

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Economics Research Associates (ERA) and ND LEA, in association with Number Ten Architectural Group, were engaged by the City of Winnipeg to conduct an independent assessment of 311 community facilities as shown on Figure 1. The need for this assessment was driven by Executive Policy Committee (EPC), who mandated the development of a long-term sustainable strategy and fiscally sound business case for managing the City of Winnipeg's public use facilities that support an appropriate level of community-based services. This mandate was precipitated by the growing realization that the infrastructure deficit associated with the City's portfolio of recreation, leisure and library facilities is not sustainable. Furthermore, many of the facilities were designed for a single purpose and as such; no longer meet the functional requirements for the current delivery of recreation, leisure and library services. Adding to the complexity of this situation is the fact that many of the facilities were constructed prior to Unicity, resulting in varying levels of service throughout the City. These discrepancies have only grown over the years, driven by shifts in demographics and development, the latter of which has tended to favour suburban fringe neighbourhoods within the City of Winnipeg.

Changes to the overall recreation, leisure and library service environment dictated that the study include a comprehensive needs assessment to ensure that the facility portfolio is responsive to and meets the needs of the community in both the near and long terms. A facility study in the absence of a comprehensive needs assessment carried a significant risk that future investment in the infrastructure would not result in an increase in benefits to the citizens of Winnipeg. The following were identified as the key components required to successfully undertake the study:

- Development of a policy framework
- Assessment of the existing infrastructure
- Community and recreational trends assessment
- Facility usage and programming assessment
- Public and stakeholder consultation
- Strategic implementation plan and business case

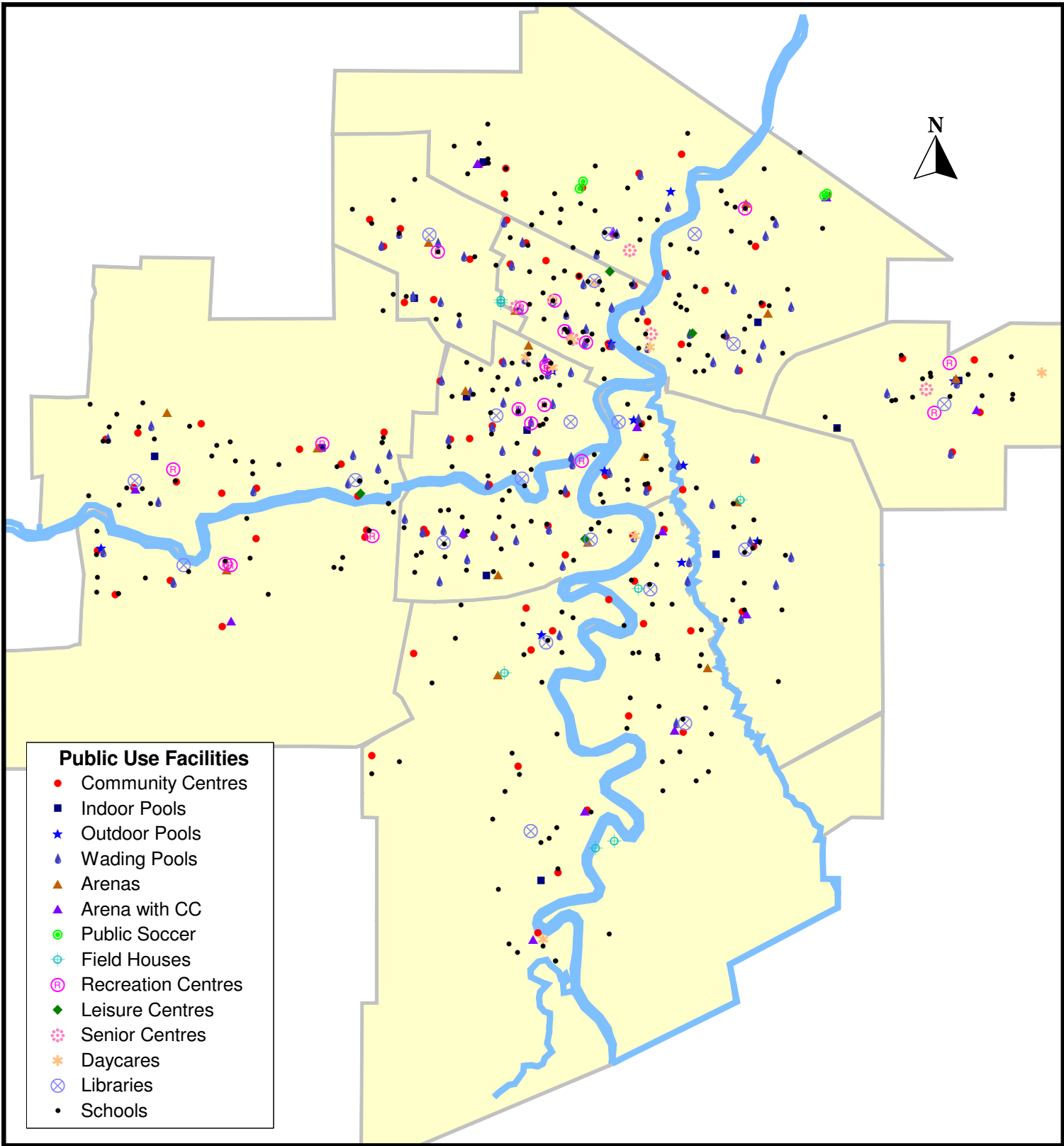
The objective of the study as mandated by EPC is the development of a long-term sustainable strategy and fiscally sound business case for managing the City of Winnipeg's public use facilities that support an appropriate level of community-based services.

The development of a strategic blue-print and fiscally sound business case required that the following essential elements be addressed:

What do we have?

Facility Utilization – Detailed usage and programming data was collected and analyzed for each facility type.

Figure 1: Existing Public Use Facilities and Schools



Population Characteristics – Population and demographic trends for each community characterization area (CCA) were evaluated based on 2001 Census data and included an analysis of surrounding municipalities.

Physical Condition Assessment – Detailed physical condition data was compiled for each facility in the City’s inventory. The data included size and age of the facility; current maintenance and operating costs; an estimate of the current replacement value (CRV); an estimate of preservation needs required over the next ten years to reduce the infrastructure deficit to manageable levels; and the Facilities Condition Index.

What do we need?

Policy Review and Development – Overall strategic direction was provided through Plan Winnipeg Vision 2020. The ACTIVE Policy Framework was developed and subsequently adopted by Council to specifically address recreation, leisure and library services programs and infrastructure. The ACTIVE policy framework established that all remaining and new building infrastructure be maintained at a level of care known as “managed care.” The Municipal Aboriginal Pathways Strategy (MAPS) was also used as a basis for the formulation of the strategic blueprint.

Recreation, Leisure and Library Trends – Information regarding evolving trends in the provision of recreation, leisure and library services and facilities in Manitoba, Canada and the U.S. were gathered and assessed for relevance to the Winnipeg market.

Stakeholder / Public Consultation – A number of consultation vehicles were utilized to engage the public and stakeholders and provide the opportunity for respectful and meaningful dialogue. The strategy included targeted stakeholder interviews, public focus group sessions facilitated by an independent facilitator, and a random phone survey conducted by Probe Research as part of a broader Omnibus survey.

Development of a Facility Hierarchy – A facility hierarchy was developed to facilitate decision-making; assist in matching the facility inventory to the market; ensure adequate market coverage; and to define the potential role of the City of Winnipeg in the provision of facilities.

Identification of Essential Building Blocks – The requirement for four new building blocks were developed on the basis of the policy framework, the facility hierarchy, extensive data analysis, trend information, and public and stakeholder consultation. These included the Community Campus, the Urban Oasis, Spray Pad water features, and Sport Pods. These building blocks are integrated into the existing infrastructure in a strategic manner.

Scenario Development – Infrastructure scenarios were developed for each CCA to ensure a “Made in Winnipeg” solution. The scenarios took into account socio-economic characteristics of the population, the CCA demographic profile, facility utilization data, the existing facility inventory and condition, and the presence of external service providers.

Business Case Analysis – Four scenarios were developed complete with a comparative business case analysis to choose the preferred option. The options included retaining the status quo in a

“managed care” state; continuing to fund the infrastructure at current levels; rationalizing the existing facility inventory and incorporating new infrastructure in accordance with the vision for the future; and adding new infrastructure without rationalizing the existing infrastructure. The third scenario, addressing the vision for the future, was clearly the most advantageous from both an economic and a benefits perspective. This scenario leverages and maximizes the use of existing assets and once implemented will result in an alignment between the facility inventory and current and emerging trends **and is a contingent plan.**

How do we get there?

Implementation Plan – A ten-year implementation plan was developed for the preferred option. The implementation plan provides for a smooth transition from “today” to “tomorrow”, with the initial focus on high return activities.

The remainder of this executive summary provides a synopsis of the foregoing essential elements.