



Administration and Operations Committee Report

To: The Chair and Members of the Administration and Operations Committee
From: Sarah Dredge, Manager of Recreation Services
Date: February 17, 2026
Report #: RPT-0039-26
Subject: Recreation Services Program Summary
Purpose: For Information

Recommendation

THAT RPT-0039-26 be received as information.

Executive Summary

This report is intended to provide Council with an overview of recreational activities, programs and services that were offered in 2025 compared to 2024, highlighting achievements, gaps in service delivery, resource challenges and the increased demand for recreational programs, activities and services in Brant.

Strategic Plan Priority

Strategic Priority 5 - Healthy, Safe, and Engaged Citizens

Impacts and Mitigation

Social Impacts

Recreational activities, programs, and services offer positive socialization with peers, improved communication skills, the development of friendships, increased leisure skills, appropriate behavior development, enhanced self-esteem and self confidence, increased autonomy, and a feeling of community and acceptance for all.

Environmental Impacts

N/A

Economic Impacts

To accommodate the growth and demand for recreational activities, programs, and services in the County of Brant, staff have included additional resources in the 2026 Operating Budget.

Report

Background

The Community Services Department offers a variety of recreational activities, programs, and services to residents of all ages throughout the County of Brant.

These recreational activities, programs and services include but are not limited to, the After School Program, Aquatic Programs, Drop-in Programs, FAIR Brant Programming, Fitness Classes, General Camps (Winter, March Break, & PA Day), Gymnastics Program, Ice Programming, Park and Outdoor Programs, Seniors Drop In Centre, Seniors Programs, Special Events, Sports Leagues, Summer Camp, Youth Centre, and Youth Programming.

In 2016, the County of Brant adopted the Active Grand Policy “All In, All Active” recognizing access to recreation as an essential service for all residents and committed to providing opportunities that are affordable, inclusive, and responsive to community needs. The policy is a way for the County of Brant to empower communities and create collaborations that engage communities in physical activity, building a foundation of an Active Living Culture with the emphasis on when we are “all in” for recreation we are “all active” for life.

In 2018, the County of Brant committed to serving all members of our community equally when participating in recreation programs by implementing the Fun, Adaptive, Inclusive Recreation (FAIR) in Brant Program. The FAIR Brant Program provides participants with adapted and inclusive opportunities within already existing programs and services in the County of Brant. These programs include After School Programs, Aquatics Programs, General Camps (Winter, March Break, & PA Day), Sensitive Santa event, Sound and Sooth Programming and Summer Camp. These programs have been designed for a wide range of abilities and accommodations are made to fit the individual needs of the participants.

Recreation Master Plan Context

There are a wide range of recreation programs and activities available in the County of Brant, including those delivered by volunteer and not-for-profit groups and other community service providers. The County of Brant Recreation Master Plan Section 4.13, recommendation #40 Recreation Programs, outlined the need to continually monitor and assess our approach to delivery of recreation program services, while ensuring expansion of services in priority areas such as seniors, arts and outdoor programming is met. The County of Brant also needs to ensure that staffing levels are available for the demand of future programs and services as well as continued access to recreation services for all.

Analysis

The Recreation Services Program Summary below provides an overview of recreational activities, programs, and services that were offered January-December 2025 compared to January-December 2024.

Recreation Programs

1.0 Registered Recreation Program Data

Registered Recreation Program Data 2024 & 2025 Comparison			
Program	2024 Participants	2025 Participants	% Increase
Recreation Programs	2,270	6,897	304%
Summer Camp	1,754	2,078	19%
Aquatics	5,737	9,633	68%
After School Program	158	159	NIL
Total Registrants:	9,919	18,767	89%

2.0 Drop-in Recreation Program Data

Drop-in Recreation Program Data 2024 & 2025 Comparison			
Program	2024 Participants	2025 Participants	% Increase/Decrease
Recreation Programs	15,718	10,114	-36%
Aquatics	9,428	10,278	9%
Total Drop-In Registrants:	25,146	20,392	-17%

In 2025, registered recreational programming experienced a significant increase of 89% from 2024 to 2025 as indicated in table 1.0. Participation increased due to a combination of strategic program changes (i.e. program trends, resources, facility space, scheduling) and growing community demand. The Recreation Services Division expanded popular programs such as Gymnastics, Ice Programs, Fitness Classes and introduction to new programming opportunities such as Sports Leagues for children and adults (i.e. hockey leagues) as well as the expansion of the Brant Ventures in Nature Program, offering Eco Kids Club and Angler Programming, attracting a broader range of participants. When permitted, staff adjusted scheduling and programming formats to better align with

participant availability.

As indicated in table 2.0 drop-in program participation decreased -17% from 2024 to 2025. This decrease reflects a strategic shift in program delivery rather than a reduction in service and/or participation. Several programs that were previously offered as a drop-in program in 2024 were transitioned to registered in 2025. This was to improve program planning, staffing efficiency, participant accountability and program quality. This change allowed for more consistent attendance, improved safety of staff and participants and better allocation of resources while continuing to meet community needs.

In addition, the Recreation Services Division continues to invest in staff training opportunities to enhance programming quality and overall programming experience, leading to increased registration and participation.

Summer Camp

The County of Brant has offered summer camp for over 20 years. Various types of summer camps are offered throughout the County of Brant, which include Summer Sizzler for ages 4-6, Summer Fun for ages 7-9, Ultimate Camp Adventures for ages 10-12 years and Specialty Camps for ages 5-12 years. All camps consist of weekly themes and guest speakers. Specialty Camps have become increasingly popular over the years and include the following camps: Gymnastics Camp, Cooking Camp, Express Yourself Camp, Sports Camp, Hockey Camp, Basketball Camp, DIY Camp, Fire Fighter Camp, Outdoor Adventure, Jr. Zookeeper Camp, Stemetics Camp, Camp Canvas and Soccer Camp.

Based on availability, space requirements, demand and community feedback, summer camps are offered in all areas of the County including the Brant Sports Complex, Syl Apps Community Centre, Scotland Community Centre, Burford Community Centre, Gaukel Memorial Community Centre, Green Lane Sports Complex, Paris Central School, Cobblestone Elementary School, Northward School, Holy Family School, Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, Paris District High School, Twin Valley Zoo and Paris Soccer Club.

In 2025, staff continued to manage wait list demands, implementing the following measures: increased camp capacity where staffing and facilities permitted for the more popular camps, reallocating staff resources to high-demand programs, increased communication with families regarding registration timelines and wait list movement, monitored daily attendance to fill last-minute vacancies from wait lists and reviewed program schedules and formats to optimize usage of facility space.

There continues to be an increased demand for summer camps in the County of Brant and as indicated in table 1.0, there has been a 19% increase in participation for summer camp since 2024. Staff continue to make every effort to accommodate those on the waitlist, however resource challenges such as facility space, staffing, and budget constraints limit the ability to provide accommodation for everyone.

Currently, the County of Brant is at capacity to expand summer camp programs within existing County of Brant indoor facilities and County of Brant schools that meet the space requirements for the program. Staff continue to seek partnerships and new locations to assist with the ongoing demand for summer camps.

Aquatic Programs

The Paris Community Pool delivers a diverse range of instructional, recreational, and drop-in aquatic opportunities designed to meet community demand and enhance overall participation. Programming includes swimming lessons, aquatic fitness classes, recreational swims, and specialty aquatic events, with a continued focus on safety, accessibility, and quality instruction. The usership for 2025 increased approximately 68% compared to 2024.

The Paris Community Pool restructured programming to align with aquatic facilities in the surrounding area and offered multi-use scheduling. For example, in 2025 lane swims were offered seven (7) days a week vs. three (3) days a week in prior years. Lane swims were offered during fitness class times.

A key highlight for 2025 was an increase of 9% for drop-in programming compared to 2024. Additional drop-in swim times (“Bonus Swims”) were introduced to better accommodate varying schedules and increase opportunities for casual visits to the pool. This increase supported higher flexibility for patrons, improved facility utilization, and aligned with observed demand for unstructured aquatic access.

To assist with accommodating those on the waitlist (171 participants), two timeslots were unassigned during each instructional block for each session (4 sessions). These timeslots were used to create second offerings of classes in high demand for each session. Swimming lessons with no enrollment were cancelled and replaced with a swimming class that is more in demand to accommodate those on the waitlist.

In addition, the County of Brant continues to offer the Swim to Survive program that is in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Lifesaving Society of Ontario. This year, staff accommodated grade three (3) and seven (7) classes from both Grand Erie District School Board and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, serving over 2,500 students in Brant. This program ran Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at capacity throughout the month of June. Due to the increase in students, additional timeslots were added to offer this program, limiting the ability to accommodate school trip requests. As growth continues, the concern is the ability to accommodate all grade 3 and 7 classes for the Swim to Survive program.

Overall, Aquatic Programming in 2025 demonstrated growth in service delivery and responsiveness to community needs. This represents a positive step towards increased engagement and inclusive aquatic recreational opportunities.

After School Program

The County of Brant has been offering the After School Program for over 20 years. Currently, the program is partially funded by the Ministry of Sport, with the remaining portion funded by user fees. As part of the Ministry funding criteria, the program is required to provide a physical activity component, therefore facility space requirements are in place to run the program safely and effectively.

For the 2025/2026 school year, the program is being offered at the following locations: Burford Community Centre (students from Blessed Sacrament School, 7 participants enrolled out of 20), Burford District Elementary School (30 participants enrolled out of 30), Cobblestone Elementary School (20 participants enrolled out of 20), Gaukel Memorial Community Centre (students from St. George German School, 20 participants enrolled out of 20), Glen Morris School (15 participants enrolled out of 20), Mt. Pleasant Community

Centre (students from Mt. Pleasant Elementary School, 7 participants enrolled out of 20), Paris Central School (20 participants enrolled out of 20), Onondaga Brant Public School (20 participants enrolled out of 20), Scotland Community Centre (students from Blessed Sacrament School & Oakland/Scotland School, 20 participants enrolled out of 20).

As indicated in table 1.0 for the 2025/2026 school year, there are 159 spots filled out of the 190 available, which is a nominal increase from the 2024/2025 school year. The waitlist of 23 participants is due to the demand for certain After School Program locations as indicated above. Unfortunately, due to staffing challenges and facility space requirements, the County of Brant was unable to open additional spots to accommodate waitlists at these locations.

The After School Program remains a highly valued recreation program, delivering meaningful benefits to children, families and the communities it serves. In 2025, the program demonstrated strong participation and positive outcomes. Staff will continue to invest in this program and will continue to support children’s development, family well-being, and community safety while responding to growing demand in the years ahead.

Seniors Programming

3.0 Seniors Registered Program Data

Seniors Registered Program Data 2024 & 2025 Comparison			
Program	2024 Participants	2025 Participants	% Increase/Decrease
Fitness	667	623	-9%
Pickleball	2,845	2,728	- 4%
Workshops	456	999	119%
Seniors Tournaments	N/A	207	N/A
Senior Centre Memberships	N/A	206	N/A
Total Senior Registrants:	3,968	4,763	20%

Senior programming is on the rise with an overall increase of 20% in the last year due to demographic shifts, increased awareness of the benefits of active aging, and support for senior overall well-being. With a growing and aging population, the need for structured and engaging recreational activities has become more evident. This demographic shift necessitates the expansion for seniors programming and a Seniors Drop-in Centre to cater to the physical, mental, and social well-being of older adults.

In 2025, the County of Brant received funds through the Seniors Active Living Centre Program, launching the Seniors Drop-in Centre at Sojourn Church in Paris. The Seniors Drop-in Centre hosted a Seniors Centre Open House in September 2025, where 180 seniors attended. As shown in table 3.0, there were 206 Seniors Memberships for the Seniors Drop-in Centre in 2025. The number of programs offered within the Seniors Drop-in Centre was 174, which included multipurpose activity rooms for fitness, arts, games and educational workshops, social lounge and café for informal gatherings. The Seniors Drop-in Centre has welcomed a total of 1,925 member visits from September to December. The opening of the centre has provided a safe, accessible and engaging space for seniors to participate in social, recreational, educational and wellness programs. The centre will continue to support healthy aging, reduce social isolation and strengthen community connections.

Seniors programming outside of the Seniors Drop-in Centre as shown in item 3.0 continues to be well attended. Programs offered include Walking Soccer, Bocce Ball, Trivia at Paris Beer Co., Art & Sewing Workshops, Fitness Walks and Classes, Special Events, Seniors Winter and Summer Olympics, Bird Walks, Pickleball, Cornhole and Fill Your Cup Socials.

As the senior population continues to grow, the need for well-structured seniors recreational programming will become increasingly vital. The Recreation Services Division will prioritize seniors' recreational programming as it promotes healthy aging, social connectivity and overall well-being, ultimately improving the quality of life for older adults in our community.

Summary and Recommendations

Overall, the Community Services Department continues to be very successful in the delivery of recreational activities, programs, and services. The Recreation Services Division continues to take more of a community partnership approach working with new and existing community groups to support recreational activities, programs, and services. As the County of Brant continues to see growth, it will be important to ensure that resource challenges are addressed to accommodate the current and future demand for recreational activities, programs, and services to achieve access to recreation for all.

Attachments

N/A

Reviewed By

Philip Mete, General Manager of Community Services
Stacey Ellins, Director of Parks and Recreation

Copied To

By-law and/or Agreement

By-law Required	No
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No