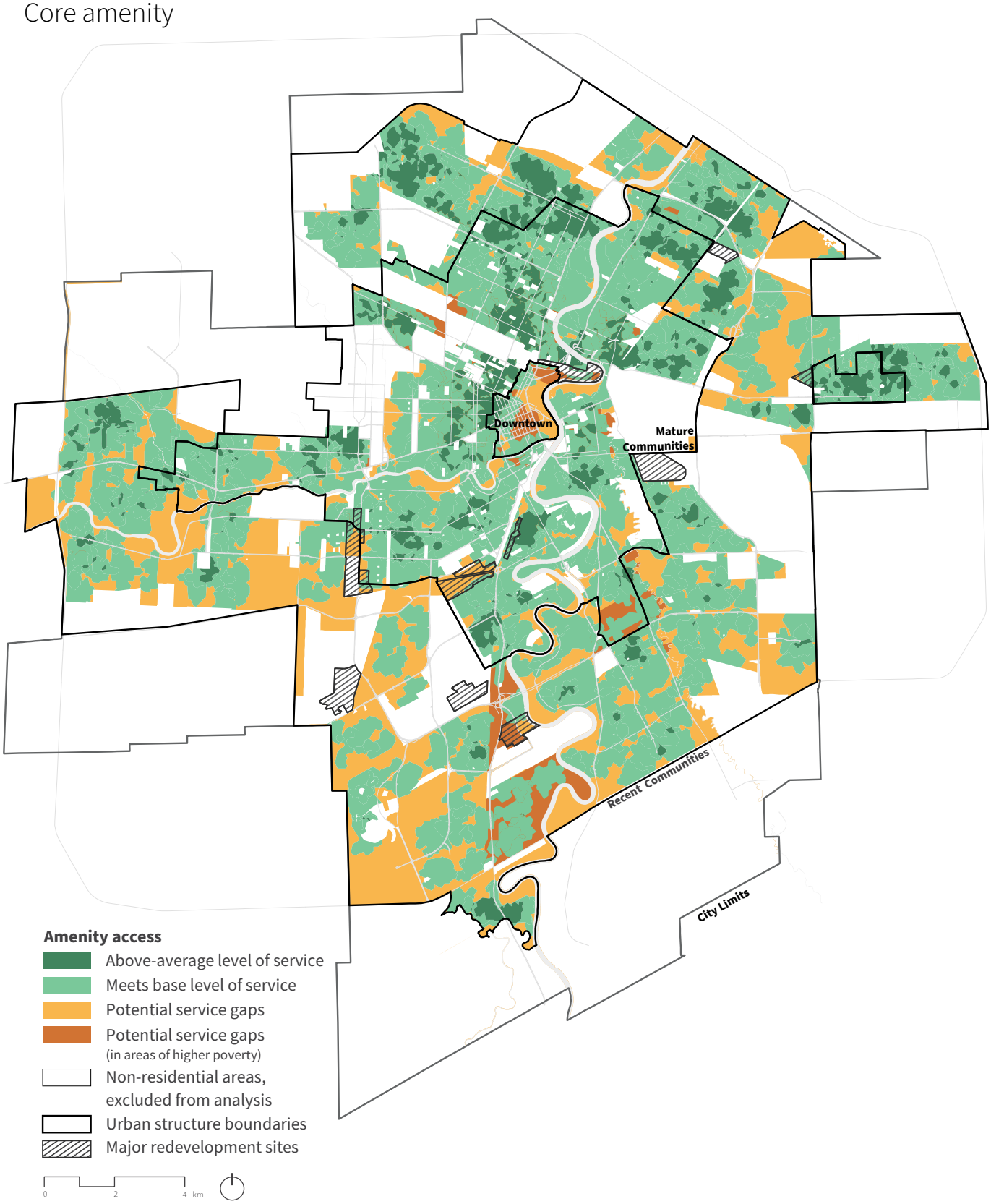


Fig. 33: *Playground access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different playgrounds. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have walkable access to any playground within 600 m.*

Picnic and gathering spaces

Picnic and gathering spaces are the key social spaces in the parks system. These spaces contain picnic tables and other seating that encourage gathering and eating together. Some of these amenities also include bookable or non-bookable shelters and community barbeques. Picnic and gathering spaces are used by Winnipeggers for family gatherings, cultural celebrations, and other social events and functions. These spaces should be welcoming for all ages and abilities, serving as the living and dining rooms of the parks system. These spaces are intended to be accessible by a short drive or bike ride for all Winnipeggers (a 2-km catchment) and may be co-located with playgrounds and other flexible outdoor spaces. They should be separated from sports fields and other athletic amenities. Larger picnic areas require nearby parking. The current level of access of picnic and gathering space is summarized in *Fig. 34*.

Service area:
Leisure & gathering

Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional event spaces.

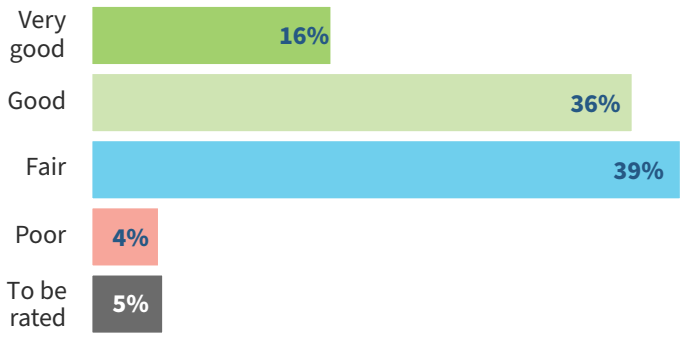
CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• There are 375 picnic areas in the city (including 1,291 picnic tables, 29 shelters, 114 BBQs, and 116 rental sites)
Access	• 98% of the population is within 2 km of a picnic area • The average Winnipegger has access to eight picnic areas within 2 km of their home • Above-average level of service is found in much of Downtown and mature neighbourhoods
Quality	• Overall, the condition of rental sites has not been assessed, however 4% of tables and 3% of picnic shelters located within are recorded in poor or very poor condition

375
PICNIC AREAS

98%
of Winnipeggers are within 2 km of a picnic area

QUALITY



Picnic and gathering spaces

Core amenity

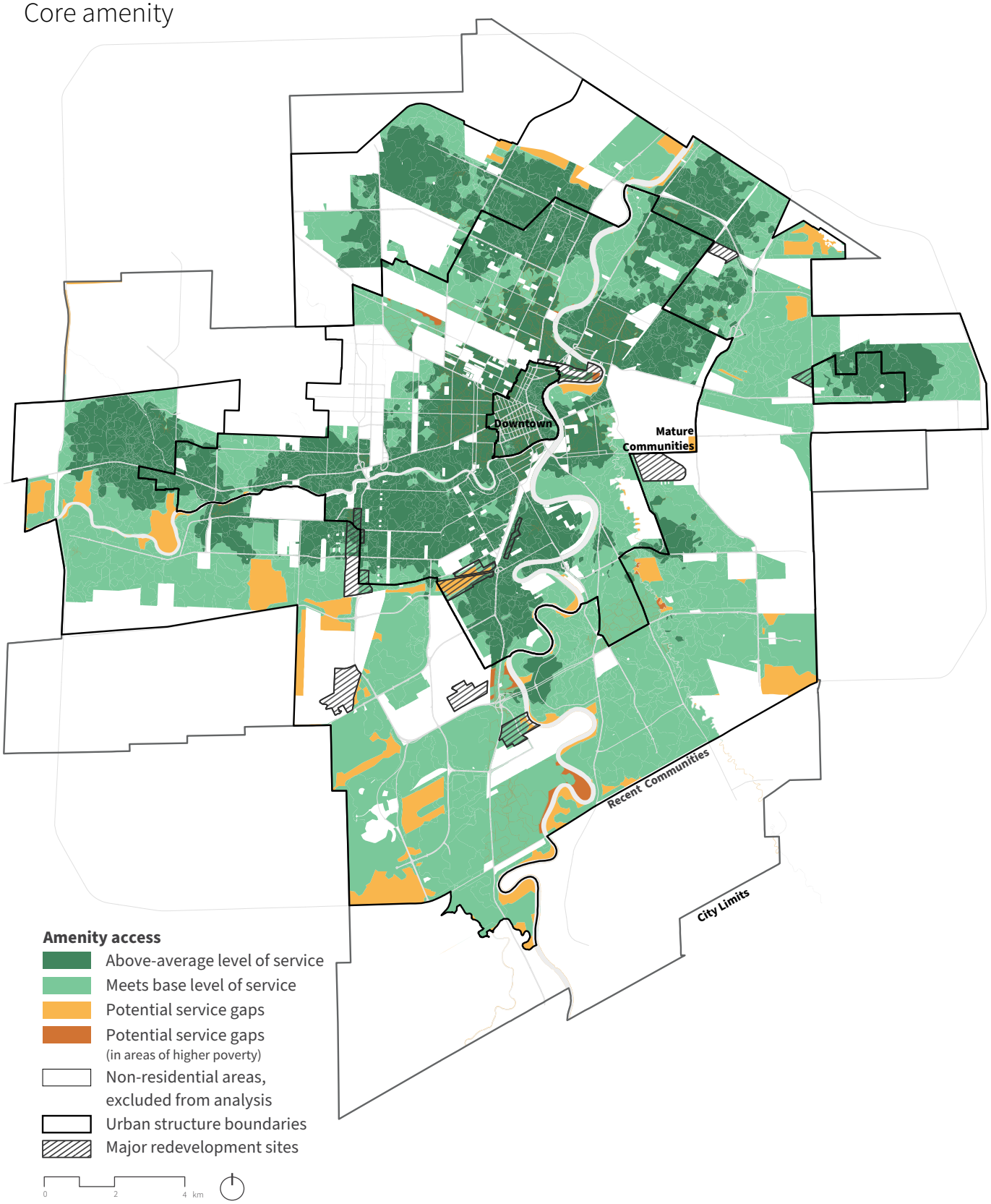


Fig. 34: *Picnic and gathering space access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different picnic and gathering spaces. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have access to any picnic and gathering spaces within 2 km.*

Multi-use greenspaces

Multi-use greenspaces are one of the most flexible amenities in the parks system. These areas are maintained and unprogrammed greenspaces of 2,000 m² or larger (~four times the size of a basketball court), used for a variety of informal sports and recreational activities. These are the spaces to throw or kick a ball, toss a frisbee, or play tag. Unlike formal athletic fields, these are non-bookable. This makes them the most accessible to everyone. Multi-use greenspaces are intended to be in close proximity for all Winnipeggers. However, based on analysis using a 600-m walking distance, the current distribution of unprogrammed multi-use greenspace leaves much of the city under-served in this important amenity. Opportunities may be explored to convert existing underused bookable athletic fields to more flexible casual spaces. The current level of access of multi-use greenspace is illustrated in *Fig. 35*.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• A total of 148 parks provide multi-use greenspaces
Access	• 27% of Winnipeggers live within 600-m walking distance of one unprogrammed multi-use greenspace
Quality	• The condition of these amenities is not formally assessed

148
MULTI-USE GREENSPACES

27%
of Winnipeggers are within a walkable distance

Service area:
Outdoor sport

Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

Service area:
Outdoor play

Foster self-directed outdoor fun, energetic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of inclusive, safe, year-round play environments for people of all ages and abilities.

Service area:
Leisure & gathering

Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional event spaces.

Multi-use greenspaces

Core amenity

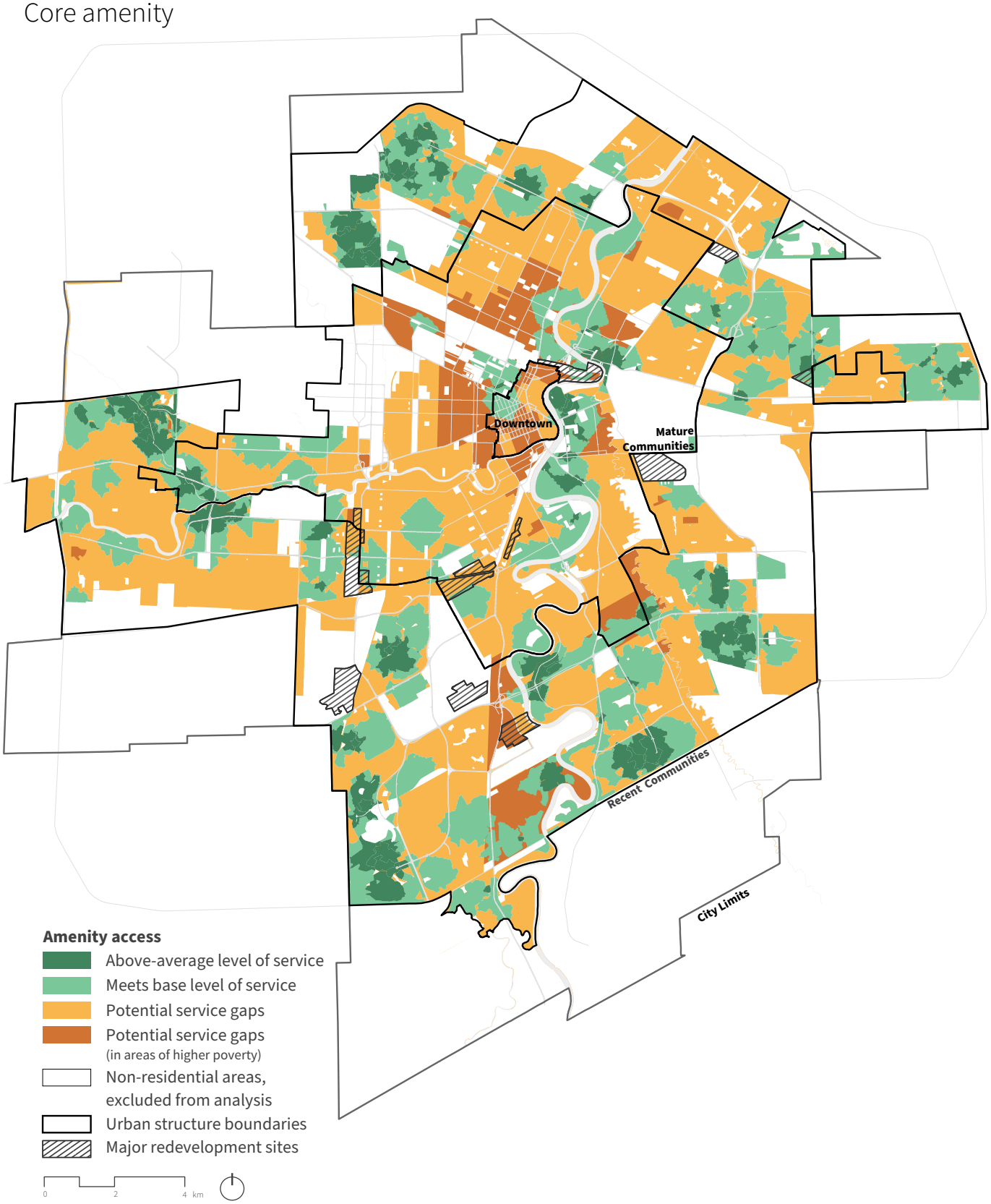


Fig. 35: *: Multi-use greenspace access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the citywide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different multi-use greenspaces. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have walkable access to multi-use greenspaces within 600m.*

3.7.2 Secondary amenities

Seven secondary amenities supplement the City's provision of core amenities. These are the second priority for allocation of resources and space within Winnipeg's parks system, providing additional informal and organized sport opportunities and other leisure and play opportunities. Like core amenities, secondary amenities are intended to be provided at an equal distance from all Winnipeggers. This is achieved through the specification of a catchment for each amenity. Most of the catchments for secondary amenities are larger than for core amenities, meaning that Winnipeggers will generally have to travel longer to get to secondary amenities. The City will continue to directly provide many secondary amenities but will also seek opportunities to partner with other organizations to provide them where possible.

The next section summarizes the distribution of secondary amenities across the city, within the lens of urban structure. *Fig. 36* shows the overlapping potential service gaps for all secondary amenities. Each secondary amenity is described in subsequent sections, detailing the current level of service for that amenity, a summary of their condition, city-wide distribution, and any potential service gaps.

SECONDARY AMENITIES

- Tennis and pickleball courts
- Basketball courts
- Baseball/softball diamonds
- Bookable multi-purpose athletic fields
- Outdoor skating rinks and areas
- Skateboard parks
- Off-leash dog areas

Summary of secondary amenity distribution across the city

Downtown

Downtown is adequately served by athletic fields, skateboard parks, and skating areas. Though there are no athletic fields within Downtown itself, the field at the Broadway Neighbourhood Centre is within the 2-km catchment. There is also an artificial turf athletic field at Central Park which is intended for casual use only therefore not considered bookable. Access is above-average in all of Downtown for skateboard parks and for most of Downtown for skating opportunities.

There are potential service gaps for baseball and softball diamonds, tennis and pickleball courts, and basketball courts. A small portion of the southwest corner of Downtown does not have access to a baseball diamond. There is also limited opportunity to fill this gap in existing parks within Downtown or surrounding communities. The north area of Downtown is under-served by tennis and pickleball courts and the southeastern half of Downtown does not have access to basketball courts. Also, as identified in the *Off-Leash Dog Area Master Plan*, most of Downtown does not have access to a regional or community scale off-leash dog area, though it does have access to the neighbourhood off-leash dog area at Bonnycastle Park. As the residential population of Downtown grows, it will be important to monitor community need for these amenities.

In addition to potential service gaps, there are also areas of Downtown that have above-average access to both tennis, pickleball, and basketball courts. In areas of above-average level of service for basketball located in the northwest, these are entirely provided by schools. In the area south of Downtown, there is above-average access for tennis and pickleball.

Secondary amenities – potential service gaps

- Rectangular athletic fields
- Baseball / softball diamonds
- Tennis and pickleball courts
- Outdoor skating rinks and areas
- Basketball courts
- Skateboard parks

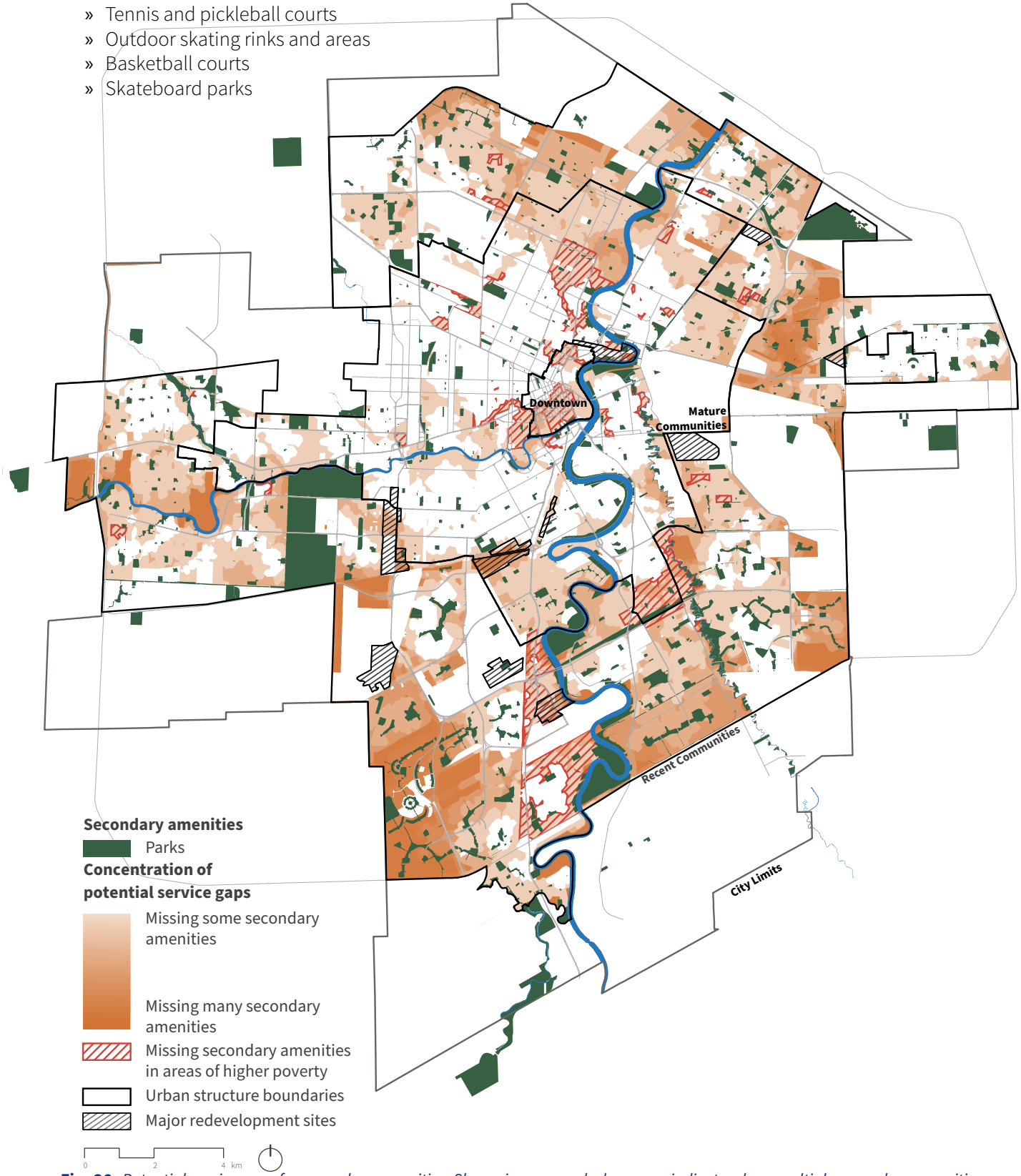


Fig. 36: *Potential service gaps for secondary amenities. Shown in orange, darker areas indicate where multiple secondary amenities are not currently provided.*

Mature communities

The recommended level of service for secondary amenities is met across much of the mature neighbourhoods. Above-average access to skateparks is available to residents of the north and west, surrounding Downtown. The only potential area of need is to the east of the former Kapyong Barracks.

Athletic fields are well-served in all mature communities. In fact, large pockets of above-average level of service are distributed throughout the mature area. In these locations, service levels may be above actual need, which could provide opportunities to repurpose and diversify the amenities offered. Ice skating opportunities are sufficiently accessible throughout the mature area, with large areas of above-average level of service in the south and northeast mature communities. Large access gaps in tennis and pickleball are found in the north, northeast and south of the mature area, and around the Parker Major Redevelopment Site.

Lands surrounding Downtown generally have an above-average level of service, usage estimates may identify whether these courts are well-used. Basketball courts are well-served in much of the mature area, but potential service gaps are found in small pockets. Baseball diamonds are generally accessible, with key gaps in the lands southwest of Downtown, and the Parker Major Redevelopment Site. Above-average level of service is available in the west, south, northwest and northeast.

Recent communities

Recent communities tend to lack sufficient access to a variety of secondary amenities, with a handful of communities are particularly deficient. In general, areas closer to city centre have access to more amenity types, while outlying areas are lacking due to limited walkable connections and a preponderance of linkage parks that can accommodate only small amenity footprints.

Access to skateparks is available in most recent neighbourhoods, apart from lands around the former Kapyong Barracks, and the periphery of the city in the far north, far west, southwest, and southeast. Access to outdoor skating opportunities is available in most recent neighbourhoods, but larger gap areas are found in the southwest, southeast and northeast. Community access to tennis and pickleball is clustered around key areas, leaving many recent communities without easy access to these amenities, especially in the south. Recent neighbourhoods are generally well-serviced with baseball diamonds.

Potential service gaps are found in the southwest, southeast, and northeast. Recent neighbourhoods are generally well-serviced with athletic fields, with small gaps in the east, and two major gap areas in the west and south. These areas have inconsistent access to basketball courts, with large gaps in service found in the north, east and south, as well as numerous smaller gaps.

Tennis and pickleball courts

Tennis and pickleball courts are fenced hardscaped courts intended for racket sports. While the court sizes differ slightly (pickleball being smaller than tennis), both sports can be accommodated within the same facility. In Winnipeg, some of these courts are bookable while others are available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Tennis and pickleball both require limited equipment, making them widely accessible for people to learn and play as a casual leisure activity or competitively. However, for best experience they require a quality flat hard surface that can be costly to maintain in Winnipeg's climate. Pickleball is a growing sport in Canada, particularly amongst older adults. Tennis is also primarily played by an older demographic. The current level of access of tennis and pickleball is summarized in *Fig. 37*.

Service area:
Outdoor sport

Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

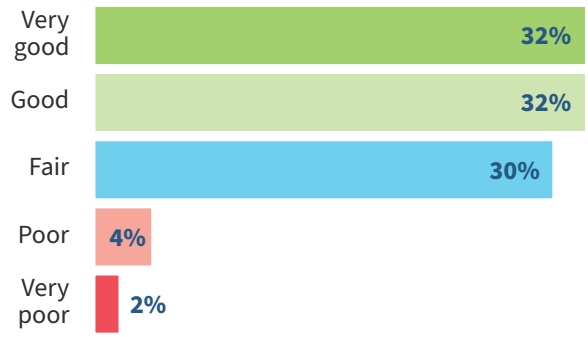
CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• There are 153 tennis/pickleball courts in Winnipeg parks
Access	• 64% of the population is within 2 km of a tennis/pickleball court • The average Winnipegger has access to five tennis/pickleball courts within 2 km • The centre-west portion of the City's mature neighbourhoods have an above-average level of service of tennis/pickleball courts, while the recent communities have significant gaps in service
Quality	• 6% of tennis / pickleball courts are recorded in *poor* or *very poor* condition

153
TENNIS / PICKLEBALL COURTS

64%
of Winnipeggers are within 2 km of a court

QUALITY



Tennis and pickleball courts

Secondary amenity

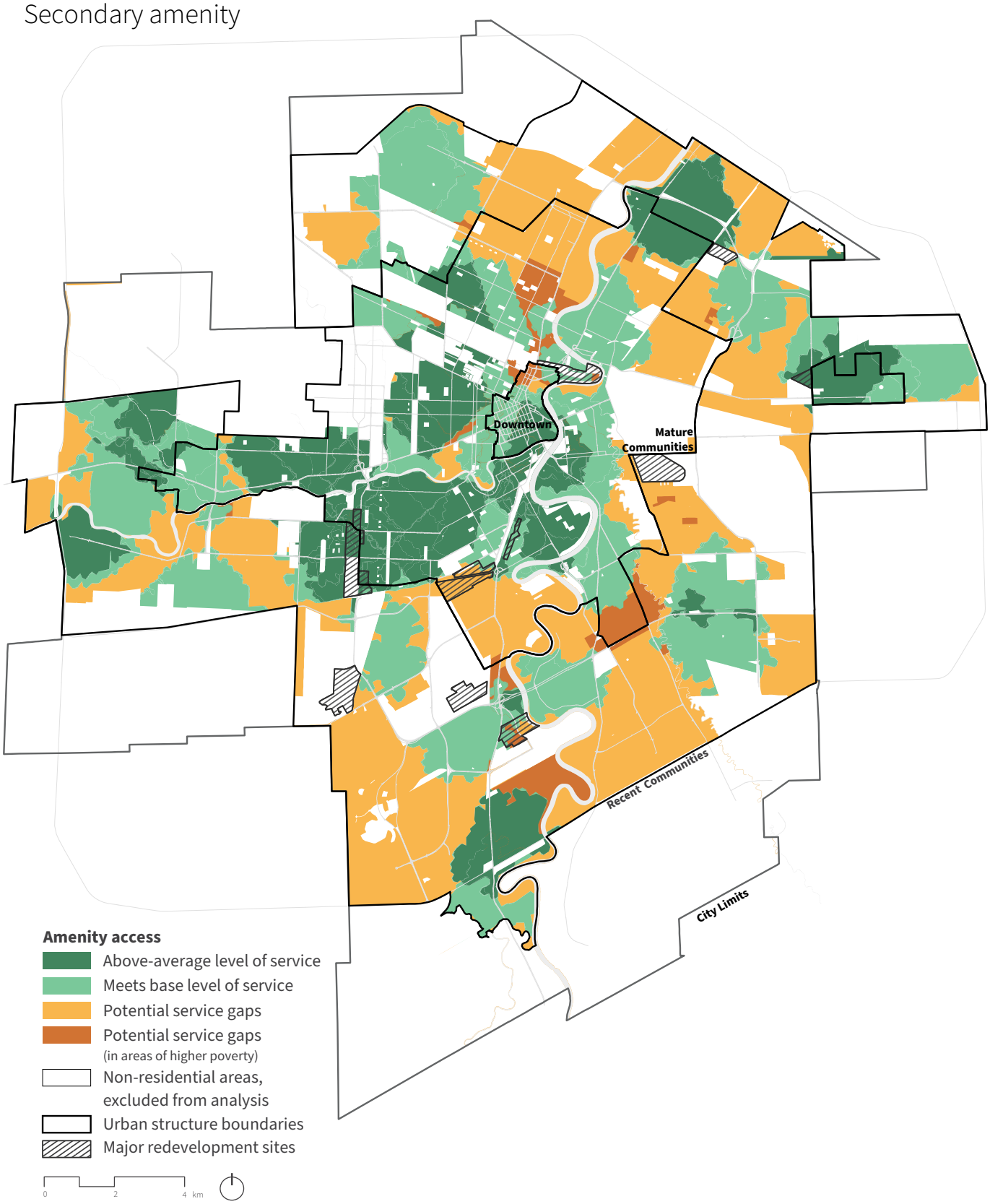


Fig. 37: *Tennis and pickleball access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different tennis and pickleball courts. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have walkable access to tennis and pickleball courts within 2 km.*

Basketball courts

Basketball courts are hardscaped areas with one or more basketball nets that may or may not be fenced. Basketball courts are an important amenity for children and youth and can often be very social spaces. Half courts, with only one net, are also one of the smallest sports amenities, making them easy to incorporate into all scales of parks. Even though they are generally used for basketball, these courts may also be used for a variety of other informal sports activities, including court soccer or ball hockey. The current level of access of basketball courts is summarized in *Fig. 38*.

Service area:
Outdoor sport

Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity

- 385 basketball courts are found in the city, with only 77 in parks, and 308 on school sites*
- Basketball courts are non-bookable amenities

Access

- 67% of the population is within 600-m walking distance of a basketball court
- The average Winnipegger is within the catchment of two basketball courts
- An above-average level of service of basketball is found north and west of Downtown

Quality

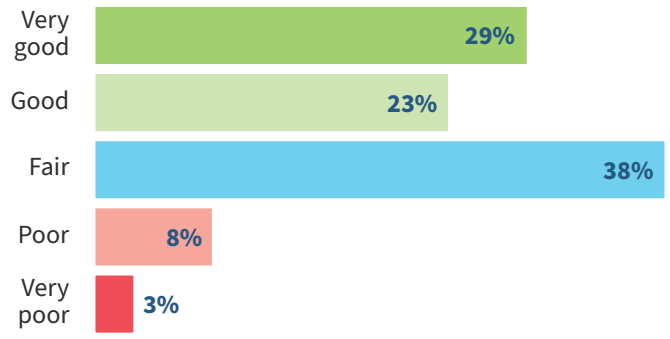
- 11% of basketball courts are recorded in poor or very poor condition
- This quality assessment only relates to City-owned basketball courts

***assumption made that all school sites have 1 basketball court**

385
BASKETBALL COURTS

67%
of Winnipeggers are within walking distance

QUALITY



Basketball courts

Secondary amenity

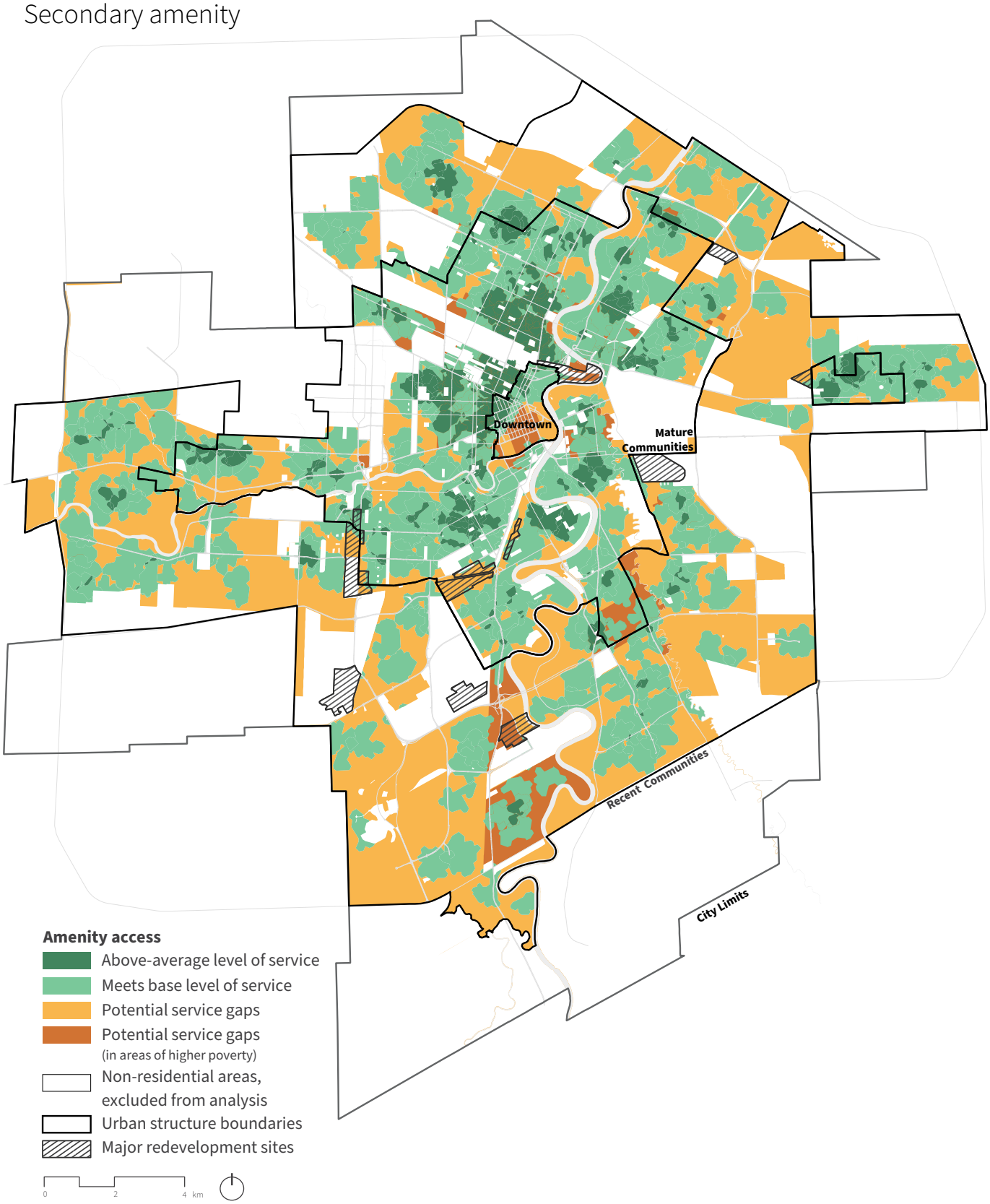


Fig. 38: *Basketball access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different basketball courts. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have walkable access to basketball courts within 600m.*

Baseball and softball diamonds

Baseball and softball assets include dugouts, batting cages, and fields. Most baseball and softball diamonds in Winnipeg are bookable and used for organized rather than casual sports. Baseball and softball fields vary between approximately 0.4 and 1 ha, making it one of the larger single-use amenities. The unique configuration of these amenities makes them difficult to easily convert to other uses, therefore it is important to ensure that they are well used to justify their upkeep. Baseball and softball amenities are often run by community sport leagues, who are an important source of information regarding investments and improvements needed. The current level of access of baseball and softball is summarized in *Fig. 39*.

Service area:
Outdoor sport

Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• 278 baseball and softball diamonds in are found in City parks
Access	• 94% of the population is within a 2-km distance of a baseball and softball diamonds • The average Winnipegger has access to seven baseball and softball diamonds within catchment • An above-average level of service of diamonds are found in hotspots throughout the city, where large aggregations of athletic fields occur
Quality	• Approximately 15% of these diamonds and their associated batting cages and dugouts are recorded in poor or very poor condition

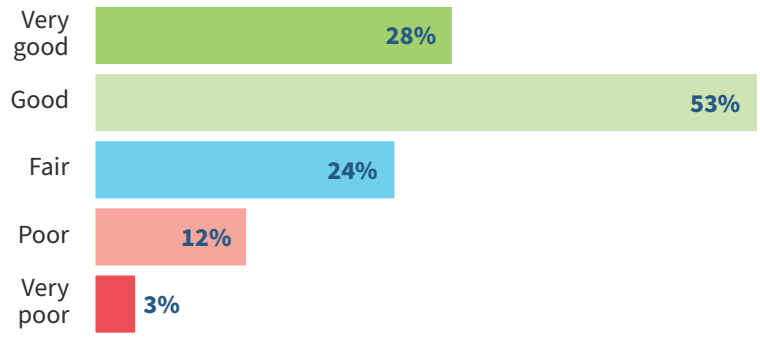
278

BASEBALL & SOFTBALL DIAMONDS

94%

of Winnipeggers are within a 2-km distance

QUALITY



Baseball / softball diamonds

Secondary amenity

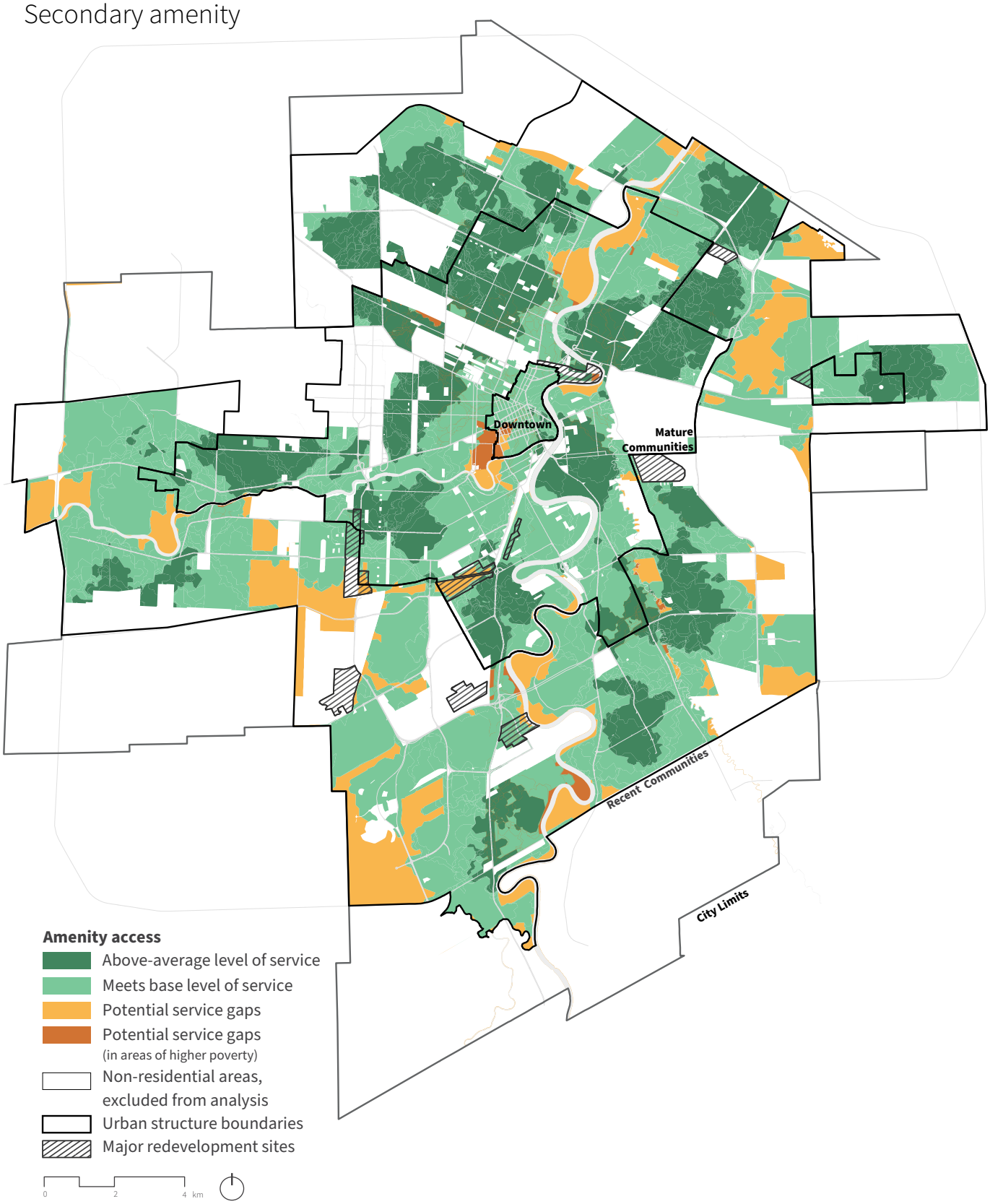


Fig. 39: *Baseball and softball access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different baseball and softball diamonds. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have access to baseball and softball diamonds within 2 km.*

Rectangular athletic fields

Rectangular athletic fields include bookable soccer, rugby, football, and ultimate fields. These athletic fields are an important bookable multi-functional amenity for all ages and abilities of Winnipeggers. These fields are primarily turf with associated assets, and so can be easily repurposed into other uses, should community need warrant.

In Winnipeg, these fields are used for everything from kids' soccer to adult walking soccer, ultimate, cricket, and even quidditch. These sports activities help Winnipeggers stay active for life, build skills and passions, and connect with others in their communities. The current level of access of athletic fields is summarized in *Fig. 40*.

Service area:
Outdoor sport

Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

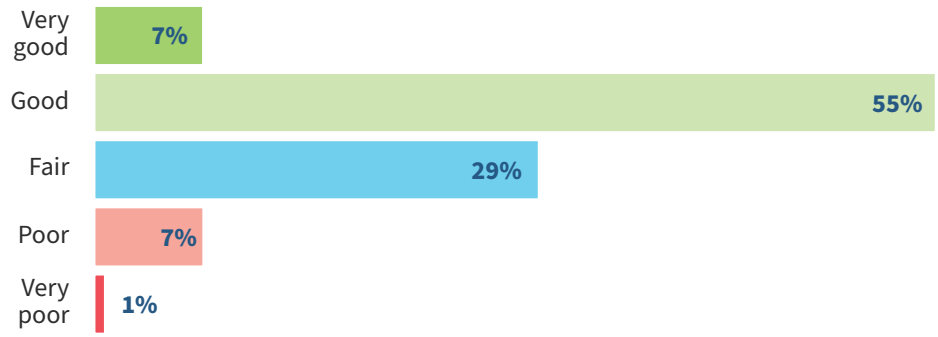
CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• There are 303 bookable rectangular athletic fields in Winnipeg
Access	• 96% of the population is within 2 km of an athletic field • The average Winnipegger has access to nine athletic fields of mixed sizes within catchment • An above-average level of service of athletic fields are found in clusters around the City, notably the north, west and southeast
Quality	• Approximately 8% of these fields are recorded in poor or very poor condition

303
RECTANGULAR ATHLETIC FIELDS

96%
of Winnipeggers are within a 2-km distance

QUALITY



Rectangular athletic fields

Secondary amenity

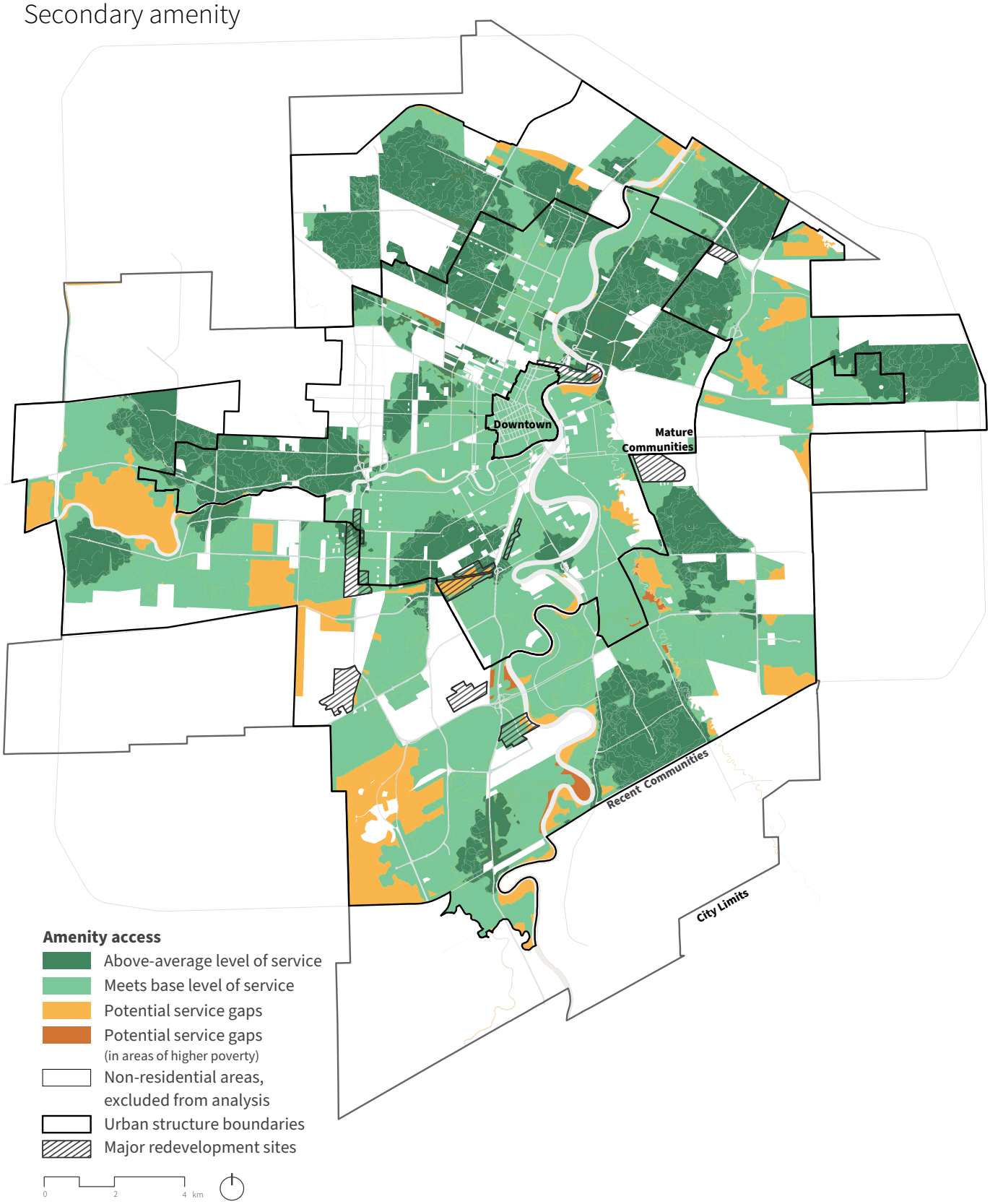


Fig. 40: *Rectangular athletic field access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different rectangular athletic fields. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have access to rectangular athletic fields within 2 km.*

Outdoor skating rinks and areas

Outdoor skating rinks and areas are an amenity that keeps Winnipeggers outside and active in winter. This amenity type includes temporary and permanent outdoor hockey and ringette rinks and pens provided in partnership with community centres, as well as pleasure skating ponds and rinks. All of these amenities are in high demand in the winter, but effort should also be made to accommodate high demand activities during the summer months. The current level of access of outdoor skating rinks and areas is summarized in *Fig. 41*.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• There are 176 ice skating rinks and areas in Winnipeg parks
Access	• 90% of the population is within 2 km of an outdoor skating opportunity • The average Winnipegger has access to five outdoor skating rinks within catchment • An above-average level of service of ice-skating opportunities are available in the mature communities
Quality	• Of the 90 that have been rated, approximately 8% of these are recorded in *poor* or *very poor* condition

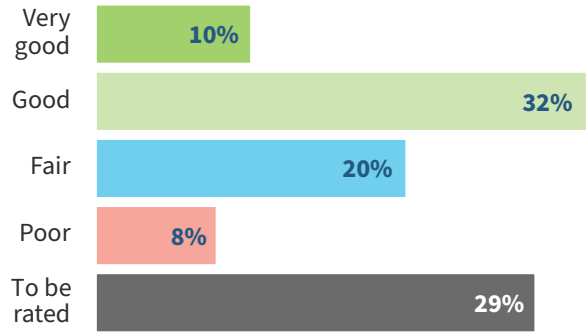
176

OUTDOOR SKATING RINKS & AREAS

90%

of Winnipeggers are within a 2-km distance

QUALITY



Service area:
Outdoor sport

Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities.

Service area:
Outdoor play

Foster self-directed outdoor fun, energetic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of inclusive, safe, year-round play environments for people of all ages and abilities.

Service area:
Leisure & gathering

Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional event spaces.

Outdoor skating rinks and areas

Secondary amenity

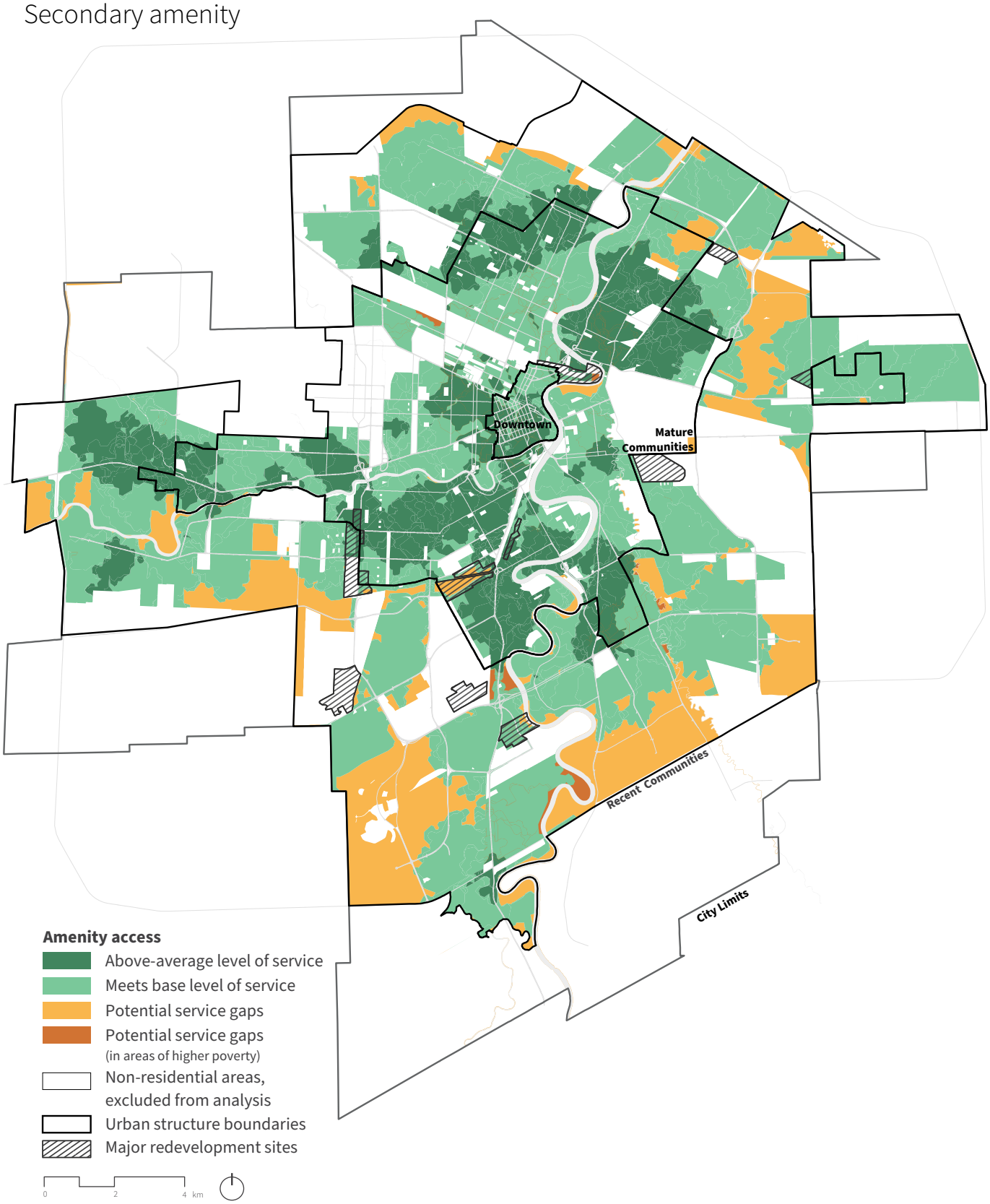


Fig. 41: *Outdoor skating areas access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different outdoor skating areas. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have access to outdoor skating areas within 2 km.*

Skateboard parks

Skateboard parks are important urban amenities, particularly for young adults. These amenities provide recreation and leisure opportunities for a variety of wheeled activities, including skateboarding, longboarding, BMXing, and roller skating. They are highly social spaces, helping to foster community and comradery. The current level of access of Skateboard Parks is summarized in *Fig. 42.*

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• There are 16 skateboard parks and skate spots in Winnipeg
Access	• 91% of the population is within 5 km of a skatepark • The average Winnipegger has access to three skateparks within catchment • An above-average level of service of skateparks are available in the areas surrounding Downtown
Quality	• No skateparks are in *poor* or *very poor* condition

Service area:
Outdoor play

Foster self-directed outdoor fun, energetic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of inclusive, safe, year-round play environments for people of all ages and abilities.

Service area:
Leisure & gathering

Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional event spaces.

16
SKATEBOARD PARKS

91%
of Winnipeggers are within a 5-km distance

QUALITY

Skateboard parks

Secondary amenity

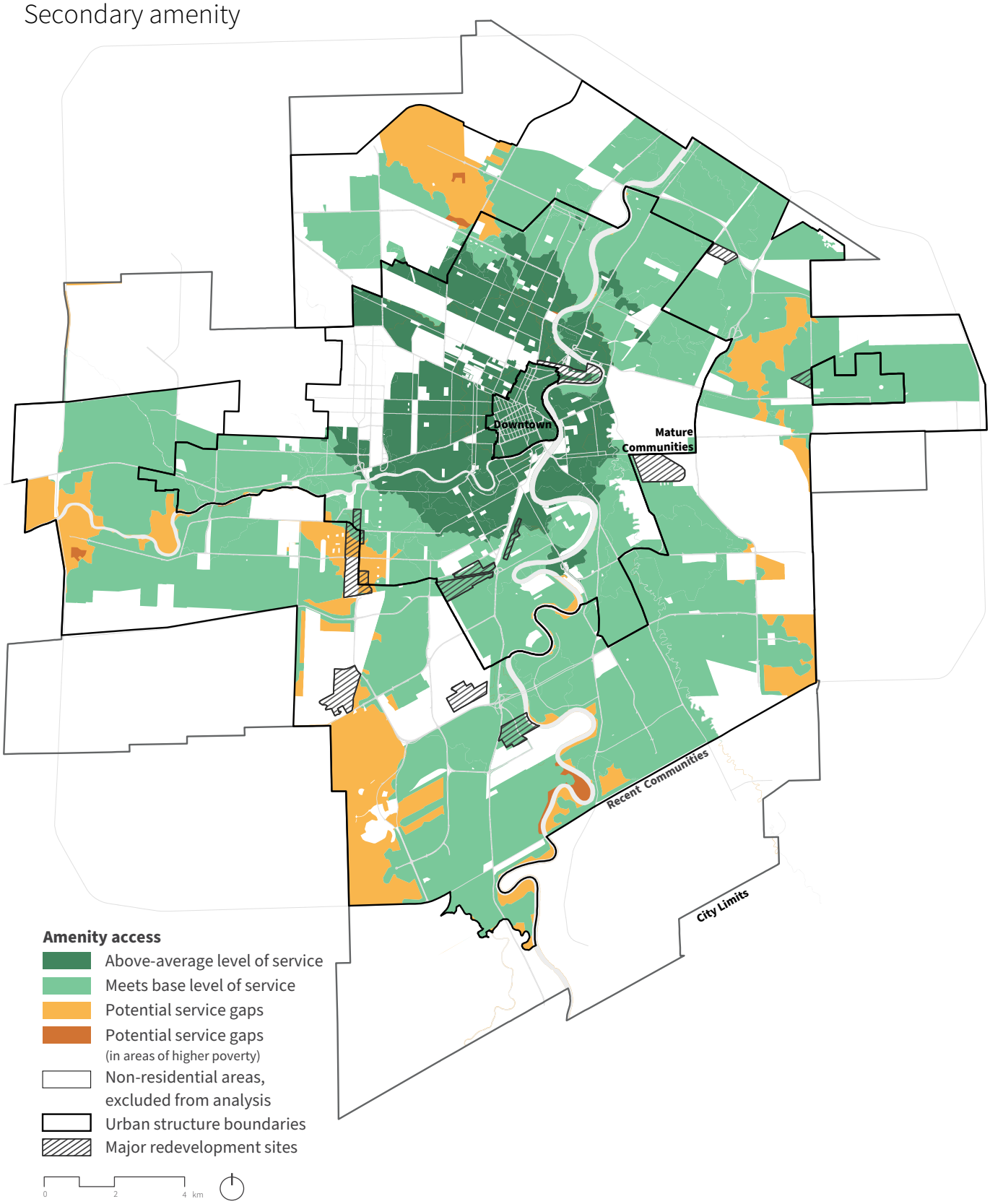


Fig. 42: *Skatepark access and potential service gaps. Areas of above-average level of service (compared to the city-wide average) indicate where residents have access to a variety of different skateparks. Potential service gaps, shown in orange, indicate areas where people do not have access to skateparks within 5 km.*

Off-leash dog areas (OLA)

Off-Leash dog areas are becoming increasingly important amenities, particularly for urban dwellers with limited private outdoor space. The City recently completed the *Off-Leash Dog Area Master Plan*, which engaged with Winnipeggers on the priorities for providing more space in parks suitable for off-leash use. Existing service mapping created for the *Off-Leash Dog Area Master Plan* should guide further strategic efforts.

Service area:
Leisure & gathering

Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional event spaces.

CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE

Quantity	• There are currently 12 Off-Leash Areas in Winnipeg: four regional scale, five community scale, and three neighbourhood scale.
Access	• 98% of Winnipeggers have access to an OLA
Quality	• Not yet formally assessed

12
OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

98%
of Winnipeggers have access to an off-leash dog area

3.7.3 Tertiary amenities

Tertiary amenities are opportunity-based and place specific amenities. These amenities are not considered integral to the overall function and objectives of the parks system, but they can create additional recreational value and benefit for Winnipeggers. As such, they are not guaranteed to be provided at a specific distribution across the city, but will be added to the system following clearly demonstrated need, as opportunities and resources allow.

3.7.4 Supportive amenities

Supportive amenities generally do not provide recreational functionality on their own but enhance the functionality of other amenities and contribute to the sense of place within parks. As such, with the exception of park furnishings which are appropriate in all park types, supportive amenities are of much greater importance in high profile regional parks, or high-capacity community parks. Since they represent the essential infrastructure components of parks, supportive amenities will continue to be directly provided by the City on a park-specific basis, in coordination with other amenities. Their provision will be governed more by park standards than by policy.

3.7.5 Specialty Amenities

Specialty amenities are primarily independent or standalone amenities that serve a very specific recreational interest. Six specialty amenities have been identified. These amenities are not a provision priority. As such, specialty amenities will generally not be prioritized for space in Winnipeg's parks system. These amenities, when provided in the future, will be constructed and maintained by another private provider or organization, although the City may provide suitable land if it is available.

TERTIARY AMENITIES

- Toboggan slides
- Special event/performance venues
- Spray pads/wading pools (direction for provision from the *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy)*
- Outdoor pools (direction for provision from the *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy)*
- Plazas
- Public art/monuments
- Community gardens
- Beach volleyball
- Fitness equipment
- Disc golf courses
- Cricket pitches
- Canoe and kayak launches
- Boat launches
- Viewing platforms and lookouts
- Lawn bowling, pétanque, bocce
- Track and field amenities

SUPPORTIVE AMENITIES

- Interpretive signage
- Aesthetic features (planters, etc.)
- Public washrooms
- Roads/bridges/parking lots
- Park furniture (benches, litter bins, lighting, bike racks, etc.)
- Maintenance/storage facilities

SPECIALTY AMENITIES

- Speed skating ovals
- Bike tracks
- Archery ranges
- Radio controlled racing areas
- Ice climbing tower

4 Policies & implementation strategies

The following policies and implementation strategies provide specific direction on how to deliver the entire parks service. These policies respond to the Strategy priorities and are organized around the parks system components, while highlighting the important related aspects of design and maintenance. The policies aim to provide a better understanding of parks role in city building by encouraging a coordinated and strategic approach going forward.

The policies are structured to address the specific objectives of the Strategy, while concurrently being driven by the parks system vision, goals, values, principles, and service priorities.

Defining levels of service (see *Section 3*) has been an important task of this Strategy so as to ensure there is a consistency of expectation and approach as decisions are made going forward. A summary of the current and target level of service for park components is provided in *Table 06*, and referenced in the following policies.

POLICY STATEMENTS VERSUS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Policy statements direct decision-making on the delivery of parks services. They further define levels of service for each of the component of the parks system.

Implementation strategies provide strategies for how the City will implement the policy statements.

4.1 Parkland

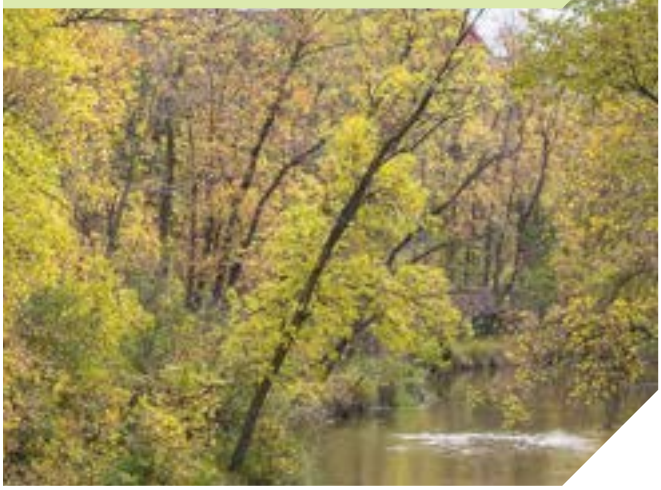
A strategic and sustainable approach to parkland provision includes establishing when and how parks will be acquired and rationalized. The policies and implementation strategies in this section do just this by setting out targets for parkland level of service. These targets clearly articulate when different classes of parks should be provided to meet the needs of Winnipeggers.

In addition to acquisition and rationalization priorities, the policies guide the parkland dedication process in new communities. They provide specific criteria that must be followed when new parks are to be added to the system as part of complete communities. The implementation strategies address how the City will achieve the policies, providing guidance on required updates to subsidiary policies and internal procedures.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

01 Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in parks service delivery needs by implementing transparent and defendable decision-making processes

05 Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities



4.1.1 Policies

Policy intent

Celebrate the value of public parks by maintaining and expanding a viable, sustainable and adaptable parks system that is recognized as a critical component of complete and walkable communities where people can live, work, and play.

General

4.1.1.1 Ensure land designated for public parks is sufficient to provide all Winnipeggers ample year-round opportunities for five key services:

- **i** *Outdoor play* - Foster self-directed outdoor fun, energetic activity and community wellbeing through the provision of inclusive, safe, year-round play environments for people of all ages and abilities;
- **ii** *Leisure & gathering* - Support individual and community wellbeing, facilitate public events and celebrations, and foster an understanding of Winnipeg's arts and culture by providing safe, accessible, vibrant, and functional gathering and event spaces;
- **iii** *Outdoor sport* - Support active living and physical literacy by providing good quality, well-maintained athletic surfaces and supporting infrastructure for people and organizations to participate in casual and competitive sport, recreation, and fitness activities;
- **iv** *Nature experience* - Improve people's access to nature and support ecological functioning through the restoration and preservation of natural systems; and
- **v** *Trail-based recreation* - Support and improve year-round opportunities for walking, cycling, skiing and other active transportation activities through the provision of a connected pathway and trail network that provides greater access to

natural spaces, parks, communities, waterways and destinations.

4.1.1.2 Aim to provide parkland to meet proposed level of service for provision (distribution and capacity), and quality (condition and functionality).

4.1.1.3 As a target level of service, the City will:

- **i** Ensure all Winnipeggers have access to a park (excluding buffers and fragments) within walking distance of home (600 m).
- **ii** Strive to maintain an average provision level of 50 m^2 of parkland per person across the City.
- **iii** Strive to maintain a minimum provision level of 30 m^2 of parkland per person in Downtown by acquiring additional parkland to support population growth.

4.1.1.4 Address the provision of parks to support employment lands on a case-by-case basis.

4.1.1.5 Recognizing that as the priority intention for parkland use is recreation and environmental protection, accommodate only compatible uses including park-related operations.

4.1.1.6 Ensure land and facilities designated for parks can be developed and adapted to serve our changing population and physical and social needs.

4.1.1.7 Reduce physical, social, economic, communication and systemic barriers to accessing parks.

4.1.1.8 Protect, preserve, and enhance natural areas and historical features to increase opportunities for human interaction with nature and facilitate reflection on our city's cultural past.

4.1.1.9 In recognition of the challenges associated with increasing park provision Downtown, strive to ensure that existing Downtown parkland and amenities are retained, multi-functional and well-maintained.

Park classifications

4.1.1.10 Create a cohesive, balanced parks system by providing a range of park types and scales to accommodate a variety of spaces, uses and levels of intensity.

- **i** Implement a classification system that establishes a hierarchy of park types and associated size, access, and provision characteristics as outlined in *Table 03.*
- **ii** Ensure all parks are planned, maintained, managed, and developed in accordance with the intended classification.

Regional parks

4.1.1.11 Continue to invest and upgrade existing regional parks, and prioritize efforts to strengthen each park's identity in keeping with its designated image or theme.

4.1.1.12 Proactively monitor and seek out lands for new regional parks and regional sport parks in anticipation of future population growth and to address gaps in distribution by considering:

- **i** Expansion of existing sites, where practical and feasible; or
- **ii** Establishment of new sites that meet the qualities and character of these park classifications as outlined in Table 03, and for regional parks specifically:
  - Prioritizing sites that incorporate a water-oriented feature (ie. river, stream or pond) to serve as both a natural feature focus and a major visual attraction; or
  - Targeting rural and agricultural areas that have existing natural and/or cultural features worthy of preservation.

Community parks

4.1.1.13 Increase provision of community parks in response to a demonstrated need for additional core and secondary amenities. To achieve this, the City will strategically:

- **i** Develop new community parks, where land acquisition is possible;

ii Expand and enhance an existing community park site; and

iii Expand an existing neighbourhood park to transition to a community park.

4.1.1.14 Parks at the community scale should be sufficiently flexible to provide as wide a range of park and recreation opportunities as possible and also accommodate changes in demand over time.

4.1.1.15 Recognize the limitations of providing community parks and associated secondary amenities in the Downtown by considering community parks from adjacent neighbourhoods in provision assessments.

4.1.1.16 Develop community parks in conjunction with the development of new community centres or co-located with middle schools and high schools, when possible.

Neighbourhood parks

4.1.1.17 Strategically develop new neighbourhood parks in existing communities to provide core amenities in areas of higher poverty, Downtown and mature communities with demonstrated need, where acquisition is possible.

4.1.1.18 Neighbourhood parks may support inclusion of basketball courts, off-leash dog areas, and skate spots only where appropriate separation from adjacent residential properties can be achieved.

4.1.1.19 Support the co-location of neighbourhood parks with elementary schools.

4.1.1.20 Locate neighbourhood parks on local streets away from high traffic areas.

i Larger neighbourhood parks (3 acres or greater) that incorporate informal athletic field(s) may be permitted to have a small frontage on collector streets.

4.1.1.21 Consider regional streets, railways and waterways as a barrier to safe and accessible walkability when evaluating neighbourhood park catchments.

Nature parks

4.1.1.22 Establish nature parks to protect quality natural habitats and ensure they are recognized and maintained as a public resource for educational and passive recreational use.

4.1.1.23 Develop nature parks to balance public access with ecological integrity. Where possible, the City will:

i Minimize landscaping impacts to preserve native habitats and provide essential ecosystem services to the city as a whole;

ii Primarily support unstructured passive recreation pursuits such as walking, resting, photography and animal watching; and

iii Preserve, protect and manage natural areas identified as *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands (ESNL)*.

Linkage parks

4.1.1.24 Maintain and strategically expand existing linkage parks to:

i Support active mobility and promote healthy low-cost and environmentally sustainable choices for recreational and commuter active transportation; and

ii Expand and improve access to and along the riverbank *Parkway System* and *Greenway* networks.

4.1.1.25 Support linkage parks as part of developer parkland dedications, where they:

i Are provided in a balanced manner with requirements for neighbourhood and community parks and the related provision of core and secondary amenities;

ii Provide sufficient corridor width to accommodate pathways and associated site requirements (drainage, planting, and bench nodes), and protect the riparian

Table 03: *Primary park classifications*

	REGIONAL	REGIONAL-SPORT	COMMUNITY
CHARACTER	• destination park • each developed around a distinct image or theme	• sporting event site	• activity centre for 3-5 neighbourhoods • often associated with a community centre
SIZE	• >40 hectares	• >40 hectares	• >5 hectares
CAPACITY	• serves 100,000 people	• serves 250,000 people	• serves ~10,000 people
ACCESS	• 5-km catchment	• 10-km catchment	• 2-km catchment
KEY FEATURES	• located on a regional street and/or existing or future transit route • along a waterway or incorporates a water feature • supports a significant natural area • connected to active transportation • parking for a minimum of 100 vehicles • may function as neighbourhood park for nearby residents	• located on a regional and/or collector street or existing or future transit route • connected to active transportation • parking for 200 vehicles • well-buffered from residential areas (to limit disruptions from noise, traffic, lighting)	• located on a collector street and/or transit route • well connected to active transportation network • often incorporates natural features • include parking for >25 vehicles • may function as a neighbourhood park to nearby residents
CO-LOCATION OPPORTUNITIES	• often co-located with a golf course	• may be in an industrial area • preferably buffered from residential areas	• may be co-located with middle school or high school
AMENITY INCLUSIONS	• all amenity categories	• focus on multiple secondary amenities to accommodate both recreation and competitive league play	• core amenities • common siting for secondary amenities • may have tertiary amenities
CITY ROLE	• direct provider	• direct provider or partner	• direct provider or partner
MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES (refer to Section 4.6)	• service level A	• service level A	• service level B
FUTURE DIRECTION	• monitor city growth & land availability in anticipation of future demand • direction to be provided by *Regional Park Investment Strategy*	• continue to be governed by agreements with external partners	• determine land requirements to accommodate community centre or recreation centre

NEIGHBOURHOOD	NATURE	LINKAGE
• walkable access • visual and social focus of the neighbourhood	• >80% coverage of Grade A, B, or A/B quality habitat	• ecological and recreational connectivity • generally long and narrow
• 0.2 - 5 hectares	• variable	• variable
• serves ~2,000 people • new communities: 1/1,000 people	• variable	• variable
• 600-m catchment	• variable	• variable
• located on a local street • well connected to active transportation network • incorporates natural features, where possible • ideal for playgrounds	• encompasses contiguous, high-quality native habitats • incorporates interpretive nodes • incorporates a dedicated pathway either through or around	• incorporates a multi-use pathway, trail or sidewalk • access points every 400 m • often associated with native habitats, or naturalized areas
• may be co-located with elementary or K-8 school	• variable • often along waterways	• may be adjacent to stormwater retention ponds • often along waterways
• core amenities • may accommodate single use informal athletic fields	• supportive amenities	• supportive amenities
• direct provider	• direct provider	• direct provider
• service level B	• service level C	• service level C
• strive for increased multi-use capacity	• proactively acquire lands with high ecological value	• strive to balance linkage park with needs for other park classifications

environment while concurrently setting aside sufficient land to facilitate path, taking into account stability concerns;

iii Facilitate or enhance connectivity between neighbourhoods and communities;

iv Connect to the existing active transportation network;

v Facilitate or enhance connections to major anchor points or destinations, such as other parks, schools, community centres and commercial areas;

vi Integrate activity nodes such as playgrounds and picnic and gathering spaces;

vii Contribute towards or complete a neighbourhood pathway loop;

viii Provide access to natural areas; or

ix Facilitate improved connections to the transit system.

4.1.1.26 When provided in association with a retention pond (storm water retention basin), linkage parks should only flank one side or approximately half the pond in consideration of: park dedication limitations; the need to balance other park types; and to maximize potential for more multi-functional spaces.

i Paths or trails encircling a pond are not supported unless they are located within a regional park.

4.1.1.27 To maximize safety and convenience, linkage parks should have multiple access points:

i In new developments, strive for an access point every 250 m, which may be extended to 400 m where there are good site lines; and

ii In existing linkage park networks, the City should strive to achieve an access point every 400 m.

Buffers

4.1.1.28 Discourage the creation of new publicly owned and maintained buffer strips, and instead encourage the land buffer to form part of the street right of way, or become incorporated into the lot(s) that the buffering is intended to serve.

4.1.1.29 Existing buffer strips:

i Should be designed to contribute to the health and visual aesthetic of the urban fabric by making them key locations for tree planting;

ii May, where located along a regional road network, serve the dual purpose of providing an off-road pathway network; and

iii May be made available to community groups for community gardens and food production in locations where it is safe to do so and will not be negatively impacted by adjacent traffic noise or emissions.

Acquisition and rationalization

Parkland acquisition

4.1.1.30 Pursue acquisition of land for parks through both strategic and opportunistic means to:

i Consider providing additional parkland in identified geographic areas of higher poverty, especially in those areas that are underserved;

ii Provide additional parkland in high density areas with below average parkland access;

iii Protect natural areas;

iv Provide core amenities in areas that are under-served or have demonstrated need;

v Provide additional access to parkland in areas with high projected future densities, including Downtown;

vi Provide secondary amenities in areas that are under-served and consider enhanced provisions where there is demonstrated need;

vii Provide access to riverfront areas, especially where the added land serves to extend

planned pathway and trail networks along the waterways;

viii Develop additional public gathering spaces in Downtown;

ix Protect known archaeological or historic resources;

x Acquire key land parcels required for long term needs of the parks system; or

xi Acquire land parcels that facilitate the completion or contribute to the completion of the linkage park network.

4.1.1.31 Consider acquisition of school sites, golf courses, or other public lands that are made available for repurposing and suitable for designation as parkland.

4.1.1.32 Ensure land acquired for park purposes is:

i Of an adequate and functional size and shape to support its intended uses and amenities;

ii Connected or has potential to be connected to existing and planned active transportation routes; and

iii Located centrally, or in an easily accessible location to best serve the community or neighbourhood catchment area.

4.1.1.33 Encourage and promote the donation of private land to expand the parks system for public use.

4.1.1.34 Seek creative alternatives to expand park access, such as exploring the possibilities and implications of publicly available private lands (ie. green roofs, private park spaces) to supplement the park provision.

Parkland for new communities

4.1.1.35 Conduct parks planning as part of the initial stages of developing area structure plans and neighbourhood structure plans. At a minimum this should:

i Identify the natural systems that should be protected;

ii Assess the need for ranges of park types and amenities in consideration of anticipated population and surrounding context, to align with the recommended park provisioning; and

iii Consider park provisioning requirements concurrently with other policies and criteria

related to land use, transportation, servicing and design elements.

4.1.1.36 Ensure that, wherever possible, land is dedicated for park purposes as a first priority and that cash-in-lieu is only accepted where:

- **i** The City deems proposed park site as not suitable or otherwise not necessary;
- **ii** The resulting land parcel would be too small to provide sufficient park space for its intended use; or
- **iii** The surrounding context already provides park lands to the extent that the additional provision will result in the area being over-served.

4.1.1.37 Parkland dedication contributions will be evaluated to ensure they meet the following criteria:

- **i** Basic acquisition criteria outlined in 4.1.1.30;
- **ii** Demonstrate a functional and cohesive network of parks that achieves the levels of service specified within the Strategy;
- **iii** Existing natural habitat identified for preservation and incorporation into the parks system has been assessed and deemed worthy of protection by the City's Naturalist Services branch;
- **iv** The proposed parks meet the minimum size requirements of their intended classification and appropriate configuration requirements to accommodate the intended uses and amenities (refer to 4.1.1.39 through 4.1.1.43 for details);
- **v** The proposed parks are generally free of encumbrances such as hazardous or excessive slopes that could impact leisure and recreational uses; and
- **vi** If the proposed parkland dedication contribution does not meet these criteria, the City will not accept the land dedication.

4.1.1.38 The following conditions are not deemed eligible for parkland dedication credit:

- **i** Water and Waste department controlled embankments along stormwater retention and detention ponds, basins and channels, or lands abutting ponds that are in excess of 10 percent slope;
- **ii** Land for utility needs, such as cell towers or hydro substations;
- **iii** Publicly accessible private open spaces;
- **iv** Buffer strips and fragments; or
- **v** Street-to-street walkway connections.

4.1.1.39 All new developments shall achieve the following amenity provisions for its residents:

Core amenities:

- **i** Minimum one playground (including school-owned) within 10-minute walking distance (600 m), with additional provisions as required to achieve one playground per 1,000 people;
- **ii** Minimum one picnic and gathering space within 2-km distance, with additional provisions as required to achieve one picnic and gathering space per 2,500 people; and
- **iii** Minimum one multi-use greenspace within 1.2-km distance, with additional provisions as required to achieve one multi-use greenspace per 2,000 people.

Secondary amenities:

- **iv** Minimum one basketball court (including school-owned) within 1.2-km distance, with additional provision as required to achieve one basketball court per 2,000 people;
- **v** Minimum one tennis/pickleball court, one baseball/softball diamond, one rectangular athletic field and one outdoor skating area within 2-km distance, with additional provision as required to achieve one of each amenity type per 5,000 people;
- **vi** Minimum one skatepark/spot within 5-km distance, with additional provision as required to achieve one skatepark/spot per 50,000 people; and
- **vii** Required provision of off-leash dog areas per the Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan.

Supportive amenities:

- **viii** One parks maintenance building and yard per 100 ha of parkland.

4.1.1.40 Community parks shall be provided:

- **i** To achieve one park 5 ha or greater in size, per 10,000 people within a 2-km catchment;
- **ii** As needed to respond to gaps in secondary amenity provisioning;
- **iii** In a location that best serves its catchment; and
- **iv** Where it can be accessed by all modes of transportation (ie. on a collector street, near a transit route, and directly connected to the active transportation network).

4.1.1.41 Neighbourhood parks shall be provided in coordination with other parkland provision:

- **i** To achieve one park 0.2 to 5 ha in size, per 1,000 people within a 600-m catchment;
- **ii** To provide sufficient parkland to accommodate the amenity requirements per 4.1.1.39;
- **iii** Typically located on local streets, however allowances may be made for parks greater than 2 ha with informal athletic fields; and
- **iv** Ensuring catchment does not extend beyond arterial or regional streets.

4.1.1.42 Linkage parks shall:

- **i** Be provided in accordance with criteria outlined under 4.1.1.24 to 4.1.1.27; and
- **ii** Where located along a stormwater retention basin, ensure the route has purpose for connectivity, and sufficient space to accommodate paths and drainage, sitting areas, and tree plantings.

4.1.1.43 Natural features shall be preserved in accordance with assessment by the *City Naturalist* and/or *City Forester*.

- **i** Where natural features do not exist, the City shall designate a minimum area that should be naturalized to help achieve natural feature targets.

Parkland rationalization

4.1.1.44 Disposition of parkland will only be considered for lands deemed 'non-essential' (lands no longer considered a priority to

retain for parkland or park-related purposes). This includes:

i Low-functioning parkland;

ii Fragments or isolated/inaccessible parkland (excluding riverbank lands or other disconnected parcels intended to form part of a future linkage park);

iii Parkland that cannot be repurposed for other park-related uses; or

iv Parkland in areas of above-average level of service, where evaluated community need and anticipated future demand are low.

4.1.1.45 Based on a thorough assessment of parkland provisioning, and only after determining that the land is non-essential (per 4.1.1.44), explore opportunities to:

i Offer the land to another organization for continued use/stewardship as a park, where they can provide greater public benefit than is otherwise possible within the existing target levels of service;

ii Lease the land to a recreation group or organization;

iii Shift ownership and operation of the parkland to another internal City or Provincial department at fair market price or through a land swap;

iv Swap the subject land for land within an area of parkland need or amenity service gap; or

v Dispose of the land through a market sale (in accordance with City policies and processes).

4.1.1.46 Parkland in identified areas of higher poverty will only be rationalized where it can be exchanged for lands in the same geographic area that achieve a net benefit in provision such as a larger site, improved access or more functional park space.

4.1.1.47 As per the *Winnipeg Charter Act,* funds derived from the sale of park land shall be held in a reserve account for the intended purpose of acquisition, development and improvement of public parks and other recreational purposes.

4.1.2 Implementation strategies

Asset inventory

4.1.2.A Refine and document a process for managing and updating the parkland asset registry.

General parks planning and acquisition

4.1.2.B Monitor and act upon parkland acquisition opportunities in identified areas of higher poverty, communities with below average level of service for parkland, denser neighbourhoods, and high growth areas of the city.

4.1.2.C Monitor future growth scenarios to assess anticipated future demand of parkland.

4.1.2.D Investigate opportunities for acquisition of surface parking, derelict buildings, or other desirable lots in Downtown for conversion to parkland, prioritizing areas that can fill core and secondary amenity service gaps.

4.1.2.E Explore processes to leverage the expertise of the development industry and benefit from economies-of-scale, to construct parks and related amenities in addition to developer site improvement obligations.

Rationalization

4.1.2.F Conduct a regular 'Non-essential Parkland Assessment' to understand the current and potential opportunities for repurposing to respond to:

- **i** Gaps in natural features provision;
- **ii** Existing and projected amenity gaps;
- **iii** Increases in demand; and/or
- **iv** Changing trends in recreation and leisure.

Policy development and refinement

4.1.2.G Review and update the *Development Agreement Parameters*:

- **i** To clarify that, as per current practice, the 2 percent in cash-in-lieu contribution is intended to be reinvested in the site as the developer site improvement obligation; and
- **ii** To establish clear process to adjust dedication requirements (both land and cash equivalent for in-lieu contributions) to account for increasing density.

4.1.2.H Revisit the *Land Dedication Reserve Fund* Policy to confirm and clarify how the funds may be allocated, with an emphasis to:

- **i** Designate a minimum percentage to be retained for the purchase of parkland;
- **ii** Designate a minimum percentage to be retained for major improvements in regional parks;
- **iii** Designate a minimum percentage to be retained for improvements to community and neighbourhood parks; and
- **iv** Amend the evaluation criteria to require that all projects meeting the minimum criteria receive a further assessment for priority investment by the *Parks Services Administrator* based on level of service.

4.1.2.I For all new communities eligible for park dedication, explore the opportunity to set aside a percentage of the dedication value as a 'Greenfield Development Fund' to fund core and possibly secondary amenities, in addition to, or specifically allocated within, the *Land Dedication Reserve Fund*.

Coordination with other park/open space providers

4.1.2.J Explore options to work with private landowners, school boards, conservation authorities and other levels of government to provide public access to non-municipal open spaces.

4.1.2.K Explore possibilities to enhance partnerships with public utilities to allow for greater public use and functionality of their utility areas and corridors. For example, the provision of trails, community gardens and off-leash dog areas within hydro corridors.

Temporary Parks

4.1.2.L Research benefits and explore opportunities and appropriate arrangements to promote temporary parks and park amenities on City-owned vacant and underutilized lands, particularly in areas of the city that have a demonstrated community need. This may include skate spots, community gardens, off-leash dog areas, and events, among others.

4.2 Natural features

Natural areas and urban forests are integral to the quality of life of Winnipeggers and contribute to the resilience of Winnipeg as a city. The policies in this section establish the city-wide level of service targets for natural and urban forest areas, and direct how natural areas will be both acquired and protected by the City. Further, it will guide how natural areas will be incorporated into new communities to ensure their continued ecological integrity and public benefit.

The associated implementation strategies provide actionable future policy development and procedural changes to increase the City's capacity to protect and manage natural features, and to harness the capacity of natural systems to improve the resilience of communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **01** Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in park service delivery needs by implementing transparent and defendable decision-making processes
- **03** Improve the functionality, sustainability, responsiveness and ecological integrity of the parks system by updating design guidelines and management practices
- **05** Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities

4.2.1 Policies

Policy intent

Demonstrate exemplary land stewardship by preserving, protecting and enhancing significant and high-quality natural areas and urban forest canopy.

General

Level of service

4.2.1.1 Strive to provide access to natural features within walking distance of all Winnipeggers (600 m). To achieve this, the City will:

- **i** Focus protection and preservation of existing natural areas (quality grade C or above) identified in the *Natural Areas Inventory*;
- **ii** Focus protection and preservation of continuous forest patches with a canopy greater than 0.5 ha in area;
- **iii** Naturalize park areas, where appropriate, to address service gaps; and
- **iv** Prioritize acquisition of riverbank lands that form part of an identified linkage park network.

4.2.1.2 Natural areas shall not be considered as multi-use greenspaces.

Urban forests

4.2.1.3 Preserve, protect, maintain and enhance Winnipeg's urban forest as directed by the *Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy,* with aim to:

- **i** Achieve tree canopy coverage targets for parks; and
- **ii** Ensure species diversity in planted natural features.

4.2.1.4 Prioritize preservation and enhancement of Winnipeg's urban forest along riverbanks.

4.2.1.5 Provide a well-managed urban forest that contributes to air quality, water quality and high environmental and aesthetic standards.

Stewardship of natural areas

4.2.1.6 Preserve, protect, maintain and enhance Winnipeg's natural areas as directed by the *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy (ESNL)* and any future *Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan.*

4.2.1.7 Naturalize park areas, where appropriate, to support or restore ecological functions, and improve climate resilience.

4.2.1.8 Prioritize protection of natural areas designated as ecologically significant lands within parks over recreational uses where those uses may negatively impact the long-term health of the area being protected.

4.2.1.9 Strive to restore impacted or damaged ecosystems to increase the function of ecological systems.

- **i** Prioritize remediation of unstable riverbanks and riparian areas.

4.2.1.10 Preserve natural vegetation and habitats and promote wildlife passage corridors through parks and natural areas, where possible.

4.2.1.11 As per *Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan*, develop a methodology to quantify the value of ecological goods and services and natural assets.

4.2.1.12 Manage drainage into natural areas with aim to retain existing soil moisture regime.

THE *ECOLOGICALLY SIGNIFICANT NATURAL LANDS STRATEGY'S* **DEFINITION OF 'NATURAL AREAS' INCLUDES:**

- Lands and/or waters with natural or native biotic communities representative of the natural ecology of the region;
- Lands that have significant animal or bird communities;
- Land of cultural or historical significance;
- Land that fosters connectivity between natural areas for both wildlife and the public; and
- Land adjacent to waterways.

4.2.1.13 Ensure recreational activities in parks, including events and festivals, are compatible with the protection of natural areas and wildlife habitats, or impacts are mitigated through buffering of uses.

4.2.1.14 Manage human access to and within natural features by restricting:

- **i** The location of paths within or around natural areas to control movement and minimize habitat damage, while allowing for nature interpretation opportunities and experiences; and
- **ii** Access to certain sensitive habitats and landscapes, rare or at-risk species, and wildlife movement areas.

4.2.1.15 Provide opportunities for volunteer stewardship groups to assist with management of natural features.

4.2.1.16 Provide environmental education opportunities and experiences within parks.

4.2.1.17 Use pest management and other maintenance best practices to prevent the spread of noxious and non-native species.

Enhancing natural feature provision

4.2.1.18 Acquire natural areas for protection opportunistically, prioritizing:

- **i** Intact natural heritage ecosystems;
- **ii** Ecosystems that are highly sensitive to disturbance;
- **iii** Areas that contain rare, at-risk or unique species or ecosystems;
- **iv** Significant natural features;
- **v** Lands that provide wildlife connectivity; or
- **vi** Lands that provide or may provide significant ecosystem services (assisting with riverbank stabilization or flood mitigation).

4.2.1.19 Ensure that patches of natural areas prioritized for acquisition are large enough to retain their ecological function.

4.2.1.20 In developed parts of the city where natural areas no long exist, seek to naturalize low-functioning parks, first focusing on geographic areas of higher poverty.

4.2.1.21 Recognizing that most remaining natural areas lie beyond the built-up areas of the city, proactively acquire natural areas on the city outskirts to protect these habitats from development pressures, and in anticipation of future park needs.

4.2.2 Implementation strategies

Asset inventories

4.2.2.A Refine and document a process for managing and updating the:

- **i** Tree asset registry; and
- **ii** Natural areas asset registry.

Prioritizing natural areas

4.2.2.B Develop a Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan By-law to replace, or as a companion to the *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy and Policy*. The plan and by-law should:

- **i** Ensure conservation, management, restoration, and enhancement of the inherent value and ecological functioning of parks, waterways, natural areas and systems;
- **ii** Advance climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- **iii** Increase the quantity of open space for recreation, social interaction, active living, and connection of people with nature as population growth occurs;
- **iv** Provide a biodiversity framework or policy;
- **v** Provide a methodology to quantify the value of ecological goods and services and natural assets.

4.2.2.C Explore the opportunity to establish a separate and distinct land dedication requirement specific to the preservation of ecologically significant natural lands.

4.2.2.D Explore opportunities and implications of identifying ecologically significant natural lands for protection and integration into new community design at the secondary planning stage, prior to dedication of parkland.

4.2.2.E Celebrate and promote the Assiniboine Forest, Living Prairie Museum and riparian habitats as key natural areas for the City.

Naturalization

4.2.2.F Undertake parkland naturalization initiatives.

4.2.2.G Explore processes, standards and opportunities for retrofitting traditional stormwater retention basins to naturalized basins.

4.2.2.H Expand an education and public information campaign about the benefits and value of naturalization.

Management of urban forests

4.2.2.I Complete the *Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy* and implement recommendations.

4.2.2.J Develop a Greening Plan as a component of the *Downtown Plan* to increase greenspace and tree canopy Downtown.

Management of natural areas

4.2.2.K Work towards the development of agreements with stewardship groups for management of natural features.

4.2.2.L Develop a 'Natural Areas Management Plan' to prioritize the implementation of natural areas restoration and maintenance.

4.2.2.M Monitor wildlife activity in targeted locations to develop data-driven natural area management policies and procedures, as well as to introduce additional educational opportunities to the public.

Environmental education

4.2.2.N Collaborate with organizations to provide environmental education opportunities, through programs, signage or other means such as maps or web-based applications.

4.3 Connections

Connections, including trails and pathways, serve to provide Winnipeggers with access to parks and provide recreational functions by serving as spaces for trail-based activities. The policies in this section support the City's goals of creating a well-connected network of pedestrian and cycling routes, to support connections to and within parks. Coordinating park development with city transportation networks, including pathways, streets, sidewalks, and transit, is essential to ensuring that parks are fully integrated as part of Winnipeg's complete communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **01** Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in parks service delivery needs by implementing transparent and defensible decision-making processes
- **04** Broaden the reach of the parks system by coordinating improved connections, enhancing safety and expanding opportunities for sharing park information
- **05** Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities

4.3.1 Policies

Policy intent

Support safe connections to the parks system, by considering how people get there, how and why they use trails and paths within parks, and the cues that help guide movement within parks, including the infrastructure required to clearly communicate that intent and purpose.

General

4.3.1.1 Coordinate (complement and supplement) park trail and pathway improvements with planned active transportation networks and transit service to increase access to parks and amenities.

City-wide connectivity

Alignment with active transportation

4.3.1.2 Endeavor to provide linkages between parks and the city-wide walking and cycling routes established in the *Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies*, to improve access to and through parks.

4.3.1.3 Provide additional connections through parks that serve to enhance the year-round connectivity of neighbourhoods and communities, as indicated in *Fig. 31*.

4.3.1.4 Where possible, leverage planned transportation infrastructure renewal projects and opportunities to create additional connections with the linkage park network.

4.3.1.5 Promote the year-round use and enjoyment of waterways and riverbanks by facilitating public access.

4.3.1.6 Expand the network of public riverbank lands for active transportation and recreational purposes.

i Support the continued development of *Winnipeg's Parkway System* and *Greenway and Trails* routes.

Wayfinding

4.3.1.7 Use simple and legible wayfinding to support exploration and enhance visitor experiences by telling people where they are, where they can go, how they can get there, or how far it is to key destinations.

4.3.1.8 Implement a consistent signage, wayfinding, and mapping identity across the parks system, including:

- **i** Entrance signage;
- **ii** Trail and major amenity identification; and
- **iii** Universally accessible routes and amenities identification.

4.3.1.9 Explore innovative opportunities for digital wayfinding and trail conditions updates through online applications and maps.

Transit

4.3.1.10 When planning new community and regional parks, coordinate park siting with transit service to increase public access.

4.3.1.11 Ensure that parks are considered in any expansion or reduction of transit service to maintain or increase transit access to existing or planned community or regional parks.

Internal park connectivity

Pathway development

4.3.1.12 Establish pathways and trails within parks to provide access to amenities and natural areas, and prevent the creation of user-created trails.

4.3.1.13 Optimal pathway alignment within a park will consider its role in the larger active transportation network, with attention to how it:

- **i** Creates or complements walking circuits, bike routes, multi-purpose trails, a continuous system of universally accessible trails, winter recreational activities, and enhanced connections to existing amenity nodes; or
- **ii** Feeds into commuter routes, improves access between neighbourhoods, links across the rivers and streams, where appropriate, and routes between destinations.

Connecting to natural areas

4.3.1.14 Minimize trail impacts in natural areas as much as possible by the provision of:

- **i** A safe passage through, or loop within the area; and/or
- **ii** An alternate safe passage around the area.

4.3.1.15 Strategically plan trail location to provide for needed connections while minimizing the total number of trails created.

Inclusivity

4.3.1.16 Ensure inclusive access to parks, their amenities and the experiences they offer for people of all ages and abilities. To prioritize inclusive access, the City will:

- **i** Provide pathways and trails that adhere to universal design principles to ensure access to the broad range of experiences provided by parks; and
- **ii** Improve directness and connectivity through the removal of barriers and impediments on pathways and trails.

4.3.1.17 Prioritize upgrades/repair of degrading trail surfacing on the primary network of universally accessible pathways in parks.

Year-round access and use

4.3.1.18 Promote and support winter trail-based activity. In support of this, the City will:

- **i** Identify and clear pathways of snow to enable walking for leisure and connectivity;
- **ii** Maintain the current level of cross-country ski-trail grooming;

iii Promote trails dedicated for snowshoeing and skijoring; and

iv Partner with organizations to resource maintenance activities.

4.3.2 Implementation strategies

City-wide connectivity

4.3.2.A Update *ParkMaps* to maintain and enhance opportunities for people to seek out park experiences. Specifically:

i To query specific park classifications (such as nature parks) and related amenities.

ii To allow users to easily locate and find multi-modal directions to parks.

4.3.2.B Explore options to improve connectivity from Downtown across and along our waterways, in collaboration with the Transportation division and partnership groups, to increase access to parks and amenities in surrounding neighbourhoods.

i Explore the feasibility of additional active transportation bridges.

ii Encourage the development of a more direct active transportation connection from Downtown to the newly designated regional park (Whittier Park/Lagimodiere-Gaboury Historic Park).

4.3.2.C Explore opportunities to improve visual connectivity and wayfinding to river parkway paths from Downtown streets.

4.3.2.D Develop a waterway access study to explore opportunities to promote Winnipeg's rivers and creeks as important recreational and active transportation corridors in all seasons.

4.3.2.E Collaborate with the Forks Renewal Corporation to:

i Provide additional access points to the riverwalk system in all seasons; and

ii Promote the winter river trail to enhance active living and outdoor recreation opportunities.

iii Support improved access to water-based activity such as canoeing and kayaking.

4.3.2.F Clarify the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority for active transportation pathways that traverse park space.

4.3.2.G In collaboration with the Streets Maintenance division, regularly review and refine the priority network for snow clearing on trails and commuter routes to encourage year-round active transportation.

Pathways and trails within parks

4.3.2.H Improve signage to more effectively support wayfinding, interpretation, and park identity objectives, by:

i Refining signage standards; and

ii Updating and strategically implementing additional signage in new or renovated parks, where appropriate.

Connections management

4.3.2.I Refine and document a process for managing and updating park pathways and trails asset registry, in collaboration with Streets Maintenance and Transportation divisions.

4.3.2.J Update park design standards to establish construction details and use criteria for differing classifications of multi-use paths in alignment with the standards for the pedestrian and cycling network.

4.4 Amenities

Amenities represent some of the most essential features of park spaces. These are often the things that draw people to parks, and provide the comforts that encourages them to stay. The policies in this section establish a consistent approach to the provision of amenities, building upon the amenity classification provided in *Section 2.6.4 Amenities*.

The policies establish target levels of service for each amenity which are derived from the analysis outlined in *Section 3.7 Amenities.* The targets give the City direction on where to prioritize the addition or removal of service and where to pursue partnerships with other service providers.

As noted previously in *Section 2.8,* additional work will be required to assess community need for amenities as part of the decision-making process. When to assess community need and guidance on how to do so is reflected in the policies and implementation strategies in this section. Using these decision-making processes will ensure that over the course of the next 25 years, new investment and reinvestment is strategically directed to where it is needed most in the system.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- **01** Identify, prioritize, and address gaps in parks service delivery needs by implementing transparent and defendable decision-making processes
- **02** Respond to communities' unique challenges and opportunities by supporting existing and fostering new partnerships with community groups and private organizations
- **05** Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities

4.4.1 Policies

Policy intent

Recognize and support the provision of park amenities as essential building blocks in the delivery of key services.

General

4.4.1.1 Strive to provide amenities in accordance with the level of service identified in *Table 04 and Table 05*, and consider*:*

- **i** Amenities provided by a third-party to fill service gaps when they support attainment of target service levels.

4.4.1.2 Acknowledge the City's role in the provision and support of amenities as identified in *Fig. 21* (direct provider, indirect/partner, discontinuing support).

4.4.1.3 Strive to align the provision of amenities to the park classification structure as outlined in *Table 01.*

4.4.1.4 Prioritize the investment in amenities as follows:

- **i** Address service gaps in core amenities to meet base level of service with focus on geographic areas of higher poverty and the Downtown;
- **ii** Renew or enhance existing core amenities to improve quality;
- **iii** Address service gaps in secondary amenities to meet base level of service with focus on geographic areas of higher poverty;
- **iv** Add additional core amenities to address capacity needs, and/or renew or enhance existing secondary amenities to improve quality; or
- **v** Add additional secondary amenities to address capacity needs.

4.4.1.5 Provide tertiary amenities as opportunity and resources allow, on a site-by-site basis

and based on demonstrated community need.

4.4.1.6 Provide supportive amenities as necessary to enhance the functionality of core, secondary, and tertiary amenities.

4.4.1.7 Additional specialty amenities will not be provided by the City in the future, however existing specialty amenities may continue to operate within parks.

4.4.1.8 Parkland for the provision of specialty amenities will not be prioritized in the future.

Core amenities

4.4.1.9 Core amenities will be provided by the City to meet target level of service.

4.4.1.10 School playgrounds and publicly accessible play spaces provided by other community organizations will be considered in provision assessments.

4.4.1.11 Private picnic and gathering spaces provided by other community organizations may be considered in distribution calculations and decision-making, provided they are open to the general public.

4.4.1.12 Multi-use greenspaces generally do not include bookable rectangular athletic fields , but may include casual rectangular fields.

i Where sites have more than one bookable rectangular field (2,000 m^2 or larger), one of those fields may be deemed to have provided a multi-use greenspace.

Table 04: *Core amenity service levels (* only condition has been captured as a measure of quality at this time)*

CORE AMENITY		CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (2020)	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (2045)
Playground	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor play, Leisure & gathering, Nature experience**	
	City role	Direct provision Indirect provision (school divisions)	Direct provision Indirect provision (school divisions)
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community, neighbourhood & nature parks	Regional, regional-sport, community, neighbourhood & nature parks
	Capacity	1 per 1,000 people (incl. school-owned)	1 per 1,000 people (incl. school-owned)
	Distribution/access	83% of people within 10-minute walk (600 m)	100% of people within 10-minute walk (600m)
	Quality	4% in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Picnic & gathering space	Service(s) supported	**Leisure & gathering**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community, neighbourhood & nature parks	Regional, regional-sport, community, neighbourhood & nature parks
	Capacity	1 per 2,000 people	1 per 2,500 people
	Distribution/access	100% of people within 2-km distance	100% of people within 2-km distance
	Quality	4% of tables & 3% of shelters in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Multi-use greenspace	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor play, Outdoor sport, Leisure & gathering**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks
	Capacity	1 per 5,200 people	1 per 2,000 people
	Distribution/access	27% of people within 10-minute walk (600 m)	100% of people within 1.2-km distance)
	Quality	Not yet assessed	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality

Table 05: *Secondary amenity service levels (* only condition has been captured as a measure of quality at this time)*

SECONDARY AMENITY		CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (2020)	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (2045)
Tennis/pickleball courts	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor sport**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional-sport & community parks	Regional-sport & community parks
	Capacity	1 per 5,000 people	1 per 5,000 people
	Distribution/access	64% of people within 2-km distance	80% of people within 2-km distance
	Quality	6% in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Basketball courts	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor sport**	
	City role	Direct / indirect provision	Direct / indirect provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks
	Capacity	1 per 2,000 people (incl. school-owned)	1 per 2,000 people (incl. school-owned)
	Distribution/access	67% of people within 600-m distance	100% of people within 1.2-km distance
	Quality	11% in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Baseball/softball diamonds	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor sport**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks	Regional, regional-sport, & community parks
	Capacity	1 per 2,800 people	1 per 5,000 people
	Distribution/access	94% of people within 2-km distance	100% of people within 2-km distance
	Quality	15% in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Rectangular athletic fields	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor sport**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks	Regional, regional-sport & community parks
	Capacity	1 per 2,500 people	1 per 5,000 people
	Distribution/access	96% of people within 2-km distance	100% of people within 2-km distance
	Quality	8% in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Outdoor skating rinks/areas	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor sport**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks	Regional, regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks
	Capacity	1 per 4,400 people	1 per 5,000 people
	Distribution/access	90% of people within 2-km distance	100% of people within 2-km distance
	Quality	8% in poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality
Off-leash dog areas *(direction per Off-leash Dog Areas Master Plan)*			
Skateparks/spots	Service(s) supported	**Outdoor play, Leisure & gathering**	
	City role	Direct provision	Direct provision
	Appropriate siting	Regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks	Regional-sport, community & neighbourhood parks
	Capacity	1 per 48,000 people	1 per 50,000 people
	Distribution/access	91% of people within 5-km distance	100% of people within 5-km distance
	Quality	0% in poor or very poor quality*	Less than 5 % in poor or very poor quality

Secondary amenities

4.4.1.13 Secondary amenities will be provided either directly by the City or through partnerships with other agencies and service organizations to meet target level of service.

4.4.1.14 Siting of basketball courts, skate spots, and off-leash dog areas in neighbourhood parks should only be considered where the park size and configuration ensures appropriate separation can be achieved between these amenities and adjacent residential properties.

4.4.1.15 Basketball courts provided by schools and other community organizations will be considered as part of provision assessments.

4.4.1.16 As per the *Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan* (OLAMP), the City will:

- **i** Strive to ensure Winnipeggers have access to either a regional or community off-leash dog area (OLA) where there is demonstrated community need; and
- **ii** Work with communities to provide additional walkable Neighbourhood OLAs in accordance with OLAMP siting and need criteria.

4.4.1.17 Refer to the *Athletic Field Review* study to support decisions on planning and provision of ball diamonds and rectangular fields.

4.4.1.18 Prioritize the provision of pleasure skating opportunities on trails and ponds in regional parks.

Tertiary amenities

4.4.1.19 Tertiary amenities will be provided directly by the City as resources permit, or indirectly through a partnership with another organization or provider.

- **i** Provision is opportunity-based or place-specific.

4.4.1.20 Monuments shall:

- **i** Generally not be supported in regional parks;
- **ii** Be limited to designated parks; and
- **iii** In the case of military monuments, be placed in parks designated to serve memorial functions.

Supportive amenities

4.4.1.21 Supportive amenities will be directly provided by the City across all parks as needed to increase the usability of other recreational amenities, or the parks themselves.

4.4.1.22 Focus provision of high-maintenance supportive amenities such as flower beds and decorative fountains in regional parks.

4.4.1.23 Provide parking lots in all regional parks, and in community parks, as appropriate.

4.4.1.24 Provide site furnishings as directed under *Section 4.5 Design.*

4.4.1.25 Provide bicycle racks in regional parks and at high activity parks, especially those accommodating secondary amenities.

4.4.1.26 Consider provision of outdoor cooking opportunities in select picnic and gathering locations, where there is a demonstrated community need.

4.4.1.27 Provide washrooms in all regional parks. Washrooms will be considered in other park classifications on a case-by-case basis, including:

- **i** Community parks where there is an operating community centre; and
- **ii** Community or neighbourhood parks where there is an operating wading pool.

4.4.1.28 Provide park maintenance facilities to achieve the provision of one maintenance building for every 100 ha of parkland, as follows:

- **i** In all regional parks, and at appropriate community parks to ensure a reasonable travel radius for large motive park maintenance equipment; and
- **ii** A regular distribution of small equipment sheds in select neighbourhood parks to decrease the need to trailer small self-propelled mowers and maintenance machines.

Specialty amenities

4.4.1.29 Parkland will not be prioritized for specialty amenities in the future.

4.4.1.30 Requests for new privately-provided specialty amenities will only be considered if accompanied by a defendable business case and will operate at no added cost to the City.

4.4.1.31 Existing specialty amenities will continue to operate per existing agreement.

Amenities in future development

4.4.1.32 All new developments must achieve amenity provision requirements in accordance with *Table 04 and Table 05.* The target per person will consider amenities located outside the new development, but within catchment.

4.4.1.33 New developments may be required to set aside land to accommodate maintenance facilities to meet distribution requirements.

Decision-making matrix

4.4.1.34 Assess current amenity provision, usage, quality, and future community demand in accordance with *Fig. 19* and *Fig. 20.*

4.4.1.35 Where service gaps exist, provision prioritization will be guided by population density as an indicator of demand.

4.4.1.36 When service gaps are identified for City-provided amenities, provision by a third-party will only be considered when access:

- **i** Is free of charge;
- **ii** Is not limited by exclusive use arrangements;
- **iii** Meets city standards with respect to safety; and
- **iv** Complies with *Universal Design Standards*.

4.4.2 Implementation strategies

Asset inventory

4.4.2.A Refine and document a process for managing and updating the park amenities asset registry.

Evaluating community need

4.4.2.B Develop and implement low-cost use monitoring techniques such as in person surveys, counters, or cameras, to evaluate current usage of park amenities and whether they are being used at or above their capacity.

4.4.2.C Conduct regular future community need assessments to supplement amenity level of service data and catchment analyses.

- **i** Prioritize the evaluation of community need in identified areas of higher poverty first.

4.4.2.D Re-assess provision and community need in areas when a school or other partner is reducing their service for a core or secondary amenity in an area.

- **i** Highlight the need to offset this service reduction if there is demonstrated need; and
- **ii** Explore opportunities to gain early notifications from partners regarding anticipated changes in amenity provision.

Addressing service gaps

4.4.2.E Assess opportunities to convert athletic fields into flexible and non-bookable amenities or multi-use greenspaces in areas where there is above-average service for these fields.

4.4.2.F Explore innovative opportunities to enhance amenity service provision in the Downtown given limited land availability.

4.4.2.G Recognize the limitations of providing secondary amenities in the Downtown by supporting anticipated increased demand for those amenities in adjacent mature areas by:

- **i** Striving to ensure existing amenities are retained;
- **ii** Closely monitoring amenity use and condition to ensure they are well-maintained;
- **iii** Considering upgrades to existing amenities to support increased use;
- **iv** Seeking options to supplement demand with other additional types of amenities; and
- **v** Seeking additional opportunities for the provision of larger secondary amenities, such as athletic fields, adjacent to Downtown.

Partnerships and agreements

4.4.2.H Work with Community Services department to ensure that the level of service and distribution of recreational amenities, such as permanent outdoor hockey rinks, spray pads and outdoor pools, are appropriately planned and incorporated into park master plans.

4.4.2.I Work with community centres to ensure their decision-making processes align with level of service guidelines outlined in the Strategy.

4.4.2.J Leverage joint use agreements with school divisions where appropriate to secure public access to playgrounds and athletic fields outside of regular operating hours.

4.4.2.K Establish evaluation criteria and process to govern requests for providing or partnering in the provision of tertiary amenities.

4.4.2.L Outline the conditions and processes required for the City to consider partnering in the provision of specialty amenities.

4.5 Design

The design of parks is an integral step in the process of creating a parks system that is functional, inclusive, connected, accessible, engaging, and beautiful. A healthy, viable parks system offers a wide variety of spaces and versions of amenities that invite both Winnipeggers and visitors to play, explore, learn and relax at all times of the year. The policies and implementation strategies in this section establish several design criteria and considerations that must be incorporated into all elements of the parks system. Proper design in the development and redevelopment of parks will ensure that parks are adaptable, multi-functional, and account for the community's future needs as Winnipeg grows and evolves.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

03 Improve the functionality, sustainability, responsiveness and ecological integrity of the parks system by updating design guidelines and management practices

4.5.1 Policies

Policy intent

Provides the direction and guidance for decisions related to planning and design of the parks system, taking into account the interrelationship of the various components to create a coherent, cohesive, balanced, interesting, safe, enjoyable park experience.

Urban design

Parks function within the city

4.5.1.1 Consider, through placemaking and provision of diverse landscape opportunities and experiences, a parks system that is designed to:

- **i** Meet the recreational, social and environmental needs of the community, while considering risk and affordability;
- **ii** Enhance property values and increase property tax revenues; and
- **iii** Promote use of consistent materials and standards, while striving to provide aesthetically pleasing park elements which demonstrate uniqueness and individuality.

Integration

4.5.1.2 Parks should be an integral part of the planned area.

4.5.1.3 Consider all park components (parkland, natural features, connections and amenities) in a holistic manner.

4.5.1.4 Park design should consider relationships to schools, specifically:

- **i** If co-located, recognize potential for sharing of amenities; or
- **ii** Even when not co-located, recognize the benefits of the school amenities to the community as a whole.

4.5.1.5 Consider context and evaluate surrounding land uses to mitigate potential conflicts or leverage opportunities for mutual benefit.

4.5.1.6 When parkland is co-located with stormwater infrastructure, it should be done with intent and purpose to enhance connectivity, improve walkability, and enhance park aesthetics.

Sense of place

4.5.1.7 Provide places to gather and create a feeling of community.

4.5.1.8 Strive to celebrate and promote the qualities and character of a community through incorporation of unique representative elements within parks, while balancing affordability of long-term maintenance requirements.

4.5.1.9 Delineate different activity areas through such means as signage, plantings, markings, spatial proximity, or boundaries.

Design criteria

Balance uses

4.5.1.10 Consider each park's contribution to the required active and passive recreation needs of the area.

Safety

4.5.1.11 User safety should be paramount in the planning, design, development and maintenance of parks.

4.5.1.12 Incorporate the principles of *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED),* to promote the safety of all parks.

- **i** Consider configuration, frontage, and maintenance of sight lines; and
- **ii** Use sensory cues and ensure adequate sight lines especially where vehicles and trails, or park access points, intersect.

4.5.1.13 Ensure that park design provides for emergency services access, including identification signage and street address.

4.5.1.14 Provide appropriate setbacks of trails and amenities or incorporate protective barriers around steep slopes, especially those adjacent to watercourses.

4.5.1.15 Where safety is the primary reason for lighting, lighting provided must have an appropriate intensity, colouration and distribution.

Inclusive

4.5.1.16 Ensure inclusive access to parks and their amenities by applying the principles of universal design, as outlined in the City of Winnipeg *Universal Design Policy* and *Accessibility Design Standards*.

4.5.1.17 To enhance the inclusivity, regular spacing of benches and rest areas should be incorporated along multi-use paths as specified by Winnipeg's *Accessibility Design Standards.*

4.5.1.18 Diversify amenities provided in playgrounds to suit a variety of ages and needs, and provide inclusive, interactive, educational, and playable landscapes.

Access

4.5.1.19 Provide the necessary requirements for vehicular access, parking, and circulation as appropriate to the intended level of activity and associated park classification.

4.5.1.20 Reinforce views and linkages to and from streets and other public spaces.

4.5.1.21 To promote multi-modal access and use:

- **i** Design all roads in parks as shared-mode spaces to safely accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. When possible, establish a parallel separated path system for cyclists and pedestrians; and
- **ii** Endeavour to coordinate pedestrian entry points close to transit stops.

4.5.1.22 Use standardized elements to define and establish park presence through such means as signage or fencing.

Flexibility

4.5.1.23 Design parks to accommodate a multi-use space that can provide a variety of year-round recreational experiences.

4.5.1.24 Multi-use greenspaces must be:

- **i** A minimum of 2,000 square metres in size;
- **ii** Generally square, or rectangular proportion of a 3:5 ratio; and
- **iii** Designed to be suitable for activities such as casual ball games, disc sports/games, and gatherings.

4.5.1.25 Strive to design spaces and incorporate amenities that may serve multiple purposes throughout the year, including:

- **i** Open areas that are easily convertible to ice skating and skate spots, or off-leash dog areas;

ii Designated trail areas that can be converted into cross-country skiing zones;

iii Adaptive re-use of hockey pens for summer uses such as off-leash dog areas, soccer, or lacrosse;

iv Lighting to extend park and amenity usage hours;

v Consider surfacing materials and their capacity for alternative uses (ie. permeable paving materials and other flood resilient design techniques);

vi Shelter from the elements (sun, wind, snow and rain); and

vii Consider where rest areas may be located to best serve needs through the seasons for varied activities.

Comfort

4.5.1.26 Create welcoming, comfortable and accessible spaces for all Winnipeggers by incorporating:

i Shade, shelter, wind protection, and seating spaces to support personal comfort in every season;

ii Barrier-free play features, facilities, and trails;

iii Barrier-free river access points, wildlife viewing areas, and boat launching facilities; and

iv Public washrooms and drinking fountains (primarily in regional parks).

4.5.1.27 Provide seating throughout the parks system to:

i Permit comfortably-distanced rest spots along pathways;

ii Augment picnic and BBQ sites;

iii Create comfortable places to supervise play areas;

iv Accommodate spectators;

v Direct one's view to pleasant vistas as deemed aesthetically pleasing and appropriate in each setting; and

vi To provide opportunity for quiet contemplation, by locating some benches in locations away from activity areas.

4.5.1.28 Minimize mosquito breeding sites by ensuring site grading and amenity design do not contribute to standing water.

Environmental sustainability

4.5.1.29 Design parks and associated infrastructure with ecological principles in mind.

4.5.1.30 Design park components to minimize environmental impacts, by considering:

i Treatment of stormwater runoff on-site through bioswales and rain gardens;

ii Sustainable landscaping practices, including xeriscaping and use of native vegetation and plants that require less water or maintenance;

iii Planting of shade trees;

iv Incorporation of permeable surfacing, where appropriate; and

v Setbacks of facilities, amenities and trails from steep slopes and watercourses to mitigate erosion, flood impacts, and landscape degradation.

4.5.1.31 Ensure park designs accommodate on-site surface drainage and minimize the use of mechanical drainage systems where feasible.

4.5.1.32 Strategically incorporate interpretive signs at viewpoints and areas of significance to:

i Highlight and educate on ecologically and geologically significant sites;

ii Provide interpretation of natural features and processes; and

iii Describe restoration work underway.

4.5.1.33 Apply the City of Winnipeg's *Green Building Policy* to park building construction projects, where possible.

Culture and heritage

4.5.1.34 Provide opportunities for people to connect with, learn about, and experience art, history, and culture within parks.

- **i** Recognize the significance of historical meeting and gathering places for Indigenous people, through design, programming, art and educational elements.
- **ii** Recognize and celebrate the historic significance of Winnipeg's waterways.

4.5.1.35 Identify, monitor, manage, and protect the heritage value of archaeological, cultural, and other historic resources which meet one or more of the six significance criteria defined in the City's *Historical Resources By-law.*

- **i** Partner with historic and heritage organizations and other City departments to identify, preserve, and enhance existing heritage assets in parks.

4.5.1.36 Continue to collaborate with Winnipeg Arts Council to install public art and playable art within parks on an opportunity basis.

Quality and durability

4.5.1.37 Generally, amenities shall be standardized to ensure a cohesive look and feel to minimize maintenance and renewal costs.

- **i** Unique features may be considered if they can be demonstrated to meet quality standards without increasing maintenance costs.

4.5.1.38 Ensure that new and retrofit amenities are designed and constructed from durable and easy to maintain materials to ensure the resilience and longevity of public assets.

4.5.1.39 Ensure that appropriate design materials are selected to suit Winnipeg's variable weather conditions, and site-specific needs.

Appropriate siting

4.5.1.40 Ensure that primary active transportation corridors are not routed through areas that would create conflicts, such as off-leash dog areas.

4.5.1.41 Create appropriate separations or buffers between natural features and high intensity activity areas like athletic fields and off-leash dog areas.

4.5.1.42 Foster community connections and activity by co-locating picnic and gathering spaces with other compatible park amenities and event spaces, such as play areas.

4.5.1.43 Encourage the integration of community gardens with other complementary uses and amenities such as seating or gathering spaces.

4.5.1.44 Locate maintenance yards in consideration of safe access, and the ability to establish appropriate buffering and screening from residential areas.

4.5.1.45 Outdoor fitness equipment, when provided, should only be located along pathways or adjacent to high traffic locations.

4.5.1.46 Locate litter bins in places where people gather and along major multi-use paths, in locations that are easily accessed by park users and maintenance staff.

4.5.1.47 Limit third party for profit lease of park space that does not support park purposes.

4.5.1.48 Ensure public art is located in high-traffic and high-profile areas to promote local artists and to establish locally recognized landmarks.

Design standards

4.5.1.49 Ensure the design and provision of park infrastructure adheres to the applicable national standards and City policies, standards and guidelines.

4.5.1.50 Regularly update and publish park design standards, construction details, and expected best practices to:

- **i** Better communicate the City's intentions to developers, consultants, contractors, and partners;
- **ii** Promote efficient design, construction, and maintenance processes in an effort to reduce long-term operation and maintenance cost; and
- **iii** Seek innovative design solutions.

4.5.1.51 Unless otherwise governed by City standards, the following national standards shall apply:

- **i** Skateboard parks and athletic field networks must be developed to North American best practices at the time of their development and include a full spectrum of beginner to expert/competitive features.
- **ii** All playgrounds, play spaces, and equipment must be designed to the latest edition of the *Canadian Standards Association (CSA)* playground standards and best practices.
- **iii** Basketball, tennis, pickleball, baseball, softball, soccer, rugby, lacrosse and cricket sports courts, fields and pitches must be developed to current *Canadian Athletic Facilities and Association Standards.*

4.5.1.52 All off leash dog areas must be developed to the requirements of the City of Winnipeg *Off Leash Dog Areas Master Plan*, including the incorporation of clear boundaries and fencing.

4.5.2 Implementation strategies

General

4.5.2.A Continue to update and expand parkland and amenity design standards and guidelines to enforce City quality standards and programming requirements.

- **i** Work with Community Services department to research best practices and trends in leisure and recreation; and
- **ii** Ensure the standards are made available publicly on the city's external website.

Climate change mitigation

4.5.2.B Explore park design options to maximize opportunities to sequester carbon in support of achieving the City's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

Amenities

4.5.2.C Explore best practices for playground development to diversify from traditional structured equipment approaches, encompass more imaginative/interactive play opportunities, and better support a variety of ages and abilities.

Flexibility

4.5.2.D Conduct a year-round, and winter-specific, use assessment to determine how parks and open spaces are used throughout the year to better understand how community need for park space and amenities varies over the year.

Maintenance

4.5.2.E Develop design templates and guidelines for three scales of parks maintenance facilities/ yards to clarify provision expectations and facilitate more efficient and consistent implementation.

4.6 Operations and management

In order to ensure that high-quality parks and open spaces are available for future generations of Winnipeggers, the parks system must be sustainably managed and operated.

The policies and service directions in this section support this by establishing a level of service for maintenance across parks, and identifying actions that will allow the parks system to become more environmentally and economically sustainable. The policies and service ensure that the City retains qualified staff who are up to date on current trends in parks management and recreation planning. Additionally, they ensure that the City has consistent funding sources to enable long-term planning and investment in parks. The implementation strategies identify ways to improve the sustainability of Winnipeg's parks system by building internal capacity, developing a more sustainable funding model, and implementing asset management practices.

Operations level of service, sometimes referred to as technical levels of service, define the standard to which parks are maintained and operated. These are traditionally what we think levels of service are – frequencies, interventions and response times. They include reference to both:

- Operational tasks that are routine such as grass maintenance, litter collection, tree pruning and snow removal
- Maintenance tasks that are performed both reactively and proactively such as playground equipment repairs and renewals, painting of park furniture, and replacing bollards

This section will help to refine and build upon the current technical levels of service outlined in the existing Park and Open Space division's *Park Area Maintenance Guidelines* document, defined as Service Level A, B, or C.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

01 Identify, prioritize, and address community needs by implementing transparent and defendable decision-making processes

03 Improve the functionality, sustainability, responsiveness and ecological integrity of the parks system by updating design guidelines and management practices

05 Strive for equitable access and maintenance across the city by establishing clear levels of service for parkland, natural features, connections, and amenities

4.6.1 Policies

Policy intent

City actions demonstrate a commitment to providing sustainably operated, managed and well-maintained, safe, and clean park spaces.

General

Asset management

4.6.1.1 Implement a robust, transparent, and defensible process to evaluate, prioritize and promote parkland, natural features, connections and amenity provisioning *(Section 2.8 Decision-making matrix)*.

4.6.1.2 Manage and operate parks in adherence to defined levels of service with clear outcome-based performance indicators.

4.6.1.3 Maintain, enhance and regularly update a asset registries for all park components to support evidence-based decision making in alignment with asset management best practices.

i Conduct ongoing assessments of amenity provision (distribution and capacity) and quality (condition and functionality) in order to determine repair, renewal or replacement needs.

ii Engage community groups, schools, and universities in the collection and analyzing of data to support informed decision-making.

4.6.1.4 Ensure map-based location information for park components is publicly-available to enhance public awareness and promote transparency.

i Partner with other service providers to share information on amenity inventory in an effort to minimize redundancies in provision.

4.6.1.5 Prioritize renewals and improvements to the parks system as directed by approved asset management plans, informed by the Strategy.

4.6.1.6 Utilize available parks and amenities usage data, in association with public engagement and trends analysis, to inform future parks and amenities planning.

4.6.1.7 Maintain the parks system in a 'state of good repair'.

4.6.1.8 Adhere to a standardized and transparent set of operations and maintenance requirements for each park classification:

i Regional parks - Service Level A;

ii Community and neighbourhood parks - Service Level B; and

iii Nature and linkage parks - Service Level C.

4.6.1.9 Strive to operate and maintain parks within identified areas of higher poverty at Service Level A.

4.6.1.10 Refer to the *Athletic Field Review* study to support decisions on inventory management and future planning and partnerships.

4.6.1.11 Refer to the *Off-leash Dog Areas Master Plan* to support decisions on maintenance and operations of off-leash dog areas.

4.6.1.12 Comply with *Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy*.

4.6.1.13 Comply with *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy and Policy*.

Funding

4.6.1.14 Ensure all new acquisitions and capital expenditures in the parks system are supported by a lifecycle assessment of operating and repair/replacement costs, in accordance with asset management best practices.

4.6.1.15 Ensure adequate resources are available to support park development, and renewal or replacement of park amenities.

4.6.1.16 Ensure adequate resources are available for operations and maintenance when new parks and amenities are accepted into inventory.

4.6.1.17 Pursue innovative funding opportunities to support park development and renewal.

Donations

4.6.1.18 Event or personal commemoration shall be encouraged to pursue the bench or tree donation program in accordance with the associated criteria. Other tokens of commemoration will only be permitted if:

i In accordance with the criteria for accepting donations;

ii The scale is deemed appropriate to the location; or

iii The inclusion of the item does not compromise an existing core or secondary amenity without compensation for relocation re-establishment in an approved location elsewhere.

4.6.1.19 Donations of artistic or sculptural elements as aesthetic enhancements in parks or as neighbourhood entrance features on public land shall be treated as 'gifts to the city' and managed in accordance with those processes and protocols.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

4.6.1.20 Review and implement *Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan* recommendations for parks.

4.6.1.21 Employ sustainable turf management practices.

Personal or private use of park space

4.6.1.22 Private or personal use of park space is not permitted without appropriate authorization and approvals as directed by the *Park by-law,* including, but not limited to:

- **i** Park space rentals;
- **ii** Access through parks for construction purposes;
- **iii** Encroachments into parks by adjacent property owners; and
- **iv** Improvements to park space for personal benefit.

Commercial activities in parks

4.6.1.23 Consider permitting limited commercial activities within parks that are complementary to the intent of the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* and do not restrict public use of parks, such as:

- **i** Temporary permits for seasonal uses, events and festivals;
- **ii** Year-round permits in significant/highly visible parks and public spaces (e.g. regional parks, Downtown); and
- **iii** Sponsorship opportunities in accordance with the *Sponsorship Policy*.

4.6.1.24 Ensure commercial activity considerations are in alignment with regulations, site-specific zoning and the *Sponsorship Policy*.

Public engagement

4.6.1.25 Engage with the public and stakeholders in accordance with the City's *Engage Winnipeg Policy*.

Partnerships and collaboration

4.6.1.26 Collaborate with Indigenous communities to identify and develop Indigenous cultural spaces in parks.

4.6.1.27 Work with organizations, archaeologists, historians, Indigenous communities, Elders/ Traditional Knowledge Keepers, and education institutions to explore opportunities to advance reconciliation through education, traditional practices and educational opportunities in Winnipeg's parks.

4.6.1.28 Build trust and participation through the provision of recreation opportunities that are respectful and appropriate for various ethno-cultural groups.

4.6.1.29 Champion opportunities for adopt-a-park and community stewardship of parks, natural features and connections to improve quality of service while allowing the City to reprioritize maintenance resources to areas of greatest need.

4.6.1.30 Support community-led urban agriculture and community gardening initiatives on city parkland, where possible and non-disruptive of other amenities or functions.

4.6.1.31 Seek opportunities to leverage shared use of open space and amenities with schools and other service organizations.

4.6.1.32 Collaborate with the Community Services department to explore opportunities to develop outdoor recreation programs that activate and leverage existing city parks and pathways.

4.6.1.33 Foster internal inter-departmental and cross-functional collaboration in the provision of park services.

4.6.1.34 Partner and collaborate with organizations and businesses to deliver programming and events, enabling users to activate and animate parks.

Staffing and resources

4.6.1.35 Ensure that City personnel responsible for maintenance of parks are familiar with and adhere to city safety standards and protocols.

4.6.2 Implementation strategies

Asset management

4.6.2.A Continue to develop, refine and report on defined levels of service for parks.

- i Prepare an annual report to communicate progress with respect to managing identified service gaps in the parks system.

4.6.2.B Establish and maintain heat maps for park components level of service and coverage, as well as monitor usage databases, to inform future planning and decision-making exercises.

- i Share map-based location information for all park components on the City's Open Data Portal.

4.6.2.C Establish outcome-based performance indicators that assess current service provision and inform decisions on future park service.

4.6.2.D Develop asset management plans, complete with capital investment strategies, for parkland, core and secondary park amenities, connections and natural features.

4.6.2.E Research and invest in tools and systems to provide for improved asset knowledge management to allow for efficient and effective lifecycle cost tracking and analysis.

4.6.2.F Explore opportunities to monitor park usage using passive and user-contribution surveillance technologies, including monitoring charging stations and cell phone data.

4.6.2.G Establish a database of festivals and events held in parks to assess which parks are more highly desirable for these activities and to plan and design the parks system accordingly.

4.6.2.H Strive to renew or replace park infrastructure at the optimal stage in its lifecycle.

Fees and funding

4.6.2.I Review and update licensing protocols and fee structures, and leverage technology to streamline booking procedures for all events and programming in parks and open spaces.

4.6.2.J Implement recommendations of the *Athletic Field Review* to increase cost recovery for the operations and maintenance of athletic fields.

4.6.2.K Establish processes and protocols to enforce charges for damages to parks and amenities by users.

4.6.2.L Explore processes for establishing park endowment funds.

4.6.2.M Explore a methodology for establishing a capital reserve which sets aside annually an amount based on a percentage of the annual depreciation of park infrastructure, to be used for its future renewal.

4.6.2.N Explore whether additional dog licensing fees can be used to maintain off-leash dog areas.

4.6.2.O Investigate funding opportunities for heritage conservation and interpretive programming in parks.

4.6.2.P Leverage provincial or federal infrastructure funding programs to renew trails, amenities, and facilities.

4.6.2.Q Consider the establishment of land dedication-related funding streams, in addition to, or specifically allocated within the *Land Dedication Reserve Fund*, including:

- **i** A fund for the preservation of ecologically significant natural lands; and
- **ii** A greenfield development fund.

4.6.2.R Review and seek Council support to implement the *Strategic Infrastructure Renewal Policy (SIRP)* to ensure that all new parks include an operating and maintenance budget, in accordance with asset management best practices.

4.6.2.S To benefit from economies-of-scale, explore opportunities to leverage the development industry when engaged in park development, to construct amenities above base obligation to address service gaps.

4.6.2.T Explore opportunities for sponsorship of park amenities as directed by the *Sponsorship Policy*.

Maintenance

4.6.2.U Refine Technical Levels of Service A – C based on level of use of each park class to focus maintenance efforts on high priority areas and clearly defined customer expectations. Service levels should align with the following guidance:

- **i** A - A large variety and number of assets provided, often custom designed with high quality materials. Maintenance is undertaken to the highest affordable standards, with quick response times and proactive operations.
- **ii** B - A moderate level of asset provision, using robust materials and simple designs with a focus on core and/or secondary amenities. Maintenance is undertaken to good standards, with standard response times and operations.
- **iii** C – A few basic quality assets provided and maintained to a basic standard with a focus on core amenities.

4.6.2.V Achieve Council adoption of the Technical Levels of Service.

Safety

4.6.2.W Ensure City personnel responsible for maintenance of parks receive regular training on safety standards and protocols, including, but not limited to: CPTED principles, Manitoba WorkSafe program, COR certification for contractors, APWA accreditation, departmental safety branch directives, Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), Safe Work Procedures (SWP), WHMIS/GHS, Equipment Operator Training, Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI), and Red Tagging procedures to ensure that maintenance practices consider safety.

i Automate processes for tracking and sharing staff safety training records to support operational planning.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation

4.6.2.X Establish and support greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for the overall parks system and its operations, as identified in *Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan.*

Programming and events

4.6.2.Y Explore opportunities to enhance transit access during large festivals by temporarily adjusting routing and extending service to align with event hours of operation.

4.6.2.Z Evaluate current use and demand for festivals and events within parks to determine provision and capacity requirements.

Commercial activities in parks

4.6.2.AA Review and update existing policies and guidelines around commercial activities in parks.

Partnerships

4.6.2.AB Review existing lease agreements with intent to standardize, ensure consistent responsibilities in operations, maintenance, renewal, and the establishment of new leases.

4.6.2.AC Work collaboratively with other City service areas, particularly the Community Services Department, to review and update policies and procedures related to Joint Use Agreements.

4.6.2.AD Explore opportunities for coordination with the Water and Waste Department for composting and bio-soil initiatives.

4.6.2.AE In high-traffic parks and strategic locations, consider offering free public Wi-Fi internet.

i Consider partnering with internet service providers and nearby businesses to provide access.

ii Explore the option of providing device charging outlets.

Collaboration with Indigenous communities

4.6.2.AF Implement recommendations related to naming or re-naming of park components as directed in the *Welcoming Winnipeg Policy*.

i Consider naming or renaming parks, sites, features and/or roads to better acknowledge Indigenous communities and people.

ii When the site or space has Indigenous significance, as determined by an Indigenous community, work with the Indigenous community to determine the most appropriate and respectful marker or name.

4.6.2.AG Initiate a city-wide cultural landscape plan for the City of Winnipeg in collaboration with Indigenous communities and organizations that describes the significant relationship of Indigenous people with the land, records key oral histories, and identifies appropriate sites to establish Indigenous placemaking. The cultural landscape plan could then be used to prioritize Indigenous led initiatives in parks.

4.6.2.AH Collaborate with local Indigenous communities to gather and preserve traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about the parks system, and explore ways to incorporate TEK into the monitoring, management and decision-making of culturally and historically significant areas.

Park regulations

4.6.2.AI Review and confirm the definitions of 'park' and 'open space' within the *Park By-law*.

4.6.2.AJ Establish a process to address encroachments on parkland including enforcement measures, and formalize use agreements to address liability, conditions of use, and fees.

Table 06: *Parks Level of Service Metrics (*direction for Off-leash dog areas to be provided by* Off-leash Dog Areas Master Plan*)*

PARKS SYSTEM COMPONENT		CAPACITY					
		Current count			Current average per person	Ratio of park component to number of people	
		Total	City	School		Current (2020)	Target (2045)
PARKLAND	All parks *(citywide)*	3,300 ha			39m²	39m² per person	50m² per person
	City	1				1:total	1: total
	Regional	8				1:95,863	1:100,000
	Regional-sport	3				1:255,633	1:250,000
	Community	216				1:3,550	1:10,000
	Neighbourhood	454				1:1,689	1:1,000
	Nature	43				1:17,835	
	Linkage	246				1:3,117	
NATURAL FEATURES		449			1	1:1,708	
CONNECTIONS (KM)		306 (paths) 16 (ski trails)			1 (paths)	1:2,500	
CORE AMENITY	Playground	806	511	295	2	1:963	1:1,000
	Picnic & gathering space	375	375		8	1:2,045	1:2,500
	Multi-use greenspace	148	148		*n/a*	1:5,181	1;2,000
SECONDARY AMENITY	Tennis/pickleball court	153	153		5	1:5,012	1:5,000
	Basketball court	385	77	308	2	1:1,992	1:2,000
	Baseball/softball diamond	278	278		7	1:2,759	1:5,000
	Rectangular athletic field	303	303		9	1:2,531	1:5,000
	Outdoor skating rink/area	176	176		5	1:4,357	1:5,000
	Off-Leash dog area*	12	12			1:63,908	
	Skatepark/spot	16	16		3	1:47,931	1:50,000

ACCESS				QUALITY		SERVICE
Catchment *(metres)*		Percent population within catchment		Percent amenity in poor/very poor quality		P: Outdoor play L: Leisure & gathering S: Outdoor sport N: Nature experience T: Trail-based recreation
Current (2020)	Target (2045)	Current (2020)	Target (2045)	Current (2020)	Target (2045)	
600	600	93%	100%			P, L, S, N, T
						P, L, S, N, T
						P, L, S, N, T
						P, L, S, N, T
						P, L, S, N, T
						P, L, N, T
						L, N, T
						L, N, T
600	600	64%	100%			N
600	600	96%	100%	13%	<5%	T
600	600	83%	100%	4%	<5%	P,L
2,000	2,000	98%	100%	Tables: 4% Shelters: 3%	<5%	L
600	1,200	27%	100%	N/A	<5%	P, S, L
2,000	2,000	64%	80%	Tennis: 17% Pickleball: 2%	<5%	S
600	1,200	67%	100%	10%	<5%	S
2,000	2,000	94%	100%	13%	<5%	S
2,000	2,000	96%	100%	8%	<5%	S
2,000	2,000	90%	100%	8%	<5%	P,L,S
					<5%	L
5,000	5,000	91%	100%	0%	<5%	L, P

5 Implementation

5.1 Actions matrix

Based on the *Implementation Strategies*, the actions matrix below prioritizes key activities required to support implementation of the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* over the next 25 years. The action matrix is a tool to guide decision-making and financial investment in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the Strategy.

TIMELINE	FINANCIAL IMPACTS OPERATING COSTS	FINANCIAL IMPACTS CAPITAL COSTS
(S) Short Term – 0 to 6 years (M) Medium Term – 7 to 10 years (L) Long Term – 11 - 25 years	($) Less than $50,000 ($$) $50,000 – $150,000 ($$$) $151,000 – $300,000 ($$$$) $300,000 +	($) $0 - $100,000 ($$) $100,000 - $1M ($$$) $1M - $5M ($$$$) $5M +

References indicate the related Implementation Strategy from *Section 4* under each of the following categories:
P: Parkland; N: Natural features; C: Connections; A: Amenities; D: Design and O: Operations & management

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
1. MEETING COMMUNITY NEED	1	*Refine and document a process for managing and updating the parkland asset registry.*	P	4.1.2.A	S	-	-
	2	*Monitor and act upon parkland acquisition opportunities in identified areas of higher poverty, communities with below average level of service for parkland, denser neighbourhoods, and high growth areas of the city.*	P	4.1.2.B	S,M,L	-	$$$
	3	*Monitor future growth scenarios to assess anticipated future demand of parkland.*	P	4.1.2.C	S,M,L	-	-
	4	*Investigate opportunities for acquisition of surface parking, derelict buildings, or other desirable lots in Downtown for conversion to parkland, prioritizing areas that can fill core and secondary amenity service gaps.*	P	4.1.2.D	S	-	$$$
	5	*Conduct a regular Non-essential Parkland Assessment.*	P	4.1.2.F	M	-	-
	6	*Research benefits and explore opportunities and appropriate arrangements to promote temporary parks and park amenities on city-owned vacant and underutilized lands, particularly in areas of the city that have a demonstrated community need.*	P	4.1.2.L	M	-	-
	7	*Develop and implement low-cost use monitoring techniques such as in person surveys, counters, or cameras, to evaluate current usage of park amenities and whether they are being used at or above their capacity.*	A	4.4.2.B	S	-	$$
	8	*Conduct regular future community need assessments to supplement amenity level of service data and catchment analyses.*	A	4.4.2.C	M	-	-
	9	*Assess opportunities to convert athletic fields into flexible and non-bookable amenities or multi-use greenspaces in areas where there is above-average service for these fields.*	A	4.4.2.E	S	-	$$
	10	*Explore innovative opportunities to enhance amenity service provision in the Downtown given limited land availability.*	A	4.4.2.F	M	-	$$$
	11	*Recognize the limitations of providing secondary amenities in the Downtown by supporting anticipated increased demand for those amenities in adjacent mature areas.*	A	4.4.2.G	M	-	$$$
	12	*Conduct a year-round, and winter-specific, use assessment to determine how parks and open spaces are used throughout the year to better understand how community need for park space and amenities varies over the year.*	D	4.5.2.D	S	$$	-
	13	*Strive to renewal or replace park infrastructure at the optimal stage in its lifecycle.*	O	4.6.2.H	S,M,L	-	$$$$

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
2. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS	14	*Explore processes to leverage the expertise of the development industry and benefit from economies-of-scale, to construct parks and related amenities in addition to developer site improvement obligations.*	P	4.1.2.E	M	-	-
	15	*Explore options to work with private landowners, school boards, conservation authorities and other levels of government to provide public access to non-municipal open spaces.*	P	4.1.2.J	M	-	-
	16	*Explore possibilities to enhance partnerships with public utilities to allow for greater public use and functionality of their utility areas and corridors. For example, the provision of trails, community gardens and off-leash dog areas within hydro corridors.*	P	4.1.2.K	M	-	-
	17	*Work towards the development of agreements with stewardship groups for management of natural features.*	N	4.2.2.K	S,M	$	-
	18	*Collaborate with organizations to provide environmental education opportunities, through programs, signage or other means such as maps or web-based applications.*	N	4.2.2.N	S,M,L	-	$$
	19	*Collaborate with the Forks Renewal Corporation to: -Provide additional access points to the riverwalk system in all seasons; -Promote the winter river trail to enhance active living and outdoor recreation opportunities.*	C	4.3.2.E	S	$$	$$$
	20	*Re-assess provision and community need in areas when a school or other partner is reducing their service for a core or secondary amenity in an area.*	A	4.4.2.D	M	-	-
	21	*Work with Community Services Department to ensure that the level of service and distribution of recreational amenities, such as permanent outdoor hockey rinks, spray pads and outdoor pools, are appropriately planned and incorporated into park master plans.*	A	4.4.2.H	S	-	-
	22	*Work with community centres to ensure their decision-making processes align with level of service guidelines outlined in the Strategy.*	A	4.4.2.I	S	-	-
	23	*Leverage joint use agreements with school divisions where appropriate to secure public access to playgrounds and athletic fields outside of regular operating hours.*	A	4.4.2.J	S	$	-
	24	*Establish evaluation criteria and process to govern requests for providing or partnering in the provision of tertiary amenities.*	A	4.4.2.K	S	-	-
	25	*Outline the conditions and processes required for the City to consider partnering in the provision of specialty amenities.*	A	4.4.2.L	S	-	-

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
2. BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS	26	*Explore opportunities for sponsorship of park amenities as directed by the* Sponsorship Policy.	O	4.6.2.T	M	-	-
	27	*Explore opportunities to enhance transit access during large festivals by temporarily adjusting routing and extending service to align with event hours of operation.*	O	4.6.2.Y	M	-	-
	28	*Review and update existing policies and guidelines around commercial activities in parks.*	O	4.6.2.AA	S	-	-
	29	*Review existing lease agreements with intent to standardize, ensure consistent responsibilities in operations, maintenance, renewal, and the establishment of new leases.*	O	4.6.2.AB	S	$$	-
	30	*Work collaboratively with other City service areas, particularly the Community Services Department, to review and update policies and procedures related to Joint Use Agreements.*	O	4.6.2.AC	S	$	-
	31	*Implement recommendations related to naming or re-naming of park components as directed in the* Welcoming Winnipeg Policy.	O	4.6.2.AF	S	-	-
	32	*Initiate a city-wide cultural landscape plan for the City of Winnipeg that could then be used to prioritize Indigenous led initiatives in parks.*	O	4.6.2.AG	M	-	$$
	33	*Collaborate with local Indigenous communities to gather and preserve traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about the parks system, and explore ways to incorporate TEK into the monitoring, management and decision-making of culturally and historically significant areas.*	O	4.6.2.AH	M	-	-
3. ADAPTING TO CHANGE	34	*Review and update the* Development Agreement Parameters.	P	4.1.2.G	S	-	-
	35	*Revisit the* Land Dedication Reserve Fund Policy *to confirm and clarify how the funds may be allocated.*	P	4.1.2.H	S	-	-
	36	*For all new communities eligible for park dedication, explore the opportunity to set aside a percentage of the dedication value as a 'Greenfield Development Fund', in addition to, or specifically allocated within, the* Land Dedication Reserve Fund.	P	4.1.2.I	S	-	-
	37	*Refine and document a process for managing and updating the tree and natural areas asset registries.*	N	4.2.2.A	S	-	-
	38	*Develop a Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan By-law to replace, or as a companion to the Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy and Policy.*	N	4.2.2.B	S	-	$$

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
3. ADAPTING TO CHANGE	39	*Explore the opportunity to establish a separate and distinct land dedication requirement specific to the preservation of ecologically significant natural lands.*	*N*	*4.2.2.C*	*S*	-	-
	40	*Explore opportunities and implications of identifying ecologically significant natural lands for protection integration into new community design at the secondary planning stage, prior to dedication of parkland.*	*N*	*4.2.2.D*	*S*	-	-
	41	*Celebrate and promote the Assiniboine Forest, Living Prairie Museum and riparian habitats as key natural areas for the City.*	*N*	*4.2.2.E*	*S*	-	-
	42	*Undertake parkland naturalization initiatives.*	*N*	*4.2.2.F*	*S,M,L*	*$$*	*$$*
	43	*Explore processes, standards and opportunities for retrofitting traditional stormwater retention basins to naturalized basins.*	*N*	*4.2.2.G*	*S*	-	-
	44	*Expand an education and public information campaign about the benefits and value of naturalization.*	*N*	*4.2.2.H*	*S*	-	-
	45	*Complete the* Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy and implement approved recommendations.	*N*	*4.2.2.I*	*S,M,L*	-	*$$$$*
	46	*Develop a 'Greening Plan' as a component of the* Downtown Plan *to increase greenspace and tree canopy Downtown.*	*N*	*4.2.2.J*	*M*	-	*$*
	47	*Work towards the development of agreements with stewardship groups for management of natural features.*	*N*	*4.2.2.K*	*S*	-	-
	48	*Develop a 'Natural Areas Management Plan' to prioritize the implementation of natural areas restoration and maintenance.*	*N*	*4.2.2.L*	*M*	-	*$$*
	49	*Monitor wildlife activity in targeted locations to develop data-driven natural area management policies and procedures, as well as to introduce additional educational opportunities to the public.*	*N*	*4.2.2.M*	*S,M,L*	-	-
	50	*Clarify the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority for active transportation pathways that traverse park space.*	*C*	*4.3.2.F*	*S*	-	-
	51	*Refine and document a process for managing and updating the amenities asset registry.*	*A*	*4.4.2.A*	*S*	-	-
	52	*Continue to update and expand parkland and amenity design standards and guidelines to enforce City quality standards and programming requirements.*	*D*	*4.5.2.A*	*S*	-	-

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
3. ADAPTING TO CHANGE	53	*Explore park design options to maximize opportunities to sequester carbon in support of achieving the City's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.*	D	4.5.2.B	S	-	$$
	54	*Explore best practices for playground development to diversify from traditional structured equipment approaches, encompass more imaginative/interactive play opportunities, and better support a variety of ages and abilities.*	D	4.5.2.C	S	-	-
	55	*Develop design templates and guidelines for three scales of parks maintenance facilities/yards to clarify provision expectations and facilitate more efficient and consistent implementation.*	D	4.5.2.E	S	-	-
	56	*Develop asset management plans, complete with capital investment strategies, for parkland, core and secondary park amenities, connections and natural features.*	O	4.6.2.D	S,M	$	-
	57	*Research and invest in tools and systems to provide for improved asset knowledge management to allow for efficient and effective lifecycle cost tracking and analysis.*	O	4.6.2.E	S	$$	$$
	58	*Explore opportunities to monitor park usage using passive and user-contribution surveillance technologies, including monitoring charging stations and cell phone data.*	O	4.6.2.F	S	$	-
	59	*Establish a database of festivals and events held in parks to assess which parks are more highly desirable for these activities and to plan and design the parks system accordingly.*	O	4.6.2.G	M	-	-
	60	*Review and update licensing protocols and fee structures, and leverage technology to streamline booking procedures for all events and programming in parks and open spaces.*	O	4.6.2.I	S	-	$$
	61	*Implement recommendations of the* Athletic Field Review *to increase cost recovery for the operations and maintenance of athletic fields.*	O	4.6.2.J	S	-	-
	62	*Establish processes and protocols to enforce charges for damages to parks and amenities by users.*	O	4.6.2.K	S	-	-
	63	*Explore processes for establishing park endowment funds.*	O	4.6.2.L	L	-	-
	64	*Explore a methodology for establishing a capital reserve which sets aside annually an amount based on a percentage of the annual depreciation of park infrastructure, to be used for its future renewal.*	O	4.6.2.M	S	-	-
	65	*Explore whether additional dog licensing fees can be used to maintain off-leash dog areas.*	O	4.6.2.N	S	-	-

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
3. ADAPTING TO CHANGE	66	*Investigate funding opportunities for heritage conservation and interpretive programming in parks.*	O	4.6.2.O	S,M,L	-	-
	67	*Leverage provincial or federal infrastructure funding programs to renew trails, amenities, and facilities.*	O	4.6.2.P	M	-	-
	68	*Consider the establishment of land dedication-related funding streams, in addition to, or specifically allocated within the* Land Dedication Reserve Fund, *including:* • *A fund for the preservation of ecologically significant natural lands* • *A greenfield development fund*	O	4.6.2.Q	M	-	-
	69	*Review and seek Council support to implement the* Strategic Infrastructure Renewal Policy (SIRP) *to ensure that all new parks include an operating and maintenance budget, in accordance with asset management best practices.*	O	4.6.2.R	S	-	-
	70	*To benefit from economies-of-scale, explore opportunities to leverage the development industry when they are already engaged in park development, to construct amenities above base obligation to address service gaps.*	O	4.6.2.S	M	-	-
	71	*Ensure City personnel responsible for maintenance of parks receive regular training on safety standards and protocols*	O	4.6.2.V	S	-	-
	72	*Establish greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for the overall parks system and its operations, as identified in* Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan.	O	4.6.2.W	M	-	$$
	73	*Evaluate current use and demand for festivals and events within parks to determine provision and capacity requirements.*	O	4.6.2.Y	L	-	-
	74	*Explore opportunities for coordination with the Water and Waste Department for composting and bio-soil initiatives.*	O	4.6.2.AD	M	-	-
	75	*Review and confirm the definitions of 'park' and 'open space' within the Park By-law.*	O	4.2.2.AI	S	-	-
	76	*Establish a process to address encroachments on parkland including enforcement measures, and formalize use agreements to address liability, conditions of use, and fees.*	O	4.6.2.AJ	S	$	-

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE		ACTION	REFERENCE		TIMELINE (S/M/L)	FINANCIAL IMPACTS	
						OPERATING	CAPITAL
4. IMPROVING ACCESS	77	*Update ParkMaps to maintain and enhance opportunities for people to seek out park experiences.*	C	4.3.2.A	S,M,L	$	-
	78	*Explore options to improve connectivity from Downtown across our waterways, in coordination with the Transportation Division, to increase access to parks and amenities in surrounding neighbourhoods.*	C	4.3.2.B	L	-	$$$$
	79	*Explore opportunities to improve visual connectivity and wayfinding to river parkway paths from Downtown streets.*	C	4.3.2.C	M	-	$$$
	80	*Develop a waterway access study to explore opportunities to promote Winnipeg's rivers and creeks as important recreational and active transportation corridors in all seasons.*	C	4.3.2.D	S	-	$$
	81	*In collaboration with the Streets Maintenance Division, regularly review and refine the priority network for snow clearing on trails and commuter routes to encourage year-round active transportation.*	C	4.3.2.G	S	-	-
	82	*Provide signage that effectively supports wayfinding, interpretation, and park identity objectives, by updating and strategically implementing additional signage in new or renovated parks.*	C	4.3.2.H	M	-	$
	83	*Refine and document a process for managing and updating park pathways and trails asset registry, in collaboration with Streets Maintenance and Transportation Divisions.*	C	4.3.2.I	S	-	-
	84	*Update design standards to establish construction details and use criteria for differing classifications of multi-use paths in alignment with the standards for the pedestrian & cycling network.*	C	4.3.2.J	S	-	-
	85	*In high-traffic parks and strategic locations, consider offering free public Wi-Fi internet.*	O	4.6.2.AE	M	-	-
5. FORMALIZING SERVICE DELIVERY APPROACH	86	*Continue to develop, refine and report on defined levels of park service.*	O	4.6.2.A	S,M,L	-	-
	87	*Establish and maintain heat maps for park components level of service and coverage, as well as monitor usage databases, to inform future planning and decision-making exercises.*	O	4.6.2.B	S	-	-
	88	*Establish outcome-based performance indicators that assess current service provision and inform decisions on future park service.*	O	4.6.2.C	S	-	-
	89	*Refine Technical Levels of Service A – C based on level of use of each park class to focus maintenance efforts on high priority areas and clearly defined customer expectations.*	O	4.6.2.T	S	-	-
	90	*Achieve Council adoption of the Technical Levels of Service.*	O	4.6.2.U	S	-	-

5.2 Investment plan

5.2.1 10-year investment plan

In keeping with the City's asset management and investment planning framework, the Strategy provides a 10-year investment plan that outlines suggested budget allocations required to meet its strategic objectives by parks system component type. *Fig. 43* shows both the current and future recommended investments by year, including staff resource requirements. Any additional investment needs, both within and beyond the 10-year view, will be brought forward through the City's annual investment planning process, as further studies and business cases are developed. Proposed investments to support the long-term sustainability of the parks system are focused around:

- **Green infrastructure:** In Winnipeg and across the country, the impacts of COVID-19 have amplified the need for greater access to local parks, greenspaces, and waterways. Dedicated funding for land acquisition is needed to maintain quality of life for the next generation of Winnipeggers, and grow the parks system before all remaining unprotected natural areas and greenspaces are gone. Additionally, the increasing severity of weather events and impacts of climate change have created a greater need for adaptation measures. The Strategy recommends the City respond through enhanced investment in preservation, restoration, naturalization, and environmental education initiatives.
- **Research and knowledge:** To continue to optimize value for all Winnipeggers we must ensure the right investment is being made in the right asset at the right time. The Strategy encourages continued financial support for existing and new research and plans to address current gaps in knowledge, and to allow for an evidence- based approach to decision-making.
- **Supporting partnerships:** To foster partnership opportunities with community groups and stewardship organizations, it is important the proper agreements are in place to ensure there is a shared understanding of common goals and objectives, and a collaborative approach to decision-making. Additional operating resources are needed to effectively grow our partnership opportunities and manage existing park agreements such as leases, encroachments, easements, adopt-a-park, sweat equity, joint-use and stewardship.
- **Improvements to access:** Improving connections to the parks system is key to ensuring equitable access by people of all ages and abilities. By focusing investment on path and trail development and renewal, waterway access, pedestrian/cycling bridges, wayfinding and park space rental booking improvements, we can make positive strides in eliminating physical, social, and economic barriers.
- **Amenity renewal and replacement:** Dedicated annual funding to support the renewal and replacement of park amenities such playgrounds, athletic fields, sport courts, and park furniture, allocated based on needs city-wide, will help to ensure these assets continue to provide quality of service delivery across all wards. This includes providing additional resources to acquire and implement the systems and tools necessary to monitor use and track amenity lifecycle costs to support investment prioritization.
- **Operating funding for staff resources:** Successful implementation of the Strategy relies not only on recommended capital investments, but additional FTEs (full-time equivalents) to complement existing staff resources. In particular, the hiring of project manager dedicated to oversee, guide, and monitor the execution of the Strategy will help to ensure that continuous and incremental positive strides are made towards achieving its goals and objectives.

5.2.2 Funding the Strategy

Access to sufficient funding to operate, maintain, renew, and revitalize parks is a challenge for most municipalities across Canada, and Winnipeg is no exception. In recent years, there has been an increasing

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT		ACTION ITEM	CURRENT MULTI-YEAR BUDGET	FUTURE MULTI-YEAR BUDGETS									
$0 Investment scale $ 5 million +			2021	Short-term						Medium-term			
				2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
	Oversee implementation of the Winnipeg Parks Strategy	ALL			$	1.0 FTE (WAPSO 5)							
PARKLAND	Acquire parkland, as required	2, 4				$		$		$		$	
PARKLAND	Develop cultural landscape plan	32				$							
PARKLAND	Conduct greenhouse gas emission reduction initiatives	53, 72					$		$		$		$
PARKLAND	Streamline park bookings processes	60						$					
PARKLAND	Manage encroachments	76				$	1.0 FTE (WAPSO 3)						
PARKLAND	Manage park agreements	17, 22, 23, 29, 30											
NATURAL FEATURES	Enhance environmental education initiatives	18					$		$		$		$
NATURAL FEATURES	Develop greenspace and natural corridor plan by-law	38		$									
NATURAL FEATURES	Implement *Urban Forest Strategy* recommendations	45	$	Urban forest renewal program									
NATURAL FEATURES	Develop a 'greening plan' for Downtown	46						$					
NATURAL FEATURES	Develop natural areas management plan	48								$			
NATURAL FEATURES	Conduct naturalization initiatives	42				$	1.0 FTE (Tech) & Naturalization program						
CONNECTIONS	Improve multi-use path and trail access	19, 79	$	Recreational walkway & bike path renewal program									
CONNECTIONS	Construct pedestrian and cycling bridges	78										$	
CONNECTIONS	Improve waterway access	19, 80				$	Waterway access improvement program						
CONNECTIONS	Improve parks system wayfinding	82								$		$	
AMENITIES	Monitor park and amenity usage	7, 58				$	1.0 FTE (Asset Management Technologist)						
AMENITIES	Renew and replace existing amenities, as required	13, 57	$	Regional/Community & neighbourhood parks/Buildings programs									
AMENITIES	Provide new amenities, as required	9, 10, 11	$	Regional/Community & neighbourhood parks program									
AMENITIES	Procure and implement work/ asset management systems	57						$	$				

Fig. 43: *Recommended 10-year investment plan (2022-2031). Investment needs will continue to be refined and through the City's annual investment planning process, as further studies and business cases are developed and approved.*

gap between the maintenance and renewal needs of the system and the operating and capital budgets available to support these needs. Correspondingly, the City must strategically plan and optimize investment in its parks system to ensure it can sustainably provide services throughout the city into the future.

The City of Winnipeg's ability to generate and sustain sufficient funding levels is limited but critically important to the success of the Strategy. Options and recommendations have been developed to guide the financial implementation of the plan, including possible funding approaches that require further exploration and stakeholder involvement.

- **Dedicated mill rate support:** Dedicated annual mill rate funding for roads has resulted in significant improvement to the condition and service levels to the transportation system in Winnipeg. Future City Councils may consider a similar approach to address the unfunded park renewal and acquisition needs.
- **Development agreement parameters:** Through collaboration with the development industry, explore opportunities to redefine what parklands and amenities are included as part of new developments.
- **Development cost charges:** The City intends to work with the development industry to establish growth or impact fees to address some of the infrastructure costs associated with residential growth. Consider allocating a proportionate share of any new funding to land acquisition for parks (and park-related purposes), along with related infrastructure required to meet defined level of service targets.
- **Dog-licensing fees:** Explore whether additional dog licensing fees can be used to maintain off-leash dog areas.
- **Funding partnerships with senior levels of government:** Continue to work with senior levels of government to identify mutually beneficial projects and opportunities that address new park infrastructure needs, renewal, and investments to achieve climate adaptation and mitigation goals.

Which of the following options would you support to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our parks?

83%
allocate a portion of dog licensing fees to establishment and renewal of off-leash dog areas

81%
promote sponsorship opportunities for parks and their amenities

62%
shift existing budgets from other City services

57%
allow for increased park-compatible commercial activities in parks

49%
increase property taxes

43%
increase user fees for park space rentals

16%
have fewer parks and amenities so that the remaining parks are better maintained

11%
maintain regional parks at a higher standard, while reducing the standard in community and neighbourhood parks

3%
none; I don't think parks needs any additional funding

Fig. 44: *Survey responses from Phase 2 public engagement assessing level of public support for various options to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our parks system*

- **Increase cost recovery:**
  - Implement recommendations of the *Athletic Field Review* to increase cost recovery for the operations and maintenance of athletic fields.
  - Establish processes and protocols to enforce charges for damages to parks and amenities by users.
- **Land dedication:** Consider the establishment of land dedication-related funding streams, in addition to, or specifically allocated within the *Land Dedication Reserve Fund*, including:
  - A fund for the preservation of ecologically significant natural lands; and
  - A greenfield development fund.
- **Partnerships:** Continue to embrace partnership opportunities with private or community organizations with compatible service goals and benefits to the community, that can bring additional capital and/or operating funds to projects.
- **Property sales:** Where appropriate, and with Council concurrence, proceeds from the sale of parkland will be reinvested in parks or related amenities in other geographic areas. The proceeds will be held in the Land Dedication Reserve until they are reallocated.
- **Renewal reserve:** Explore a methodology for establishing a capital reserve which sets aside annually an amount based on a percentage of the annual depreciation of park infrastructure, to be used for its future renewal.
- **Sponsorship:** Opportunities for sponsorships that potentially expand the available operating and capital funding for parks services should be explored.
- **Strategic Infrastructure Renewal Policy:** Review and seek Council support to implement the *Strategic Infrastructure Renewal Policy (SIRP)* to ensure that all new parks include an operating and maintenance budget, in accordance with asset management best practices.

6 Appendix

6.1 Historic park development in Winnipeg

The concept of parkland in North America took root in the mid-1800s when people began gathering in vacant green space for leisure and recreational pursuits such as picnicking. Historically, it also included the development of privately-owned land made available for public commercial use. The movement to establish City-owned and operated public parks that were free for everyone and supported by municipal taxes began in the early 1890s as part of larger civic reform movements to improve quality of life in urbanizing cities. At this time, community activists (mainly women's organizations) urged municipal governments to create more playgrounds for the benefit of mental and physical wellbeing. The growing middle-class, with increased time for leisure activities, also advocated for more recreation facilities such as playing fields, swimming pools and gymnasiums.

A *Manitoba Public Parks Act* was passed in 1892, and enabled municipalities to establish parks boards with the authority to buy, sell, own, operate and regulate park lands. Winnipeg's City Council, having taken note of the effect of parks and other city beautification efforts on increasing property values and investment in other jurisdictions, established a board that – over the next decade – laid the groundwork for a system of neighbourhood parks (including Fort Rouge Park, Central Park and part of St. John's Park) and acquired 290 acres of land dedicated for Assiniboine Park. The park was designed by famed landscape architect Frederick G. Todd and opened to the public in 1909.

By 1914, the Public Parks Board had been assigned as the authority in charge of Winnipeg's public green spaces including boulevards, Brookside Cemetery and various civic squares and gardens. Early parks superintendents favoured passive uses such as reading, walking, picnicking and nature appreciation in their public parks. Still, active recreational amenities like sports fields, tracks, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, and tennis courts were gradually incorporated into several parks.

The Winnipeg Playgrounds Commission formed in 1909, and began operating skating rinks and playgrounds, primarily on school sites. The Commission subsequently offered social centre classes, including activities such as folk dancing and cultural activities. Simultaneously, community clubs and parent volunteer groups assembled to provide supervised sports programming for neighbourhood children using vacant lots and school facilities.

During the inter-war years, the city's growing park inventory and aging infrastructure, austerity measures of the World Wars and the Depression, and a consistent aversion to increase parks levy led to funding gaps that would challenge parks and recreation providers for decades to come.

In 1946, the Parks Board began constructing recreation facilities across the city, providing financial and strategic oversight but shifting responsibility for funding, administration, and programming to schools and community centre boards. This service delivery model remains to this day.

In 1960, a two-tiered system of government was imposed on the City of Winnipeg and surrounding suburban municipalities. The new Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg assumed responsibility for major parks within the region. These major parks, owned and funded by the City of Winnipeg for the benefit of its residents, tended to be located in suburban municipalities. Continued strife between the Metro member municipalities led to a complete amalgamation in 1971; however, the parks boards of the former municipalities were not unified until 1977. These consolidations, along with centennial celebration funding from senior levels of government (Canada in 1967, Manitoba in 1970 and Winnipeg in 1974) enabled the coordinated planning and development of several major parks, arenas, recreation centres and swimming pools in suburban areas.

The next few decades were characterized by continuous administrative reorganization and innovation, with the goal of addressing the effects of municipal amalgamation, economic recessions and budget restrictions. The new Winnipeg Parks and Recreation department adopted many elements of contemporary planning practices, including development agreements to acquire parkland by dedication. The department also incorporated more contemporary practices for streetscaping, naturalized landscaping, and open space systems. These were influenced by the broader environmental movement of the late 20th century.

As each of the former municipalities had previously used their own provision and management standards, the new amalgamated park facilities were disparate and unequally distributed. The City of Winnipeg experienced further administrative reorganization and stagnant budgets into the 2000s. Fortunately, funds from the *Canada-Manitoba Agreement for Recreation and Conservation* (1978) were used to enhance several riverfront parks, while the *Core Area Initiative* (1981-1991) helped to revitalize Downtown parks and community centres, and to construct the Forks National Historic Site.

In recent years several challenges have emerged: a growing parks infrastructure deficit; inability to acquire riverbank parkland; insufficient funding to maintain parks within new developments; and significant variations in service provision across the city. Despite these challenges, quality remains a priority. Smart investment and strategic partnerships have allowed park amenities to be added or refurbished where budgets permit, including Winnipeg's first accessible toboggan slide (2017), over 100 playground renewals and installations (2013-2018), and the planting of over 10,000 trees in City parks and boulevards (2013-2018).

Sources:
Harnik, P. (2010). Urban Green, Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities. Washington: Island Press.
Macdonald, C. (1995). A City at Leisure, An Illustrated History of Parks and Recreation Services in Winnipeg. Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, Parks and Recreation Department.

6.2 Organizational governance

Two City of Winnipeg departments are primarily responsible for providing recreation and parks services in Winnipeg: Community Services and Public Works. Each relies on the support and resources of other City departments in the provision of these services.

Within Public Works, the Parks and Open Space division is responsible for the operating and maintaining existing city-owned parks and open space. It is also responsible for the planning, development and design of new park spaces in collaboration with

the Planning, Property and Development's Urban Design branch. As part of this role, the Parks and Open Space division:

- Provides year-round opportunities for outdoor recreation activities such as walking, biking, and cross-country skiing
- Maintains and operates outdoor facilities and amenities such as athletic fields, tennis, basketball, playgrounds, picnic sites, boat docks and launches, ice skating surfaces, and toboggan runs
- Preserves and enhances Winnipeg's urban forest
- Protects and restores natural areas and provides environmental education programming
- Supports individuals and groups in growing their own food in community or allotment gardens
- Beautifies the city through floral displays and boulevard maintenance
- Protects Winnipeggers against the negative effects of pests such as mosquitoes
- Maintains open spaces for other City departments

The Parks and Open Space division also works collaboratively with Community Services and community organizations in the delivery of amenities and services. There are agreements for joint use of spaces as well as maintenance agreements for specific amenities. These agreements help to increase the level of service of parks and amenities, allowing City staff to prioritize other areas of operation and maintenance.

6.3 Operating and capital budgets

The City reports budget information on a service-based basis (how much the service will cost and how the service is to be funded), regardless of which area or department delivers the service. The service-based budget is intended to provide more transparent reporting and a more direct link between budgets provided and the services delivered. Approved operating and maintenance budgets for parks services is largely identified within the Parks and Urban Forestry service of the City's annual operating and capital budget documents. Additional funding is also identified within the City Beautification and Insect Control services.

Approved funding for parks capital replacement and renewal needs is identified within the City's annual capital project detail document, under the Public Works department. The capital budget is comprised of six years; the budget year and a five-year capital forecast. *Asset Management Policy FI-011* states that the City will implement a comprehensive approach to managing its assets, to meet established levels of service at the lowest overall cost of ownership, at an acceptable level of risk. Winnipeg's *City Asset Management Plan* (CAMP) and the annual capital budget process are the tools used to implement the city's long-term capital planning process.

6.4 Existing City-wide policies

The following policies apply to the City of Winnipeg as a whole, but contain important direction for the parks system and therefore are specifically addressed in the Strategy.

Age-Friendly Winnipeg Action Plan

The *Age-Friendly Winnipeg Action Plan* provides directions on how to make Winnipeg a more age-friendly city by optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. Because the parks system plays a direct role in fostering health and participation, and contributing to quality of life, the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* takes into consideration how the system serves the aging population.

Asset Management Policy

The *Asset Management Policy* directs the City to consistently deliver established customer service levels at an acceptable level of risk while minimizing the lifecycle costs of City assets. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* provides direction to re-define the service levels that the City will provide for parks and park assets.

Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan

Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan provides targets and actions for mitigating the city's environmental impacts and responding to a changing climate. It directs specific updates to municipal plans and infrastructure and provides a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for the city. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* both addresses *Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan's* directions specific to parks and ensures ecological and environmental functions are considered in its own relevant recommendations.

Green Building Policy

The *Green Building Policy* ensures that new City-owned facilities and major additions to existing facilities are designed, constructed and operated to a high standard of performance in environmental, economic and social sustainability. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* takes these principles into consideration and applies them through the lens of its design-based policies and recommendations.

LiveSAFE

The *LiveSAFE* policy document recognizes that successful crime prevention interventions involve all sectors within the community. The intent is to find a balanced approach to crime prevention that includes policing as well as a preventive approach, in order to address the root causes of crime. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* includes specific provisions to mandate that parks spaces are safe and supportive, as to contribute to both crime prevention and community building.

Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak, Winnipeg's Indigenous Youth Strategy

The mission of the *Indigenous Youth Strategy* is to give Indigenous youth positive opportunities in the community and civic system by bridging and providing culturally appropriate programs and supports related to employment, literacy and recreation. This hopes to increase resilience, self-sustainability, pride and future opportunities. The objectives and service areas of the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* reflect the *Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak's* second pillar of Physical, Culture, and Leisure.

Winnipeg Pedestrian and Cycling Strategies

The Pedestrian & Cycling Strategies (PCS), provides the long-term vision for accessible, convenient, and safe walking and cycling facilities for people of all ages and abilities. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* recognizes the importance of a pedestrian and cycling network that supports active-living goals, and connects people with nature, and increases access to the parks system.

Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy

The *Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy* is a comprehensive plan, co-created with the community, that includes a practical approach to reducing poverty, increasing equity, and incorporating a 'culture of caring' in all City endeavours over the next decade. The *Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy* aims to be a

catalyst for additional and increasing action and partnerships going forward to address underlying root causes and localized impacts of poverty in our city.

Winnipeg Recreation Strategy

Closely aligned with the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy*, the *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* provides a 25-year framework to guide programs, services, and facilities to ensure the recreation system, which is integral to our quality of life, continues to support the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities.

Winnipeg Transit Master Plan

The *Winnipeg Transit Master Plan* establishes the long-term vision for transit in Winnipeg. The plan is supported by strategic policy guidance that creates structure and transparency, along with specific objectives that provide better transit options, resulting in a simpler, more efficient, more effective, and more accessible transit system - one that is better positioned to become people's first choice for travelling around Winnipeg. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* recognizes the important role Winnipeg's transit network plays in providing access to the parks system, and encourages the coordination of park siting with transit service when planning new community and regional parks.

Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan

The *Winnipeg Transportation Master Plan* (TMP) presents a long-term strategy to guide the planning, development, renewal and maintenance of a multi-modal transportation system that is consistent with projected needs, and aligned with the City's growth and the overall vision for a sustainable Winnipeg and region. The City is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the TMP, with a vision to ensure our transportation system supports quality of life and economic vitality through safe, efficient, connected and barrier-free movement of people and goods using a choice of modes and sustainable infrastructure. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* emphasizes that the coordination of park development with city transportation networks, including pathways, streets, sidewalks, and transit, is essential to ensuring that parks are fully integrated as part of Winnipeg's complete communities.

Universal Design Policy

The *Universal Design Policy* ensures that the City incorporates universal design principles in all of its new construction and major renovations to City buildings. Universal design ensures that buildings and facilities are designed in a way that enables use by people with a wide range of abilities. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* contains language that ensures universal design principles are applied when developing new parks spaces and renovating existing ones as a means of creating outdoor opportunities for Winnipeggers of all ages and abilities.

The City of Winnipeg *Accessibility Design Standards* for the built environment is a set of requirements under the *Universal Design Policy* and are applied to City-owned, occupied, funded or leased buildings and exterior environments.

Go to the Waterfront

Go…to the Waterfront is Winnipeg's 20-year Downtown waterfront vision, adopted by City Council in 2014. Inspired by *OurWinnipeg (2011)*, the document provides a vision and strategies to strengthen the connections of neighbourhoods to each other and the Downtown. The primary means to achieving this are safe and accessible linkage parks connected by components of the active transportation network. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* prioritizes the expansion of the waterfront multi-use pathway network and improving public access to waterways, directly supporting *Go to the Waterfront.*

Welcoming Winnipeg: Reconciling our History Policy

Welcoming Winnipeg is an initiative that responds to the national dialogue to re-examine historical markers and place names to resolve the absence of Indigenous perspectives, experiences, and contributions in the stories remembered and commemorated in Canadian cities.

6.4.1 Parkland-related planning documents

The following policies are informed by the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy*, and provide specific direction for parkland management.

Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy

The *Ecologically Significant Natural Lands (ESNL) Strategy and Policy* provides an overview of the importance of natural areas in the Winnipeg region and suggests a process for identifying, assessing, and protecting natural areas as ESNLs. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* identifies additional recreational and connectivity benefits of natural area protection and sets out strategies to better articulate the City's commitment to natural area preservation.

Regional Parks Investment Strategy

The *Regional Parks Investment Strategy* (RPIS) will refine the direction provided in the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* to standardize the level of service for regional parks and define the core amenities and functions they should provide. The RPIS also provides place-based recommendations that are specific to each park and its unique character.

Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy

The City's *Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy* (UFS) will establish a long-term vision for Winnipeg's urban forest and develop clear guidance and measurable outcomes for the funding and levels of service required to sustain an urban forest that is resilient to current and future challenges. The *Winnipeg Parks Strategy* provides broad recommendations for maintaining and enhancing Winnipeg's urban forest in parks; these recommendations will inform the UFS's own recommendations and actions.

6.4.2 Amenity-related planning documents

The following policies are informed by the *Winnipeg Parks Strategy*, and provide greater direction relating to park amenities.

Athletic Field Review

The *Athletic Field Review* provides recommendations for planning of and operating City athletic fields, ensuring that they are well maintained, strategically allocated, and fully utilized. This review complements the Strategy by providing more detailed direction on how the City should manage and provide access to athletic fields.

Community Garden Policy

The *Community Garden Policy* is intended to foster a positive climate for community gardening and identifies the principles used by City administration in its decision-making around the development, management and maintenance of community gardens on City-owned land.

Off-leash Dog Areas Master Plan

The *Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan* addresses the growing community need for off-leash dog areas in Winnipeg. It sets out a vision and implementation strategy including site selection criteria, policies around user conflicts and maintenance, and potential partnership and funding opportunities. The Strategy provides the direction to implement the guidance provided in the *Off-Leash Dog Areas Master Plan*.

6.4.3 Park development and acquisition documentation

The following policies put the Strategy into practice by providing direction and guidelines for the development of parks and park facilities.

Land Dedication Reserve Policy

The policy guides how the *Land Dedication Reserve Fund* is administered; the fund is supported by the sale of parkland or as cash in lieu (CIL) of dedicating land to parks during the development approval process. Seventy-five percent of CIL funds collected must be allocated to the community from which they were derived, while the balance is redistributed equally among all communities (with a specific neighbourhood allocation established for Assiniboia). The policy articulates what the funds generally may and should not be used for but allows Community Committees to waive criteria on a case-by-case basis. This waiver triggers approval from a higher level of Committee of Council. The Strategy provides additional direction on how CIL funds should be prioritized across the City and within local communities to ensure overall equal access to parks and amenities in Winnipeg.

Development Agreement Parameters

The *Development Agreement Parameters* express the general policy of the city providing guidelines for formulating conditions in development agreements, which are negotiated between the City and developers. The parameters set out the roles, responsibilities, and cost sharing obligations of each party for a new development. This includes the processes and expectations associated with determining public park dedication or a cash-in-lieu of land payment (or a combination of both), along with associated requirements for landscape improvements, land drainage servicing, and public access easements. The *Development Agreement Parameters* will be updated as per the direction of the Strategy.

Joint use agreements

Joint use agreements are partnerships between the City of Winnipeg and other entities, most often school divisions and recreation organizations. These agreements are used to secure public access to non-City facilities (such as school sports fields); they guide the planning and development of joint use sites for school and park purposes and service providers. Joint use agreements, as an older style of agreement, are limited in their applicability and comprehensiveness. The Strategy provides direction for how and when joint use agreements or other forms of partnership agreements should be used to establish the provision of public park services on non-City land.

6.4.4 Bylaws

Bylaws are typically informed by strategic plans and the planning process. The following bylaws may require amendments to align with the outcomes of the Strategy and appropriately guide the management and use of parks.

Park By-law

The *Park By-law* contains regulations on how parks are managed and used to maximize public enjoyment, minimize public safety and health risks, and minimize harm to the environment. The Strategy will provide scope and guidance to the *Park By-law*.

Glossary

Accessible: Access to recreation opportunities can be easily obtained. The term accessible is oft en used to describe the lack of physical barriers in a facility that would limit use by persons with disabilities. Accessible can also be used in many other contexts including the ability to easily access information, programs and services.

Accessibility: To enable every person to participate fully in all aspects of parks, free from attitudinal, organizational or systemic, architectural or physical, information or communication, and technological barriers.

Active transportation: Any human-powered mode of transportation such as walking, cycling, skiing, skating and skateboarding. Active transportation can provide safe, affordable, and efficient transportation opportunities that allow people to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives and gain associated health benefits. Along with personal health benefits of using active modes of travel, there are broader community benefits- such as reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved air quality, and maximizing the use of existing infrastructure *(OurWinnipeg 2045).*

Age-friendly design: When the physical and social environment is designed to help individuals 'age actively' and considers access and mobility from the perspective of both the youngest and oldest members of the community to enable access for all.

Areas of higher poverty: Geographic areas of Winnipeg identified by Community Services based on Canadian Census dissemination blocks where poverty (as measured by the *Market Basket Measure* of low-income status) was the primary criteria. Secondary criteria used to identify areas included analysis of two demographic groups significantly overrepresented in poverty: Indigenous residents and children (0–14 years).

Asset management: An integrated set of business processes to minimize the lifecycle costs of owning, operating, and maintaining assets, at an acceptable level of risk, while continuously delivering established levels of service *(OurWinnipeg 2045).*

Barrier: Something that impedes people or separates them, either material or immaterial. It can be a circumstance or obstacle that limits access and/or prevents communication and/or progress in order to achieve an objective.

Buffer: Open space maintained by the City that is intended to separate land uses, typically residential from more intensive uses such as industrial areas or high-speed roadways.

Climate adaptation: Includes any initiatives or actions in response to actual or projected climate change impacts and which reduce the effects of climate change on built, natural, and social systems *(ICLEI Canada- Local Governments for Sustainability & OurWinnipeg 2045).*

Climate mitigation: The promotion of policy, regulatory and project-based measures that contribute to the stabilization or reduction of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Renewable energy programs, energy efficiency frameworks and substitution of fossil fuels are examples of climate change mitigation measures *(ICLEI Canada- Local Governments for Sustainability & OurWinnipeg 2045).*

Community: A group of people with similar or shared culture, concerns or geography *(OurWinnipeg 2045)*.

Complete Communities: When italicized and capitalized, it refers to the *Complete Communities Direction Strategy*. When not italicized or capitalized it refers to an area offer a mix of urban features which enable residents to live, work, shop, learn and play without leaving the neighbourhood.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) uses urban design tactics and interventions to deter criminal behaviour.

Culture: The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that encompasses art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs *(OurWinnipeg 2045).*

Diversity: A wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group or community. When we celebrate diversity, communities and workplaces become richer as they draw upon the variety of experiences, perspectives and skills that people can contribute.

Equity: Recognizes that not all people start off from the same position, and that unequal opportunities make it more difficult for some to be successful. Treating everyone the same is only fair if they are starting from the same position. It seeks to address the inequalities that stem from an individual's particular circumstances, to help put them at the same position as others *(OurWinnipeg 2045)*.

Fragment: Small open spaces such as road verges and boulevards which are maintained by the City and contribute to overall aesthetics/beautification of the city, but are of insufficient size to provide support park amenities.

General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC): The GCWCC is the volunteer-based organization that leads and coordinates the management and operation of Winnipeg's community centres.

Green infrastructure: A broad category that integrates natural assets, and designed and engineered elements that have been created to mimic natural functions and processes that provide human health benefits and critical environmental, social and economic services, and protect against climate shock; and the stock of natural resources or ecosystems that are relied upon, managed, or could be managed by a municipality, regional district, or other form of local government for the sustainable provision of one or more municipal services. For example, urban forests, grasslands, wetlands, parks and open space, river corridors, soil, green roofs, and permeable pavement.

Greenfield development: New development on a previously undeveloped site.

Heritage value: Value deriving from a resource's importance for the illustration/interpretation of history, association with important individuals, groups, or events, embodiment of unique design, and/or location in an area of historic interest.

Immigrant: A person born outside of Canada who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently.

Inclusion: An organizational practice and goal in which all groups and individuals are welcomed and valued.

Indigenous: The use of this term refers to 'Aboriginal Peoples of Canada' as defined in Section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada *(OurWinnipeg 2045).*

Joint-use sites: Sites where the City has entered into an agreement with another organization or institution to enable public use of the space, such a school gymnasium, that provide recreation functions or amenities.

Land dedication: Land dedication is a method of government land acquisition through subdivision where land is transferred to the City from the private land owner for a public purpose.

Leisure: The use of free time for enjoyment.

Lifecycle costs: The total cost of an asset throughout its life including planning, design, construction, acquisition, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation and disposal costs.

Level of service: Parameters, or combination of parameters, which reflect social, political, environmental, and economic outcomes that the organization delivers.

Natural areas: Natural areas are examples of intact natural vegetation and landforms, which contain predominantly native vegetation.

Naturalized areas: Naturalized areas have previously been covered in non-natural land cover (agriculture, industry, or other impermeable disturbances), and then restored with vegetation.

Naturalization: The process of re-vegetating areas that have been disturbed by human use. Ideally, naturalization will include native plantings and re-introduction of more natural topography.

Neighbourhood: Neighbourhoods were defined following the amalgamation of the City of Winnipeg in the early 1970s and were intended to serve as the basic building blocks of the city for planning purposes. The neighbourhoods were defined based on their characteristic features and natural boundaries, so that once identified the neighbourhood boundaries would not be subject to arbitrary change. Some neighbourhood areas were added or modified in response to new developments in parts of the city, but for the most part neighbourhood boundaries have remained the same. The geographic size and population of neighbourhoods varies considerably. There are currently 237 neighbourhoods in the City of Winnipeg and 194 of these neighbourhoods have Canadian Census statistics associated with them. The other 43 neighbourhoods are either industrial or undeveloped areas having populations under 100 persons.

Newcomer: Generally means all new residents to Winnipeg including people arriving from reserves, rural communities, other provinces or territories, or countries outside Canada. For the purpose of this Strategy, the term newcomer refers primarily to the following groups: recent immigrants, refugees, refugee claimants or asylum seekers, and temporary residents.

Non-essential parkland: Lands no longer considered a priority to retain for parkland or park-related purposes.

OurWinnipeg: The *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities* by-laws are the City's development plan which provides a framework to guide development and growth decisions in the City of Winnipeg for the next 25 years.

Park/parkland: Property owned or managed by the City of Winnipeg that is publicly accessible and mainly used for public recreation, leisure, sports, and/or preserving natural areas.

Partnership: A relationship between the City and a third party (either private, non-profit, institutional or public) intended to provide a recreation opportunity in a joint manner. Partnerships have defined roles and responsibilities for all involved.

Pathways to Wellbeing: The *Framework for Recreation in Canada* (2015) — the guiding document for public recreation providers in Canada. The *Framework for Recreation in Canada* was jointly developed by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (IRSC); it presents a renewed definition and vision of recreation as well as confirms common values, principles, and goals. The Framework was endorsed in February 2015 by Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation, and is supported by the Government of Canada. Municipalities across Canada are using the Framework to ensure their recreation programs, facilities, spaces, and community associations are aligning with the five goals.

Physical literacy: Is the ability of an individual to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person.

Play: Is freely chosen and self-directed mental or physical activity that is undertaken for enjoyment and that is separate in some way from "real" life.

Privately owned publicly accessible open spaces (POPS): Development of private land specifically designed for and reserved for use by the general public for active or passive recreational use, but that is owned and operated by a private organization, non-profit organization, institution, or similar body.

Recreation: The experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

Resilience: The ability to easily respond, adapt, and recover from change.

Restoration: A legally and technically specific term for returning a disturbed site to a more-or-less natural condition.

Riparian areas: The banks or boundaries of water bodies,including rivers, creeks, streams and wetlands.

Sensitive lands: Includes land that is susceptible to flooding or erosion or that has unstable slopes or poor drainage; areas of special significance for animal, bird or plant life, including wetlands, forests and nesting areas; and land on which any development is likely to harm ecological diversity.

Sustainability: The ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Universal design: The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Urban forest: The sum total of all trees and associated vegetation, soil, natural processes and cultural elements on public and private land in and around towns, cities and other communities *(Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy)*.

Wayfinding: Signage, cartographic materials and design techniques that provide information about the location, orientation and surroundings in order to support navigation around the city.

Wellbeing: The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in recreation and culture.

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