Programming and Services for Youth in North Kingston Parks: A Community Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Neighbourhood parks have been widely studied as places for children to play, socialize, and engage in physical activity. Overall, parks promote physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive, and social development among children (National Academy of Sciences, 2004). There is evidence that active recreation facilities and sports programs, as well as other activities and programs, tend to draw children to parks (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). However, children and youth are often faced with barriers to participation in activities, such as time and resource constraints and perceptions of safety. In a recent needs assessment of North Kingston, the Kingston Community Health Centres (2010) found that an important priority for improving community quality of life is the provision of activities and support for children and youth over age six. Moreover, participation in organized activities is low compared to the national average. This report seeks to assess youth programs in the neighbourhoods of Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres and provide recommendations for the future by addressing three research questions:

• What are the programming and service needs of children in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?
• What community assets exist in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?
• How can these assets be mobilized to address the programming and service needs of children in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?

Methods

A community assessment was carried out in order to collect information about programming and services for children and youth in the Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods in Kingston, Ontario. This area encompasses seven neighbourhood parks: Snider Park, Headway Park, Shannon Park, Marker’s Acres Park, Sutherland Drive Park, Neil McArthur Park, and Starr Reid Park.

A review of parks and youth programming literature was conducted to provide a theoretical background and summarize best practices. In order to develop an understanding of community needs and assets specific to the study area, four additional key documents were reviewed, including the City of Kingston’s Official Plan and the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Inventories of physical and organizational assets were compiled through the use of direct observations, key informant interviews, and community directories. The physical asset inventory served to describe each of the parks and identify resources present within the parks that can be leveraged when forming partnerships. The organizational inventory identified community organizations and institutions that serve youth or have the potential to partner with youth groups that are predominantly found within the study area. Finally, key informant interviews with service providers and members of the community were held in order to confirm
the results of the document review and asset inventories and provide additional insight into the
neighbourhoods.

Findings

This study identified several areas of improvement for youth programs and services. A review of
key documents showed that participation in organized sports and clubs is low in North Kingston
because of time and resource constraints, as well as perceived safety concerns. Additionally,
there is a need for more programs targeting older youth. Key informants also felt that the parks
in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres are underused; more specifically, there is a lack of
spontaneous play and poor use of sports fields.

Fortunately, Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods have many assets that are
beneficial to youth, such as strong community organizations offering a diversity of programs for
children and youth, a varied network of park spaces, and the Wally Elmer Youth Centre that
provides affordable programming space for youth activities. Moreover, the study area is
characterized by resilience and a strong sense of community among residents, which can
contribute to the positive social development of children and youth. Finally, interviews with key
informants showed that individuals and organizations within the community have a history of
collaborating with each other to provide facilities and services to youth.

Recommendations

Three recommendations were proposed as a result of this study:

1. **Youth should be involved in program development.** Youth should be given the
   opportunity to participate in dialogue and reflection in order to determine their own
   programming needs.

2. **New programmable spaces should be located nearby existing neighbourhood parks.**
   Parks in North Kingston are generally underused by youth, however they may be more
   likely to engage in spontaneous play if the parks become an everyday part of their lives
   through afterschool programming.

3. **The City of Kingston should continue to strengthen and expand its partnership base with
   organizations throughout Kingston.** Partnerships can play a role in addressing resource
   constraints and pooling expertise from a variety of fields.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I had the great fortune of working with two amazing supervisors while completing this report – Drs. Patricia Collins and Patricia Streich. Patricia C., thank you for guiding me through the proposal process and always being available for discussion. Your expertise on healthy community planning and continued support were greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Patricia S. for providing valuable feedback and encouragement in the final stages of my report.

I am deeply indebted to the interviewees for agreeing to participate in this study and for sharing their insight into the North Kingston community.

To my friends, family, and everyone at SURP – thank you for the great memories and for all the support.
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACPHD</td>
<td>Alameda County Public Health Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Compassion Capital Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Canadian Parks Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRNC</td>
<td>Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCHC</td>
<td>Kingston Community Health Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>NKCHC</td>
<td>North Kingston Community Health Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMKN</td>
<td>Ontario Municipal Knowledge Network</td>
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1.0 Introduction

Neighbourhood parks provide spaces for children and youth to socialize, engage in sports and physical activity, and participate in a variety of programs (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Children’s use of parks is a commonly studied phenomenon because many children do not meet national physical activity guidelines (Moody et al., 2004). Research on park use shows that active recreation facilities and sports programs, as well as other activities and programs, tend to draw children to parks (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Community-based youth programs can serve as inclusive, safe spaces for children to spend time outside of school, the home, and the street (Halpern et al., 2000). Holt et al. (2009) also argue that adult-supervised programs can “support and empower disadvantaged youth providing a culture of hope, an environment in which young people can gain strength, courage, resiliency, and a sense of optimism for present and future endeavors” (p. 1027). Unfortunately, youth often face barriers to participation in organized activities because of perceived and/or real safety concerns as well as time and resource constraints, among other factors (The United Way of Greater Toronto, 2005; Holt et al., 2009). Overall, it is important for neighbourhoods to provide adequate programs and services for youth in order to promote their physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive, and social development (National Academy of Sciences, 2004).

According to a recent needs assessment of North Kingston\(^1\), a key priority for improving community quality of life is the provision of activities and support for children and youth over age six (KCHC, 2010). While existing parks in North Kingston are generally viewed as neighbourhood assets by members of the community, there still remains the potential to improve programming for youth within these parks. Only half of the individuals interviewed for the needs assessment reported having children involved in organized sports, clubs, and activities, which is lower than the Canadian average of 75% (KCHC, 2010). These findings point

\(^1\) North Kingston, as defined by Kingston Community Health Centres, comprises the following neighbourhoods in Kingston, Ontario: Inner Harbour, Kingscourt, Marker’s Acres, Rideau Heights, and Williamsville.
to the importance of assessing youth programs and services in North Kingston parks in order to determine what changes and improvements can be made.

1.1 The North Kingston Context
North Kingston comprises a diverse group of neighbourhoods in Kingston, Ontario, consisting of Inner Harbour, Kingscourt, Marker’s Acres, Rideau Heights, and Williamsville. While the socioeconomic makeup of each neighbourhood varies, some common themes and needs exist in North Kingston, including lower than average incomes, a lack of affordable housing, food insecurity, and community safety concerns (KCHC, 2010). Many members of this community face social stigma, as some of these neighbourhoods, particularly Rideau Heights, have developed poor and often undeserved reputations of being run down and unsafe (Meagher, 2007). Despite these shortcomings, North Kingston is also characterized by close-knit, resilient, and effective social networks (Meagher, 2007). As such, community members display a willingness to be involved in community action (KCHC, 2010).

Given the large geographic scope of North Kingston, the focus of the study was on two adjacent neighbourhoods located within North Kingston: Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights. These two neighbourhoods were selected because they encompass seven parks that are in close proximity to each other.

1.2 Research Questions
This report seeks to provide recommendations for programs and services for children within parks in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights. The following research questions will be addressed:

• What are the programming and service needs of children in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?

• What community assets exist in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?

• How can these assets be mobilized to address the programming and service needs of children in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?
1.3 Study Overview

The study was carried out using a community assessment approach, which involves understanding a community’s needs, assets, opinions, and goals in order to make recommendations for the future. In Section 2, a literature review of parks and youth programming was conducted in order to provide a theoretical underpinning for the analysis. Section 3 describes the methods that were undertaken during the study. In Section 4, a review of key documents provides an overview of community needs and assets that have been previously identified by other community organizations. Asset inventories and key informant interviews contribute to this body of knowledge. In Section 5, the information was synthesized in order to make appropriate recommendations in the area of park programming for youth in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study, key terms are defined as follows:

- **Open space**: includes public parks, private open space areas, and natural reserves (City of Kingston, 2011). Open spaces can be used for recreational purposes, ecological linkages, and/or trail linkages.

- **Park**: A park is a public space, suitable for sports, recreation, and cultural activities. Parks often include amenities such as green space, play structures, sports fields, and community facilities (City of Kingston, 2010). Parks range in size and service area, from neighbourhood parks to city-wide parks. Most of the parks included in the study are neighbourhood parks, which offer informal spaces for neighbourhood residents to socialize and play (City of Kingston, 2011).

- **Programmable space**: Any space that can accommodate social, cultural, educational and physical activities of particular interest to the community (The City of Red Deer, 2008).

- **Recreation**: Sporting, fitness, and physical activities that are undertaken for the purposes of personal satisfaction and development, physical health and/or competition (City of Kingston, 2010).
2.0 Literature Review

The following section will provide an overview of literature associated with children and their use of parks, programming, and services. A theoretical background for studying children will be presented, followed by a brief description of how neighbourhood parks are beneficial to their surrounding residents. Next, children’s use of parks and barriers to use will be described. Finally, best practices for youth programming will be summarized.

2.1 Theoretical Background

Many researchers take a social ecological approach when studying the behaviour of children and youth. This model posits that the social environments of home, school, and neighbourhood influence a child’s opportunities and choices, and accordingly have an impact on his or her behaviour (Moren-Cross et al., 2006). Children and youth are “uniquely situated in the ecological environment” in that they are less mobile than older age groups, and are still developing “a sense of boundaries, norms, and selves” (Moren-Cross et al., 2006, p. 276). Thus, they are more vulnerable to “the effects of deteriorating, disorganized neighbourhoods” (Moren-Cross et al., 2006, p. 285) since much of their time is spent in their nearby environments. A social ecological approach means that parks cannot be studied in isolation; they need to be placed within the context of their social environments. The following models will further explain the link between children and their social environments.

The neighbourhood institutional resource model states that the availability, accessibility, quality, and affordability of institutional resources such as learning, recreational, and social activities may influence children and youth by promoting their physical and socio-emotional wellbeing (Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000). For example, aspects of the environment, including streets, parks, trails, and recreational facilities, can discourage or facilitate physical activity, depending on their accessibility, design, aesthetics, and safety (Potwarka et al., 2008). Research has shown that socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods have fewer resources available to them and are often characterized by social (e.g., crime, violence) and physical (e.g., graffiti, vandalism) disorder (Moren-Cross et al., 2006). Children who are chronically exposed to physical and social disorder are more likely to internalize risks, including
fighting, becoming involved with drug activity, dropping out of school, and committing crimes (Moren-Cross et al., 2006). Meanwhile, research has shown that children who live in neighborhoods with good access to supermarkets, parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities are more likely to experience healthier diets, less sedentary activity, and reduced risk for overweight (Holt et al., 2009). Thus, children’s behaviour can be tied to the neighbourhoods in which they live, and the resources that are available to them.

The collective social model of neighbourhoods proposes that children are influenced by the social organization of their neighbourhoods, including the presence of adult role models, supervision, monitoring, structure, and routines (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Collective efficacy refers to the degree to which residents monitor the behavior of children “in accordance with socially accepted practices” (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000, p. 326) with a goal of maintaining public order. Children who grow up in neighbourhoods with greater collective efficacy tend to live in environments where norms are reinforced among neighbours, which results in less problem behavior and healthier social development (Moren-Cross et al., 2006). Conversely, socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to experience a lack of informal and formal social networks for youth, which may be associated with delinquency, problem behavior, and negative peer group affiliation (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Since parks are located within the public realm, it is important for service providers and community organizations to improve the collective efficacy of these settings by encouraging the creation of informal and formal networks in order to promote the positive social development of children and youth.

In summary, social ecological models of children’s behaviour point to the importance of studying the neighbourhoods in which they live in order to create effective policy changes. These models support the idea that changes made to the environment, including neighbourhood parks, as well as supportive institutional policies and programs can lead to positive change at the population level (Holt et al., 2009). Accordingly, the design of parks and
programs located within them should address deficiencies in resources and seek to improve collective efficacy.

2.2 Parks Literature

2.2.1 Benefits of Parks

Numerous studies have determined benefits associated with parks and urban green spaces, many of which can be applied to children and youth. Haq (2011) states that the roles played by urban green spaces comprise “social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects of sustainable development” (p. 601). Of interest in this report are the social benefits that have been linked to park use among children, including increased contact with nature, enhanced opportunities for physical activity, and the encouragement of social interaction.

Parks are often regarded as places where children receive their “first exposure to nature” (Louikatou-Sideris & Stieglitz, 2002, p. 467) and have been described as “an antidote to the commercialization of children’s leisure.” (p. 468). Access to nature is associated with psychological, emotional, and mental health benefits because of the presence of open space and the contrast with city environments (Haq, 2011). Children’s contact with nature can lead to a greater sense of identity with and ownership of the land, empowerment and skill development, as well as ingenuity and imagination (Flett et al., 2010; Zhou & Rana, 2011). Parks provide “distinct senses of colours, shapes, textures and sounds” and promote a sense of beauty, all of which leads to aesthetic enjoyment amongst individuals (Zhou & Rana, 2011, p. 175). Finally, parks have been shown to offer nature-based educational opportunities through recreation and programming (Flett et al., 2010).

A predominant theme in the literature is the connection between parks and public health. While parks are predominantly used for sedentary or social pursuits, research has also shown that individuals who live close to parks and open space generally experience higher physical activity levels (Kaczynski et al., 2009; Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005). Additionally, children who do not use parks tend to have sedentary lifestyles (Louikatou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). For example,
they are more likely to be driven to school, and less likely to participate in sports and other organized activities. Flett et al. (2010) argue that integrating nature experiences with physical activity can enhance wellbeing by providing a positive emotional setting that serves to motivate people to exercise regularly (Flett et al., 2010). Van Loon & Frank (2011) argue park and playground design may play an important role in determining physical activity patterns among children. Additionally, the number of features within a park, park size, and distance from participants’ homes are significant predictors of physical activity (Kaczynski et al., 2008). In general, parks play an important role in promoting physical activity among youth.

Parks can also facilitate social interactions “that are critical in maintaining community cohesion, pride, and social capital” (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005) and promote social interaction among youth. They often function as meeting places and provide an arena for group activities such as picnics and low-intensity social recreation. In an empirical study of social interactions in urban parks, Peters et al. (2010) found that urban parks connect people to certain places and to other people who use those places, which can lead to social cohesion. Also of interest is the fact that within a small neighbourhood park, people felt at ease because they knew other visitors to the park (Peters et al., 2010). Peters et al. (2010) concluded that in order to further promote social cohesion, programming should be introduced to and/or promoted within parks. Fan and Khattak (2009) found that individuals who live close to parks are more likely to participate in joint recreational activities. They concluded that parks may “act as effective glue for family ties and the community fabric” (Fan & Khattak, 2009, p. 208). Therefore, if designed effectively, parks have the potential to stimulate social interaction, build ties between individuals, and strengthen communities.

2.2.2 Children’s Use of Parks

It is imperative for community organizations and service providers to understand what draws children and youth to parks in order to adopt appropriate policies and programs, particularly when parks display low participation rates. It is generally held that parks should be attractive and safe while offering a wide variety of amenities and features to meet the needs of children with different interests (Cohen et al., 2010). The following section will outline dominant
determinants of park use, including individual characteristics, safety, and facilities and programming.

Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris (2009) argue that children of different age, gender, race, and ethnicities display varying park preferences. For instance, a literature review of park use among youth showed that children in middle school (aged 10-13) are less likely than other age groups to visit neighbourhood parks and playgrounds (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris (2009) argue older children tend to feel that parks are too boring and prefer other activities. Davis and Jones (1997) found that older children enjoy ‘hanging out’ and value spontaneous interactions with friends. Their research also showed that teenage girls display low levels of physical activity and sports participation, which is consistent with other studies (Davis & Jones, 1997). The United Way of Greater Toronto (2005) identified socio-economic status as another barrier to participation in youth recreation, since lower income status youth often have less access to and opportunities for recreational activities. Thus, park programs and facilities should address differences among children’s needs on a neighbourhood scale.

Safety is an important determinant of park use for both parents and children, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods. Both objective and subjective measures of neighbourhood safety affect park use (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Holt et al. (2009) studied barriers to physical activity among children and youth in a low-income neighbourhood in Edmonton, Canada. They found that perceived neighbourhood safety concerns, including parent and children’s perceptions of strangers, bullies, and gang members, act as important deterrents to park use. Davis and Jones (1997) surveyed children aged 9 to 14 in Birmingham, UK about how they spend their leisure time within their local areas. Their results showed that parks were used infrequently due to vandalism, fear of theft of bicycles, and difficulties accessing parks because of motor traffic. Thus, neighbourhood crime and an unsafe pedestrian environment served as barriers to park use. Van Loon and Frank (2011) found that the presence of other children in parks makes parents feel more confident about neighbourhood safety “because it suggests a level of confidence in other parents regarding neighbourhood safety” (p. 292). However, Cohen
et al. (2010) found that while perceptions of low safety have been considered a barrier to park use, parks that are considered to be safe are not necessarily the most used. Louikatou-Sideris and Sideris (2009) argue many children do not visit parks because their parents do not have time to accompany them. They claim adult-supervised organized activities tend to ease parental concerns about safety. Thus, Louikatou-Sideris and Sideris (2009) recommend integrating more organized activities and hiring adult supervisors to attract children to parks.

There are various studies that address children’s use of organized activities within parks. Community-based youth programs can serve as inclusive, safe spaces for children and youth to spend time outside of school, the home, and the street (Halpern et al., 2000). Active recreation facilities and sports programs, as well as other activities and programs, tend to draw children to parks (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). A survey of children in Los Angeles County showed that the majority of respondents prefer organized physically active activities because they provide more structure and offer opportunities to play with other people (Louikatou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Other children claimed they preferred informal activities because they don’t like rules and because free play is more fun. Cohen et al. (2010) argue that on top of physical attributes, there are various social factors that may influence park use, including the number and types of events and programs that are available and the friendliness of park staff. Holt et al. (2009) recommend collaboration between different organizations, so that programs provide integrated services “that span several domains of healthy development as opposed to focusing solely on unidimensional programming” (p. 1027). Outreach is an important priority for promoting park use and that lack of awareness of park programs is an important barrier to use (Cohen et al., 2010). Thus, the availability of programming, both formal and informal, can act as an important determinant of park use and should be developed and improved upon to increase participation rates.
2.3 Youth Programming Literature

2.3.1 Youth Programming Best Practices

Programming is a key component of the positive development of children and youth. Much of the literature discussed below focuses on children aged 10 to 14, because the transition into adulthood is an “integral stage in life” (UWGT, 2005, p. 5) and effective strategies for program planning should be established to ensure their success. This age group requires additional programming focus because of low participation rates in parks and recreational activities, and a tendency to find many activities ‘boring’, when compared to younger children (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Edginton and Randall (2005) claim that a major challenge faced by youth workers today is the creation of programs and services that are both meaningful and relevant to youth, while promoting a sense of responsibility and encouraging personal growth.

There are various approaches to youth programming that have been described in the literature. Preventative youth programs are typically concerned with identifying risk factors such as drug and alcohol abuse and intervening at the individual level to create change. This process often involves “the successful transmission of a specific set of ideals, values, and attitudes that lead to healthy behaviours” (Edginton & Randall, 2005, p. 21). Another approach to youth programming, referred to as positive youth development, involves using positive factors and experiences to improve the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and vocational competence of youth (McKay, 2011). When engaging at-risk and marginalized youth in low-income neighbourhoods, youth programs should “build on the strengths and skills of youth, rather than focus on deficiencies” (UWGT, 2005, p. 23). Given that part of the study area is located in the low-income neighbourhood of Rideau Heights, the positive youth development approach is particularly relevant.

Advocates of the youth development perspective believe that youth need to have a sense of safety and structure; a feeling of active participation and group membership; a sense of self-worth; independence; and significant relationships with adults and peers (Edginton & Randall, 2005). Youth tend to experience positive development when they live within healthy
communities and feel they can participate in civic affairs (McKay, 2011). Positive youth
development has several objectives, including promoting bonding, fostering resilience,
encouraging self-determination and self-efficacy, and promoting diverse competencies (McKay,
2011). These objectives can be met by programs that link youth to the community as well
activities that lead to the mastery of a range of skills, while encouraging informal education and
allowing youth to converse with their peers and reflect on life experiences (McKay, 2011;
Edginton & Randall, 2005). Children and youth should also be engaged in program
development; an approach that is referred to as youth-centered programming. Youth-centered
programming should promote engagement by “attracting and holding their interest so that
dialogue, social discourse, and reflection can occur” (Edginton & Randall, 2005, p. 23). Article 12
of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by the United Nations General Assembly
states that children have the right to have their opinions be taken into account in all matters
that affect them (UNICEF, 2005). In general, participation in decision-making can have several
benefits for children and youth, including learning about democratic citizenship and gaining
social and environmental interests and concerns (Chawla, 2002). Moreover, children are often
the best experts on local environmental conditions and are therefore important resources for
program and policy development (Chawla, 2002). Thus, positive youth development and youth-
centered programming are two complementary approaches that can be used by service
providers.

There are also various reports and studies that specifically mention programming for youth
residing in low-income neighbourhoods. Youth who live in low-income neighbourhoods are not
necessarily at risk of violence and antisocial behaviour, but they experience a higher exposure
to this type of behaviour compared to other youth (McKay, 2011). An individual’s community
can play a role in promoting resilience in the face of adversity by contributing to a youth’s
autonomy, social competence, critical consciousness, problem-solving skills, and sense of
purpose (McKay 2011). Participation in youth organizations is associated with increased self-
estee and sense of personal control, greater family communication, fewer psychosocial
problems, decreased involvement in risky behavior, and improved academic achievement
(University of Victoria, 2002). In general, youth participate in programs because they provide a psychologically safe and welcoming space for them to be themselves (Halpern et al., 2000). Programs should offer low-income youth a sense of safety, clear rules that are enforced, challenging and interesting activities, a sense of belonging, attention from caring adults, a role in program design, and an opportunity to contribute to the community (Halpern et al., 2000). Thus, neighbourhood programming can play a role in fostering resilience among youth residing in low-income neighbourhoods.

2.3.2 Programming in Parks

Parks and recreation centers are an important space for youth development, as they are inherently “designed to improve the well-being of children and youth” (University of Victoria, 2002, p. 193). Children are “increasingly disconnected from the natural world” (Macklin et al., 2010, p. 8), which can be attributed to urbanization, declining natural spaces, fear of the outdoors, and alternative access to nature through electronic media. Interpretation in parks is often directed towards adults, however in order to effectively reach children, interpretive techniques need to be age-appropriate and relevant. The Canadian Parks Council (CPC) researched best practices for engaging youth in Canada’s parks, with the purpose of improving opportunities for connecting youth with outdoor recreation activities and their cultural and natural heritage (CPC, 2011). The CPC came up with key values associated with park programming for youth. One such value includes experience – youth want to try new activities and “explore new geographical and social territories” (CPC, 2011, p. 10). The current generation also values reinvention; that is, “anything that is faster, more efficient, or easier to use” (CPC, 2011, p. 10). Youth are interested in connection, through collaborative projects and sharing information. Finally, expression is valued by youth because the current generation “believes that we all have something to say, to contribute, or some unique way to shine” (CPC, 2011, p. 10).

Various studies and reports have addressed best practices for program development in parks. For example, children aged six to twelve increase their learning when they are active participants, which includes being offered opportunities to interact with tangible objects and
using all their senses (Macklin et al., 2010). Improvisational theatre games can be a form of interpretation for children. Loosely structured role-playing allows children to solve problems in a “creative, spontaneous, and interactive manner” (Macklin et al., 2010, p. 8). Other effective strategies for youth social recreation in parks include offering a variety of activities, such as sports, the arts, and community service; offering activities that are not offered at school; and incorporating physicality through athletics, drama, dancing, and camping, among other activities (UWGT, 2005). The CPC (2011) recommends integrating mentorship programs, encouraging stewardship, and building programs that provide opportunities for youth to interact with natural systems within the built environment in order to foster a nature-urban connection. Flett et al. (2010) found that older children are interested in competitive and challenging nature-based physical activities and that many youth prefer group activities, Youth tend to receive inadequate education about the value of healthy active lifestyles; thus program development should be educational in nature (Flett et al., 2010). Thus, programming in parks should address the findings presented in the literature in order to create a connection between youth and the outdoor environment.

2.3.3 Implementation of Programming

Recent research shows that the majority of Ontarians feel that recreation and parks are “essential services that benefit the entire community” (OMKN, 2009, p. i.). Unfortunately, a major barrier for effective programming identified by service providers is the lack of staff training and volunteer recruitment (Moody et al., 2004). In order to increase funding sources and community involvement, partnerships may need to be formed with school groups, places of worship, community planting programs, and other local organizations and institutions (OMKN, 2009). In general, the implementation of programming requires a variety of resources and expertise, and programs will have to draw from various stakeholders (UWGT, 2005). The development of programs should involve various different organizations, including park and recreation agencies, nonprofit organizations, schools, and family members in order to create a holistic experience for youth (Edginton & Randall, 2005). Partnerships can include formal agreements with school boards and other educational organizations, as well as community service organizations to cover operating costs and to develop programs. Community health
organizations can provide parks and recreation agencies with education, training, and resources. Examples of successful partnerships in Ontario include the City of St. Catharines, who partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara to lease a City-owned community centre to improve youth programming (OMKN, 2009). In order to leverage community resources, Chatham-Kent has a community partnership fund that provides funding to support-community-based initiatives, through which community groups can apply to receive grants. Thus, partnerships between municipalities and other institutions and organizations may play an important role in providing effective recreational programming for youth.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

A review of academic literature showed that parks can offer various benefits to children and youth, including the provision of spaces for children to play and learn about the natural environment as well as the promotion of physical activity and improved public health. There are various factors that influence children’s participation in parks, such as safety, attractiveness, accessibility and the range of amenities and features offered. Moreover, park use varies by age, gender, race, and ethnicity. Parks are also important settings for community-based programs. These programs should offer youth a sense of safety and structure, feelings of active participation and independence, and close relationships with adults and peers. The literature also showed that children are influenced by the neighbourhoods in which they live, including the quality of institutional and recreational resources as well as the social organization of their neighbourhoods. Thus, it is important to assess programs and services that are being offered to youth in order to determine what improvements can be made in the area of youth development and recreation.
3.0 Methods

3.1 Case Study Analysis
The research methodology consists of a single case study describing the programming and service needs and assets of youth in North Kingston parks. A case study is a qualitative method commonly employed to “understand complex social phenomena” (Yin, 2008, p. 4) and to examine contemporary events. Case studies involve using multiple sources of evidence derived from various methods (Yin, 2008). The use of multiple sources of evidence allows for data triangulation, ultimately leading to “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2008, p. 115) in order to analyze data and develop recommendations. The research protocol for this study included several qualitative methods: a literature review, a document review, key informant interviews and direct observations. The scope of work for the study is described below.

3.2 Scope of Work
This report investigated the potential for parks to provide programming and services to children aged six to fourteen in North Kingston, Ontario. This age range was identified because a recent community needs assessment of North Kingston points to a gap in programming for children over the age of six (KCHC, 2010). Moreover, a wide age group was examined because research has shown that urban parks play a significant role in the physical, intellectual, and emotional development of both younger and older children (Turner, 2004).

The geographic scope of the analysis consisted of the area bound by Division Street to the east, Highway 401 to the north, Montreal Street to the west, and John Counter Boulevard to the south. These road boundaries were selected because they are the closest major roads to the selected parks. The geographic area encompasses parts of two neighbourhoods: Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights, as defined by the 2006 Census. The analysis included the following parks: Snider Park, Headway Park, Shannon Park, Marker’s Acres Park, Sutherland Drive Park, Neil McArthur Park, and Starr Reid Park. These parks were selected because they are in close proximity to each other and are all located within the Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights neighbourhoods. The focus of the analysis was on Headway Park and Shannon Park because
these two parks have an abundance of space and facilities, which can be utilized for programs and services. Figure 1 below provides a map of the study area and the seven parks.

Figure 1: Map of Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Parks in Study Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Snider Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sutherland Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marker’s Acres Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Headway Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Shannon Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Starr Reid Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Neil McArthur Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods display varying sociodemographic characteristics, as seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights (KCHC, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rideau Heights</th>
<th>Marker’s Acres</th>
<th>City of Kingston</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>5600</td>
<td>2735</td>
<td>117,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Family Income ($)</td>
<td>39,022</td>
<td>60,046</td>
<td>68,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Households (%)</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% in Labour Force</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Size</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Home Ownership</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows that both Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres have lower than city average household incomes. However, for the most part, Marker’s Acres resembles the rest of the City of Kingston in terms of key statistics and is quite different from Rideau Heights. Almost 50% of households in Rideau Heights are low-income\(^2\), compared to 12.7% of households in Marker’s Acres. Home ownership and employment are also low in Rideau Heights when compared to Marker’s Acres and the rest of the city. This overview of statistics shows the differences between Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres and provides a starting point for understanding the two neighbourhoods. It should be noted that despite these differences, both neighbourhoods were included in the study because they are located adjacent to each other and children from Marker’s Acres have access to parks in Rideau Heights, and vice versa.

3.3 Community Assessments
The study was framed by the community assessment process. A community assessment is a method of collecting information about a community (Sharpe et al., 2000). One of its primary functions is to allow planners and service providers to understand background information about a geographic area before programs and services are developed and undertaken (Maurer, 2002). Information gathered includes community needs, assets, opinions, and goals; local resources; and plans for the future. Community needs are described as “the gap between what a situation is and what it should be” (CCF, 2010, p. 4). Part of the community assessment involves determining why these needs exist, and why it is important to address them. Community assets are defined as aspects of a community “that can be used to improve the quality of life” (CCF, 2010, p. 4), and can include organizations, services, individuals, partnerships, facilities, policies, and a community’s collective experience (CCF, 2010; University of Kansas, 2012). The understanding of needs and assets can be used to “strategically plan and deliver relevant, successful, and timely services” (CCF, 2010, p. 4).

There is often a propensity for municipalities in North America to create plans and policies based solely on the needs and problems of a community rather than on its capacities and

\(^2\) Households paying 20% or more than the average family on shelter, food, and clothing (Social Planning Council of Kingston & Area, 2009)
assets. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) argue that when planners focus on the needs, deficiencies, and problems of a community, lower income neighbourhoods become ‘environments of service’ where residents “begin to see themselves as people with special needs that can only be met by outsiders” (p. 2). In contrast, community development takes place when local individuals and associations are committed to investing themselves and their resources into the effort (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). Knowing a community’s strengths also allows planners to comprehend what kinds of programs and services might be possible to address a community’s needs using existing resources and capacities (University of Kansas, 2012). It is important to have an understanding of what those needs are so that community assets can be effectively mobilized. Thus, this study took both a needs- and asset-based approach to conducting a community assessment in order to appropriately form recommendations. The following examples illustrate how need and/or asset assessments have been conducted by various municipalities and organizations.

3.3.1 Precedents

The Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa (2010) carried out a needs assessment on the services offered to high-risk youth in two communities in Ottawa, Ontario. The researchers used qualitative methods such as surveys and focus groups to determine needs by speaking directly to youth. Focus group results showed that youth use these programs because they provide places to feel safe, to have fun, to keep out of trouble, and to stay away from gangs. The researchers determined that best practices for planning for youth programs included partnering with groups already present within neighbourhoods, and aligning programs with existing initiatives.

The Town of Aurora (2010) looked at the availability of leisure services available to youth in Aurora, Ontario. Through community and stakeholder consultations, the Town identified barriers to participation in recreational programs and activities, gaps in programming, as well as opportunities to improve service delivery. Key barriers to participation included lack of time due to schoolwork, unavailability of programs and services, unsuitable facilities, and a lack of awareness of programs being offered. The findings showed there is a need for more drop-in,
unstructured activities for youth that allow them to socialize and/or play sports. Opportunities for improving service delivery included improved marketing, including youth in the planning process, and service partnerships.

The Town of East Gwillimbury (2008) performed a needs and asset analysis in order to determine the current conditions of parks and recreation services in East Gwillimbury, Ontario. The methodology included documenting needs and assets through focus groups, interviews, and surveys of the public and key service providers, as well as asset inventories and policy reviews. The Town also documented how community organizations contributed to recreation, parks and culture related activities, by describing their facilities, programs, and partnerships, as well as future plans for programming/expansion.

3.3.2 Summary
The above examples demonstrate the various methods that can be undertaken to conduct community assessments, and how programming for youth has been researched by other municipalities and organizations. In keeping with the case study methodology, multiple methods were used during the study to collect data in order to answer the research questions stated in Section 1.2. The methods included a document review, Internet research, direct observation, and key informant interviews. A focus on secondary data collection – data that has already been collected by others – was necessary because of time and resource constraints. This type of data collection is often undertaken to gather preliminary information about communities because it is relatively inexpensive and easy to conduct (Maurer, 2002). The methods used to guide the data collection process will be described in the following sections.

3.4 Document Review
A document review is a type of secondary data collection that involves analyzing the information contained within a variety of written, visual, and physical material (Olson, 2010). These include public records such as policy documents, reports, newspaper articles, and census data (Olson, 2010). A preliminary step in conducting a document review is the identification of appropriate materials for analysis. The first two research questions of the study were aimed at
determining the programming and service needs of children in North Kingston, as well as community assets that can address these needs. To gain an overview of these needs and assets, four key documents were reviewed: The City of Kingston Official Plan (2011); The City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2010); “If I Could Change One Thing: A Community Needs Assessment of North Kingston Neighbourhoods” (KCHC, 2010); and “A Community Engagement Strategy for Rideau Heights and the Wally Elmer Centre Community Hub” (Meagher, 2007). The City of Kingston Official Plan is a policy document intended to guide the development of the City of Kingston, and it includes overarching policies concerning such topics as sustainable development and open space use. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides detailed information about parks and recreation needs in the City of Kingston, as well as plans for the future. The last two documents are specific to the North Kingston area and outline various needs and assets present within the community. Both of these reports draw from primary data including local meeting notes, letters of concern, surveys and focus groups, and are thus representative of the viewpoints of community members.

The document review began with the use of key search terms. In order to determine programming needs and assets, documents were analyzed to determine community strengths, weaknesses, resources, goals, and plans associated with youth and/or youth programs and services that have been documented (The University of Kansas, 2012). Examples of search terms used to scan the documents included children and youth; participation; quality/quantity of programs and services; sports and physical activity; cultural activities; youth development; service partnerships; and barriers/challenges (Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa, 2010; Town of Aurora, 2010; Town of East Gwillimbury, 2008). These search terms were particularly important for the City of Kingston documents, because of their length and the abundance of information that is not pertinent to the research questions. However, the Meagher (2007) and KCHC (2010) reports were shorter in length (31 and 54 pages respectively) and were read in their entirety.

Relevant sections of each document were then recorded and compiled into a table according to whether they represented a need or an asset. For the purposes of this study, policies contained
within the City of Kingston’s Official Plan were regarded as assets because they represent plans for the future. The documents were analyzed using inductive reasoning, which is when data is explored for regularities, patterns, and themes, leading to generalizations (O’Leary, 2007). This means that the documents guided the creation of themes, which were then used to categorize the findings. This method is also referred to as open coding, in which a document is read carefully in order to “determine the concepts and categories that fit the data” (Berg, 2007, p. 358). Common patterns and findings were then developed for each theme after comparing and contrasting the tables that were created.

3.5 Asset Inventories
An important aspect of community assessments is the creation of asset inventories. Asset inventories can play a role in creating links among diverse groups that may not have previously worked together (Sharpe, 2000). Information is collected through direct observations, key informant interviews, and community directories (Sharpe, 2000). Since assets can range from individuals, to organizations, to physical assets such as parks and infrastructure, the type of asset inventory is dependent on the scope of the project. For the present study, two different types of inventories were compiled. The first inventory is a list of physical park assets, such as recreation facilities, paths, playgrounds, and fields, created through direct observation of the parks (The Town of East Gwillimbury, 2008). This inventory serves to identify resources present within the parks that can be leveraged when forming partnerships. The second inventory is a catalogue of community organizations and institutions that serve youth or have the potential to partner with youth groups that are predominantly found within the study area defined in Section 3.2, with the addition of other organizations located nearby (Sharpe, 2000).

In order to collect data for the organizational asset inventory, Internet searches and document reviews were conducted to determine the extent and location of programs and services that are currently being offered to youth within parks and in the greater North Kingston area (University of Kansas, 2012). A key resource for finding relevant organizations and institutions was the KFL&A Community Resources Database, an online directory that is available to the public. Additional information on the organizations’ goals, missions, programs and services
were also provided within the inventory, when information was available (Sharpe et al., 2000; Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2004). The types of programs or services offered were identified based on categories of support for school-aged youth set out by the Coalition for Community Schools (2000). These categories are: Academic Enrichment; Cultural Programs; After-School Programs; Community Service; Conflict Resolution; Family Life/Personal Skills; and Recreation/Sports. It should be noted that some organizations offered several of these different categories of programs and services. Finally, the type of youth development that the programs and services aim to foster were identified based on the National Academy of Sciences’ (2004) classification system, as shown in Table 2 below. This categorization was inferred based on the goals and the missions of the organizations and institutions.

**Table 2: Types of Youth Development (National Academy of Sciences, 2004)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Youth Development</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Development</td>
<td>-Good health habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Good health risk management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Development</td>
<td>-Knowledge of essential life skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-School success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Critical thinking and reasoning skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Knowledge of different cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Good decision-making skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological and Emotional</td>
<td>-Good mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>-Positive self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Good conflict resolution/coping skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Mastery motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Planning for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Sense of autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>-Perceived good relationships with parents, peers, other adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Sense of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Commitment to civic engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Key Informant Interviews

An interview is “a formal or informal discussion with an individual to gather in-depth information on specific topics” (ACPHD, 2004, p. 35). It is a type of primary data collection, which often involves collecting data that cannot be answered by secondary sources (CCF, 2010). Interviewing key informants is particularly useful because it allows the researcher to gain ‘insider information’ about an issue, situation, or problem from several different perspectives.
(Maurer, 2002). Key informants include community leaders, service providers, and members of the community that have knowledge of their neighbourhood’s history. Ethics clearance was received prior to contact with interviewees.

The key informant interviews were conducted to confirm the findings of the document review and to identify needs and assets that have were not captured in the four documents described in Section 3.4. Interviewees were also asked what they believe are the priorities for youth programming and services in parks in North Kingston, positive outcomes associated with existing programs, and youth perception of and satisfaction with programs (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2004). Another important function of the interview was to answer the third research question, regarding the leveraging of assets; a key topic of conversation was the potential for partnerships with other groups and organizations.

The interviews were conducted using an interview guide, which is a list of topics and issues to be addressed (ACPHD, 2004). Interview guides allow the researcher to determine the wording and order of the questions, and provide the opportunity to be flexible during the interview depending on responses given by the interviewee (ACPHD, 2004). The findings of the document review and asset inventories were used to inform the creation of the interview guide. See Appendix 1 for a sample interview guide used during the key informant interviews. The interviews were analyzed based on common themes, concerns, and recommendations, however anecdotal evidence was also taken into account to enrich the analysis (ACPHD, 2004).
4.0 Results
This section provides a summary of the results from the document review, site observations, asset inventories, and key informant interviews in order to address the research questions outlined in Section 1.2. Four main types of information are provided as follows.

- **Section 4.1** summarizes relevant information from four documents related to planning for the recreational needs of children and youth in the study area;
- **Section 4.2** provides an assessment of the physical asset inventory based on site visit observation;
- **Section 4.3** includes an inventory of programs and organizations related to parks and recreation activities; and,
- **Section 4.4** presents information compiled in key informant interviews conducted for this study.

Detailed information compiled for the study is provided in tabular form in the appendices to this report.

4.1 Document Review
This section reviews four documents in terms of how they describe the needs and assets of Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights, with a focus on programming and services for children and youth.

The four key documents reviewed are as follows:

1. The City of Kingston’s Official Plan (2011) provides goals and policies for the growth of the city.
2. The City of Kingston’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2010) describes the City of Kingston as a whole, however many of the findings and recommendations can be applied to the study area.
3. The Kingston Community Health Centres report (2010) provides general context for the Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights neighbourhoods. It is important to note that the KCHC conducted a needs assessment of all five neighbourhoods in North Kingston, and some of the results have been generalized for the entire geographic area. However, many of the questions asked during interviews and focus groups were directed towards residents of Rideau Heights and still hold value for this study.

4. The Community Engagement Strategy for Rideau Heights and the Wally Elmer Centre Community Hub (Meagher, 2007) is specific to the Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights neighbourhoods, however within the document the area is referred to as Rideau Heights.

4.1.1 The City of Kingston’s Official Plan

Appendix 2 provides sections and quotations from the City of Kingston’s Official Plan that are relevant to youth programming in parks in North Kingston. In general, the City of Kingston strives to serve its citizens through the provision of social, educational, or cultural facilities in a safe, accessible, and sustainable manner. The policies contained within the plan are consistent with the Ontario Provincial Policy Statement (2005) and are designed to promote a strong community structure. According to the Official Plan, Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres are located within the Urban Growth Boundary. The parks that are found within these neighbourhoods have been designated as ‘Open Space’.

One of the goals of the City of Kingston is to “support the significant role that Open Space areas play in responding to the recreational and leisure needs of City residents, in sustaining the natural heritage system, and in contributing to cultural landscapes, heritage settings and to the City’s quality of life and sense of place” (City of Kingston, 2011, p.101). Within Open Spaces, many uses are permitted, including active recreation uses (ex: sports fields), passive recreation uses (ex: community gardens), landscaped areas, conservation areas, and intensive recreational or community facilities. Municipal parks are expected to meet the recreational and cultural needs of residents in accordance with the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
4.1.2 Documented Needs

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the KCHC and Meagher reports were analyzed to determine key needs in the study area. The findings were categorized into four key themes: General Community Needs, General Service Gaps, Children and Youth Needs, and Barriers to Participation. General Community Needs describe the community in general and provide context for the analysis. General Service Gaps refers to general issues that should be addressed when developing programs, regardless of whether they are linked to children and youth. Children and Youth Needs refer to gaps in programming and services that are experienced by children. Finally, Barriers to Participation include any needs that must be addressed in order to promote participation in new and existing programs and services. These four themes address different aspects of community need, which is defined in Section 3.3 as “the gap between what a situation is and what it should be” (CCF, 2010, p. 4).

In terms of general community needs, one of the biggest challenges experienced by residents of Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres is the stigma associated with North Kingston (KCHC, 2010; Meagher, 2007). These neighbourhoods have been described as poor, rundown, and unsafe. As a result, community members feel they need more support and initiatives that strengthen the community. Improvements that could be made to Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres include cleaner neighbourhoods, additional green space, activities and support for children and youth, and increased incomes. Residents have also pointed to the need for new community leaders who demonstrate concerns about the community. In general, given that there are many low-income families in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres, it is important to provide programming and services that address their needs and promote community development.

Residents of Kingston believe the City lacks meeting and programmable spaces, as well as opportunities for safe, casual recreation (City of Kingston, 2010). Residents of North Kingston feel that community services can be improved through integration and ensuring service providers work together and share skills, knowledge, programs, and connections (KCHC, 2010). Similarly, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2010) has identified a need for stronger
partnerships between the City and other organizations to improve the availability and range of recreational programs and services. Within Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights, many community members feel they have been forgotten by service providers and are isolated from the rest of the City. As a result, program development should be carefully planned so that residents do not feel let down. Residents would also like the Wally Elmer Youth Centre, located within Shannon Park, to act as a community hub and serve to bring people together (Meagher, 2007). In all three documents, youth have been identified as a priority for service provision.

Within Canada, physical inactivity and unhealthy dietary habits among youth have led to concerns that the “current younger generation will not have the longevity or quality of life enjoyed by their parents” (City of Kingston, 2010). Youth participation in organized sports, clubs and activities in North Kingston is in the range of 52.2% compared with a Canadian average of 75% (KCHC, 2010). While the sample size for the KCHC report is small, low participation levels in North Kingston should still be a concern to service providers. When asked to rank their children’s access to affordable leisure and recreation activities on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being ‘poor’ and 5 being ‘excellent’), just over 25% of interviewed residents answered ‘poor’. The most frequent answer was ‘good’ (a ranking of 4), consisting of 29.8% of respondents. However it is still worth noting that a quarter of respondents are dissatisfied with the availability of affordable opportunities for recreation, therefore there is room for improvement in this area. Similarly, citywide programming for youth aged 13-19 received the lowest scores (3.28 out of 5) with respect to resident satisfaction when compared to programming for other age groups (City of Kingston, 2010). Fortunately, children aged 5-12 received one of the highest scores (3.75 out of 5). Given that children and youth make up a significant population in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights (approximately 30% of the North Kingston population is under the age of 20), compared to approximately 24% in the City of Kingston), their needs should be made a priority (Meagher, 2007). Residents of these neighbourhoods have identified various programs and activities that should be introduced for youth, including teen clubs, cultural programs, youth drop-ins, and intergenerational programs. The Wally Elmer Youth Centre in particular should be child centered, while still providing services for adults and families (Meagher, 2007).
In order to implement new programming, it is important that barriers to participation are addressed. Within North Kingston, social conflict and negative relationships with neighbourhoods could impact whether parents allow their children to participate in activities. Other barriers to participation in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres include program fees, a lack of awareness of programs, busy schedules, inadequate transportation, and concerns about safety and crime. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan recognizes the need for affordable programming throughout the city (City of Kingston, 2010). In order to address time and financial constraints, the City of Kingston (2010) suggests increasing the availability of casual drop-in programs that fit the schedules of youth. Similarly, residents of Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres believe that fun, one-off, up-beat events rather than structured programming can address accessibility issues while engaging the community and increasing participation in activities. In terms of safety, Headway Park has been identified as a location where criminal activity tends to take place (Meagher, 2007). Studies have shown that perceived neighbourhood safety concerns can act as important deterrents to park use (Holt et al., 2009). Safety concerns can be addressed through program supervision and community improvement programs such as gardens and murals.

4.1.3 Documented Assets

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the KCHC and Meagher reports were analyzed to determine key needs in the study area. The findings were categorized into three main themes: Community Values, Community Strengths, and Goals for the Future. Community Values refer to overarching values held by the community. Community Strengths include physical assets, partnerships, and leaders that have been identified as beneficial to the community. Finally, Goals for the Future include policies and recommendations that are expected to add value to the community. These three themes were developed according to the definition of community assets described in Section 3.3: aspects of a community “that can be used to improve the quality of life” (CCF, 2010, p. 4).
Residents of Kingston place importance on the prevalence of quality green spaces and conservation areas as well as community cohesiveness throughout the city (City of Kingston, 2010). These values should be upheld when developing programming for children and youth. Respondents of the KCHC needs assessment also felt that parks, playgrounds, and green space are a strong point of North Kingston, thus the value they add to community life should be preserved. Within Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres, children are considered the centre of the community, which is evidenced by “parents who invest their scarce resources to start children’s programs, face dangerous conditions to ensure the safety of children, rally around families whose children are in crisis and take great pride in the accomplishments of local children” (Meagher, 2007, p.12). In terms of municipal planning, the City of Kingston places importance on neighbourhood planning, with the understanding that educational and recreational opportunities should be provided based on neighbourhood level considerations such as the history of the community and demographics. These findings show that community members value parks and children, and that the City of Kingston is committed to introducing programming according to specific neighbourhood needs.

Community strengths include existing programs, partnerships, and community successes that can be mobilized to improve programs and services for youth in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights. One of the biggest strengths specific to Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres is the resilience of residents despite the challenges they are faced with on a daily basis (Meagher, 2007). A strong sense of community and a distrust of public institutions have led to residents providing support for each other (Meagher, 2007). The positive relationships that exist between groups of people in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres can be used a building block for developing new partnerships and programs for children and youth. This idea is supported by the collective social model of neighbourhoods, which states that informal and formal networks within communities are an essential part of promoting the positive social development of children and youth (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000).
At the municipal level, there are programs in place that are designed to provide affordable recreational programming for children and youth, such as the Subsidy Program for Affordable Recreation in Kingston (SPARK) and Positive Recreation Opportunities for Kids (PRO Kids) (City of Kingston, 2010). The City has also emphasized the importance of being active by distributing free passes to programming located in neighbourhood community centres, and is committed to working with like-minded organizations to promote healthy behavior among youth through similar initiatives (City of Kingston, 2010).

In terms of partnerships, the KCHC report has found that North Kingston has recently experienced improved relationships with the City (KCHC, 2010). The City recognizes that community partnerships with non-profit organizations, private providers and community-based organizations are necessary for fulfilling the Department of Parks and Recreation’s service delivery goals (City of Kingston, 2010). Key partners with the City include the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, and sport delivery associations. The community assessments of North Kingston point to other potential partners, including Better Beginnings for Kingston Children, Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns, the Kingston Community Health Centres, and the neighbourhood schools (KCHC, 2010; Meagher, 2007). Many of these organizations hire from within the community, maintain consistent core staff, and are generally trusted by residents in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights.

The City of Kingston has several recommendations for promoting youth development and engagement throughout the city, all of which apply to the Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods. For instance, the Parks and Recreation Department suggests undertaking a youth consultation campaign prior to planning new programs and facilities, as well as developing a Youth Strategy to ensure that engagement and empowerment of youth are a priority (City of Kingston, 2010). The City is also interested in engaging children and youth to protect and enhance the environment (City of Kingston, 2010). More generally, the City is committed to strengthening and expanding their partnership base to provide and deliver parks and recreation services, including partnerships with school boards, conservation authorities,
and other institutional bodies (City of Kingston, 2010). Other recommendations in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan include improving accessibility and safety in parks, as well as ensuring are responsive to the needs of their surrounding communities (City of Kingston, 2010). Overall, these recommendations are assets for the Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods because they reflect the commitment the City of Kingston has towards improving recreational services for children and youth.

All three documents discuss goals and recommendations for the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. The City of Kingston (2010) describes the center as “an ideal location for a youth facility” (p.26) and hopes to repurpose the centre to “function as a social and recreational hub for the Rideau Heights Community, particularly its youth population” (p.47). Similarly, the KCHC needs assessment envisions the centre as a space that provides “safe and affordable recreational activities for all ages” (KCHC, 2010, p.16). The retention and expansion of the Wally Elmer Youth Centre “is seen as a potential signal of a new era in Rideau Heights” according to residents of Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights (Meagher, 2007, p.13). More specifically, the centre provides an opportunity to move away from the “insular mood” in Rideau Heights towards broad-based community development (Meagher, 2007, p.24). For example, new partnerships and relationships with organizations may be formed, broadening the range of networks available to residents of Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres (Meagher, 2007). Various organizations, including local schools and churches, have shown an interest in forming a partnership with the centre and can play a role in outreach, gathering information about community needs and priorities, as well as contributing to service delivery (Meagher, 2007). Thus, the hope that the City and residents have for the Wally Elmer Youth Centre can be considered an important asset because of its potential to provide recreational opportunities while bringing the community together.

4.2 Physical Asset Inventory
There are seven parks in the study area. The parks vary in size, equipment and amenities. The assets of these parks were recorded through site visits and direct observations on two separate days: October 1, 2012 and October 26, 2012. Table 3 on the following page summarizes the key
features of parks in the area. A detailed table of physical assets in the seven parks in the study area is included in Appendix 3.

Table 3: Summary of Parks & Amenities in the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Play Equipment</th>
<th>Sports Fields/Courts</th>
<th>Other Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snider Park</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutherland Park</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marker’s Acres Park</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headway Park</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Park</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starr Reid Park</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil McArthur Park</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, Marker’s Acres Park and Shannon Park offer the most play and sports facilities relative to the other parks and are therefore well suited for programming. The number of amenities within a given park has been associated with increased physical activity among youth (Kaczynski et al., 2008). Therefore, these two parks appear to offer the most potential for active recreational use. Each park has its individual strengths and weaknesses, and can be considered an asset for different reasons. For example, while Sutherland Park lacks physical amenities, it has a beautiful natural wooded area that could be incorporated into environmental education programming. Most of the parks have exposed granite and/or limestone, and therefore offer opportunities for children to learn about Kingston’s geology. Many of the parks also have lots of green space, which can be used for both formal and informal physical activities, depending on the nature of the space.

While the scope of this report does not include park use, it should be noted that on October 26, the weather was warmer than average and the site visit took place after school hours, yet many of the parks had few children playing. Only Starr Reid, Marker’s Acres, and Headway parks were well used.

It is also important to note that this inventory was compiled through subjective site observations, and is useful for general information about the parks. Given that the focus of this report is on parks programming, this inventory serves as a brief overview of each park and the
amenities contained within. Further research should be conducted on park use and accessibility to develop recommendations for improvements to the physical aspects of each park.

4.3 Program/Organizational Inventory

Appendix 4 provides an inventory of programs and organizations that offer services to youth, within the study area as well as in the greater Kingston area. Table 4 below provides an overview of the programs and organizations involved.

Table 4: Summary of Programs and Organizations Within & Outside Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization/Program</th>
<th>Target Audience</th>
<th>Type of Programming</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within Study Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys and Girls Club Kingston</td>
<td>All children and youth</td>
<td>Drop-in, casual, afterschool activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kingston (GameFace)</td>
<td>Children aged 6-17</td>
<td>Drop-in, casual, afterschool activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kingston (Neighbourhood Park Drop-in)</td>
<td>Children aged 6-12</td>
<td>Drop-in, casual activities during the summer months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns</td>
<td>Residents of Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights</td>
<td>Raising awareness of community issues; mobilizing assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Inc.</td>
<td>Females aged 6-13</td>
<td>Drop-in, casual, afterschool activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kingston Community Health Centres (Pathways to Education &amp; Better Beginnings for Kingston Children)</td>
<td>All children and youth</td>
<td>Health services; tutoring; mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways for Children and Youth</td>
<td>All children and youth</td>
<td>Mental health services; counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside Study Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Children’s Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington</td>
<td>All children and youth</td>
<td>Child protective services; counseling; support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Family YMCA</td>
<td>All children and youth</td>
<td>Structured programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Military Family Resource Centre</td>
<td>Members of the military community aged 6-18</td>
<td>Drop-in, casual activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Youth Advisory</td>
<td>Youth aged 13-25</td>
<td>Afterschool programming; community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Youth Arts Cooperative</td>
<td>Children aged 6-18</td>
<td>Afterschool arts programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Youth Space</td>
<td>Youth under the age of 26</td>
<td>Drop-in, casual activities; support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Diversion</td>
<td>At-risk youth</td>
<td>Mentorship; skill building; counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a wide variety of programs offered to youth within Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres. Put together, these programs touch on almost all of the categories of support for school-aged youth set out by the Coalition for Community Schools (2000), aside from community service, and promote physical, intellectual, psychological, and social development. This section describes programs and services offered within the study area, followed by other organizations that may be important resources for improving services in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres.

The asset inventory demonstrated the importance of various community organizations and settings in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights. Within the study area, The Wally Elmer Youth Centre and Shannon Park appear to be important community assets, given the amount of programs offered in these locations. For example, programs and activities offered by the City of Kingston, Girls Inc., and the Boys and Girls Club are all housed within the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. Given the close proximity of the Wally Elmer Youth Centre to Shannon Park, youth may be encouraged to spend time within the park before and after programs hours. It is interesting to note that both programs offered by the City of Kingston (GameFace and the Neighbourhood Park Drop-In) promote park use among youth. By providing adult-supervised programming, these programs may serve to mitigate parental safety concerns about the parks in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres (Louikatou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009). Another important community asset is the North Kingston Community Health Centre, which does not specifically offer services within the parks but plays a role in promoting active and healthy lifestyles. Given the wide variety of services available to the community, the NKCHC can be a vital resource for community outreach and raising awareness about programs offered within the parks.

In general, it appears that programs within the study area are focused on providing affordable, drop-in opportunities to all youth in North Kingston. Thus, there is an overall goal to offer programming that is accessible to all, rather than targeting specific groups of youth or providing specific categories of programs. The exception to this pattern is Girls Inc., which exclusively offers programs for girls. Another commonality between the programs offered is the prevalence of drop-in programming, which is considered to be an important strategy for park
programming because of the variety of activities offered and the flexibility provided to youth with busy schedules (The Town of Aurora, 2010). There appears to be a need for programming that integrates an educational component, including the integration of nature-based programming into activities. There is also an apparent lack of youth-centered programming within the study area, which involves engaging youth in program development (Edginton & Randall, 2005).

Within the greater Kingston area, there is a larger diversity of programs offered to youth. For instance, there are organizations that are targeted towards at-risk youth (Youth Diversion) and youth in military families (Kingston Military Family Resource Centre). There are also programs that offer specific activities, such as arts programming offered by the Kingston Youth Arts Cooperative. While this inventory is not a comprehensive list of programs and services for youth in Kingston, it does demonstrate the range of organizations that may be willing to provided services to youth the study area. This idea follows from recommendations in the City of Kingston’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2010) to strengthen and expand its partnership base, as well as from best practices for program implementation that were described in Section 2.3.3. Collaboration between organizations can lead to the pooling of resources and integrated service delivery. However, given the lack of onsite indoor facilities, with the exception of the Wally Elmer Youth Centre, it may be difficult to integrate programming with park use. Moreover, programs will have to continue the trend of offering affordable programming to reduce the barrier of costly activities for youth.

4.4 Key Informant Interviews
Key informant interviews were conducted with individuals from local organizations who have experience working in the study area, and who have spoken to residents about their needs.

As shown in Table 5 on the following page, individuals from six organizations were contacted and asked to participate in the key informant interviews. Four interviews were completed. Three were conducted by telephone interviews and one was conducted by a face-to-face, in-person interview. One of the interviews was with a representative of a service organization in
the area that asked not be identified in this report. Representatives from three other organizations were contacted but were not available to complete the interviews during the time frame for this study.

**Table 5: Key Informant Interviews for the Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>Interview Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completed Interviews</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kingston Community Health Centres (NKCHC)</td>
<td>Community Health Service Agency</td>
<td>In-person Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kingston</td>
<td>Municipal Recreation Department</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns (CRNC)</td>
<td>Community Advocacy Group</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Organization</td>
<td>Service agency</td>
<td>Telephone Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews Not Completed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Youth Diversion</td>
<td>Youth services agency</td>
<td>Not completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Inc.</td>
<td>Community service organization</td>
<td>Not completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Boys &amp; Girls Club</td>
<td>Community service organization</td>
<td>Not completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section summarizes key findings from the interviews.

**4.4.1 Community Needs and Assets**

In general, the interviews confirmed the results of the document review in *Section 4.1*. For instance, all of the interviewees agreed that the parkland in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights is one of the community’s greatest assets. However, interviewees identified a range of concerns about how well these recreation facilities meet the needs of the community.

Representatives from the CRNC and the NKCHC felt that parks in the area are underused by children and youth, and that secondhand reports from local residents confirm this notion. More specifically, there is a lack of spontaneous play within the parks, as well as poor use of existing sports fields, particularly in Marker’s Acres and Shannon Park. One of the interviewees suggested setting up a rental system for play equipment to encourage children to engage in casual sports. Another interviewee pointed out that perceived safety concerns may act as a barrier to park use, although perceptions of North Kingston have been changing for the better in recent years. Moreover, some of the parks lack basic facilities such as shade, benches, and
garbage bins. Still, in the summer many children visit Shannon Park to use the splash pad, and in the winter the hill at Marker’s Acres Park is a popular tobogganing spot. Thus, it appears that children make use of some of the assets found within the parks, however there needs to be more focus on encouraging spontaneous play.

Barriers to youth participation in existing programs and activities were addressed in all of the interviews. One of the biggest requirements for organizations serving youth in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights is to ensure the affordability of programs – there should be minimal or no program fees. The representative of the NKCHC pointed to the lack of disposable income experienced by many low-income families in the study area as a reason for providing affordable programming. The City of Kingston has addressed this need for affordable programs through the Wally Elmer Youth Centre, which will be discussed below. Interviewees also pointed out that transportation to facilities can be an issue; children tend to only attend activities that are within walking distance. Another barrier is the lack of programming for older youth, many of whom feel they cannot participate in activities unless they are specifically invited to do so. Finally, a representative of the City of Kingston stated that some children do not attend organized activities because of a lack of time. This issue has been addressed by the implementation of drop-in programming through the Wally Elmer Youth Centre and the Neighbourhood Park Drop-In program.

Another key asset that was pointed out by service providers was the range of partnerships that exist within the community. According to one service provider, there are various organizations that communicate and collaborate with each other in the background to improve the community and respond to the needs of residents through the provision of services, opportunities, and programs. Common organizations that were brought up during the interviews include North Kingston Community Health Centres, Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns, the Boys and Girls Club, Kingston Literacy, Girls Inc., and schools found within the study area.
4.4.2 The Wally Elmer Youth Centre

There was a significant amount of discussion around the Wally Elmer Youth Centre throughout the interviews. The key informants recognized its role as a community hub, and how it has fulfilled a need for affordable, drop-in programming within the study area. Since the proposal of the community engagement strategy in 2007, the Wally Elmer has been repurposed as a centre for youth programming in the North Kingston Area. Aside from weekly programming that is offered by various organizations, there are also special events such as youth dances and community fairs that are held in the meeting space. Given that the Wally Elmer is located adjacent to Shannon Park and often offers programs outdoors, it can be considered a key community asset that has the potential to increase park use among youth in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres. During the interviews, one service provider stated that many youth and children say that the Wally Elmer is a second home, gives them a sense of belonging, and is a place where people come together.

A representative from the City of Kingston described how organizations have partnered with the centre to serve youth in the North Kingston community. These organizations include Literacy Kingston, Better Beginnings Better Futures, Boys and Girls Club, and Girls Inc.. The City of Kingston’s Parks and Recreation Department acts as landlords of the Wally Elmer and coordinates the activities of the various groups. The Wally Elmer facilities are available to these organizations free of charge, provided that they offer free, non-exclusive programming that operates during normal business hours. Aside from these basic criteria, there is no selection process for deciding which organizations are able to use the Wally Elmer. Since there is no funding provided to these organizations and they are expected to offer free programming, they need to secure their own funding to run their operations. Therefore, only organizations that have outside funding can provide programming at the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. Another finding from the interviews is that the City of Kingston does not coordinate what specific kinds of programming and activities are offered, nor do they seek input from youth to determine what their needs are; it is up to the organizations to do so on an individual basis.
The biggest issue faced by the City of Kingston in terms of running the Wally Elmer Youth Centre is that there is only one accessible meeting space in the Wally Elmer, so there can only be one program offered at any given time. There are organizations that want to provide programming at the Wally Elmer but they cannot be accommodated due to space constraints. The interviewees alluded to the need for the physical expansion of the Wally Elmer or the creation of a new facility adjacent to the existing building in order to include a gym, meeting rooms, a kitchen, childcare space, and a teen room. The representative from the City of Kingston stated that while there is a strong network of organizations in North Kingston, additional programming cannot be offered until more physical space is made available.

4.4.3 City of Kingston Programming

The City of Kingston offers two programs in the study area: GameFace and the Neighbourhood Park Drop-In. GameFace is a free, drop-in, afterschool program for children and youth aged six to seventeen at the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. Activities include casual games, sports, homework assistance, and resume building. When the weather permits, GameFace uses the facilities at Shannon Park, particularly the splash pad in the summer. There are approximately 100 to 150 youth registered this year, and an average of 20 to 30 children show up every day. The representative from the City of Kingston noted that overall the City is happy with participation in GameFace, given staffing and space constraints. The Neighbourhood Park Drop-In is a free program offered throughout the summer for children aged six to twelve. Activities are provided in a day camp format, and they include sports, quiet games, special events, and field trips. This year, the program will be offered at Marker’s Acres Park, however locations change by year depending on need. Both of these programs offered by the City of Kingston’s Parks and Recreation Department have played a role in promoting park use and ensuring youth are being offered safe, affordable, and accessible places to play.

4.4.4 Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns (CRNC)

An interview was held with a representative of CRNC, an organization that discusses problems and issues that have been brought up by residents of Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres and subsequently tries to find solutions through collaboration with individuals and organizations.
CRNC plays a role in promoting and facilitating networking between individuals and groups. There are a number of agencies and residents on the committee, which holds regular monthly meetings that are open to the public. CRNC’s philosophy is that partnerships are really important; they seldom ask anyone for money without offering to share the responsibility, whether it be financial or in terms of time.

CRNC has been involved in several initiatives that specifically target youth. For example, the CRNC was responsible for the introduction of a splash pad to Shannon Park, following a community survey about what recreational activities were desired by residents. Several items were on the list; at the top was a water facility. The City was moving away from wading parks, and at that time there were no splash pads in the city. CRNC approached the City of Kingston to create a partnership, and in 2007 the splash pad was opened to the public. In 2008 CRNC began working on building a skate park at the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. This project targets a different age group from the splash pad. The skate park will be suitable for older youth, providing them a free activity located within their own community. It is anticipated that it will bring new people into the neighbourhood, allowing local youth to interact with their peers from outside North Kingston. CRNC is also in the final stages of developing a parks education program, designed to teach youth about what types of flora, fauna, and geology are situated within the parks in North Kingston. For example, children will be able to take out kits and learn about bird populations through the use of informational cards and binoculars. If teachers want to use the equipment, there will be a ‘master pack’ available to them. These examples of initiatives show that CRNC is committed to promoting children’s use of parks in North Kingston and creating partnerships that will bring positive change to Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres.

4.5 Summary

Section 4 has provided an analysis of the needs and assets of the Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights area for recreational programming and services for children and youth in North Kingston. The section has summarized information from City of Kingston and other reports related to community needs, profiled the assets available, presented an inventory of programs and service organizations involved, and summarized information gathered in key informant
interviews about programs and services for children and youth in the area. These multiple sources of information confirm the existence of a range of community assets in the area while also identifying continuing unmet needs and barriers to recreational services for children and youth. The findings and conclusions from this study are presented in Section 5 along with some recommendations for future planning and service delivery.
5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the main findings of the analysis and proposes recommendations and areas for future research. It also provides a summary of the limitations to the study and the overall conclusions from this research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Summary of Needs Assessment

The document review and key informant interviews identified several general community needs in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights. In general, residents believe that North Kingston is characterized by a negative stigma, and is often forgotten by service providers because it is geographically isolated from the rest of the city. Interviews with key informants confirmed this notion. Residents believe that there is a need for support and initiatives that strengthen the community; there is also a desire for new community leaders and integrated services. These issues are relevant to youth because, according to social ecological theory, children and youth are influenced by the social environments of their neighbourhoods, which accordingly have an impact on their opportunities, choices, and behaviour (Moren-Cross et al., 2006).

The document review, asset inventories, and key informant interviews provided insight into how youth programming can be improved. A review of key documents showed that participation in organized sports and clubs is low in North Kingston. Key informants also felt that the parks in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres are underused; more specifically, there is a lack of spontaneous play and poor use of sports fields. The inventory of parks within the study area showed that some of the parks are lacking even basic amenities such as shade, benches, and garbage bins. This may deter parents from bringing their children to parks and make them less attractive spaces for play. Several other barriers to participation were identified, including social conflict within the community, program fees, lack of awareness of programs, busy schedules, inadequate transportation, and concerns about safety and crime. Interviewees also identified a lack of programming for youth over the age of 13, which also prevents this age group from participating in activities. This is an issue that has also been identified in the City of
Kingston’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan (City of Kingston, 2010). Another concern that is specific to the study area is the lack of programmable space within the neighbourhood; new spaces need to be introduced to accommodate the demand for programming. Finally, the inventory of programs and organizations within the area showed there is room for improvement in the provision of activities that have an educational component, that integrate nature-based programming, and that engage youth in program development.

5.1.2 Summary of Assets
A review of key documents showed that the Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods have many assets that are beneficial to youth within the study area and to the greater community in general. One theme that was predominant was the resilience and strong sense of community among residents. This is particularly significant because, according to the collective social model of neighbourhoods, informal networks can play a role in promoting positive social development among children and youth. There are also several organizations that have been identified by residents and key informants as important contributors to the community, including Better Beginnings for Kingston Children, Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns, the North Kingston Community Health Centres, Girls Inc., Kingston Literacy, the Boys and Girls Cub, and schools within the neighbourhood. The asset inventory of programs and organizations showed that there is a wide variety of programs being offered to children and youth within the study area, covering almost all of the categories of support for school-aged youth and promoting physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, and social development.

It is clear that residents of Rideau Heights and Markers Acres value the prevalence of parks, playgrounds and green space within the area. The asset inventory of the parks showed that these parks range in size and amenities provided, but in general there is an excellent distribution of places to play for children. More specifically, Marker’s Acres Park and Shannon Park offer the most play and sports facilities, and are also key places for youth programs and services. Discussions with key informants and direct observations showed that all of the parks have opportunities for environmental education programming. Within Shannon Park, the splash
pad is well used, and children make use of the park when outdoor programming is provided by various organizations working out of the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. The Wally Elmer Youth Centre itself is a community hub, offering youth centered programming at no cost. Youth have described the centre as their second home because it provides them a sense of belonging and is a place where people come together.

5.1.3 Mobilization of Assets

Interviews with key informants showed that individuals and organizations within the community have a history of collaborating with each other to provide facilities and services to youth. For example, Community Response to Neighbourhood Concerns is an organization that works to come up with solutions to problems brought up by residents of Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres by facilitating networks between different groups and individuals. This organization played an instrumental role in bringing the splash pad to Shannon Park and is currently working on building a skate park at the Wally Elmer Youth Centre in an effort to engage older youth. CRNC has also developed an educational program that recognizes assets in otherwise underutilized parks in North Kingston by providing an opportunity for children and youth to learn about their natural properties. North Kingston Community Health Centres is another key organization because of its focus on promoting active and healthy lifestyles, and the role they play in raising awareness about events throughout the community. In general it appears there are many organizations that are working together to improve the community, which allows for the pooling of resources and expertise and leads to the creation of lasting partnerships. In its Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the City of Kingston (2010) has recognized the need for community partnerships to fulfill the Department of Parks and Recreation’s service delivery goals.

The Wally Elmer Youth Centre can serve as a model for the provision of affordable, drop-in programming for youth. In 2007, a community engagement strategy for Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres identified programs and activities that would add value to the community, including teen clubs and youth drop-ins. Many of these activities have been put in place at the Wally Elmer Youth Centre in an effort to provide spaces for older children to interact with each
other. The emphasis on providing free drop-in programming and special events addresses the
time and resource constraints experienced by youth in the study area. The City of Kingston has
played a key role in ensuring the affordability of programming by providing a free space for
organizations to offer activities. Hopefully in the near future the Wally Elmer Youth Centre can
be expanded in order to increase the range of programs and services that are being offered to
youth.

5.1.4 Summary of Findings on Research Questions
The main findings from the research study are as follows:

1. **What are the programming and service needs of children in Marker’s Acres and
   Rideau Heights?**
   There are unmet needs for recreational programming in these areas, particularly for
   youth over the age of 13 as well as a need for more programmable spaces within the
   Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres.

2. **What community assets exist in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?**
   These areas have valuable community assets including strong community
   organizations offering a diversity of programs for children and youth, a varied
   network of park spaces, and the Wally Elmer Youth Centre that provides program
   space for youth activities.

3. **How can these assets be mobilized to address the programming and services needs
   of children in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights?**
   The community benefits from a history of collaboration and partnerships in
   providing valuable programs in these areas as well as opportunities to develop
   additional programs with other organizations. Expansion of the Wally Elmer Youth
   Centre to provide more program space could enhance the programming and
   services for youth in the areas.
5.2 Recommendations

This research study and literature on youth programming and neighbourhood parks lead to three proposed recommendations.

The first recommendation is that youth should be involved in program development. The City of Kingston’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommends consulting with youth to plan new programs and facilities to ensure that any new initiatives will be responsive to youth needs. (City of Kingston, 2010, p. 26). Conversations with service providers in the area showed that organizations tend to develop programs without involving youth. It should be noted that not all the organizations serving Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres were interviewed, and this recommendation can only be applied to the organizations that participated in the study. Engaging youth in program development is a key component of youth-centered programming (Edginton & Randall, 2005). Youth should be given the opportunity to participate in dialogue and reflection in order to determine their own programming needs. This is particularly important when delivering programs and services to older youth, an age group that does not tend to participate in existing programs. This recommendation also follows from the City of Kingston’s commitment to neighbourhood planning and its understanding that educational and recreational opportunities should be provided based on neighbourhood level considerations. Research to develop programs should include primary research involving youth, which can then be shared with the various service providers in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres. Given that this type of research can be expensive to conduct, informal conversations during existing programs and activities can be a starting point for involving youth in program development.

The second recommendation is that new programmable spaces should be located nearby existing neighbourhood parks. The Wally Elmer Youth Centre is located within walking distance of Shannon Park and Headway Park and is an example of how programming can promote park use. The proximity to play structures and sports fields allows organizations working out of the Wally Elmer to integrate outdoor play into programs that are offered to youth. The key informant interviews and the document review showed that the parks in North Kingston are
generally underused by youth but that youth may be more likely to engage in spontaneous play if the parks become an everyday part of their lives through afterschool programming. Moreover, by having adult supervised programming within parks, parental safety concerns can also be addressed. An interview with a representative of the City of Kingston showed that there are various organizations that wish to provide free programming, however there is no space to accommodate them at the Wally Elmer Youth Centre. If new facilities are to be constructed within the study area, these should be within walking distance of neighbourhood parks.

The final recommendation is that the City of Kingston should continue to strengthen and expand its partnership base with organizations throughout Kingston. This recommendation is in line with the City of Kingston’s (2010) Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which recognizes, that in an effort to be fiscally responsible, the Parks and Recreation Department should continue to collaborate with community groups and external organizations in order to fulfill its service delivery goals. The literature review showed that partnerships can play a role in addressing resource constraints and pooling expertise from a variety of fields. While it is important that service providers have addressed the community need for drop-in programming, the City of Kingston should collaborate with various organizations in order to maximize the range of programming offered to youth and ensure the affordability of activities. The Wally Elmer Youth Centre is an example of a successful partnership between the City of Kingston and other organizations, because the City is providing a free space to host activities, while various organizations develop the programs and provide staff. The inventory of organizations serving youth outside the study area showed that there are many existing organizations that can play a role in addressing programming gaps. For instance, the Kingston Youth Arts Cooperative may be an important resource for introducing arts programming to the study area. Other programming gaps include community service activities and environmental education programs.

Actions on these recommendations could go a long way to improve programming and services for youth in these areas of North Kingston. At present, there are steps being taken to expand the Wally Elmer Youth Centre, therefore it is likely that in the near future more programming
will be available to youth in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres. Hopefully these programs will integrate a greater diversity of organizations and involve youth in program development.

5.3 Limitations
There are several limitations associated with the methods used for this research study. While efforts were made to ensure that the process of collecting and analyzing data was objective as possible, there remains the possibility of bias in interpretations of information.

First, when compiling assets and needs through the document review, pertinent information may have been omitted or themes may have been misclassified because of the researcher’s interpretation. Additionally, since only four documents were reviewed, there may be additional available information that was not considered during the study.

A second limitation relates to the scope of the study. Given more time and resources, additional interviewees could have added to the richness of the data. As described in Section 4.4, several additional organizations were contacted for interviews but they were unable to participate within the timeframe of the study. Additionally, a valuable addition to the study would have been interviews with youth to gain their perspectives on programming and services in North Kingston, however this was not possible given the scope of the research.

Finally, the results of this research are specific to the North Kingston area, and may not be generalizable to other areas within Kingston or to other communities. Nevertheless, the research demonstrated the usefulness of the community assessment approach used throughout the study and showed how this may be of use in similar studies in other communities.

5.4 Conclusion
Neighbourhood parks are important locations for children and youth to socialize, engage in physical activity, and participate in organized programming. Studies have shown that active recreation facilities and sports programs, as well as other activities and programs, can play a
role in increasing park use. According to a recent community assessment of North Kingston
neighbourhoods, there is need to improve activities and support for children and youth within
the area and address the underuse of neighbourhood parks. This study served to describe
programs and services for youth in Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights and propose
recommendations that make use of the community’s assets. Key directions for moving forward
include promoting partnerships between the City of Kingston and other service providers,
strategically locating youth facilities near parks, and involving youth in program development.
APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Context

Can you briefly describe the role you play in the North Kingston community?

Have you had the opportunity to work with youth? What about your organization in general?

Needs

What would you say are the greatest needs and priorities for the Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods?

How would you describe children’s use of parks in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres?

Can you comment on existing programs and services for youth in Kingston? What do you think is missing? Have you spoken to youth and/or parents about what programs should be introduced to the community?

Through your interactions with the community, are you aware of any barriers to participation in programming for youth?

Assets

What would you say are some of the biggest strengths of the Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres neighbourhoods? (physical assets, partnerships, services)

How do you envision the parks in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres five years from now?

What sort of actions do you think need to be taken to improve programming and services for youth in North Kingston? Do you have any general recommendations for the City and/or local organizations?

What do you feel can be accomplished with existing resources within the community, including but not limited to individuals, groups, money, and time?

What role can community partnerships play in the development of youth programs? Are there any organizations in Kingston you feel should be involved in program development?
## Appendix 2: City of Kingston Official Plan Goals and Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Definitions</td>
<td>Leisure time activity undertaken in built or natural settings for purposes of physical activity, health benefits, sport participation and skill development, personal enjoyment, positive social interaction and the achievement of human potential.</td>
<td>Definition of recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Sustainable Development Policies</td>
<td>Most growth will occur within the Urban Boundary, shown on Schedule 2, where development will be directed to achieve greater sustainability through... d. opportunities for sharing resources such as parking, utilities, and the land base for locally grown produce, in the form of community gardens, as well as educational, recreational or cultural assets... g. maximized use of investments in infrastructure and public amenities...</td>
<td>Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights are within the Urban Boundary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 City Structure Goal</td>
<td>To promote the continued evolution of Kingston as a unique City with valued natural and built resources and a historic legacy, having an efficient, sustainable, and strategic structure that best serves its citizens, businesses, workforce, and visitors.</td>
<td>A dominant goal is to serve citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5 City Structure Policies</td>
<td>Housing Districts are generally planned to remain stable, but will continue to mature and adapt as the City evolves... Housing Districts will be designated for residential uses of different types, but will also contain areas of local open space, community facilities and neighbourhood or district commercial designations...</td>
<td>Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights are designated as a Housing District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Principles of Growth Goal</td>
<td>To manage future growth within the Urban Boundary and in the Country Area in a strategic and efficient manner that optimizes infrastructure and public investment, promotes diverse economic activity and prosperity, supports an attractive, accessible, safe and sustainable City, protects Kingston’s cultural and natural resources, and provides a variety of housing options for all residents.</td>
<td>Reference to public investment; cultural and natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Community Facilities Definition</td>
<td>Community facilities support educational, social, cultural or religious activity within the City and are permitted in many land use categories. Community facilities are often owned and operated by different levels of government or non-profit groups, but are smaller and more local in scale than uses designated as Institutional.</td>
<td>Reference to educational, social, cultural or religious activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Community Facilities Goal</td>
<td>To provide for social, educational, cultural or religious facilities that support the function and operation of many land uses in the City in locations that are convenient and compatible with adjacent land uses.</td>
<td>Reference to educational, social, cultural or religious activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2.5 Community Facilities Policies</td>
<td>Libraries, museums, and small-scale community centres or other social or cultural centres are permitted in Institutional, Residential, Open Space, and all Commercial designations, including the Central Business District. Such uses are not allowed as a neighbourhood commercial use. Community centres may be permitted in an Open Space designation, subject to the provision of adequate parking and buffering, or other suitable transition to any adjacent Residential or Environmental Protection Area designations.</td>
<td>Parks are designated as Open Spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.8 Community Facilities Policies</td>
<td>Community-based initiatives such as community gardens, other forms of urban agriculture, and tree planting projects are permitted in all land use designations, subject to site by site evaluation.</td>
<td>Community gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Open Space Definition</td>
<td>The Open Space Areas designated on Schedule 3 include public parks, private open space areas, natural reserves, and lands adjacent to Environmental Protection Area designations. This Open Space designation provides not only recreational opportunities, trail linkages, and linkages and corridors which are valuable for wildlife movement, but also provides visual relief within the urban landscape, and is a valuable context for many significant cultural heritage resources and natural heritage features and areas.</td>
<td>Parks are defined as open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Open Space Goal</td>
<td>To support the significant role that Open Space areas play in responding to the recreational and leisure needs of City residents, in sustaining the natural heritage system, and in contributing to cultural landscapes, heritage settings and to the City’s quality of life and sense of place.</td>
<td>Quality of life, sense of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.1 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>The City will actively acquire, conserve, maintain and renew public Open Space areas and related facilities as part of an on-going program.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.8.2 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>Uses permitted in an Open Space designation vary and will be further defined in the zoning by-law. Private and semi-private open space areas, including golf courses, marinas, and cemeteries are also considered as open space uses within the Urban Boundary. Buildings or structures are generally to be minimized, and may be prohibited in the implementing zoning by-law. One or more of the following uses may be permitted: a. active recreation uses, such as sports fields and sports centres; b. passive recreation uses and forms of urban agriculture, such as community gardens and garden plots; c. landscaped areas; d. conservation areas, woodlots and forestry reserves; and, e. major cemeteries and related accessory uses.</td>
<td>Permitted uses in open spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.8.4 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>Accessory uses that may be permitted include community facilities in accordance with Section 3.2, and such buildings and structures as: recreation facilities and play structures; greenhouses; pergolas, gazebos, weather shelters and pavilions; change rooms and washroom facilities; parking areas; and, commercial or food outlet accessory uses...</td>
<td>Permitted accessory uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.5 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>Developing intensive recreational or community facilities in an Open Space designation may be considered when: a. an extensive site area is available; b. the parkland quality of the site can be protected; c. transportation capacity is adequate and access is from an arterial or major collector road; and, d. the facility can be designed to integrate and be compatible with adjacent uses, including Environmental Protection Areas.</td>
<td>Intensive facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.9 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>Municipal open space must not be sold or removed from the open space system unless extenuating circumstances warrant its disposal, and the City holds a public meeting prior to the disposal of any such property.</td>
<td>Disposal of parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.11 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>Municipal parks are acquired to meet the needs of the population for recreation and cultural activities in accordance with the City’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.</td>
<td>Municipal parks, Parks &amp; Recreation Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.12 Open Space Policies</td>
<td>Parks are organized into the following hierarchy and general purpose: · Regional parks and recreation areas attract patrons from the wider regional area and may include multiple functions on a property; · City-wide parks attract patrons from a wide area across the municipality and may be designed for multi-purposes or specialized functions, including civic and cultural activities, and recreational and social functions; · District parks and playfields, serving a number of neighbourhoods, provide for a variety of outdoor or indoor facilities for sports, recreation and community centre uses; and, · Neighbourhood parks and playgrounds accommodate a range of more informal recreational, leisure and play activities, frequently oriented to children’s facilities.</td>
<td>Park hierarchy &amp; definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.1 General Policies</td>
<td>The policies of this Official Plan are designed to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2005) in identifying appropriate land use designations and policies directing development to appropriate locations, to promote a sustainable environment, to protect natural and cultural resources, a healthy economy, and a strong community structure.</td>
<td>Strong community structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 3: Physical Assets of the Parks in Rideau Heights and Marker’s Acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park &amp; Location</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Play and Sports Equipment</th>
<th>Other Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snider Park (146 Guthrie Dr.)</td>
<td>Mid-sized park located uphill. It is located next to the 401 and is noisy.</td>
<td>One pathway leads from Guthrie Rd. to the playground.</td>
<td>-Open field; unsuitable for sports because it is uneven -2 swing sets -Play equipment</td>
<td>-Several benches and picnic tables -Several trees -Signage -Visible limestone and granite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutherland Park (51 Sutherland Dr.)</td>
<td>Mid-sized park with few amenities.</td>
<td>Access to the park is through an unpaved road off of Montreal Road.</td>
<td>-Large open field -2 swing sets</td>
<td>-Large wooded area -Garbage bins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marker’s Acres Park (201 Conacher Dr.)</td>
<td>Large, well-kept park.</td>
<td>Park is level with a small pathway throughout.</td>
<td>-Fenced off sports field with soccer posts and stands -Basketball court with stands -2 swing sets -Play equipment -Skating rink</td>
<td>-Small pavilion with picnic table -Sparse trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headway Park (40 Compton St.)</td>
<td>Mid-sized park with a large hill.</td>
<td>Chained off and therefore appears to be inaccessible; large path</td>
<td>-Play equipment</td>
<td>-No garbage bins -Visible limestone -Community gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Park (199 Wilson St.)</td>
<td>Large park with many amenities.</td>
<td>The main entrance is through a parking lot. There is a path throughout.</td>
<td>-Lots of open field -Basketball court -2 baseball diamonds -Play equipment -Splash pad -Indoor ice rink (Wally Elmer)</td>
<td>-Natural areas, including a marsh -Wally Elmer Neighbourhood Centre -Few benches -Community gardens -Pavilion with several picnic tables -Visible granite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starr Reid Park (56 Drennan St.)</td>
<td>Small, well-kept park in a quiet neighbourhood setting</td>
<td>Several entrance points but no pathway.</td>
<td>-Field with soccer posts -Play equipment -Swing set -Basketball court</td>
<td>-Several benches -Picnic table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil McArthur Park (Briceland St. &amp; Wiley St.)</td>
<td>Small park without much space for play.</td>
<td>Very accessible; pathways throughout.</td>
<td>-None</td>
<td>-Benches -Visible limestone and granite -Many trees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 4: Program/Organizational Inventory

**Programs and Organizations Located within the Study Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Organization</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Mission/Goals</th>
<th>Description of Programs and Services Offered</th>
<th>Type of Programs Offered</th>
<th>Type of Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>City of Kingston Programs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Game Face¹ (Wally Elmer Neighbourhood Centre, 50 MacCauley St.)</td>
<td>Drop-in programming for children aged 6-17 during the spring and summer months.</td>
<td>To provide affordable programming for youth.</td>
<td>Drop-in programming includes homework club, video games, physical activities, arts &amp; crafts, zumba, special food nights, healthy snacks and movie nights. Activities often take place in Shannon Park.</td>
<td>Academic enrichment; after-school programs; recreation/sports</td>
<td>Physical; intellectual; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Park Drop-in² (In 2013 programming will be offered at Marker’s Acres Park)</td>
<td>Free recreational opportunities in parks throughout Kingston during the summer months.</td>
<td>To provide affordable programming for youth.</td>
<td>Drop-in programming includes active and quiet games, arts and crafts, sports, special events and theme days. Children must be within walking distance of their homes because of the lack of washroom facilities.</td>
<td>Cultural programs; recreation/sports</td>
<td>Physical; intellectual; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Programs and Organizations</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kingston Community Health Centres³ (various locations throughout North Kingston)</td>
<td>Provides care for individuals and families and responds to neighbourhood concerns. Includes Pathways to Education and Better Beginnings for Kingston Children.</td>
<td>To provide services that are comprehensive, accessible, community-focused, interdisciplinary, integrated, involve community governance, recognize social determinants of health, and use a community development approach to planning.</td>
<td>Offers comprehensive health services, parenting programs and workshops, and tutoring and mentoring for high school youth.</td>
<td>Academic enrichment; family life/personal skills</td>
<td>Intellectual; psychological and emotional; social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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¹ Game Face is a drop-in program for children aged 6-17 during the spring and summer months, providing affordable programming such as homework clubs, video games, physical activities, arts & crafts, zumba, special food nights, healthy snacks, and movie nights. Activities are often held in Shannon Park.

² Neighbourhood Park Drop-in is a free recreational program offering opportunities in parks throughout Kingston during the summer months, designed to provide affordable programming for youth.

³ North Kingston Community Health Centres provide comprehensive health services, parenting programs, and workshops, with a focus on addressing community concerns, integrating community governance, and recognizing social determinants of health. They work to provide a community development approach to planning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathways for Children and Youth™ (1201 Division St.)</th>
<th>A mental health agency for children and youth.</th>
<th>To strengthen and support the emotional well being of children and families.</th>
<th>Services include counseling, education, advocacy, and other interventions.</th>
<th>Conflict resolution; Family life/personal skills</th>
<th>Psychological and emotional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Programs and Organizations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys and Girls Club Kingston™ (provides services at Rideau Heights Public School and the Wally Elmer)</td>
<td>After-school programming that promotes healthy lifestyles for children.</td>
<td>To enhance the quality of life for children in Kingston.</td>
<td>Activities offered at the Rideau Heights Public School include physical activity and health and wellness programs.</td>
<td>After-school programs; recreation/sports</td>
<td>Physical; intellectual; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Response to Neighbourhood Concernsvi</td>
<td>Responds to neighbourhood concerns and provides community-oriented programs and activities in the Marker’s Acres and Rideau Heights neighbourhoods.</td>
<td>To develop and promote awareness and understanding of the needs and concerns of the community and networking with its constituents to address and resolve these issues.</td>
<td>CRNC has been responsible for mobilizing resources to provide infrastructure for youth in North Kingston (ex: Splash Pads in Shannon Park). There is a focus on promoting physical activity among youth.</td>
<td>Recreation/sports</td>
<td>Physical; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Inc. Limestonevi (Wally Elmer Youth Centre, 50 MacCauley St.)</td>
<td>After-school programming for girls aged 6-13.</td>
<td>Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.</td>
<td>The Girls in Action After-School Program includes activities such as cooking, dance, martial arts, sports, and crafts.</td>
<td>Cultural programs; after-school programs; recreation/sports.</td>
<td>Physical; intellectual; psychological and emotional; social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Programs and Organizations Located outside the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Organization</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Mission/Goals</th>
<th>Description of Programs and Services Offered</th>
<th>Type of Programs Offered</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Programs and Organizations</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Children’s Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington viii (817 Division St.)</td>
<td>Provides child protective services for children facing physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.</td>
<td>To understand and respond to the specific needs of children.</td>
<td>Provides child protective services, counseling and support, and mediation.</td>
<td>Family life/personal skills</td>
<td>Psychological and emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citywide Programs and Organizations</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Family YMCA ix (various locations)</td>
<td>Provides recreational programming for various age groups to enhance their physical, mental, and spiritual well being.</td>
<td>Dedicated to building strong kids, strong families, and a strong community.</td>
<td>A variety of programs and services are offered, including aquatics, fitness, and recreation, as well as educational programs and support for youth. Includes programs for children with disabilities as well as open gym unstructured programming.</td>
<td>After school programs; family life/personal skills; recreation/sports</td>
<td>Physical; intellectual; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Military Family Resource Centre x (32 Lundy’s Lane)</td>
<td>Provides a variety of programs for youth aged 6-18.</td>
<td>Supports and enhances the health and well-being of the military community.</td>
<td>Programming includes mentoring, special events, physical activity, arts, and drama.</td>
<td>Cultural Programs; after-school programs; conflict resolution; family life/personal skills; recreation/sports</td>
<td>Physical; intellectual; psychological and emotional; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston Youth Arts Cooperative(^i) (79 Jane Avenue)</td>
<td>Works with community partners to provide children opportunities to participate in performing arts and science programs.</td>
<td>To create and deliver free arts and science programming to youth from ages 6 to 18.</td>
<td>Builds the skills of children in the areas of drama, art, set design, robotics, dance, and music.</td>
<td>Cultural programs; after school programs; family life/personal skills; recreation/sports</td>
<td>Intellectual; social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Kingston Youth Space(^ii) (20 Montreal St.)</td>
<td>Provides youth-led programming and resources for youth under the age of 26.</td>
<td>To provide confidential services with non-judgmental staff.</td>
<td>Programs and services include general support, clothing/food cupboard, video games, art, volunteer opportunities, and events.</td>
<td>After school programs; cultural programs; community service</td>
<td>Intellectual; psychological and emotional; social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Advisory Committee(^iii)</td>
<td>A diverse group of young people dedicated to bettering their communities.</td>
<td>To supporting youth-oriented programs and projects through grant-making, volunteerism, and initiatives.</td>
<td>Provides grants for elementary and secondary school students as well as volunteer opportunities.</td>
<td>After school programs; community service</td>
<td>Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Diversion(^iv) (559 Bagot St.)</td>
<td>Provides a range of programming and services for at risk youth throughout Kingston.</td>
<td>Works in partnership with the community to deliver quality programs to assist youth to make positive changes in their lives and at the same time to take responsibility for their actions.</td>
<td>Programs include mentorship programs, skill building, counseling, and academic programming.</td>
<td>Academic enrichment; conflict resolution; family life/personal skills</td>
<td>Intellectual; psychological and emotional; social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^i\) [http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/recreation/facilities/community/wally-elmer](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/recreation/facilities/community/wally-elmer)


\(^iii\) [http://www.kchc.ca/index.cfm/home/](http://www.kchc.ca/index.cfm/home/)

\(^iv\) [http://www.pathwayschildreneyouth.org/](http://www.pathwayschildreneyouth.org/)
v http://www.bgckingston.ca/
vi https://www.facebook.com/CRNC.Kingston
vii http://www.girlsincalifornia.ca/index.html
viii http://www.facsfla.ca/Default.aspx
ix http://kingston.ymca.ca/index.cfm
x http://www.familyforce.ca/sites/Kingston/EN/Children%20and%20Youth/Pages/YouthDevelopment.aspx
xi http://130.15.23.21/~kyac/index.html
xii https://www.facebook.com/pages/Kingston-Youth-Space/80536244964
xiii http://www.cfka.org/initiatives/youth-advisory-committee
xiv http://www.youthdiversion.org/
REFERENCES


