

1.0 Introduction and Overview

1.1 Project Context

The Peace River Regional District, City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor deliver coordinated recreation services to the residents of the North Peace region. Before subsequent recreation master plans are updated and plans made to commit capital or operating funds, it is prudent to get a comprehensive picture of the current status of facilities and assets. Most of the major recreation and parks infrastructure are in the most densely populated Fort St. John, and Taylor. The rural area facilities are limited to community halls, gymkhanas/ rodeo grounds and some outdoor recreation opportunities.

While School District 60 is not party to this service delivery, there exists a community access agreement with the school district allowing community of use of school gymnasiums in evenings and weekends in exchange to school access to the pool, ice arenas and Kids Arena fieldhouse during the daytime. For the purposes of this study, the gymnasiums have been assessed in the same manner as PRRD, FSJ and Taylor recreation assets. Opportunities to enhance and expand that relationship exist given SD60's need to add new schools and replace two current schools.

The purpose of this report and the audit appendix is to thoroughly document the condition and projected remaining service life of assets in order to forecast at what point in time capital interventions will be necessary. In the audit appendix, buildings and outdoor facilities have been given numerical scores or grades between 1 (lowest) and 10 (highest) as well as an estimate of remaining service life (between 5 and 35 years). Assessments were based on visual observations only (not detailed technical assessments by engineering specialists, though buildings with obvious concerns were identified for further investigation).

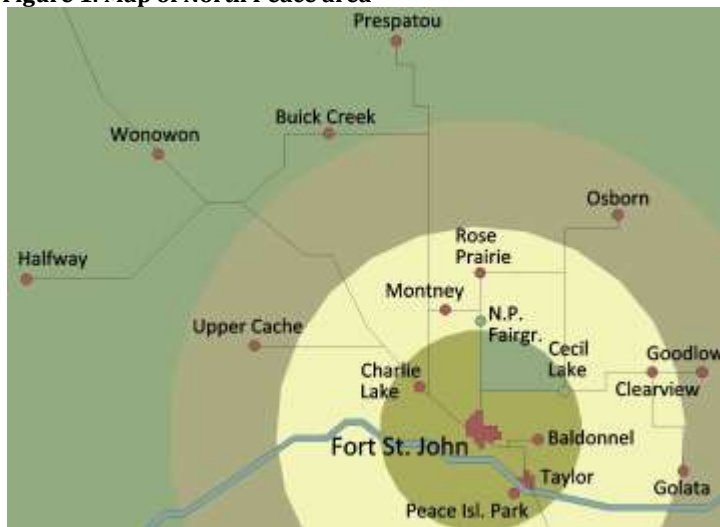
This report summarizes the assessments as well as examines demand factors including population and participation rates, facility utilization, facility scale and construction type and cost recovery. Demand analysis examines current participation levels in various sports, looks at future projections and at the effectiveness or efficiency of utilization of facilities. The analysis aided in determining if the current inventory of facilities is adequate for meeting the demand or if gaps exist. A driver of note, the City of Fort St. John has made a commitment to making recreation accessible to all citizens through affordability, impacting cost recovery for a higher social good, but also effecting regional cost recoveries facilities and rates.

The last section of this report offers a series of options and strategies to consider for the development or redevelopment of facilities including order-of-magnitude capital cost estimates. Values are construction cost only in current dollars and indexed for the Fort St. John region, and do not include soft costs or escalation for inflation to future years. None of these options are prescribed, nor have any of the options been vetted through a public consultation process. At this stage these are merely a series of ideas and opportunities for further consideration and debate.

1.2 North Peace Region Service Delivery Area

The study area for the Recreation Facilities Inventory and Assessment includes the urban areas of Fort St. John and Taylor and the northern portion of the Peace River Regional District (Electoral Area C and a portion of B). The following map illustrates the relative locations and distances from Fort St. John are shown in concentric circles of 20-kilometres distance. Each concentric ring represents approximately 20-minutes travel time by automobile.

Figure 1. Map of North Peace area



1.3 Current and Projected Population and Participation Factors

The North Peace region is younger and growing more quickly than the province and nation as a whole. The table below illustrates the distribution by age and projections for each of the next two decades. This window corresponds with the window of change for most of the recreation facilities evaluated in this report. The age and growth projections on the left side of the table are from StatsCan data sorted by school district. The right side of the table is total population (different as catchment areas for SD60 and for the northern portion of the PRRD do not precisely match). Note: the just released BC Stats 2014 sub-profile suggests an increase in FSJ of 4.7% in one year from 2013 to 2014 – faster than projected. Unincorporated areas grew 1.9% during the same period, Taylor declined 1%.

Figure 2. Population by Age and Location

SD60 Peace North* By Age		Current 2015	2025	10 Yr. Change	2035	20 Yr. Change	StatsCan / PRRD Location	Current 2015	Percent Distribution
<1		597	590	99%	643	108%			
1 to 4	Toddler	3013	2416	2480	103%	2581	Fort St. John	18,609	59%
5 to 9		2538	3299	130%	3253	128%			
10 to 14	Active Youth/ School Aged	7444	2416	3306	137%	3320	Taylor	1,490	5%
15 to 19		2490	2842	114%	3383	136%			
20 to 24		2992	2631	88%	3452	115%	Area C	6,398	20%
25 to 29	Young Adult	6323	3331	2860	86%	3366	Area B of study area	4,960	16%
30 to 34		3135	3628	116%	3474	111%			
35 to 39		2676	4026	150%	3499	131%			
40 to 44	Active Adult/ Parenting	12989	2407	3843	160%	3887			
45 to 49		2306	2958	128%	4024	175%			
50 to 54		2465	2353	95%	3679	149%			
55 to 59		1970	2119	108%	2721	138%			
60 to 64	Active Older Adult	5193	1494	2128	142%	2088			
65 to 69		1027	1879	183%	1834	179%			
70 to 74		702	1331	190%	1768	252%			
75 to 79		500	878	176%	1441	288%			
80 to 84		326	505	155%	895	275%			
85 to 89	Aging Adult	1114	174	292	168%	512			
90+		114	223	196%	363	318%			
Total		36076	44171	122%	50183	139%	Total North Peace Region	31,457	
Households		14041	16690	119%	19584	139%			

* SD60 catchment includes Hudson's Hope

Comparing population with participation reveals some interesting patterns that can be found in 'Figure 4. Sport Registrations by Place of Residence' in Section 1.5 of this report. Residents of the unincorporated rural areas make up 35% of the North Peace region's population but in many cases disproportionate use of recreation facilities is higher. As well, there tends to be residents of Taylor who regularly use recreation facilities in Fort St. John, and vice versa.

Not evident in the population data is where much of the future growth will occur. Future development will predominantly be in urban areas as evidenced by SD60's plans to add three new schools in the north, northwest and northeast areas of Fort St. John. This would base on analysis of where large-scale real estate development is being planned. Some bedroom-community type growth will occur as families seek more affordable housing in the smaller settlements and on acreages but this will likely be offset by out-migration of rural residents.

1.4 Scheduling of Facilities and Weekly Hours of Participation by Sport

All indoor sport facilities have a finite capacity or inventory of time. The most usable or saleable time window is referred to as prime-time, and less desirable times or unwanted times when a facility is less likely to be used. Prime (most desired) can be sold for the highest hourly rate, off-prime (shoulder time) sold for slightly lower rates, and non-prime (weekday daytime, very late night, off-season) sold at the lowest rate or made available for free. With most hockey arenas, prime time is almost always sold to Minor Hockey but at a heavily subsidized discounted rate.

The definition of prime-time can vary, but has typically come to mean between the hours of 5:00 PM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 or 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM - typically be 50 hours per week. In some cases, bookings only until 9:00 PM are considered prime and the total is only 45 hours per week. Given the ages, most minor sports are only attracted to prime time.

In the Canadian recreation industry, it is widely accepted that ice arenas should sell 100% of prime time and at least 50% of the 25 hours/week of off-prime in order to meet operating costs and break-even financially. Indoor soccer and gymnasium operating costs are marginally lower and cost recovery can occur through the revenues from prime-time alone. Sports fields cost recovery are usually heavily subsidized as usage and revenues tend to be very low.

Figure 3. Typical Prime-Time Weekly Schedule



The following section examines the demand variables for ice arenas, indoor soccer facilities and gymnasiums, aquatic facilities, curling venues and sports fields. Section 2.0 of this report translates

the demand into utilization of facilities and examines cost recovery and specific facility's remaining service life.

Ice Hockey

Ice hockey can be divided into minor hockey (boys, girls and mixed) and adult (men's and women's). Minor hockey typically only plays during prime time hours, with younger players getting the earlier time slots and older getting the latter timeslots. Occasionally, minor hockey will rent early-morning time slots. Fort St. John Minor Hockey currently has about 480 players registered and District of Taylor has 70. Clearview and Buick Creek each have less than 40. Minor hockey participation for the latter three constitutes less than 33% of total prime time in each arena. The Fort St. John arenas and FSJ Minor Hockey is further analyzed below. Taylor and FSJ are offset by significant participation in figure skating.

Hockey Canada recommends that minor hockey players have access to 3 hours per week for Coach Level (recreation teams) and 5 hours per week for Development Level (competitive rep teams, especially older age groups). Coach Level should include 1 game per week and 2 practices. Development Level should include 2 games and three practices per week. By this measure FSJ Minor Hockey should have 104 hours per week of ice time, current actual is 92 hours of ice time per week between the three ice sheets.

After a decade of flat or no-growth, FSJ Minor Hockey is estimating a potential growth of up to 20% in the next decade (rate matching enrolment projections of SD60). The past flat-growth was very likely masked a decline in male participation and a corresponding increase in female participation for a zero net increase. Projecting ahead, the male-female ratio is expected to remain constant.

Fort St. John Minor Hockey's 480 players constitutes about 32 teams of 15 players each. Assuming a 1/3 - 2/3 split with 1/3 in the competitive Development stream (11 teams) and 2/3's in the Coach stream (21 teams), the Development Level requires 44 hours per week and the Coach Level requiring 53 hours per week. This is based on 30 players on the ice (2 teams) for every hour of game and 15 players for practices (1 team only).

Adult hockey in Fort St. John has about 550 players on 22 old-timer teams and a recreation league. District of Taylor has about 320 adults on 3 old-timers teams and 11 recreation league teams. Clearview has about 110 adults participating in ice hockey. Buick has even less including teams from Prespatou and other outlying areas.

In Fort St. John, analysis reveals that Minor Hockey utilizes, or at least books, virtually 100% of prime time on two ice sheets, with the third ice sheet only 10% used by Minor Hockey and the rest of the time available for figure skating, adult hockey, short-track speed-skating and public skating. In all three FSJ arenas, virtually no off-prime time ice is booked or sold. This is somewhat of an anomaly as in most municipalities across Western Canada, adult hockey does not have access to prime time.

The Huskies are a Junior B team in the Northwest Junior Hockey League and play in the North Peace Arena. The team plays 18 regular season home games a season and up to 11 home play-off games. Games are usually Friday and Saturday nights, back-to-back. The team practices three time a week as well, plus dry-land training at Pacific Sport in the Pomeroy Centre.

Should FSJ Minor Hockey achieve its growth target, three strategies could address the increased demand, but a fourth ice sheet in Fort St. John would be difficult to justifiable for the medium-term to long-term future. The three strategies include:

- As minor hockey increases, adult hockey will have to shift to the later off-prime time slots. This change may not appeal to the current generation of adult hockey players, but future new adult

players will not have the same expectations and will shift to the later time as with most arenas across Canada.

- FSJ Minor Hockey will have to buy Prime Time ice in Taylor (15-minutes drive from FSJ), potentially shifting their adult use to later time slots as well. As this arena is funded by Taylor residents, this option may not be accepted.
- Older age-group minor hockey players will have to book some early-morning time slots for practices.

Realistically 20% growth in FSJ Minor Hockey is an ambitious goal when compared to national trends, and given the almost flat growth of the past decade. However, at least some increase can be expected. Growth will also occur in figure skating, competing for at least a portion of additional time. Some adult hockey players and teams rather than shift to later times might prefer to book prime time ice in Clearview (45 minutes out of FSJ) or Buick Creek (70 minutes out of FSJ). Adults being more mobile would have this option, minor hockey improbable.

The FSJ figure skating club currently has 120 members and uses 20 hours per week of ice time in the North Peace Arena. Taylor also has a large number. There are no hours per week benchmarks for figure skating, however 7-10 skaters are typically on the ice at any given time resulting in an average of about 90 minutes per week per skater. Competitive skaters will be on the ice as much as 2 hours per day. According to the club, this allocation of time is adequate for their needs. Less time may mean more skaters on the ice at the same and a dilution of coaching.

Box lacrosse uses the ice arena dry floors and Kids Arena in April, May and June. Lacrosse currently has about 120 participants, all minor. There is no adult lacrosse in the North Peace region. Hockey and figure skating has requested that ice be kept in one ice sheet in April and May to extend their seasons. This would not impact lacrosse demand for dry floor unless the sport grows dramatically.

Indoor Soccer and Indoor Soccer in Gymnasiums

Indoor Soccer can be divided into minor boys, girls and co-ed and adult men's and women's. Like hockey, minor indoor soccer typically only plays during prime time hours, with younger players getting the earlier time slots and older getting the latter timeslots. The Fort St. John Indoor Soccer program is currently capped at 480 players registered, playing at Kids Arena (44 hours/week) and in local school gymnasiums. Women's (15 hours/week) and Men's (2 hours/week) Indoor Soccer playing at Kids Arena are also capped owing to limited access.

Soccer Canada does not prescribe weekly hours of participation for youth indoor soccer, however at most facilities across Western Canada, the target is 1 game and 1 to 2 practices (depending on age and skill level) per week. Based on 32 teams of 15 players each, 16 hours of game time (30 players, 2 teams) is required and 48 hours of practice time (15 players, 1 team at a time) is required. On average, 44 of those 64 hours per week are accommodated at Kids Arena Fieldhouse.

The demand for youth indoor soccer currently saturates 90% of available prime-time at Kids Arena, with some adult play the remaining 10% and off-prime. Other potential indoor turf users are relegated to cancelled time slots, daytime and late bookings. Current daytime use of the Kids Arena Fieldhouse indoor soccer pitch is largely by SD60 urban schools as part of the reciprocal agreement for community access to school gymnasiums in the evenings.

FSJ Minor Indoor Soccer currently utilizes 8 hours per week (7:00 -9:00 PM, Mondays-Thursdays) in the equivalent of 3 of the 10 urban schools in Fort St. John. Other activities competing for time in school gyms include dance and movement classes, pickleball, sportball, floor hockey and basketball and volleyball in the larger high school and middle school gyms.

Registration in FSJ Minor Indoor Soccer is 60% of the outdoor registration (480 to 800). While the indoor-to-outdoor ratio is comparable to other cities with indoor soccer facilities, the number of participants in outdoor soccer is artificially low due to supply constraints: only two municipal soccer fields and 10 mostly marginally playable school fields.

According to Soccer Canada, nationally 44% of school-aged children now participate in soccer. In Fort St. John there are currently 4,400 enrolled in SD60 with 900 more projected by the year 2024. This participation-rate to enrolment-rate would translate into about 1,900 soccer participants today and 400 more in the future if enough fields were available. In terms of demand for indoor soccer this should translate into almost 1,150 in indoor soccer, more than double the current capped number.

The precise number of young players turned away annually is unknown as FSJ Minor Soccer only keeps a short wait-list for backfilling teams where players drop out early in the season. But players are turned away each year however. In all likelihood, interest in soccer may be lower in this community than the national average, however the current 18% outdoor participation rate and 11% indoor participation rate implies significant unmet demand.

In addition, adult soccer also has the potential for absorbing more indoor pitch time. The men's indoor program has access to one-sixth the weekly hours of the women's program but the number of players is comparable.

There appears to be significant unmet demand for high-quality playable outdoor soccer fields and consequently unmet demand for indoor artificial turf, enough to justify a second indoor pitch in Fort St. John or Taylor in the short-term future.

The second indoor pitch or new twin pitches, if anticipating the replacement of Kids Arena, should be of the competitive standard found in Central BC and Alberta (where most of the regional competition occurs): 180'x85' pitch surrounded by dasher-boards and glass. The indoor game played in the Lower Mainland of BC is gravitating to a no-dasher-boards game that more closely resembles the outdoor game.

Gymnastics

The North Peace Gymnastics Club is the only gymnastics centre in the North Peace study area. Gymnastics has indicated it currently has 856 registrants, 85% from FSJ, and another 11% from Taylor and Charlie Lake. Participants range in age from pre-school to young adult and most of the participants are female. This makes gymnastics and soccer the two largest sports in the region in terms of participation for young females, and underscores the need for equitable gender balance in sport opportunities.

Gymnastics is growing in popularity for developing a critical foundation for long-term athlete development, or as Gymnastics Canada refers to it, 'physical literacy and human movement'. Within gymnastics is acrobatic, aerobic, tumbling, trampoline, rhythmic and artistic disciplines developing locomotion, rotations, springs, landings, swings, static positions and object manipulation. In addition to be a foundation sport, gymnastics has its own elite competitive track.

The existing gymnastic centre is the old Fort St. John natatorium that pre-dated the North Peace Leisure Centre. The main hall is about the size of a full-size gymnasium, plus ancillary and support spaces. With the recessed floor (old pool tank) compensates for the low ceiling height for trampolines, the bigger issue floorplate size and configuration. The current layout coupled with high demand puts multiple age groups out on the floor at the same time, increasing the risk of collisions and injury. An ideal floorplate would be approximately twice the size of the existing, plus support ancillary and space.

Therefore the issue with gymnastics is the need for enough space to create a fully-functional layout. Absorbing growth in capacity can be accommodated by increasing intensity of utilization, or adding more time slots. The NPGC currently operates a prime-time schedule as well as extensive daytime programming for pre-school aged children.

Gymnastics Canada recommends 3 hours per day for the first 10 years for optimum athlete development. Taking this as an average, as elite athletes will train more and young children and novices much less, this works out to 2,550 hours per week, divided by 850 participants. This works out to about 30 participants for 80 hours per week (prime-time plus six daytime hours per weekdays as well). This works out to about 200 SF / participant in a class, exceptionally dense for the types of activities engaged in. A more than doubling of floor area will increase area per person to almost 500 SF, increasing safety and functionality.

Fitness

In the municipalities of Fort St. John and Taylor, fitness is largely provided by a number of private sector service providers. The North Peace Leisure Centre has a very small exercise room (3 pieces of cardio equipment) and Taylor a rehab and therapy space (9 pieces). On a per-square-foot basis fitness yields the highest density of users (100 SF/person compared to gyms at 550 SF/person or hockey ice 425 SF/person) and the highest revenues per square foot. In most places it is used intensively during the entire day with particularly strong peaks at noon and supertime. Fitness continues to be a growth area as currently less than 15% of the population nationally exercises regularly.

One gap in the delivery of fitness in the North Peace is movement programs owing to a dearth of large sprung-floor dance studio spaces in Fort St. John. Only the Pacific Sport space in the Pomeroy Centre can accommodate groups this large but it is not on an engineered or sprung wood floor.

Additional rooms designed to accommodate a minimum of 20 persons up to as large 40 would create the opportunity to offer exercise classes such as Zumba, aerobics, boot camp, TRX, Nia, jazzercise, Tai Chi and yoga as well as accommodating dance classes, ballroom dancing, martial arts and youth ballet classes. Non-movement activities could include meetings and lectures, adult education, birthday party rentals, hobby and interest programs and, youth and seniors drop-ins.

Ideally, two large multi-purpose rooms added in the future would meet most of the demand. These types of spaces could be built on to one of the other replacement buildings that may be realized, such as a new aquatic facility or an indoor soccer facility. Some of this type of programming already occurs in urban elementary school gyms but can only be offered in the evenings and scheduling availability can be inconsistent.

Swim Teams and Aquatics

Recreation planning standards and master planning guidelines generally recommends one indoor pool facility (lane tank, plus leisure pool and support spaces) per 40,000 persons population. The 40,000-population number is generally thought to generate a large enough tax base to support the long-term amortization of the capital debt as well as an annual operating subsidy (pool cost recovery rates range from only 30-70%). In some cases rolled-over debt or support from other levels of government can reduce the borrowing amount.

The 40,000 benchmark is also thought to create sufficient demand for aquatics programs and leisure swims (demand ranges widely between cosmopolitan and remote urban centres, the latter more intensively used due to fewer recreation and entertainment alternatives).

The combined current population of Fort St. John, District of Taylor and the rural North Peace region (Electoral Area C) is just over 30,000 and could be approaching 40,000 by the time the North Peace Leisure Centre is replaced. The North Peace region will not likely be large enough to support two aquatic facilities or a 50-metre lane tank in a single facility within the planning window of this study. To understand the cost implications, comparative data for other stand-alone pools or pools in multiplexes suggests the cost per household of building a \$20 million facility would be in range of \$150 per household per year and the annual operating subsidy more than \$50 per household per year.

The current North Peace Leisure Centre is an intensively-used and heavily programmed pool facility. The lane tank supports swim club, public lane swim, swimming lessons and aquasize classes. The Inconnu Swim Club currently has 113 members. The club has 38 hours per week of access to at least 3 lanes that translates into 28.5 hours of full 6-lanes access. That results in approximately 90 minutes per week in the water per swimmer based on 1-person per lane at any given time. With multiple swimmers per lane the average time in the water is exponentially increased.

Inconnu has indicated they would like two additional hours per week of pool time. There are no prescribed requirements with Swim BC or Swim Alberta for minimum hours per week attending practices, however many sources indicate swimmers should be attending three practices, with elite competitors swimming daily and novices once or twice per week.

With the degree of programming and scale of the swim club program, demand for number of pool lanes rests somewhere between 6 and 8 lanes. The current North Peace Leisure Centre is a 6-lane pool, and economies of scale would suggest a replacement pool for the NPLC would be an 8-lane pool, increasing building size by less than 20%, but increasing flat-water capacity by 33%.

An eight lane pool would allow two lanes to be kept open for public lane swim. The eight lane width is also a good proportion for allowing the pool to be sub-divided for concurrent activities such as aquasize and lane swim. The added water inventory would also be able to absorb any future growth for the swim club.

Curling

The 8-sheet Fort St. John Curling Club currently officially has 310 annual memberships but over 440 on their members list, many attendees in drop-in leagues and clinics for youth and learn-to-curl. The 4-sheet Taylor Curling Club has 24 members. Rose Prairie no longer has a base of support to sustain future operations. Curl BC monitors the 91 province-wide curling facilities, suggests both FSJ and Taylor have population-to-participation rates of 1.7%, lower than the provincial average of 2.7%. This may be attributable to the relatively young demographic profile of the region.

While the Fort St. John Curling Club through revenues from memberships, bonspiel rentals and food and beverage sales is largely self-sustaining for the scale of building (8-sheets), the smaller Taylor facility (4-sheets) with a very small revenue base raises bigger questions in the long-term. While both buildings have 15-20 years of remaining service life, replacing the Taylor facility with an expensive new building will be hard to justify. In the short-term one option is to decommission curling in Taylor and replace it with artificial turf addressing an immediate regional need of indoor soccer.

Nationally, curling participation is in decline and many facilities are closing permanently. With closures however, comes the consolidation of loyal curlers in the remaining facilities, improving utilization and financial sustainability of those remaining curling clubs.

Pacific Sport

Pacific Sport currently uses space in the Pomeroy Sports Centre, including the open space exercise studio area and a free-weights and conditioning area, and when available space in the Kids Arena. About 160 athletes use the space on a regular basis, most athletes from other sports including hockey, figure skating, soccer, curling, speed-skating, swimming, gymnastics, golf, wrestling, rugby, archery, etc. Pacific Sport also programs summer camps and Pro-D day camps, averaging in excess of 300 registrations. Pacific Sport indicated it requires access to additional time inventory in gymnasiums and indoor turf spaces.

Sports Fields

According to StatsCan participation in sport in Canada has declined by 17% in the past two decades. Ball diamond sports have declined by almost 70%, but offset by the growth of soccer by 250%. Currently, 14% of the population participates in soccer and only 3% in softball.

Only 12 players were registered last year in FSJ Minor Baseball (and no response from Little League despite numerous contact attempts). FSJ adult slo-pitch softball is seeing modest declines through attrition not replaced by equal numbers of young adults. Slo-pitch in Fort St. John has 600 participants on 45 teams playing about 600 games each summer (May-August – 13 weeks) or about one 2 ½ hour game per week per participant. Slo-pitch books all eight diamonds at Surerus Fields and occasionally some diamonds Kin Park.

Taylor has 8 teams or 160 players using the 3 slo-pitch diamonds plus 1 T-ball diamond at the Cherry Ave. location. If two games per week per team occur, this would translate into 40% utilization of the diamonds over the course of a week during the summer season.

Fort St. John currently has 800 males and females youth registered in (outdoor) soccer playing on 2 civic fields and up to 10 poor-quality unreliable school fields. According to Soccer Canada, 44% of school-aged children participate in soccer - translating into 1,900 soccer players or 140% more.

While there is only a partial seasonal overlap between the two sports, the bigger issue is field configuration. At some point in the future, it will become difficult to rationalize the disproportionate allocation of so much sport field inventory to one activity. Added to this, rugby and cricket are two other emerging open-field sports in FSJ and currently use school fields when they can get them.

Note: A grass field begins to deteriorate rapidly after 250 hours per year to a maximum utilization of 400 hours per year (2.5 to 4 hours/day for three months). Conceptually, quality sand-based engineered grass fields could support the short seasons for both soccer (April-June) and slo-pitch (mid-June to early September).

'Super Park'

A grassroots community group of parents with young children have introduced the concept for an indoor playground for toddlers age-group and special needs children they call a 'Super Park'. This would be different and in addition to the existing Rotary Play Centre or Playplace in the Child Development Centre in Fort St. John. The concept began as an outdoor park, but evolved into an indoor facility recognizing the long, cold winters limit playground use in general. Additionally, the facility would also need to be expanded and zoned for older children as well.

The non-profit organizing group has developed a concept for a stand-alone building estimated to cost \$2.7 to 3.3 million, plus an additional \$250,000 for specialized play equipment. Based on economy-end institutional quality construction, this would likely be an 8,000 to 11,000 SF building including support spaces.

Two aspects of the proposal need further investigation:

- 1) Can the facility be viable as a stand-alone or 'destination' entity, and
- 2) Can the operation be self-sustaining.

Recent precedents has shown that this type of amenity would likely be more successful as part of a larger multiplex facility with higher traffic, cross-programming potentials, economies of staffing and operating overheads and shared use of support spaces (washrooms, concessions, first aid, offices). Paired with high revenue generators such as indoor soccer or ice arenas that potentially have net positive cash flows, those components can create economies of scale and can offset the operating shortfalls of an indoor playground.

If the question is there a need for an indoor playground in a growing young community like Fort St. John, the answer is likely affirmative. According to SD60's development plan, enrolment in the next decade alone is expected to increase by 20%, meaning increased birthrates and young families immigration and consequently more toddlers and pre-school aged children as well.

Most multiplex recreation centres developed in the last two decades in Edmonton and Calgary and their bedroom communities (Sherwood Park, Tri-Leisure, St. Albert, etc.) have included indoor playgrounds as child-minding space for adults using fitness, compliments to pre-schools or daycares or as specific child development programming needs.

Operating a smaller 8,000 to 11,000 SF facility can cost up to \$75,000 to \$100,000 per year for staff labour, energy costs, insurance and fixed overheads translating into \$200-\$275 dollars per day, \$25-30 per every operating hour from 10AM to 8 PM each day, year-round. If supervision is by parents and facility staff only passively supervise and maintain the space, the costs could be reduced by as much as 30-50%. A stand-alone building could not be operated without staff present at all times for risk-management reasons.

1.5 Geographic Factors: Place of Residence and Travel to Recreation Facilities

The table following illustrates place of residence of participants in all of the key major recreation and sport activities. The data represents to things:

- Distance of travel for participants based on geographic location; and
- How many residents from different municipalities and electoral districts are actually using facilities

Public swimming drop-in visits to the North Peace Leisure Centre (70,000 to 100,000 annually) suggests a similar participation rate to what is shown for team sports participation. No data exists either for who books rural community halls, but anecdotal information comments suggest it was limited to area residents. Only the minor hockey breakdown was an estimate based on anecdotal information from coaches and parents, as the FSJ organization did not respond to requests for data within the timeframe of this study.

The data table illustrates that a slight majority of users of facilities in Fort St. John actually reside in Fort St. John and that the remainder or out-of-boundary participants, especially Electoral Area C constitutes a significant and disproportionate percentage of overall use.

Figure 4. Sport Registrations by Place of Residence



	Postal Code	FSJ Minor Hockey*	FSJ Adult Hockey*	Speedskating	FSJ Figure Skating	FSJ Curling Club	Indoor Minor Soccer	Indoor Womens Soccer*	Indoor Mens Soccer	FSJ Outdoor Minor Soccer	FSJ Outdoor Adult Soccer*	Income Swim Club	Gymnastics Club	FSJ Minor/Little Lea Baseball	FSJ Adult 510-Pitch	Taylor Minor Hockey*	Taylor Figure Skating*	Taylor Adult Hockey*	Taylor Curling Club	Taylor Adult 510-Pitch*	Bulck Creek Minor Hockey	Clearview Minor Hockey	TOTAL	PERCENT
Fort St. John	VU	270	360	78	75	268	281	97	60	553		61	542	9	356			19					3010	53.4%
Taylor	VOC 2K0		20	3		26	13					9	37		85	70	60	295	24	160			802	14.2%
Electoral Area C																								
FSJ Fringe**	V1J M4	90	115	25	25	85	94	33	20	184		20	181	3	110			6					994	17.6%
Baldonnel	VOC 1C0	25	10		1	6	1	5		8		1	7	1	10								75	1.3%
Charlie Lake	VOC 1H0	40	35	11	16	39	40		1			11	56	2	25								276	4.9%
Electoral Area B																								
Altona	VOC 2T0									8					5								0	0.0%
Bulck	VOC 2R0									60					15						45	13	0.2%	
Cecil Lake	VOC 1G0	20			1	6	1	10				6			15							119	2.1%	
Goodlow	VOC 1S0		10			3																19	0.3%	
Montney	VOC 1Y0	25			1	1	6		2	2		3			15							55	1.0%	
North Pine	VOC 2A0						1			5		1	1									8	0.1%	
Prespetou	VOC 2S0												4		5							9	0.2%	
Rose Prairie	VOC 2H0	10			1	1			1						15							28	0.5%	
Wonowon	VOC 2N0																					0	0.0%	
Other																								
Calgary	T2L			1						1													2	0%
Chetwynd	VOC 1J0		5																			5	0%	
Clayhurst	VOC 1K0					1																1	0%	
Cranbrook	V1C			1																		1	0%	
Dawson Creek (and Flatrock)	V1G		15						11				3									29	0.5%	
Farmington	VOC 1N0					2				2			1									5	0.1%	
Fort Nelson	VOC 1T0					1																1	0%	
Grande Cache	T0E 0Y0											3										3	0%	
Grand Prairie	T8V					1																1	0%	
Groundbirch	VOC 1V0									9			6									15	0.3%	
Hudson's Hope	VOC 1V0		5										1									6	0.1%	
Kamloops	V1S								1													1	0%	
Pink Mountain	VOC 2B0												1									1	0.0%	
Pouce Coupe	VOC 2C0									13			1									14	0.2%	
Vernon	V1B								1													1	0%	
Westbank	V4T			1																		1	0%	
TOTAL		480	575	120	120	440	437	145	97	845	0	106	856	15	650	70	60	320	24	160	60	60	5640	100%

* Estimated distribution based on anecdotal information

** Estimated based on proportion of population with V1J postal code