

World,' with a maintained skating surface of 165,621 m<sup>2</sup>.

### Highlights of the 2005-2006 Skating Season on the Rideau Canal

- Despite the variability in the weather this past winter season, the NCC estimates that over 850,000 visits were made to the Rideau Canal Skateway during the 2005-2006 skating season.

- Officially launched on January 7, 2006, the 36<sup>th</sup> season of skating on the world's largest skating rink offered 39 days of skating. Colder weather conditions in February allowed the NCC to keep the Rideau Canal Skateway open to skaters for 29 consecutive days, with no temporary closures between February 9<sup>th</sup> and March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

- Skating for the first time on the 'World's Largest Naturally Frozen Ice Rink' was a highlight for many residents, visitors and Winterlude festival-goers to the Capital, as well as for professional athletes. On January 17, 2006, to the delight of hockey fans, the NCC welcomed the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim Hockey Club for a one-

hour practice on the Rideau Canal Skateway. Crowds gathered along the banks of the canal to witness, for the first time in the history of the Skateway, an NHL hockey team from sunny California State skate on the world's largest skating rink.

### Interesting Facts

- The Rideau Canal is one of Canada's nine heritage canals. The Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada is owned by Parks Canada. The Skateway is managed by the NCC during the winter months.

- The segment of the Rideau Canal known as the Skateway runs 7.8 km from downtown Ottawa, along Colonel By Drive to the Hartwell Locks, located near Carleton University.

- The "classic" 7.8 km loop on the Skateway was established over 20 years ago as a speed skating circuit for the prestigious, international Jack Barber Challenge, held on the Rideau Canal from 1982 to 1986 and sanctioned by the Ontario Speed Skating Association.

- The actual skating surface is comparable to more than 90 Olympic-sized hockey rinks.

- On average, the skating season starts between Christmas and New Year's Day, weather permitting.

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Maintenance crews work day and night to keep the skating surface smooth and clear. Snow removal is ongoing, and the Skateway is flooded every night, weather permitting.

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- The average skating season during the past five years was 50 days long. During the 2002-2003 season, the Skateway opened on January 3 and closed on March 16 for a total of 72 days (66 skating days). This closure matched the March 16, 1999 date for the latest closing in recent history.

- The longest skating season to date was in 1971-1972 and lasted 95 days, while the shortest was in 2001-2002 and lasted 34 days (26 skating days).



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- The 1972–1973 and 1981–1982 seasons tie for the earliest Rideau Canal Skateway opening on December 18. The latest Skateway opening was on February 2, 2002, breaking the previous record established on January 18, 1971. The latest Skateway closing was on March 25, 1972.

- Every year in mid-October, Parks Canada drains the Rideau Canal by opening the sluice valves at the Ottawa Locks near the Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel. In just a few short days, vehicle-access ramps, skate shelters and other facilities are installed in the Canal before beams are placed at the locks and the water is raised to skating level. From then, until the time the surface freezes, maintenance crews are busy installing stairs, hooking up plumbing and electricity, and setting up an entire infrastructure before the opening of the season.

- As the ice freezes and is covered with snow, the surface is cleared manually and with light equipment. Once the ice is approximately 15 centimetres (6 inches) thick, heavier equipment can be used.

- Maintenance crews work day and night to keep the skating surface smooth and clear. Snow removal is ongoing, and the Skateway is flooded every night, weather permitting.

- It takes about 10 to 14 consecutive days of cold weather (-15° C to -20° C) to get an ice surface safe for skaters.

- The ice must be at least 25 to 30 centimetres (10 to 12 inches) thick for skaters to be allowed on the Rideau Canal



Skateway. The NCC Ice Safety Committee experts assess the ice thickness before the official opening of the Skateway can be announced. The Committee continuously monitors ice conditions throughout the skating season.

- Snow must be removed when ice thickness permits as it acts as a thermal blanket and prevents the ice from expanding.

- The maintenance of the Skateway is 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- The NCC uses a flag system to indicate Skateway conditions. The green flag means fair to good conditions, but caution should be used when skating. The red

flag means the Canal is closed and conditions are unsafe.

- The Rideau Canal Skateway has its own skate patrol of 40 to 45 patrollers trained in First Aid and CPR. Some of these patrollers work two hours a week, while others do six- to eight-hour shifts.

- The second year the Rideau Canal Skateway was in operation, new skate shelters were installed on the ice surface of the Canal. They all sank! Since then, shelters have been supported by gravel pads and frames so they do not rely only on the support of the ice. The majority of the shelters are heated, and some are universally accessible.

- The holes along the Skateway serve as access for pumps required for flooding.

- Some 2,500 Christmas trees are recovered by the NCC and displayed in all the rest areas located on the Rideau Canal Skateway.

- The Skateway features an array of services such as concession stands, skate and sleigh rentals, shelters and rest areas.

### Public Information

For Rideau Canal Skateway ice conditions, the public can call 613-239-5234 for a recorded message. For more information about the activities offered on the Rideau Canal Skateway, visitors may call the National Capital Commission toll free at 1-800-465-1867 in North America, or at 613-239-5000, or they may stop by the Capital Infocentre at 90 Wellington Street in Ottawa, across from Parliament Hill. ♦

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# THE ABCs OF OUTDOOR RINK MAINTENANCE...

**A**lcohol is forbidden at all ice rinks.

**B**enches should be provided for resting, otherwise skaters will group together on the ice.

**C**racks, frost boils, chopped up surface must be repaired immediately.

**D**ocument all inspections, repairs and maintenance.

**E**ven surface preparation in the fall makes for a better skating surface in the winter.

**F**lood the rink as often as needed when weather permits applying light sprays of water.

**G**arbage containers should be provided or else the ice rink will become the container.

**H**ockey should not be allowed during public or open skating.

**I**ce shavings may contain bodily fluids; dispose of accordingly.

**J**ustify your rules to the public in terms of safety and legislation.

**K**now what the different colours of natural ice mean (blue, white, grey).

**L**ights must be in working condition and should point towards the ice surface.

**M**aintain adequate water supply and equipment at all rinks.

**N**o food or drink on the ice.

**O**nly maintained ice is safe ice.

**P**arking should be provided for users.

**Q**uick response to any reports of unsafe conditions can prevent injury.

**R**ules should be posted on signs, websites and in newspapers.

**S**ignage should advise when the ice is OPEN and when the ice is CLOSED.

**T**rucks are not the preferred method of clearing snow.

**U**sers of the rink should be encouraged to report problems with the ice.

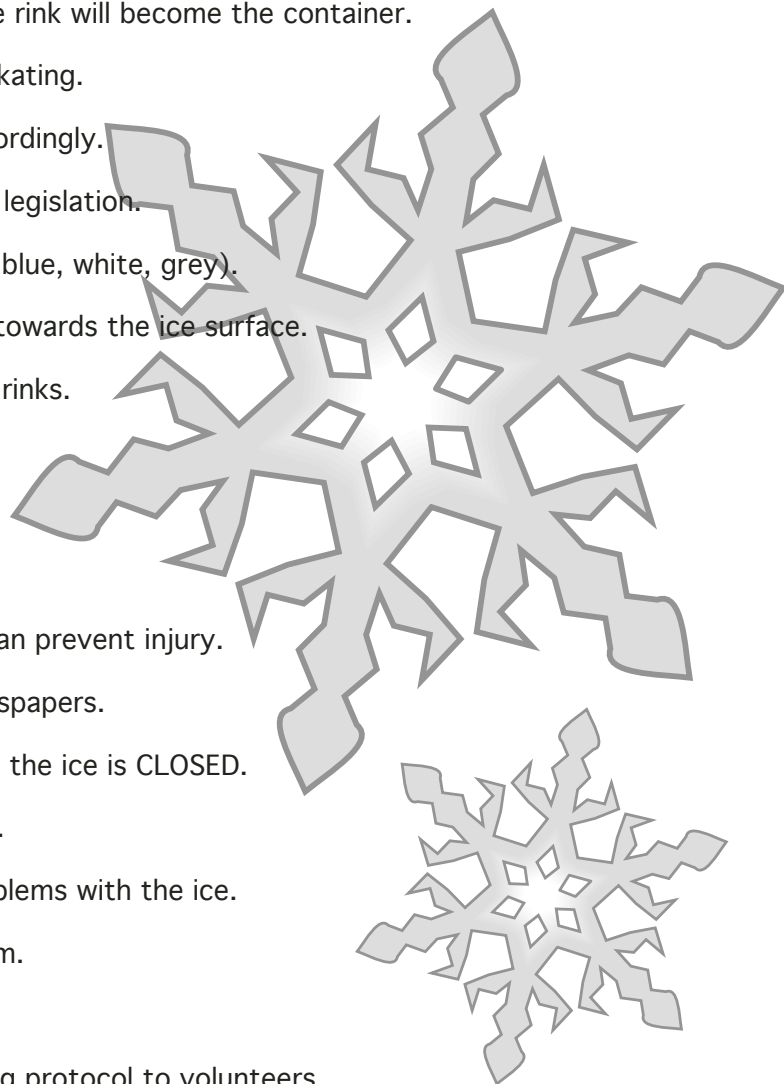
**V**olunteers are crucial for any outdoor ice rink program.

**W**earing of helmets by all skaters is recommended.

**X**'plain your policies, procedures and incident reporting protocol to volunteers.

**Y**ou should train your volunteers as if they were your own employees.

**Z**amboni or any ice resurfacer should be transported on a flat bed to an outdoor rink.



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Reprinted from *News & Views*, February 2006, Frank Cowan Company. Editor's Note: *Creating and Maintaining Outdoor Ice*, delivered in cooperation with Frank Cowan Company Limited & O.R.F.A. Municipal Members Operating Outdoor Ice, is Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> during ORFA's Facilities Operational Forum. For all the details visit [http://www.orfa.com/FOF/2006\\_FOF.pdf](http://www.orfa.com/FOF/2006_FOF.pdf).



## YEAH! IT'S DOWN TIME... OR IS IT?

JANE ARNETT-RIVERS, SUPERVISOR, SPORTS FIELDS & IPM, TOWN OF OAKVILLE

**S**o you have aerated, overseeded and topdressed everything you could (or could afford). Sod is down, seamed, seeded and rolled. Goal posts that could be pulled have been and fields have been t-barred to keep those diehard soccer and football fans off your newly renovated turf. Irrigation systems are blown out and equipment is clean – well OK, there may be a few more leaves to pick up and fence lines to clean, but you did it! You reached December! And, you accomplished this feat

working through one of the wettest seasons going. Fellow STA Director Paul Turner joked with me in late September about seeing an ark – we all felt that pain this fall.

I don't mean to ruin your well-deserved break, but this is an excellent time to polish and improve schedules while the problems of last season are still fresh in your mind. Remember the conversation in June about putting a smaller unit in that park because of the trees? How about realizing that a diamond was never used on Tuesdays so

why are we still grooming it? Then there were the missed parks you discovered thanks to an angry resident pointing out seven very long inches of growth.

I recently read an article laying out three steps to improve any operation and decided to test it. The steps are:

- 1. Simplify.** Tasks, practices, and schedules – the best format is always simple.
- 2. Innovate.** Find the better ways, quicker routes, OWN IT.
- 3. Grow.** Keeping up with expansion, achieving more in your day.

How do we put this theory to the test in our profession? Let's examine scheduling. Here's what I suggest:

1. Print off all your schedules: mowing, ball diamond grooming, lining, trimming, tennis court blowing, aerating, garbage – every schedule you have. Hand them out to the relevant staff who does the work. Changes made here will have the largest impact on your department and no one knows those hidden efficiencies more than the person(s) doing the job. Make sure staff know the direction you want to go. In the initial brainstorming session there should be no boundaries! They should consider travel, equipment, staffing, everything they can think of relevant to the job and then submit recommendations back to you.

2. Apply the three steps (simplify, innovate and grow) to improve each schedule. Then meet with the relevant staff and discuss. Your three steps may be different than theirs. For more input, bring in staff who used to do the job; experience is gold in this field.

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I don't mean to ruin your well-deserved break, but this is an excellent time to polish and improve schedules while problems are still fresh in your mind.

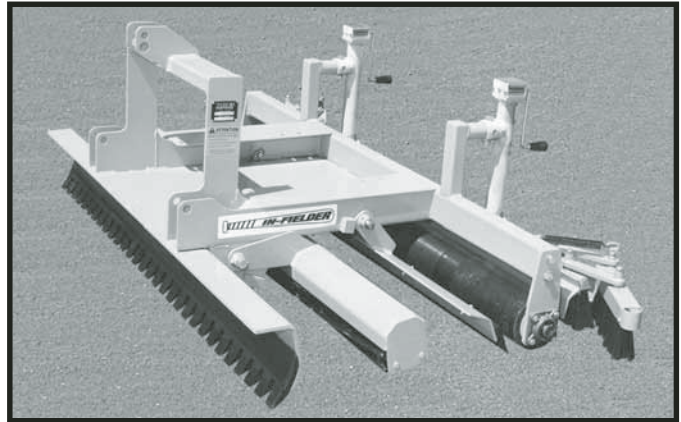
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3. Take everything into account; leave no stones unturned. For example, perhaps someone doing another schedule is working close by and their 4-wheel drive unit would be better for the job than yours. Taken a step further, perhaps your scheduled work should be done on Mondays, and not on Fridays, as you did all last season.

4. We have started putting notes on schedules – area wet, park/unload here, heavy litter area/leave yourself time to hand pick, noise sensitive neighbourhood, etc. This has really helped when staff is moved around to different areas; all your staff can have the knowledge, not just the experienced ones.

5. Once you are comfortable with the changes, create a checklist to run parallel with your schedule. Whether it is a field inspection or for time/cost tracking purposes, this will help the operator and you to know what has been done and what hasn't. We have all had the calls, "Hey, you haven't cut this grass for a month!" With your new-found level of organization, you can tell them exactly when the field was cut last (and I hope for your sake it hasn't been a month!) and when it's scheduled to be done again.

6. So, I submit this article with apologies for adding yet another task to your list. However, I promise you will be glad you took the time to perfect your scheduling when spring arrives and there are fewer bugs to work out. And everyone knows 'less bugs' in the spring is always a good thing! ♦



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## MAKING THE MOST OF SEMINARS & TRADE SHOWS

JIM PUHALLA COVERS A TOPIC MOST WOULD FEEL IS INTUITIVE – BUT MANY PARTICIPANTS DON'T GET THE BEST BANG FOR THEIR BUCK AT CONFERENCES

A glance at the Coming Events calendar on page 4 indicates the approach of the conference/trade show circuit. The following article will assist you in making the most of your event attendance – a boon for you, your employer and the clientele you serve.

Conferences can be a welcome break from the daily grind – a chance to step away from the demands of the office, get some new ideas, and think about the big picture. If we go about it right, we come back refreshed and rejuvenated, ready to bring new life to our work. But if we fail to think through the process, we come back tired and discouraged, wondering why we wasted all that precious time.

Let's look at some of the habits that can make attending a conference an exciting and useful enterprise. While we're at it, let's consider some ways to get the most out of the trade shows that are a part of most conferences and educational seminars these days.

### ATTENDING SEMINARS

At many conferences, one of the most important and useful parts of the gathering is the slate of seminars and presentations sponsored by the organizers. Surprisingly, many professionals never take time to attend these seminars, and many of those who do attend don't get the full benefit of the presenter's knowledge. Here are a few tips for making these presentations a productive part of your conference experience.

**Get a Good Seat.** Arrive early enough to get a good seat (15 minutes in advance is usually enough). If the presenter has audio-visual equipment like an overhead or slide projector, choose your seat to make sure you can see. Generally, you need to be closer to the screen when overheads are used than you do with slides.

**Stay Close to the Speaker.** Lots of us still have an elementary-school tendency to sit in the back row when we can. But if you're in the back when questions are being asked, you likely won't hear the questions or the answers.

John Madden tells about attending a coaching seminar the first year he was a head coach and sitting down in the last row, then seeing one of the NFL's most respected coaches march right to the front row, where he took copious notes and asked lots of questions. Madden learned a lesson from that, and we can too. That brings us to the next point.

**Ask Questions.** Lots of us are shy about asking questions. We don't want to sound stupid. But there's an old saying that the only dumb question is the one you don't ask. You're paying to be there – either through registration fees or through dues in an organization – so get your money's worth. If there's something you want to know more about, ask. You'll be surprised how often people will come up to you later and say, "I'm glad you asked that."

**Ask About Handouts.** Before the seminar starts, ask the speaker what information will be handed out at the end. It's silly to scribble notes the whole time, then have someone hand you a nicely printed booklet containing the same information.

**Fill Out Feedback Forms.** Lots of people hurry from the room after a presentation without filling out the response form. That's a mistake. It only takes a few minutes to fill out the form, and it's a big help to the presenter and the organizers in planning good seminars in the future. It's especially helpful to write down things you hoped to learn about, but didn't.

That's right – there are no dumb questions. Usually someone else seeks the same information anyway. Remember, you (or your employer) are paying for you to be there, so take full advantage of the opportunity!

#### TRADE SHOW TIPS

**Establish Objectives.** A good place to start is by thinking about what you hope to accomplish at the trade show. What new products do you want to learn more about?

What problems in your work could you find solutions for at the show? Who would you like to see at the event?

Take time to make up a list of goals you want to accomplish and put them in order, just as you might (and should!) list the things you have to do on a typical work day. That way, you can make sure you accomplish your high-priority items. Without planning, you can easily fritter away the time looking at interesting (but useless) new stuff.

**Go Early.** Most trade shows have light crowds first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Those are the times you can get the attention of exhibitor staff people with less competition. Of course, at the end of the day you'll be talking to tired people who are thinking about getting to the hotel bar. Instead, aim to be there when the doors open, and see your most important exhibits first thing.

**Plan for Bringing Back Information.** Before you can use any great discoveries you

make or exploit the great contacts you establish at a show, you must transport information about them back to your office. That takes some planning, too.

Probably the most common method for taking information home is to gather up lots of exhibitor literature and put it into a plastic bag. Of course, this is also the least efficient method. Many people get back from the show with a bulging bag of literature, put it in a corner of their office until they can get to it, and don't touch it again until they throw it out six months later.

It makes much more sense to carry a little notebook and write down the key items you learn, along with names and addresses of industry contacts, and so on. Little tape recorders are also very useful, because you can easily and quickly record lots of information then go through it later and make note of the really important stuff. Some exhibitors will even let you record their pitch – just make sure to identify yourself and ask permission first.

You might feel a little silly standing there talking into a tape recorder, but take



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### Contributions Welcome

Contact Lee Huether at the STA office if you are interested in contributing to the *Sports Turf Manager*. We appreciate feature-length articles, column ideas and newsworthy items. Updates on innovative research or equipment are also welcomed. This is a great way to both support your professional association and enhance your resume!

a minute to look around. You can probably see people dressed up like cartoon characters, booths with cheerleaders performing sales pitch cheers, and sales reps blathering on like carnival pitch men. A person recording notes looks pretty “normal” by comparison.

The new generation of electronic pocket notebooks can also be handy at a trade show. These devices have miniature keyboards to let you type in your information. If you decide to try one of these, make sure you’ll be able to operate it in the aisle of the show without finding a table to put it on.

**Take Business Cards.** Next to lugging around too much literature, forgetting to take enough business cards is probably the most common trade show mistake. If you have an adequate supply, you can give them to exhibitors and ask them to send you literature after the show. That lets you avoid lugging their brochures around.

When you give people a card, ask for one of theirs and write on the back what you expect them to do – call, send information, etc. That way, if they don’t get back to you in a reasonable amount of time, you know who to call.

**Schedule Time for Spontaneous Nosing Around.** Scheduling time to be spontaneous seems like a contradiction in terms, but it’s really not. You will definitely get more from the show if you plan your time, but it’s also important to leave a couple of hours to wander around and see what’s new.

One strategy is to arrive at the show early, make your key contacts and booth visits early in the day, and set aside the last hour or two to wander around. Since booth traffic usually dies off at the end, you’ll be able to get close to some exhibits that were packed earlier in the day.

**Plan for Networking.** Before you go to a show, think about other attendees you’d like to meet. They could include prospective clients, specialists you’d like to hire, or even an expert whose brain you’d like to pick. Consider calling before the show to make an appointment, or just to find out where you might run into the person you’d like to see.

Trade shows bring together the brain trust of an industry. If you’re going to be there, you might as well get the benefits of networking while you’re looking at the exhibits.

**Get Off Your Feet Sometimes.** Vince Lombardi used to tell his players, “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” In other words, when we’re tired, we tend to think more about our fatigue than about the real work at hand. If you’re a football player that means you’re less willing to take chances to make the big play. If you’re a trade show attendee, it means you miss something you should see.

So plan to get off your feet after you’ve been at the show awhile. If you go early, take an early lunch break. Your feet will probably be tired by then, and you’ll miss the bulk of the lunchtime crowd, which can be brutal at a trade show. And make a point to sit down to eat; you’ll be able to focus better when you return to the show floor.

My final word of advice is one any experienced trade show veteran already knows: wear comfortable shoes. Aside from that, a little planning and forethought will help to make the trade show experience a productive and rewarding investment of your time – one that pays rich dividends for years to come. ♦

— *sportsTURF*, Volume 14, Number 1,  
January 1998



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# STA Facility Profile

City of Windsor

**1. Name, location of facility(s).**

City of Windsor Parks & Facility Operations and Recreation Departments.

**2. General information.**

Parks and Recreation is responsible for:

- 2280 acres of parkland
- Over 211 parks
- 68 kilometres of trails
- 450 acres of green space in 700 locations of vacant city and private lots
- 123 km of roadside ditches
- 104 km of irrigation piping

- 102 life preserver stations
- 3 maintenance work yards (Malden – West, McDougall – Central, Little River – East)
- Ecologically significant areas such as Ojibway Park, Black Oak Heritage Park and Spring Garden ANSI, South Cameron Woodlot, Oakwood Woodlot, Peche Island, Ojibway Tall Grass Prairie.
- Peche Island, which contains many types of vegetation that are unique to the island.

**4. How many employees are involved with turf care?**

There are 3 who are dedicated year round to maintaining the sports fields. An additional 9 maintain during the high season. Each supervisor judges what is needed at what time. In the Parks Department there are 60 full time staff and 40 students between the months of May and September.

**5. How many acres of turf are maintained? How many acres of sports turf?**

Over 900 in total.

**6. What percentage of this acreage is irrigated?**

Approximately 10% of our sports fields are irrigated.

**7. What is the primary type of turfgrass? Name of varieties.**

Kentucky bluegrass with a mix of rye and fescue.

**8. Is yearly overseeding part of your sports turf maintenance program?**

Yes.

**9. How many times do you fertilize?**

3 times.

**10. Do you aerate? Topdress?**

Yes, we aerate and topdress.

**11. Has your municipality banned the use of pesticides? When? Comments.**

The City of Windsor implemented its Pesticide Use Bylaw in April, 2006. Meetings were held with both the public and commercial applicators to inform and educate on the particulars of the bylaw and what it entailed.



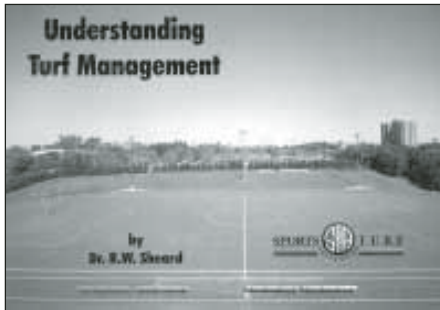
John Ivan Complex, MicMac Park

- Maintenance of the entire stretch of green space along E.C. Row Expressway (320 acres)
- 6 arenas with 8 ice pads and 2 outdoor rinks
- 10 Community & Heritage Centres and 5 clubhouse facilities
- 6 outdoor pools and 3 indoor pools which hold swim and fitness programs all year round.
- 28 park public washrooms
- 2 natural beaches
- 1 marina with 295 boat wells

- 8 picnic sites with shelters which are booked through Parks and Recreation by families and community groups year round.
- Odette Sculpture Park with over 30 features
- Festival Plaza and Civic Terrace, which hold over 14 major festivals each year.
- MicMac and Malden Park Complexes
- 1,000,000 square feet of horticulture planting beds
- 65,000 street trees and 35,000 park trees (excluding natural area trees) with 8,000 work requests per year

**3. What types of sports fields are on site?**

- 100 ball diamonds
- 40 soccer fields
- 13 lighted stadia
- 2 cricket pitches
- 1 Australian Rules Football pitch
- 48 tennis courts in 13 locations



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### 12. Are community user groups involved or have they been involved in the construction/maintenance of facilities? In what manner?

Yes, user groups continue to raise funds to partially finance new construction as well as assist with on-going maintenance of facilities. The City of Windsor and community groups and organizations routinely work together to construct/maintain the various sports fields and facilities located across the city. Partnerships are developed and grant funding is secured through local organizations to help alleviate costs.

### 13. How many hours per year are the fields permitted?

20,273 hours. Fields are permitted from May 1 to November 30, depending on the sport. Hours of rentals run from 9 am to 11 pm, depending on facility type. We have control on the amount of timing of use through our permitting system. Fields are closed during the regular season at the discretion of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

### 14. Who permits them?

The Recreation Department issues permits for the use of fields. Each booking is entered into the facility booking system in order to issue permits and fees to local groups and individuals.

Our Pesticide Use Bylaw was implemented in April, 2006. Meetings were held with both the public and commercial applicators to inform and educate on the particulars of the bylaw and what it entailed.

### 15. Are the fields ever closed during the season to give them a rest?

No, we do not close fields during the season.

### 16. How much input do you have in the amount and timing of use?

The Recreation Department manages all usage of the fields and determines when those fields will be open or closed. ♦

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