

**THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL
BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY
EXPANDED SERVICES OPPORTUNITY
EVALUATION REPORT**

January 2018

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past year or so, the City has been working with community members and stakeholder groups to identify opportunities to not only increase revenues at the Conservatory but also its overall usage and benefit to the community. In October, the consultant team was retained to review and assess other potential services, previously identified through stakeholder and public consultation. The potential new services included: multi-purpose room rental; coffee bar; market rental space; educational programming; and community greenhouse space usage.

In addition to reviewing the opportunities related to the above services, the consultant team also performed the following:

- Best practice review of other conservatories;
- Market research to assess the need for the proposed revenue generating opportunities;
- Order of magnitude cost to renovate the facility for those particular revenue lines; and
- Creation of an evaluation model, which considers both economic and social benefits of the potential services.

Preliminary Findings

The Thunder Bay Conservatory is located on a dead end street and is not well integrated in the Community. But for providing plants to the City parks, it does not have any significant partnerships or relationships with other City departments or organizations. As part of the Chapples Recreation Area, there are many opportunities to better integrate the facility into the community. Its abilities and opportunities to try new things or expand operations have been limited by existing staff levels and funding. In many ways, the Thunder Bay Conservatory is not much different than other conservatories across Canada: it is not self-sustainable, it seeks relevance in today's society and needs to pursue alternate services.

While City staff and Council have been trying to best determine next steps in revitalizing the Conservatory, the City's strategic and recreation master plans best speak for the true opportunities: engaging and connecting the community; being proud of diversity and unique culture; creating accessible services that meet the needs of people of all ages and of course, doing this in a cost-efficient, affordable manner.

Expanded Services Evaluation Model Results

The potential new service opportunities identified above will create a number of benefits for the Conservatory. In assessing these potential opportunities, both the economic and social benefits were considered. In creating this evaluation model, key goals or objectives were identified that the City will want to achieve by repairing the facility and providing new services within the Conservatory. These key objectives include: to allow community members to **engage** and **connect**; and to **sustain** the facility by increasing third party revenue sources.

Each of the opportunities were evaluated based on weighted key objectives, their ability to achieve such results and a total score of ten (10). Based on the evaluation matrix, the multi-purpose room achieves the highest ratings, followed by educational programming and the Coffee Bar. While the greenhouse space rental may be an opportunity, it is not clear if there will be sufficient demand for this type of space. There is sufficient supply of market days and craft type events in the community, but periodic markets to be held on the grounds of the Conservatory may be an optional fundraising activity put on by the Friends of the Conservatory.



Recommendations

Based on the evaluation matrix results, it is recommended that the East Wing be upgraded to a multi-purpose room, and a coffee bar be added near the front entrance of the Conservatory. Around the same time, it is further recommended that the City work with the Friends of the Conservatory to better engage its volunteers and develop an itinerary of additional events to host over the next year or two; seek out partnerships and to prepare a business plan that better develops the key strategies of the Conservatory to engage and connect with the Community; identifies a plan to restore the facility over the long term and develops a staffing model that will meet the City's planting needs and strategies developed.

Over the long term, it may be very beneficial to be better integrate the Conservatory in the City's parks and recreation plans, including the extension of trails past the Conservatory, extension of Dease Street to Chapples Park opening traffic past the Conservatory, and locating children's or older adult's outdoor equipment near the facility.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Since its inception, Thunder Bay Centennial Botanical Conservatory operations have been generally funded by the City of Thunder Bay, similar to many other cultural or recreational community assets. Celebrating its 50th birthday in 2017, the Conservatory is in need of significant upgrades with its two display wings closed to the public for safety reasons.

Over the past year or so, the City has been working with community members and stakeholder groups to identify opportunities to not only increase revenues at the Conservatory but its overall usage and benefits to the community. In October, the consultant team was retained to review and assess other potential services, previously identified by a number of stakeholders. The potential new services included:

- Multi-purpose room rental;
- Coffee Bar;
- Market rental space;
- Educational programming; and
- Greenhouse space rental.

Study Approach

In addition to reviewing the opportunities related to the above new services, the consultant team also performed the following:

- Market research to assess the community need for the proposed services (Appendix One);
- Best practice review of three other conservatories (Appendix Two);
- Order of magnitude cost to renovate the facility for those particular revenue lines;
- Development of projected revenues and expenses associated with the proposed new services; and
- Creation of an evaluation model, which considers both economic and social benefits of the potential services (Appendix Three).

As a result of discussions with various stakeholders, the consultant team performed additional steps in order to provide better information to the management team, City Council and community members. This will create more fruitful conversation while making strategic decisions related to the future of the Conservatory. These steps included:

- Development and release of Survey to identify the interest of volunteers to assist in various capacities related to the Conservatory;
- Visit to three conservatories in the Greater Toronto area, and discussions with representatives of additional conservatories; and
- Review of the City's other plans, including its Strategic Plan, Recreation and Facilities Master Plan, and the Chapples Park Master Plan.

Expanded Services Evaluation Model

The potential opportunities, such as a multi-use room and Coffee Bar identified above, will create a number of benefits for the Conservatory. In assessing these potential opportunities, both the economic and social benefits were considered. Based on research conducted, there are a number of existing models that have attempted to quantify the value of social benefits. While “valuing” the social benefits from an economic perspective is out of the scope of this assignment, the concept behind comparing the benefits and impacts of each of the opportunities is essentially the core of the model developed.

In creating this evaluation model, key goals or objectives were identified that the City will want to achieve by repairing the facility and providing new services within the Conservatory. These key objectives include: to allow community members to **engage** and **connect**; and to **sustain** the facility by increasing third party revenue sources. The developed model is discussed further in the body of this Report.

3.0 THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY

As its name suggests, Thunder Bay Centennial Botanical Conservatory was opened to the public in 1967 as a Centennial project to commemorate Canada's 100th birthday¹. The Thunder Bay Conservatory is owned by the City of Thunder Bay and is operated under its Parks Division. Currently there are three full time employees who work through the year, and five seasonal staff who work from April to November.



Source: City of Thunder Bay

Visitors

There are more than 30,000 people who visit the Conservatory each year, averaging 100 visitations per day. In the 2016/17 season, the minimum number of visitors was 14 people per day while the maximum was 529. Scheduled events include special events hosted by Friends of the Conservatory, school tours and weddings.

The largest visitor groups are families with young children and older adults. Representatives of the Friends of Conservatory indicated that in their review of the Log Book, visitors come from all over the world. Unfortunately however, full statistics are not tracked.

Young Families

Many conservatories in Ontario, like Toronto Centennial Park Conservatory and Burlington Royal Botanical Gardens, spend a lot of time to create a child-friendly environment by having children playgrounds and displays that will appeal directly to young families. It is considered a long-term investment for the Conservatory to attract more young visitors, who when they grow up, will then bring their families to visit and share the same fond memories.

Older Adults

According to the Deloitte 2009 Impact of Ornamental Horticulture on Canada's Economy Report, baby boomers are spending more on horticultural related products and services that improve their quality of life². According to a U.S. study reported by the Wall Street Journal's Market Watch, gardening was cited as the fourth most desired retirement leisure activity choice for baby boomers³. Many adults visit the Thunder Bay Conservatory to enjoy the lush greenery, solitude and peacefulness.

With a growing interest in gardening and the baby boomers aging, there may be increased interest in the horticultural activities that may be offered at the Conservatory.

Programs and Services

The Thunder Bay Conservatory provides a wide range of amenities and services, many of which are free of charge. Other than weddings and other special events, all visits are free, unless the patron chooses to give a donation to the facility. There are some school visits through the year, where elementary school children will learn about growing plants, generally in the Spring time. In addition, other organizations will offer summer camp days at the Conservatory.



Bedding Plant and Hanging Basket Production

For many years, the Conservatory staff have been growing and providing most of the City's annual bedding plants and hanging baskets used throughout its parks and streets. Recently, City Parks is starting to change its display gardens to perennial plants, which may change the use of the Conservatory greenhouses and the role of the Conservatory staff in the future.

Seasonal Display

The Conservatory also grows a number of seasonal plants, such as poinsettias and lilies, that it displays at the facility but also through City service facilities.

Over time, the Conservatory has amassed a large collection of plants which have not been sold.

PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

- Tropical arboretum filled with flowering plants, exotic trees and shrubs from around the world
- Park benches
- Waterfall and wishing pond
- Washroom facilities
- Limited wheelchair accessibility
- Guided tours of conservatory, upon request or booking
- Exterior activities, including:
 - Community and children's gardens
 - Picnic tables
 - Shade trees
 - Pollinator garden
 - Horticultural society perennial garden
 - Bee hives
- Wedding rentals
- Monthly events, hosted by Friends of the Conservatory

Management, Staff and Volunteers

The Thunder Bay Centennial Botanical Conservatory currently employs eight people. Five are seasonal employees who work from the end of April to the end of November. The Thunder Bay Conservatory's management consists of a part-time supervisor and a Leadhand, while there are two other full-time employees. At this time, other than the Leadhand, the employees do not require any special education to work in the Conservatory, although there are several recommended courses in which they could enrol.



Volunteers also play an important role and are mostly made up of the "Friends of the Conservatory".

Friends of the Conservatory

The Conservatory maintains a positive relationship with the Friends of the Thunder Bay Conservatory. The Friends' current mission is "to promote and educate the community in the stewardship of natural environment through the growth, appreciation and preservation of the Conservatory's collections and activities."

The objectives of the Friends of Thunder Bay Conservatory are:

- to facilitate a variety of educational activities;
- to encourage public participation;
- to celebrate the Conservatory's heritage;
- to promote the enhancement and continued growth of the Conservatory;
- to advocate for environmental stewardship, protection, conservation and interaction with natural sustainable practices; and
- to promote the natural therapeutic benefits of the Conservatory for the health and well-being of the community⁴.

Volunteer Survey Results

Through this study, a short volunteer survey was released for a period of ten days and completed by 69 people. The survey was not advertised and heavy reliance was placed on the Friends of the Conservatory and other stakeholder groups for release. The survey results are as follows:

- Just over 80% of respondents said they would volunteer at the Conservatory;
- Over 20% would volunteer in each of either the weekdays, weekends or any day;
- Less than 10% would volunteer in the evenings;
- Almost 60% would volunteer between one and five hours per month;

- About 4% and 4% indicated they would volunteer between 10 to 15 hours, and over 15 hours per month respectively;
- Persons were interested in volunteering in a number of ways:
 - Organizing and hosting events (24 persons);
 - Fundraising (16);
 - Teaching classes or workshops (16);
 - Assisting in guided tours (25);
 - Assisting in outdoor activities (31); and
- The age of those who responded was quite evenly spread between the ages of 35 and 74 years.

Facility Overview

Opened to the public as a floral conservatory in 1967, Thunder Bay Centennial Botanical Conservatory consists of a large tropical house and two smaller wing houses. With a total area of 7,000 square feet, the surrounding area of tropical house is landscaped with exotic flowers, trees, shrubs, ponds and a bridge that provides a pleasing and relaxing environment to visitors. There are two identical wing-houses each with an area of 1,516 square feet. The west wing house is home to a cactus garden. The east wing was originally set up as a seasonal display house. Both the west and east wings are currently closed to the public for safety reasons and are waiting for upgrades prior to reopening.



There are also three greenhouses adjacent to the Conservatory, used for raising bedding plants and hanging baskets for Thunder Bay's community parks and streets. The three greenhouses, with a total area of 8,300 square feet, are 2,528 square feet, 2,528 square feet and 3,224 square feet in size. All greenhouses are linked by a long hallway. In addition to this, there is a boiler room, storage room and a storage building at the back of the Conservatory, providing work space up to 2,724 square feet for the staff.

Use of the Facilities

While the capacity of the greenhouse facility or a calendar of the greenhouse uses was not available, the greenhouse facilities are fully used for the City bedding plants and hanging baskets

starting in the spring, prior to planting. In fact, there is not enough space for an additional 60 to 80 baskets required by the City.

Additional work would be required to determine whether the greenhouse facilities could be used during the off season, since grow lights and higher temperatures would be needed. There is concern that increasing temperatures may result in insect infestations.

Order of Magnitude Capital Cost Estimate

The estimated costs shown below for updating facilities at the Conservatory was prepared by Gord Wickham, Vice President of Colliers International Projects Leaders.

Facilities	Total Capital Costs	Details
Renovate and Restore Greenhouses	\$600,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition • New structural and frame • Doors and frames • Winter lighting in one greenhouse
Renovation to Create Multi-Purpose Room (East Wing)	\$137,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial demolition • Compaction and concrete slab • New structural and frame • Exterior link and patio space • Electrical and lighting • New door and access
Coffee Bar	\$22,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial demolition, as required • Furniture, equipment and fixtures
Outside Play and Picnic Area	\$95,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site landscaping • Furnishings and play equipment • Access and routing
Restore Closed Exhibit Area (West Wing)	\$97,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial demolition • New structural and frame • Doors and frames

SWOT Analysis Derived from Community Consultations

Over the past year, the City has conducted a number of community consultations and surveys where 185 persons participated. A summary of the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are below:

Strengths

- Uniqueness: it is an oasis in the winter
- Free admission
- Diversity of plant life: different kinds of plants from various countries
- Good atmosphere: many people enjoy the peaceful and therapeutic atmosphere
- Capacity: there is potential space for education
- Good performance: average 100 people come to visit per day

Weaknesses

- Lack of visibility and integration in the community: visitors can be confused about the location given it is at the end of dead-end road
- Lack of space: no room for events, gift shop, plant sale, tea room etc., narrow pathway, limited parking space
- Outdated and aged facilities: unsafe glass roof; no electrical and lighting outside and outdated electrical and lighting on the inside; not energy efficient; not accessible; no air circulation
- Inefficient layout: a lot of space is unused
- Not enough variety: people feel like there is no reason to return

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering: visitors want to have a café or teahouse that they can sit down; a farmers' market • Increased space: people want it to be big enough to hold different events • Partnerships: Non-profit groups, such as Roots to Harvest, Horticultural society, Tree Canada, Ontario Master Naturalists Program; the Private sector for room and space rental; and First Nation organizations, where a Spirit, meditative or indigenous garden could be established. • Gift shop: a gift shop could be run to generate income based on the large number of visitors • Longer hours: people like to have extended hours for visiting • Multi-purpose room: many participants identified a number of benefits of a multi-purpose room • Volunteers: expand opportunities for volunteers and increase number of people involved • Educational demonstration gardens: many visitors prefer have garden and plants demonstrations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resources: the conservatory needs more revenue and appropriate staff; staff with expertise in applying for grants is also needed • Poor advertising: advertisements only reach people who are already involved; no Conservatory brochures or plant guides exist • Lack of community involvement • Uncertainty: the uncertain future makes potential partners leery to collaborate with the conservatory

4.0 CONSERVATORY BEST PRACTICE REVIEW

Canada hosts a number of different botanical gardens and conservatories, many of which have been around for over a century. A summary of the Conservatories reviewed is set out in Appendix Two. Here are the highlights:

- Most conservatories are located in a park offering outdoor active or passive recreation activities and gardens;
- Most botanical gardens and conservatories are public and funded by municipal and provincial governments;
- Admission fees, memberships, event rentals and donations are the most common sources of revenue, outside of government monies;
- Many botanical gardens include greenhouses, butterfly conservatories and historic sites. Generally they are located on larger properties and as such, can provide both indoor and outdoor facilities and a variety of visitor experiences;
- There are many garden related festivals or events that take place throughout the year. Festivals and events such as the Canadian Tulip Festival in Ottawa, Canada Blooms in Toronto and the Lilac Festival at the Royal Botanical Gardens attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and have been recognized in the America Bus Association's top 100 events listing⁵. They are led by the Conservatories and municipalities but expand beyond the Conservatory and into the cities;
- Educational programming is offered by many conservatories, providing an academic and scientific resource to the public and education institutions;
- Each botanical garden or conservatory has its own plant collections, and produces new plants through the year;
- Excess plants and some productions are sold to the public;
- Volunteers are heavily engaged in the operations;
- Where restaurant or coffee shop services are offered, attendance is at least 100,000 per year;
- Where gift shops are open, attendance is generally at least 70,000 per year;
- Some events and activities held in botanical gardens and conservatories are eligible for funding support, which can offset a portion of the operating costs; and
- The majority of botanical gardens and conservatories depend heavily on government funding and do not anticipate being self-sustainable.

Allan Gardens

Allan Gardens Conservatory is widely recognized as a significant heritage and cultural public venue in downtown Toronto. Over the years, the Conservatory has suffered from inadequate maintenance. To help to determine the extent of necessary repairs, the study group has visited seven conservatories across North America of similar physical and operational characteristics. Facilities, collections, programming, governance and funding models have been examined and

documented. As a result, a plan to renovate and recognize the facility has been developed. The plan has incorporated models of park revitalization from other successful conservatories.

The key strategies in Allan Gardens Conservatory's refreshing plan include: promoting horticultural excellence; maintaining and enhancing heritage qualities of the park, conservatories and collections; and providing new opportunities for people to enjoy, participate and take stewardship.

The work completed by Allan Gardens was very informative. Based on the best practices review, revitalization, relevance and overall sustainability are key themes for many conservatories across Canada.

5.0 REVIEW OF EXISTING CITY PLANS

In developing the evaluation model, a number of other City plans were reviewed, including the City's Strategic Plan, the 2017 Recreation and Facilities Master Plan and the 2017 Chapples Park Master Plan. In assessing the key goals and objectives that each opportunity may achieve, the following key points were derived from the existing plans.

City of Thunder Bay Strategic Plan

In its 2015 to 2018 Corporate Strategic Plan, the City of Thunder Bay identified a number of goals in achieving its commitment to a high quality of life, including:

- Goal 1: Unified city of strong, active and vibrant neighbourhoods, building civic pride, neighbourhood capacity and implementing initiatives that support physical, emotional and mental health;
- Goal 3: Proud of its diversity and unique culture, recognizing the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples, celebrating arts and heritage as a key contributor to quality of life in Thunder Bay;
- Goal 6: Leader in accessible recreation and services for all people, investing in revitalized recreational facilities and affordable, accessible programs that meet the needs of people of all ages in their neighbourhoods and improving services and programs to enhance the quality of life of seniors.
- In its commitment to the Environment, the City identified goals to invest in programs to beautify facades and private properties, and beautification of public areas; and be a leader in climate change adaptation and protecting and preserving public green space.

Recreation and Facilities Master Plan

The vision of the City of Thunder Bay's Recreation and Facilities Master Plan, released in 2017, was: "Thunder Bay is a vibrant City providing positive and animated places and opportunities for residents and visitors to recreate, engage and connect." The pillars of the plan include:

- City serving and neighbourhood focus;
- An inclusive city;
- Age friendly and accessible recreation;
- Positive places and animated spaces;
- Core and evolving partnerships;
- Services for evolving needs of the 21st century; and
- Affordable plan.

Chapples Park Master Plan

Although located on a currently dead end Dease Street, the Conservatory is considered to be within the boundaries of Chapples Park. The vision of the Chapples Park Master Plan, released in 2017, was: "Chapples Park is a city-wide destination for year round recreation, wellness and

open space. It is a hub that celebrates equity, inclusiveness, community and recreation in a safe and fun environment. Through sound stewardship of assets and a focus on sustainability, the park will become a central hub for premier sports facilities, access to nature and open space that can be enjoyed for generations”.

The key themes included: high quality, multi-use centralized sports hub; access to nature; safety and connectivity; field condition improvements and year-round opportunities. Its goals and guiding principles were:

- Dynamic and diverse;
- Accessible to all users;
- Fosters community engagement;
- A destination;
- Celebrate and enhance ecological character; and
- Flexibility.

Preferred Option

In its Master Plan, the consultants identified a Preferred Option for the City Wide Sports Park in the Chapples Recreation Area. In the image below, the Conservatory is around the middle in yellow, next to Dease Street, where a new road running through Chapples Park would provide a second entrance to the recreation area. While there are no recommended changes to the Conservatory other than the location of new maintenance facility in the area, there may be some additional options to consider moving some of the passive recreation and/or golf facilities closer to the conservatory in order to create more activities in close proximity to each other.



PREFERRED OPTION: City Wide Sports Park, derived from Chapples Park Master Plan 2017

6.0 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Based on staff and stakeholder discussions and review of available materials, there are a number of preliminary findings that will impact both the evaluation model and recommendations in this Report.

- There is no conservatory that is currently self-sustainable. As a community asset, there is a focus on providing a sanctuary, education, access to nature and gathering space for community members to engage and participate;
- Many of the conservatories are located either within or near the City providing access to not only its facilities but a park like atmosphere. An example is Thunder Bay's sister conservatory in Etobicoke which is located in Centennial Park, where there are seven soccer fields, five softball fields and children's play equipment;
- The Thunder Bay Conservatory is tucked away on Dease Street, a dead end street and is not well integrated into the community or its activities;
- The Conservatory is centrally located and considered to be part of the Chapples Park;
- There are many opportunities for the integration of the Conservatory into the community by adding or extending existing amenities around the facility over the long term. Examples include: extending Dease Street to add an entrance to Chapples Recreation Area; enhancing the trail system; and combining food services in a central location at the park;
- There are a number of opportunities to better integrate the Conservatory into the community with smaller capital projects, including better signage along the walking and bike trails, and at the Friendship Centre and older adult facilities; extending the walking and bike trails directly past or into the Conservatory property; and adding children's and/or older adults play equipment on the properties;
- Restaurants, coffee and/or gift shops are added only when there are significant visitors to the Conservatory;
- Many different sources of revenues are added to supplement government funding, but the more sources of revenue, the more management and staffing required to manage those other services;
- Over 80% of the respondents to a volunteer survey, completed by 69 people, said they would volunteer at the Conservatory in a number of different roles;
- Over 60% of those who said they would volunteer indicated that they would volunteer one to five hours per month, while many of the remaining volunteers would work for more hours;
- Adding one service may not require additional staff, but adding several new services would likely require additional staff; and
- Older adults spend a significant amount on gardening. This interest in horticulture may extend to involvement or participation at the Conservatory if programming becomes more relevant.

7.0 EXPANDED SERVICES EVALUATION MODEL

The potential new service opportunities will create a number of benefits, both economic and social, for the Conservatory. In developing an evaluation model for these opportunities, the City's strategic and master plan priorities were considered, along with the overall needs of the Conservatory. The key markers used to evaluate the revenue generating opportunities, along with an analysis of the revenue generating opportunities are set out below.

Key Markers

In evaluating the revenue generating streams, key markers were derived from the goals and principles that the City wanted to achieve in its strategic and recreational master plans, and of course, the identified objectives of this study, improving the overall sustainability of the Conservatory.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Engage | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase attendance2. Educate residents and tourists3. Create a facility that has multiple purposes4. Promote environmental awareness |
| Connect | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encourage spiritual connections2. Include activities for all generations to enjoy3. Provide access to nature4. Foster diversity |
| Sustain | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Overall viability2. Revenue generation3. Employment impact4. Tourism impact |

New Service Opportunities

There were a number of new service opportunities identified by community members and stakeholders, and many services that other conservatories across Canada are providing in order to help sustain their facilities. While some may be successful in other communities, these same opportunities may not achieve a high level of benefits in Thunder Bay.

Multi-Purpose Room Rental

A multi-purpose room available for rent at the Conservatory would suit many community members' needs. This room, 1,516 square foot with a room occupancy of 50 persons, could be used for multiple purposes, including but not limited to:

- Small weddings;
- Business meetings;
- Seminars;
- Family or friends gatherings;
- Yoga lessons;
- Horticultural therapy classes; and
- Fundraising events.

Financial Sustainability

Order of Magnitude Capital Cost estimate to upgrade the East Wing to a multi-purpose room:	<u>\$140,000</u>
Estimated annual revenues generated	\$ 16,000
Incremental annual expenses incurred	<u>5,000</u>
Annual net incremental income	<u>\$ 11,000</u>
<i>Return on investment</i>	<i>7.9%</i>

For the purposes of the above, the following assumptions were made:

- The multi-purpose room rental prices would be dependent on its use, however for the purposes of these projections, it is assumed that rental prices would be \$100 per half day and \$150 for a full day;
- Repeated rentals would be available at a discounted price, but have not been considered in this analysis;
- Current rate charged by the Conservatory for weddings is \$124.30 per hour;
- The current customer service representative would be able to manage any incremental volume in calls to support increased usage;
- Room cleaning can be managed by current staffing levels;
- Annual maintenance and capital replacement cost of 10% will be incurred;
- The facility would be rented an average of three half days per week. Attendance at the Conservatory could increase by more than 10% per year; and
- Additional advertising costs of \$3,000 per year would be incurred to let people know about the facility. Overall, there would still be a heavy reliance on referrals and social media.

Benefit and Risk Analysis

Benefit and risk analysis is to assess the benefits and risks associated with the implementation of proposed services.

Benefits

- Overall, increased attendance and usage of the facility
- As more attend various events, they may return for other events and visits
- The visitor demographics may expand depending on the type of events held in the facility
- Central location

Risks

- Strong competition from local hotels, community centres and other organizations (see Appendix One – Market Review)
- Relatively unknown facility and without word of mouth and/or advertising, it may not be rented often

Coffee Bar

It is anticipated that a caterer, perhaps the same caterer who would run the arena canteen, would be contracted out to be available during event days. Event days may include Conservatory events, Friends of the Conservatory events or other special events, where community members or organization rent the Conservatory or multi-purpose room. While a full-time restaurant or coffee shop were considered, the low volume achieved would likely result in incremental annual operating losses. Therefore, the Coffee Bar will include a tea and coffee machine, fridge and serving bar, where beverages and snacks can be purchased during event days.

Financial Sustainability

Order of Magnitude Capital Cost estimate to add a small Coffee Bar and equipment:	<u>\$ 22,000</u>
Estimated annual revenues generated	\$ 4,000
Incremental annual expenses incurred	<u>400</u>
Annual net incremental income	<u>\$ 3,600</u>
<i>Return on investment</i>	<i>16.3%</i>

For the purposes of the above, the following assumptions were made:

- The Conservatory would not incur any direct costs of the Coffee Bar but the small costs to retain a caterer;
- The conservatory would earn a “rental fee” or percentage of total revenues each time the Coffee Bar was open for business;
- The conservatory would earn \$80 each time the Coffee Bar was open;
- Annual maintenance and equipment replacement costs of 10% will be incurred; and
- Conservatively, the Coffee Bar will be used 50 times each year.

Benefit and Risk Analysis

Benefit and risk analysis is to assess the benefits and risks associated with the implementation of proposed services.

Benefits	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased events if Coffee Bar services available• Visitors may stay longer if Coffee Bar open• Minimal operating risks if third party operator responsible for Coffee Bar services• Opportunities for regular activities, including snacks and beverages, with nearby residents, such as the long term care facility residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong competition from nearby Coffee Bars and restaurants (see also Appendix One – Market Review)• Demand low on an everyday basis given current low attendance• While there appears to be interest, actual usage is unknown until services are offered

Educational Programming

As the only science-related facility open to the public in Thunder Bay, the Conservatory could provide an educational experience to its visitors. The Conservatory can play a role in educating the public about plants, ecology, and cultivation in different climates. Focuses may be on cultivation of plants in Northwestern Ontario and/or indigenous and medicinal plants. Educational programming can be developed to raise the awareness in horticulture, biodiversity, and environmental issues by carrying out series of short courses, day camps, workshops or through information boards. This program would benefit a diverse group of community members, including students, Indigenous peoples and older adults.

Financial Sustainability

Order of Magnitude Capital Costs

No capital costs would be required directly for education programming, but the facility would need to be upgraded as identified in past reports, to allow this program to run effectively.

Incremental Net Income

Education programs generally do not reap a significant amount of incremental net income. Education program revenues can be derived from government funding, partnership development and student participation fees.

- If there is government funding available, there may be cost recovery of a portion of the facility operating costs or additional administrative costs, such as management time.
- If the Conservatory partnered with another organization, such as EcoSuperior, or Science North, there may be a rental fee that could be earned. Often, these types of organizations utilize the facility on a no-charge basis, simply offering a community service.

- Alternatively, if the Conservatory runs its own programs, it may charge a student participation fee, which can range between \$6 to \$10 per student depending on the program. A week long summer camp could be \$150 to \$250 per child. This will supplement the staffing and supply costs but will likely not cover the full operating cost of the program.

A summary of potential revenues and costs is below:

Incremental Revenue:	Government Funding	Rental Income (Partners Run Programming)	Student Participation Fee
Potential Incremental Expenses:	Management and Administrative Costs	Management and Administrative Costs	Management and Administrative Costs
	Education Programming Staff		Education Programming Staff
	Supplies		Supplies

It is expected that the revenues will come from government funding, rental income, student participation fees or a combination thereof. However, depending on how the education program is developed and operated, expenses may differ. For example, if the City entered into a partnership, another organization may actually provide the staffing, ie Science North, but the City would still incur operational costs.

Benefit and Risk Analysis

Benefit and risk analysis is to assess the benefits and risks associated with the implementation of proposed services.

Benefits	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attendance by schools, groups and individuals • Improved environmental awareness • Increased tourism if relevant programming, ie, indigenous and medical plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff with relevant skills and education required to run programs • Low participation rate

Greenhouse Rental

Utilizing the current greenhouses on site may be another cost-efficient way to generate revenue. With a total area of 8,300 square feet, the greenhouses can be opened to businesses, organizations, or the public for gardening purposes. Rolling benches, a drying oven, potting area and storage facilities are available. Due to Thunder Bay’s long cold winters, there may be business opportunities for floral and vegetable growing and transplanting.

Financial Sustainability

Order of Magnitude Capital Cost estimate to upgrade production greenhouses:	<u>\$ 600,000</u>
Estimated annual revenues generated	\$ 18,000
Incremental annual expenses incurred	<u>10,000</u>
Annual net incremental income	<u>\$ 8,000</u>
<i>Return on investment</i>	<i>1.3%</i>

For the purposes of the above, the following assumptions were made:

- Cost savings as a result of the Conservatory providing the City plants has not been included in this calculation;
- Capital costs to upgrade production greenhouses similar to what currently exists, but for upgraded technologies. It is assumed that one greenhouse, approximately 2,500 square feet, would be equipped with lighting to allow for winter production;
- There is not a lot of increased staff time to accommodate renters in the facility;
- There is demand for greenhouse space in the non-growing season;
- There is sufficient space in at least one greenhouse to allow for use in the non-growing season;
- The rental rate for greenhouse would be an average of \$2/square foot/month and may fluctuate depending on the type of organization renting the facility;
- The total rental area would be 1,500 square feet;
- Utility costs would increase when facility is in use during the winter months; and
- The annual rental period would be six months.

Benefit and Risk Analysis

Benefit and risk analysis is to assess the benefits and risks associated with the implementation of proposed services.

Benefits	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased revenues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff shortage • Low participation rate • Impacts on its own production • Insufficient work completed to determine most likely utility costs to run greenhouses in winter • Existing greenhouses for rent in the community are not utilized (see Appendix One – Market Review)

Market Space Rental

Given the existing farmer's market and craft events during holiday season, market space rental is likely not a significant revenue generator. However, special event market days during the summer may capture increased traffic and overall familiarity with the Conservatory. An example may be a market day during the Canada Day weekend to be held the day before or the morning of the other events being held in the community.

Financial Sustainability

Order of Magnitude Capital Cost estimate for market space rental:	\$ <u>nil</u>
Estimated annual revenues generated	\$ 4,000
Incremental annual expenses incurred	<u>nil</u>
Annual net incremental income	<u>\$ 4,000</u>

For the purposes of the above, the following assumptions were made:

- The market booth fee would be between \$50 and \$100 per booth;
- Two events would be held each year; and
- Additional revenue sources may include snack and beverage revenues and/or plant sale revenues through the day.

Benefit and Risk Analysis

Benefit and risk analysis is to assess the benefits and risks associated with the implementation of proposed services.

Benefits	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attendance • Increased diversity of visitors • Some revenue generation, would need to be run by volunteer group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of event may be difficult given many other community events held through the summer • Limited parking for an outside event • Insufficient number of volunteers available to run the event

Evaluation of Potential New Services

An evaluation model based on three key markers mentioned above is developed to reflect the economic and social benefits of proposed services. The weightings of Engage, Connect and Sustain are 40%, 40% and 20% respectively. Each of the opportunities were evaluated based on the key markers, their ability to achieve such results and a total score of ten (10). The evaluation mark may be considered subjective and may vary depending on each person's own perceptions.

The detailed evaluation results are set out in Appendix Three. Based on the evaluation matrix, the multi-purpose room achieves the highest ratings, followed by educational programming and the Coffee Bar.

Revenue Generating Opportunity	Evaluation Result	Comments Regarding Evaluation
Coffee Bar	6.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has potential to earn a higher return on a smaller investment; • Opening only during events or high visitation will result in lower operating costs; • Will not result in increased attendance on its own, but may increase the number of multi-use room rentals as a result of it being available for use.
Multi-use Room	7.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has potential to earn a reasonable return on investment to upgrade the East wing; • Will attract a more diverse group of people seeking out a unique venue for special events or meetings, yoga or therapeutic classes; • Will result in increased usage during the events, but may also result in returning visitors.
Greenhouse Space Rental	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be considered at a later date when greenhouses upgraded and greenhouse use is better tracked through the year; • Potential for use during winter months but lighting and heating would need to be updated, which may not make sense in existing facilities; • Does not achieve other key objectives to connect and engage the community unless key partnerships are developed for shared use; • Low rate of return based on investment needed.
Educational Programming	6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages large groups of visitors to attend workshops, classes etc.; • Enhances the relevance of the Conservatory to the community members and tourists; • Staff with specialized education would be required to manage and teach the programs;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires full facility renovation; • Community engagement and connection is more significant if educational programming added; • Unless government funding received for educational programming, or another organization runs the programming, costs may exceed revenues earned.
Market Space Rental	4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor source of revenue; • Increase the diversity of the visitors to the Conservatory; • Costs to achieve revenue are minimal, but the Friends of Conservatory would need to host the event in order to reduce the associated staff time.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In determining how to move forward, the City recognized that these decisions need to be based on both the social and economic benefits to the community. In reviewing the potential revenue generating opportunities and assuming that the City is going to incur costs to upgrade portions or all of the facility, the following is recommended:

1. Upgrade the East Wing to accommodate a multi-purpose room;
2. Use a small space around the front entrance to build a coffee bar;
3. Work with the Friends of the Conservatory to better engage its volunteers and develop an itinerary of additional events to host over the next year or two, and monitor to identify the most attractive events and activities;
4. Hire a summer or intern student to help build a plan to rent the multi-use facility; seek out partnerships and reach a greater number of potential users;
5. Work with partners to sell extra plants on an annual basis;
6. Establish a better tracking system for visitors;
7. Prepare a business plan for the Conservatory, which would include some Strategic development including, but not limited to:
 - a. vision and mission statements and guiding principles;
 - b. overarching strategies and identification of niche horticultural objectives, ie, remain the same, focus on native species, focus on indigenous and medical plants of interest;
 - c. staffing model and new job descriptions required to achieve the above;
 - d. operation of the plant production facilities, including types of plants to propagate and grow, space usage, partnerships etc.; and
 - e. marketing of the facility.
8. Through the business plan and aligned with existing plans and the needs assessment report, develop a long-term timeline for the restoration of the remaining facility, considering new changes to the City's planting needs as well as the overarching strategies of the Conservatory developed above;
9. Seek out partnerships to improve utilization of the Conservatory facilities and property, reducing or sharing in costs where possible; and
10. While discussing City parks and recreation improvements, consider better integration of the Conservatory in all plans, including the extension of trails past the Conservatory, extending Dease Street to Chapples Park opening traffic past the Conservatory, and locating children's or older adult's outdoor equipment near the facility.

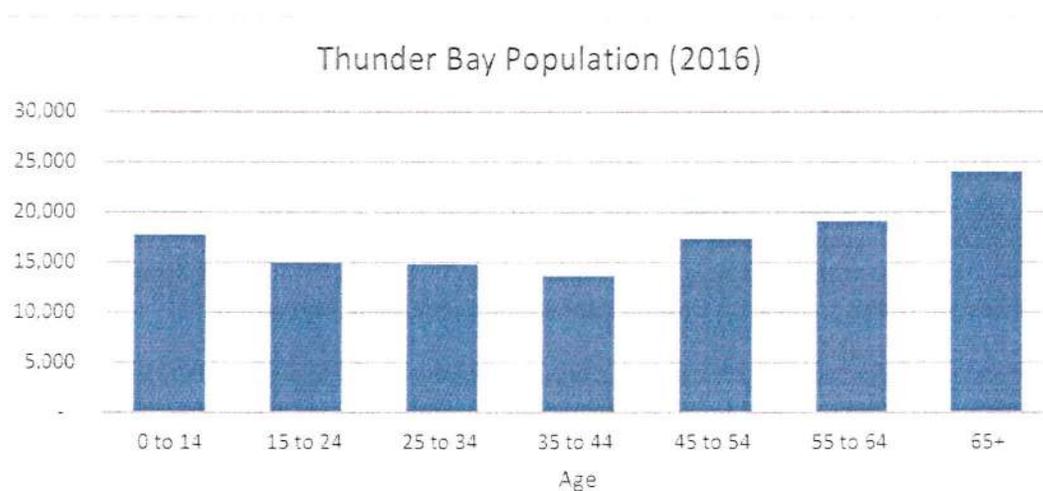
APPENDIX ONE: MARKET REVIEW

THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY

APPENDIX ONE: MARKET REVIEW

Thunder Bay Demographics

Located in the centre of Canada, Thunder Bay is the largest municipality in Northwestern Ontario with a census metropolitan area population of 121,621 (Census 2016)⁶. The median age was 44 years, based on 2016 Census data. Of those residents, 49% and 51% were male and female respectively⁷. Between 2011 and 2016, the population change was nil in comparison to Ontario's population increase of 4.6% during the same period⁸. Based on 2016 Census data, Thunder Bay's children and youth between the ages of 0 and 24 years represented 25% of the total population while people between 55 years old and above made up about 35% of the total population⁹.



Source: Statistic Canada, 2016 Census for Thunder Bay.

The education levels of Thunder Bay residents are slightly lower than the average provincial level. Based on the 2011 National Household Survey, 23% of the citizens over the age of 15 had no certificate, diploma or degree, 25% completed High School while 52% attained post-secondary certification.

Spending in Thunder Bay

Based on data and available statistics, relevant expenditures by local residents are as follows:

Recreational Services	Coffee and Tea	Food Purchased from Restaurant	Gardening
\$93 million	\$5 million	\$127 million	\$16 million

Local Agriculture

According to a recent market study of Thunder Bay area, 84% of Country Market customers and 65% of grocery store customers reported that buying locally produced food items is important to them¹⁰. A majority of Country Market customers (70%) and grocery store customers (60%) are willing to pay more for locally grown or harvested foods relative to non-local food¹¹. The study also showed that most of greenhouse production in Thunder Bay District is dedicated to flower production (309,000 square feet), followed by vegetables (25,000 square feet)¹². From 2006 to 2016, the production of flowers in greenhouse increased by 14% while the production of vegetables decreased by 22%¹³.

Tourism

Tourism plays an important role in Ontario's economy. According to Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, there were over 128 million domestic visitors to Ontario in 2015, generating over \$16 billion revenues¹⁴. Among the tourists, about 1.15 million or 1% visited zoos, aquariums or botanical gardens¹⁵. In addition, Ontario welcomed 11 million American visitors. 4.3% or 0.5 million of the U.S. visitors showed interest in zoos, aquariums or botanical gardens¹⁶.

Tourism in Thunder Bay is worth an estimated \$160 million to the local economy annually¹⁷. With over 550,000 visitors annually, approximately one half are drawn to the city for leisure experiences that include paddle sports, cycling, camping, hiking, power sports, winter sports, angling, hunting, visiting friends and families and festivals.¹⁸ Most visitors come from Northwestern Ontario, southern Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec, and Minnesota.¹⁹

Another study from Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport in 2015 reports that about 0.3% of Northwestern Ontario visitors, or 10,500 persons would like to visit zoos, aquariums, or botanical gardens²⁰. Those interested in visiting gardens are between 45 and 54 years old²¹.

Competitive Analysis

In reviewing the potential source of new revenues, a competitive analysis was completed for opportunities where others provided similar services.

Multi-Purpose Room Rental

There are many community centres, hotels, restaurants and campuses that provide multi-purpose room rental services around Thunder Bay. Most of the services include full banquet catering services as well as catering for luncheons, teas, showers, etc.

	Services	Prices	Features
Current River Community Centre	Board room rental Meeting room rental	\$150 (up to 4 hours)	Rental fee waived for over 100 guests Full catering services
North End Community Centre	Hall rental	\$85 (afternoon or evening) \$150 (full day)	Fully equipped kitchen
North McIntyre Community Centre	Room rental Hall rental	\$100 and \$150 (up to 4 hours and full day, Room) \$200 and \$250 (up to 4 hours and full day, Hall)	Fully equipped kitchen
Vickers Heights Community Centre	Hall rental	\$125 (no alcohol) \$250 (with alcohol)	Lunch/coffee available Fully equipped kitchen
West Thunder Community Centre	Board room rental Multipurpose rooms rental Hall rental	\$110 (up to 4 hours, Hall) \$195 (up to 4 hours, Multipurpose room 1) \$175 (up to 4 hours, Multipurpose room 2)	Fully wheelchair accessible Catering services
Thunder Bay 55 Plus Centre	Auditorium rental Multipurpose room rental Kitchen rental Dish Rental	\$193.74 and \$129.16 (up to 4 hours, Auditorium, Profit and Non-profit) \$80.74 and \$53.79 (up to 4 hours, Multipurpose room, Profit and Non-profit)	Drink catering only
Lakehead University	Conference rooms rental	\$35 - \$340 per day	Over 90 rooms available – classroom to gymnasium Catering services Accommodations from May to August
Thunder Bay Museum	Meeting room rental Galleries rental	\$120 - \$340	Registered not-for-profit organizations receive 30% discount

Restaurants and Coffee Shops

Thunder Bay has numerous restaurants and coffee shops around the community. The closest competitors near the Conservatory are Tim Hortons, Persian Man and Robin's Donuts located on Waterloo Street South.

Wedding Facility Rental

There are many available places that host wedding ceremonies and receptions in Thunder Bay. Fort William Historical Park, golf course facilities and hotels are the most popular choices for both large and small weddings. These facilities offer a full range of services including receptions and catering. There are no other facilities that offer an indoor location full of lush and beautiful greenery on a year round basis.

Greenhouse Rental

Greenhouse rental is a unique less competitive and less demanded services. The only other organization that offers greenhouse rental options within the city is Lakehead University. Key features of the Lakehead University greenhouse facilities include:

- five single gable greenhouses, four growth chambers, a cooler, drying oven, potting area, classroom and associated storage facilities;
- additional lighting for winter growing;
- combined available growing space of all greenhouses is about 1,900 square feet;

The greenhouse rental business is managed by a part-time manager. Currently, there are ten users, all of whom are university faculty and students. The greenhouse facilities have received a number of updates recently as a result of a successful Canada Foundation for Innovation funding.

	Teaching and Research by Faculty and Students	External Research and Personal Use	Commercial Uses
Greenhouse Bench Space	\$10/m ² /month	\$30/m ² /month	\$40/m ² /month
4' Growth Chamber	\$35/month	\$75/month	\$100/month
8' Growth Chamber	\$50/month	\$100/month	\$125/month

Overall, there is little rental of the Lakehead University Greenhouse facility. Its rental availability is not advertised and as such, many may not know about it.

Another facility that has a greenhouse is the Roots to Harvest program. While they do not rent out facilities, they are currently developing a greenhouse model that may be delivered to remote communities in order to increase the availability of fresh produce.

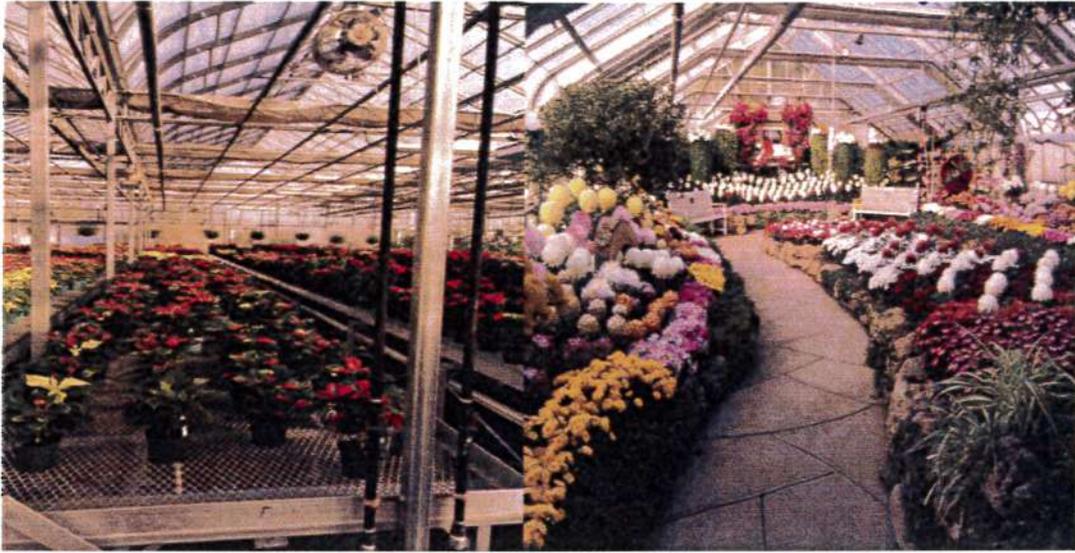
APPENDIX TWO: SUMMARY OF SELECT CONSERVATORIES

THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY

APPENDIX TWO: SUMMARY OF SELECT CONSERVATORIES

Toronto Centennial Park Conservatory

Features	<p>Toronto Centennial Park Conservatory is Thunder Bay Conservatory's sister conservatory, located in Etobicoke Centennial Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three display greenhouses of 12,000 square feet, similar to that in Thunder Bay• Eight additional greenhouses for production only
Annual Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Between 70,000 and 110,000 visitors per year• Film production and social activities for clubs and associations
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open to the public 365 days a year• Typical hours: 10 am to 5 pm• Number of staff: six full-time employees and five part-time seasonal workers• Number of volunteers: 150 plus• Role of volunteers: assist in fundraising, social events, educational programs, space rental and other daily routines• Minimal advertising, including radio, TV, newspaper, poster and website update
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rich collection of plants, changing the display plants about six times per year• Most popular season is the holiday season in December, where the entire conservatory is decorated and filled with thousands of poinsettias• Other winter holiday season festivities include: horse and wagon rides, carolers, hot apple cider and a visit from Santa
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mainly funded by the City of Toronto• Private donations• Minimal direct revenue generation
Revenue Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No admission fees or membership fees• Space rental for wedding ceremonies or photo shoots• Extra plants sold by the Friends of Conservatory or given to the public to encourage donations• Pictures of the conservatory taken and sold as postcards



Royal Botanical Gardens

Features

Royal Botanical Gardens is located in Burlington with extensive natural areas and garden lands in Hamilton, Ontario.

- Largest botanical garden in Canada with 2,422 acres
- National Historic Site
- Registered charitable organization
- Extensive system of nature trails, more than 20 kilometers in length
- Four distinct formal gardens
- Rich outdoor plant and art collections
- Various conservation projects

Annual Visitors

Operations

- More than 270,000 visitors per year
- Open to the public year round
- Typical hours: 10 am to 5 pm
- An organized volunteer group of 296 members called the RBG Auxiliary supports the efforts of the RBG
 - Significant fundraising activities
 - Donates over 35,000 hours in such roles as tour guides, staffing the RBG Library and RBG Archives, and assisting with the gardening operations
- Large number of staff
 - Spring and summer: 103 full-time, 136 part-time
 - Off season: 95 full-time, 37 part-time

- Advertising including radio, TV, newspaper, poster, social medias and website update
- Programming**
- Holiday traditions including North Pole Experiences, Holiday Entertainment, Displays and Exhibits
 - Over 200 courses and workshops for families, kids and adults in the areas of gardening, nature, botanical arts and wellness
 - Various festivals and events year round
 - Discovery Day camps providing hands-on, environmental-based programs for kids
- Funding Sources**
- Primarily funded by the Province of Ontario, City of Hamilton and Region of Halton (40% of budget)
 - Remainder or 60% is classified as 'self-generated revenue'
 - 2016 annual revenue was \$15,744,000
 - Not financially sustainable but its goal is to be self-sustainable by 2020
 - Many funders support the operation of the Royal Botanical Gardens, including but not limited to:
 - Private businesses
 - Various Business and Family Charitable Foundations
 - Government agencies including: Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Canadian Heritage, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Natural Resources Canada
- Revenue Generation**
- Visitor Experience fees (16% of total revenues):
 - Admission fees and special events (43% of visitor experience fees)
 - Memberships fees (11%)
 - Wedding and meeting room rental (18%)
 - Gift shop (28%)
 - Horticultural activities, research, education and school programs (21% of total revenues)
 - Cafeteria and restaurant rental income



Source: Website of Royal Botanical Gardens

Allan Gardens Conservatory

Features

Located in downtown Toronto, Allan Gardens Conservatory is a historical landmark in one of the city's oldest parks.

- Six greenhouses covering over 16,000 square feet
- One outdoor playground
- Two fenced off-leash areas for dogs

Annual Visitors

- Not available, started counting the number of visitors last November

Operations

- Open to the public 365 days a year
- Typical hours: 10 am to 5 pm
- Number of volunteers: more than 300
- Roles of volunteers: assist in fundraising, grant application, space rental, gardening and other daily routines
- Advertising including radio, TV, newspaper, poster, social medias and website update

Programing

- Rich collection of plants, changing the display plants about five

times per year

- Most popular season is the holiday season in December, where the entire conservatory is decorated and filled with thousands of poinsettias
- Other winter holiday season festivities include: horse and wagon rides, carolers, hot apple cider and a visit from Santa
- Future plans to establish art programs, Indigenous gardens, demonstration gardens and gardening events

Funding Sources

- Mainly funded by the City of Toronto
- Private donations
- University and corporate donations
- Minimal direct revenue generation

Revenue Generation

- No admission fees or membership fees
- Space rental for wedding ceremonies or photo shoots
- Extra plants sold to the public
- Future plans to create a café and develop education programs



Bloedel Conservatory

Features

Bloedel Conservatory is located in Queen Elizabeth Park in Vancouver and is jointly operated by the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association.

- Accessible by a number of public transit routes
- Home to a resident population of more than 100 free-flying birds
- Canada's largest single-structure conservatory at 140 feet in diameter and 70 feet high

Annual Visitors

- More than 72,000 visitors per year

- Operations**
 - Open to the public year round
 - Typical hours: 10 am to 8 pm
 - More than 1,600 volunteers from Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association assist both at VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory
 - Roles of volunteers: garden guides, seed collectors, fundraisers, special event and school program volunteers, etc.
- Programming**
 - Tour buses and group tours
 - Guided tours (VanDusen Botanical Garden)
 - School programs (VanDusen Botanical Garden)
 - Educational programs (VanDusen Botanical Garden)
 - A library (VanDusen Botanical Garden)
 - Event programs (VanDusen Botanical Garden)
 - While VanDusen Botanical Garden has provided many programs and services, Bloedel has limited capacity in these areas currently.
- Funding Sources**
 - Primarily funded by the City of Vancouver
 - Private and corporate donations
- Revenue Generation**
 - Admission fees and events rental (54%)
 - Gift shop sales (46%)

Regina Floral Conservatory

- Features**

The Regina Floral Conservatory is located in Regina, Saskatchewan.

 - Permanent collection includes trees, cacti, succulents, tropical plants and orchids
 - Wheelchair-accessible and stroller-friendly
- Annual Visitors**
 - More than 11,000 visitors per year
- Operations**
 - Open to the public from September to June
 - Typical hours: 1 pm to 4:30 pm
 - Number of staff: Unknown
 - Number of volunteers: more than 160
 - Roles of volunteers: assist in gardening, school programs, rental and other routines
- Programming**
 - Rich collection of plants, changing the display plants about four to six times per year
 - Educational programs for children from preschool to grade

eight

Funding Sources

- Tea services
- Primarily funded by the City of Regina
- Private donations

Revenue Generation

- No admission fees
- Space rental for wedding ceremonies and social events (28%)
- Tea service (17%)
- Memberships (5%)
- Educational programs (24%)
- Donations (26%)
- 2013 annual visitor experience revenues were \$44,075

APPENDIX THREE: OPPORTUNITY EVALUATION MATRIX

**CITY OF THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY
APPENDIX THREE: OPPORTUNITY EVALUATION MATRIX**

	Weighting	Coffee bar	Multi-use room	Greenhouse space rental	Educational programming	Market space rental
Engage						
Attendance improvement						
Horticultural and aboriginal education	40%	6.0	8.0	3.0	8.0	3.0
Multiple uses of the facility						
Environmental awareness						
Connect						
Diversity						
Generations	40%	5.0	8.0	3.0	6.0	6.0
Access to nature						
Spiritual connections						
Sustain						
Overall viability						
Revenue generation	20%	8.0	6.0	3.0	3.0	5.0
Employment impact						
Tourism impact						
TOTAL SCORE	100%	6.0	7.6	3.0	6.2	4.6

APPENDIX FOUR: END NOTES

THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY

APPENDIX FOUR: END NOTES

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- ¹ City of Thunder Bay, Botanical Conservatory, Retrieved from: http://www.thunderbay.ca/Living/recreation_and_parks/Parks/Botanical_Conservatory.htm
- ² Brain Trust Marketing and Communications, Ontario Garden Tourism Strategy, dated July 8, 2011
- ³ Brain Trust Marketing and Communications, Ontario Garden Tourism Strategy, dated July 8, 2011
- ⁴ Friends of the Thunder Bay Conservatory, Mission, vision and objectives of the Friends of the Thunder Bay Conservatory, Retrieved from: <http://www.friendstbconservatory.com/>
- ⁵ Brain Trust Marketing and Communications, Ontario Garden Tourism Strategy, dated July 8, 2011
- ⁶ Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, Supporting and Enhancing Business in Thunder Bay, 2017 Community Profile
- ⁷ Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016 Census Thunder Bay
- ⁸ Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016 Census Thunder Bay
- ⁹ Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016 Census Thunder Bay
- ¹⁰ Harry Cummings and Associates, Thunder Bay and area food and agriculture market study, October 2017
- ¹¹ Harry Cummings and Associates, Thunder Bay and area food and agriculture market study, October 2017
- ¹² Harry Cummings and Associates, Thunder Bay and area food and agriculture market study, October 2017
- ¹³ Harry Cummings and Associates, Thunder Bay and area food and agriculture market study, October 2017
- ¹⁴ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Regional Tourism Profiles Data Compilation– Ontario, 2015
- ¹⁵ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Regional Tourism Profiles Data Compilation– Ontario, 2015
- ¹⁶ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Regional Tourism Profiles Data Compilation– Ontario, 2015
- ¹⁷ Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, Supporting and Enhancing Business in Thunder Bay, 2017 Community Profile
- ¹⁸ Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, Supporting and Enhancing Business in Thunder Bay, 2017 Community Profile
- ¹⁹ Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, Supporting and Enhancing Business in Thunder Bay, 2017 Community Profile
- ²⁰ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Regional Tourism Profiles Data Compilation– Region 13c, 2015
- ²¹ Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Regional Tourism Profiles Data Compilation– Region 13c, 2015

APPENDIX FIVE: STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

THUNDER BAY CENTENNIAL BOTANICAL CONSERVATORY

APPENDIX FIVE: STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

1. Kayla Dixon, Director of Engineering and Operations, City of Thunder Bay
2. Sharon Sidlar, Chair, Friends of the Thunder Bay Conservatory
3. Doug Murray, CEO, Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission
4. Ryan Moore, Development Officer, Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission
5. Aaron Halcovitch, Community Grower, Roots to Harvest
6. Karen Nadeau, Leadhand, Thunder Bay Conservatory
7. Mike Dixon, Supervisor of Forestry and Horticulture, City of Thunder Bay
8. Werner Schwar, Supervisor of Parks and Open Spaces Planning, City of Thunder Bay
9. Michelle Giordano, Clerk, City of Thunder Bay
10. Paul Pepe, Tourism Manager, City of Thunder Bay
11. Arefaine Gebreselassie, Foreperson, Toronto Centennial Park Conservatory
12. Curtis Evoy, Foreperson, Allan Gardens Conservatory
13. Ema Tanaka, Business Team Lead, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory
14. Bernice Wilson, Reception Coordinator, Regina Floral Conservatory
15. Keri Pidgen, Greenhouse Manager, Lakehead University
16. Terry Lang, Supervisor, City of Thunder Bay
17. Joanne Scerba, Supervisor, City of Thunder Bay
18. Representatives, Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington
19. Marilyn Stinson, Friends of the Thunder Bay Conservatory
20. Sandra Nunn, Friends of the Thunder Bay Conservatory

APPENDIX SIX: PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Conservatory Needs Assessment Open House #1 Report

On May 9, 2017 a public open house was held from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the DaVinci Centre with respect to potential future uses of the City of Thunder Bay Centennial Conservatory. The Conservatory, including the display area and greenhouses, is in need of renewal so the City has taken the opportunity to investigate whether additional uses should be and can be incorporated into the renewal project.

Open House Logistics

The Open House was held from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the DaVinci Centre. Staff from the City of Thunder Bay and two consultants, Anneliese Grieve and Sally Harvey, were available to answer questions and discuss the Conservatory with participants. Sixty-one members of the public attended the open house and 41 comment sheets were submitted at the event. The display panels were posted on-line immediately following the open house and a further 73 comment sheets were provided online after the event. A copy of the comment form is provided in Appendix A.

The Open House was advertised by the City of Thunder Bay in local newspapers and through social media.

A series of display panels were provided that summarized the history of the Centennial Conservatory, the issues with the buildings and the ideas for new opportunities that were identified during the previous stakeholder workshop. These panels are included in Appendix A.

Summary of Comments Received

A review of the comments received shows that all but one commenter is in favour of making improvements to the Conservatory including adding new uses both inside and outside the Conservatory buildings. The following is a summary of the input received organized by question from the comment form.

1. What is your favourite part of the Conservatory?

The favoured parts of the Conservatory fell into three categories as detailed below. Note that the aspects are simply listed without consideration of the number of comments received.

a. *The features of the Conservatory*

- Waterfalls and pools; bridge
- Cactus display with desert artifacts

- Exotic plants
- Tropical plant collection
- The new garden beds outside (i.e. pollinator bed, vegetable beds)
- Seasonal displays which are now closed

b. *How visiting the Conservatory makes you feel*

- Flowers and Plants-Visuals and the smell of growing things and earth (it effects all the senses)
- Has a lot of nostalgia from when I was young
- Going there on a cold day; a break from winter; warm and humid air-especially in the winter

c. *The Conservatory as a community resource*

- The wonderful fact that in a small, isolated City we have a Conservatory
- The greenhouses to raise plants to keep the entire city beautiful
- No/low cost
- Accessible evening/weekends
- Overall site (i.e. adjacent to a golf course –making it a peaceful place to walk around/visit a lovely tropical house.
- Great place for children and seniors

2. What is your least favourite part of the Conservatory?

The least favoured parts of the Conservatory fell into three categories:

a. *The state of the buildings*

- No multi-purpose or meeting room
- Lack of space at the entrance and walkways: The front area-the whole door doesn't open, people in wheelchairs have problems
- The overall size and the closed off cactus garden and seasonal display room. Would like to see those spaces utilized again.
- The state of the Conservatory – i.e. maintenance, tired look/state of the building
- Lack of long term maintenance planning that have led to larger issues over time- need a plan and supported funding structure for the future to avoid this happening again.
- Baby change table in the washroom would be very helpful
- Coat rack keeps coming apart

- Not AODA
- Difficult to get around with a walker
- No open areas
- No coffee/tea or food
- No washrooms, poor washrooms, access to washrooms
- Lack of lighting outside

b. *The state of displays, plant collection and access to displays*

- Not much in terms of education signage
- The ramp over the pond is poorly designed, too steep, and sometimes slippery
- Seems the same every time we go. Need an educator position and the person should create new events and educational materials each month
- The pathways are dead ended and narrow
- Closed wings for cacti and seasonal displays
- Ground cover plants lack diversity reducing all plant diversity and great plant opportunities
- Plants are unlabeled
- Lacks research
- Lacks exotic "attraction" plants

c. *Other*

- Missing opportunities for collaboration
- Need to utilize the space around Conservatory
- Area around the Conservatory could be used for vegetables or flowers.
- Limited awareness of the facility

3. Is any part of the plant collection significant to you and why?

In general, parts of the plant collection which have personal significance are those plants that were donated by individuals or were placed as a memorial, and those plants related to milestone lifetime events.

- When my brother died he had huge plants which the Conservatory put into use so that is special to me to see them thrive
- Beautiful birds of paradise and the mature exotic trees
- The tropical plants that I grew up with in Australia
- The lemon tree- I watch them grow...what happens to the lemons?

- The plants that were donated by individuals (e.g. avocado and orange trees)
 - The cactus trees, bananas and fig
 - The green house providing plants for old folk's homes and city parks should remain
 - I love the Buddha tree-fig.
 - Birds of paradise- I knew the gentleman who started them
 - Yes, my father donated the Valencia Orange Tree
 - Plants that have been donation in memorial.
 - Bird of Paradise; my husband and I got engaged at the Conservatory and had our wedding pictures taken there 10 years ago.
4. **What opportunities do you think the City should examine with respect to new uses at the Conservatory and the area outside around the Conservatory?**
- a. ***New uses at the Conservatory***
- multipurpose room: could be used for special events, tea room, education, master gardeners, yoga, meditation, etc.
 - tropical bird, butterfly or bug room
 - Café/Coffee shop on site
 - Plant sale for tropical and surplus plants grown for parks
 - Educational programs for school children
 - Programming for people with disabilities
 - Improve parking lots to make open and more/improved accessible spaces
 - Available space for growing food
 - Seasonal displays inside and outside; e.g. Christmas lights, fall lanterns, etc.
 - Incorporate an ethno-botanical aspect of the rich history of First Nations plants use in this area
 - Research-often, botanical gardens are paired with a research aspect (Kew and Missouri for example); the opportunity exists with Lakehead-there's a sizeable collection of plants kept there as preserved, as well as a curator and small amount of students researching.
 - The herbarium suffers from a few problems as does the Conservatory (lack of knowledge, under-utilization); a partnership would be beneficial to both institutions. Additionally, there are a number of botany courses offered in the Biology Department; including the Conservatory either as a field trip or lab would be great. The Conservatory is so rich with possibility in this respect (Full disclosure: I am the acting curator of the herbarium at Lakehead)

- As the only science related facility in Thunder Bay the Conservatory has the market for all school botany field trips that should be provided as a curriculum based program by charismatic educators for which a partnership with the local school boards would be imperative.
 - Growing endangered species and a seed collection program while sharing with other institutions around the world would connect Thunder Bay with the global efforts to preserve biological diversity and educate the public in the significant role of the botanical Conservatory in safe guarding our future.
- b. ***New uses outside around the Conservatory***
- Outside – extend gardens that are separated from each other, such as zones (boreal, savannah, prairie) that have a sense of privacy/isolation
 - “Nature” themed playground (that is accessible to ALL).
 - Involve Master Gardeners and Roots to Harvest in Community gardens
 - Growing vegetables and education
 - Experimental gardens on the grounds
 - Sculpture garden on grounds
 - Lilac grove and Edible forest
 - Community gardening
 - Area focussed on native plants and trees; medicinal garden
 - Grow veggies for local services (i.e. Shelter House and Food Bank/Soup Kitchen)
 - The use of the surrounding area connecting the greenhouse could be developed with a collection of regional specific plant specimens, First Nations economic garden and Food Security.
 - Northern vegetation and lichens collections.

5. Which of the “Fresh Ideas” do you like and why? Would you use the Conservatory more if these ideas were implemented?

There was general support for the potential future uses or ‘fresh ideas’ put forward for consideration. Most commenters indicated that they thought the fresh ideas would increase their use of the Conservatory and its use by other members of the community and others. Some additional suggestions were made which have been added to the following list:

- ✓ Multi-purpose space which could be used for:
 - Education
 - Rented for special events (meetings, parties, yoga/meditation)
 - Tea room

- Craft or farmer's market
- Pop-up shop by local businesses (coffee, dessert, restaurant market vendors)
- ✓ Creative partnerships with private sector for the following:
 - Catering of tea room
 - Rental of bench space for growing
 - Other services for special events
- ✓ Creative partnerships with the not-for profit sector with respect to:
 - Community gardening with Roots to Harvest
 - Friends of the Conservatory and Master Gardeners for education. Partnership is very important to Thunder Bay Master Gardeners. Each year our group develops a plan for teaching events that will allow us to meet our mandate of sharing horticultural knowledge with the public. If we could come to the Conservatory and make use of a multipurpose space, we could offer many more workshops and demonstrations. This kind of MG/Conservatory partnership strengthens the public presence of both organizations. We are keen to partner in a sustained way and to help with the horticultural teaching aspect of other initiatives at the Conservatory. We are responding to growing interest in urban agriculture and see a role for the Conservatory and Master Gardeners in supporting this local movement.
 - Creating more volunteer opportunities
 - Partnership with Lakehead University Herbarium for research and to improve utilization
- ✓ Building improvements:
 - AODA accessible
 - Coat storage
 - Appropriate washrooms
 - Appropriate space for staff to work with enough space for small workshops
 - Energy efficiency and environmental controls for energy, water and waste; make Conservatory a demonstration for the use of rain harvesting, solar energy, vermiculture, etc.
 - More efficient use of space including outdoor space and parking
- ✓ Better use of outdoor space for:
 - Special events such as seasonal displays
 - Community gardening
 - Demonstration gardens including an 'edible schoolyard' type opportunity
 - Education
 - Northern plants and trees garden; northern medicinal garden

- Edible forest
- Nature themed play space which is fully accessible
- Incorporate an ethno-botanical aspect of it a rich history of First Nations' plants used in this area
- ✓ Additional uses for indoor space:
 - Gift shop
 - Incorporate an ethno-botanical aspect of the rich history of First Nations' plants used in this area
 - My kids would love a "Harry Potter" theme collection of plants brought in.
 - Exhibition space to display insects and have visiting exhibits (e.g. reptiles), a turtle and some fish in the pond.
 - A live bee hive with an acrylic conduit entrance would be popular.
 - Night plants are novel.
 - Butterfly program for hatch and release Monarchs.
 - What about an area set aside for a Culpepper's Garden - a display explaining the relationship between astrology/astronomy and plant medicine in old times. You could have displays co-ordinated with the observatory for explanations of the planetary movements necessary for each plant for it to be medicinally effective. Done right, it would be a terrific attraction for the community and tourists.

Conservatory Needs Assessment Meeting Notes

Stakeholder Group Meeting Attendance: Friends of the Conservatory (Marilyn, Kevin, Sharon and Sandra), Master Gardeners (Ralph and Holly), Economic Development Commission (Doug Murray), Eco Superior (Julia), Roots to Harvest (Cherry) and Barb (Conservatory Staff Member)

Suggestions:

- Having “travelling” plants to keep people coming back and keep up the interest, as well as adding a more interesting online presence
- People want to know how much money we are putting into the Conservatory before they want to “dream big”
- WE NEED MORE SPACE!!! To make people interested/make money
- Partnering with temporary First Nations housing and the treatment centre (Spirit Garden? Meditative Gardening?)
- Big Take Away is that people want a multi-purpose space, educational space, eating space and outdoor space PLUS a new parking lot and outdoor lighting
- Make a Conservatory Boucher and Plant Guide/ update the plant signage (online? Or smart phone app?)
- When applying to Northern Ontario Fund make sure to use key words like tourism and education!
- Could we partner with Delany arena to upgrade to cogenerate electricity and heat
- Everyone wants to see it become fully AOD accessible
- Need to try to get a regional/national reach
- People REALLY REALLY REALLY want the wings open!!!
- Way finding is needed
- Upgrade the greenhouse automation

Opportunities

- Renting bench space to grow food
- Educational Program
- Tourism
- Community Garden Plots
- Commercial Space to increase revenue (create synergy)
- Multi-purpose spaces
- Growing food for the less fortunate
- Use of biomass for power
- Garden and Planting demonstrations
- Growing out own native plants for LIDs
- Having growing space for “public”/private use
- Gift Shop

- Grow pollinator plants to sell to establish bees/pollinators
- Rain Garden Example
- “Bug” or Butterfly room on rotation (partner with businesses)
- Tea Room
- Picnic Space
- More special events (liquor licence)/private function
- Live bug cam for bug hatching
- “Travelling” plants and plants that only bloom every couple of years etc
- Better use of the outdoor space
- Partnering with DJs and Musicians
- Meditation Garden
- Working with First Nations, the elderly and other groups

Other Things to Consider

- Look up the Community Garden Network
- Roots to Harvest would like to collaborate with the Conservatory and help to promote/run new community gardens
 - Expanding their gardens to more people than just at risk youth (and teaching people to grow food in Northern ON)
- People want more chances to volunteers and participate in gardening
- People want more summer programming and later business hours
- A place for seed production (Superior Seed Producers)
- Keeping it local and northern
- Need a trained horticulturalist/more staff in general
- Need someone to apply for grants and need to coordinate more with the rest of the City of Thunder Bay
- Ontario Master Naturalist Program-Run a Herbarium?
- Need to find a way to turn all of these ideas into REVENUE
- Is the demand for programming sustainable?
- Is there any money available to make this happen? Grants? City? Province?
- Link everything to tourism so we can apply for economic development grants
- Host annual festivals to draw people in continually from across the region?
- We need new signage! Better Way finding!!
- Appropriate staffing
- We need to make sure that we don't conflict with the union
- Make better relationships between the stakeholder groups and The City of Thunder Bay
- The uncertainty of the future of the Conservatory and the greenhouses make potential partners leery of contacting/collaborating with us
- People want to the Conservatory to have a plan before they “by into” the Conservatory
- Rent outdoor space to food trucks

- Continual Programing
- Install a smart board and projector in a multi-purpose room
- Catering high tea instead of building a kitchen
- Have a bus route go through/past the Conservatory to enhance visibility and walkability
- Hands on events/tours/programs/demonstrations
- Could science north use the space for tours/educational space for their summer camps?
- Friends or Master Gardeners mentoring people/classrooms?
- Could we put fish in a new pond?

Anneliese's White Board Notes

Responses from the Staff

How it's used

- School Tours
- Weddings
- PR announcements
- Photography (Plants and Events)
- People Meet there for coffee etc
- Gathering Place
- Special Events 1-2 a month
- Residents from homes for the aged
- University
- Slow day has 40 attendance
- Average 100 people per day
- The highest days 459

New Requests

- Meetings
- PR
- Liquor licence
- Baby or Wedding Showers
- Bug Rooms (for Education)
- Tours
- Cactus Room is the most important
- People want to changing displays back (Seasonal Room)
- Food Plants for the Homeless
- LU already rents out greenhouse space...could we do that
- Tea House
- Summer Picnics (people also request to eat inside)

Who Uses It

- Starting to expand
- Mostly the old and young
- Used for Engagements and for DJ'ing by the younger crowd
- Church Groups
- Musicians (
- People who already know about it

Problems

- Not a big enough social media presence
- People do not know about the conservatory
- Advertisements only reaches people who are already involved
- Need better relations with the community

Existing Partnerships

- Hospital
- Schools
- Churches
- Homes for the Aged
- Eco Superior (day camp)

Skills

- Advice on Plants
- Plant Identification
- Gardening Advice (Seminars, Canning, Drying)

Strengths

- Cactus Room

Weaknesses

- Width of paths
- Not AODA
- Bridge not accessible
- Building is old and tired
- Poor lighting Outside –Safety Issue
- Outside landscape is lacking and has too much grass
- Needs a gathering place

- Entrance is old and small and congested
- No place for coats
- Washrooms are not AODA
- Not change tables
- Location at the end of dead end road (confusion due to address and no wayfinding)
- 5 acres of mostly unused space
- Relationships with neighbours
- In a lower income neighbourhood
- No specific programming
- Hours need to be longer
- Parking lot needs replacement
- Shortage of staff
- Not enough staff space
- Not enough growing space
- Water Features Need Replacing
- Drainage System
- Roof Leaks
- No Air Circulation (Hand cranks instead of automation)
- No misting in the grow houses
- Layout is not efficient
- Need new work benches (ie. Need more than one)
- Need a proper sink with a soil trap
- Noise from the boilers
- No room for transplanting
- No sanitary controls
- No environmental controls
- The grounds need fencing/security

Opportunities

- Food
- Education
- Events
- Butterfly/bug Space
- Farmers Market
- Craft Shows
- Potential Partners
 - Horticultural society
 - Tree Canada (edible tree grant etc)

Threats

- Resources
 - Staff
 - Finances
- City is not a business
 - Ability to be collaborative and creative with partnerships
- No payment for access
- Payment for events
- No charge for non-profit

Future Uses

- Farmers Market
- Gazebo- gather place for outdoor events
- Bug space
- Special event space
 - Weddings
 - Educations
 - Tea Room
 - Associate Groups
- Community Garden Plots
- Commercial Garden Plots
- Birders

Responses from the Stakeholders

Strengths

- Versatile – indoor/outdoor
- Free admission
- Oasis in the winter
- Used by many socio economic groups
- Grounds are starting to be integrated with the conservatory
- Unique features – bridge/water feature
- Weddings/special events
- Soil attributes
- Location
- The grounds have 5 acres
- Capacity and potential for educational space
- Used by visitors
- Linked with growing houses – interaction with staff
- Collaboration
- Diversity and maturity of plant collection

- Tons of collection
- Unique to Northern Ontario

Weaknesses

- Way finding
- Online presence
- No reason to come back (people feel like they've seen it all)
- Closed wings
- Lack of integration with surrounding area
- State of the buildings
- No space for events
- No electrical outside and out dated electrical on the inside
- Pathways are too narrow
- No room for a gift shop, plant sale or tea room
- No multipurpose room
 - Need better space for education
- Need guide materials in the conservatory
 - Hand out or online
- Need new signage for plants
- Not energy efficient
- Poor lighting inside and no lighting outside
- Limited/weird parking
- No opportunities for making memorials (memorial plants)
- Not AODA accessible
- Lack of events and festivals

Opportunities

- Demand for greenhouse space
- Permanent edible demonstration garden
- Balance need for plants with other uses
- Commercial partnerships
- Use of biomass for power
- Pollinators
- Naturalization
- Rain garden
- Different types of demonstration gardens
- Butterfly/ bugs (hatching events)
- Special Events indoor and outdoor
- Better transportation and intersection with Chapel's Complex
- Medicinal Garden

- Expanding opportunities for volunteers
- Champignon all things horticultural
- Roots to Harvest interested in collaboration around community gardening
- Community demand for growing space
- Seed production (specific to the North)
- Ontario Master Naturalists Program – Partnership with LU
- Seed Vault
- Charitable status for the COTC?

Weakness

- Need more expertise/ a coordinator to apply for grants and run programs

Threats

- Money
- Poor advertising of Conservatory
- Need more APPROPRIATE staff
- Better relationship with City administration
- Uncertainty around future plans

Fresh Ideas

- Special Events Space (inside and outside)
- Technological outfitting
- Catering Concession
- Better Transit Access
- Edible Schoolyard type program

Conservatory Needs Assessment Open House #1 Report

On May 9, 2017 a public open house was held from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the DaVinci Centre with respect to potential future uses of the City of Thunder Bay Centennial Conservatory. The Conservatory is in need of replacement or reconstruction so the City has taken the opportunity to investigate whether additional uses should be and can be incorporated into the new greenhouse buildings.

Open House Logistics

The Open House was held from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the DaVinci Centre. Staff from the City of Thunder Bay and two consultants, Anneliese Grieve and Sally Harvey, were available to answer questions and discuss the Conservatory with participants. Sixty-one members of the public attended the open house and 41 comment sheets were submitted at the event. The display panels were posted on-line immediately following the open house and a further 73 comment sheets were provided online after the event. A copy of the comment form is provided in Appendix A.

The Open House was advertised by the City of Thunder Bay in local newspapers and through social media.

A series of display panels were provided that summarized the history of the Centennial Conservatory, the issues with the buildings and the ideas for new opportunities that were identified during the workshop. These panels are included in Appendix A.

Summary of Comments Received

A review of the comments received shows that all but one commenter is in favour of making improvements to the Conservatory including adding new uses both inside and outside the Conservatory buildings. The following is a summary of the input received organized by question from the comment form.

1. What is your favourite part of the Conservatory?

The favoured parts of the Conservatory fell into three categories as detailed below. Note that the aspects are simply listed without consideration of the number of comments received.

a. *The features of the Conservatory*

- Waterfalls and pools; bridge
- Cactus display with desert artifacts

- Exotic plants
- Tropical plant collection
- The new garden beds outside (i.e. pollinator bed, vegetable beds)
- Seasonal displays which are now closed

b. *How visiting the Conservatory makes you feel*

- Flowers and Plants-Visuals and the smell of growing things and earth (it effects all the senses)
- Has a lot of nostalgia from when I was young
- Going there on a cold day; a break from winter; warm and humid air-especially in the winter

c. *The Conservatory as a community resource*

- The wonderful fact that in a small, isolated City we have a Conservatory
- The greenhouses to raise plants to keep the entire city beautiful
- No/low cost
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- Overall site (i.e. adjacent to a golf course –making it a peaceful place to walk around/visit a lovely tropical house.
- Great place for children and seniors

2. What is your least favourite part of the Conservatory?

The least favoured parts of the Conservatory fell into three categories:

a. *The state of the buildings*

- No multi-purpose or meeting room
- Lack of space at the entrance and walkways: The front area-the whole door doesn't open, people in wheelchairs have problems
- The overall size and the closed off cactus garden and seasonal display room. Would like to see those spaces utilized again.
- The state of the Conservatory – i.e. maintenance, tired look/state of the building
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b. *The state of displays, plant collection and access to displays*

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c. *Other*

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- Area around the Conservatory could be used for vegetables or flowers.
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4. What opportunities do you think the City should examine with respect to new uses at the Conservatory and the area outside around the Conservatory?

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