



# PARKS & RECREATION Annual Report

2024



# Message from the Director



**Perry Roque**  
*Director of Parks & Recreation Services*

In 2024, the City of Brandon remained committed to ensuring that all residents have access to recreational activities and spaces. These activities and spaces foster a sense of community, pride, and connection.

The dedication of the Parks and Recreation staff to maintaining and enhancing our parks, facilities, and recreation programs ensures that residents of all ages can enjoy safe and accessible spaces. Their hard work behind the scenes plays a vital role in enriching the lives of everyone in our community. Brandon is also fortunate to have passionate volunteer clubs and groups that manage recreation facilities and provide public programming. Additionally, numerous volunteers have stepped up to adopt parks and gardens, helping to keep our community clean and vibrant. The collaboration between Parks and Recreation staff and volunteers serves as a powerful example of community teamwork.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be an exciting year with the opening of the new Maple Leaf Foods Sports Complex and the reopening of the Sportsplex Arena. Our goal for the future is to ensure our community remains active, connected, and healthy.



### Mission Statement

Parks & Recreation Services mission is to enrich the community through positive service that supports, engages and inspires the public.



### Vision Statement

Parks & Recreation Services strives to become an accessible resource, engaging a community that leads a healthy, green and positive lifestyle.

*“In today’s hectic world it’s important to take time to enjoy each day for our health and well-being. Parks and Recreation services is committed to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to experience recreational activities and parks, to build relationships with family and friends, for a sense of community pride.”*

# Who We Are

Parks & Recreation Services mandate is to improve the quality of life for our residents. Through programing, events, amenities and greenspaces our goal is to offer something for everyone. Our framework for service delivery is based on the [Green Space Master Plan \(2015\)](#), [Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan \(2019\)](#), and [Brandon’s Assiniboine River Corridor Master Plan \(2016\)](#).



## Parks

Parks is made up of 2 sections, Forestry & Horticulture and Greenspace Maintenance, where a wide range of staff maintain and upgrade City parks, playgrounds, recreation facilities and greenspaces. Parks employs 16 full-time staff and 53 casual staff throughout the year who work out of the Parks Complex and Brandon Municipal Cemetery.



**Recreation Services** focus on facilities and programming. We believe recreation is an essential public service for growing healthy, vibrant and connected communities. We have a large portfolio of both free programming and paid programming available to the public, and oversee Brandon’s Community Sportsplex, the Brandon Youth Centre and Outdoor Water facilities. With 19 full-time staff and of 75 casual staff, Recreation offers a variety of services and programs in the areas of City-Wide Initiatives and Recreation Hub Programs.



# Building Facilities in 2024

## Maple Leaf Foods Sports Complex

Located at First Street and Veterans Way, the Maple Leaf Foods Sports Complex will include a FIFA sized soccer field, up to eight 11 v 11 soccer fields, one dedicated 9 v 9 soccer field, a cricket pitch, a clubhouse with changerooms and washrooms, and 3.6 km of pathways. With investments from the governments of Canada and Manitoba, the City of Brandon is on track to see the project completed in 2025.



Olivia the Brave Park



Jacobson Park



North Hill Outdoor Rink

# Areas of Focus in Parks

## Forestry and Horticulture

Activities within the Forestry & Horticulture section include tree maintenance and pruning, tree planting, tree stumping, greenhouse activities, flower planting and maintenance and landscaping.

### Dutch Elm Disease (DED)

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) is an invasive fungus spread to American Elms via the native elm bark beetle. This disease has killed off many American Elms in urban forests but with the help of the Province of Manitoba it has been managed for a number of years. The Province of Manitoba’s website provides, signs, symptoms, and the management program for Dutch Elm Disease.

Dutch Elm Disease is managed jointly between the Province and the City of Brandon. This program has been very successful in limiting the loss of elm trees in our community from this deadly disease.

### Tree planting

In accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan of the municipality, trees offer numerous environmental and social benefits. Planting trees is a crucial part of expanding our urban forest and restoring lost canopy. Trees are an essential part of public infrastructure.

## Greenspace Maintenance

Annual duties include grass mowing and clean up, maintenance of recreation facilities, playgrounds, parks and greenspaces, operation and maintenance of Brandon Municipal Cemetery, start up, maintenance and shutdown of all spray parks, pool, park washroom facilities and irrigation. Staff also administer the Mosquito Abatement Program alongside the Province.





# Facility Highlights

Parks & Recreation owns, operates and maintains a number of recreation facilities. For a full listing of facilities, Visit <https://www.brandon.ca/greenspaces> for a full listing of Parks & Recreation Services facilities. Highlight facilities include:

## Spray Parks & Paddle Pools

The City of Brandon owns and operates 5 Spray Parks throughout the City. These spray parks are a great way to beat the heat in the summer, and they are completely free for the community to use throughout the summer months. Each year a schedule of opening dates and hours is updated at [brandon.ca](https://www.brandon.ca).

## The Skating Oval

The City of Brandon’s skating oval, developed annually by Parks & Recreation Services, offers amenities like warming shacks, portable washrooms, flood lighting, ambient music, and fire pits.

## Brandon’s Community Sportsplex

Brandon’s Community Sportsplex, located at 30 Knowlton Drive, offers a variety of recreational facilities including a pool, arena, and racquetball courts. It’s a hub for community activities, providing programs for all ages and skill levels.



# Parks Stats



# Areas of Focus in Recreation

## Brandon’s Community Sportsplex

This multipurpose recreation facility houses a 50-meter swimming pool, arena, 3 racquetball courts, a 400 m outdoor track and offers multiple recreation programs for the community.

### Aquatic Facility

The Sportsplex aquatic facility has a 50-meter pool along with 2 diving boards and a water slide.

With the conversion to the Lifesaving Society’s programming in 2023, this year saw our participants thrive in the new curriculum including the Swim for Life and Leadership programming. Our lap swim and aquafit programs continue to be a hit with our users.

This year also saw the Manitoba Provincial Junior Swim Championships at the Sportsplex pool as well as the Manitoba 55+ Summer Games Swimming Competition.

### Arena

Renovations of the Sportsplex arena started in September of 2024. The renovations will include a new ice plant, new arena slab (floor), and new arena boards and glass.

Prior to closing for construction, the dry arena floor had pickleball and floor hockey programming. Introduction to Pickleball sessions were held throughout the year to entice new users to the sport.

### Track Facility

In 2024, there were 28 local and regional track meets at the Sportsplex outdoor 400 track. The 2024 55+ Games track events were held at the Sportsplex track. The track is open for public use and many registered programs. In the spring and summer, the track is often a hot spot of activity at the Sportsplex.

The track infield is also the home field for the Assiniboine Community College Cougars soccer team.



### Racquetball

The Sportsplex racquetball courts host many local tournaments as well as club and drop-in play. In 2024, the Brandon Racquetball Association hosted a national team selection event at the Sportsplex which saw competitors from the western region of Canada vie for a spot on Canada’s National Team.

### North Hill Outdoor Rink

In 2024, we were excited to purchase and install a new modular board system, creating an outdoor rink in Ward One. The modular design allows for flexibility in use, ensuring that the rink can be adapted as needed. The rink is in the Sportsplex track infield and provides a safe and enjoyable space for residents to gather, skate and stay active in the winter months.

## Sportsplex Stats

11,193  
Drop In Program  
Attendance


  
1,038  
Pool Hour Rentals

  
2,669  
Swimming Lesson  
Registrations

  
1,356  
Racquetball Rental  
Hours

  
773  
Track Rental Hours

  
2,457  
Pickleball Rental  
Hours

  
114  
Learn to Skate  
Registrations



# Recreation Projects

2024 has been an exciting chapter for Recreation, as we move forward with key projects that will renew and improve the recreational experiences available to our community. After navigating the challenges in 2023, we are thrilled to be progressing on the construction of a renewed Sportsplex Arena. Construction includes the replacement of the ice plant with a new exterior ice shed, bringing us up to industry and safety standards. Additionally, the

ice slab will be removed, and cooling lines will be replaced to ensure longevity of renewed arena. Finally, dasher boards, lighting and aesthetics will be addressed, creating a welcoming and functional environment for our users. Construction is expected to be complete in the Fall of 2025, and we are looking forward to welcoming the community back into the Sportsplex Arena.



Recreation programming has seen another year of growth and innovation. Our dedicated team of Programmers and Coordinators have continued to deliver a diverse range of programs that meet the ever-evolving needs of the community. We are proud of the continued growth in participation, the success of our expanded program offerings, and the ongoing positive impact we provide for our community.

Other notable projects in 2024 include the Recreation Amenities Data Base and Mapping Report, and the revitalization of the City of Brandon Culture Plan. The Recreation Amenities Data Base and Mapping Report is a valuable tool designed to help identify gaps in recreation amenities throughout the city. This system allows us to track and update the available amenities and provides a clearer picture of where additions are needed. By utilizing this data, we can better prioritize future developments and address underserved areas. The Culture Plan had been sidelined in recent years due to shifting priorities, department reorganization, and the challenges of the pandemic. An advisory committee was brought together to help revitalize the plan. The committee is working to update the Culture Plan and create initiatives that address key action items within it.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue expanding our programming and creating more opportunities for residents to stay active, engaged, and connected in the coming year.

# Brandon Youth Centre

The City of Brandon Youth Centre provides a safe and inclusive space for all youth to grow, develop and discover their passion. Open seven days a week year-round, the centre is geared towards youth ages 8 to 17 years. The Centre offers a wide range of programing ranging from life-skills to educational to leisure.

In late 2024 the Youth Centre received a grant, from the **Group Up – Safe Healthy Communities for ALL Program**. We will be facilitating two 6-week Indigenous Learning Programs. The program is intended to encourage discussion, educate and provide culturally based activities centered through indigenous leadership. Following both sessions the selected Indigenous artist will take the youth’s ideas and input to create an Indigenous mural in the Brandon Youth Centre.

## Youth Centre Stats

 **353**  
Members

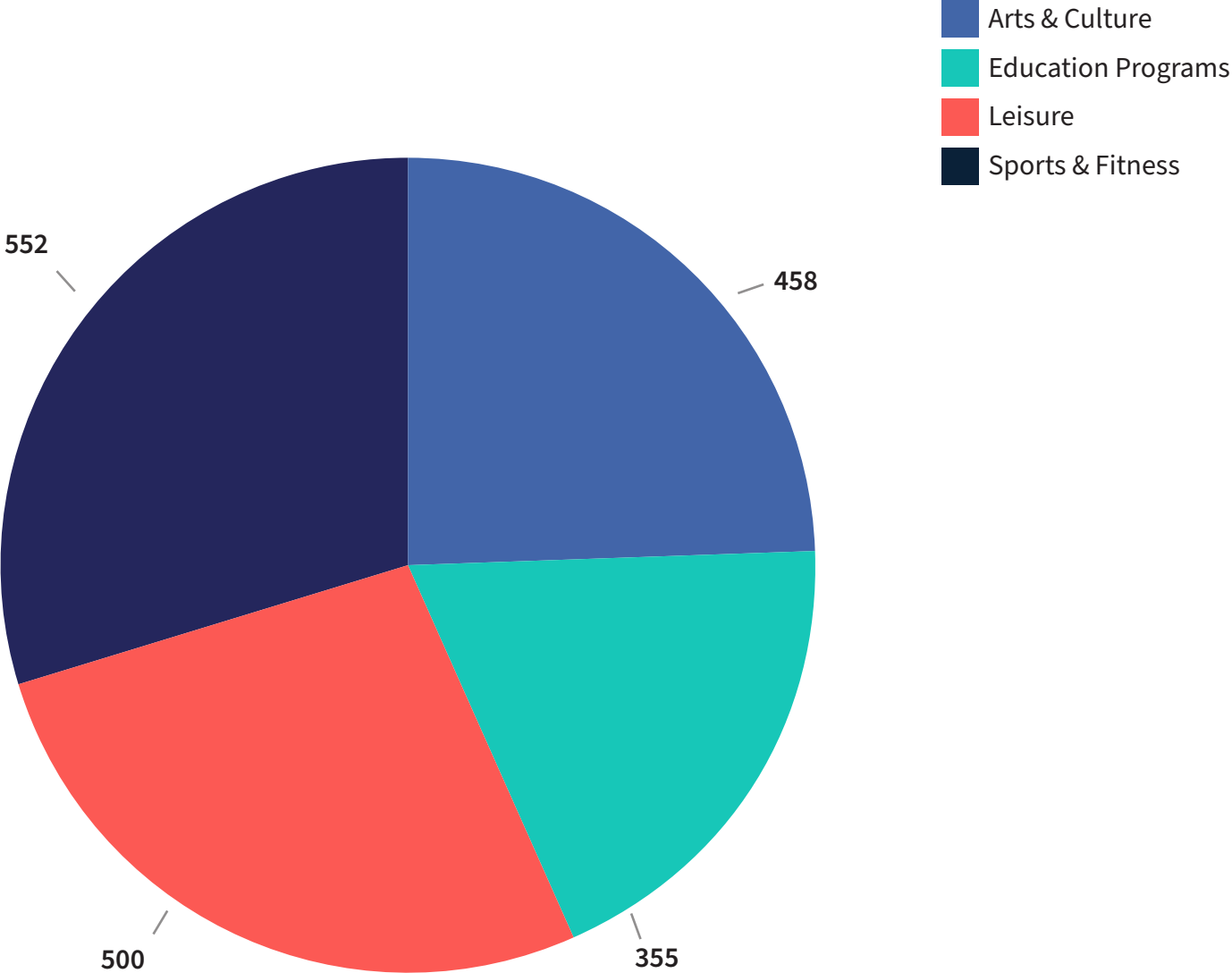
 **7,675**  
Attendance

 **15**  
Total Days Closed





# Program Stats



PROGRAM	REGISTRATION
Arts & Culture	458
Educational Programs	355
Leisure	500
Sports & Fitness	552
Total	1,865

# 2024 Program Highlights

## Soccer/T-Ball Program

A hit amongst the 4- & 5-year-olds in Brandon! Kids are able to learn the fundamental skills of soccer and t-ball using a fun play-based curriculum. With their registration fee, they receive a customized t-shirt jersey and individual/team photos.

## Pet Series Programs

During the Spring and Fall a number of Pet series programs take place. First Aid & CPR for Pets, Dog Grooming 101 and the Canine Good Neighbour program which is recommended as the pre-requisite for the Canadian Kennel Club Therapy Dog Title.

## Preschool Ballet

After six successful sessions, Preschool Ballet continues to be a popular program for 3–5-year-olds. Students learn introductory ballet steps and participate in creative movement games and songs. Over the course of the program, dancers learn a short routine which they perform at a recital, fit with costumes, decor and an audience!

## Basketball Fundamentals

A new program in 2024, Basketball Fundamentals is an opportunity for registrants aged 9-12 to learn and develop the fundamental skills of basketball in a fun environment that is welcoming to all experience levels. Instructors, including current basketball coaches from our local high school programs, along with City of Brandon recreation leaders, lead participants in drills and games that teach dribbling, passing, shooting, rebounding, and defending.

## Haunted Forest Hikes

This year over 100 people attended the Haunted Forest Hikes. Staff and volunteers hide in the Hanbury Hill trails waiting to scare those who dare to participate. A storyteller leads the group telling spooky stories as they wander in the woods and keep their eyes open for creatures and spirits. The hike features two versions: Kid Friendly and Extra Spooky, to accommodate all ages.

## Dungeons & Dragons for Kids

In 2023 the Recreation Department introduced an Introduction to Dungeons & Dragons program for kids ranging from 8-12 years old. The program was immediately received with enthusiasm from both youth registrants who enjoyed the fun and engaging adventures, and their parents who appreciated the program’s value in developing teamwork, leadership, and communication skills, as well as building participant’s confidence in social settings. Since then, the program has grown and expanded to include an Introduction and an Advanced stream, for kids aged 8-12 and 13-16 respectively.

# City Wide Initiatives

## Programs and Events Highlights

### Brandon Municipal Cemetery Tours

This year we ran multiple free guided tours of the Brandon Cemetery. We took in the beautiful spring and fall scenery and learned about a few of the fascinating people that have been laid to rest over the last century. Our tour guide was David McConkey. David is a history buff and Brandon Sun Columnist and has a vast array of knowledge about the Cemetery and the interesting people who reside here.

### Winter Fest

Winter Fest celebrated its third year at the Sportsplex! This year the event was attended by approximately 600 people. Activities included live outdoor music, sleigh rides, bouncy castles, snow painting, free hotdogs and hot chocolate. The Sportsplex Park was transformed into an event space with bonfires, a stage and food areas. Winter Fest continues to being the community together to get outside, have fun and celebrate the winter season!

### Lighthouse Afterschool Program

Lighthouses is a free crime-prevention program funded by Manitoba Justice that supports community groups and Municipal governments in providing effective after school youth programming targeting grades 5-6 using the principles of effective youth programming which include structured programming, effective supervision, and skill-building activities. The program runs at 6 different schools throughout the week starting January to March and October to December, from 3:30pm-5:30pm in either the gym, a classroom, or another multipurpose space. City Recreation Leaders facilitate the program and provide supervision and equipment. In 2024 the Lighthouse program programmed 120 sessions and saw approximately 1,202 participant visits.

### Stats

YOUTH	ATTENDANCE
Lighthouse	1,202
Youth Activity Centres	5,010
Youth Centre	7,675

ARTS & CULTURE	ATTENDANCE
National Garden Day	~1,000
Adopt-a-Bed	20
Music in the Parks	~4,000
Open Garden Tours	~1,200
Doors Open Tours	~1,200

SPORT & FITNESS	ATTENDANCE
Fresh Air Fitness	108

EVENTS	ATTENDANCE
City Wide Garage Sale	379
Community Tours	69
Winterfest	640

### Youth Activity Centres (YAC)

YAC is a FREE, fun, active program for youth ages 7-15. Activities include sports, arts & crafts, themed days and pool days. Youth Activity Leaders support a safe, non-judgmental, confidential and inclusive environment that promotes youth to develop skills in leadership, cooperation, problem solving, positive relationships, responsibility and confidence.

The Youth Activity Centres were implemented in our community to provide healthy opportunities to youth during the summer months.

We offer 3 YAC centres, located in Community Centres around Brandon.

YAC LOCATION	NUMBER OF YOUTH ATTENDING	TOTAL VISITS
YAC East - East End Community Centre	219	1,215
YAC West - West End Community Centre	232	2,153
YAC Junior - Valleyview Community Centre	198	1,642
Total	649	5,010

Along with Council support and funds we received the following:

In-Kind Support	Sponsorship
\$10,060	\$46,321

### Community Partnerships

Parks & Recreation Services works with several facilities in the City of Brandon through service agreements, providing support to:

- Wheat City Golf Course
  - Andrews Field and Sumner Field
  - Ashley Neufeld Softball Complex
  - John Reilly Rugby Field
  - Central Community Centre
  - East End Community Centre
- Green Acres Community Centre
  - North End Community Centre
  - Park Community Centre
  - Valleyview Community Centre
  - West End Community Centre
  - Westridge Community Centre



# Sales & Marketing

## Tree and Bench Celebration Program

This program has been designed to recognize a loved one, recall a momentous occasion, celebrate a unique occasion, or demonstrate a desire for improving our community!

In 2024 we have had 12 Benches, and 2 Trees sponsored.



## Social Media Marketing

Our residents made it very evident throughout the public consultation phases of the Recreation and Community Facilities Master Plan that they were not aware of the recreational options available in our neighborhood. Our voice in the community has grown as a result of our usage of social media.

### 2024 Visual for Stats



FACEBOOK

9,319

Followers

804,707

Reach



INSTAGRAM

2,042

Followers

78,663

Reach

# Program Guides

We have created many program guides in collaboration with ITC; fresh guides are being presented in the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall program sessions. These guides highlight the events and activities that Parks & Recreation is hosting.

