



## **Committee of the Whole Report**

### **For the Meeting of June 3, 2021**

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 23, 2021  
**From:** Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities  
**Subject:** 2020 Annual Report: Community and Seniors' Centre Operations

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receive this report on the operation of the community and seniors' centres for information.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the operation of the City's community and seniors' centres for 2020. The report focuses on the quantitative data relating to programs and services, participation levels, and financials for each community based facility.

With the exception of the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre, community recreation services are provided on behalf of the municipality by non-profit societies in buildings owned by the City of Victoria or leased for this purpose. In this service delivery model, decision-making regarding programs and services offered through each of these facilities is the responsibility of the local society. Each society also determines the operating approach that best suits their needs, often utilizing a mix of employees and volunteers to carry out the mandate of the society board.

While there is presently a range of amenities and approaches to operating these facilities, City staff have collaborated with centre representatives to develop definitions and standardize methods of recording and reporting key components.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability of operators to provide programs and services at these centres. For example, the Provincial Health Orders permitted the continuity of childcare as an essential service, however, many other service offerings were restricted or simply not permitted. The result was a dramatic reduction in participation, particularly for adult and senior populations. To mitigate some of the financial impacts of the pandemic, operators also took advantage of relief programs offered by other levels of government.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present the data relating to the operation of community and seniors' centres over the past year.

## BACKGROUND

The City owns seven community centres and two seniors' centres, and contributes funding toward a lease for a third seniors' centre. The City also provides an operating grant for the Downtown Community Centre, which is owned by the Province and operated by the Victoria Cool Aid Society.

The centres are all operated by non-profit agencies, of which seven are neighbourhood associations. All the agencies provide community recreation and social programming on behalf of the City. Of the 13 neighbourhoods, nine have community centres. The James Bay and Fairfield neighbourhoods have both a community centre and a seniors' centre.

## Community Centres



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| 1. <b>Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre</b><br>2275 Quadra Street<br><a href="http://victoria.ca/crystalpool">victoria.ca/crystalpool</a>                            | 5. <b>Fairfield Community Place</b><br>1330 Fairfield Road<br><a href="http://fairfieldcommunity.ca">fairfieldcommunity.ca</a>               | 9. <b>Oaklands Community Centre and Neighbourhood House</b><br>2827 Belmont Avenue<br><a href="http://oaklandscommunitycentre.com">oaklandscommunitycentre.com</a> |
| 2. <b>Burnside Gorge Community Centre</b><br>471 Cecelia Road<br><a href="http://burnsidegorge.ca">burnsidegorge.ca</a>  | 6. <b>Fernwood Community Centre</b><br>1240 Gladstone Avenue<br><a href="http://fernwoodnrg.ca">fernwoodnrg.ca</a>                           | 10. <b>Quadra Village Community Centre</b><br>901 Kings Road<br><a href="http://quadravillagecc.com">quadravillagecc.com</a>                                       |
| 3. <b>Cook Street Village Activity Centre</b><br>1-380 Cook Street<br><a href="http://cookstreetvillageactivitycentre.com">cookstreetvillageactivitycentre.com</a> | 7. <b>James Bay Community School Centre</b><br>140 Oswego Street<br><a href="http://jamesbaycentre.ca">jamesbaycentre.ca</a>                 | 11. <b>Victoria West Community Centre</b><br>521 Craigflower Road<br><a href="http://victoriawest.ca">victoriawest.ca</a>  |
| 4. <b>Downtown Community Centre</b><br>755 Pandora Avenue<br><a href="http://coolaid.org">coolaid.org</a>  | 8. <b>James Bay New Horizons Activity Centre</b><br>234 Menzies Street<br><a href="http://jamesbaynewhorizons.ca">jamesbaynewhorizons.ca</a> | 12. <b>Silver Threads Centre</b><br>1911 Quadra Street<br><a href="http://silverthreads.ca">silverthreads.ca</a>   |

## ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The City of Victoria has a long history of partnering with non-profit agencies to deliver recreation programs through community facilities. The services provided in these centres play an important role in fostering community development and respond to the evolving needs of residents. In addition to recreation programs, community centres offer a variety of health and wellness services, childcare, special events and provide a gathering space for residents.

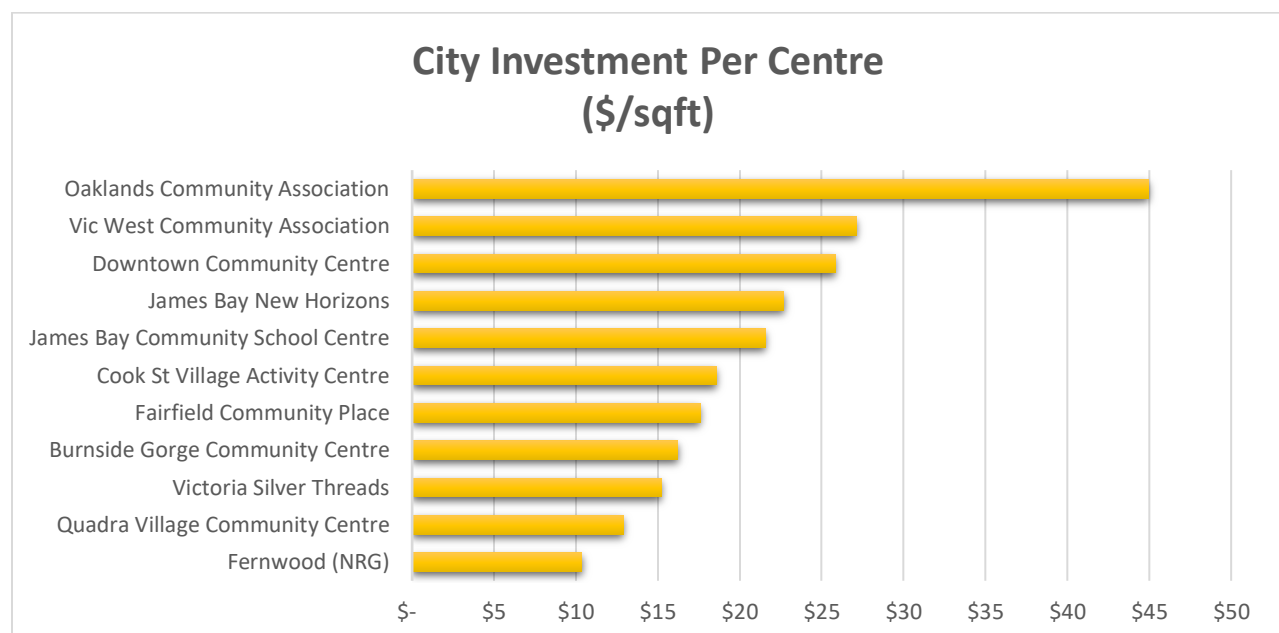
In 2017, Council endorsed the continuation of a decentralized operating model, which enables centre operators to offer programs and services that best meet the needs of their individual neighbourhoods. Below are some highlights of the contributions of each party and the outcomes delivered.

### City Investment

The City invests in the community centres in multiple ways. Direct and indirect financial investment is through annual core operating grants and programming for youth, as well as support for maintenance and upgrading of the facilities, custodial services, utilities and other supports.

In February 2019, Council approved a one-time increase of \$21,303 in operating funding to each of the 11 community and senior centres. As a condition of the funding, Council requested a report as part of the 2020 Financial Plan process, that outlined how the supplemental funding was used. Subsequently Council approved the additional funding on an on-going basis from 2020. As a result, base funding of \$75,000 was approved for each of the community and senior centres, and is adjusted annually with the rate of inflation, per Council direction.

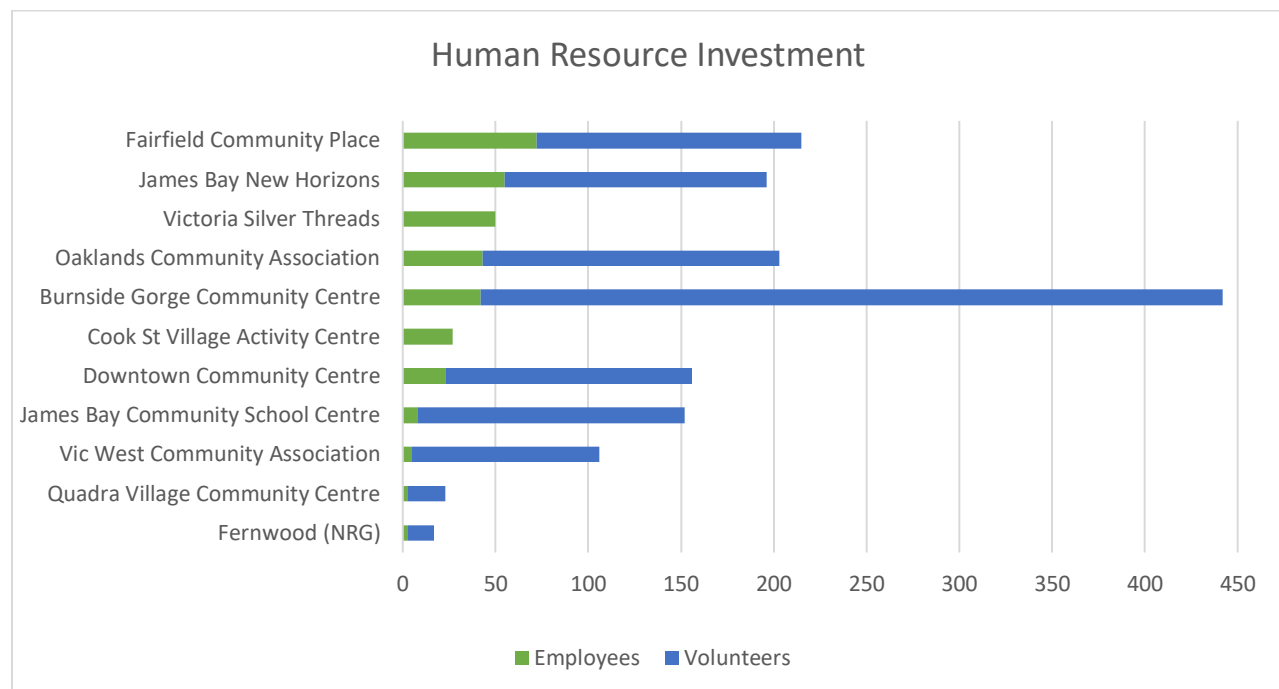
In 2020, the City invested a total of approximately **\$1.91 million** to support the facility operations, as shown in Attachment A. The total area of these buildings is approximately 93,000 square feet, with buildings ranging from 5,000 square feet to over 15,000 square feet. The average investment per operation was \$173,000 (or \$20.50 per square foot).



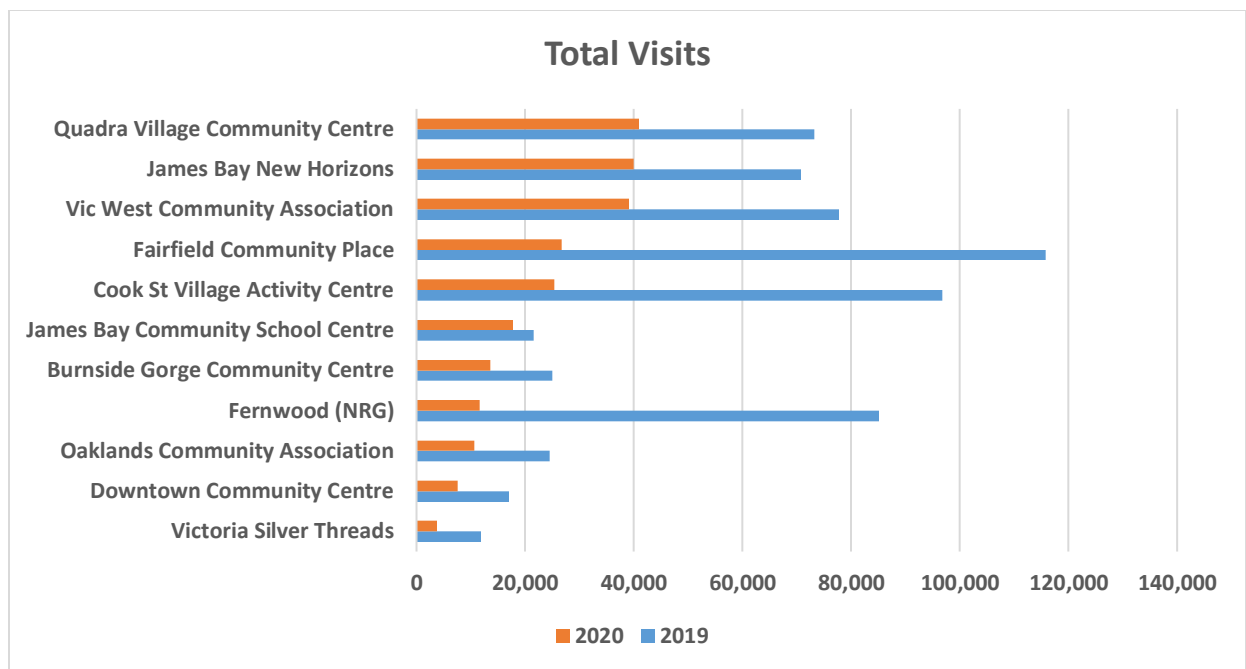
The City's investment in the Oaklands Community Centre is higher per square footage than the other centres as they have the smallest operational footprint at 4,400 sq.ft. compared to the 8,479 sq.ft. average.

## Local Association Services

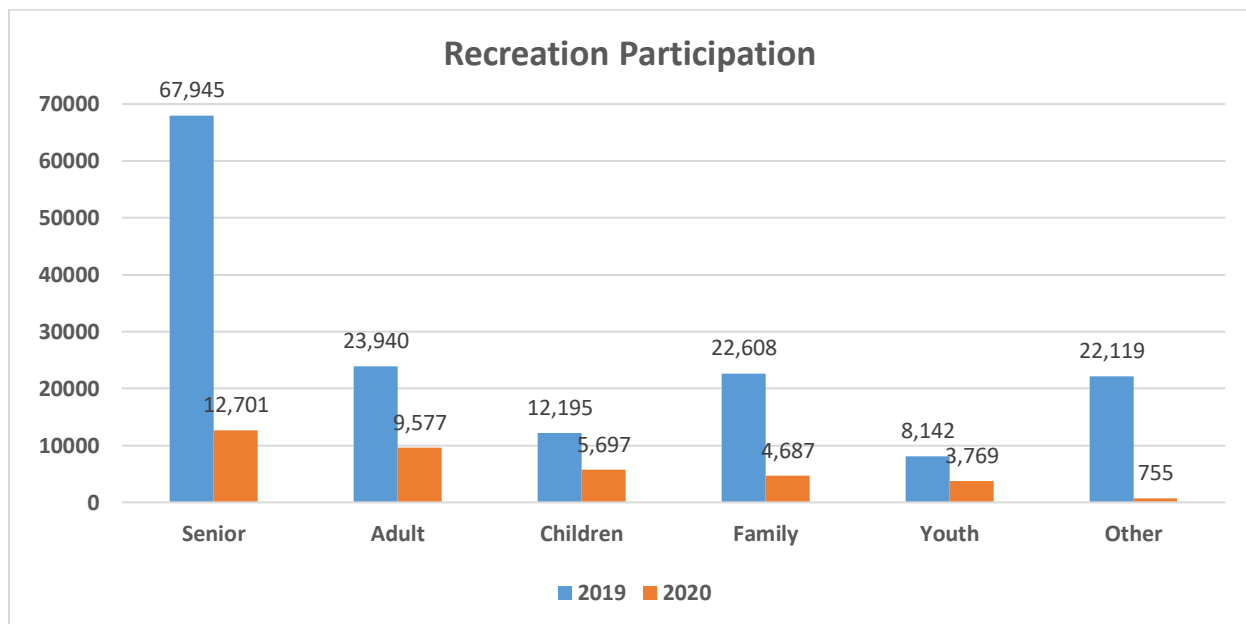
Each of the centres have slightly varying service delivery and facility management models. The responsibility for the day-to-day operations of each centre relies on a combination of employees and volunteers. In 2020, an average of approximately 30 employees and more than 114 volunteers were involved in supporting centre operations.



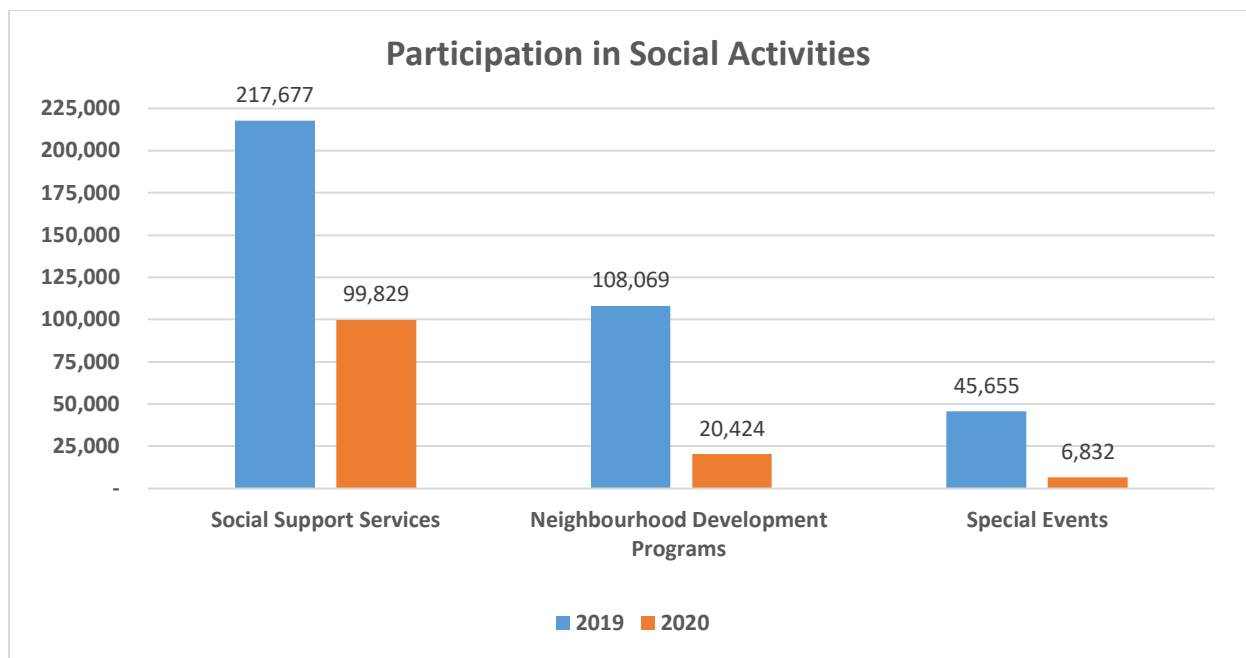
The range of programs and services delivered through each centre varies. One measure of overall activity is the total number of visits to centres. The community and seniors' centres experienced a 60% reduction in people served in 2020 due to the pandemic. In comparison to the 619,373 visitors in 2019, only 236,949 were recorded in 2020, primarily because of physical distancing requirements and restrictions on gatherings.



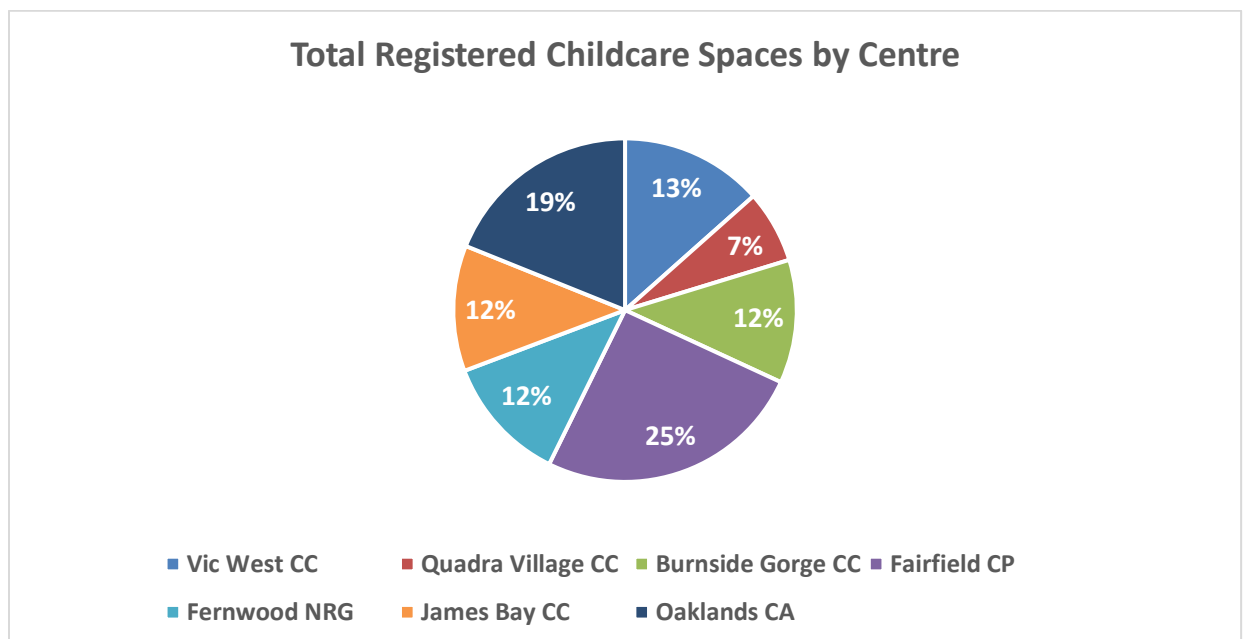
Recreation programming is one area of focus for centre operators. As shown in the chart below, programs are offered for all ages, with seniors being the highest proportion of participation.



Social programs, services and events are also offered in these centres. These activities cover a wide range of neighbourhood supports and services for individuals and groups, while also fostering opportunities for residents to connect with one another around topics of interest or celebration.

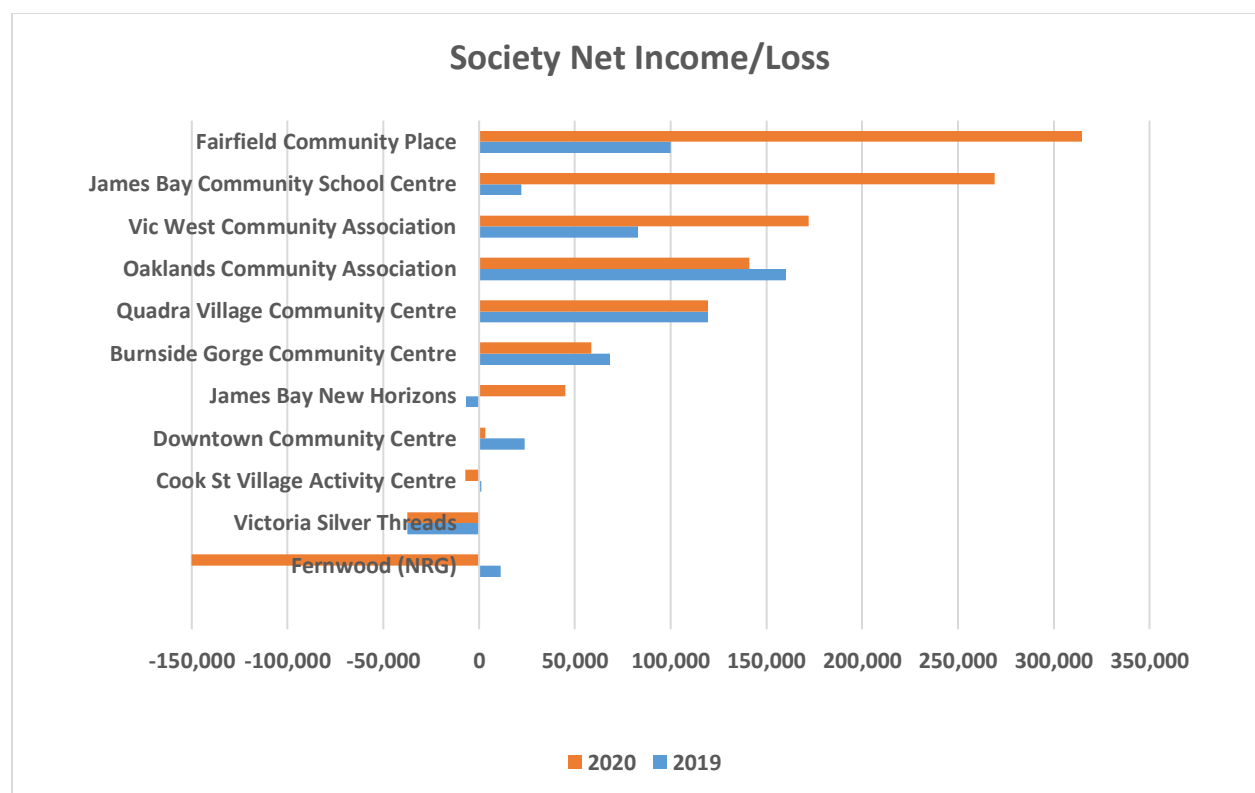


Another important community service offered by community centre operators is licensed childcare. In 2020, seven of these centres offered a total of **878** spaces for families in need of childcare. The slight decrease in the available spaces available from 2019 (1,000) was due to the implementation of COVID-19 control measures. The demand for childcare, both full-time daycare and out-of-school care has continued to exceed supply in the City. Currently, additional pressures resulting from increased demand for space is placing existing childcare operations, which are located within schools and other privately owned properties, at risk. In October 2020, the Mayor's Childcare Solutions Working Group completed the Childcare Strategy and Action Plan, which highlighted the need to prioritize opportunities that increase affordable access to childcare in the community.



In accordance with the arrangement between the City and each operator, the revenues received for programs and services are applied to offset the expenses associated with the society's operating costs. Depending on such factors as the society mandate, neighbourhood demographics and facility amenities, the opportunities for revenue generation and overall financial performance, vary for each operation. The chart below reflects the information provided by each of the operators to City staff.

The reduction in services resulted in almost a 50% decrease in required staff and volunteer resources in 2020. Due to the grant support programs available to operators in 2020, the decrease in community access and participation did not translate into financial hardship, particularly for the providers who offer childcare services. Centres who provided childcare services, generally improved their profitability compared to previous years. In most cases, the financial reports show a consistent performance level to previous years in relation to the income/loss metric.



The financial records submitted by Fernwood NRG indicate a significant net loss in 2020. Despite a large increase in revenue (\$850K) primarily due to grant funding, the operation recorded a substantial increase in expenditures (\$1.03M), relating to amortization of assets, interest on long-term debt, professional fees, and contracts and wages/salaries.

## **COVID-19 Impact**

The global pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of programs and services by the community and senior centre network. Most facilities incurred a full facility closure for several weeks in the spring of 2020, and when operations resumed, capacity was reduced due to Provincial Health Orders introduced to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As an essential service, childcare operations continued with modifications, but many other supports and services that citizens rely on, were limited.

### *Accessibility Impact Statement*

The programs and services provided by community and seniors' centres are designed to align with the City's commitment to ensure access for all citizens.

### *2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan*

This report relates to 2019-2022 Strategic Plan Objective 5 (*Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City*), and Objective 8 (*Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods*).

### *Impacts to Financial Plan*

The Financial Plan includes a combination of cash grants and in-kind supports for building services and utilities, as well as capital upgrades to the City-owned facilities.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The data presented in this report is intended to provide Council with an overview of how the investments and contributions of each local neighborhood association, along with City support are being used to serve local residents. While there are opportunities for the City and the societies to collaborate further on service planning and analysis, this approach to reporting the level of activities and investment is an important foundational component.

Respectfully submitted,

Navdeep Sidhu  
Assistant Director

Thomas Soulliere  
Director

**Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.**

## **List of Attachments**

**Attachment A – 2020 Contributions to Community and Seniors' Centre Operations**