



# SMITHERS PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

# “CURRENT STATE”

# RESEARCH AND

# ENGAGEMENT

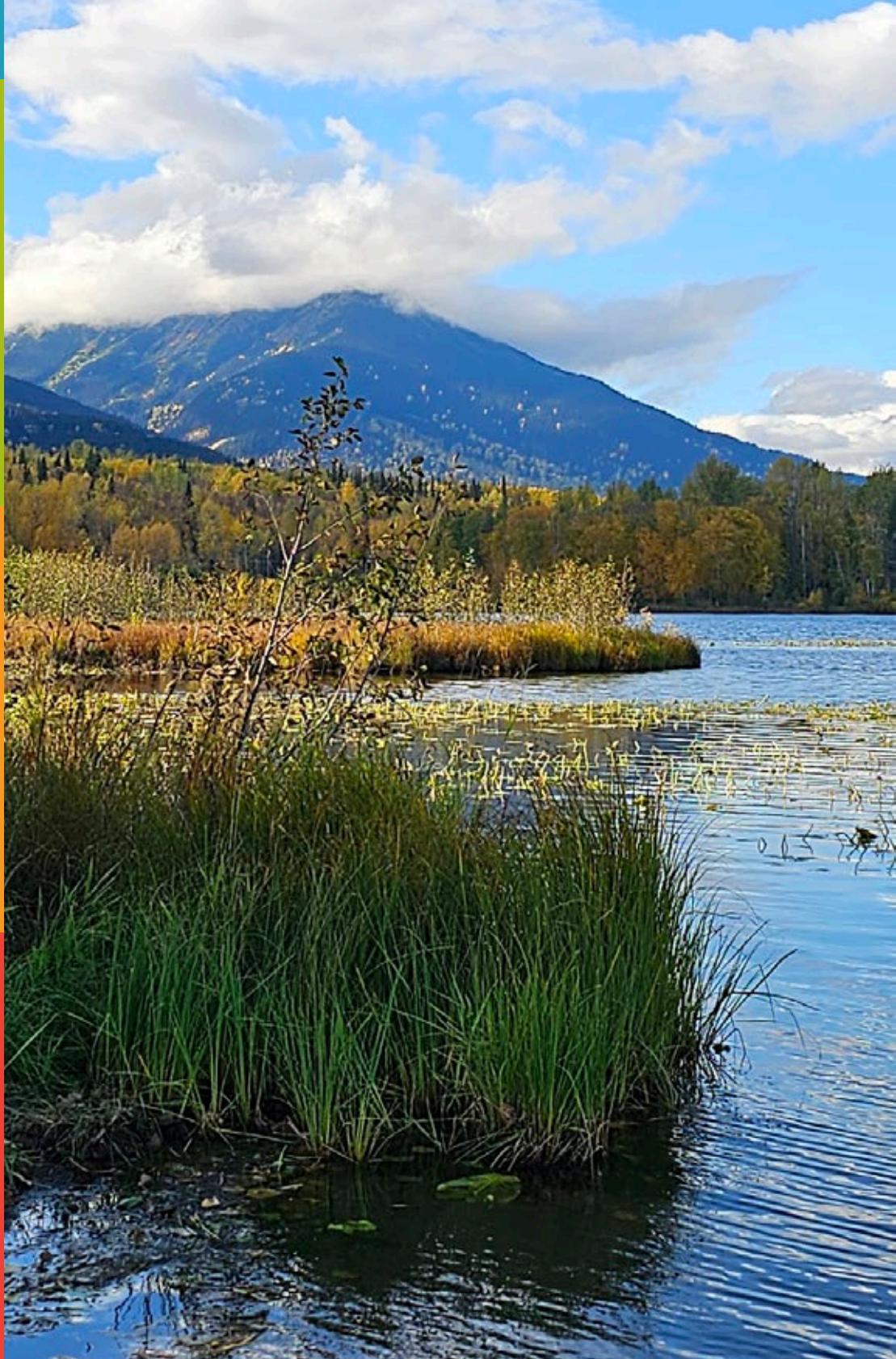
# SUMMARY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

**The Town of Smithers acknowledges the Gidimt'en Clan and the Witsuwit'en people, on whose unceded ancestral territory we live, work and play.**



# SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- The Town of Smithers has created a good foundation for future planning. The most recent Official Community Plan (OCP), along with other recent planning documents (Child Care Plan, and upcoming Accessibility Plan), has set some reasonable objectives and policy recommendations that will integrate well into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- The Town of Smithers population demographics are expected to change over the next 10 years. While the Town still has a higher proportion of youth (ages 0-14) compared to provincial averages, the older adult population is anticipated to increase as an overall proportion of the total.
- Opportunities exist to use recreation as a key driver of improved health metrics and outcomes. Concerning health data exist nationally, provincially, regionally, and locally. Anticipating different recreation and park services needs can help to be proactive in addressing health outcomes that are linked with an aging and sedentary population.
- Partnerships are an important aspect of how Smithers provides parks and recreation services and programs. The Town owns but does not operate a number of facilities and spaces used for parks and recreation programming. In order to maintain what is currently provided it will be important for the Town to maintain and update current agreements in place.
- The two arena facilities have capacity for more use. While the New Arena is the newest ice arena in the Town of Smithers, the New Arena is considered 'a second sheet of ice' due to its limitations in hosting competitive events. The Civic Centre arena is the more desired space for ice bookings.
- The Smithers Public Library is an important community space and resource centre. The library has seen a significant increase in their program participation as well as the use of their computers stations and wifi services. Its current size poses challenges to hosting events and expanding library programs.
- Sport field bookings have increased over the past four years, but there is still capacity for more bookings in the system. Sport organizations are growing and there is desire to extend the season of play.
- Most Smithers residents can walk to a park within 10 minutes of their home. It is important to consider what types of experiences that residents are looking for at those parks and how to best provide services.
- Schools are an important provider of playground opportunities in the community. In general, school playgrounds are newer and more dynamic than the municipal supply. Opportunities exist to increase the diversity of play opportunities in Smithers, including the addition of more natural and adventure play features.
- Smithers has a relatively well developed trails network, however opportunities exist to improve connectivity and better position the trails network to accommodate all-season use.
- Smithers lacks multi-use large span program space that can meet organized program and casual recreation needs throughout the day. Currently, school gymnasiums are relied upon to meet these needs but have limited availability.

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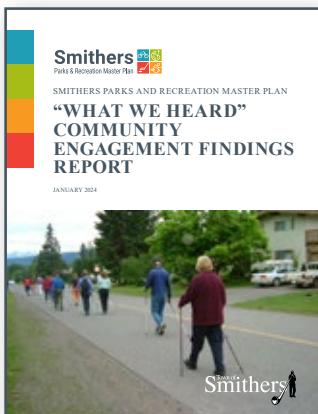
# 1. INTRODUCTION

# 1.1. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

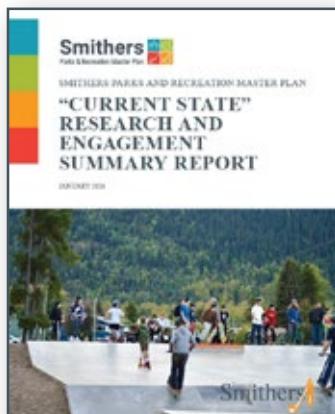
The Town of Smithers is developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that will provide a long-term strategic plan for parks and recreation service delivery. The plan provides Town Council, staff, and partners with a resource that can help inform decision making by identifying priorities and focus areas for capital and operational investment. The plan will create vision and action plan for key spaces, facilities, and topics.

Understanding the current state (strengths, gaps, and opportunities) of the parks and recreation system in Smithers is a critical step in developing the Master Plan. This document contains the detailed non-engagement research and analysis. Along with the “What We Heard Report” Engagement Summary Report (found under separate cover), these two background documents provide a foundation of information that informs the Master Plan priorities and recommendations.

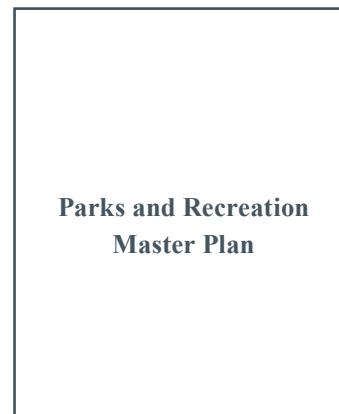
## PROJECT DOCUMENTS



**“What We Heard”**  
**Engagement Summary**  
**Report** (findings from  
community engagement)



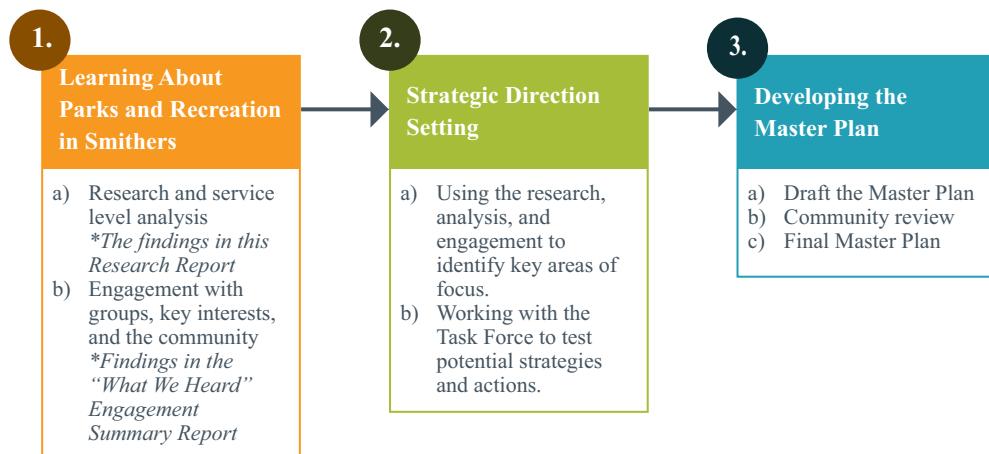
**Research Report** (findings  
from the non-engagement  
research and analysis)



**Parks and Recreation**  
**Master Plan**

## PROJECT PROCESS OVERVIEW

The following graphic illustrates the overall process used to develop the Master Plan.



## 1.2. RESEARCH INPUTS OVERVIEW

When evaluating a complex recreation and parks system that provides an array of benefits and experiences, fosters quality of life, and supports conversation, it is critical to ensure the analysis is comprehensive and uses multiple inputs that provide the required insights into strengths, gaps, and opportunities that the Master Plan can provide long-term direction on. The following icons summarize the research inputs used to undertake this analysis and generate the information contained in this report document.



Inventory of amenities and spaces



Population and demographics analysis



Spatial analysis



Benchmarking



Trends and best practices review



Functional assessments of the park system



Review of previous planning and policy



Analysis of facility use and programming

# 1.3. PLANNING INFLUENCES

For the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan to be most effective as a strategic planning resource, it will need to align with related and overarching Town policy and leverage previous planning that has been undertaken.

Summarized below are Town and partner documents that have been reviewed by the project team for their insights and integration into the new Master Plan.

## PREVIOUS TOWN PLANNING

### *Bylaw No. 1935- Town of Smithers Official Community Plan 2040*

Overall land use and planning for designated geographic areas in British Columbia are guided by **Official Community Plan (OCP)**. OCP's provide a vision, goals and/or objectives, and policy directions for a community or jurisdiction, while also identifying how projected growth and evolution will be managed.

The Town of Smithers OCP's guiding principle's identify commitments to social equity, economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and cultural vitality. The OCP uses community wellbeing as a framework to provide a holistic approach to planning and policy development. Within each guiding principle specific goals are outlined that are later built upon as community objectives and policies. Many of the objectives and policies will provide direction to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, specifically those outlined in Section 9: Heritage, Arts and Culture – Culture and Inclusion, Section 10: Parks, Open Space and Recreation, and Section 13: Community Services and Facilities. The table below (Table 1.3.1.) lists key objectives and policies that will impact the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Direct references to the Recreation and Parks Master Plan development are in bold.

**Table 1.3.1. Key OCP Objectives and Policies that Impact the Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Objective	Policies Directly Impacting the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
9.2. Indigenous Heritage  To recognize Smithers is located on Witsuwit'en territory and to increase awareness of the Witsuwit'en's long history.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to honour the Protocol Agreement between the Town of Smithers and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en as a basis for discussing items of mutual interest.</li><li>Work with the Witsuwit'en Nation to modify the character of Smithers to better reflect the history and culture of the Witsuwit'en people.</li><li>Support the use of public spaces, such as parks, facilities and public plazas as venues to express Witsuwit'en history, culture, and art. Work in collaboration with Indigenous led organizations on these initiatives.</li><li>Explore opportunities to share the Witsuwit'en Nation's history and culture through events and gatherings in Smithers.</li><li>Support initiatives by the Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society, Smithers Public Library and the Smithers Bridging Committee that build community awareness and education of Witsuwit'en history.</li></ul>
9.4. Arts and Culture  To support and encourage the growth and appreciation of arts and culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognize the outstanding efforts of the various cultural service organizations in Smithers and the Bulkley Valley and continue to support efforts to promote arts and culture in the community.</li><li>Include the arts and culture community in Town planning processes for public spaces and facilities as opportunities to integrate art and culture.</li></ul>

Objective	Policies Directly Impacting the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
<p>9.5. Inclusion and Accessibility</p> <p>Strive to be a more inclusive and accessible community for all ages and abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with local groups to foster BIPOC and LGBTQ+ representation in the arts and cultural initiatives, including participating in Town planning processes.</li> <li>Support age-friendly and inclusive participation in all aspects of civic life, including communications, diversity of programming and accessible indoor and outdoor spaces.</li> <li>Work to ensure that public spaces in the Town are accessible and safe for all.</li> <li>Continue to work on implementing the Town of Smithers Age-Friendly Action Plan and engage with community groups like Access Smithers on Town initiatives.</li> <li>Encourage development and redevelopment to incorporate principles of Universal Design.</li> <li>Support land uses, transportation routes, community facilities, public spaces, and parks to meet the needs of all ages and abilities.</li> </ul>
<p>10.2. Parks and Open Spaces</p> <p>To provide a system of accessible, safe, and connected parks and natural open space areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Develop a Recreation and Parks Master Plan to assess and guide the expansion, improvement, and management of the Town's public park system. The plan should focus on how to integrate these services into the community in a manner that reduces the impact on the environment and natural spaces.</b></li> <li>Develop comprehensive plans for Central Park, Heritage Park, and Veteran's Peace Park to improve the design, function and services provided by these important and valued civic spaces.</li> <li>Support the creation of new neighbourhood parks, particularly in or adjacent to areas of new residential development as part of subdivision approvals.</li> <li>Use funds raised by the sale of parklands to acquire new parks and open space areas of equal or greater area and quality, where possible, or be used to improve existing ones.</li> <li>Incorporate CPTED principles into the design of open space and parks.</li> <li>Enhance the connectivity of the parks and open space to support improved pedestrian/ cyclist connections and biodiversity as part of future subdivision approvals and upgrades.</li> <li>Consider users of all abilities and ages when planning or upgrading new parks and open space areas to maximize accessibility.</li> </ul>

Objective	Policies Directly Impacting the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
<p>10.3. Recreation</p> <p>To provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of all ages, abilities, and income levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop the Town's indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, working in collaboration with local sport user groups and broader community.</li> <li>Support community initiatives to improve recreation opportunities by endorsing grant applications and similar opportunities.</li> <li>Work with School Districts and independent schools in Smithers on shared use agreements that enhance overall community recreation opportunities.</li> <li>Support co-location of recreation facilities with compatible mixed uses, such as childcare centres, civic uses, and higher density housing.</li> <li>All new or upgraded facilities in Smithers shall be designed to encourage active participation, accessible recreation, and inclusive programming for a diverse population. Opportunities for adaptive and flexible design of recreation facilities should be explored.</li> <li>Locate new recreation opportunities so they are easily and safely accessible from surrounding neighbourhoods by walking, cycling and transit (where possible).</li> <li>Include recreation facilities in asset management planning.</li> </ul>
<p>10.4. Trails</p> <p>To improve the existing trail system to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage active transportation;</li> <li>Strengthen connection to nature;</li> <li>Promote community health and wellbeing;</li> <li>Increase access to nature; and</li> <li>To minimize wildlife encounters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the overall connectivity of the Perimeter Trail by constructing trail gaps, such as along Railway Avenue and behind Alpine Village Estates, as well as new connections to existing trails and key community destinations.</li> <li>Support public education initiatives to minimize wildlife encounters.</li> <li>Maintain and develop new dedicated public trail connections to key community destinations, facilities, neighbourhoods, and features of interest as part of Town upgrades, planning processes, and approvals for new development proposals and subdivision applications.</li> <li><b>Complete a Recreation and Parks Master Plan to guide the development and management of trails within the Town of Smithers.</b></li> <li>Encourage the ongoing development of trails adjacent to the Town boundary such as the Cycle 16 Trail, mountain bike trails, and hiking trails.</li> <li>Improve trail wayfinding for both residents and visitors.</li> <li>Encourage the development of trails and pathways throughout parks and open space areas that supports the participation of users of different ages and abilities.</li> </ul>

## OTHER KEY LOCAL PLANNING INFLUENCES

The table below additionally provides a summary overview of several other key planning and policy documents developed by the Town of Smithers and other community organizations that play a leading role in parks, recreation, and culture advocacy in Smithers.

**Table 1.3.2. Other Panning Influences**

Document	Relevance to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Smithers Strategic Priorities Plan 2023-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The strategic priorities are Council's goals, drawn from the OCP, and priorities for the Council term. The Smithers Strategic Priorities Plan identifies strategic priorities for the community in six Strategic Focus Areas: Economic Prosperity, Community Liveability, Environmental Sustainability and Responsibility, Infrastructure and Asset management, Partnerships, and Organizational Excellence.</li><li>• Developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan was identified as an initiative under the Community Liveability Strategic Focus Area.</li><li>• Developing a Central Park Plan and exploring opportunities to build a new library were also identified as potential initiatives under the Community Liveability Strategic Focus Area.</li></ul>
Age Friendly Assessment and Action Plan for the Town of Smithers 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides an assessment of Smithers public buildings, recreation facilities, parks, trails and open spaces, and municipal policies and plans.</li><li>• Provides an action plan with six priorities that came from the assessments, community consultation, surveys, meetings, and direct engagement with the senior population in Smithers.</li></ul>
Updated Accessibility Assessment 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Updated Accessibility Assessment 2023 reviews and provides a progress update on each of the recommendations provided in the 2016 document.</li></ul>
Town of Smithers Accessibility Plan – Baseline Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Baseline Report provides a background summary and foundation for the Smithers Accessibility Plan to build upon.</li><li>• The Report outlines why accessibility is planned for, what achievements have been made, what knowledge gaps exist and what the Plan will focus on. Parks and recreation services and facilities is an area where achievements have been made and an area that still has need for improvements.</li></ul>
Town of Smithers Child Care Plan 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides an overview of the current and future child care needs and identifies actions that the community can take to support child care space creation.</li><li>• Identifies that there is a lack of child care co-located with other uses that serve families such as municipal recreation facilities, schools, etc.</li><li>• The plan suggests that future town planning projects consider child care as a vibrant mixed-use element and specifically notes the new Central Park Plan. It also suggests that the Town's Asset Management Plan is an opportunity to consider leveraging available child care funding to upgrade and enhance aging facilities.</li></ul>

Document	Relevance to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Planning for a Vibrant Downtown Smithers 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Town of Smithers, in partnership with CMHC, hosted a charrette that explored downtown revitalization. The result was a vision and set of strategies for creating a vibrant main street supported by a range of options for 'downtown living' and an enhanced public open space network. Strategy #4 specifically identifies Central Park as a historical and cultural town anchor and provides suggestions for policy and implementation ideas.</li> </ul>
Smithers Public Library Design Report 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Smithers Public Library Board engaged Urban Arts Architecture to prepare a study to determine the appropriate size of a library expansion and to provide a design and cost for the revised facility.</li> <li>The Design Report summarizes the design of a new public library for Smithers. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Design Brief issued in March 2009, which summarizes: the assessment of the existing library facility, the community vision for library service, a building program, sustainable guidelines, design concepts, siting strategies, and a preferred design concept.</li> </ul>

## KEY PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL PLANS AND FRAMEWORK

Aligning with broader planning influences reflects that the Town values best practice and recognizes that its part of a broader parks, recreation and culture delivery system. Listed as follows are pertinent documents and planning references that will be considered as the new Master Plan is developed.

- Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- Sport for Life and Long-Term Development
- Let's Get Moving: A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada (2018)
- British Columbia Arts Council Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022
- Nature for All – Connecting with Nature (2018)
- Parks for All (2017)
- A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing (2015)
- Active People, Active Places—BC Physical Activity Strategy (2015)



## 2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

## 2.1. COMMUNITY PROFILE AND KEY CHARACTERISTICS

The Town of Smithers is situated in the Bulkley Valley, the traditional unceded territory of the Gidimt'en Clan and the Witsuwit'en people. The Town of Smithers story begins in 1913 with the coming of the railroad, in 1921 Smithers was designated as the first incorporated village in British Columbia and in 1967 became a town<sup>i</sup>.

Settlers made Smithers their home because of the natural environment; fertile soil, mineral riches, and gorgeous mountain valley, rivers, and lakes<sup>ii</sup>. Today, the natural environment of Smithers is still of great importance. Many people are still employed in agriculture industries such as forestry, fishing and hunting, or mining, but all Smithereens enjoy the landscape for its abundance of spaces to participate in recreation endeavours, be active, and enjoy nature.

Smithers is known for its festivals, fairs, and gatherings, outdoor recreation opportunities, and cultural, arts and music scene.

Photo: [Smither.ca](http://Smither.ca)



## 2.2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

The Town of Smithers has a population of 5,378<sup>iii</sup>. The following section outlines population trends and statistics outline how demographic characteristics can impact parks and recreation participation in the community.

### POPULATION AND FUTURE GROWTH

Over the last 20 years the population in Smithers has remained relatively stable with a slight decrease of 0.7%. **Table 2.2.1** examines the population change over the last several census periods (2001-2021). The median age of the population has increased similar to the rest of the province, the population has gradually aged with a growing proportion of older adult cohorts ages 50 - 75 years of age. Although decreasing, the proportion of youth ages 0 - 14% is approximately 4% higher in Smithers compared to the rest of B.C. and the Median Age is lower; 39.6 compared to 42.8 in 2021.

**Table 2.2.1. Smithers Population Trends 2001 - 2021**

Census Year	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Population	5,414	5,217	5,404	5,401	5,378
5 Year % Change	-3.70%	-4%	4%	-0.1%	-0.4%
Median Age	33.3	36.1	37.2	39.2	39.6

*Source Statistics Canada, Census 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001.*

**Table 2.2.2.** illustrates the proportion of the population that fall into each age category in Smithers compared to that of the rest of the province. Almost a quarter (24%) of the population is under the age of 20 and a quarter (25%) is 60 years or older in Smithers. The rest of the province has a higher proportion of seniors compared to youth than Smithers does.

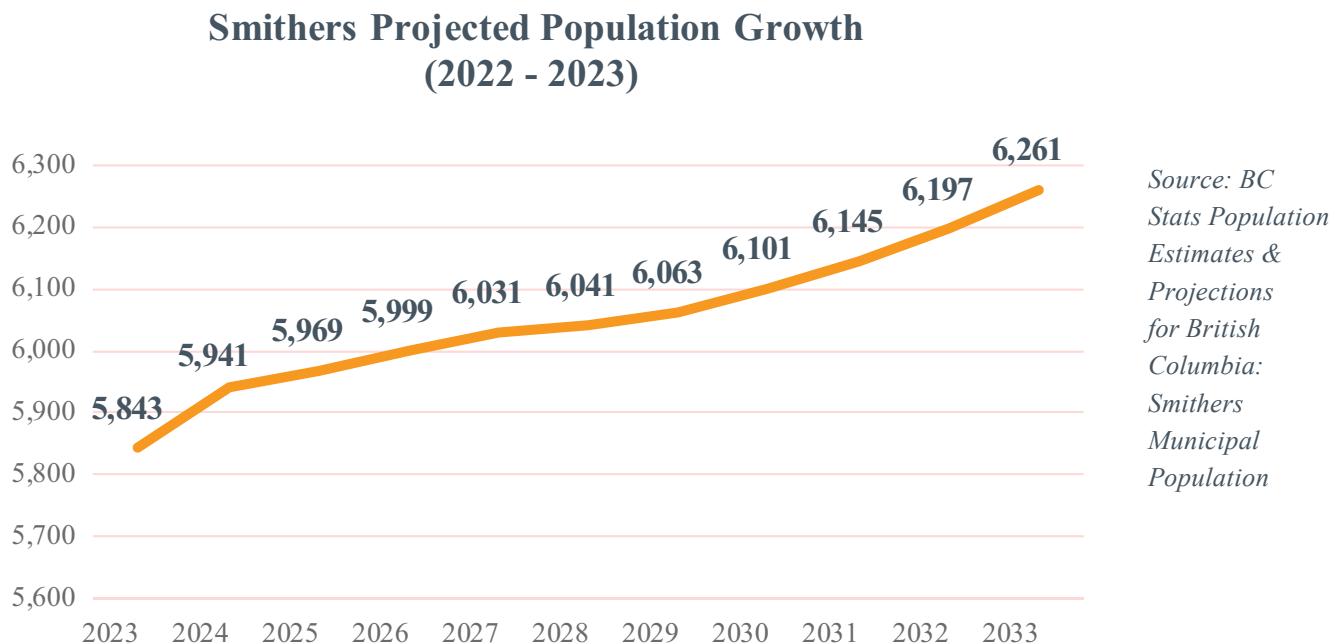
**Table 2.2.2. Age Characteristics of Smithers 2021**

Age Range	Proportion of the Population in Smithers	Proportion of the Population of B.C.
0 to 4 years	6%	4%
5 to 9 years	6%	5%
10-14 years	7%	5%
15-19 years	6%	5%
20-29 years	12%	13%
30-39 years	15%	14%
40-49 years	13%	13%
50-59 years	11%	14%
60-69 years	12%	13%
70-79 years	8%	9%
80+ years	5%	5%
Average Household Size	2.3	2.4
Median Age	39.6	42.8
Average Age	40.6	43.1

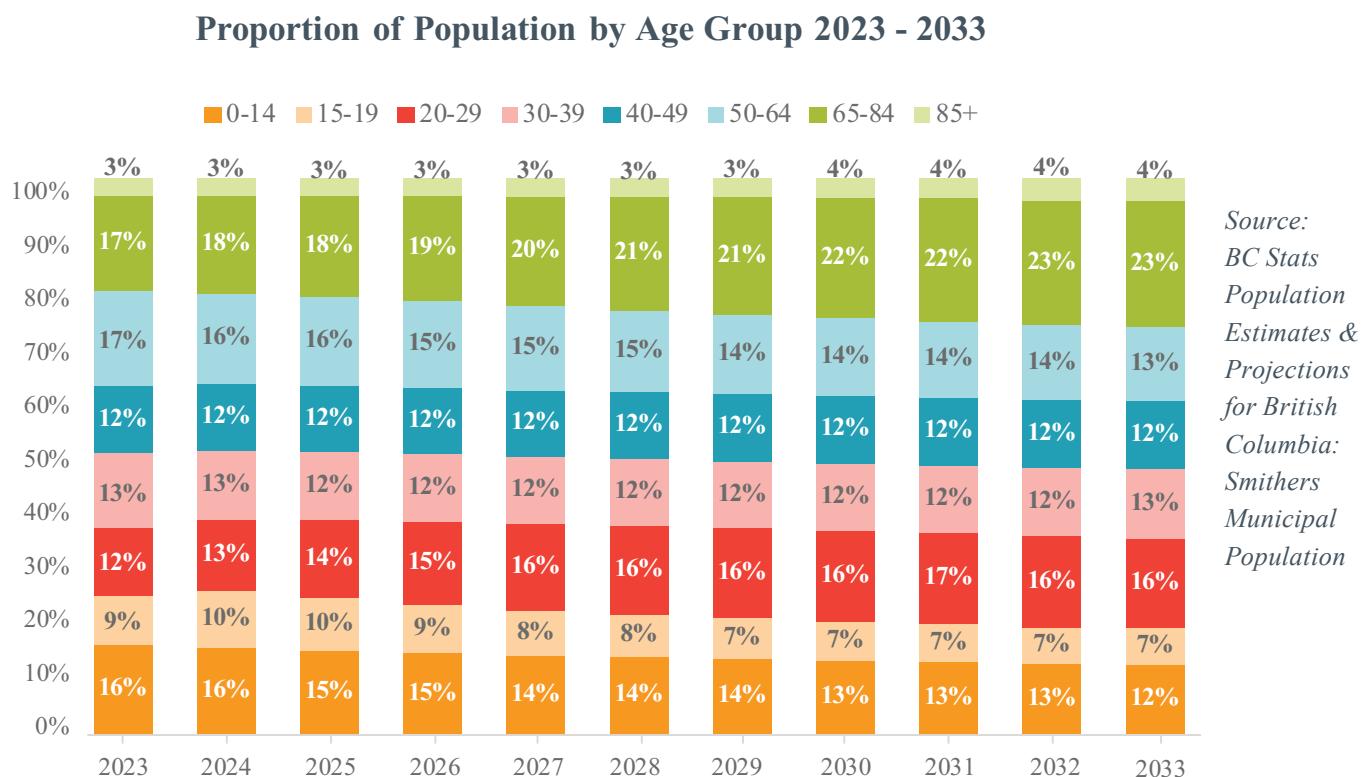
*Source Statistics Canada, Census 2021, 2023*

Using population projections sourced from BC Stats, over the next ten years the population in Smithers is expected to grow by 7%. **Figure 2.2.1.** shows the growth projected, and **Figure 2.2.2.** illustrates the age demographic proportion changes over the next ten years. The proportion of the population that is aged 65 - 84 years and 20 – 29 years is expected to increase as the population increases while the proportion of the population aged 50 – 64 and 15 – 19 is expected to decrease.

**Figure 2.2.1. Smithers Projected Population Growth 2023 -2033**



**Figure 2.2.2. Projected Age Proportions of the Smithers Population 2023 - 2033**

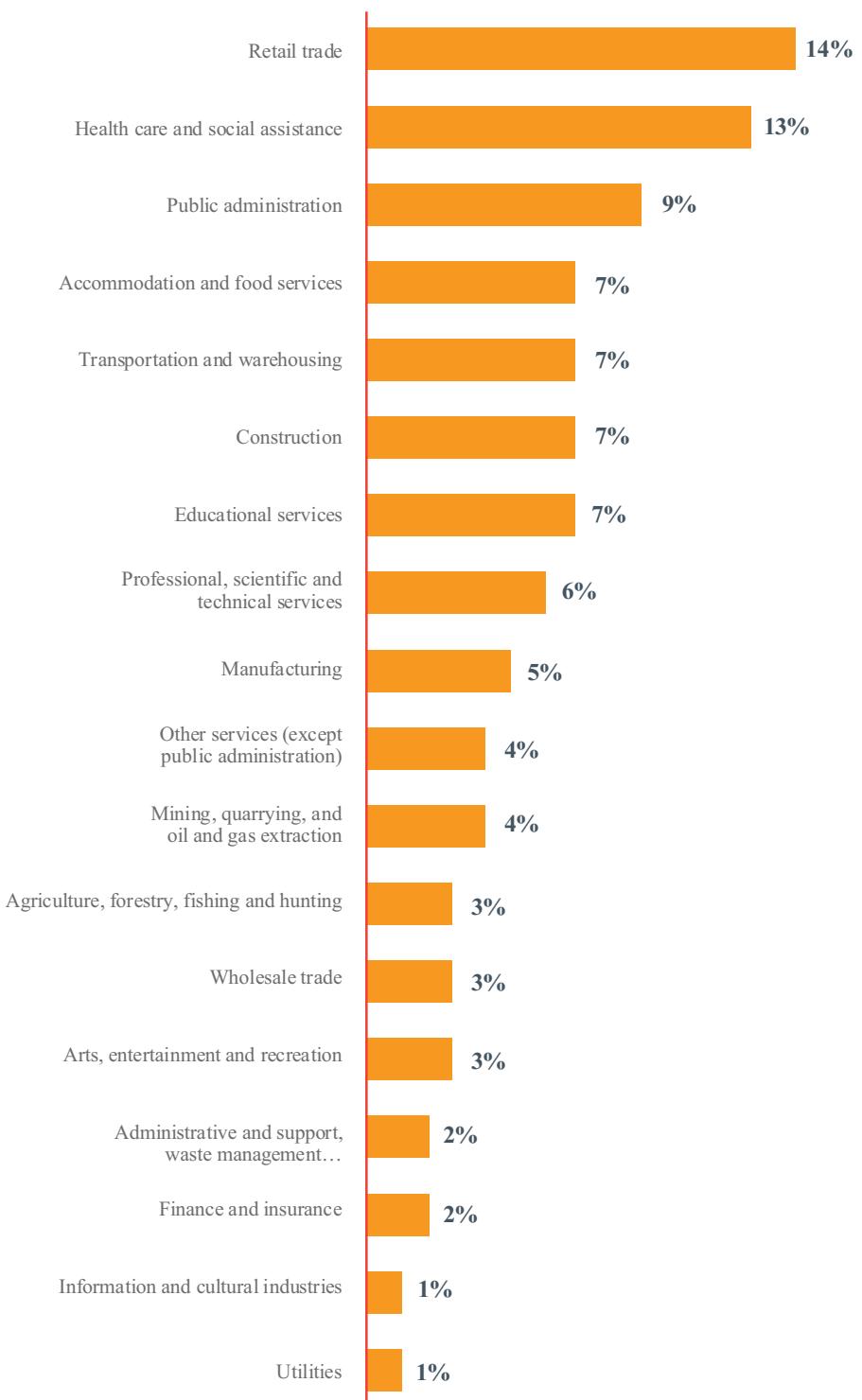


## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

According to Statistics Canada, the median annual household income in Smithers is \$75,000 after tax. The chart to the right illustrates the breakdown of the labour force by occupation type. Smithers's largest labour force is retail trade (14%), followed by health care and social assistance (13%), and public administration (9%). Approximately 2% of residents aged 18 – 64 years are considered low-income after tax in Smithers.

**Figure 2.2.3. Labour Force by Occupation Type (2021)**

**Labour Force by Occupation Type (2021)**



*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population*

## THE GINI COEFFICIENT

The Gini coefficient or Gini index is a measure of inequality that indicates how equally income is distributed for a given population. It measures how much an income distribution deviates from perfect equality. Values of the Gini coefficient can range from 0 to 1. A value of 0 indicates that income is equally divided among the population with all units receiving exactly the same amount of income. At the opposite extreme a Gini coefficient of 1 denotes a perfectly unequal distribution where one unit has all of the income in the economy.

**Smithers's Gini Index Score: 0.277**

**Terrace's Gini Index Score: 0.300**

**Kitimat's Gini Index Score: 0.305**

**New Hazelton's Gini Index Score: 0.318**

**British Columbia's Index Score: 0.346**

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population.*

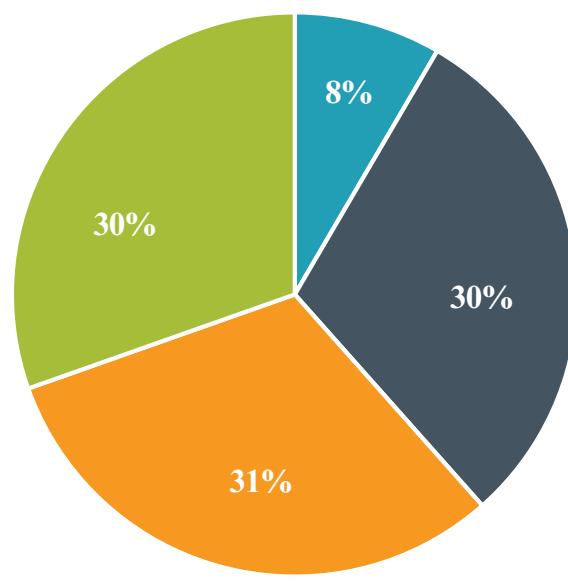
## EDUCATION

**Figure 2.2.4.** breaks down the highest level of education of the population aged 25 – 64 years. 61% of residents have some form of post-secondary education, 30% have high school or equivalent and 8% have no certificate, diploma, or degree.



**Figure 2.2.4. Highest Education Level**

### Highest Education Level (Population Aged 25 - 64)



■ No certificate, diploma or degree

■ High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate

■ Postsecondary certificate or diploma below bachelor level

■ Bachelor's degree or higher

*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population*

## HEALTH

The BC Community and Wellness Indicators Health Profile for Smithers provides data that can inform community health and planning conversations. The profile includes a number of valuable metrics which provides insight into key health and wellbeing characteristics of individuals in Smithers. Summarized as follows is pertinent information contained in the report.

- 67.6% of the adult population (18+) in Smithers have a strong sense of community belonging.
- 70.4% of the adult population (18+) in Smithers are physically active, however 28.7% also self reported binge drinking and 9.1% self reported smoking or vaping.
- 92.2% of the population of Smithers self reported as being in good general health, however nearly one-quarter identified as having poor mental health at the time of the survey.
- 25.5% of the adult population of Smithers self reported with poor general mental health.

## 2.3. ADDITIONAL “BIG DATA” INSIGHTS INTO PARKS AND RECREATION DEMANDS AND PREFERENCES IN SMITHERS

Market demand for parks and recreation services is strongly influenced by the lifestage of person(s) within a household as well as a variety of other demographic indicators and characteristics. The emergence of analytics tools and resources can help providers of many services (including parks, recreation and culture) better understand the dynamics of their community and how they translate into needs and wants for programming, facilities and events.

Envionics Analytics PRIZM is a segmentation system that classifies Canada’s neighbourhoods into 68 unique lifestyle types and incorporates data from over a dozen demographic, marketing, and media sources to analyze and understand consumers, customers, and markets. The segmentation summary for Smithers indicates that the three largest segments of the population are:

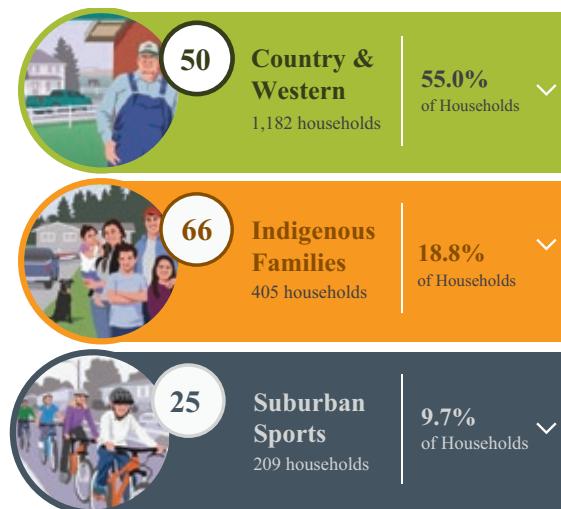
- “Country & Western” (55% of all households)
- “Indigenous Families” (18.8 % of all households)
- “Suburban Sports” (9.7% of all households)

### “Country & Western” Households

- This demographic mainly consists of older singles, and empty-nesting couples mostly aging in place.
- Most are homeowners, typically owning single detached homes.
- Many spend their leisure time swimming, hiking, golfing and working in the garden.
- This demographic is among the top segments for attending pro hockey games.

### “Indigenous Families” Households

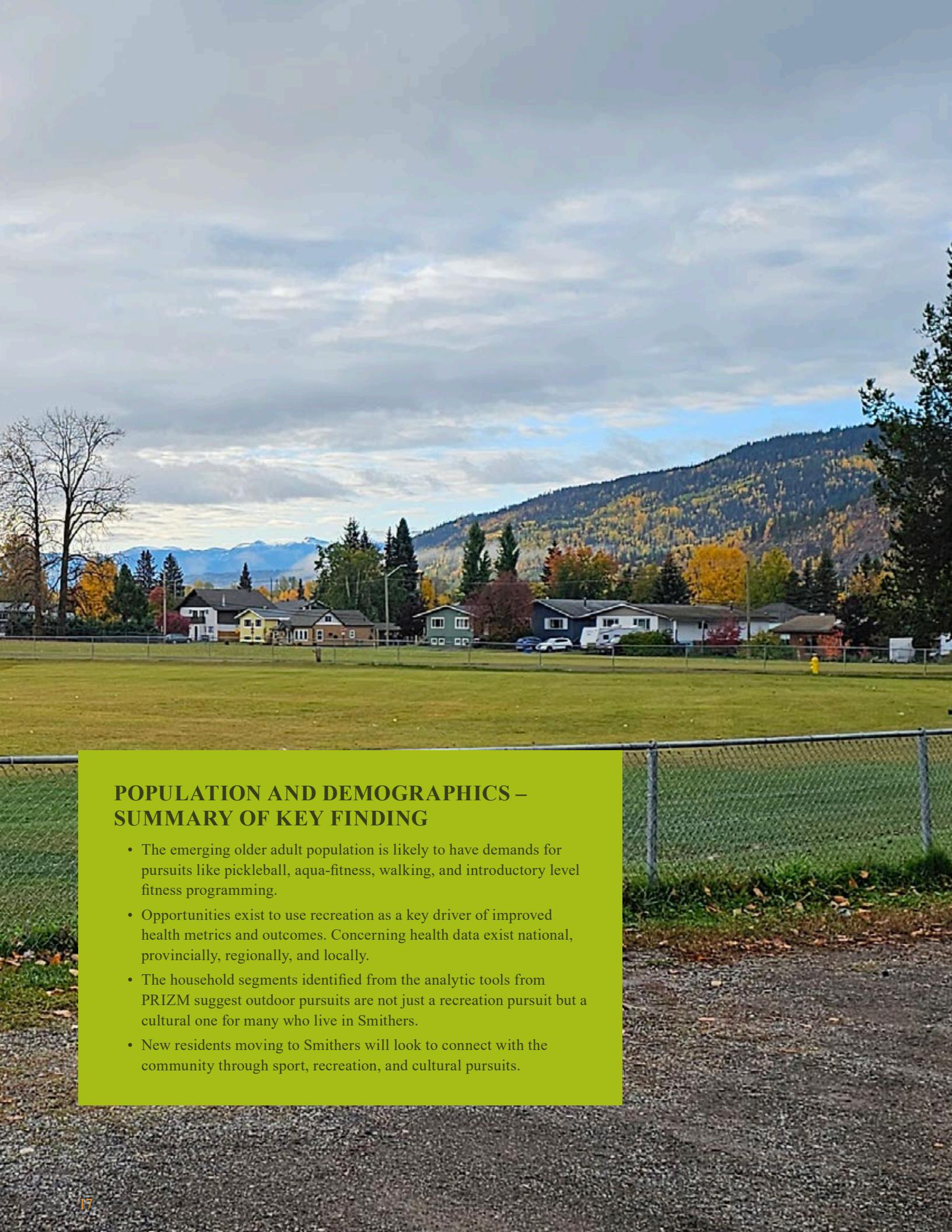
- This demographic tends to be younger and middle-aged families living in remote communities. There are three times the national average of multigenerational households within this demographic segment.
- They enjoy active lifestyles with hobbies such as fishing, hunting, power boating, and snowmobiling, as well as gardening and making crafts.
- Are willing to do their part to improve their communities through volunteer work and social activism.



### “Suburban Sports” Households

- The households are nearly evenly divided between couples and families, maintainers range from 35 to 64, and children are of all ages.
- Regular exercise and participation in sport and recreation pursuits are highly valued
- More likely to watch professional sports and have attachment to favourite teams
- Enjoy trips and vacations based around recreational pursuits (“the need to escape”)
- Favourite leisure activities: yoga / Pilates, golf, concerts, pubs / sports bars

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for the complete PRIZM segmentation profiles.



## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS – SUMMARY OF KEY FINDING

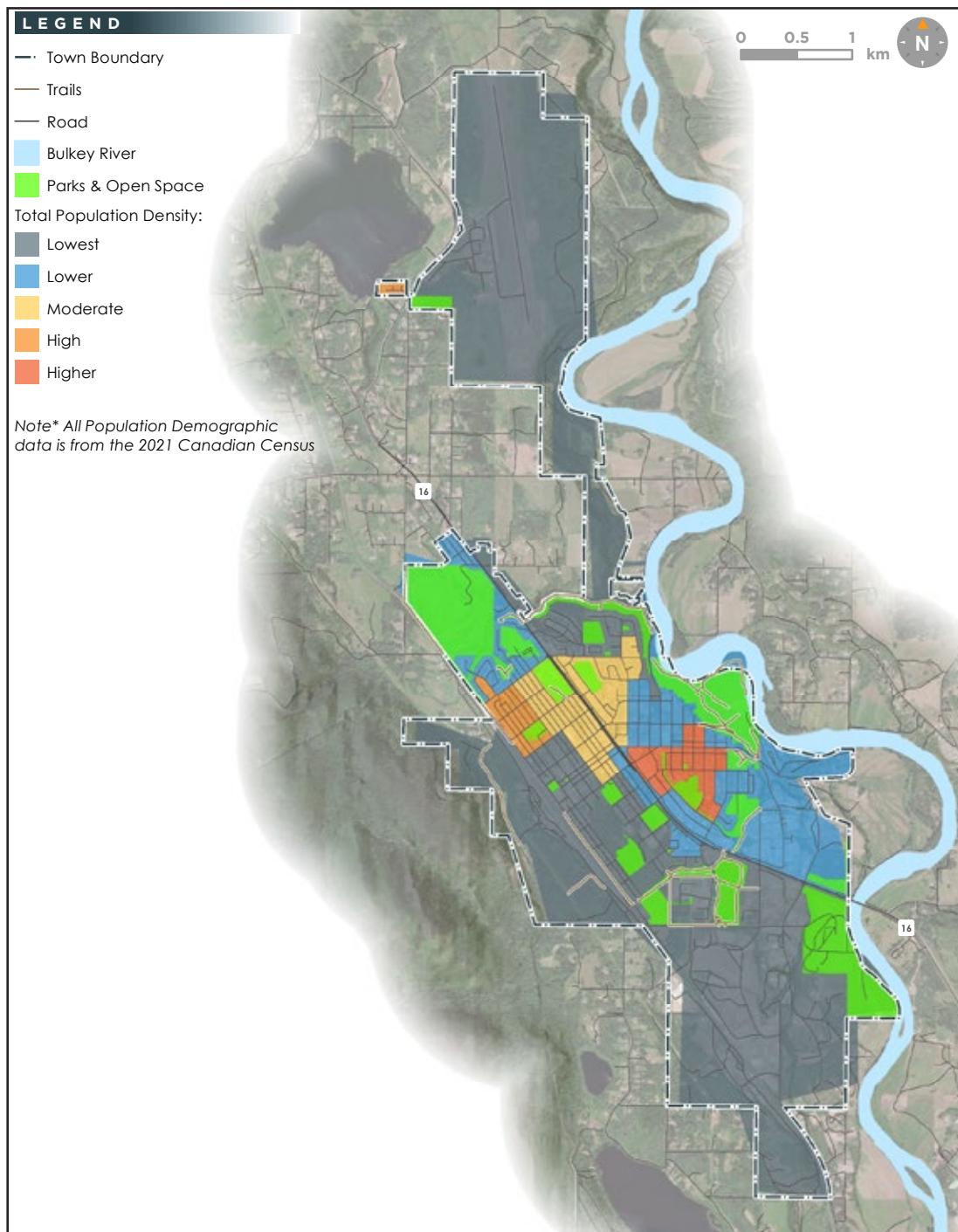
- The emerging older adult population is likely to have demands for pursuits like pickleball, aqua-fitness, walking, and introductory level fitness programming.
- Opportunities exist to use recreation as a key driver of improved health metrics and outcomes. Concerning health data exist national, provincially, regionally, and locally.
- The household segments identified from the analytic tools from PRIZM suggest outdoor pursuits are not just a recreation pursuit but a cultural one for many who live in Smithers.
- New residents moving to Smithers will look to connect with the community through sport, recreation, and cultural pursuits.

## 2.4. SPATIAL OVERVIEW OF THE POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

The following maps reflect spatial analysis undertaken by the project team to better understand how these spatial characteristics may impact parks, and recreation services and needs.

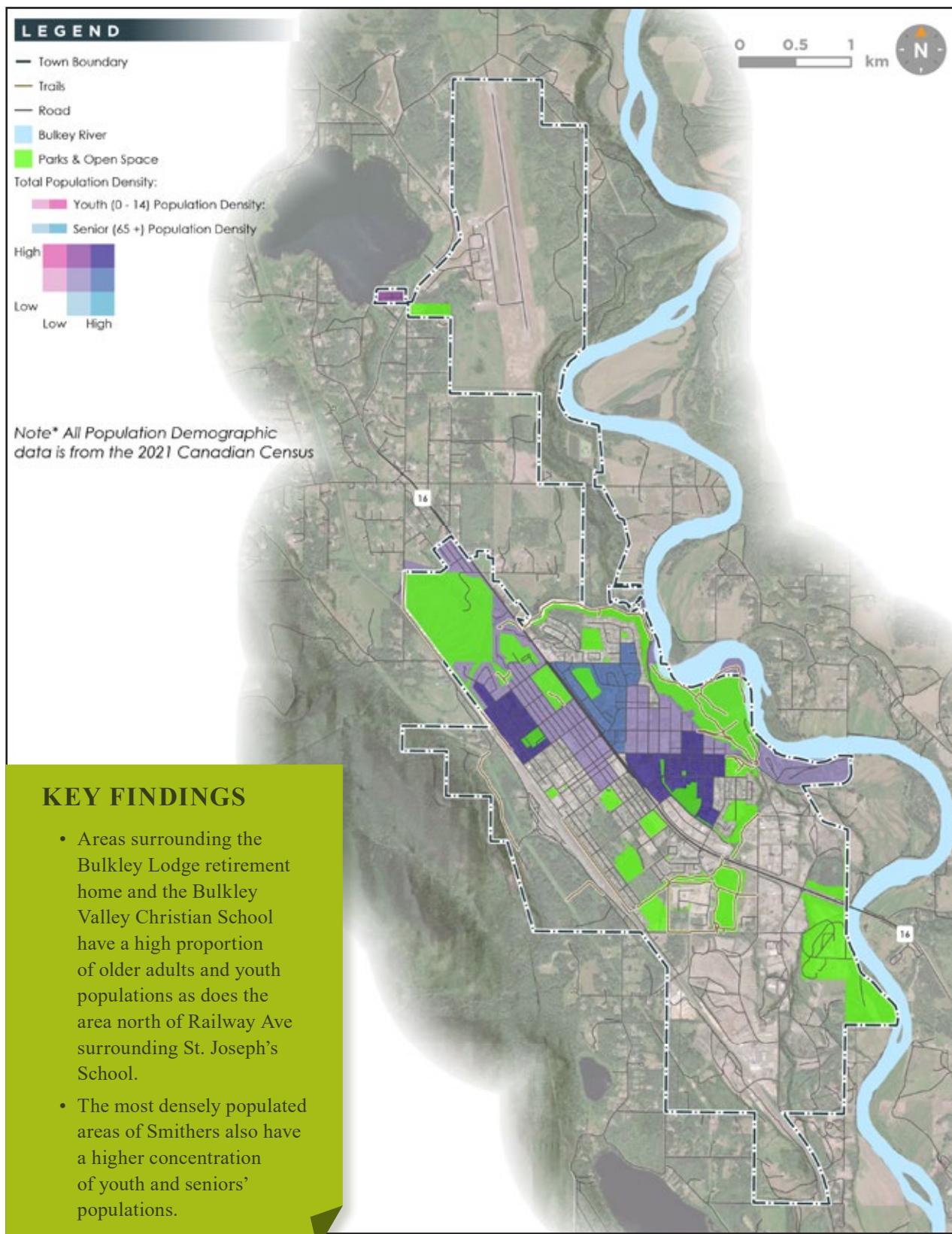
### POPULATION DENSITY MAP

This map reflects the areas of town that have the highest and lowest population density.



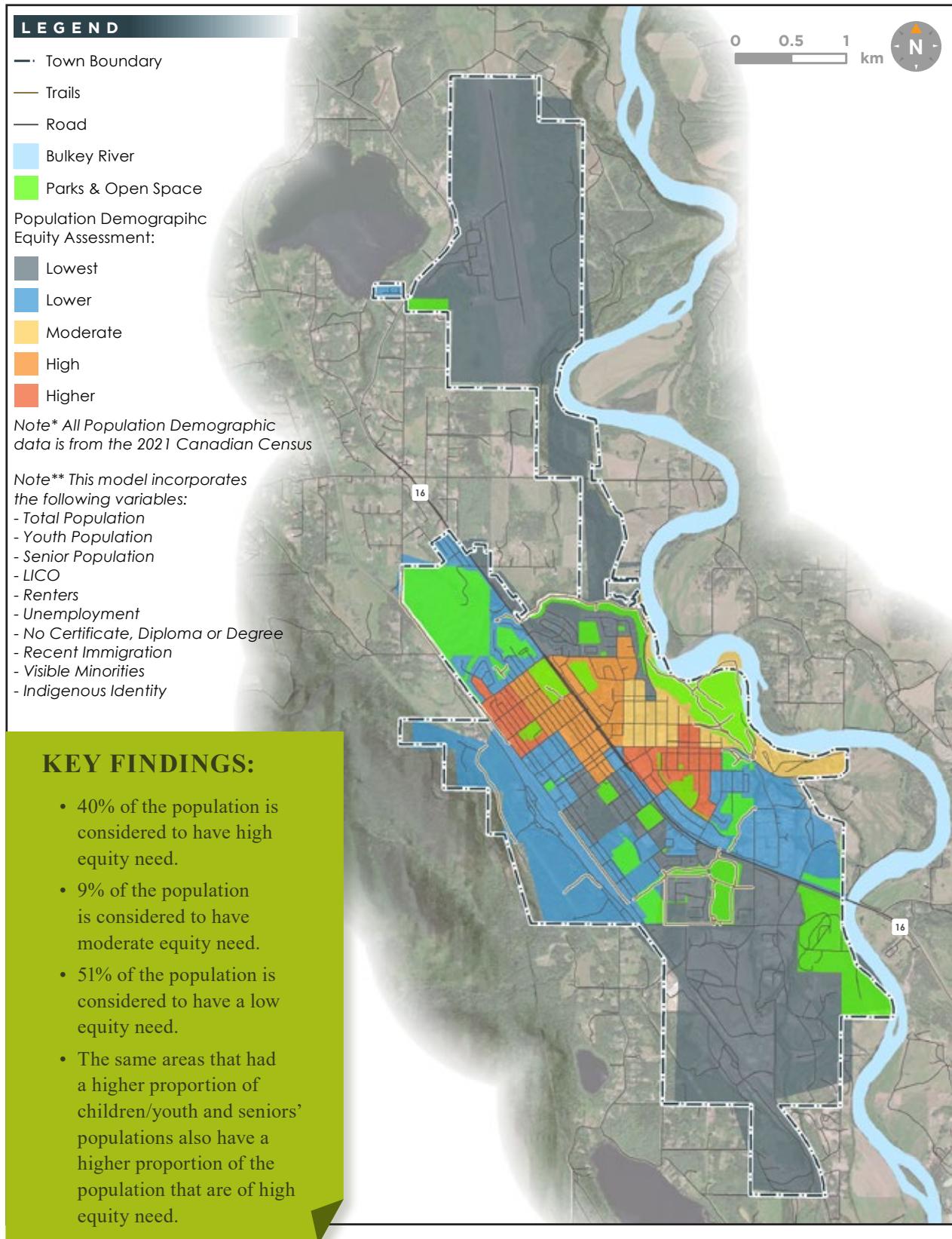
## CHILDREN / YOUTH AND OLDER ADULT BIVARIANT

This map helps reflect areas of the town with a lower proportion of children/ youth and higher proportion of older adults, lower proportion of older adults and higher proportion of children / youth, and areas that have relatively low or high proportions of both age cohorts.



## EQUITY ANALYSIS

Certain populations face social, health related, financial and systemic barriers to accessing some parks, recreation and culture opportunities. The Equity Analysis map utilizes 10 indicators to identify areas of Smither in which a higher proportion of residents may face multiple barriers to participation. The indicators are listed on the map.





### 3. THE CURRENT PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM IN SMITHERS

# 3.1. SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW

The Town of Smithers's Community Services Department is responsible for the provision of programs, services, and facilities focused on active living, healthy lifestyles and building community. There are three main approaches to parks, recreation, and culture service delivery that municipalities employ; direct delivery, indirect delivery and a mix of direct and indirect delivery. The Community Services Department mainly utilizes the indirect delivery approach by operating or supporting the operations of partner operated facilities that community organizations use for their programs.

Led by the Director of Community Services, the Recreation and Culture Coordinator, and the arena and parks operations staff support this model. The Town owns/ operates several key pieces of parks and recreation infrastructure in Smithers. [Section 3.2](#), Indoor Infrastructure, and [3.3](#), Outdoor Infrastructure provide a comprehensive list of facilities available, an overview of the Town facilities, their most recent condition assessment review and available information on utilization.

## SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS:

- Direct Delivery: The local government provides programming and other related activities at facilities that they operate.
- Indirect Delivery: The local government facilitates the provision of programming and related activities by operating facilities that are available for community organizations to book at a subsidized cost and/or providing funding support (e.g. supporting the operations of partner operated facilities, contracting third party entities to provide services, grants, etc.).
- Mix of Direct and Indirect Delivery: The local government directly offers some programming and other related activities to meet gaps and ensure equitable access, but also invests in recreation and culture through the indirect methods noted previously.



## BYLAWS, POLICIES, AND AGREEMENTS

The Town of Smithers has a number of bylaws, policies and agreements that further shape the delivery of parks and recreation services.

### 3.1.1 Overview of Key Bylaws, Policies, and Agreements

Document	Synopsis
Bylaw No. 1941: Fees and Charges - Schedule G- Recreation Fees and Charges	<p>The Bylaw establishes rental fees for regular, discounted and last-minute use of recreation amenities.</p> <p>Rates for Child, youth / senior / student, adult, and family</p>
Policy#: AMD- 024: Community Partnership	<p>The Community Partnership Policy is meant to clarify roles of the Town and community organization when projects are undertaken in partnership. In particular, it applies to projects undertaken by community organizations that result in infrastructure that is owned, managed and maintained over the long term by the Town.</p> <p>The policy provides a framework for community organizations to receive approval from Town and Council.</p>
Policy#: REC – 007: Ice Allocation Policy	This policy is in place to ensure fair and equitable distribution of ice time in the best interest of the community. The policy identifies priority of ice booking, primary and secondary user groups, and procedures for booking, invoicing, dispute resolution, and other requirements. This policy was last updated in 2020.

The Town has several lease agreements in place with organization to enable them to deliver their programs and services. These include the following:

#### Bulkley Valley Archery Range:

- Bulkley Valley Bowmen Association
  - July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2024

#### Ranger Park Building

- Bulkley Valley Collaborative Learning Society (Ranger Park Building)
  - Sept 1, 2019 to August 31, 2024
- Bulkley Valley Search & Rescue Society (Ranger Park Building)
  - September 15, 2005 to September 14, 2025

#### Smithers Fairgrounds

- Fall Fair Management Agreement – Bulkley Valley Agricultural and Industrial Association
  - April 23, 2014 to April 22, 2039
- Northern Saddle Club
  - September 7, 2015 to September 6, 2040
- Bulkley Valley Folk Music Society
  - September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2026



### **Central Park Building**

- Central Park Building Society
  - May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2025
- Chamber of Commerce
  - April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2028
- Smithers Gallery Association
  - February 14, 2018 to February 13, 2023

### **Tourism & Visitor Information Centre**

- Chamber of Commerce
  - April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2028

### **Smithers Curling Centre**

- Curling Club
  - October 17, 2018 to October 16, 2043

### **Gymnastics Centre**

- Northern Edge Sport Association (formerly Bulkley Valley Gymnastics Association)
  - May 1, 2020 to April 30, 2035

### **Chandler Park**

- Bulkley Valley Soccer Society
  - April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026

### **Elk Park**

- Northern Root Community Garden
  - May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2030
- Smithers Junior Softball Society (Elks Park Softball Diamond)
  - July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2025
- Smithers Mountain Bike Association – Lease of Bike Park
  - May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025

### **Civic Centre & New Arena**

- Smithers Minor Hockey - Civic Centre meeting room
  - February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2028
- Smithers Steelheads Hockey – Lease
  - July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2024
- School District #54 & Town of Smithers - Ice Arena Use Agreement
  - September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2024

### **Joint Use Agreement**

Joint use agreements typically provide direction and guidance around use of school facilities for public recreation, as well as outlines fees and usage of public recreation facilities for school programming. Currently there is one approved joint use agreement:

- Joint use agreements with Bulkley Valley Christian School:
  - Oct 9, 2018 to Oct 8, 2023

Fees for school use are identified in the Fees and Charges Bylaw.

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

A high-level analysis of the Town of Smithers 2022-2026 Operating Budget (adopted April 26, 2022) was undertaken. For the 2023 budget, recreation, parks and culture comprises 9.7% of the Town's total expenses. Revenues collected from recreation, parks and culture (e.g. arenas and other recreation facilities/ parks spaces) was not subdivided in the report.

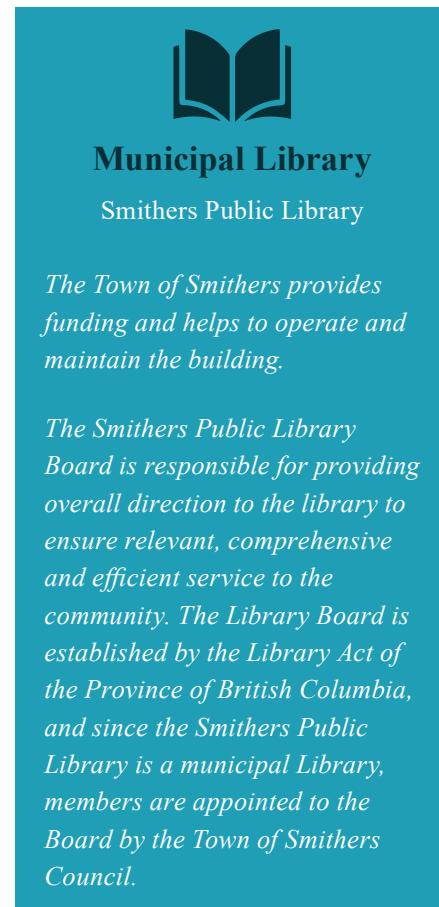
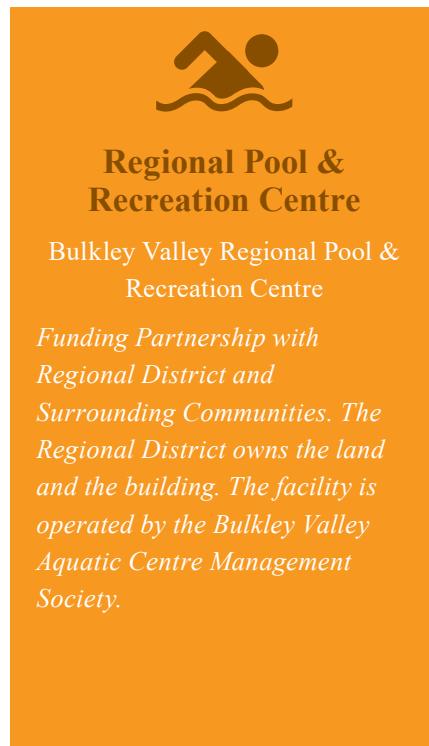
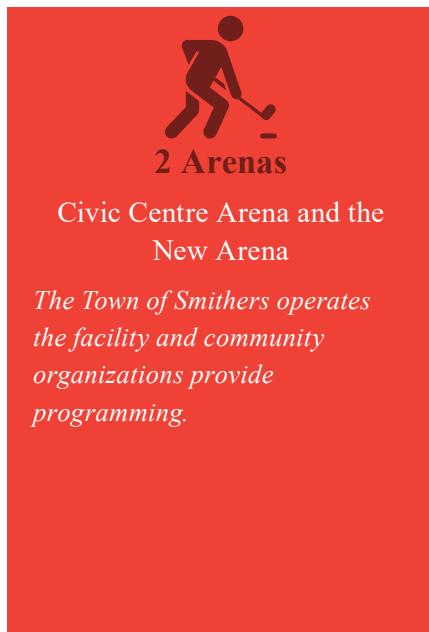
### 3.1.2. Overview of the Town's Investment in Recreation and Culture

Total Town Expenses 2023	\$ 22,246,062
Total Recreation, Parks and Culture Expenses	\$ 2,152,093
Total Regional Library	\$ 284,199
Proportion of Town's expenses	\$ 9.7%

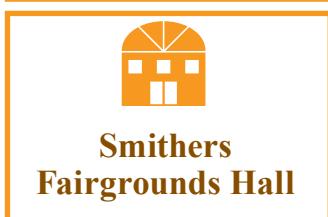
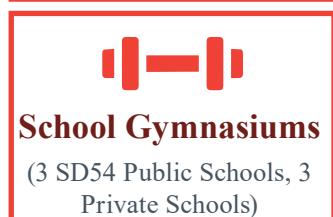
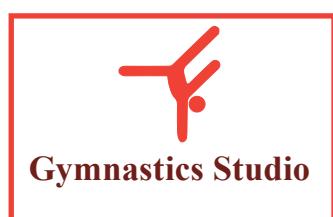


## 3.2. INDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

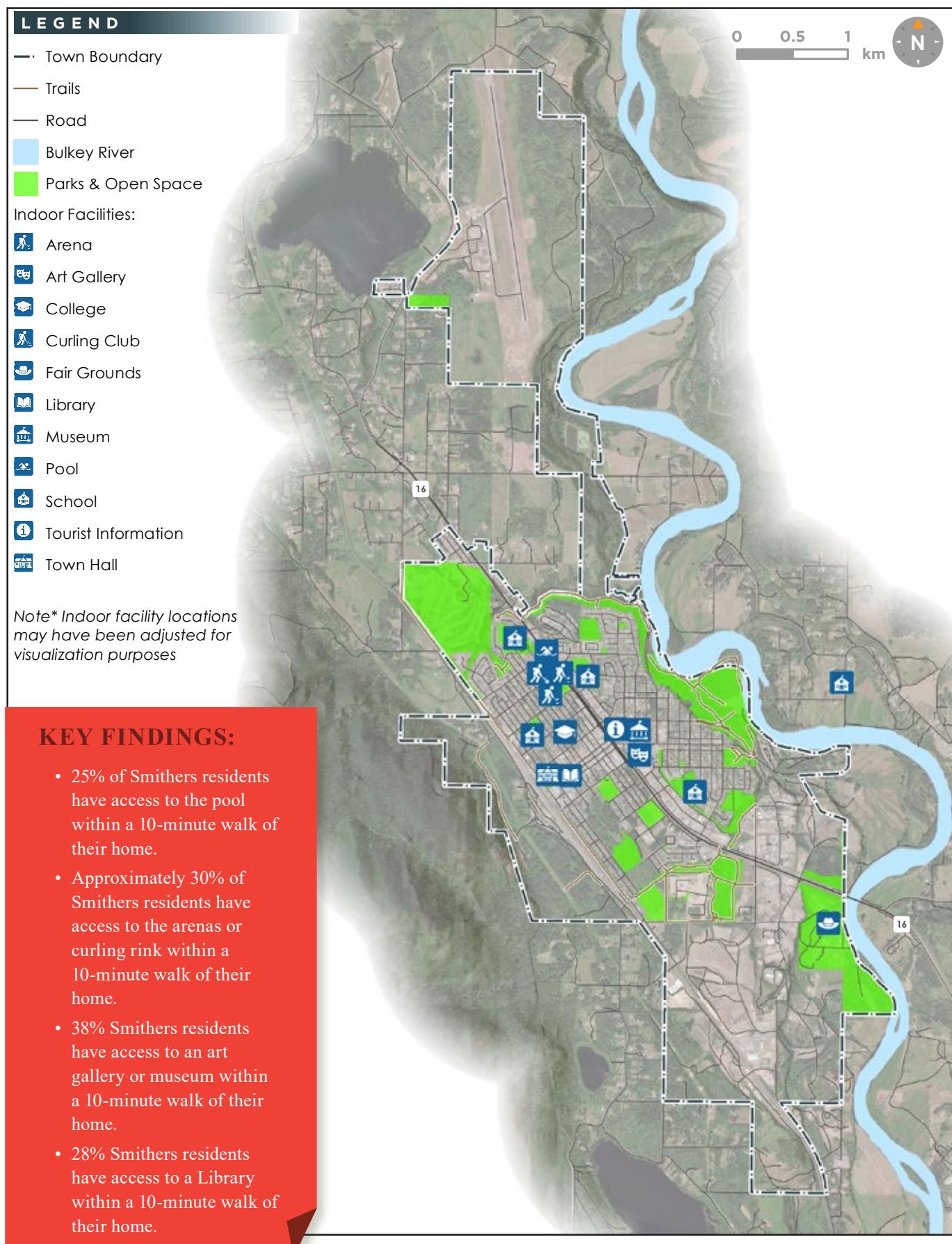
As illustrated below, the Town operates two arenas, supports the operation of the Regional Pool & Recreation Centre through a funding partnership, and provides funding and direction to the municipal library.



The following facilities are not directly provided by the Town but may receive some funding and other forms of support from the Town in the form of promotion, grant funding, and /or collaborations as appropriate. The land or the facility itself may be owned by the Town but are operated or managed through agreements noted on [page 23-24](#).



## INDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE MAP



# ARENAS

## OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Civic Centre Arena (Old Arena)	New Arena
4204 3 Ave, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0 	4202 3 Ave, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0 
Photo: <a href="#">Smither.ca</a>	Photo: <a href="#">Smither.ca</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Capacity:</b> 800 people</li><li>• <b>Types of Uses:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Ice Arena (September – April)</li><li>◦ Dry Floor Use (May – August)</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Capacity:</b> 350 people</li><li>• <b>Types of Uses:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Ice Arena (September – April)</li><li>◦ Walking track (September – April)</li><li>◦ Dry Floor Use (May – August)</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Arena Operations</b>	
The Town of Smithers operates and maintains the two arena facilities.	
<b>Agreements in Place</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smithers Figure Skating Club – Advertising Agreement<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ March 12, 2019 to December 31, 2023</li></ul></li><li>• Smithers Minor Hockey Association - Arena Boards Advertising Agreement<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ March 12, 2019 to December 31, 2023</li></ul></li><li>• Smithers Minor Hockey - Civic Centre meeting room<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2028</li></ul></li><li>• Smithers Steelheads Hockey<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2024</li></ul></li><li>• School District #54 &amp; Town of Smithers - Ice Arena Use Agreement<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2024</li></ul></li></ul>	

## INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW KEY FINDINGS

FaulknerBrowns Architects visited Smithers, B.C. in August 2023, for a site review and high-level condition assessment of the arenas in Smithers (Civic Centre and New Arena). The following table provides the key findings and considerations from their visit. [Appendix B](#) provides the full site review report. A building condition assessment was completed on the Civic Centre Arena by SPG Sustainable Projects Group in November of 2021, key findings from that report are noted in the site review completed by FaulknerBrowns.

**Table 3.2.1 Arena Reviews Overview**

Facility	Year Built	Key Findings/ Considerations
<b>Civic Centre</b> (single sheet of ice and 800 spectator seats)	1959 (Constructed as aircraft hangar in 1949, relocated and repurposed in 1959)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of its significant spectator seating capacity, the Civic Centre acts as the primary event arena for major hockey tournaments and competitive events.</li> <li>• The facility presents many accessibility challenges (changes in elevation, public washroom access, spectator seating access, ice access).</li> <li>• Based on the previous conditions assessment report, most building components assessed are recommended to be replaced within the next 5-10 years.</li> <li>• Suggested improvements: insulation at exterior walls and roof, HVAC improvements, new spectator seats, accessibility improvements (dedicated elevated wheelchair seating, accessible changeroom features, barrier-free rink access, re-configuration to provide level/barrier-free access to public and staff spaces)</li> <li>• Structural and envelope condition assessments are recommended.</li> </ul>
<b>New Arena</b> (large lobby, single sheet of ice and 350 spectator seats)	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although it offers an NHL-sized ice pad, the arena does not offer sufficient spectator seating required to host significant tournaments.</li> <li>• A new facility, minimal planned upgrades include LED lighting replacement.</li> <li>• Suggested improvements: Improved drainage at facility entrance, dedicated elevated wheelchair seating, accessible changeroom features, barrier-free rink access.</li> </ul>



## FACILITY UTILIZATION

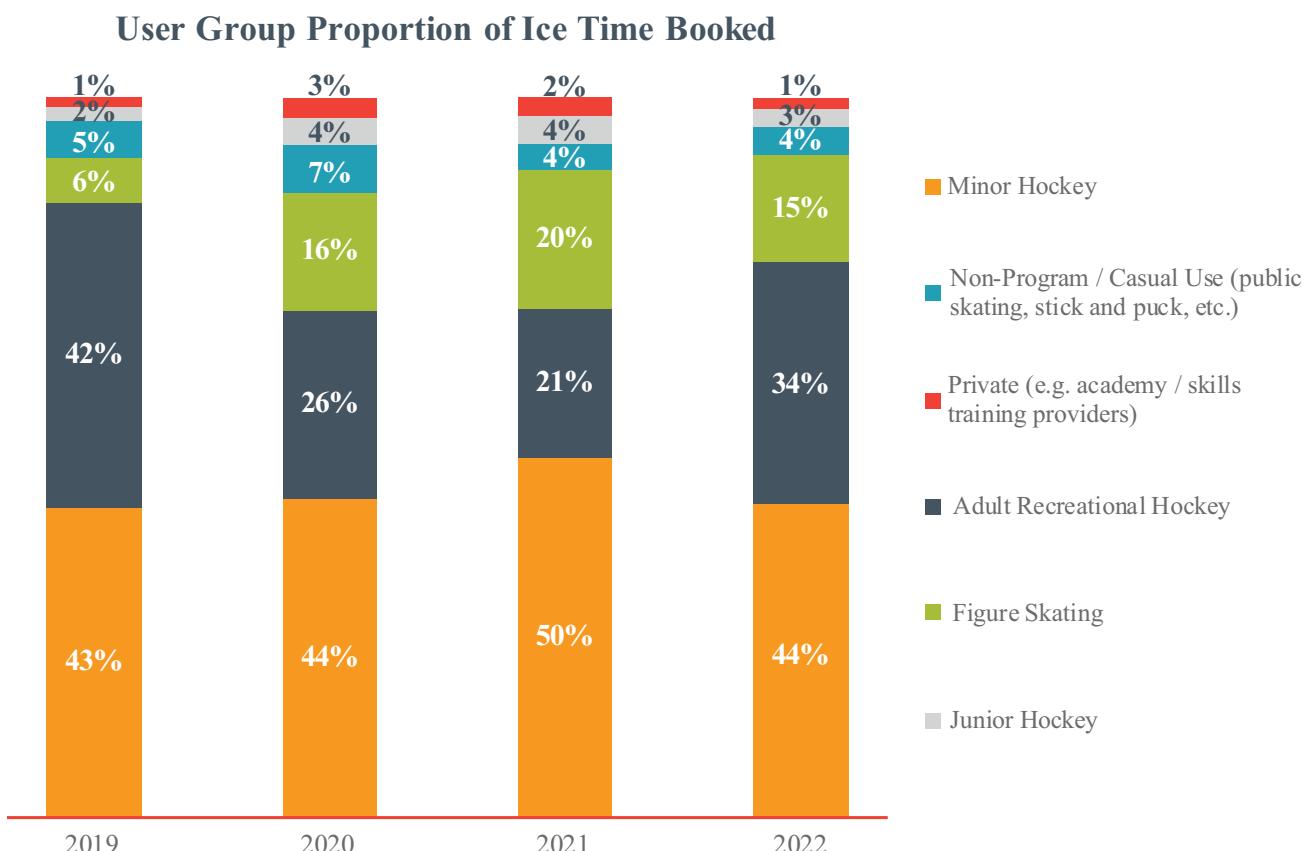
To best understand how well utilized an arena facility is, an analysis of prime ice time used is completed. Prime ice time is considered the most optimal time to use the ice, and is known to be weekdays from 4:00 PM – 11:30 PM and all day on the weekends. **Table 3.2.2.** indicates the number of hours booked during prime, the hours available during prime and the percentage that ice is booked during prime in Smithers. The total booked hours in the arenas is also provided, along with the percentage booked of the total ice capacity. About half of prime capacity was booked in 2022 (52%), the booked hours during prime in 2022 are almost the same as hours booked during prime prior to the COVID 19 pandemic in 2019.

**Table 3.2.2. Ice Bookings in Smithers 2019 – 2022 and Percentage Booked of Prime Capacity**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Prime Hours Booked	1,461	1,053	890	1,453
Total Hours Booked	2,142	1,716	1,510	2,138
Sheets of Ice	2	2	2	2
Prime Capacity	2,795	2,795	2,096	2,795
Total Capacity	4,998	4,427	3,749	4,427
% Booked of Prime Capacity	52%	38%	42%	52%
% Booked of Total Capacity	43%	39%	40%	48%

The proportion of ice time booked by different user group types is provided in **Figure 3.2.3.** From 2019 – 2022, minor hockey books the most ice time, followed by adult recreational hockey and figure skating.

**Figure 3.2.3. Proportion of Ice Time Booked by User Group 2019 - 2022**





## KEY FINDINGS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The Civic Centre presents many accessibility challenges often found in facilities of a similar era (changes in elevation, public washroom access, spectator seating access, ice access). Although the facility does not meet many of the requirements of a modern ice arena and the building structure, is in noted fair condition and the community relies on this facility for major events and tournaments.
- While the New Arena is the newest ice arena in the Town of Smithers, the New Arena is considered 'a second sheet of ice' due to its limitations in hosting competitive events.
- The booking data provided suggests that there is sufficient capacity within the current inventory for the foreseeable future.
- The arenas are next door to each other and co-located with the curling facility and the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool and Recreation Centre.

# BULKLEY VALLEY REGIONAL POOL & RECREATION CENTRE

## OVERVIEW & FACILITY DESCRIPTION

### Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre

1316 Toronto St, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0



Photo Source: BV Aquatic Centre Management Society AGM document, 2022

#### **Facility Features:**

- **Pool:**
  - 25-meter 4 lane lap pool
  - Leisure lagoon with spray feature
  - Tot pool
  - 25-person hot tub
  - 3 family changerooms
  - Standard male and female changerooms

#### **• Fitness Centre:**

- Cardio machines
- Free weights
- Training equipment

#### **• Climbing Wall**

- 22-foot-high climbing wall
- Bouldering cave

#### **• 2 Convertible Squash/racquetball Courts**

#### **Facility Operations:**

The Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre is a not-for-profit facility that is operated under the direction of the Bulkley Valley Aquatic Centre Management Society's Board of Directors.

The Society and Staff operate the building under an agreement with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who owns the building and the land. An annual tax grant is provided from the Town of Smithers, Village of Telkwa and Rural Area "A" and is distributed through the Regional District. This tax grant provides approximately 65% of the operation budget, and the rest is generated from user pay services and programs<sup>iv</sup>.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW KEY FINDINGS**

FaulknerBrowns Architects visited Smithers, B.C. in August 2023, for a site review and high-level condition assessment of key facilities in Smithers, the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre was one of those facilities. The following table provides the key findings and considerations from their visit. Appendix A provides the full site review report. In the spring 2021, the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre (BV Pool or Bulkley Valley Pool) retained Carscadden Stokes McDonald Architects and GDH Solutions to build on earlier studies and reviews – including Facility Energy and Life Cycle Assessments – with a review of the facility’s current programs, services, physical premises. This review resulting in the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool & Recreation Centre Facility Function and Program Review Report. Some key findings from this report were noted in the site review report.

**Table 3.2.3 Pool Review Overview**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Key Findings/ Considerations</b>
<b>Bulkley Valley Regional Pool &amp; Recreation Centre</b> (pool, small fitness space, squash courts and climbing gym)	1991, Expansion in 2001, Hot tub replaced in 2006/2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ongoing/upcoming facility and maintenance projects include pool filter replacements.</li><li>• Funding has been granted for planned improvements to administration and lobby area, a larger boot room, large fitness/multipurpose room and private staff office.</li><li>• Given the age of the original facility, a physical condition assessment is recommended.</li><li>• Suggested improvements: Improved access to the fitness room; review options for heat recovery from adjacent arenas; improve ramp access from changeroom to pool deck; universal washroom near lobby.</li></ul>



Photo: [www.facebook.com/bvpool](http://www.facebook.com/bvpool)

## FACILITY UTILIZATION

When an individual pays for admission for the pool, they are also granted admission to the fitness centre, the visits are tracked together. When individuals pay for admission into the courts or climbing wall they have also have access to the pool and fitness centre but they aren't tracked as admission to the pool/ fitness centre. The total swim visits presented in **Table 3.2.4.** is an approximation; the number of climbers/ court users that also use the pool is unknown and the number of pool/ fitness users that only use the fitness centre and not the pool is also not known. The full facility attendance was used for annual swim visits.

**Table 3.2.4. Annual Swim Visits at the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool and Recreation Centre**

Bulkley Valley Regional Pool and Recreation Centre	2019	2020**	2021**	2022***
Annual Total Swim Visits	52,993	16,637	31,414	37,972
Town of Smithers, Village of Telkwa & Electoral Area A Population*	7,581	7,581	7,688	7,688
Annual Swim Visits Per Capita	7	2.2	4.1	4.9

\*Population data sourced from 2016 & 2021 Census of Population from Statistics Canada

\*\*During 2020- 2021 the facility was impacted public health measures that reduced the number of hours available and people permitted in the facility.

\*\*\* During 2022 the facility was short staffed and as result reduced their hours/ availability compared to 2019.

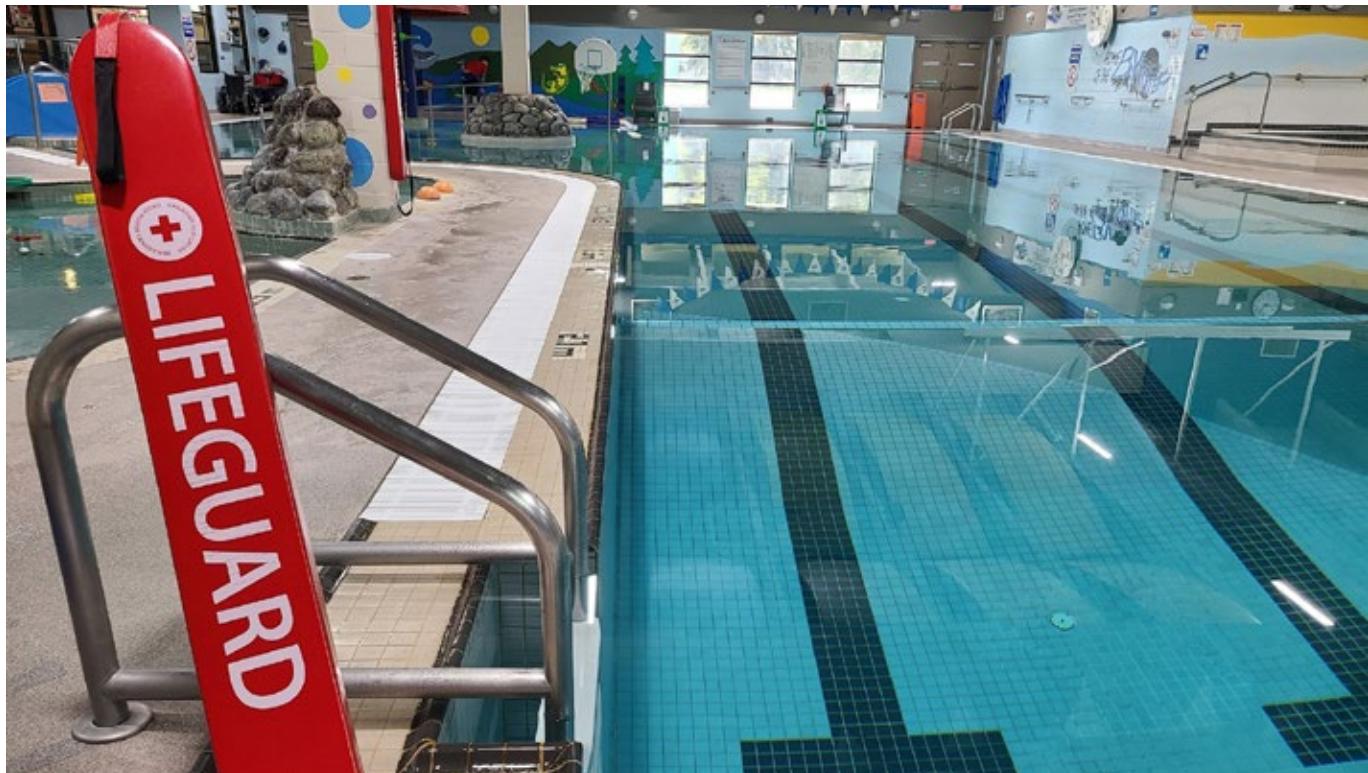
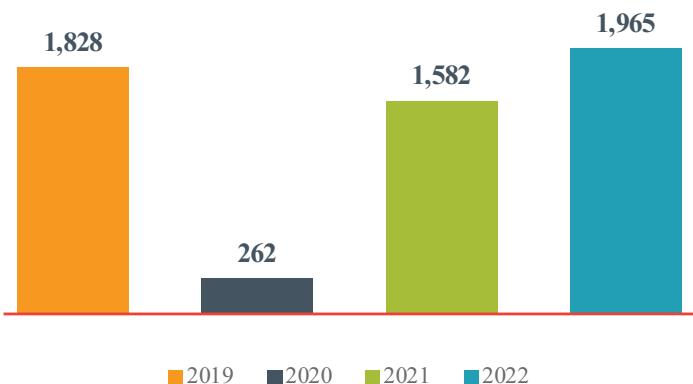


Photo: [www.facebook.com/bvpool](http://www.facebook.com/bvpool)

**Figure 3.2.2.** Swim Lessons Provided 2019 – 2022 illustrates the number of swim lessons provided from 2019 – 2022. More swim lessons were provided in 2022 compared to 2019, however the facility is likely still dealing with a backlog and increased demand for lessons due to the reduction during the 2020 – 2021 timeframe.

**Figure 3.2.2. Swim Lessons Provided 2019 - 2022**



## KEY FINDINGS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The Bukley Valley Pool and Recreation Centre meets basic recreation requirements for the Town of Smithers. However, the desire to increase the facility function and improve community access has been explored in the 2022 BV Regional Pool and Recreation Center Carscadden Facility Function and Program Report 2022.
- Annual swim visits have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic but have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Because the facility reduced its hours in 2022, it's difficult to ascertain how much that has impacted annual swim visits compared to other factors that may influence swim visits.
- Although the number of swim lessons has increased from 2019, it has not increased proportionally to accommodate the backlog, there will likely be a higher number of lesson participants until the backlog has been resolved and there may be less spontaneous swim visits because parents and participants may feel less confident using the pool without having had a lesson.
- The facility serves a regional population, it is located within Smithers but is meant to provide services to populations that may live more than 30 minutes away. The actual population that this facility reasonably services may be lower or higher than the Statistics Canada population estimates used for annual swim visits.
- Facility is co-located with the two arenas and curling facility.

# SMITHERS PUBLIC LIBRARY

## OVERVIEW & FACILITY DESCRIPTION

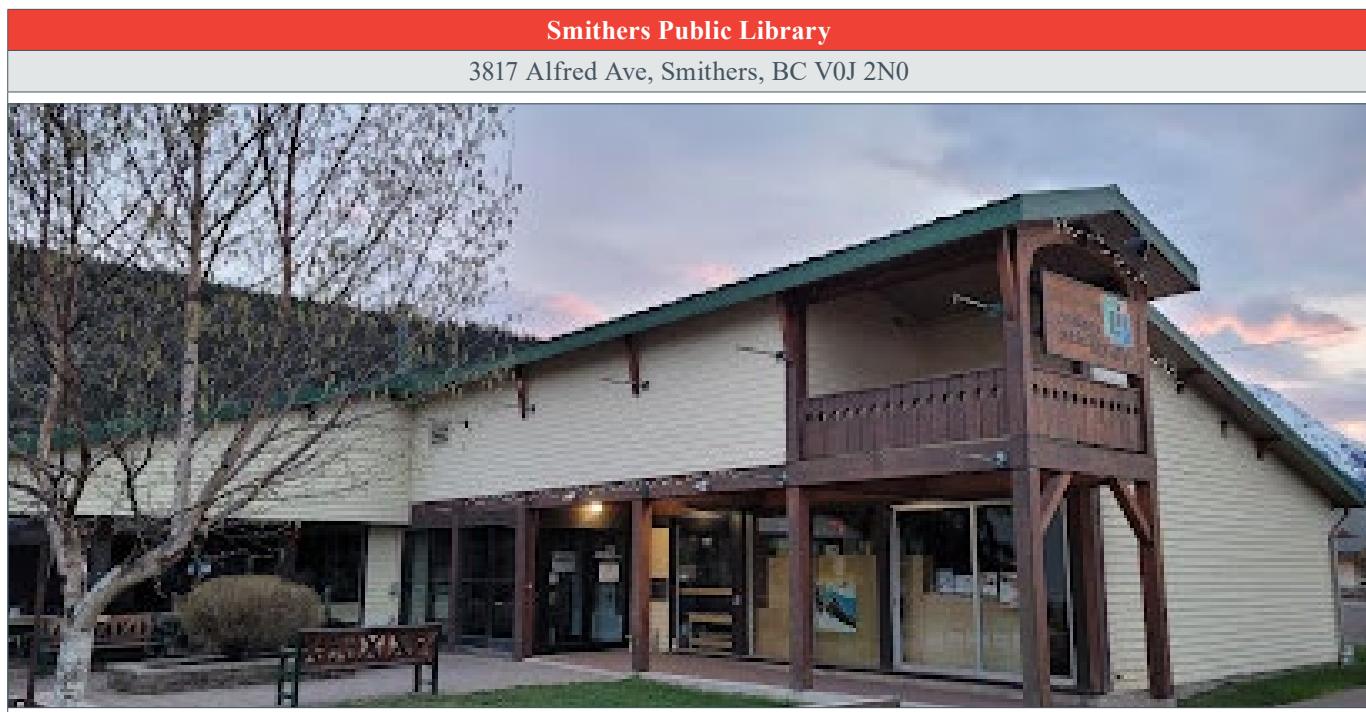


Photo source: [google.ca](#)

### Facility Features

- Open floor plan
- More secluded children's area next to the washrooms
- Small staff area behind the desk
- 3,600 square foot facility

### Library Operations

The Smithers Public Library operates according to the Library Act of British Columbia. The Smithers Public Library is governed by a Library Board constituted according to the terms of the Library Act of British Columbia. The Smithers Public Library Board is composed of a designate from Smithers' Town Council and up to eight additional members selected and appointed by the Town Council<sup>v</sup>.

## INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW KEY FINDINGS

FaulknerBrowns Architects visited Smithers, B.C. in August 2023, for a site review and high-level condition assessment of key facilities in Smithers, the Smithers Public Library was one of those facilities. The following table provides the key findings and considerations from their visit. Appendix A provides the full site review report.

**Table 3.2.5 Smithers Public Library Review Overview**

Facility	Year Built	Key Findings/ Considerations
Smithers Public Library	1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A well-used and loved community amenity, the facility is at capacity. Its current size poses challenge to hosting events and expanding library programs. To meet community needs, the library requires expanded area that will allow for greater program variety, study and learning spaces, and hosting of group events, typical of contemporary library environments.</li> <li>• Basic accessibility provisions are provided through out.</li> <li>• Given the age of the original facility, a physical condition assessment is recommended.</li> </ul>

## FACILITY UTILIZATION

All the services and programs at the Smithers Public Library are free or low cost. **Table 3.2.6.** provides the usage data from 2019 – 2022. The library saw an increase in use of their computers/ wifi, and program participation from 2019 to 2022. The circulation and number of memberships issued has increased since the drop in 2020 and 2021.

**Table 3.2.6. Smithers Public Library Use Data**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	Trend Line
Circulation (items borrowed)	110,510	75,479	86,839	99,251	
Computer / Wifi Use (# of uses)	16,552	6,101	Not Provided	22,963	
Membership (new members)	437	62	413	413	
Programs/ Outreach Offered	126	114	192	192	
Program Participation	4,653	4,561	8,308	8,330	

## KEY FINDINGS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The Library is a well used facility that serves a wide variety of user types and ages. They offer services from educational initiatives for seniors who may be computer illiterate, to reading programs for children and youth, to simply offering a safe space to relax and read a book or browse the internet.
- A large number of visits emanates from individuals wanting to use the computer or wifi/ internet access.
- Participation in programming and computer/wifi use at the library are higher than they were pre-pandemic. The library staff have indicated that they are unable to grow their programs or offerings due to space restrictions.
- The library's current size poses challenge to hosting events and expanding library programs. To meet community needs, the library may require an expanded area.



### 3.3. OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Town manages many outdoor amenities and parks spaces, the infographic below illustrates the types of the amenities that residents and visitors to Smithers are able to enjoy. Similar to the indoor infrastructure, the Town works with community groups and local schools to ensure members of the community have access to a variety of outdoor infrastructure. The map on [page 40](#) provides a spatial overview of where the facilities and amenities are located.

#### MUNICIPALLY PROVIDED OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

1 Skate Park (Heritage Park)



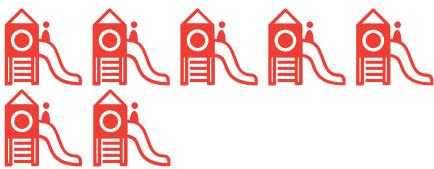
1 Municipal Campground (Riverside Campground)



1 Off Leash Dog Park (Heritage Park)



7 Playgrounds



1 Outdoor Stage (Bovill Square)



6 Ball Diamonds (5 at Elks Park, 1 at Heritage Park)



1 Disc Golf Course (Ranger Park)



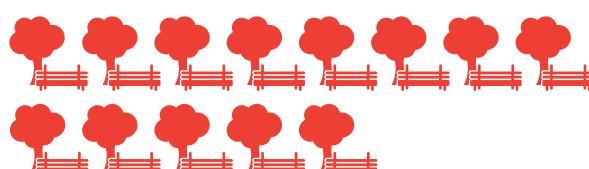
2 Tennis Courts (Montreal Tennis Courts)



1 Outdoor Rink (Central Park)



13 Parks



4 Rectangular Fields (3 at Chandler Park, 1 at Heritage Park)



2 Basketball Courts (1 net available at Dogwood and Rangers Park)



## OTHER OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

1 Bike Park (Located at Elk Park- Leased by Smithers Mountain Biking Association until April 2025)



1 Track (Smithers School)



1 Community Garden (Northern Root Community Garden located in Elks Park, agreement in place for use of the space until April 30, 2030)



3 School Playgrounds



1 Golf Course (Smithers Golf & Country Club)



4 Sport Courts (School Courts)



1 Fairgrounds (Smithers Fairgrounds is owned by the Town but operated by the Fall Fair Management Committee )



6 Multi-Use Fields (School Fields)



## RESIDENT ACCESS TO KEY OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

 57%

of Smithers residents have access to a park with a playground within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

 36%

of residents have access to a sport field within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

 7%

of residents have access to a ball diamond within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

 38%

of residents have access to a tennis court within a **5-minute** walk of their home.

 84%

of Smithers residents have access to a park with a playground within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

 73%

of residents have access to a sport field within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

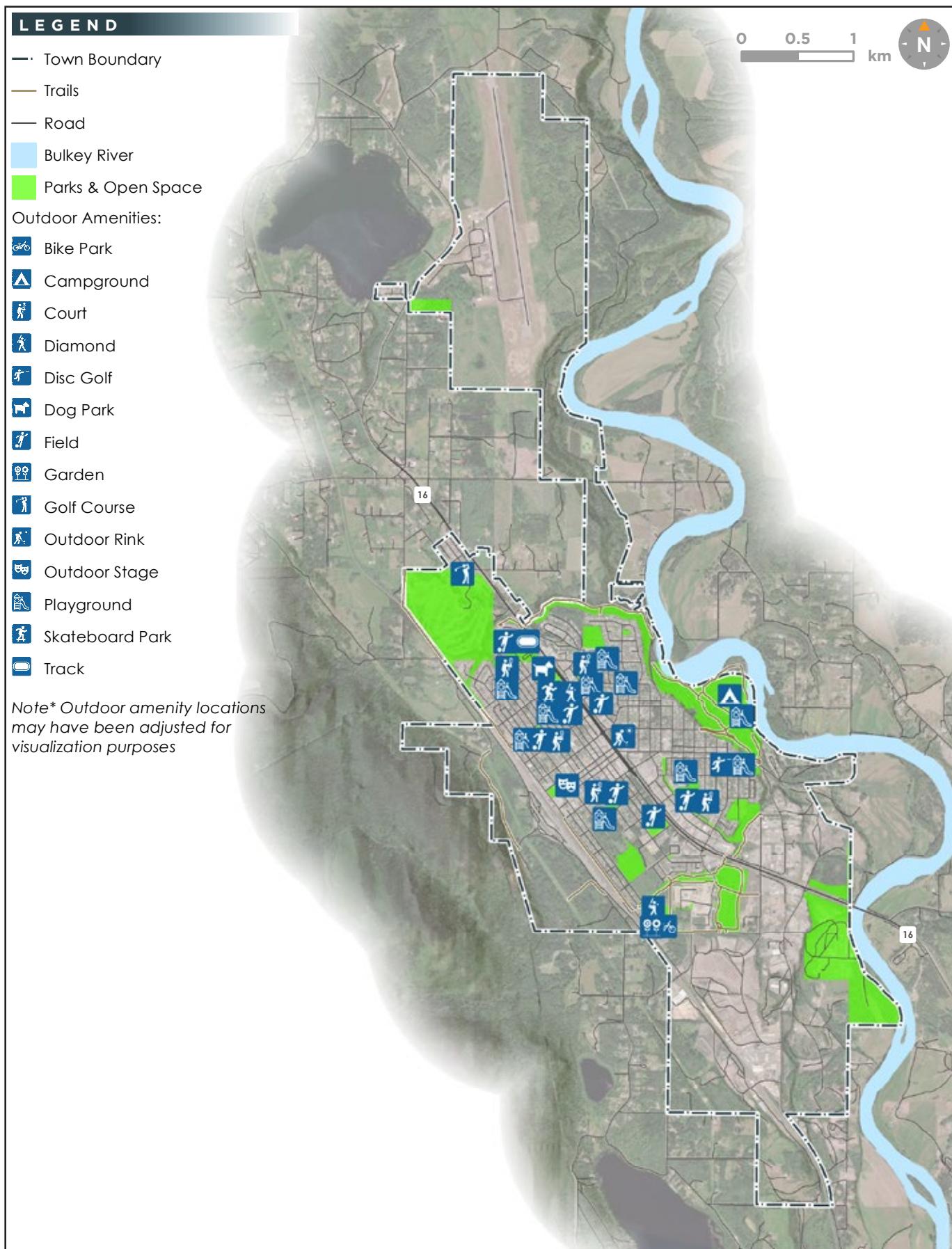
 33%

of residents have access to a ball diamond within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

 76%

of residents have access to a tennis court within a **10-minute** walk of their home.

## OUTDOOR INFRASTRUCTURE MAP



# PARKS AND OUTDOOR SPACES

## OVERVIEW & DESCRIPTION

The **Table 3.3.1** and **Table 3.3.2** outline the amenities at municipal parks and school locations.

**Table 3.3.1. Smithers Park Spaces**

Municipal Parks	Amenities
Alfred Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>
Bovill Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor stage</li> </ul>
Bulkley Drive Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>
Central Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor rink</li> </ul>
Chandler Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 rectangular fields</li> </ul>
Dogwood Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• 1 basketball hoop</li> </ul>
Elks Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 softball diamonds</li> <li>• 1 practice diamond</li> <li>• Bike park</li> <li>• Northern Root Community Garden</li> </ul>
Fulton Multi-Use Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paved walking trail</li> <li>• Skate park</li> <li>• Ball diamond</li> <li>• Multi-use field</li> <li>• Dog park</li> <li>• Kinsmen Kiddies Park (in the same park)</li> </ul>
Kathlyn Lake Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach access</li> <li>• Washrooms</li> </ul>
Montreal Tennis Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 tennis courts</li> </ul>
Ranger Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-use field/ green space</li> <li>• Disc golf</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• 1 basketball hoop</li> </ul>
Riverside Municipals Campground & Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Covered picnic site</li> <li>• Camp stalls</li> </ul>
Smithers Christian Reformed Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>

Municipal Parks	Amenities
Veterans Peace Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green space</li> </ul>
Willowvale Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trails</li> </ul>
Yorke- Hardy Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>

**Table 3.3.2. School Outdoor Amenities**

Municipal Parks	Amenities
Bulkley Valley Christian School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport field</li> </ul>
Muheim Memorial Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Multi-use field</li> <li>• Sport court</li> </ul>
St. Joseph's School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Multi-use field</li> </ul>
Smithers Secondary School Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track</li> <li>• Multi-use field</li> </ul>
Walnut Park School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Sport court</li> <li>• Multi-use field</li> </ul>

## PARK SITE VISIT KEY FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Members of the project team undertook site visits to most parks' spaces in the community during the summer and fall months of 2023. These site visits were not technical condition assessments, but rather intended to help the project team better understand key characteristics of the park system. The following SWOC Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges) provides an overview of the key findings from the site visits.

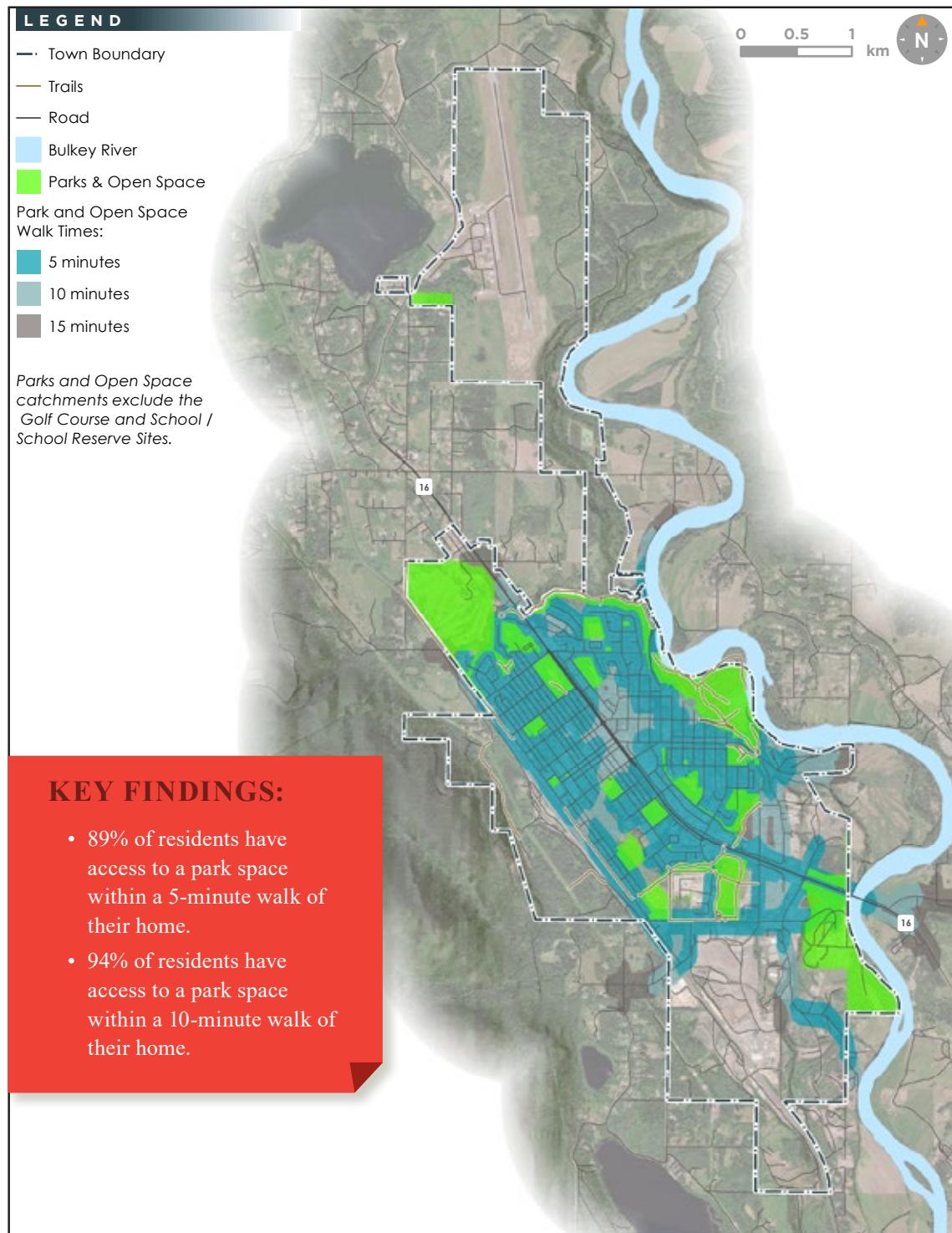
**Table 3.3.3. Parks and Outdoor Space Functional Assessment Summary**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Perimeter Trail remains a terrific community asset that links a number of high value recreation and parks sites.</li><li>The Willowvale Wetlands, Riverside Campground, and Lake Kathryn provide unique nature based park opportunities with fairly good levels of accessibility via active modes of transportation.</li><li>Strong diversity of parks opportunities.</li><li>Most residents have relatively easy access to a park space.</li><li>Quality and size of school playgrounds (in general, school sites provide the best play experiences).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lack of a clear vision for park spaces – in some instances major park spaces have amenities that are underused, lack support amenities, or have non-symbiotic relationships with each other.</li><li>Lack of play diversity (many playground are the same in terms of equipment and ages/interests served).</li><li>Park naming and wayfinding signage is inconsistent.</li><li>Aging ball diamonds at Elks Parks – require upgrades to ensure safe and functional use.</li></ul>
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creating a clear vision for key, community-wide serving park spaces (e.g. Central, Heritage, Ranger, Chandler, and Elks parks).</li><li>Enhancing trail management, ensuring that clarity exists on the types of uses that are most appropriate / permitted for each type of trail.</li><li>Creating more year-round trail experiences.</li><li>Improving trail and pathway linkages (e.g. from the Perimeter Trail to other trails and pathways in town).</li><li>Improving naming and wayfinding signage.</li><li>Increasing the use of parks and trails for tourism purposes.</li><li>Leveraging natural assets, including the Bulkley River and Lake Kathryn.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Current approach to park management is maintenance and upkeep based – shift needed towards visitor management and experience.</li><li>Resourcing needed to realize potential while maintaining what already exists across a fairly extensive park system.</li><li>Ensuring park equity and access for all residents.</li><li>The Yellowhead Highway bisects the community, presenting a physical and safety barrier for some residents in accessing parks and trails opportunities.</li></ul>

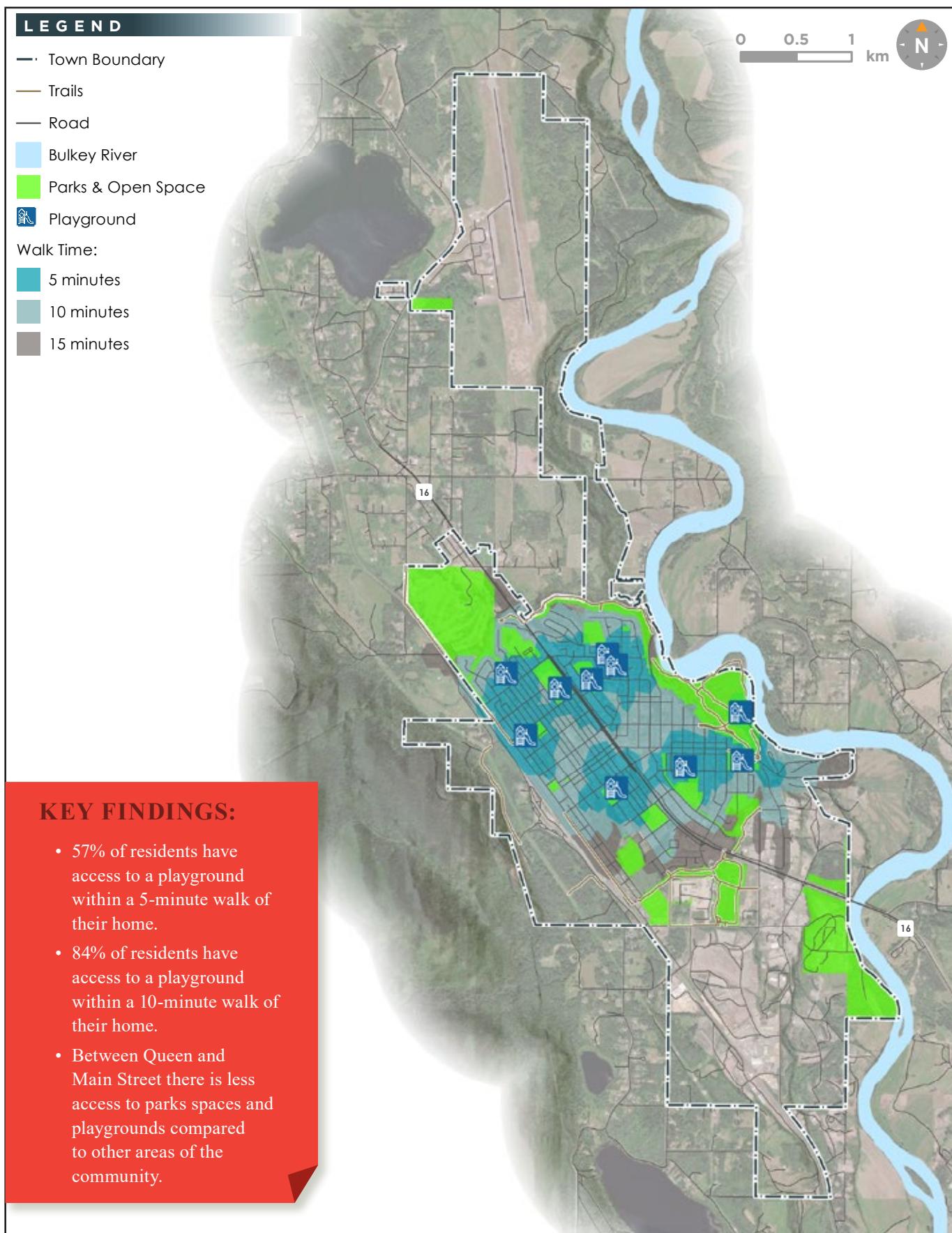
# PARK ACCESS

Smithers is a compact community; all residents have access to a park and/or playground within a 10-minute drive of their home. The following two maps illustrate the walkability of parks within Smithers. The first map illustrates the walk times to parks within Smithers and the second illustrates the walk times to parks with playgrounds (including school sites). Neither map speaks to the quality of park spaces or playgrounds at the locations.

## PARK ACCESS MAP



## PARKS WITH PLAYGROUNDS ACCESS MAP

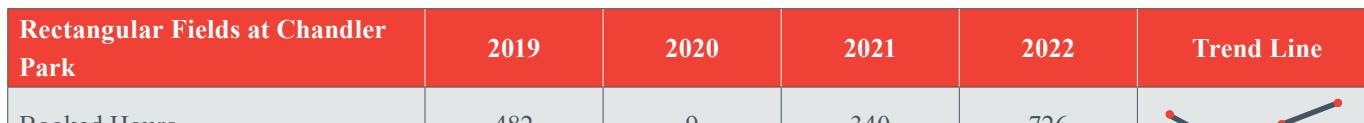
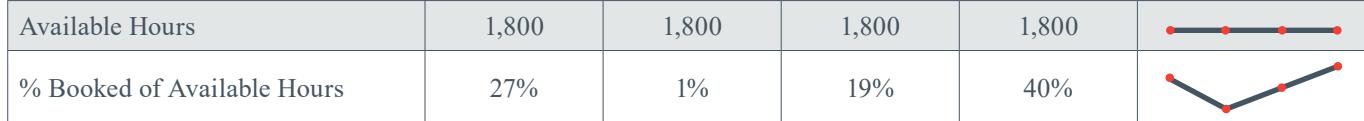


## FACILITY UTILIZATION

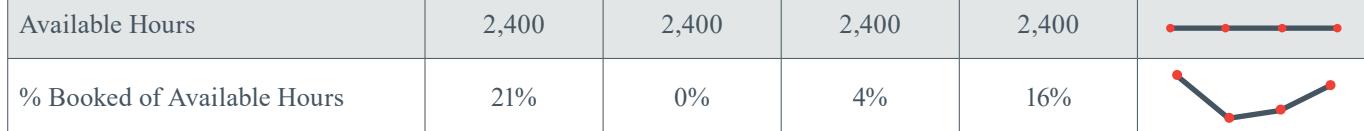
Most municipally provided outdoor facilities are used spontaneously or on a drop-in basis (e.g., spray parks, playgrounds, trails, etc.,), however sport fields, ball diamonds and courts spaces (pickleball, tennis, etc.,) are often bookable as well as open for casual public use. In Smithers, the rectangular fields at Chandler Park and ball diamonds at Elks Park are bookable amenities, while the Montreal Tennis Courts and the diamonds and fields at Heritage and Rangers Park are not bookable. Reservations at the Riverside Campground for camp spots are mandatory. In 2020 and 2021 bookings and reservations were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and public health related precautions put in place to reduce the spread of the virus.

**Field / Diamond Capacity = 600 hours per field/diamond available.**

**Table 3.3.4. Sport Field Bookings**

Rectangular Fields at Chandler Park	2019	2020	2021	2022	Trend Line
Booked Hours	482	9	340	726	
# of Fields	3	3	3	3	
Available Hours	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	
% Booked of Available Hours	27%	1%	19%	40%	

**Table 3.3.5. Ball Diamond Bookings**

Elks Park Softball Diamonds	2019	2020	2021	2022	Trend Line
Booked Hours	507	0	95	380	
# of Diamonds	4	4	4	4	
Available Hours	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	
% Booked of Available Hours	21%	0%	4%	16%	

The following two tables (**Tables 3.3.4 and 3.3.5**), indicate the hours booked at the Chandler Park sport fields and Elks Park ball diamonds and the percentage of capacity that has been booked. Booked use is not the only use that takes place at these fields, spontaneous use / casual drop-in use of the fields is not tracked and thus not part of the analysis. Capacity for fields is based on the amount of use a field/diamond can withstand from a maintenance perspective (before quality of the surface deteriorates and more specialized maintenance is required).

**Table 3.3.6.** Riverside Campground Bookings illustrates the number of campground bookings from 2019 – 2022. The campground is booked by both locals and visitors. International tourists' reservations were higher pre- pandemic.

**Table 3.3.6. Riverside Campground Bookings**

Riverside Campground Bookings	2019	2020*	2021	2022	Trend Line
Reservations	2,500	1,000	1,464	1,928	

\*Reservations are an estimate based on a graph provided in the 2021 & 2022 Town of Smithers Annual Reports.

**Other Tracked Park Use and Relevant Park User Information:**

- The Town approved 37 special events in 2021 and 33 special events in 2022. These special events took place at various outdoor locations throughout the town.
- In 2022, sport field user groups reported approximately 1,020 participants, with the Bulkley Valley Soccer Society participants accounting for the majority of these participants (850 members).
- There were 410 ball diamond user group participants. Smithers Slow-Pitch was the largest user group with 250 members.

## KEY FINDINGS:

- Sport field bookings have increased over the past four years, but there is still capacity for more bookings. User groups that participated in the engagement process for this project noted that they would like to have access to fields further into the shoulder seasons.
- Bookings at the ball diamonds have increased since the pandemic, however they have not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels yet. There is capacity for more bookings.
- Riverside Campground reservations has not returned to pre-pandemic levels yet but rebounded strongly in 2022.





## 4. TRENDS AND LEADING PRACTICES

Understanding regional, provincial and national trends helps public sector providers of parks and recreation opportunities identify new and emerging activities and align the provision of facilities and resource inputs accordingly. Identified in this section are a number of key trends and leading practices that are supported by industry research and / or the consulting team's observed experience.

## 4.1. PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVITY TRENDS

### OLDER ADULT PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION ACTIVITIES

There is an increase in the aging population who are retiring and thus, we are seeing longer periods of retirement. The many “traditional” activities such as swimming, fitness classes and low-impact activities are still very popular amongst the older adult population. However, there has been an increase in demand for moderately vigorous forms of physical activity and multi-generational programs. The emergence of pickleball and aqua fitness classes are examples of activities whose popularity is driven by older adult populations.

### SPONTANEOUS RECREATION

There is growing demand for more flexibility in timing and activity for leisure pursuits. People are now seeking individualized informal pursuits that can be done alone or in small groups, at flexible times, often near or at home. This trend does not eliminate the need for structured activities but suggests that planning for the general population is as important as planning for more traditional structured-use environments. Spontaneous recreation is broadly characterized as physical activities in which the activities, nature of participation and timing of participation are freely chosen and do not require registration for programs or leagues.

### COVID-19 HAS CHANGED RECREATION AND LEISURE PURSUITS

COVID-19 has changed recreation participation and the important role that parks, trails and recreation play in strengthening mental health has become clear. Visitation to parks and trails has grown significantly including significant increases by those who are new to outdoor recreation. 94% of cities reported increased use of parks during COVID-19 while 66% of Canadians said they spent more time in parks compared to pre-pandemic<sup>vi</sup>. 82% of Canadians expect their post pandemic use of parks to continue or increase. In addition to increasing volumes of use, the temporal patterns of recreation visitation have also shifted. Greater visitation is occurring during previously less busy times (e.g., mid-week, early morning, later evening). Increased visitation and untraditional visitor patterns are expected to continue and could be compounded further with the return of visitors from long-haul and international destinations.

## OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES ARE RAPIDLY EVOLVING

Not only is outdoor recreation participation growing but it is rapidly evolving. Recreation activities are changing daily as new technologies emerge. Electric bicycles, electric scooters, one-wheels, more capable mountain bikes and even electric off-road motorcycles are just some of the examples of new technologies' integration with recreation. Recreation activities will continue to evolve faster than parks, trails and recreation managers can keep pace. This will drive the need for the more active management of recreation and different activities in order to, minimize conflicts amongst visitors. Parks, trails, and recreation spaces and the policy and regulatory frameworks that guide their management will need to be updated to address the continual introduction of new activities.

## MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking has rapidly evolved over the past decade and all indications suggest that it will continue to do so. Mountain bike organizations, riding schools, active transportation are all helping to expand the demographic of mountain bikers, thus increasing mountain biking participation and ensuing demands for more trails and greater active management to avoid crowding. Mountain bikes have also only become more capable of navigating the terrain and obstacles encountered on the trail meaning that the level of challenge sought in trails will also evolve. Communities and destination marketing organizations across the province, including Indigenous communities, see the potential for mountain biking to help grow, strengthen, and diversify economies especially in rural communities. And these communities know that quality trails are the foundation of this tourism economy. This trend will certainly continue and is likely to expand greatly.

## CYCLING

Cycling in Canada has also kept up with its torrent growth that began during COVID-19. "Market research firm NPD Group says Canadian numbers aren't tracked, but in the United States, sales of bicycles increased 75 per cent in 2020 compared with a year earlier. For the first two months of 2021, the increase year over year was 130 per cent." The continuous bike shortages are an indicator of supply chain issues, but also reflect the rapid rise in peoples interest in biking as source of physical activity, which has even led to the implementation of bike lanes to support more people.

## PICKLEBALL

Pickleball is quickly becoming one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in North America.

Membership in Pickleball Canada has grown from 5,000 to 22,000 players in just five years, and a pre-pandemic Ipsos poll put the number of Canadians playing pickleball at 350,000<sup>vii</sup>. The sport seems to be growing so much that many people are migrating from tennis to pickleball. While pickleball still provides a way for people to stay active and enjoy the competitive nature of racket sports, it's not as intense as tennis. Pickleball is also relatively easy to pick up, the underhand serve is less technical than tennis and the smaller court makes it less strenuous.

Many players also comment on the very open and inclusive community that is known for being very welcoming to new players. While people do play at a very competitive level with national tournaments, brand sponsors and prize money- you can easily join a local league or club and pick up the game in a very casual atmosphere. Pickleball is also a great way to stay active with [several health benefits](#) and fewer injuries than some other sports.

## OUTDOOR COURT ACCESS AND YOUTH

Outdoor courts provide a cost-effective and accessible alternative to indoor facilities, which can be expensive and difficult to access for many youths. A study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that outdoor basketball courts were one of the most frequently used outdoor spaces for physical activity among youth in urban areas. The study also found that outdoor recreation spaces, including basketball courts, were associated with lower levels of sedentary behaviour among youth.

Outdoor courts are being used to develop youth skills in a variety of sports, including basketball, tennis, pickleball, and volleyball, among others. They provide opportunities for informal play and self-directed skill development. Youth can use outdoor courts to practice their skills on their own or with friends, which can help to foster a love of sports and physical activity.

## SNOWSHOEING AND CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Embracing the changing seasons, the conversion of tranquil summer walking trails into captivating cross-country ski and snowshoe routes exemplifies the art of repurposing nature's pathways. The gentle undulations and scenic vistas that once captivated walkers now serve as the backdrop for cross-country skiers and snowshoers to relish the serene beauty of winter. By adapting these trails for different seasonal uses, residents are provided an additional opportunity for physical activity throughout the year. Established summer walking trails often work best for transitioning into winter snowshoeing and/or cross-country skiing trails because residents already feel comfortable in those locations and are familiar with the routes.



## 4.2. SERVICE DELIVERY TRENDS

### FACILITY ALLOCATIONS

Allocation policies and practices help provide clarity on which types of uses should get priority access to facility space. Historically in Canada, these policies and practices have favoured ‘tenured’ groups that provide more traditional types of programs (e.g. hockey, ball, soccer, etc.). While it is important to recognize the longstanding contributions of these groups and continue providing them with sufficient facility time, it is also important to ensure that new and emerging activities are provided with appropriate time to enable their success. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on equity and inclusion considerations in facility allocations.

**SPORT FOR LIFE (S4L) has also developed a series of best practices and recommended principles for the allocation of facility time to user groups.**

- Allocation practices are based on “standards of play” principles in terms of the time and space required by each group.
- Allocation policies are transparent and reviewed with the groups. Allocation is not done by tradition, but rather on actual requirements of all groups, including the needs of emerging sports.
- Seasonal allocation meetings are held with common users’ groups to review their requests and try to achieve consensus on sharing available spaces and times.
- As seasons progress, groups are encouraged to be flexible in the reallocation of spaces with other groups when no longer needed, either temporarily or for longer periods.
- User fees and subsidies need to reflect community taxpayer support, and the rationale should be shared with sport organizations.

### OTHER NOTABLE TRENDS IMPACTING SPACE USE AND ALLOCATIONS

Summarized as follows are a number of broader trends in recreation, parks, and culture participation will also influence future space needs and the allocation of space.

- Increasing demands for spontaneous / unstructured recreation and leisure opportunities.
- The financial impact of COVID-19 on both user groups and facility providers.
- Diversifying activity preferences and interests.
- The evolving nature of volunteerism from longer term to shorter term commitments.



- The rising cost of participating in higher levels of sport.
- Increasing awareness of the need for physical literacy and the negative impacts of activity specialization.
- Continued shift in infrastructure typology from single purpose facilities to those that are multi-purpose and expected to accommodate a wide array of activities and functions.



## REGIONAL COST SHARING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Across British Columbia many jurisdictions collaborate to deliver regional recreation services. These collaborations often involve one or more municipalities along with adjacent electoral areas and are typically formed to leverage available resources in order to provide costly types of facilities that would be challenging for a single jurisdiction to provide (e.g. pools, arenas, major parks, etc.). The Bulkley Valley Pool and Recreation Centre is an example of this locally. While resident usage is sometimes the basis of determining funding responsibility within a regional partnership, increasingly other considerations are being integrated into funding models that reflect the broader benefits that recreation services can provide even if a large proportion of residents from a jurisdiction don't use the services directly. These benefits considerations include the ability for a region to attract and retain professionals and much needed skill sets, economic generation, and increased community satisfaction. As recreation and parks infrastructure becomes more expensive to build and operate, it is probable that regional funding partnerships will become even more of a necessity across the province.

Partnerships with schools present another opportunity, especially given the different time of day needs of the school system (daytime) and community (evenings and weekends). Examples of common space partnerships include:

- Municipal “topping up” of new school gymnasium funding in order to provide a full-size gymnasium with community access.
- Artificial turf field partnerships.
- Performing arts space funding partnerships.

## REVENUE GENERATION IN PARKS

Generating revenue within parks can be accomplished through a range of methods. Typical approaches encompass leasing park spaces, including facilities and parking lots, to businesses like coffee carts and ice cream vans. Another avenue involves organizing recreational programs and classes, where participants are charged fees, as well as hosting special events like markets or holiday celebrations that require entry fees. Another reliable revenue source involves advertising and sponsorship, often achieved through collaborations with local businesses. These businesses may sponsor park events or initiatives in exchange for prominent branding exposure. Moreover, selling advertising space offers an additional avenue for generating income. This can involve charging businesses for displaying their signage within parks, sports facilities, park websites, or digital screens within recreation facilities.

## DATA COLLECTION

Parks and recreation departments are increasingly utilizing data to understand user behaviors, needs, preferences, and desires. According to the National Parks and Recreation Associations Survey [NRPA survey](#) of parks and recreation professionals, more than 90% of respondents (in leadership roles) identified data collection and analysis as important or very important for activities such as master planning, capital investments, programming, and support staff. However, not every municipality is collecting data and no two municipalities collect data using the same methods. Respondents identified facility usage data, program utilization data, demographic trends, crime data, and school enrollment as important data sources for decision-making.

In terms of methods for collecting data, surveying residents and users is the most common approach. For facility usage, some municipalities have staff manually count visitors and others use automated methods such as scanning user cards. Other departments that may be collecting useful data include public works or utilities, police and fire departments, and transportation departments. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are also becoming frequently used within the sector to understand where users live, what amenities are available to whom and to identify gaps and opportunities geospatially.

## EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

There is increasing cultural awareness regarding the systemic nature of racism and the structural inequalities that exist within society. In Canada, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was fundamental in highlighting and exposing historical and ongoing structural flaws within society that perpetuate racism and harm towards Indigenous populations.

Like most sectors, municipalities and other public entities that provide recreation services are in the midst of evaluating their history in perpetuating historical inequalities and future-forward solutions that can address these issues. The recreation sector is uniquely positioned to foster inclusiveness and provide a platform to help blunt racism, prejudice, and inequality. Identified below are initiatives that are being undertaken by leading organizations in the sector:

- **viaSport** has identified inclusion as a key focus area and has developed a number of free or low-cost resources focused on fostering increased diversity and opportunity for women and girls, persons with disabilities, the LGBTQI2S Community, marginalized youth, Indigenous people, socio-economically disadvantaged individuals, newcomers to Canada, individuals from rural/remote/isolated regions, and older adults.
- **Spare BC (The Social Planning and Research Council of B.C.)** has published or co-developed a wealth of resources on inclusion and access. One of these documents, *Everybody's Welcome: A Social Inclusion Approach to Program Planning and Development for Recreation and Parks Services* was developed in conjunction with the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association and provided the sector with a formative resource that helped generate a greater understanding of what inclusion means and how to undertake actions that can foster it within public facilities and spaces.
- **The National Recreation and Parks Association** in the United States has been a leader in foster conversations on topics related to inclusion and inequality in the parks and recreation. In 2018, NRPA published a Parks and Recreation Inclusion Report which outlined findings from a comprehensive review of inclusion practices across parks and recreation agencies (service providers) in the United States.

## PARKS & TRAILS CAN SUPPORT TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION<sup>VIII</sup> <sup>IX</sup>

The federal governments commitment to the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), the government of British Columbia's adoption of UNDRIP, the release of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action](#) (2015), and the Government of British Columbia's passing of the [Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and action plan](#), are changing the way municipal governments work with and consider the needs of Indigenous Peoples. This includes within the provision of parks, trails, and recreation services.

- The parks and trails sector, including local governments, is increasingly collaborating with Indigenous communities to identify how these services can support truth and reconciliation, respect Indigenous cultures, meet the needs of urban Indigenous peoples, and strengthen the relationships between local governments and Indigenous governments.
- Parks and trails services are also being increasingly viewed as opportunities to help non-Indigenous people develop a better understanding and appreciation of the land Canadians reside on, Indigenous peoples, their culture, and to foster new relationships.
- As outdoor recreation becomes an increasingly important local, regional and provincial economic driver it also provides an opportunity to renegotiate power dynamics, build a sense of belonging<sup>x</sup>, and create economic opportunity for Indigenous Peoples.

## LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEER CAPACITY

Many programs and services offered in rural communities are heavily dependent on volunteers and seasonal staff. Research shows that these roles, especially those in fitness, health, and active living, are temporarily filled by youth and young adults who move away from rural communities to more urban areas, significantly impacting the potential pool of available staff and volunteers. Contrary to popular belief, overall volunteer participation rates are not rapidly declining – but the nature of volunteerism is changing. The “modern volunteer” is more selective of the organizations they commit their time to, desires clarity on roles and tenure/term for their involvement, and often prefers shorter duration commitments (e.g. event focused volunteerism) over ongoing and indefinite volunteer positions. Younger volunteers are also often motivated by the opportunity to gain new skills, make connections, and align themselves with organizations that are working to address key societal issues. Changes in volunteerism are also impacting the service delivery of public sector recreation, sports and culture facilities and programming. Volunteer fatigue is becoming a serious issue for many organizations that are being increasingly challenged to fulfill important volunteer roles, often resulting in the need to pay individuals or alter program offerings.



## URBAN PARKS & NATURAL SPACES AS CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

Eighty four percent of cities reported dealing with climate change impacts and extreme weather as a challenge. While 92% of Canadians said they would support climate-resilient infrastructure built into parks<sup>xi</sup>. Parks and trails are being recognized by local governments as important climate change resiliency and adaptation strategies. Climate change is also changing visitation patterns. A climate change policy lens is becoming more prevalent in local governments, and it's changing how local governments plan, design and maintain parks and trails.

- Investments in the establishment of well-planned parks and trails systems is being viewed by many local governments as opportunities to help slow climate change by sequestering and storing carbon. They are also being seen opportunities to help to reduce carbon emissions through active transportation alternatives.
- Parks and trails are now being viewed as green infrastructure that can help the region adapt to the effects of climate change (e.g., flood mitigation and control) and parks and trails are being sited and designed to maximize these opportunities. Further, parks and trails are being developed and designed to limit urban heat island effect which is expected to become a growing public health concern as the climate warms.
- At the same time, climate change is altering how people enjoy parks and trails. The timing and patterns of outdoor recreational use will continue to shift as climate change impacts continue to grow (e.g. heat, extreme weather, wildfire / smoke). These changing patterns are forcing park operator's to adjust maintenance schedules and levels of service in response to changing user activity patterns. These changing patterns will require local government to also adjust resourcing and capacity of its operations team to keep pace with demands.
- Further, there is growing public expectation and focus on ensuring park and trails operations minimize carbon emissions, as well as other undesirable environmental impacts, associated with providing and operating parks and trails (e.g. fully electric mowers, trimmers, blowers, vehicles, alternative fuels).

## 4.3. INFRASTRUCTURE TRENDS AND LEADING PRACTICES

### AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Managing aging infrastructure is of key concern for Canadian municipalities, including recreation amenities that are vital to the delivery of important community programming. Many municipalities are facing difficult realities related to sustaining current service levels for their residents. The Canadian Infrastructure Report Card (CIRC) assesses the condition of municipally owned infrastructure; the Report Card (a nationally conducted study) was first released in 2016. A follow-up report was completed in 2019. The Report Card assessed several infrastructure categories, including an analysis of the state of culture, recreation, and sports facilities in Canada.

Both reports reveal several concerns and issues that will impact the delivery of recreation over the next number of years. Approximately 30-35% of facilities are in fair condition or worse and a large proportion is more than 50 years old. While the condition of individual facilities varies, it can be assumed that a collection of facilities many decades old will require significant capital investment (or replacement) compared with much newer facilities. The categories in the worst condition (i.e., more than 30% are in fair, poor or very poor condition) include single-pad ice arenas, outdoor pools and wading pools, indoor 25-metre pools, indoor curling rinks and tennis courts.

#### CANADIAN INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD KEY FINDINGS

- The Report Card demonstrates that Canada's infrastructure, including sport and recreation facilities, are at risk of rapid deterioration unless there is an immediate investment.
- The average annual reinvestment rate in sport and recreation facilities is currently 1.3% (of capital value) while the recommended target rate of reinvestment is 1.7% – 2.5%.
- Almost 1 in 2 sport and recreation facilities are in 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' condition and need repair or replacement.
- In comparison to other municipal infrastructure assessed in the Report Card, sport and recreation facilities were in the worst state and require immediate attention.
- The Report Card indicated that the extrapolated replacement value of sport and recreation facilities in 'poor' or 'very poor' condition is \$9 billion while those in 'fair' condition require \$14 billion.

### LEED/ SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED® is an international symbol of sustainability excellence and green building leadership. LEED's proven and holistic approach helps virtually all building types to lower carbon emissions, conserve resources, and reduce operating costs by prioritizing sustainable practices.

Canada is one of the top Countries in the world for LEED certification. Additional practices for sustainable buildings include building with repurposed materials, utilization of LED lighting, and renewable energy resources such as solar panels, and reducing water use through waterless urinals or rainwater basins.

## MULTI USE FACILITIES

Sport and recreation facilities are being designed to accommodate multiple activities and to encompass a variety of different components. The benefits of designing multi-use spaces include the opportunity to create operational efficiencies, attract various users, and procure multiple sources of revenue. Providing the opportunity for all family members to take part in different opportunities simultaneously at the same location additionally increases participation levels, convenience, and satisfaction for residents.

Creating spaces within a facility that are easily adaptable and re-configurable is another growing trend observed in many newer and retrofitted facilities. Most facilities are now being designed and constructed in such a manner that staging, seating, and wall configurations can be easily changed or removed as required to host various community and cultural events.

## INTEGRATING INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTS

A relatively new concept in recreation and leisure infrastructure planning is to ensure that the indoor environment interacts seamlessly with the adjacent outdoor environment. This can include ideas such as public event spaces, indoor/outdoor walking trails, indoor/ outdoor child play areas, and indoor/outdoor public art. Although there are a number of operational issues that need to be considered when planning indoor/outdoor environments (e.g. cleaning, controlled access, etc.) the concept of planning an indoor facility to complement the site it is located on (and associated outdoor amenities included) as well as the broader community parks and trail system is prudent and will ensure the optimization of public spending on both indoor and outdoor recreation and culture infrastructure. Integrating indoor and outdoor environments can be as “simple” as ensuring interiors have good opportunities to view the outdoors.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is already impacting the design, maintenance and use of parks, trails and recreation facilities. Parks and trails are now recognized as an important climate change resiliency and adaptation strategy. Investing in parks and trails is now seen as a strategy to establish areas that sequester and store carbon and help to reduce carbon emissions through active transportation. Parks and trails are now being viewed as green infrastructure that can help the region adapt to the effects of climate change (e.g., flood mitigation and control). At the same time, parks and trail users will experience more frequent weather interruptions but also enjoy extended peak activity seasons. Park operator's maintenance programs will need to shift because of changes in user activity patterns and there is growing expectation that efforts are being made to minimize emissions associated with providing and operating parks, trails and recreation facilities (e.g. fully electric mowers, trimmers, blowers, vehicles, alternative fuels). Shifting climate interests closer to the core of the Regional District's planning and operations for parks and trails will manage risk and increase readiness for green infrastructure project funding from the federal and provincial government.

## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

The proportion of British Columbians seeking active transportation options to travel to work and to community activities continues to grow. In the Nechako Region 10.9% of people use active transportation to work and 6.5% use active transportation to community activities<sup>xii</sup>. There has been an increase in awareness of the benefits of being active and the positive impacts it has on physical and mental health, reduction of carbon emissions and the financial savings. This trend has been reinforced during the COVID-19 pandemic. A quality interconnected and efficient active transportation network is required to enable residents to increasingly choose active transportation options and the region to realize the benefits of active transportation.

## **SHELTERING IN PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION SPACES**

Ninety percent of surveyed Canadian cities said that the use of parks, trails and recreation spaces for temporary sheltering by unhoused individuals is a growing management challenge<sup>xiii</sup>. Parks and open spaces along trails can become temporary camping and overnight locations for residents who are experiencing housing insecurity. Managers are experiencing increased public demands to address incidents of undesirable behaviours (e.g., drug and alcohol use, violence, vandalism) in parks and along trails. Local governments are finding themselves on the front lines of highly complex social issues that extend beyond their mandate and capacity. Public pressure to address these complex health, safety, and environmental concerns is growing and user conflicts can be intense. These challenges will continue, and parks and trails managers, in partnership with public health, social services and community advocates, will need to shift traditional approaches and increase internal capacity and training to address these challenges.

## **MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PLAY SPACES**

Increasingly, many municipalities and play space providers are focusing on creating “destination” play spaces that provide opportunities across a wider range of ages, ability levels, and interests. Expanding the seasonality of use also feeds into this trend as there is a demand for sites that can be used in winter climates beyond 4 or 5 months of the year. Playground planners are expanding meeting these demands by creating playground spaces that include a wide range of equipment, better support amenities, and integration of other community spaces (e.g. adjacent indoor facilities, skating areas, outdoor aquatics features, etc.).



## NATURAL PLAY

In recent years the playground landscape has seen significant expansion in the types of equipment and structures that are available. Leading this trend are “natural play spaces”, which are intended to replicate aspects of natural environment such as forests, rocks, crevices, slopes and other outdoor elements. Societal concerns over children and youth disconnection with nature is leading this trend, especially in urban environments. In some instances entire playgrounds are constructed using entirely natural play equipment, while in other cases playgrounds include a mix of traditional and natural play equipment. Natural playgrounds are also credited with having significant cognitive benefits to children, forcing them to manage complexity as they maneuver around the play space whereas traditional playgrounds tend to be more suggestive.



*Natural Playgrounds – Holiday Beach Conservation Area (Amherstburg, Ont.). Source Essex Region Conservation Authority*



*Natural Playgrounds - Hastings Mills Park (Vancouver, B.C.). Source: Playground Find ([playgroundfind.com](http://playgroundfind.com))*

## ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS

Another way to update playground facilities is to add features that make the playground more inclusive. Although universal design concepts are not new, a number of communities have found new and exciting ways to incorporate inf into their playground designs. For example, the Whiskers Point Provincial Parks playground has a sign language alphabet board, and wheelchair accessible swings, while the playground at Panorama Recreation Centre has an extensive ramping system so that all children can join the fun.



Accessible Playgrounds- Panorama Recreation Centre Playground (North Saanich, BC) Source: Habitat Systems (<https://www.habitat-systems.com/project/panorama-recreation-centre/>)



Accessible Playground - Whiskers Point Provincial Park Playground (McLeod Lake, B.C.) Source: Spinal Cord Injury B.C. (<https://sci-bc.ca/new-accessible-playgrounds-in-northern-bc/>)

## SUPPORT AMENITY CONSIDERATIONS

Across recreation and leisure there are increasing expectations for the quality of experience provided in public facilities and spaces. Playgrounds are no exception, especially as it pertains to support amenities. Including washrooms that are safe and functional in major park spaces, ensuring adequate seating areas, and providing shade (natural or built) are all examples of support amenities that can have a significant impact on both the perceived experience and overall level of utilization. Many municipalities are also looking to find ways to provide these amenities and others in ways that create a sense of “place” and generate interest.



*Creative Park Washroom Design – Assiniboine Park (Winnipeg, MB). Source: Winnipeg Free Press*



*Creative Park Washroom Design – Maple Green Park (Surrey, B.C.) Source: Scarlett Black Photography*

## PARK ANIMATION: CREATING MULTI-DIMENSIONAL AND APPEALING SPACES

Parks for All, An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community identifies that “parks have the potential to bring people together into a more cohesive future” and articulates a number of benefits that are accrued by providing quality parks experiences. In recent decades, the parks sector has increasingly come to understand the important of creating parks spaces that are dynamic, diverse, and well-suited to accommodating active living opportunities for residents of all ages and ability levels. More specific to playgrounds, this fundamental attitude shift in park space provision suggests that the creating play environments needs to be about more than just the playground structure itself. **The built infrastructure and overall animation of a park should encourage play of varying types throughout the entire park space.**

Identified as follows are trends and leading practices that can help maximize the appeal and benefit of community parks spaces.

- **Diversity of park space provision.** Many municipalities are striving to create service level consistency across their parks inventory (e.g. establishing a classification system for parks that outlines design standards and maintenance guidelines). While this practice is justified and highly beneficial, it should not be allowed to result in generic park space provision. Consistent service levels and park space diversity can both be achieved by ensuring that park classification systems and service level guidelines / policies provide ample flexibility and articulate the value of diversity across the parks inventory.
- **Functional Inventory of parks spaces.** Municipalities should inventory their park spaces on a regular basis and capture both quantitative and qualitative as part of this exercise. This inventory should capture the suitability and appeal of the parks inventory for all age cohorts, individuals facing barriers to use, and the suitability of the park space to foster multiple types of activities.
- **Amenity Connectivity.** Parks spaces should be accessible via active transportation networks (trails and pathways). Further to this point, there should be strong integration between parks and trails planning with a focus on connectivity. Amenity connection within a park space is equally important. Playground structures should connect well with sport courts, forested areas, and support amenities to create a cohesive park space that can be easily navigated.

It is also important to recognize that community and neighborhood demographics can impact and change the use of a park space over time. Creating park spaces that are truly multi-generational can ensure that these spaces remain relevant and beneficial throughout the cycle of a community. Furthermore, park spaces with a multi-generational and multi-dimensional appeal can contribute to ensuring that a community remains attractive to current and prospective residents of all ages and interests.

## JUMPSTART INCLUSIVE MULTI-SPORT COURTS

Jumpstart has worked with several communities across Canada to offer inclusive multi-sport court designs that are accessible to all users. These outdoor facilities offer barrier-free access with large gate entrances, wheelchair-accessible seating, and a cushioned surface. The courts feature high-contrast colours with white lines to support those with limited vision, along with ample LED lighting over the courts and adjustable basketball nets. The courts feature adjustable equipment allowing for para sports including basketball, pickleball, sitting volleyball, tennis, wheelchair basketball, and wheelchair tennis. Additionally, their multi-sport courts can allow for a section to be transformed into an outdoor rink during winter months.



## SPECIAL EVENTS AND ANIMATING PARK SPACES

Special events play an important role in destination development as attractions, image makers, animators of static attractions, and catalysts for other developments. Festivals are increasingly important within municipal recreation planning efforts. Festivals of all sizes are becoming more prominent within many communities, in many cases supplanting 'bricks and mortar' cultural infrastructure such as performance spaces. Events such as street fairs to annual signature events such as holiday parades attract residents and tourists and serve as an economic driver. Festivals are nimble and scalable: they can take place in non-traditional spaces and can adapt and evolve programming as necessary. Many festivals are free to attend and utilize existing public spaces and cultural assets, sparking interactions among a diverse range of community members and improving images of park areas, particularly those in need of a boost.

## COQUITLAM PARK SPARK PROGRAM

The City of Coquitlam has established a Park Spark Program to encourage the community to get involved and take ownership of enhancing local community park spaces. Opportunities are available for registered volunteers or drop-ins and include creating pollination gardens, cleaning, and maintaining parks and trails or placemaking. This program encourages residents to take ownership and establishes a sense of pride in local community parks.



Photo: <https://www.tricitynews.com/standout/coquitlam-ignites-interest-in-green-spaces-through-park-spark-program-3868514>



## 5. BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking research was undertaken to review how Smithers contrasts to a sampling of other municipalities in the provision of key types of parks and recreating infrastructure. While benchmarking provides valuable information, a number of limitations and contextual factors are important to note:

- Benchmarking looks only at whether an amenity exists in a community and does not capture qualitative factors such as volume of space, age, condition, and functionality.
- Data is gathered from a number of secondary sources, including website, planning documents (e.g. needs assessments and Master Plans), and local project team contacts. Although efforts are made to ensure accuracy, some margin of error may exist due to a number of factors (e.g. recent additions or subtractions from the inventory, different ways of counting some amenities, etc.).
- Community context and history are important. Factors that impact supply of an amenity in a community include relationships with the school system, private sector provision (e.g. strength of the private sector fitness market), fundraising capacity, and proximity to other regional centres that offer recreation services.

## 5.1. INDOOR FACILITIES / AMENITIES

The following tables show the number of different indoor facilities and amenities in each town.

**Table 5.1.1. Indoor Facility Benchmarking: Number of Amenities**

Community	Population	Indoor Pool	Indoor Arena	Climbing Wall	Curling Rink (# of Sheets)	Library	Youth Center	Senior Centres	Field House	Arts and Cultural Centre	Indoor Playground	Fitness Centre	Gymnasium	Indoor Track
Terrace	12,017	1	2	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Golden	3,986	0	1	1	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Revelstoke	8,275	1	1	0	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Quesnel	9,889	1	3	0	6	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
Oliver	5,094	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Kitimat	8,236	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Rocky Mountain House	6,765	1	3	0	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Slave Lake	6,836	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Average	7,637	1	2	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
<b>Smithers</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 5.1.2. Indoor Facility Benchmarking: Provision Per Capita**

Community	Population	Indoor Pool	Indoor Arena	Climbing Wall	Curling Rink (# of Sheets)	Library	Youth Center	Senior Centres	Field House	Arts and Cultural Centre	Indoor Playground	Fitness Centre	Gymnasium	Indoor Track
Terrace	12,017	12,017	6,009			12,017						12,017		
Golden	3,986		3,986	3,986	997	3,986				3,986		3,986	3,986	
Revelstoke	8,275	8,275	8,275		2,069	8,275		8,275		8,275		8,275		
Quesnel	9,889	9,889	3,296		1,648	9,889	9,889		9,889	9,889		9,889	9,889	9,889
Oliver	5,094		5,094			5,094						5,094		
Kitimat	8,236	8,236	4,118	8,236	2,059	8,236	8,236	8,236		8,236		8,236	8,236	8,236
Rocky Mountain House	6,765	6,765	2,255		1,353	6,765				6,765	6,765	6,765		
Slave Lake	6,836	6,836	3,418			6,836					6,836		6,836	6,836
Average	7,637	8,670	4,556	6,111	1,625	7,637	9,063	8,256	9,889	7,430	6,801	7,752	7,237	8,320
<i>Smithers</i>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>2,689</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>5,378</b>				<b>5,378</b>		<b>5,378</b>		

## KEY FINDINGS:

- Smithers provides most indoor amenity types at similar levels to comparators.
- Amenity types that Smithers provides at a better level of provision:
  - Climbing wall
- Amenity types that Smithers provides at a lower (potential worse) level of provision:
  - Indoor gymnasium spaces

## 5.2. OUTDOOR AMENITIES

The following tables show the number of different outdoor facilities and amenities in each town.

**Table 5.2.1. Outdoor Facility Benchmarking: Number of Amenities**

Community	Population	Outdoor Rink	Spray Parks	Playgrounds	Basketball Courts	Ball Diamond	Rectangular Fields	Disc Golf	Tennis Courts	Pickleball Courts	Skatepark	Dog Parks
Terrace	12,017	0	1	13	1	8	5	0	5	1	1	1
Golden	3,986	4	1	6	2	4	2	1	3	0	1	1
Revelstoke	8,275	2	1	7	3	8	3	0	4	3	1	6
Quesnel	9,889	2	0	10	2	5	0	1	2	4	1	1
Oliver	5,094	0	1	4	1	5	1	1	3	0	1	2
Kitimat	8,236	0	0	13	2	6	5	1	4	0	1	5
Rocky Mountain House	6,765	1	1	19	0	5	2	0	3	6	1	1
Average	7,752	1	1	10	2	6	3	1	3	2	1	2
<b>Smithers</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

**5.2.2. Outdoor Facility Benchmarking: Provision Per Capita**

Community	Population	Outdoor Rink	Spray Parks	Playgrounds	Basketball Courts	Ball Diamond	Rectangular Fields	Disc Golf	Tennis Courts	Pickleball Courts	Skatepark	Dog Parks
Terrace	12,017		12,017	924	12,017	1,502	2,403		2,403	12,017	12,017	12,017
Golden	3,986	997	3,986	664	1,993	997	1,993	3,986	1,329		3,986	3,986
Revelstoke	8,275	4,138	8,275	1,182	2,758	1,034	2,758		2,069	2,758	8,275	1,379
Quesnel	9,889	4,945		989	4,945	1,978		9,889	4,945	2,472	9,889	9,889
Oliver	5,094		5,094	1,274	5,094	1,019	5,094	5,094	1,698		5,094	2,547
Kitimat	8,236			634	4,118	1,373	1,647	8,236	2,059		8,236	1,647
Rocky Mountain House	6,765	6,765	6,765	356		1,353	3,383		2,255	1,128	6,765	6,765
Average	7,752	4,211	7,227	860	5,154	1,322	2,880	6,801	2,394	4,594	7,752	5,461
<b>Smithers</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>4,183</b>		<b>768</b>	<b>2,689</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>5,378</b>	<b>2,689</b>		<b>5,378</b>	<b>2,689</b>

## KEY FINDINGS:

- Smithers provides most outdoor amenity types at similar levels to comparators.
- Smithers provides more rectangular sports fields than comparators
- Notable amenities that Smithers provides at a lesser level than comparators are spray parks (provided by 5 of the 7 comparators), dedicated pickleball courts (provided by 4 of the 7 comparators), and dog parks (higher level of provision in the comparator communities).





# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A: PRIZM SEGMENTATION PROFILES



## Older, middle-income western homeowners

### Who They Are

The living is easy in the rural communities that make up Country & Western. Located in areas close to towns in the western provinces, this segment contains a mix of older singles and empty-nesting couples mostly aging in place. Nearly a third of maintainers are over 65. Eight in ten households live in a single-detached house, while 8 percent own a mobile home. With their mixed educations, those still in the labour force work in farming and blue-collar industries, earning lower-middle incomes. Three quarters of adults are third-plus-generation Canadians, and 16 percent have an aboriginal identity—more than triple the national average. In these rugged communities, residents like to go boating, camping and hiking; many also like roaring around the countryside on motorcycles and snowmobiles. Their idea of a splurge is going to the closest ice cream shop. With a strong self-reliant streak, they enjoy sewing, crafting and doing home improvement projects. But they worry that immigration is diluting their Canadian traditions and believe that newcomers should blend into the dominant culture (Cultural Assimilation).

**Population:**  
762,586  
(2.01% of Canada)

**Households:**  
286,976  
(1.92% of Canada)

**Average Household Income:**  
\$90,761

**Average Household Net Worth:**  
\$367,533

**House Tenure:**  
Own

**Education:**  
Mixed

**Occupation:**  
Primary/Blue Collar

**Cultural Diversity Index:**  
Low

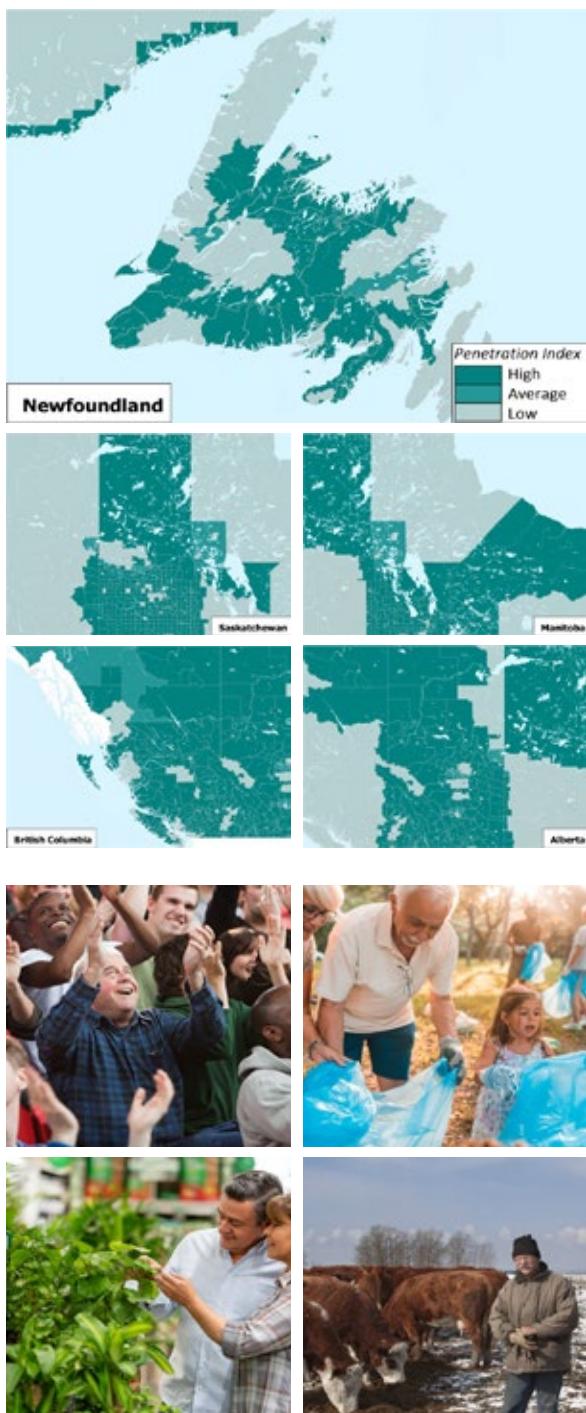
**Sample Social Value:**  
*Traditional Families*

The older members of Country & Western have found plenty to entertain themselves. Self-described fitness fans, they like to swim, hike, golf and work in the garden. Many are music buffs who enjoy pop and rock performances, and they lead most segments in attending country music concerts; Country & Western is also one of the top segments for attending pro hockey games. They'll drive to a city to visit a casino or museum, but closer to home, they make do with an evening at a pub, community theatre or sports bar. Having saved conservatively for years—mutual funds, term deposits and GICs are popular—many have a solid net worth, allowing them to donate regularly to charities. As media consumers, they get most of their news and entertainment from the TV (they especially like daytime talk shows and reality programs) and turn to radio for oldies and country music. They're more likely to read a community paper than a daily, but they rarely buy a magazine unless it covers gardening, homes or the outdoors. And these tech-shy Canadians are light Internet users, doing little online except occasionally paying bills, redeeming mobile coupons and buying groceries.

### How They Think

The members of Country & Western prefer the old ways of doing things. They aren't interested in modern definitions of family, insisting that the father must always be head of the household (*Traditional Families, Patriarchy*). They place great importance on their religious affiliation (*Religiosity*) and claim it's their duty to help others before themselves. In addition to its many other top-scoring attributes, Country & Western has one of the highest percentages of volunteers among all segments, reflecting residents' interest in *Community Involvement*. These older Canadians are comfortable with the relaxed, informal nature of rural living (*Rejection of Orderliness*), and they try to live their lives by relying less on impulse and emotions than on reason and logic (*Emotional Control*). Many express a strong *Attraction to Nature* but feel environmental degradation is somewhat inevitable (*Ecological Fatalism*). As consumers, they tend to base purchase decisions on utilitarian rather than aesthetic considerations (*Utilitarian Consumerism*), but they admit to sometimes *Buying on Impulse*. However, their *Technology Anxiety* and *Skepticism Towards Advertising* mean their impulsiveness rarely extends to buying the latest digital devices.

## Where They Live



## How They Live





**Population:**  
486,250  
(1.28% of Canada)

**Households:**  
159,324  
(1.07% of Canada)

**Average Household Income:**  
\$79,362

**Average Household Net Worth:**  
\$151,069

**House Tenure:**  
Band

**Education:**  
Grade 9/High School

**Occupation:**  
Mixed

**Cultural Diversity Index:**  
Low

**Sample Social Value:**  
*Search for Roots*

## Younger and middle-aged First Nations, Inuit and Métis families

### Who They Are

Nearly 95 percent of Indigenous Families residents are of indigenous origin—mostly First Nations but also Inuit and Métis people—and they tend to be younger and middle-aged families living in remote communities. A segment that's grown slightly older over the last decade, it still stands out for having few couples without children, many lone-parent families and more than three times the national average of multi-generational households. More than 70 percent of residents live in single-detached homes, of which about 20 percent is band housing. Educational achievement is moderate: about 40 percent have gone beyond high school to complete college or trade school. While unemployment is much higher than the national average, most adults are in the labour force, earning lower-middle incomes from jobs in primary industries, health care, education and the trades. Indigenous Families members often defy their modest means with active, rustic lifestyles. They enjoy fishing, hunting, power boating and snowmobiling, and attend pro football games, horse racing events and RV shows. Not surprisingly they're passionate about maintaining their cultural traditions, scoring among the highest of all segments for the value *Search for Roots*.

Despite their remote communities, the members of Indigenous Families rarely lack for busy days. At home, they enjoy gardening and making crafts. In their communities, they do volunteer work and write public officials about local issues. Many take advantage of their bucolic settings for hiking, skiing and boating, and they score high for camping, often at national and provincial parks. When they go shopping, they typically drive their large pickups or midsize sedans to larger cities and major stores like Canadian Tire, Real Canadian Superstore, Mark's and Walmart. Indigenous Families members are selective media consumers, with little interest in print but enjoying talk shows, CFL football and news programs on TV and a range of music on the radio—including classic hits, country and hip hop. Because some First Nations Families communities lack high-speed Internet access, their digital footprint is limited. They're just an average Internet market, using their tablets to stream music, listen to a podcast and make an occasional purchase. But they prefer to use their mobile phones for most online activities, including playing games and listening to the radio.

### How They Think

The members of Indigenous Families tend to feel a certain amount of anxiety about their personal safety, but they're confident in their ability to cope with the uncertainties of modern life (*Fear of Violence, Adaptability to Complexity*). An independent group, they're comfortable going their own way and accept the risks that go with it (*Rejection of Authority, Penchant for Risk*). Many believe they have more energy than most people, and they turn to their natural surroundings to create a more balanced, healthier way of life that deemphasizes material expectations (*Vitality, Attraction to Nature, Voluntary Simplicity*). Indigenous Families households support the ability of diverse cultures to retain their traditions, believing that other groups have much to teach them (*Multiculturalism, Culture Sampling*). As consumers, they like to impress others with well-maintained homes decorated to convey prosperity (*Status via Home, Ostentatious Consumption*). Some feel that today's environmental problems may be beyond their abilities to overcome and are the price of economic advancement (*Ecological Fatalism*). But they're willing to do their part to improve their communities through volunteer work and social activism (*Community Involvement*).

## Where They Live



## How They Live



### LEISURE

fishing/hunting  
community theatres  
casinos  
horse racing



### SHOPPING

Home Hardware  
Walmart  
Giant Tiger  
convenience stores



### TRADITIONAL MEDIA

CFL football  
reality TV shows  
new and traditional country  
radio  
*Outdoor Canada*



### INTERNET

classifieds sites  
radio station sites  
restaurant guides/reviews  
purchase video games online



### FOOD/DRINK

frozen pizza  
condensed soup  
herbal tea  
taco restaurants



### FINANCIAL

credit unions  
dental insurance  
auto loans  
gas station quick pay cards



### AUTOMOTIVE

domestic compact SUVs  
domestic large pickups  
vehicles bought used  
under \$15,000 spent on  
vehicle



### SOCIAL

Facebook  
Pinterest  
Snapchat  
share links with friends and  
colleagues



### MOBILE

music streaming on tablet  
listen to radio/podcast on  
tablet  
banking on phone  
game apps



### HEALTH

Visited a nurse for last health  
consultation

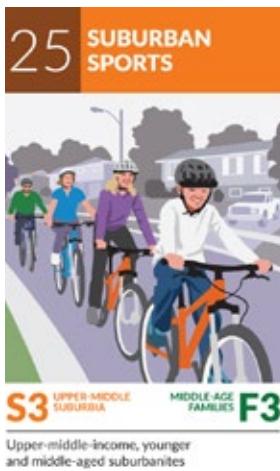
### ATTITUDES

"It's very important to be thoroughly familiar with what I think of as my region, its history, its customs and traditions"

"I would prefer to do most online activities using my phone instead of a computer"

"It's important to have a more intense and more spiritual inner life"

"In order to get what I like, I would be prepared to take great risks in life"



**Population:**  
973,860  
(2.56% of Canada)

**Households:**  
340,300  
(2.28% of Canada)

**Average Household Income:**  
\$124,461

**Average Household Net Worth:**  
\$543,718

**House Tenure:**  
Own

**Education:**  
Mixed

**Occupation:**  
Service Sector/Blue Collar

**Cultural Diversity Index:**  
Low

**Sample Social Value:**  
*Racial Fusion*

## Upper-middle-income, younger and middle-aged suburbanites

### Who They Are

Widely dispersed across Canada, Suburban Sports is one of the larger segments, a suburban refuge for younger and middle-aged families. Originally built on exurban tracts in the 1960s and 1970s, the subdivisions have evolved into conventional suburbs of small urban areas. Eight in ten households own a home, typically a singled-detached house or a duplex. The households are nearly evenly divided between couples and families, maintainers range from 35 to 64, and children are of all ages. Moderately educated, most adults have completed high school or college and hold service sector and blue-collar jobs in natural resources and the trades; thanks to dual incomes, these households earn solid, upper-middle-class incomes. Suburban Sports scores among the top segments for English-speaking residents, reflecting its third-plus-generation Canadian population of nearly 70 percent. No doubt the presence of children affects the popularity of family-friendly activities like snowboarding, baseball, basketball and swimming. But they also enjoy watching sports, rooting for their favourite pro hockey, soccer and football teams. Not surprising, Suburban Sports members score high for *Primacy of the Family*, making personal sacrifices to meet the needs of their family.

With their solid incomes, Suburban Sports members have the means to enroll their kids in soccer camp while they take a cruise or sightseeing trip to Mexico. These households frequent a wide range of cultural activities, from art galleries and theatre performances to rock and country music concerts. Regular exercise is important in this segment—and not just for kids. The adults like to bowl, golf and take Pilates classes. They're proud of their suburban homes and spend weekends doing landscaping, electrical and plumbing DIY projects before inviting friends over for coolers or Canadian rye whisky around their living room fireplace. But they also like to dine out, packing their families into a large domestic pickup or compact SUV and heading to casual family restaurants like Earls, Milestones and Montana's. While not the earliest tech adopters, they have embraced mobile phones and smart devices—TVs, watches and speakers—for entertainment as well as text messaging, responding to classified ads and downloading coupons. Traditional media is still popular however; Suburban Sports residents watch curling and football on TV, listen to country and gospel music on the radio and read outdoor magazines.

### How They Think

The members of Suburban Sports have relied on their strong *Work Ethic* to achieve upper-middle-class status and now want to instill in their children the principle of deferring pleasure and working hard to realize greater gains in the future. Despite their solid incomes, they still have *Financial Concern Regarding the Future*, especially since they want to leave a *Legacy* for future generations. These households also have a socially progressive streak, believing that other cultural groups should be allowed to preserve their traditions (*Multiculturalism*) and supporting diversity within families (*Racial Fusion*). Many define their identity through their *National Pride* and believe that Canada should hold a strong position in the world. But they also care deeply about their local communities and believe that getting involved in the political process can make a difference (*Community Involvement, Rejection of Inequality*). This altruism extends to the marketplace: they tend to make purchase decisions based on the ethics of a company—whether it treats employees fairly, tests its products on animals or participates in corrupt trade practices (*Ethical Consumerism*).

# APPENDIX B: EXISTING FACILITY AND SITE REVIEW REPORT (2023)

## EXISTING FACILITY AND SITE REVIEW REPORT (2023)

### ON SITE REVIEWS

FaulknerBrowns Architects visited the Smithers, BC on August 10, 2023, for site review and high-level condition assessments of following existing community facilities:

1. New Arena
2. Civic Center
3. Bulkley Valley Swimming Pool
4. Smithers Public Library

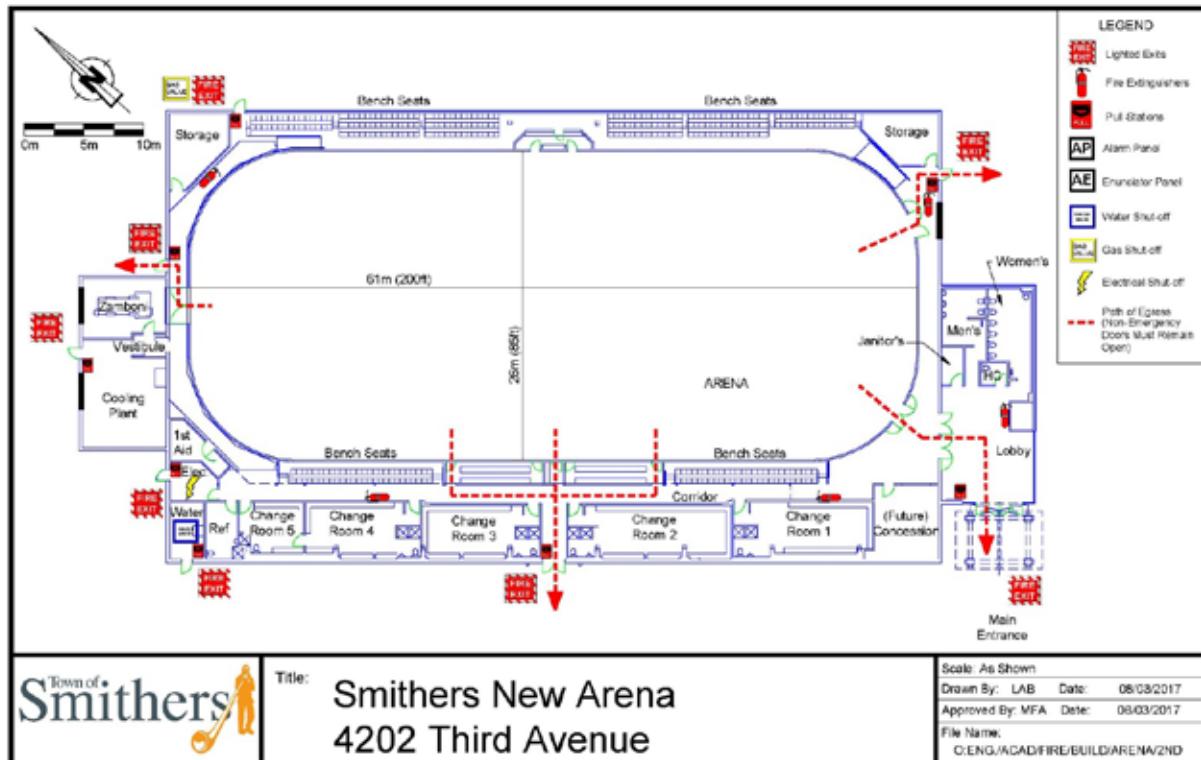
Access was provided to building interiors, as well as exterior common areas. Roof, crawl spaces and exterior façade envelope conditions were not reviewed in detail. On site observations have been cross-referenced against a previous engineering assessment report for the Civic Centre and Feasibility Study report for the Bulkley Valley Swimming Pool. The following is a high-level summary of physical site constraints, access and circulation, programmatic possibilities, and lifespan review for use as a community facility.

### KEY FINDINGS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Community Facility	Year of Construction	Key Findings/Considerations
<b>New Arena</b> (large lobby, single sheet of ice and 350 spectator seats)	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Although it offers an NHL-sized ice pad, the arena does not offer sufficient spectator seating required to host significant tournaments.</li><li>A new facility, minimal planned upgrades include LED lighting replacement.</li><li>Suggested improvements: Improved drainage at facility entrance, dedicated elevated wheelchair seating, accessible changeroom features, barrier-free rink access.</li></ul>
<b>Civic Centre</b> (single sheet of ice and 800 spectator seats)	1959 (Constructed as aircraft hangar in 1949, relocated and repurposed in 1959)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Because of its significant spectator seating capacity, the Civic Centre acts as the primary event arena for major hockey tournaments and competitive events.</li><li>The facility presents many accessibility challenges (changes in elevation, public washroom access, spectator seating access, ice access).</li><li>Based on the previous conditions assessment report, most building components assessed are recommended to be replaced within the next 5-10 years.</li><li>Suggested improvements: insulation at exterior walls and roof, HVAC improvements, new spectator seats, accessibility improvements (dedicated elevated wheelchair seating, accessible changeroom features, barrier-free rink access, re-configuration to provide level/barrier-free access to public and staff spaces)</li><li>Structural and envelope condition assessments are recommended.</li></ul>
<b>Bulkley Valley Regional Pool &amp; Recreation Centre</b> (pool, small fitness space, squash courts and climbing gym)	1991, Expansion in 2001, Hot tub replaced in 2006/2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ongoing/upcoming facility and maintenance projects include pool filter replacements.</li><li>Funding has been granted for planned improvements to administration and lobby area, a larger boot room, large fitness/multipurpose room and private staff office.</li><li>Given the age of the original facility, a physical condition assessment is recommended.</li><li>Suggested improvements: Improved access to the fitness room; review options for heat recovery from adjacent arenas; improve ramp access from changeroom to pool deck; universal washroom near lobby.</li></ul>
<b>Smithers Public Library</b>	1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A well-used and loved community amenity, the facility is at capacity. Its current size poses challenge to hosting events and expanding library programs. To meet community needs, the library requires expanded area that will allow for greater program variety, study and learning spaces, and hosting of group events, typical of contemporary library environments.</li><li>Basic accessibility provisions are provided throughout.</li><li>Given the age of the original facility, a physical condition assessment is recommended.</li></ul>

## 1. NEW ARENA

Ice Arena, NHL sized rink with minimal spectator seating, originally constructed in 2014.



### EXISTING FACILITY – FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

#### ACCESS AND PARKING

The facility is accessed by a large gravel parking lot which also services the Civic Center, the Bukley Valley Regional Pool and Recreation Centre, the Curling Club facility, and Heritage Park. There are two designated accessible parking stalls adjacent to the main entrance of the New Arena. The parking lot is packed gravel, the entrance to the arena is concrete. Three bicycle parking racks were noted near the main public entrance. The main entrance door area is weather protected by a timber roof structure. Currently, no public transit is serving the civic center and other recreational facilities in this area.



#### **EXISTING FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS**

Constructed in 2014, the building appears to have had minor alterations since construction. The New Arena hosts hockey and figure skating practice, public skate as well as occasional dry sports or events in the summer months. The facility operates as an ice arena August to March. During the summer months the arena is occasionally used for other activities such as pickleball and conventions.

Although the New Arena offers an NHL sized sheet of ice, the arena does not offer sufficient spectator seating required to host significant tournaments. With only 350 seats, tournaments must be held in the adjacent Civic Centre Arena. While it is the newest ice arena in the Town of Smithers, the New Arena is considered 'a second sheet of ice' due to its limitations in hosting competitive events. Town of Smithers does not anticipate major upgrades to this facility, as it is the most recently constructed ice arena in the town.

#### **Building Renovations**

The Town of Smithers has begun planning for an interior lighting upgrade to LED fixtures for long term energy and cost savings. Renovation date to be confirmed. Minor interior upgrades and maintenance is performed regularly by operations staff.

#### **Building Structure and Envelope**

The facility is a steel frame structure with steel columns, steel beams and steel bracing. The floor is a concrete slab. The roof assembly from interior to exterior consists of a primary large steel beam structure, with steel substructure followed by a roof insulation package and metal roof finish. Much of the interior wall and roof insulation assembly was noted as exposed and unprotected by ceiling panels or similar. The facility appears to be sprinklered throughout.

The exterior walls consist of primary columns, insulation assembly and exterior metal cladding.

Several dents in the exterior metal cladding were observed, likely due to snow drift and damage caused by vehicles.



As the insulation assembly along the interior face of the building walls was left open to the corridor and not protected, facility operations staff have applied plywood boards on most public areas. It was noted that some users have injured their heads on low-hanging exposed steel bracing and thus staff applied additional protection. Some interior walls have been lined with puck board to prevent damage to drywall and exposed insulation assemblies.



### **Sustainability**

The exterior building walls and roof appear to be continuously insulated. No renewable energy sources or heat recovery measures are present at this facility. The Town has expressed an interest in recommendations for future carbon or energy use reduction upgrades.

### **Accessibility**

The New Arena provides basic barrier-free access. Designated accessible parking is provided near the main entrance and there is a clear path of travel to the public entrance. The main entrances, the universal washroom door and the large lobby door to the ice arena have push-button activated automatic door openers. Spectator seating on the northeast side and change rooms can be accessed without stairs or steps. Tactile markings and colour contrasting edges are located throughout the facility. Visible and audible fire alarms are also provided throughout the building. Signage including emergency exits, fire exit routes, skate rules, evacuation plan, washrooms are clearly visible.

#### Suggested Areas for improvement in Accessibility:

- Improved drainage and snow removal at facility entrance. It was noted that the parking area near the main entrance collects significant snow melt, slush and water in the winter/shoulder seasons, making access to the main door challenging for people having difficulties walking or using a wheelchair.
- Dedicated elevated wheelchair seating, important for proposer sightlines to the ice for people using wheelchairs.
- Change rooms do not currently meet accessibility best practices, including providing accessible toilet stalls and accessible benches with handrails.
- Unobstructed Ice Access. Ice access currently requires navigation of an approx. 150mm high ledge.
- Assistive listening and communication enhancement technologies at reception.
- Tactile and braille signage and wayfinding.



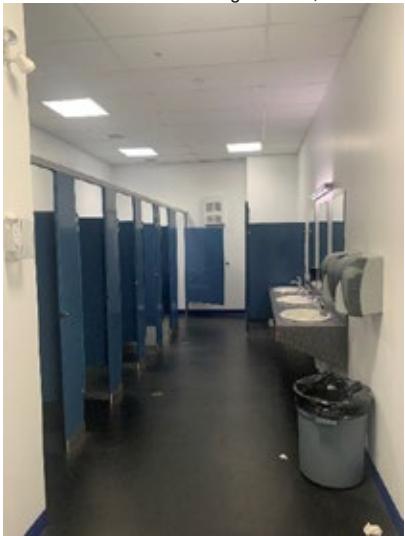
### **Lobby**

The facility public entrance is through a well-lit entrance lobby. The lobby provides access to the arena, public washrooms, a vending machine, and janitorial/storage rooms. Inside the lobby is a trophy cabinet, a vending machine, water bottle re-fill station. Large windows allow for views onto the skateboard park, baseball fields and parking lots. One of the largest community public spaces in Smithers, staff expressed an interest in opportunities for future alternative and secondary community uses of the lobby area.



#### **Public Washrooms**

Public washrooms including a men's, women's and universal washrooms are accessed through the main lobby.



#### **Spectator Seating**

Seating benches for 350 spectators are provided along the east and west dasher board walls. Seating along the south/west side of the ice rink is elevated from the corridor level and can be accessed taking two stair steps. The steps are marked with colour contrasting strips in yellow and a handrail is provided. The spectator seating along the north/east side of the ice rink is not elevated. It can be accessed without having to use any steps or stairs. Overhead heaters are provided at spectator seating areas.



#### **Storage**

There are two janitor storage rooms in the entrance lobby, and a third room that is currently used for minor hockey storage. This area was planned to be a concession with a concession window to the lobby side. The interior of the room is unfinished with no wall or ceiling finish. Items are stored at the top shelf, underneath the sprinklers. The top shelf should be free of items to not impact sprinkler functionality.

A small room at the southwest end of the facility is dedicated to public skate rental equipment.

There is no figure skating storage in this facility. Staff noted overall need for more dedicated storage in the facility.

#### **Change Rooms**

The Arena includes five team change rooms and one referee change room located along the south/west side of the facility. The change rooms vary in size. The referee change room is significantly smaller than other change rooms. It was noted that referees frequently use the women's change room and female players use the referee change room.

Inside a typical change room are benches, coat hooks, a vandal resistant stainless-steel sink, one toilet and urinal and one shower. There are no grab bars or clearances for an accessible toilet stall in the change rooms. The finishes are resilient flooring, gypsum board ceiling and tiled walls.

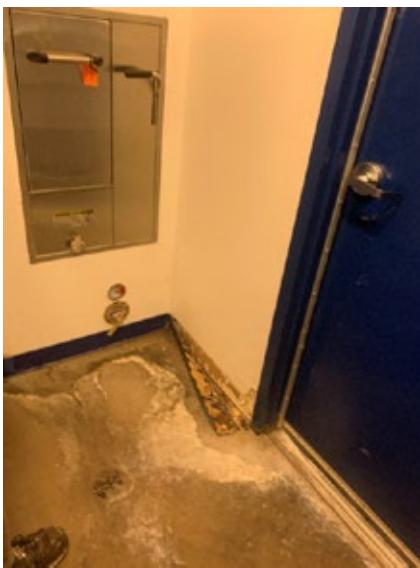
#### **Staff Spaces**

A small office is located in former first aid room. The first aid room was noted as no longer required.

#### **Zamboni Room and Cooling Plant**

The Zamboni Room, located at the north end of the facility, accommodates the Zamboni (Olympia Icebear, Electric), service equipment and a small workbench. The ice pit is located outside of the facility. It was noted that the Zamboni Room is too small in size, a ice pit would have been preferred on the interior to prevent deterioration to the Zamboni equipment required to drive over the parking lot to dump snow and return.

Drywall installed in the Zamboni room as part of original construction was since been removed by operations staff because of moisture issues. Water damage at walls near Zamboni room was observed.



#### **Mechanical/Service spaces**

The mechanical room is located on a second level above the change room areas in the north-west corner of the building. The upper level is accessed by a ladder only. The upper level stretches above the entire length of the change rooms, but is not open to the public.

#### **SUMMARY FUNCTIONAL REVIEW:**

##### **General**

While the New Arena meets general arena functional requirements, the Town of Smithers expressed frustration with the new facility not being equipped to serve as a tournament venue. This requires the Civic Center to remain operational for tournament use. Other than the New Arena's inability to host major tournaments, the facility is largely meeting the community's needs.

##### **Recommended Best Practice Improvements**

- Best practices in arena construction would include sufficient spectator seating numbers for hosting of competitive events.
- The exterior metal cladding and metal roof conform with typical material choices, however the interior finishes of the building should be more durable and vandal resistant.
- LED lighting upgrades throughout the building.
- Two separate referee change spaces.
- During the site visit facility staff noted the corridor space was originally intended as an interior walking path. The walking path is currently located between the ice rink and spectator seating as well is blocked by doors and stored equipment. Best practice would be to design a walking track area separate from the access corridor to avoid any obstructions.
- Accessibility provisions:
  - All public areas including change rooms and staff rooms designed to be accessible without any steps or stairs to access.
  - At least one universal change room.
  - Barrier free access to the ice rink.

#### **EXISTING FACILITY – LIFE SPAN REVIEW**

##### **Life Cycle Stage**

Life Cycle Stage 2 (9 years old). During this stage, standard operating and maintenance budgets are typically adequate to operate the facility and additional expenditures for major refurbishment or replacement of the building elements are not required.

##### **High level lifespan review (based on previous reports)**

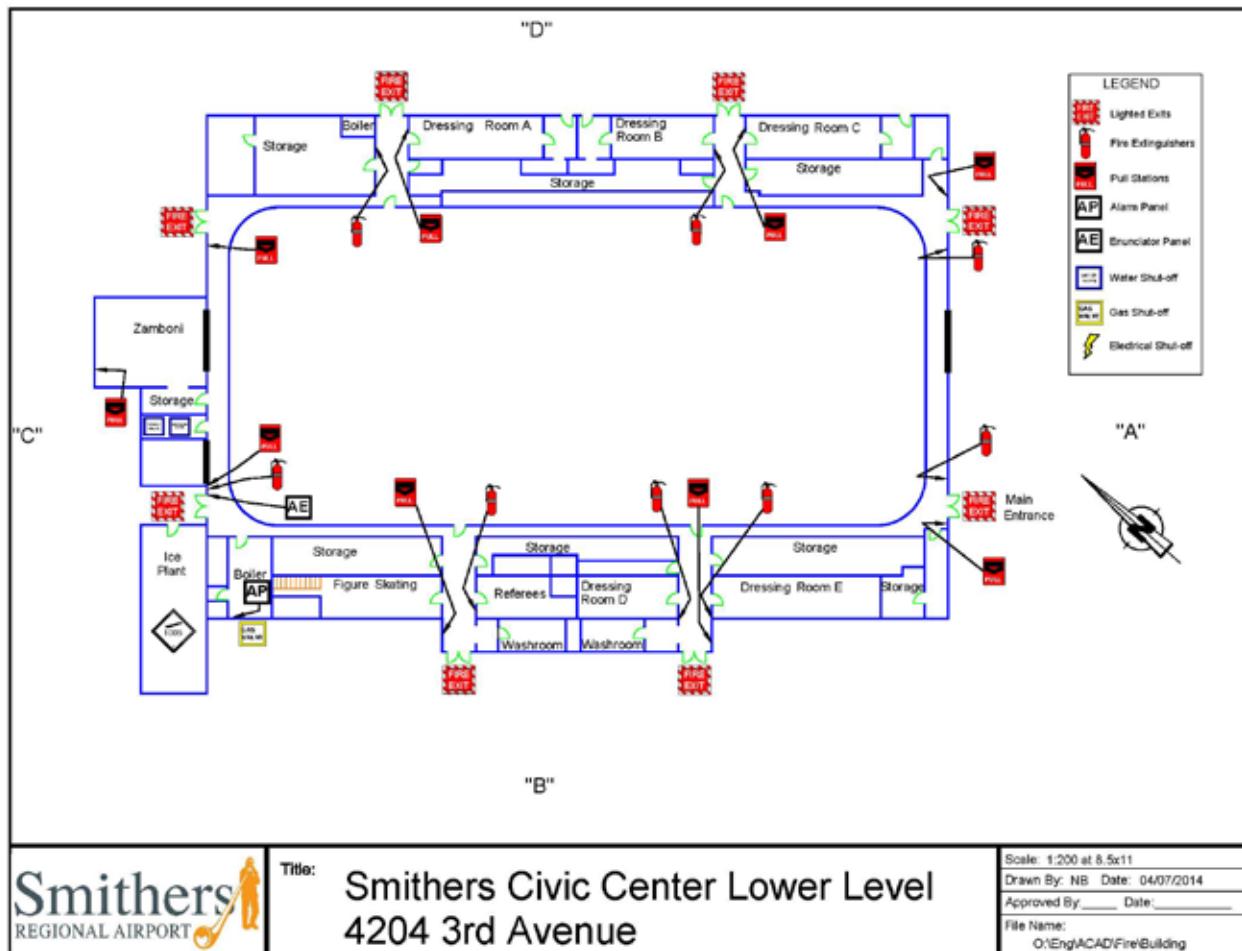
No reports available.

##### **Limitations, Risks and Considerations for involved in renovating a public facility:**

Rehabilitation, Renovation or Expansion may require code-mandated improvements. Dependent on extent of upgrades, these may include improvements to the fire alarm, sprinkler system, exits, accessibility provisions, seismic upgrades, building envelope upgrades, and changes to energy or water efficiency systems.

## 2. CIVIC CENTRE

Ice Arena with single sheet of ice and spectator seating, constructed in 1959 .



### EXISTING FACILITY – FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

#### ACCESS AND PARKING

The facility is accessed by a large gravel parking lot which also services the Civic Center, the Bukley Valley Regional Pool and Recreation Centre, the Curling Club facility, and Heritage Park. There is a single designated accessible parking stall adjacent to one of the south main entrances to the arena.



There are two main entrances. One at the south and one at the north of the facility. The south entrance provides steps and a ramp and is protected by a small canopy. The north entrance is protected from weather by a recess and has a level paved path leading to the door. Currently, no public transit is serving the civic center and other recreational facilities in this area.



Left image: South entrance  
Right image: North entrance



#### EXISTING FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS

Constructed in 1945 as an aircraft hangar in Terrace, the building was relocated to Smithers in 1959, where it was repurposed as an ice rink. The facility together with the New Arena are the only indoor ice arenas in the Town of Smithers. Because of its sufficient spectator seating capacity, the Civic Centre acts as the primary event arena for major hockey tournaments and competitive events. The Civic Centre operates as an ice arena from October to March and hosts the occasional summer tournament.

During the site visit, it was mentioned that typically one staff member operates the facility, which includes but is not limited to janitorial tasks, cleaning change rooms, operating the Zamboni, and being present for daily tasks as well as events.

Although the facility does not meet many of the requirements of a modern ice arena and the building structure, is in noted fair condition, the community relies on this facility for major events and tournaments. It is our understanding that the Town of Smithers is looking for recommendations on possible improvements regarding functionality, accessibility and maintenance and operational challenges.

#### Regulatory/Health and Life Safety Concerns

##### Building Renovations:

As outlined in the SPG Building Condition Assessment - Civic Centre (2021) the following renovations have been completed:

- 1985 Sprinkler System
- 1988 Gas-Fired Water Heater
- 1990 Vinyl Window located in the Office.
- 1994 Sound System
- 1996 Domestic Hot Water Circulation Pumps
- 1999 Electrical Water Heater
- 2001 Domestic Hot Water Storage Tanks
- 2002 Metal Cladding Building Envelope
- 2002 Zamboni Garage Addition
- 2002 Overhead Doors installed.
- 2002 Roof Exhaust Fan
- 2004 Gas-Fired Water Heater
- 2007 Boilers
- 2009 Heating Hot Water Circulation Pumps
- 2009 Lighting Interior
- 2012 Electrical Meter

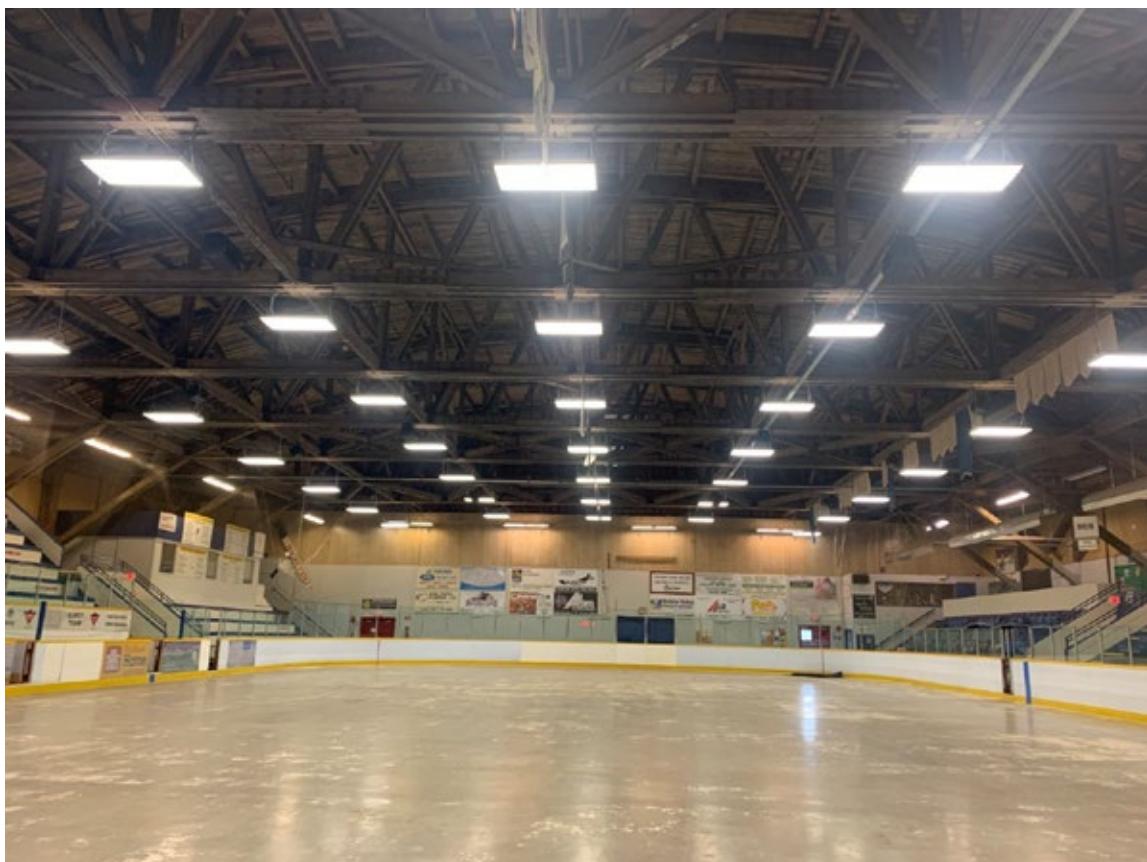
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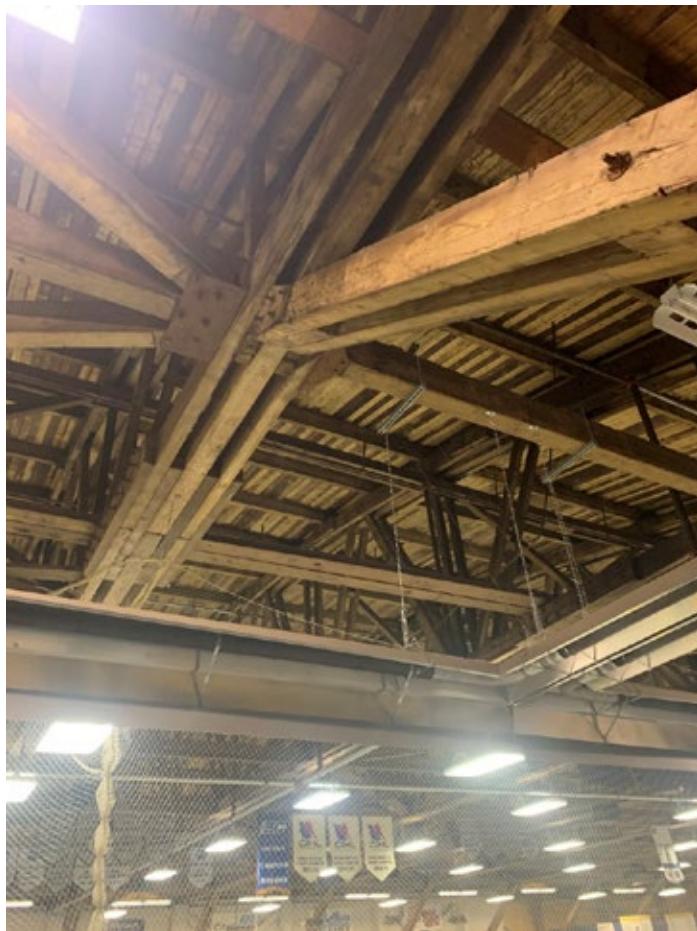
2013 Radiant Tube Heaters  
2011 Exterior Steel Doors  
2018 Emergency Shower/Eyewash Station in west mechanical room  
2022 Building Metal Roof  
2023 Ice Plant Replacement  
Upcoming: Interior lighting replacement with LED fixtures

#### **Building Structure and Envelope**

The building is noted to have concrete foundation walls and slabs. The facility roof structure consists of timber trusses with exposed wood roof deck underside and timber cross bracing. Exterior walls consist of a timber substructure structure with metal cladding on the exterior. It was observed that the metal cladding on the exterior was in fair condition with dents, scratches and open areas primarily on the lower half of the façade. Exterior doors and windows are constructed in steel, wood and vinyl. The roof consists of a metal and modified bitumen roof, which was noted to have been recently replaced in 2022.

Inside the arena, painted drywall and wood wall finishes are visible. As per previously provided report, the facility is heated by boilers, radiant tube heaters and electrical units. Domestic hot water is provided by electric and gas-fired water heaters. The building appears to have a dry sprinkler system. The report also notes that the building does not have a centralized fire alarm system, however the system includes life safety systems such as alarm bells, pull stations, smoke alarms, emergency battery pack lights and exit lights.





### **Sustainability**

The building envelope does not seem to be insulated. During the site review it was noted that turning on the heating at the spectator seating area causes ice to melt and reduces the ice quality. Therefore, often the heaters are not turned on during an event or tournament. No other energy saving components or sustainability features were observed.

### **Accessibility**

Generally, the facility provides basic barrier-free access from the north entrance to the facility. The south entrance has a concrete ramp which appears to be very steep for independent wheelchair use. Designated accessible parking is provided near the main entrance and there is a clear path of travel to the building. Colour contrasting edges can be found throughout the facility. Signage including emergency exits, fire exit routes, skate rules, evacuation plan, washrooms are clearly visible.

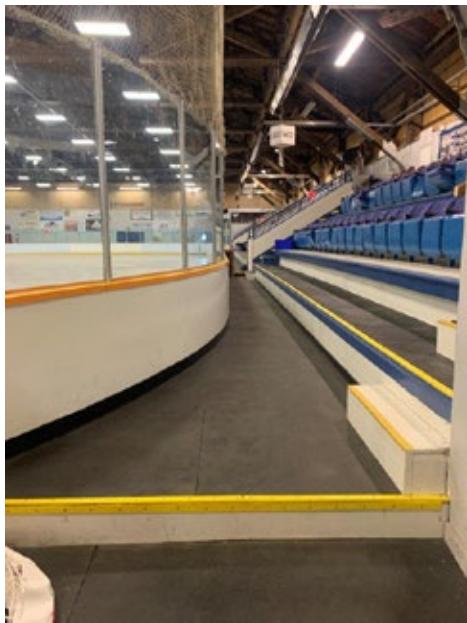
#### *Recommended accessibility improvements:*

- Removing steps and other changes in elevation: The north arena access is level and does not have any stepped transitions. However, inside the arena steps are required to access most interior spaces, including spectator seating, circulation corridor and public washrooms.
- To access public washrooms without using any steps, users are required to exit the arena and enter at an exit door which provides direct access to the washroom.
- Add a universal washroom.
- Dedicated elevated wheelchair seating, so that people sitting in a wheelchair have good sightlines to the ice.
- Change rooms do not meet accessibility best practices such as providing any accessible toilet stalls and wider benches with handrails.
- Unobstructed Ice Access. Ice access currently requires navigation of an approx.150mm high ledge.
- Tactile and braille signage and wayfinding.



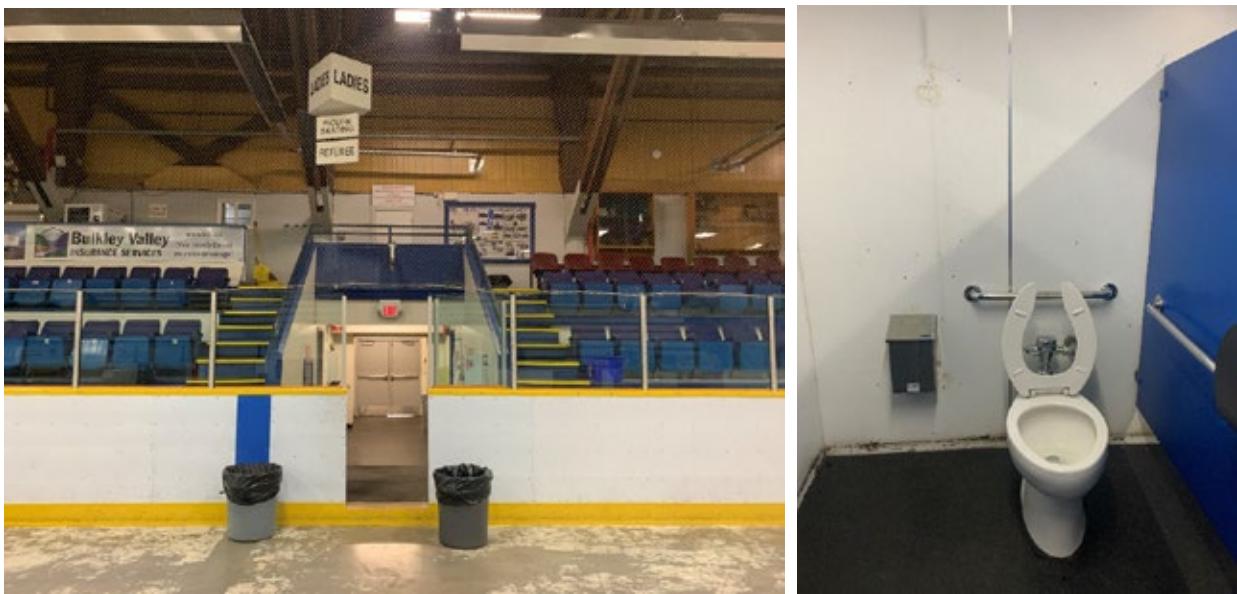
### Lobby

The facility main entrances do not have designated lobby spaces or entrance vestibules. Immediately after entering the arena, one is required to take steps to access the spectator seating or upper levels. Tickets are sold at the south entrance door.



### Public Washrooms

The public washrooms, including a men's and women's washroom is located is located central between the spectator seating area. The women's washroom includes a larger toilet stall with grab bars.



#### **Spectator Seating**

800 spectator seats are provided on the west and east side of the arena. Seats on the west side are individual seats covered with textile. On the east side bench seating makes up the remainder of the seating area. It was noted that the individual fold-down seats are re-purposed from an old movie theatre. The seats are in poor condition and were described to be very difficult to maintain and clean. No accessible seating is provided. Overhead heaters are located along the seating on the west side. The many steps and elevation changes pose increased challenges in cleaning the seating and corridor areas.



#### **Storage**

There are multiple storage areas in the facility. These include spaces below the spectator seating, in the former ticket booth next to the south entrance, upper level and former concession on the upper level. Staff noted on site that the use of the storage areas could be improved.

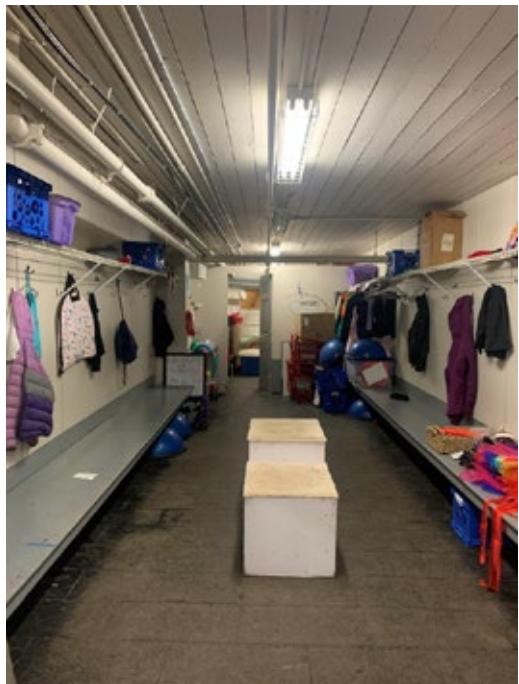


#### Change Rooms/Dressing Rooms

There are six team change rooms and one referee change room. Figure skating has a designated change room in the facility.

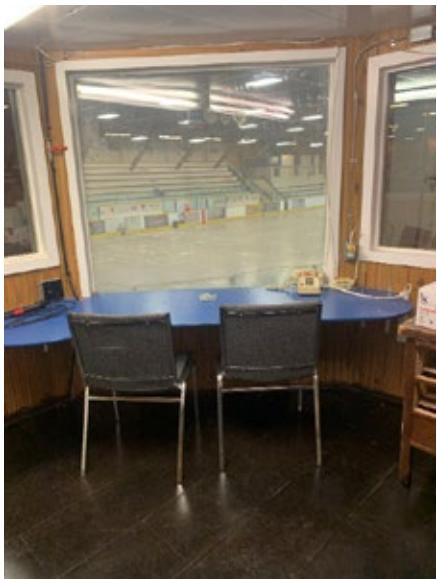
It was noted that typically only four dressing rooms are required and the remaining could be reconfigured.

The dressing rooms typically seem to consist of a narrow room with benches on either side and a toilet and shower at the end of the change room.



#### Staff Spaces

A staff office and a board room is located on the second floor above the spectator seating. A small room on the upper level overlooking the ice seems to be dedicated for game announcements etc.



#### **Zamboni, Cooling Plant**

The Zamboni room is located at the north end of the facility. During the site visit no ice was in the ice arena. The Zamboni room was used for storage of construction material related to the renewal of the ice plant works.

#### **Mechanical/Service spaces**

The mechanical room is located on ground level in the west corner of the facility close to the ice plant. A small boiler room is located on the east corner. No major immediate concerns were noted regarding the mechanical equipment.

### **SUMMARY FUNCTIONAL REVIEW**

#### **General**

While the facility meets the Town of Smithers need for a tournament and event facility, the aging building seems to have many operational challenges. Described challenges include:

- Increased maintenance and janitorial tasks, especially with keeping the facility clean.
- The many steps (level changes) present accessibility concerns, not only for wheelchair users but also for people with difficulties walking.
- Issues with ice melt when the heaters at the spectator seating is turned on, resulting in very cold interior temperatures in the winter. This, however, was not noted as a major complaint by the public.

Current planned renovations of the ice plant will likely cause a delayed opening of the facility in November 2023. With recent renovations of the roof and ice plant the Town of Smithers appears to be investing in maintaining the facility for many years to come. No replacement of the facility within the next 5-10 years is currently planned.

#### **Recommended best practice improvements**

- The impressive timber roof structure appears to be in fair condition, however the timber cross bracing is showing some cracking. A structural condition assessment is recommended.
- If the exterior painted metal cladding is replaced at a future time, insulation of the exterior walls is recommended, to decrease heat loss in the interior. Envelope Consultant assessment would be recommended at this time.
- The textile fold-down spectator seating is in poor condition and could be replaced with seats which are easier to clean and more robust.
- Although generally functional, interior layout and finishes in the change/dressing rooms could benefit from a renovation.
- Install LED lighting throughout the building.
- Addition of at least one accessible/universal change room(s).
- Barrier-free access to the ice rink would be recommended.

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Barrier-free access to public washrooms and the addition of a universal washroom would be a positive improvement. It is understood that with the current floor plan and changes in elevation of the corridor leading to the washrooms, barrier free access without any steps is not possible. Floor clearances in front of steps or stairs are not large enough to add accessible ramps.

If the goal is to improve accessibility and cleanability of the facility by reducing the changes in elevation and providing level access, a general re-configuration of the west side of the arena might be the only option. This could include removing the current seating structure with below storage and change rooms as well as upper-level uses. A revised, more efficient layout of change/dressing rooms, public washrooms, access to spectator seating and previously upper level uses, as well as replacement of the spectator seats could address user needs and improve usability of the facility.

#### **EXISTING FACILITY – LIFE SPAN REVIEW**

##### **Life Cycle Stage**

Life Cycle Stage 5 (35 years and older). During this stage, facilities typically become more costly to operate and maintain. As well, large scale rehabilitation or replacement may be required in order to continue to serve the community.

##### **High level lifespan review (based on previous reports)**

SPG Building Condition Assessment - Civic Centre (2021): most building components assessed are recommended to be replaced within the next 5-10 years. This includes, but is not limited, to Interior Finishes, Exterior Wall Cladding, Doors and Windows, Metal Roof, Interior and Exterior Lighting, Building Slab on Grade and Foundations and several Mechanical system components. Repair or replacement in 8 years or later include Overhead Doors, recently replaced Mechanical equipment.

##### **Limitations, Risks and Considerations for involved in renovating a facility of this age:**

Rehabilitation, Renovation or Expansion may require code-mandated improvements. Dependent on extent of upgrades, these may include improvements to the fire alarm, sprinkler system, exits, accessibility provisions, seismic upgrades, building envelope upgrades, and changes to energy or water efficiency systems.

### 3. BULKLEY VALLEY REGIONAL POOL & RECREATION CENTRE

Natatorium and mixed-use recreation facility, constructed in 1991 with building expansion in 2001.

Existing facility reports listed in BV Regional Pool and Recreation Center Facility Function and Program Report issued in 2022:

- 2005 Facility and Program Review (PERC)
- 2017 Facility Lifecycle Assessment report
- 2018 Facility Energy Study & Assessment, 3 of 4 recommendations completed
- 2021 Facility Function and Program Review
- 2022 BV Regional Pool and Recreation Center Carscadden Facility Function and Program Report 2022



Image source: BV Aquatic Centre Management Society AGM document, 2022

#### EXISTING FACILITY – FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

##### ACCESS AND PARKING

The facility is accessed by a large, paved parking lot which also services the Civic Center to the north, the Bulkley Valley Regional Pool and Recreation Centre, the Curling Club facility, and Heritage Park. There are two designated accessible parking stalls adjacent to the pool main entrance. The entrance to the facility is level with accessible access. Ample bicycle parking racks were noted near the main public entrance. The main entrance door area is weather-protected by a pitched roof structure. Currently, no public transit is serving the civic center and other recreational facilities in this area.

## EXISTING FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS

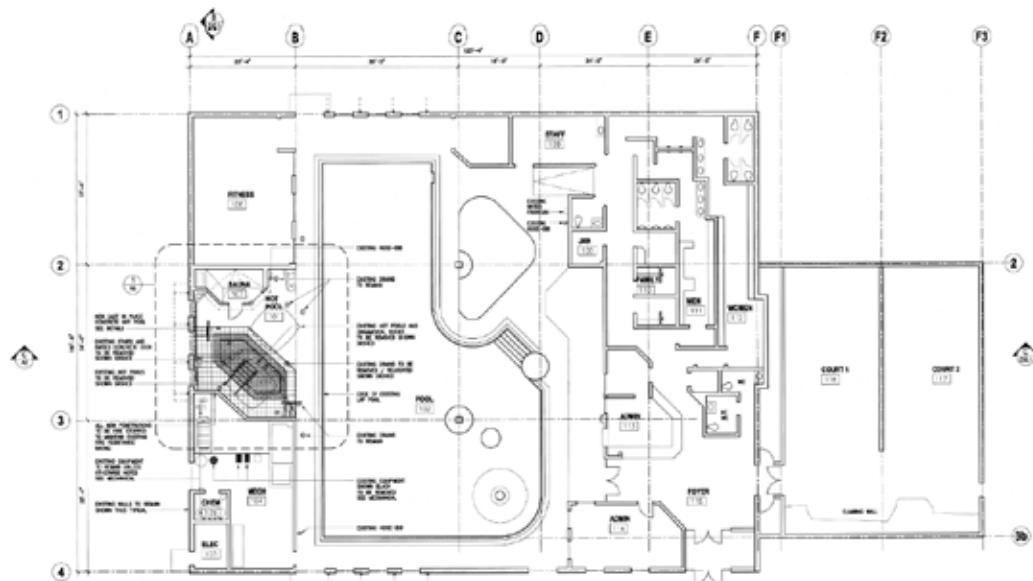


Image source: Key Plan A1, Bruce Carscadden Architect inc., Bulkley Valley Hot Pool Replacement

The facility is currently recreation facility with a pool, small fitness space, squash courts and climbing gym in the Town of Smithers. Staff noted that the facility has experienced a number of facilities closures due to staffing challenges.

Originally built in 1991, the building has undergone improvements and alterations since construction. According to the BV Regional Pool and Recreation Centre Facility Function and Program Report issued in 2022, squash courts and a climbing gym were added to the facility in 2001/2002 and the hot tub replaced in 2006/2007.

### Regulatory/Health and Life Safety Concerns

#### Building Renovations

As noted in the 2022 BV Aquatic Centre Management Society AGM report, there were several building renovations completed in 2022. Staff noted infrastructural improvements include:

- Locker replacements
- Court and Climbing Wall roof renewal
- Tot Slide replacement as well as installing a locking gate for the Pool ramp

In 2022, a BV Regional Pool and Recreation Centre Facility Function and Program Report was issued by Carscadden Stokes McDonald Architects Inc. It proposes a phased strategy to improve the existing facility.

Phase 1 includes a building addition to the front of the building re-configuring the administration and lobby area, a larger boot room, large fitness/multipurpose room and private staff offices. There is an intention to convert the existing Fitness Studio into a multi-purpose space. Staff noted funding for Phase 1 of the long-term project has been granted.

Additional facility and maintenance projects planned for 2023/ 2024, as per 2022 BV Aquatic Centre Management Society AGM notes, are the replacement of all three pool filters, floor scrubbers, and two cardio bikes. Outdoor shade options for Summer Kids Camp are to be considered. During

the site walkthrough the planned replacement of the sand filters was mentioned, and it was noted facility may also be looking HVAC system replacement in the near future. Upgrades to selected water features have been completed.

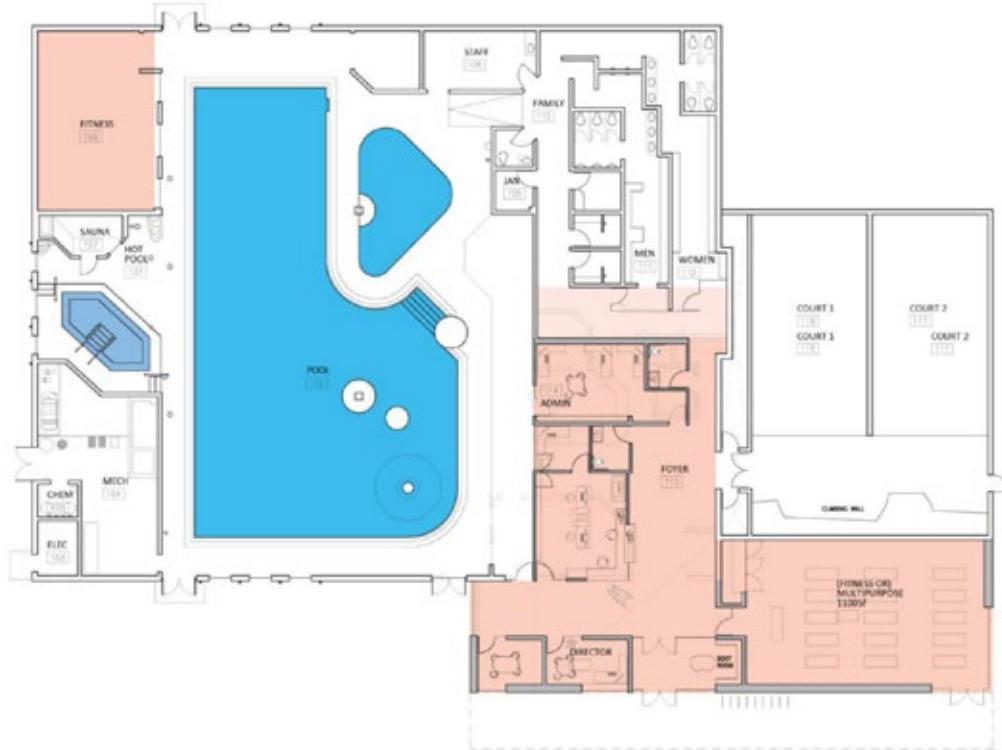


Image Source: BV Regional Pool and Recreation Center Carscadden Facility Function and Program Report 2022

#### Building Structure and Envelope

On visual inspection, facility structure and building envelope seems to be in good condition. No significant structural or envelope related failures were noticed or noted by staff. A comprehensive facility condition assessment has not been undertaken.



### **Sustainability**

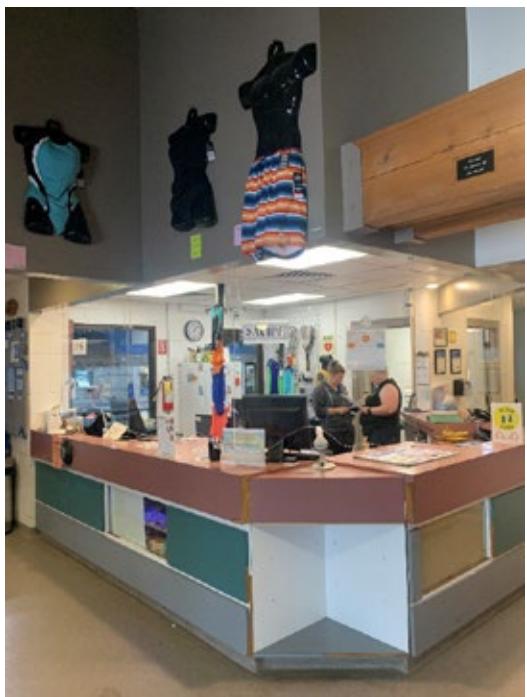
In the 2022 BV Aquatic Centre Management Society AGM Report it is noted that the installation of Electrical Vehicle (EV) charging stations was discussed but investigations to implement have stalled. The report also mentions consideration for a collaboration with the Town of Smithers, regarding installing a heat recovery system in coordination with the adjacent ice plants of the arena buildings, is on hold.

### **Accessibility**

Basic barrier-free access is provided to enter the BV Pool facility. Designated accessible parking is provided near the main entrance and there is a clear path of travel to the public entrance. Automatic door operators are installed at the main entrance door. A universal shower including adult change table and hoist is located a suitable location between entrance and pool access.

#### Suggested Areas for Accessibility Improvements:

- Redesign of the reception counter millwork to accommodate different counter heights and leg room clearance. The existing counter is not built to current building code accessibility standards or best practice. Replacement is likely to be incorporated in the Phase 1 planned improvements.
- A wide ramp/sloped corridor provides access from the change room area to the pool deck. The ramp is steep (potentially a running slope with a ratio greater than 1:12 (8.33%) and staff confirmed wheelchair access is difficult using the ramp.
- Although an accessible pool ramp is provided to the leisure pool area, the contrasting nosing tile poses a barrier at the top of ramp. Best practice is to provide flush, barrier free access from pool deck to the start of the pool ramp.
- Improved accessing to the fitness facility: Where it is currently located, people with mobility challenges must cross through the change room area and pool deck to access the fitness room.
- Assistive listening and communication enhancement technologies at reception
- Tactile and braille signage and wayfinding



#### **Natatorium**

The pool hall includes three tanks. The main pool, a four lane, 25-meter lap pool and family/leisure zone with water features and tot slide, a smaller tot pool and a 25-person hot pool. The leisure zone has ramp access and the hot pool is raised with a transfer wall, which allows a person to leave a mobility device and transfer onto the wall and then into the pool.

#### **Change Rooms**

The facility includes a women's, men's and family change/shower room area.

#### **Squash Courts and Climbing Gym**

Two squash courts and a climbing/bouldering gym are located at the south of the building, accessed thought the entrance lobby. At time of site visit, both venues were in use.



### **Staff Spaces**

Administrative offices are located adjacent to the reception counter area.

### **Mechanical/Service spaces**

The mechanical room, chemical room and electrical equipment room is located at the northwest of the building and can be accessed through the pool deck area as well as from the parking lot on the building exterior.

### **SUMMARY FUNCTIONAL REVIEW:**

#### **General**

The Bukley Valley Pool and Recreation Center meets basic recreation requirements for the Town of Smithers. However, the desire to increase the Facility Function and Improve Community Access has been explored in the *2022 BV Regional Pool and Recreation Center Carscadden Facility Function and Program Report 2022*.

#### **Recommended Best Practice Improvements**

- The Pool and Recreation facility is in close proximity to the two ice arenas, curling rink, baseball fields and skate park. Best practice is to identify synergies between the facilities and programs offered. Examples would be implementing heat recovery systems utilizing waste heat from the ice rink and direct it to the natatorium. In addition, the variety of programs offered on the site could benefit from using shared multipurpose and outdoor spaces.
- Community recreation facilities should provide equal access to everyone who would like to participate. Proposed Phase 1 described in the *2022 BV Regional Pool and Recreation Center Carscadden Facility Function and Program Report 2022* seems to provide a first step towards creating more equal access and increasing the functionality and program opportunities in the facility.
- Accessibility provisions
  - All public areas including change rooms and staff rooms designed to be accessible without any steps or stairs to access.
  - All areas including reception and lobby designed to current accessibility standards, barrier free access to all public areas including staff/admin, change rooms, pools, fitness, viewing areas and multipurpose rooms.
  - Inclusive change and washroom designs based on the community requirements. Best practice is to explore and define the needs of the community and develop an inclusive wash and change room strategy. This may include full universal washrooms, a mix of universal and gendered washrooms or other flexible arrangements to best suit the needs to the community.

### **EXISTING FACILITY – LIFE SPAN REVIEW**

#### **Life Cycle Stage**

Life Cycle Stage 4 (32 years old). During this stage, many of the facilities major components will require replacement. In addition to standard operating and maintenance budgets, significant capital improvements may be required to extend the life of the facility.

#### **High level lifespan review (based on previous reports)**

No reports available.

#### **Limitations, Risks and Considerations for involved in renovating a facility of this age:**

Rehabilitation, Renovation or Expansion may require code-mandated improvements (BCBC, Health Act). Dependent on extent of upgrades, these may include improvements to fire alarm, sprinkler system, exits, accessibility provisions, finishes, seismic upgrades, building envelope upgrades, and changes to energy or water efficiency systems.

## 4. SMITHERS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public Library, originally constructed in 1967.



Image source: BV Aquatic Centre Management Society AGM document, 2022.

### EXISTING FACILITY – FUNCTIONAL REVIEW

#### ACCESS AND PARKING

Pedestrian paths lead to the main entrance of the library which is weather protected by a wood structure. The path connects to the adjacent sidewalks and leads to a parking lot north of the library building. No dedicated accessible parking was observed. A welcoming courtyard is located next to the main entrance with seating options, planters and bicycle parking.

#### EXISTING FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS

Constructed in 1967, the building appears to have had some alterations since construction. The only public library in the Town of Smithers, the facility includes a children's area, adult/youth sections and a shared working area with multipurpose functions and paper printing options.



View of the multipurpose area.

#### **Regulatory/Health and Life Safety Concerns**

##### **Building Renovations**

The library has undergone previous expansion projects since construction. During the site visit, it was noted that several recent feasibility studies and reports have been conducted, however funding has not been secured to realize any of those plans.

##### **Building Structure and Envelope**

The single storey building seems to be a timber structure on concrete slab. No concerns regarding the structural elements, building envelope or roof were noted during the site visit.

##### **Sustainability**

No sustainability or energy saving measures were noted.

##### **Accessibility**

Basic barrier-free access is provided to the library through a level pathway. Automatic door operators are installed at the main entrance door. A universal washroom is located next to the main entrance and lobby area.

##### **Suggested Areas for improvement in Accessibility:**

- The automatic door opener (ADO) was not working at time of site visit. Recommendation to recommission the ADO.
- The pedestrian path from the main entrance leads to the gravel parking lot. The gravel surface presents mobility challenges and access limitations in poor weather conditions.
- Assistive listening and communication enhancement technologies at service counters
- Tactile and braille signage and wayfinding



#### **Library Interior**

The open floorplan allows for easy access to all areas. The children's area is more secluded and next to the main lobby and washrooms. The adult and youth section form the majority of book display area. A central reading section and multipurpose space, used for events and presentations has natural light entering the room from the east. Desks are arranged with views to the courtyard or in more private areas. Printers and other equipment including desktop computers are available for public use.



Children's area and adult/youth stacks

#### **Staff Spaces**

Administrative offices are located behind the reception desk. Service spaces were not observed at time of visit.



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## **SUMMARY FUNCTIONAL REVIEW:**

### **General**

The Smithers Public Library is a well-used and loved community amenity. Generally, it meets basic library requirements but because of its size constraints, the library is unable to host events and expanding library programs. To meet the community's growing needs, the library requires expanded area to offer greater program variety, improve the capacity to host groups and serve as a contemporary community learning hub.

### **Recommended Best Practice Improvements**

- The library appears to be at capacity, and utilizing all space available in its existing facility.
- Best practice for contemporary library design would be to:
  - Universal/barrier-free access to all public and staff spaces
  - Variety and type of seating, reading and learning environments (private study space, one to one sharing, small group space, social spaces, creative space)
  - Expand children and young people's spaces
  - Dedicated teen spaces
  - Program rooms and creative spaces: recording studio, labs, booths
  - Display and exhibition space

## **EXISTING FACILITY – LIFE SPAN REVIEW**

### **Life Cycle Stage**

Life Cycle Stage 5 (56 years old). During this stage, many of the facilities major components will require replacement or significant capital improvements may be required to extend the life of the facility.

### **High level lifespan review (based on previous reports)**

No reports available.

### **Limitations, Risks and Considerations for involved in renovating a facility of this age:**

Rehabilitation, Renovation or Expansion may require code-mandated improvements. Dependent on extent of upgrades, these may include improvements to the fire alarm, sprinkler system, exits, accessibility provisions, seismic upgrades, building envelope upgrades, and changes to energy or water efficiency systems.

# ENDNOTES

i Tourism Smithers. “About Smithers.” <https://tourismsmithers.com/plan-your-visit/about-smithers/#alpinetheme>

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iii Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023

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vi People., Park. 2021. “The Canadian City Parks Report: Centring Equity & Resilience.”

vii Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. 2015. A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

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x Reid-Hresko, J., & Warren, J. R. (2022). “A Lot of What We Ride Is Their Land”: White Settler Canadian Understandings of Mountain Biking, Indigeneity, and Recreational Colonialism. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 39(1), 108–117. <https://doi.org/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1123/ssj.2020-0161>

xi Park People. (2021). The Canadian City Parks Report: Centring Equity & Resilience

xii CleanBC. 2020. Move.Commute. Connect. Active Transportation Report Card 2019/2020. Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

xiii Park People. (2021). The Canadian City Parks Report: Centring Equity & Resilience.



# Smithers

Parks & Recreation Master Plan



Smithers

