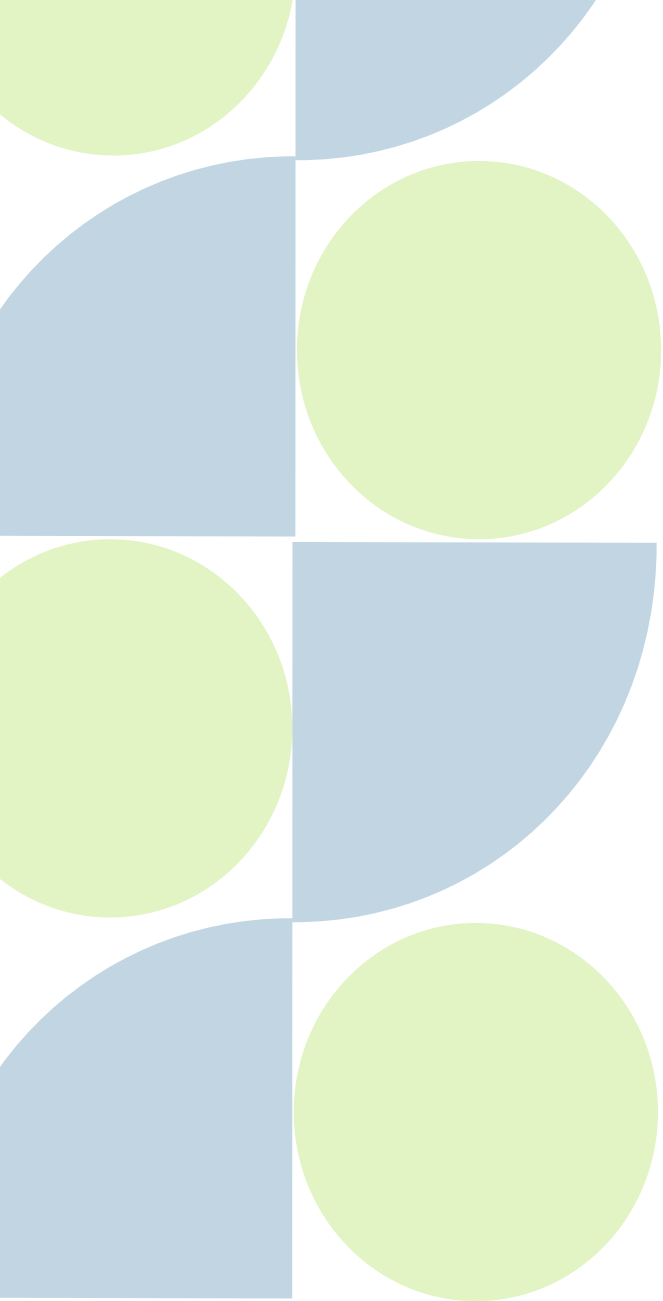




Town of Tillsonburg

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

July 2024



Prepared by thinc design in association with
Mehak, Kelly & Associates and Oraclepoll
Research Ltd. for the Town of Tillsonburg

July 2024



**mehak, kelly
& associates.**



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Town of Tillsonburg acknowledges that the land upon which it is located is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee) and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) peoples, showing respect for the long-standing relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan (herein referred to as 'The Plan') has been prepared to guide the provision of parks, cemetery and recreation services over the next 10 years (2024 - 2034).

The Plan should be viewed as a living document to be updated and adjusted through the annual budget planning process. This Plan provides a road map, identifying needs and priorities, and suggested implementation timing of recommendations, however, they may be advanced, delayed or amended to respond

to changing circumstances, and some initiatives will require additional community consultation to arrive at detailed plans and designs. Council, in consultation with municipal staff, will determine when and how initiatives are actually implemented (e.g., specific type/number of amenities).

The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a multi-phased project that began in Summer 2023, and is planned to conclude in Spring 2024 (see Figure 1-1).

Phases one and two focused on establishing the current context and undertaking extensive community consultation (Figure 1-2).

In Phase three, the team conducted needs assessments using a broad data set including the feedback from Council, staff, residents and community organizations; facility use and program participation data; review of related plans and studies; recreation trends; Town capital plans and budgets; future growth and development; and related/concurrent projects and initiatives.

In the final phase (Phase 4), the draft underwent multiple rounds of revisions with contributions from Council, Committees, and staff. The final draft will be shared with the public, and feedback received will be discussed and incorporated as appropriate before the Plan is finalized.



Figure 1-1: Project timeline



SURVEYS

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Online Survey:

- 384 engaged visitors and completed surveys

Random Household Telephone Survey:

- 300 households

User Group Survey:

- 19 user groups surveyed



INTERVIEWS

Interviews with Municipal Staff & Council:

- 16 interviews conducted

Community Stakeholders Interviews:

- 6 interviews conducted,
- 12 stakeholders participated



OPEN HOUSE

Open House:

- Approximately 40 open house attendees,
- 35 in-person survey responses

Parks, Beautification and Cemeteries Advisory Committee and Recreation & Sports Advisory Committee:

- Group discussion informing the SWOTA analysis

Figure 1-2: Consultation activities and surveyed audiences

1.2 Community Context

1.2.1 Current Demographic Profile

The Town has recently prepared population estimates, and these are the figures we will use in The Plan, including a current (2024) population of 19,503. The median household income in Tillsonburg is \$73,500, which is just slightly less than the median household income in Oxford County (\$76,500) (Canada Census 2021). The immigrant population in Tillsonburg was 12% in 2021, similar to that of the County as a whole, which was 11.3% (Canada Census 2021 Table 1-1).

Table 1-1: Tillsonburg socio-demographic highlights

2024 Population	19,503
Land Area	22.2 km ²
Population Density Per Square Kilometer	913.2
Median Total Income of Households 2020	\$73,500
Immigrant Population (2021)	2,295 (12%)

Source: Canada Census 2021, with the exception of the 2024 population, which was calculated by the Town of Tillsonburg.

1.2.2 Projected Population

Table 1-2 illustrates the current and projected populations for the Town of Tillsonburg and Oxford County from 2024 to 2034. According to these figures, the Town of Tillsonburg is projected to grow by 8,011 residents over the next 10 years, representing a growth of 41% from the current population. Comparatively, the population of Oxford County is projected to grow by 115,535 (12%) during the same period (Phase One Comprehensive Review, Oxford County, 2020, Hemson Consulting Ltd).

Table 1-2: Town of Tillsonburg and Oxford County population projections from 2024-2034

Year	Tillsonburg	Oxford County
2024	19,503	129,272
2029	25,463	137,332
2034	27,514	145,262

Sources: Tillsonburg estimates were provided by the Town of Tillsonburg. Oxford County estimates were calculated by multiplying Ontario’s average household size of 2.6 with the household forecasts from the Phase One Comprehensive Review, Oxford County Report by Hemson Consulting Ltd.

1.2.3 Age Distribution

Figure 1-3 illustrates the population age distribution for the Town of Tillsonburg, Oxford County, and Ontario in 2021. The Town of Tillsonburg has a large concentration of seniors (ages 75+), relative to Oxford County and the Province of Ontario. Additionally, Tillsonburg has a large adult population (20-49 years), which is similarly reflected in Oxford County. Tillsonburg and Oxford County have significantly less youth (15 – 19) than the Ontario average. In all, the data supports the anecdotal observations we heard during consultations that Tillsonburg has received many young families in recent years and has a large senior population.

The age distribution of the County will remain relatively stable over the next 10 years with a slight increase in the proportion over 75 years of age, and slight decreases in the proportion of those aged 50 – 64 (Ontario Population Projections Update, 2019-2049). Population projections by age were not available for Tillsonburg, but it is assumed it will trend similarly.

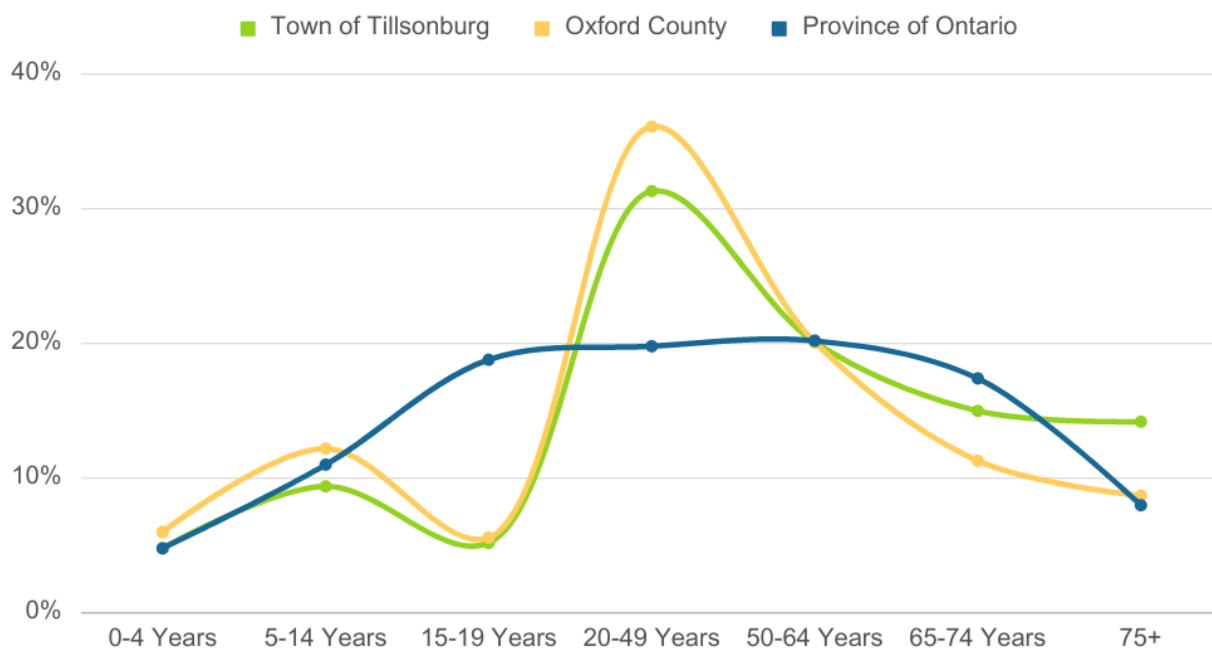


Figure 1-3: Population age distribution in Tillsonburg, Oxford County, and Ontario, 2021
Source: 2021 Canadian Census

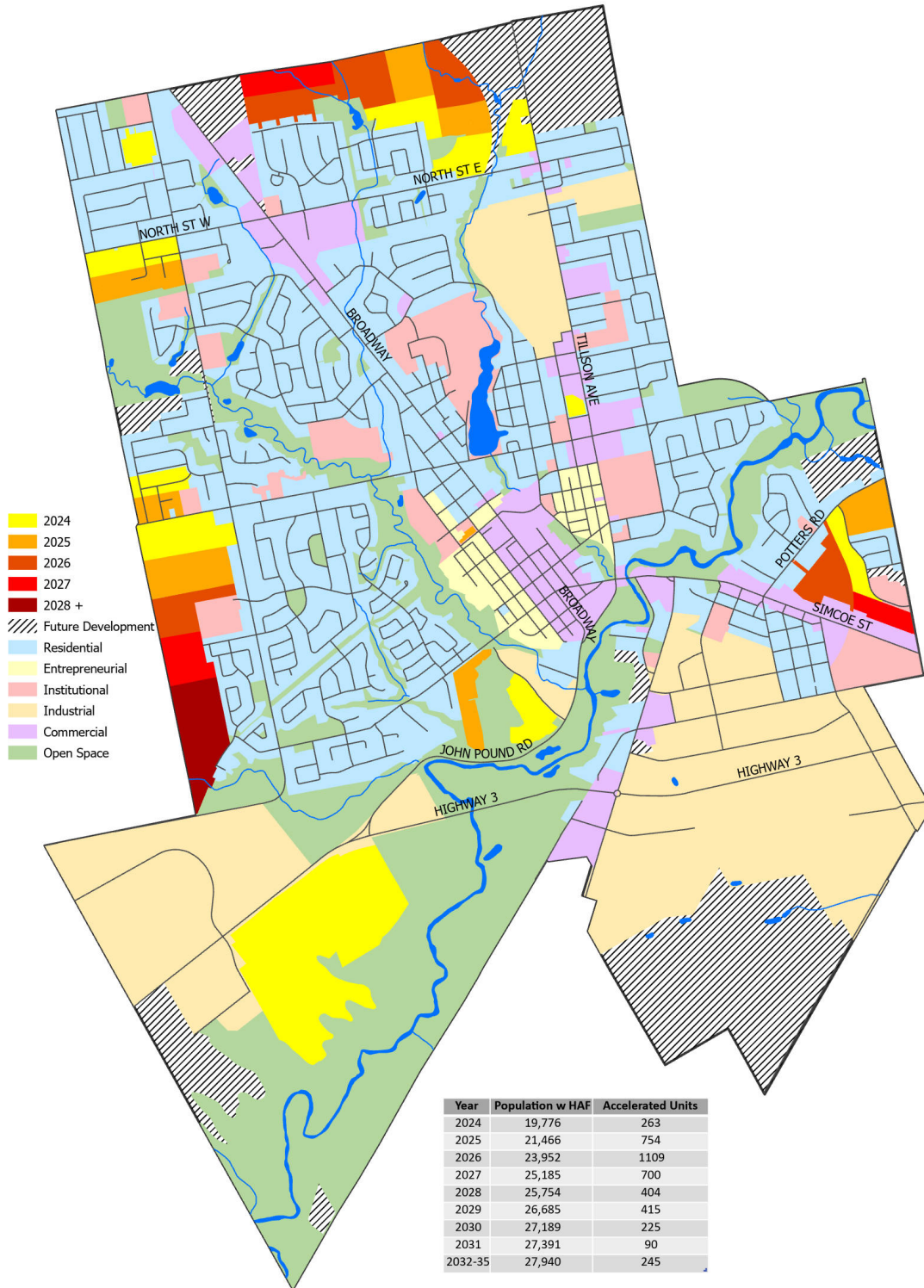
1.2.4 Geographic Context and Growth

Tillsonburg is a geographically small town (22 square kilometers), with a population density of 913.2 people per square kilometer, surrounded by rural municipalities (Figure 1-4). The nearest population centre to Tillsonburg is Ingersoll, 25 minutes to the north. To the south are rural municipalities, and as such many people from these areas likely come to Tillsonburg for services.

The Town has varied land uses, with large areas dedicated to residential and industrial (particularly at the south end of Town). It also has a fairly well developed green space system, connected by waterways and trails. Figure 1-5 illustrates these land uses, along with areas expected to see the most residential growth in the coming years, all of which are on the periphery of the Town's border.



Figure 1-4: Tillsonburg and surrounding areas



TITLE: **Land Use Analysis**

0 0.5 1 2 Kilometers

N

Figure 1-5: Tillsonburg land use and projected residential growth areas (Town of Tillsonburg, 2023)

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2.0 PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

2.1 Introduction & Assessment Background

Balancing the supply and demand of recreation programs, activities and events is a key contributor to supporting the long-term health, well-being, and quality of life for all communities. Among all age groups, programs and events can be effective tools that help to foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

An adaptive and responsive approach to developing recreation programs that reflect the interests and needs of communities can generate more participation locally, and contribute to the increased use of existing assets.



The public engagement phase of this project revealed important insight into the current supply and availability of programs, program use patterns, and new program demands and trends. The current supply of Town-led recreation programs and events includes a range of sports, arts, community, education and training programs. However, among these program types, the Town of Tillsonburg primarily offers sports-based and active programs. These programs are primarily facilitated through the Tillsonburg Community Centre, which acts as a key community hub for residents. A sample of programs offered by the Town is listed in Table 2-1.

Local community non-profits, associations and clubs are also key contributors to the supply of programs and events in the Town of Tillsonburg. Table 2-2 provides a sample of programs and events provided by local organizations.

The following section provides an overview of what we heard during the public consultation process in relation to recreation programs and events. Detailed results from the consultation process conducted during Phase 2 of this project are further described in the Consultation Summary Report.

Table 2-1: Sample of programs provided by the Town of Tillsonburg

Type of Program	Sample of Programs Provided	Sample of Facilities Used
Camps & PA Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth/senior camp winter/summer camps basketball/triathlon camp museum 	Lions Den, Lions Auditorium
Water Fitness & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aquafit swimmer 1-9 lane swim 	Lake Lisgar Water Park, Tillsonburg Community Centre Pool
Sports and Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pickleball tennis health club 	Health Club, Lions Auditorium
Speciality Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginner cooking construction coding 	Lions Den, Marwood Lounge

Table 2-2: Sample of programs provided by local organizations

Type of Program	Sample of Programs Provided	Sample of Facilities Used
Tillsonburg Minor Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiation program (IP), U9, U11, U13, U 15, U18, tournaments 	Colin Campbell Community Rink, Memorial Rink
Tillsonburg Soccer Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth house league Friday night adult recreation league 	Tillsonburg Soccer Park
Tillsonburg Seniors Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> zumba arts and crafts bingo 	Tillsonburg Senior Centre
Tillsonburg Station Arts Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beginner pottery black background drawing 	Station Arts Centre

2.1.1 What We Heard

Random Telephone Resident Survey

According to the results of the random telephone resident survey, 79% (or 238 residents) indicated that they do not think there are additional recreation programs and activities needed in Tillsonburg. However, of those who do think that additional recreation programs and activities (21% or 62 respondents) are needed, respondents identified the following sport and non-active related programs of interest:

- Group fitness classes (29%)
- Outdoor court sports (26%)
- Trail activities (24%)
- Performing Arts (18%)
- Camps (16%)
- After School Programs (16%)

As highlighted in Table 2-3, survey respondents expressed interest in programs and activities for multiple age groups. For example, among all age groups respondents indicated interest in both active sport and non-sport related recreation activities for youth ages 5-12 years (15%), teens 13-19 years (13%). However, interest in non-sport recreation activities were higher among adults and seniors ages 35+.

Finally, when asked what factors prevent respondents from participating in recreation programs/activities, 45% of respondents indicated “there is nothing that prevents us from participating”.

Table 2-3: Interest in programs and activities by age group

	Active Sport/ Fitness	Non-Sport Recreation	Both
0-4 Years	3%	3%	5%
5-12 Years	11%	6%	15%
13-19 Years	13%	8%	13%
20-34 Years	3%	3%	8%
35-54 Years	5%	11%	7%
55-64 Years	5%	18%	5%
65-74 Years	1%	11%	3%
75 Years +	-	10%	-

Online Resident Survey

Respondents to the online survey are self-selected, and may include responses from individuals with a range of interests in parks and recreation in the Town of Tillsonburg. Online survey respondents (384 responses) were first asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with all service areas (parks/trails, facilities, and programs). A majority of respondents indicated that they feel neutral among all service areas. However, when comparing all three service areas, the availability of programs, activities and events ranked second (30.2% or 116 respondents). Additionally, when asked what their top priorities are for improvements and expansion among all three service areas, respondents indicated the least interest in programs, activities and events (19.53% or 75 respondents).

Finally, when asked to indicate how residents prefer to participate in recreation, the top four responses included: using trails (67.91%), Self-directed sports/physical activity (e.g. cycling, running/walking, swimming, etc.) (65.8%), organized sports (51.9%), and social activities (41.4%).

User Group Survey & Stakeholder Interviews

Facility and park user groups that offer programs and events in the Town of Tillsonburg were also invited to participate in a survey to better understand their programming focus, facility needs, and anticipated future growth. A total of 19 user groups responded to the survey,

Only 26.3% (or 5 user groups) indicated that they primarily serve all age groups/families. However, more than half (57.9% or 11 respondents) indicated that they primarily serve teens ages 13-19 years, followed by adults 45-54 (47.3% or 9 user groups). Among all user groups, the least served age groups are children ages 0-4 years (26.3% or 2 user groups), and adults ages 75+ (21.0% or 4 user groups) (see Table 2-4).

Among the 19 respondents, the most common types of programs and activities that user groups offer include: clubs/social (29% or 5 respondents), hockey (29% or 5 respondents), and fitness/wellness programs (25% or 4 respondents). The least common type of program offered by user groups include softball (5.9% or 1 respondent), seniors programs (5.9% or

1 respondent), tennis/pickleball (5.9% or 1 respondent), figure skating (5.9% or 1 respondent), and trail programs (5.9% or 1 respondent). Programs not offered by any user groups include ball hockey, performing arts, volleyball/badminton. Other programs offered by user groups also include ringette, learn to skate, blood donation events, horticultural and community gardens.

Among sixteen respondents, twelve user groups identified that they have been experiencing growth in levels of program participation/members or attendance at their events. When asked to identify the anticipated growth levels of their groups participation or event attendance in the next 5-10 years: 50% (5 respondents) of user groups anticipate growth of between 5.1%-10%; 20% (2 respondents) of user groups anticipate a growth of between

Table 2-4: Age groups supported by user group programs and events

	%
All Age Groups/Families	26.3%
Children 0-4 Years	10.5%
Children 5-12 Years	36.8%
Teens 13-19 Years	57.8%
Young Adults 20-34 Years	36.8%
Adults 35-44 Years	36.8%
Adults 45-54 Years	47.3%
Adults 55-64 Years	36.8%
Adults 65-74 Years	36.8%
Adults 75+	21.0%

5.1%-20%; and 30% (3 respondents) of user groups anticipate a growth of over 25%. When asked to indicate the key factors contributing to stable or changing participation/attendance levels over the next 5 years, respondents indicated:

- “increasing interest in our program/ event focus”
- “population growth in the age groups we serve”
- “our programs are socially interactive/ fun”

Stakeholders were also invited to participate in interviews to further contribute feedback to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This forum encouraged attendees to expand on their feedback included in the user group surveys and discuss future opportunities. A range of feedback relating to programs and events was expressed, including:

- Limited parking identified as a challenge to running events, especially when different sports are happening in the same time and vicinity
- Teenager to 25 years old age groups identified as challenging demographics to engage in programs and activities
- Basketball programs identified as a gap in current program offerings
- Growing interest in tech programs, could be facilitated by the Library

- Limited ice space and indoor recreation space identified as a primary challenge for supporting growth active/ sport and non-sport related recreation
- Limited recreation and sports-related opportunities for adults 20-30 years old
- Some interest in growing more passive, multi-generational programs and activities for the Tillsonburg community

Town Council and Staff Interviews

Interviews with Town Council and staff were also conducted to provide further depth on current and future delivery of Tillsonburg’s programs and event offerings. A number of overarching programming goals were identified, and include providing more programs and events for families encouraging multi-generational interaction, continuing to foster positive and productive relationships with community organizations and businesses that contribute to parks and recreation, and advancing equitable and inclusive programming for persons with disabilities and seniors.

A series of challenges impacting programming in Tillsonburg were also identified, including:

- Challenges with availability of program instructors (hiring and retaining trained staff, e.g. lifeguards, camp counsellors) which directly impacts the ability to increase programming capacity

- Challenges with maintaining and keeping equipment in working condition
- Dependence on school gymnasiums puts programs at potential risk if availability changes/is reduced

Open House

The Tillsonburg community were also invited to participate in a community open house to learn more about the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Attendees were encouraged to expand on their interests and feedback relating to the programs and events in the Town. Additional insights from the open house highlighted:

- Strong interest in increasing program capacity to accommodate high demand (especially for youth programs like camps)
- Interest in making programs available in early evening for adult programs and weekend times for kids and preschool programs
- Recognition of the role programs and events have in supporting and building healthy communities. Interest in more opportunities for community building and engaging vulnerable communities (e.g. seniors)

2.2 Program Assessments and Recommendations

Within the context of Tillsonburg, the public consultation process revealed that there is a growing demand for increased capacity in existing programs, modest demand for expanded recreation opportunities, desire for more opportunities for multi-generational programs and events, and interest in using existing natural assets (e.g. trails and Lake Lisgar) for recreation activities.

Moreover, as detailed in Section 1.0, the population of Tillsonburg is projected to increase by 41% (or 8,011 residents) in the next ten-year period. In consideration of this, it is important for the Town of Tillsonburg to not only enhance existing program offerings, but to also develop a strategic approach to program planning that works to fill service gaps and prepares for future program growth and expansion.

2.2.1 General Program Recommendations

Program Planning: Program Tracking and Evaluation

As program interests and trends change, engaging in a cyclical program planning process can be a valuable strategy to help guide future program development and growth. The primary goal of planning, monitoring and evaluating programs is to contribute to informed decision-making that works to distinguish between community 'needs' and 'wants', respond to 'needs' in the most judicious way, and to monitor the efficacy of the response. Program

planning can also help to understand residents' areas of interest, identify local partners, offer an approach to 'piloting' new programs, understand the needs associated with offering programs (e.g., equipment, specialty program facilitators), tracking participation rates, and evaluating participant feedback.

In recent years, the Town of Tillsonburg has issued the Tillsonburg Recreation Survey (2022) which sought to collect general feedback relating to program and event offerings, general community recreation interests, and accessibility of event and program information. In addition to this, the Town should consider issuing and collecting program evaluations from participants after programs to further identify potential improvements for specific programs/activities. Ongoing service monitoring and evaluation will inform planning to address needs as they evolve and to gauge the success of programs, events, and services after-the-fact. Program and event participation information should be collected and tracked over time. As appropriate to the intended outcomes of individual programs/events, variables such as registration, attendance, program completion, age(s) of participants and location of residence, resident/non-resident participants, etc., should be documented and used for planning/designing services and to identify trends over time.

Parks and Recreation Ontario’s Manual entitled Measuring Customer Value and Satisfaction for Parks and Recreation is a practical guide to supporting service evaluation work. As noted in the Manual, it is “intended to enable providers of parks and recreation to easily and consistently assess customer value and related issues. [It] includes a common set of core questions and an enhanced set of questions that can be used by providers to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and services, as well as advice on approaches to administering surveys” (p. 1). The manual also includes a draft program survey that can be adapted and modified.

Program evaluations can also help the Town to better understand accessibility (in terms of facilities, programs, equipment etc.) and equipment needs (quantity and state of repair, etc.). This will help to ensure that those interested in participating in recreation programs/activities are not denied participation due to broken or damaged equipment, especially for popular programs such as aquafit programs. Effective program evaluation can also help to inform the Town Strategic Asset Management Policy, which should include a comprehensive inventory of all equipment, condition of assets, ownership of assets (user group owned vs. Town owned), and recommended maintenance schedule.

The ability to evaluate progress will require annual targets that can be measured. For example, a program objective for an upcoming budget year may be to introduce four new programs in areas of particular

interest emerging from the Master Plan’s consultation. As is the case now, each new program is essentially a pilot designed to optimize participation and should be evaluated upon completion to determine future options to continue - with any required adjustments - or discontinue. The results of each year’s programming would provide the basis for reporting on outcomes and planning for the upcoming year.

Recommendations

- PE 1. Continue to conduct recreation program evaluation procedures to document and track participant feedback. Continue to widely promote survey to the community through various channels and broaden accessibility of survey for diverse audiences.
- PE 2. Following the Town’s Strategic Asset Management Policy, the Town should develop a strategy to track equipment used for programs in order to clarify equipment ownership, condition, repair needs, and maintenance schedule.

Short Duration Programming

Short-duration programming (e.g., workshops, lesson series) is an effective way to help ensure resources are dedicated to activities where there is interest, uptake, and success in the Town. This model of programming allows community members to explore different topics; for some, it could be the first step to engaging in an activity that captures their interest. It is ideal for learning new skills and is appealing to many adults, as an ongoing commitment is not required upfront. In addition, this approach makes use of local knowledge and skills and is an opportunity for local artists, artisans, teachers, and experts to increase their exposure, share their knowledge, build awareness of their skills, and serve a broader market. By testing out new programs using a “try it” model, the Town can also gauge community interests in particular areas before dedicating greater resources to long-term programming. Moreover, this model can be used to better understand the optimal times to offer programming outside of conventional operating hours.

If a short-duration program is successful and participants want to engage further, the Town can then explore opportunities for extending the program offered in the longer-term. For example, a short term food based program that utilizes the kitchen located in the Tillsonburg Community Centre can support all-ages and intergenerational non-sport related program interests. These small-scale workshops/activity series can be led by teachers, leaders, and artists in the community (e.g., music lessons,

painting classes, drama/improv group) and/or in partnership with other community organizations.

Key considerations to determine if a program should be provided include community interest (i.e., how many people participated or indicated a desire to participate in that program topic and time of day) and capacity (e.g., availability and expertise of instructors, availability of Town facilities). Some examples of programs that could fit well within this model as shared by residents through the public consultation process include tie dye programs and DIY canning and food preservation.

Recommendation

- PE 3. Continue to implement pilot programs to assess long-term program interests, and explore alternative programming models (e.g. short-duration) programming). Programs can include both active and non-sports related programs (e.g. culinary courses, adult crafting, photography, youth coding, adult trail walking groups).





Accessible and Adapted Programs

While certain aspects of accessibility are legislated and are often associated with facility design consideration, opportunities to exceed minimum standards should be pursued wherever feasible. The goal of advocating and legislating measures to ensure accessibility and inclusion is to make it the social norm by proactively integrating accessibility considerations in all aspects of parks and recreation services, which includes how programs and events are offered to participants. Supporting accessibility means:

“Removing the barriers faced by individuals with a variety of disabilities (including, but not limited to: physical, sensory, cognitive, learning, mental health) and the various barriers (including attitudinal and systemic) that impede an individual’s ability to participate in social, cultural, political, and economic life. Disabilities can be temporary or permanent. As we age our abilities change and therefore an accessible society is one designed to include everybody; both people with disabilities and people who self identify as non-disabled.”¹⁰

10 City for All Women Initiative. (2015). Advancing Equity and Inclusion. A Guide for Municipalities. Ottawa. p. 17.

Due to the cyclical nature of program planning, there are more opportunities to preemptively prioritize the accessibility, inclusivity, and adaptive nature of programs.

Additionally, as the Town of Tillsonburg continues to grow and welcome diverse communities, all community members of racial, ethnic backgrounds, and faiths should be acknowledged and made to feel welcome in/at programs and events. The Town can do this by, for example, trying to ensure that advertising and communications reaches these groups, advertising features a diversity of people that, Town recreation staff reflects the diversity of the community, and through staff training.

Volunteer Management: Recruitment, Retention & Recognition

The public consultation process highlighted the strong culture of volunteerism in Tillsonburg, which is valued throughout the community. Although some groups reported having great success enlisting volunteers, others have reported having difficulty engaging volunteers. Encouraging and maintaining this culture should be a priority within the community, as similar trends are not reflected in other cities across Canada. In fact, many communities have experienced a decline in volunteerism, especially since the impact of COVID-19. Although the causes of this decline are multifaceted, developing strategic approaches to combat this decline is beneficial for organizations of any size and scale. Volunteer management strategies can help to support a more

reciprocal relationship between prospective volunteer bases and organizations to build a culture of volunteerism.

Volunteer management strategies can be used as tools to help formalize volunteer engagement practices that may be traditionally more informal. As described by the Citizen Information Board (based in the United Kingdom)¹¹, sustainable and successful volunteer management strategies also require the organization (including municipalities) to reflect on key questions that inform and influence the volunteer's experience.

For example, questions can include:

- “Why [do] you have volunteers?”
- What is their role?
- What limits, if any, are there to the range of activities volunteers get involved in?
- What can you offer volunteers?”¹²

Reflecting on these key components will also support a more strategic approach to recruiting and retaining volunteers. Attracting volunteers requires organizations to consider how they are perceived by the public and how the organization can highlight the positive aspects of

11 Managing Volunteers: A Good Practice Guide. Citizen Information Board, 2008. p. 19 https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf

12 https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf p. 19



volunteering with them.¹³ For example, by understanding what motivates volunteers, organizations may strategically offer some benefits (e.g., certifications, education credits, skills development) that may appeal to a wider audience. Volunteer recruitment campaigns can also occur on an ongoing or per project basis.

Some strategies noted by the Citizen Information Board include:

- “Word of mouth - let the team and board know what opportunities are available
- Print eye catching leaflets and posters
- Attend promotional events
- Have a stand in the local shopping centre or library
- Invite people to an information meeting
- Give talks to target groups”¹⁴

A key aspect of retaining volunteers also includes ensuring that volunteers feel supported. Developing a system in which volunteers can have a seamless experience onboarding and beginning their role, performing their role, providing feedback on their experience, and acknowledgment of their work is essential. The Citizen Information Board highlights that the resources provided to volunteers will largely

¹³ https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf p.35

¹⁴ https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf p.36

vary by each volunteer¹⁵, and that “support and supervision are about enabling the volunteers to do the job to the best of their ability and to the satisfaction of the organization. It’s also about saying thanks.”

This can involve:

- “Agree[ing] to meet the volunteer shortly after they start volunteering to review how things are going. Exchange feedback and clarify what, if any, issues arise
- Decide what support and supervision each role or volunteer requires
- Prepare properly by finding out what the volunteer has been doing, acknowledge specific work that they have done and get feedback on the training they attended, and
- Have an open door policy for volunteers to talk to you at other times”¹⁶

Additionally, acknowledging the contributions of volunteers should be encouraged. This allows for volunteers to feel appreciated for their work and can help to establish important foundations for recurring volunteer participation. Methods can range from holding volunteer appreciation events, taking action on

volunteer ideas and engaging volunteers in long range events or programs where interest is expressed.

Volunteer Management Cycle

The Citizen Information Board (UK) provides a useful overview of the key aspects of volunteer recruitment, management, policies, and procedures, and offers a useful chart diagram¹⁷ (Figure 2-1) illustrating a volunteer management cycle that is broadly relevant to various organizations’ structure or size.

15 https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf p.51

16 https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf p. 52

17 https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf p. 13



Figure 2-1: Diagram of a volunteer management cycle¹⁰

¹⁰ https://www.citizensinformationboard.ie/downloads/training/Managing_Volunteers_08.pdf, p 13

Reaching New Residents

Currently, the Town issues a Recreation Guide seasonally which compiles information on recreation programs, activities, classes and community events. In addition to listing the available programs and events, the guide details the available options for financial assistance to access recreation programs, space rental information, and customer service information. As the Tillsonburg community continues to grow over the next ten years, the Town should work to develop a strategy to grow awareness of these opportunities available for newer residents.

Recommendation

PE 4. Explore opportunities to increase participation and engagement for new residents through the volunteer recruitment strategy. Approaches can include creating a database of volunteer opportunities that organizations can access and update as opportunities arise.

2.2.2 Age Specific Program Needs

Preschool & Toddlers

There is a gap in the available recreation programs and activities in the Town of Tillsonburg for preschool age children (up to age 5). The public consultation process indicated that young children (ages 0-4 years) are not well served by programs offered by local user groups. Programs offered by local organizations are limited to the Oxford County EarlyOn Program, childcare services provided by the YMCA at St. Joseph's Catholic School, and some drop-in programs provided by the Oxford County Library (Tillsonburg branch). The programs delivered by the Town of Tillsonburg for this age groups are also limited to active learn and swimming programs.

For young children in this age demographic, the public consultation process identified interest in both active/sport fitness and non-sport recreation programs. The Town of Tillsonburg can (on its own and in partnership with other providers such as Tillsonburg Library) diversify program offerings to include parent and child social activities, and early literacy programs.

The Town should seek to offer more preschool programs at both indoor and outdoor locations. With the growing demand for facility use at the Tillsonburg Community Centre, utilizing outdoor locations during appropriate seasons can help to address indoor facilities limitations (see Literacy in the Park case study below). However, providing some indoor programming space for preschool children is still needed. The Town does not currently

have any space dedicated for this age group at the Tillsonburg Community Centre, which functions as a key community hub. Space designed for use for preschool and toddler programs and drop-ins can include, for example, preschool-sized tables and chairs, carpeted areas, craft area, kitchenette (or at minimum a sink for clean-up and hand washing), book and toy storage. Any space developed should be a collaborative effort between preschool program providers in order to maximize efficiency and use of the space.

Recommendations

PE 5. Assess opportunities for the Town to expand preschool and toddler programs (e.g. parent and child social activities, and early literacy programs) in current indoor and outdoor facilities.



LITERACY IN THE PARK

Many municipalities and libraries have begun offering programming outdoors at public parks. Park environments are suitable for a variety of literacy-based programs including circle time and story time for preschool and children, and book clubs, writing clubs, speaker series and crafting clubs for adults

and seniors. Participants in these programs receive the double benefit of the program plus time spent outdoors, and the community as a whole benefits from the increased vibrancy of public spaces, and increased awareness that these programs exist.

Children and Youth

Children and Youth have access to a range of programs offered by the Town of Tillsonburg and other local user groups. The public consultation process highlighted a significant interest in active/sport fitness and non-sport recreation activities among youth aged 5-12 years and 13-19 years old. However, it's crucial to acknowledge that 79% of respondents did not perceive a need for additional recreation programs in Tillsonburg. In consideration of this, the Town should explore how programs and activities for this age group can be enhanced to support a growing youth population by growing staff levels to facilitate youth programs that experience high demand and have reached capacity such as summer camps and swimming programs (for more information regarding staff retention, see section 7.0 Service Delivery). Despite staff level challenges, there is an opportunity to explore enhancements to existing programs, particularly those experiencing high demand.

Programming for youth presents challenges due to evolving interests and increased demands from school, part-time jobs, and socializing with friends. Many communities struggle with the parallel issues of apparent deficit in meaningful leisure time pursuits for teens, and not being able to 'hit' on solutions that will excite and attract high levels of participation by this age group. To address this, establishing a youth-oriented drop-in space, especially during winter months, was suggested based on survey

feedback. Collaboration with the youth-focused group 'VIBE' can provide valuable insights into youth interests and contribute to the planning of a dedicated space.

Considering the dynamic interests of youth, an equipment lending initiative is proposed, allowing for self-directed recreation opportunities (e.g., football, basketball, frisbee). Collaborating with Oxford County Library for this initiative aligns with their community hub role and enhances informal programming. Such initiatives also open avenues for local organizations to sponsor and contribute to the availability of recreational equipment.

A strong interest for after school programs was also expressed through the public consultation process. Among the random household telephone survey respondents who were asked to indicate what types of new/expanded non-sport programming or recreation opportunities would be of interest for their household, 'after school programs' were identified among the top three (16%). Although the Town of Tillsonburg offers seasonal camps for youth and children, this program alone does not support the needs of the community throughout the remaining school year. Over the term of this Plan, the Town of Tillsonburg should work towards developing and initiating after school activities for this age cohort. However, some challenges that already impact the Town's capacity to provide and facilitate more programs such as funding and staff retention may impact the ability to provide these programs. To

address these challenges, the Town should continue to research and identify diverse funding opportunities currently available to support the development of after school programs. For example, the Province of Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport [Ontario's After School Program \(ASP\)](#) supports municipalities, non-profits, and First Nations communities with funding to offer safe, enjoyable and affordable after school programs to youth across Ontario. According to the ministry, the program is delivered by over 80 organizations and supports over 13,000 children and youth from kindergarten to grade 12. The program reached \$14.6 million in funding for the ASP for the 2023-2024 school year.

Recommendations

- PE 6. Explore development of a youth leisure space.
- PE 7. Explore Oxford County Library (Tillsonburg branch) partnership for equipment lending initiatives. Consider sponsorship opportunities with service clubs.



Adults and Seniors

Municipal parks and recreation services have long been designed with children, youth, and seniors in mind. However, a noticeable trend has emerged across Ontario, with adults expressing an increased desire for municipal recreation services, spurred by a greater awareness of the health benefits of physical activity, economic considerations, and advancements in service delivery.

In Tillsonburg, the demographic significance of the senior population necessitates careful consideration in the planning of recreational programs. Survey findings highlight a strong interest in non-sporting recreational activities among adults aged 35-54 (11%), and seniors aged 55-64 (18%) and 65-74 (11%). To cater to these interests effectively, program planning must take into account various key factors. Evening program schedules may pose difficulties for adults with young children, pointing to the need for flexible programming times. Additionally, ensuring that programs are accessible to individuals with different mobility and cognitive abilities is crucial for inclusivity. Furthermore, the reluctance of some seniors to engage with complex technology means that traditional methods of program registration and information dissemination, such as in-person sign-ups and mail-outs, remain essential.

In response to these dynamics, it is advisable for Tillsonburg to engage in regular community feedback initiatives, conducted annually or bi-annually, to better understand and meet the recreational interests of its adult and senior populations. This could involve direct surveys, public forums, or focus groups designed to capture the community's evolving interests. Concurrently, the town should perform a thorough review of the programs currently available within the community, offered by various local entities, to identify any overlaps or gaps in services. This dual approach of community engagement and service inventory will ensure that Tillsonburg's recreational offerings are both responsive to community needs and efficiently coordinated, thereby enhancing the overall quality and accessibility of municipal recreation services for adults and seniors.

Recommendation

PE 8. To better align with the evolving interests of adults and seniors in Tillsonburg, the Town should conduct annual or bi-annual community feedback sessions to tailor recreational programs to community interests, and perform an inventory of existing local programs to identify and fill gaps without duplicating services.

2.2.3 Outdoor Recreation

The natural features throughout the Town of Tillsonburg are widely acknowledged and appreciated by the community as valuable assets for recreation. Outdoor programs can provide a critical benefit to the health and well-being of people of all ages, particularly children and teens. With the increased awareness of the value of outdoor recreation opportunities in the post COVID-19 period, coupled with a growing awareness and concern about climate change, outdoor recreation programs are an essential feature of a holistic approach to program development.

While there is nothing preventing people from being active outside on their own, there may be opportunities for the Town to increase participation in both structured and unstructured outdoor activities. For example, taking indoor programs (e.g. yoga, group fitness, and educational workshop) outdoors during the late spring, summer and early fall can both activate park spaces and benefit participants. The following section discusses the programmatic opportunities for trail-based, and water-based programs.

Trail-Based Activities

Trail-based activities offer a unique blend of affordable, self-guided, and informal recreational opportunities that align well with the preferences expressed by residents of Tillsonburg. The feedback gathered through the online resident survey highlighted a significant interest in utilizing trails and engaging in self-directed

sports and physical activities, placing these options prominently among preferred recreational activities. Additionally, trail-related recreation opportunities were also notably favored in the findings of a random household survey. However, despite this, only 17% of user groups participating in the user group survey reported incorporating trails into their programs, events, or activities.

Given this gap between interest and actual usage, the Town of Tillsonburg should consider the expansion of trail-centric programs, activities, and initiatives. The 2022 Tillsonburg Recreation Survey shed light on several trail-based programs that garnered interest from respondents, such as Nordic pole walking, outdoor hiking groups, and educational ventures into the realms of plant identification, foraging, and conservation ecology. This demonstrated interest in trail activities presents a variety of avenues for support, each adaptable to specific programs, activities, and the resources available.

Strategies for bolstering trail activities could include encouraging local volunteer groups to oversee specific programs, forming partnerships with existing providers to deliver introductory sessions on the town's behalf, or directly hiring skilled instructors to impart knowledge in areas like foraging or outdoor survival techniques.

Furthermore, trail-based activities can serve as a conduit for exploring local heritage, arts and culture, early childhood education, community stewardship, and an

understanding of local ecology through the lens of outdoor recreation. Initiatives such as public art projects, which can be facilitated in collaboration with local schools, historical societies, and artists, can significantly heighten community engagement with trails, as evidenced by projects like the Keddy Access Trail Public Art Project described below. The Town of Tillsonburg is positioned to delve into the development of trail programs through strategic partnerships with local entities such as the Tillsonburg Seniors Centre, the Station Arts Centre, the Tillsonburg Horticultural Society, and Glendale High School, thereby enriching the community's recreational landscape and fostering a deeper connection with the natural environment.

Recommendation

PE 9. Explore opportunities to expand trail-based recreation programs and activities (e.g. local heritage plaques, arts and culture, early childhood education, community stewardship and leadership, and local ecology focused programs) in collaboration with local organizations (e.g. Tillsonburg Historical Society, Long Point Region Conservation Authority.)





Figure 2-2: Image of artist Janet Macpherson painting Keddy Access Trail ¹⁰

CASE STUDY: KEDDY ACCESS TRAIL PUBLIC ART PROJECT, HAMILTON ON

"The City of Hamilton has commissioned a series of mural projects for barrier walls along the Keddy Access Trail and the Jolley Cut Underpass. A request for Expressions of Interest was released in June 2022 and from the 122 submissions received, a citizen advisory committee selected six (6) artists/collectives from Hamilton, Toronto, and Winnipeg to design and paint the murals in August 2022.

Projection Goals and Themes

Murals reflect one or more aspects of the project goal determined by the Keddy Trail Street Art Advisory Committee.

"The Keddy Trail Street Art Project aims to create a sense of connection with residents about the idea of Hamilton as a Livable City. The Keddy Trail serves as a thread linking elements of shared civic space, a literal line cutting through the tension of a growing city accessed by a broad range of citizens. The Keddy Trail Street Art Project commissions will address the sense of balance between the natural environment, cycling, pedestrian and vehicular infrastructure, the upper and lower city, diverse communities and people, on our journey to becoming a Livable City."

- Keddy Trail Street Art Advisory Committee"

¹⁰ https://www.thespec.com/photos/bringing-art-to-keddy-access-trail/article_b01978da-9ed7-57fd-b6dd-a5686190631e.html?

Water-Based Activities

Lake Lisgar is a prominent feature in the Town of Tillsonburg. The lake's large footprint borders Memorial Park, the Lake Lisgar Water Park, and the Gibson House which features an elevated viewing platform for visitors to passively enjoy. Currently, Lake Lisgar is used for fishing and paddling and does not authorize motorized vehicles. The Town should encourage the advancement and development of water-based activities (e.g. canoeing, kayaking, standup paddle boarding, water safety) at Lake Lisgar to increase opportunities for water-based recreation.

One way of approaching this could be by offering paddle craft rentals to provide more recreation opportunities on the Lake. Concerns about increased use leading to increased sedimentation in the lake can be addressed in a number of ways: limiting the number of craft available (just 2 or 3 craft is enough to start), limiting the time frame of availability, and limiting the area accessible to paddlers, or any combination of these. There are a number of options for how to approach providing rentals. An EOI can be released seeking private parties to operate the rentals; the Town could provide the rentals directly (purchasing equipment and hiring a summer student); or the Town can provide lockers (see Figure 2-3) that would not require staffing.

The Town should start with a small number of rentals and monitor for any negative effects on the lake. Given this approach, the

lockers are probably the best way to start, as revenues from the rentals likely would not be enough for a business to be interested, or for the Town to pay staff to operate it. With the lockers, revenues from the rentals can be used for maintenance of the equipment, and any surplus could be donated to the Lake Lisgar Revitalization Committee for Lake ecosystem protection efforts and water quality monitoring.

Figure 2-3: iPaddle Port is one example of a self-serve kayak rental product



Recommendation

PE 10. Explore opportunities to introduce non-motorized water-based programs (e.g. canoe, kayak) on Lake Lisgar.





3.0 RECREATION FACILITIES

3.1 Introduction & Assessment Background

The facilities section addresses indoor and outdoor facilities that are (or could be) scheduled for organized use by the Town and/or other providers that deliver community programs and services.

Section 4.0 of the Master Plan considers needs and opportunities to enhance parks, trails and waterfront locations with facilities and amenities for self-directed, casual use since these are often tied to the type of space being considered.

The following sections address the need for current improvements to, and future provision of, municipal facilities for structured programming and/or scheduled use, under the following main headings:

- overview of supply
- assessment considerations
- indoor facilities
- outdoor facilities
- strategic approach to facility provision

3.1.1 What We Heard

Overview of Supply

Tillsonburg has an overall good supply of scheduled (or potentially scheduled) sports and recreation facilities. Major indoor facilities are provided at the Community Centre. These are supplemented by two facilities dedicated to arts, culture and heritage services. Outdoor facilities such as ball diamonds and soccer fields are located at both the Community Centre and in parks.

At the same time, much of the Town's recreation indoor facility supply is outdated in terms of optimal design and building system functions, making it difficult to align services with today's user expectations and to develop new areas of programs and activities. Capital and operations upgrades comprise a backlog of work to be completed.

Moreover, there is a limited supply of non-municipal indoor recreation facilities available for community use. Glendale Secondary School, for example, is the only school in Town with a gym large enough to accommodate adult programming. The Town uses this facility but, as only one of many users, available time is limited and difficult to increase. This puts pressure on the Town's facilities to accommodate much of the community's sport and recreation services. Similarly, the Town – apart from soccer fields - is the primary provider of outdoor recreation facilities.

Existing building conditions/functions summary:

- Facility supply is overdue for capital investment to maintain these assets; ongoing issues include roof failures, HVAC dysfunction in many facility components, deteriorating brickwork, lack of AODA compliance, etc. (see Table 3.1).
- There is a significant shortfall in funding for capital repairs and maintenance, resulting in limited and isolated improvements.

Current facility use patterns summary:

- Over half of 300 survey respondents (57% or 170) do not use parks and recreation services in Tillsonburg.
- Among the 130 users (73% or 95 respondents) over 10% of responses indicated use of the following indoor facilities: Community Centre indoor pool (39%); fitness/health centre (35%); Kinsmen Memorial Arena (23%); Colin Campbell Community Arena (19%), and Community Centre squash courts (11%).

- Approximately three-quarters (78% or 14) of the user groups reported using the following indoor facilities for their programs/events: Lions Auditorium at the Community Centre (71% or 10 groups); Colin Campbell Community Arena, Kinsmen Memorial Arena (each 36% or 5 groups); mini practice rink at the Community Centre, Tillsonburg Senior Centre, Community Centre meetings rooms (each 21% or 3 groups); indoor pool, Station Arts Centre (each 14% or 2 groups); fitness/health centre, Annandale Museum (each 7% or 1 group).
- Almost half (47% or 8) of the user groups reported using the following outdoor facilities: Annandale ball diamonds and Kiwanis ball diamond (each 33% or 3 groups); Optimist Youth ball diamonds (22% or 2 groups); Sam Lamb and #1 hardball ball diamond, Tillsonburg Soccer Park fields, and tennis/pickleball courts (each 11% or 1 group).
- The Town noted that certain components of the Community Centre are extremely well used and, in some cases, straining capacity, and general programming can be precluded or displaced due to rooms rentals for other activities/events.

Future facility development interests summary:

- The majority of the 300 household survey respondents (84% or 253) do not think new/expanded facilities are needed.
- Among the less than one-fifth (16% or 47 respondents), between 10% and 32% of responses indicated need for pickleball (indoor/outdoor), indoor track, indoor tennis court, children's play/drop-in, and multi-purpose space.
- The majority of user groups (75% or 9) indicated anticipated growth in program participation/event attendance that will require additional access to facilities in the next 5 to 10 years; the most frequently reported need for indoor facilities: an additional ice pad to accommodate more teams, age levels, new programs, and preferred/improved scheduling; arena amenities such as more, larger and gender neutral change rooms; dry-land training facilities (e.g., indoor track); additional space for arts activities/programs; downtown event venue; more facility accessibility for inclusion of people with physical disabilities.
- Immediate and future outdoor facility requirements most often reported by the groups were more ball diamonds and/or more lit ball diamonds.
- In keeping with service trends in programming and the need to accommodate population growth, the Town's future facility interests focus on both improving/upgrading and complementing existing supply with more multi-purpose program space, a gymnasium, change room space, suitable administrative space/offices for Community Centre staff, more storage for equipment used for programming events, improved building circulation, and AODA compliance throughout.

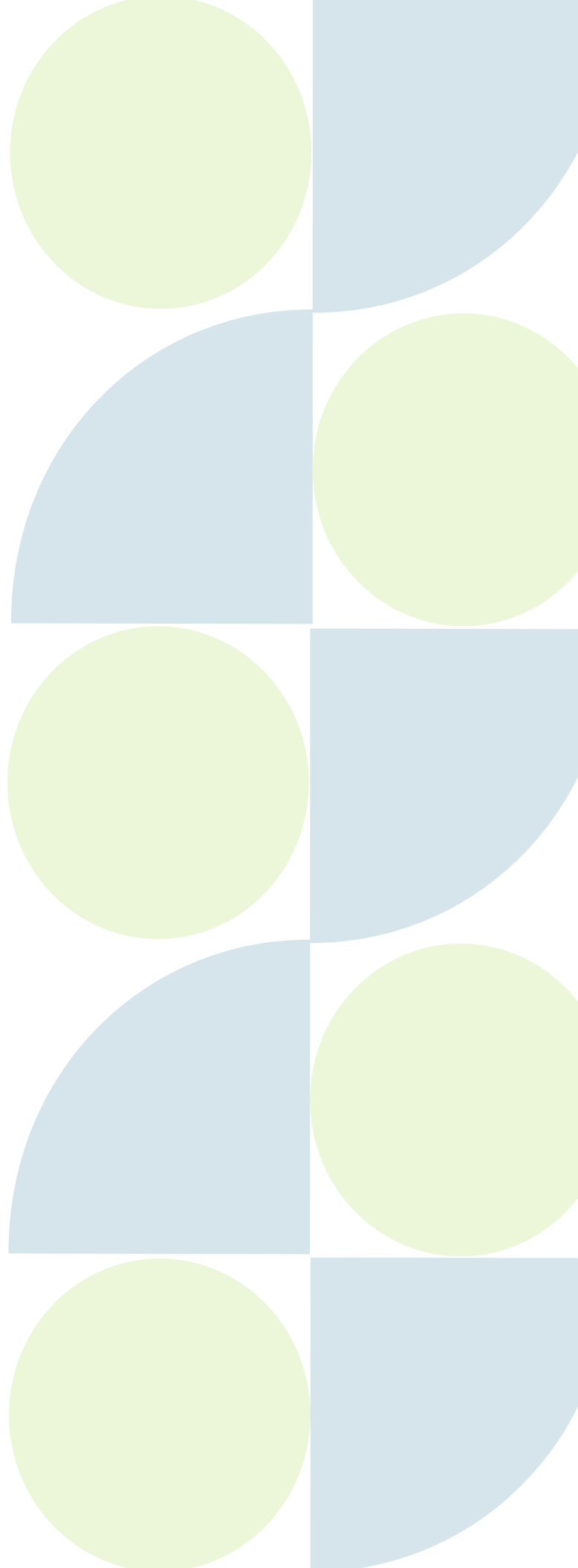
3.1.2 Assessment Considerations

In determining future need for facilities in Tillsonburg, there are several key factors to consider, including:

- the types of new facilities required - including both those not represented in current supply (e.g., municipal gym, indoor track, etc.) and additions to existing supply (e.g., a third ice pad, Station Arts expansion, soccer fields, ball diamonds).
- the extent to which existing facilities, and particularly those at the Community Centre, can be repurposed/redeveloped/expanded to provide needed state-of-the-art facilities, given the limits of infrastructure age/design/configuration, the need to retain existing spaces/uses, and the potential for expansion on the site.

- the need to make capital upgrades to existing facility components to extend their life until such time as they are expanded, redeveloped or replaced.
- constraints to funding both large new capital projects and ongoing asset management.
- prevailing community opinion that no new recreation infrastructure is needed.

The assessment aims to reconcile these factors, which are sometimes at odds, by first determining indoor and outdoor facility requirements by type and, secondly, outlining a strategic approach to future provision.





3.2 Indoor Facilities Assessment

Table 3-1 lists the indoor facilities at the Tillsonburg Community Centre, and those dedicated to arts and heritage, along with brief descriptions and levels of use and upgrade information - from background material and as provided by Town staff.

Table 3-1: Indoor facilities, use levels and upgrades

Facilities	Description	Levels of Use/Upgrades to Existing Components
Tillsonburg Community Centre		
Indoor Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25m, six-lane lap pool with ladder/lift entry • viewing area • change rooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high use • ongoing upgrades to the pool and building entrance include new entry and family/ barrier-free washrooms, change rooms, showers, lobby, administrative space
Ice Pads (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinsmen Memorial Arena (1949): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHL sized ice surface (200' x 85') • spectator seating 700 • concession (leased to vendor) • dressing rooms • Colin Campbell Arena (1977): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ice surface (180' x 80') • heated viewing area • 9 dressing rooms • dressing rooms • Mini practice rink (2004): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ice surface (20' x 35') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both main pads near capacity during prime time; underused during non-prime time • backlog in critical capital repairs (e.g., roof failures)
Arena Floors (2)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well used; demand for municipal facilities to host events is increasing • need improved cooling for summer use and on site storage for tables and chairs

Table 3-1 Continued: Indoor Facilities, Use Levels and Upgrades

Facilities	Description	Levels of Use/Upgrades to Existing Components
Marwood Lounge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> heated viewing area overlooking Memorial ice pad capacity up to 80 divisible 	
Lions Auditorium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> large room, full stage, kitchen capacity up to 275 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very well used for Town programs and private rentals please add poor acoustics for music and speaking
Lions Den (hall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> medium room, kitchen, bar room capacity up to 100 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> well used for Town programs and private rentals
Health/fitness club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,285 sq. ft. on lower level: treadmills, bikes and ellipticals resistance training machines dumbbells, benches and racks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very well used; squash court is also used as personal training studio potential for expansion and 24/7 operation
Squash courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not well used
Seniors Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meeting rooms, games room, carpet bowling/billiards, computer lab, woodworking shop, exercise room basement room (used for carpet bowling, yoga) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very well used
Kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 (see above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> well used
Arts, Culture and Heritage		
Station Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repurposed railway station comprising three connected buildings, with a heritage designated exterior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at capacity for community programs need to expand new roof and mould remediation completed failing brickwork needs repair
Tillsonburg Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> part of Annandale National Historic Site meeting/program room (capacity 80), kitchen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> very well used for programs, events; strong visitor-attraction working on upgrading lighting and AODA compliance new roof/repair (flat, museum section), chimney repair needed

3.2.1 Ice Pads

Table 3-2 summarizes the responses of user groups to the Master Plan survey on current participation, ice use and facility needs.

The 2023/24 schedules for Colin Campbell and Kinsmen Memorial Arenas - which document ice time requests and ice time received - were used to depict the patterns of ice use at both pads and to determine the extent of prime time use.

As shown in the Appendix A:

- Prime time use at both pads is close to 100% capacity.
- Contrary to current arena use patterns in many Ontario municipalities, early morning hours are also very well used.
- Almost all non-prime time is unused.

Table 3-2: Summary of ice users responses to master plan survey¹²

Group	# In Regular Programs/% from Tillsonburg	Ice Pads Used	Facility Needs
Club Oxford Hockey	150 / 85%	Colin Campbell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More change rooms in number and gender accommodation
Tillsonburg Ringette	175 / 80%	Colin Campbell Kinsmen Memorial mini practice rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional ice time for more teams at more age levels and power skating program • More, larger change rooms
Tillsonburg Minor Hockey	369 / 75%	Colin Campbell Kinsmen Memorial mini practice rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More ice time at desirable times for existing programs and for future demand, to preclude turning kids away • More change rooms and gender neutral facilities • More storage
Port Burwell Oldtimers	30 / 100%	Kinsmen Memorial	
Glendale Secondary School	300 (all athletics) / 100%	Colin Campbell Kinsmen Memorial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing strong partnership with the Town for access to its recreation facilities

¹² Figure Skating response was incomplete.

The appendix tables that record prime time used for the 2023/24 season show that, although scheduled time often fell short of that requested, the difference was often minimal, and it appears that all users received the bulk of hours requested. However, shortages in requests vs. unused prime time are not directly comparable due to the efforts of the Town to provide users with blocks of time that are closest to those requested, even if it requires a smaller final allocation to accommodate all groups.

In addition to current shortfalls, four of the five groups in Table 3-2 anticipate growth in the next 5 to 10 years, and one expects to remain stable. Tillsonburg Ringette and Minor Hockey specified that increased participation will translate into need for more ice time. Aside from other influences on participation trends, population growth alone will generate additional local participation in ice sports. At current population, the population-based supply of ice pads in Tillsonburg is one for every 9,750 residents (19,503/2). For planning purposes, applying this ratio to projected growth to 2034 indicates the need for a total of 2.8 ice pads (27,514/9,750) or one additional pad.

In anticipating the need for a third ice pad, the Town should commission a feasibility study in the short-term to confirm requirements for facility development, and to support funding applications.

The feasibility study should include a needs assessment as a first step, to be able to determine programming/use requirements and whether or not it is sufficient to

support a third pad, after which a space plan/concept drawing will be prepared on which to base capital and operating costs estimates.

Tracks for walking (and running) provided around the ice pad perimeter are becoming more common features. They offer year-round access to safe facilities/conditions for self-directed or group fitness and can better serve people with mobility concerns. Consideration should be given to including an indoor track with the development of a third pad. The study should also consider adding a third pad as an opportunity to improve the number, design and accessibility/inclusivity of change rooms, storage, etc. to be located and shared by one of the existing pads and the new ice surface.

The study would also identify the need to acquire adjacent properties to accommodate a larger building, given the potential for other facility additions at the Community Centre, as discussed in section 3.2.2.

Ice allocation is an annually negotiated process that requires compromise on the part of all users to arrive at workable solutions. The Town's commitment is to both maximize ice use with and align it with its Sports Allocation Policy that puts the needs of youth ahead of adult groups by scheduling minor sports programs in earlier time blocks. At the same time, historically entrenched allocation patterns, and limits to extending the ice-in season due to

3.2.2 Other Community Centre Components

arena floor use, detract from making more efficient use of the arenas in accommodating demand.

In advance of providing a third ice pad, the Town can work with ice users to optimize use to the two existing pads, and consider the cost-benefit of the following approaches:

- Introducing a third hourly user fee to incentivize use past typical weeknight hours along with extending operating hours beyond 11pm.
- Investigating the feasibility of extending the ice-in season in terms of ice integrity, building temperature control, etc.
- Building non-prime time ice use, wherever possible.

Recommendations

- F 1. Conduct a detailed feasibility study for a third ice pad at the Community Centre.
- F 2. In advance of providing a third ice pad, work with ice users to determine the cost-benefit of approaches to optimizing the use of the two existing pads to better meet scheduling requirements.

The Tillsonburg Community Centre has undergone major capital improvements to its aquatic and related facility components. As the Centre will continue to be a primary focus for indoor recreation, the need to further update and diversify its range of facilities is discussed below. Addressing these facility needs collectively in a feasibility study, even if they are not all developed at the same time, will result in an optimal development plan for the Community Centre to serve both existing residents and population growth. The components to be included in this study are discussed below.

Recommendation

- F 3. Conduct a detailed feasibility study to determine the need for new/updated Community Centre facility components including existing (health/fitness club, senior centre, rental space), and new (multi-purpose program space, gymnasium) facilities.



Indoor Pool and Health/Fitness Club

As noted in Table 3-1 the Town is in the process of renovating a portion of the Centre including the main entrance to the Community building, the pool area and amenities, and common areas. The architectural concept plan notes the following:

Lower Level

- New entry + change rooms (+/- 5,400 sf)
- Existing pool: new b/f pool ramp + deck resurfacing (+/- 7,830 sf)
- Existing change rooms + pool office renovation (+/- 3,000 sf)
- Health club: removal of existing washrooms + sauna (+/- 540 sf)

Upper Level

- Accessible pool viewing renovation (200 sf)
- Multi-purpose room (approx. 390 sf)

The space/room areas indicated above reflect both additions to the existing structure and internal changes to repurpose/upgrade existing spaces that begin to address some of the building's deficiencies related to accessibility and current/future program needs. The newly renovated portion of the building is anticipated to re-open in the fall of 2024. At that time, the Town can resolve the reported issue of

an imbalance in pool water temperature to accommodate both warm and cool water uses. In determining a fixed temperature setting, the Town should consider the Wilmot Aquatic Aces' requirement for a maximum temperature for training/competitive activity. Once an appropriate water temperature has been determined, share it as a standard operating procedure with the community.

The existing health and fitness component of the Centre is reportedly too small and, as a result, one of the two squash courts has been converted to a personal gym/fitness area. The ongoing pool/main entrance renovations indicate the removal of existing washrooms and sauna in the health club comprising approximately 540 sq. ft. Although not noted in the concept plan, it is assumed this space will be used to expand the equipped workout area. The Town is also interested in introducing 24/7 access to the health/fitness club. This would require direct electronic access to the space from the exterior of the building, while being able to secure it from the rest of the Centre outside of operating hours. If the health club is to remain in its existing location, the concept plan for the current renovations suggest this could be done by allowing access through the main lobby and locking interior doors leading from the health club to other spaces in the Centre, and gating the opening at the customer service desk to the lower lobby. This requirement coupled with its position in the interior of the Centre, however, may prevent complying with fire code regulations for two exits out of the

building. Personal fitness areas and fitness studios are also often co-located, which would require a larger collective space. In this case, the existing space may need to be relocated to provide the required space for both components.

How these options can be achieved from a building and cost perspective should consider: the approach to equipping a larger space with Tillsonburg's machines (e.g., purchase or lease) that are costly to provide and maintain; providing facilities that could compete with commercial fitness operators. Decisions on the future of the Centre's Club, therefore, should be compatible with trends in the local commercial market. The feasibility study can establish an appropriate service level for the Town in relation to other providers.

Recommendation

- F 4. When the new pool opens, determine and set a pool water temperature that meets the needs of both warm and cool water uses/programs, and communicate it through a standard operating procedure.
- F 5. As part of the feasibility study, determine additional health club facility/access requirements, in relation to the Town's position within the local commercial market for these services.

Gymnasium, Indoor Track, and Multi-Purpose Program Space

The new facility requests that emerged in consultation with the community are not surprising given the evolution of municipal provision generally. Community recreation complexes now typically include gyms, indoor tracks, and spaces that are designed, equipped, and finished to accommodate a wide variety of uses including active sports/fitness, events, social interaction, arts, etc. Collectively, these facilities - particularly when co-located with an indoor pool - offer opportunities for cross-programming and training.

As multi-purpose facilities, gyms can accommodate a variety of net court sports (tennis, volleyball, pickleball, badminton, and basketball), as well as other active recreation uses. As noted above, Glendale Secondary School is the only full size gym in Tillsonburg and access to it for programming is limited. A municipal gym would be a beneficial addition to facility supply and would allow full time use for both Town and community group programs/activities.

Section 3.2.1 discussed providing an indoor track as part of a third ice pad. If, from a design perspective, a new pad cannot accommodate a track, providing an elevated track as part of a gymnasium should be considered.

Existing rooms at the Community Centre that are used for programming were designed as single purpose rental spaces for banquets, meetings, etc. As such, they cannot adequately meet the range of community interests and support potential service development, as discussed in the program section of the Master Plan. Moreover, rentals of the Lions Den, Lions Auditorium, and Marwood Lounge generally take priority over programming due to the revenues they generate. This effectively makes programming a secondary – as opposed to a primary – use of the Community Centre by limiting continuous access to the spaces that are most amenable to providing programs. The pool area concept plan noted above indicates a small (390 sq. ft.) multi-purpose room. More multi-purpose space is needed, however, to build a strong base of diverse programs to serve current and future residents. In the short-term, it is recommended that either the Lions Den or the Marwood Lounge (when not being used for viewing ice activities) be designated as a program room first, with rentals taking second priority. In choosing either the Marwood Lounge or the Lions Den as dedicated program space, the relative impact of doing so should be evaluated in-house. This approach will provide two multi-purpose program rooms now, while retaining one for rental purposes. The feasibility study for the Community Centre can be used to determine the overall need for multi-purpose spaces and how these existing rental spaces will fit into the final plan.

All multi-purpose spaces should optimize design for the widest range of uses possible, while minimizing the potential for conflicts in sharing space (e.g., scheduling, access to prime/non-prime hours). As such, configuration, equipment, flooring, finishes, etc. need to support all intended uses/users of each space.

Although strong demand for performing arts space did not emerge in consultation, opportunities to incorporate these uses can also be considered in the gym and/or multi-purpose space design.

Recommendations

- F 6. Upon evaluating the relative impacts of doing so, designate the Lions Den or the Marwood Lounge as a program room first, with rentals taking second priority, to provide more guaranteed program space in the short-term.
- F 7. Plan to add a gym and more multi-purpose space(s) to future facility supply, to be assessed as part of the feasibility study.



Figure 3-1: Crow's Theatre, Toronto

Senior Centre

As part of the Community Centre, the Tillsonburg Senior Centre is Town owned and maintained/cleaned. It is leased and fully operated by a volunteer board with two paid staff who run programs and accommodate rentals. Regular membership totals 500, of which 92% live in Tillsonburg and the balance comes from Ingersoll and other communities.

The group reported that future membership is expected to remain stable, and the facilities they use at the Community Centre are well suited to their program/activity and event requirements. As a component of the larger complex, however, these facilities should be part of overall considerations related to updating/improving the design and function of interior spaces. Individual dedicated spaces (e.g., woodworking shop) could be repurposed if they are not well used. The Senior Centre could also be more strongly integrated with the larger complex, by providing programming specific to seniors in new shared space (e.g., seniors fitness in multi-purpose space) with needed dedicated spaces (e.g., social space, kitchen, games room, etc.) comprising the seniors' building component.

It was also noted that there are local seniors' clubhouses in two residential subdivisions, which are not affiliated with the Town, but provide additional services to seniors in these neighbourhoods. If these are run by formal groups in public settings, there may be opportunities for the Town to collaborate with them in providing neighbourhood-based services.

Recommendation

- F 8. Include the Tillsonburg Senior Centre as part of planned integrated design and functional improvements to the Community Centre.

3.2.3 Arts, Culture and Heritage

Station Arts Centre

Station Arts is a recent addition to Town facilities that combines heritage and functions. It comprises two historic train stations that have been refurbished and restored, and an exhibit gallery. The three components are connected. Its exterior is designated historic.

The Station is operated by a not-for-profit registered charitable organization, comprising a nine-member board of directors and three staff. As noted on the website, its mission is to “promote the arts within Tillsonburg and area. We are a local historical site that provides visitor information, art galleries, art programming, a variety of in house groups, artisan gift shop, pottery studio & Saturday Farmer’s Market.”¹³ The Station is also a visitor destination and a tourist information centre for Tillsonburg, Oxford County and region and provides daytripping and Ontario tourist information publications and maps.

The Station’s survey noted that the building is at capacity now for its programs and will need to be expanded to be able to host more children in summer programs and all ages in yearly programs. Current participation in regular programs was noted at 1,300. Event attendance in the Station’s last full year of operation totalled 7,000.

¹³ <https://www.stationarts.ca>

Tillsonburg Museum

Annandale National Historic Site comprises the 1880s mansion of E.D. Tillson, the Town's first mayor. The mansion includes galleries/exhibit spaces and houses the museum with more than 18,000 artifacts from Tillsonburg's past. The building is owned by the Town, and the museum is staffed part-time by the Town. Other organizations also use the galleries/exhibit spaces.

Both Station Arts and the Museum are strong visitor/tourist-attractive facilities, as well as venues for programs/activities that serve local residents. Both buildings are in the process of capital improvements, with outstanding reported needs for brickwork repair at the Station and chimney and roof (or replacement) at the mansion. The Station is interested in facility expansion. The extent and associated costs for this work require further confirmation (see Strategic discussion below). Communities beyond Tillsonburg are represented in the use of these facilities and benefit from their role as visitor destinations. These municipalities could be approached as potential contributors to costs associated with Station Arts and the Museum, given their regional tourism role. The Town should consult with Station Arts Centre and Museum interests to consider this potential opportunity.

Recommendation

- F 9. Consult with the Station Arts Centre and Tillsonburg Museum interests to consider the potential for capital cost contributions from other municipalities that benefit from the regional tourism role of these facilities.



3.3 Outdoor Facilities Assessment

Ball Diamonds

Table 3-3 lists the Town’s ball diamonds by location, type, uses, and the number of unused weeknight (Monday through Friday) prime time hours at peak use in 2023. Appendix A illustrates scheduled time on individual diamonds.

As indicated in the above table, there is very limited weeknight prime time available on all diamonds. Unused hours, where they exist, are typically spread across at least three nights, providing insufficient time on almost all nights to schedule enough time for a game or practice. Only hardball #1

Table 3-3: Town of Tillsonburg ball diamonds

Location	Type	Age Level	Lit/unlit	Uses	# Unused weeknight prime time hours (M-F)
Memorial Park, 48 Sanders St.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> league play, tournaments 	
Hardball #1	hardball	junior* / adult	unlit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all minor use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.5 total
Sam Lamb	hardball	adult	lit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> largely minor use + Red Sox, Tri-City 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.0 total
Kiwanis	softball	junior / adult	lit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ minor; ½ adult use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0
Optimist Park, 50 Hardy Ave.					
#1	softball	junior	unlit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all minor use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 hour / night
#2	softball	junior	unlit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all minor use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 hour / night
Annandale Diamonds, Concession St. E**				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> league play, tournaments canteen rental with diamond, water access and drainage issues 	
#2	softball	adult	unlit	-all adult use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0
#3	hardball	junior	lit	-all adult use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0
#4	softball	adult	unlit	-all adult use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0
#5	softball	adult	unlit	-largely minor; some adult use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5 total

* includes children and youth **diamond #1 was removed due to balls going into private property

diamond has a full evening of prime time available. For the most part, the diamonds are being used by the appropriate age groups. Annandale junior hardball diamond #3, however, comprises all adult use. Sam Lamb adult hardball diamond and Annandale junior softball diamond #5 are used largely by minor and adult groups, respectively. Collectively, the diamonds provide eight weekend days for scheduling regular seasonal or tournament use of which four days are unscheduled (Annandale #2, 3# and #4).

Two ball diamonds user groups responded to the survey: Tillsonburg Minor Baseball and Tillsonburg Men's Slo-pitch League. The Old Sox Hardball League was interviewed upon request. Collectively, these groups comprise over 800 participants and use all of the diamonds in Town.

For the most part, the responses of Minor Baseball and Men's Slo-pitch, and interviews with Town staff and Council confirm use data that existing diamonds are essentially at capacity, and that additional use is restricted by several factors:

- a full schedule does not allow time to reschedule rainouts
- rain prevents the use of Kiwanis, Sam Lamb and Optimist #2 for at least 24 hours, as the infields do not drain well
- lack of lit diamonds prevents late night play, which limits use to one game per evening on all unlit fields

- only one diamond is available on Sundays but is often used for tournaments, which prevents regular league use

Other generally noted deficiencies included lacks support facilities/amenities, lack of storage, aging/out of date infrastructure, too small/not regulation size (Optimist diamonds).

It was noted that the reconstructed Hardball #1 infield at Memorial Park is now the best of all the infields. Outfield improvements and adding lights to the diamond were noted as important to extending the use of this field. Minor Baseball and Men's Slo-pitch anticipate growth and the need for additional access to diamonds in the future. Men's Slo-pitch is also interested in developing a Co-ed league.

The Old Sox uses Sam Lamb and Hardball #1 at Memorial Park. They noted the diamonds are in good condition, and are well used for regular season and tournament activity, which brings visiting teams to Town. The Sox are interested in working with the Town to construct an amenities building to include washrooms, changerooms, and a canteen, which is particularly important to all-day tournaments held at the park. The Sox indicated that a concept plan for the building has been prepared and that the league can contribute to its construction. This proposal aligns with the Memorial Park Master Plan recommendation for an amenity building (referenced as a field house) to include change rooms, offices, washrooms, storage, and a concession stand. The Plan positions it to serve both Sam Lamb

and Hardball #1 at the west limit of the diamonds. A decision on adding an amenity building, however, should be deferred until indoor facility development plans at the Community Centre are finalized, and the implications for outdoor facilities are known.

Given all diamonds are effectively used to capacity now during prime time, additional facilities will be required to serve population growth over the term of the Master Plan. Since Annandale #3 is used largely as a softball diamond, it is counted as such in the following calculations, and lit diamonds are assumed to be the equivalent of 1.5 unlit diamonds, in terms of capacity, to determine projected requirements:

- Two hardball diamonds (1 lit) are assumed to be the equivalent of 2.5 unlit diamonds in terms of capacity use. At this level of supply, the ratio to current population is one for every 7,800 residents ($19,503/2.5$). Applying this figure to projected growth to 2034 indicates the need for a total of 3.5 ($27,514/7,800$) or one additional (unlit) hardball diamond.
- Seven softball diamonds (1 lit) are the equivalent of 7.5 unlit diamonds. At this level of supply, the ratio to current population is one for every 2,600 residents ($19,503/7.5$). Applying this figure to projected growth to 2034 indicates the need for a total of 10.6 ($27,514/2,600$) or 4 additional (unlit) softball diamonds.

For planning purposes, the Town should anticipate the need for the equivalent of one more unlit hardball diamond and four more softball diamonds to serve population growth during the Master Plan's term.

Options to providing these diamonds include:

- lighting existing diamonds to increase available evening prime time
- developing a ball diamond complex to provide additional diamonds and accommodate fields potentially lost to an expanded Community Centre.

Although a more complex and costly option, there is merit to investigating the potential to develop a ball complex to accommodate both community and regional tournament use. A detailed study should be prepared to determine the number of diamonds by type that would be required in a complex to serve Town needs. A typical minimum is four, but more may be required if replacement of existing diamonds becomes necessary. Ideally, they would be designed to accommodate both junior and adult play, along with the necessary indoor and outdoor amenities to host regional tournaments. Land requirements can be determined based on these findings and additional area needed for parking, buffers, etc. The scope of the study should include facility costs. Except for essential improvements, upgrades to existing ball diamonds that were requested during consultation should be deferred until the complex study is complete.

The following discussion notes the possibility of consolidating space for both future ball diamonds and soccer fields in a major sports park.

Recommendations

- F 10. Plan to provide one additional hardball diamond and four additional softball diamonds.
- F 11. Conduct a study to determine the potential to provide a ball diamond complex to accommodate both community and regional tournament use.
- F 12. Except for essential improvements, defer upgrades to existing ball diamonds until the complex study is complete.

Soccer Fields

The Tillsonburg Soccer Club (TSC) built and operates fields at the Tillsonburg Soccer Park (TSP), which is leased municipal land. The Park comprises three (3) full, two (2) intermediate/non-standard size, six (6) mini and three (3) micro fields built by the Club on leased Town-owned land. Construction was financed by a municipal loan, which has since been repaid. A clubhouse provides meeting and event space for up to 225 people. The relationship between the Town and the Club is governed by an agreement, which is discussed in the Delivery System section of the Plan. The following addresses the need to increase supply.

The Tillsonburg Football Club (TFC) uses Gyulveszi Park for its soccer program. The TFC has approached the Town with a proposal to work together to develop five soccer fields at the Park.

Gyulveszi Park was bequeathed to the Town with the understanding that it would remain a natural open space park in perpetuity. Introducing formal sports facilities of any kind, therefore, would contravene this covenant and cannot be recommended in the Master Plan.

Whether or not more soccer fields are needed requires confirmation of the actual use of existing fields along with determining the number and type of fields needed to meet any unmet demand.

If the Town is presented with evidence of need for additional soccer fields to meet organized community activity, municipal fields should be developed and leased to the organized users for their programs. In providing new fields, the Town should consider needs of all community groups for access to multi-use facilities (i.e., lacrosse, football, field hockey, etc.).

Since Gyulveszi Park cannot be considered as a location, an alternative site - ideally with the potential to house a number of fields and related amenities over time - should be the focus of development.

As noted in the above discussion, the potential to develop a major outdoor sports park - including a ball diamond complex and multi-use playing fields - could be considered in a single study. The potential to include an indoor artificial turf field as part of this park should also be investigated. This would provide a second indoor recreation facility to complement the Community Centre and keep pace with trends in municipal field house development.

Land requirements for a major sport park will be based on the results of this study and if the amount of acreage, needed, and the costs to assemble it, supports a single location for all facilities or calls for two smaller parcels - one for ball and one for soccer. Concept plans, along with development phasing of diamonds and fields, would also be prepared.

Recommendations

- F 13. If evidence of need for additional soccer fields to meet organized community activity is presented to the Town, develop municipal fields that can be leased to organized users for their programs.
- F 14. The needs of all community groups for access to multi-use facilities for lacrosse, field hockey, football, etc. should also be considered in designing and constructing new fields.
- F 15. Consider the potential to develop a major outdoor sports park - including a ball diamond complex and multi-use playing fields - in a single study, including an indoor artificial turf fieldhouse.



Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Table 3-4 summarizes the location and number of tennis and pickleball courts in Tillsonburg.

With the resurfacing of the existing tennis courts and the addition of three new pickleball courts, the Town has a balance in the supply of both types of formal facilities. At the time of writing, the four pickleball courts were temporarily out of commission. The Town is currently working to determine the best location at which to reintroduce pop-up courts on outdoor pads, including J.L. Scott McLean.

The addition of three dedicated pickleball courts effectively provides new facilities for both sports, since pickleball and tennis are no longer sharing courts. As new introductions to supply, the impact these changes will have on use at both types of courts remains to be seen. A monitoring program should be instituted to track the use of all courts, including pop-up pickleball facilities.

Given that the courts are not scheduled by the Town or organized clubs, the monitoring program should comprise a planned rotating check of all court locations at different days and times of the week to document use. It should also record information on numbers of people waiting to play at each location as well as any calls made to the Town to report details on difficulties getting access to the courts (e.g., which courts, times, etc.). The task of collecting and documenting this information could be assigned to a summer student.

If put in place to coincide with court openings in 2024, it will provide the Town with a good sense of a full season of activity, and unmet demand, which can be used to inform the potential need for more courts. An additional year of tracking can contribute to information on if/how the availability of new facilities generates growth in participation and if local clubs organize. At that time, the results of the monitoring program can be used as the basis of a study to better confirm court needs over the term of the Master Plan, the role of volunteer clubs in using Town facilities to provide

Table 3-4: Town of Tillsonburg tennis and pickleball courts

Location	# Tennis	# Pickleball	Use/Facility Notes
Tillsonburg Community Centre*	3	3	as of spring 2024: the existing tennis courts were resurfaced and three new pickleball courts were added to supply, providing three permanent dedicated facilities of each type.
J.L. Scott McLean Outdoor Recreation Pad		4 pop-ups	new in 2023, nets provided

* located in Optimist Park

tennis and pickleball to the community, and the need to co-locate courts for organized, and potential area tournament, use.

Preliminary projections assume (without use information from monitoring) that the existing number of courts are used to capacity. For tennis, therefore, three (3) dedicated facilities produce a population supply ratio of 1 court per 6,500 (19,503/3). For pickleball, seven (7) dedicated facilities generate a supply ration of 1 court for every 2,785 (19,503/7). Applying this figure to projected growth to 2034 indicates the need for a total of:

- 4.2 (27,514/6,500) dedicated tennis courts or up to two more
- 9.8 (27,514/2,785) dedicated pickleball courts or up to three more than currently exist, including making the four existing pop-up courts permanent.

Pickleball continues to grow rapidly, and many municipalities are 'catching up' to demand. At the same time, tennis participation has also been on the upswing in recent years. A 2018 study on frequent players¹⁴ shows the appeal of tennis to youth and young adults, as well as its potential to engage newcomers to Canada in community sport. While more recent data on Canadian trends in tennis participation are not readily available, U.S. information shows a resurgence in growth: "over the two-year

period from 2019 through 2021, tennis has experienced a 27.9% boom in participation, adding around 4.9 million players."¹⁵

For these reasons, as well as differences across communities in the popularity of both sports, it will be important to confirm the Master Plan's preliminary supply projections through a court study.

Recommendations

- F 16. Introduce a rotating monitoring program to start with the opening of the new pickleball and resurfaced tennis courts, including the pop-up courts, to document the use of all courts and indicators of unmet demand.
- F 17. Use the results of the monitoring program to inform a court study to confirm future need for both types of courts based on findings related to actual use, interest in community club formation, and the location/configuration of future courts.
- F 18. Preliminary supply projections for the term of the Plan, to be confirmed in the court study, comprise providing up to two more dedicated tennis courts (for a total of 5) and three more dedicated pickleball courts (for a total of 10).

14 <https://www.tenniscanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/04.-Tennis-Participation-Data-and-Statistics-to-Assist-in-Facility-Planning.pdf>

15 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2022/03/20/tennis-participation-bounced-even-higher-in-2021-up-279-since-2019/?sh=564e96ff45f5>

3.4 Strategic Approach to Facility Provision

A proposed strategic approach to future facility provision in Tillsonburg integrates needed capital repairs to existing facilities, potential need for additions to supply through redevelopment or new construction, and location considerations. It involves the following steps, some of which will comprise concurrent work, and are discussed further below:

- Update 2022 building and outdoor recreation facility conditions assessments during the Plan's timeframe and incorporate findings in the Asset Management Plan (AMP)
- Prioritize facility upgrades/improvements from the AMP in the 10-year capital budget
- Prepare studies and concept plans to confirm facility needs, locations and approaches to phased provision

Update 2022 building and outdoor recreation facility conditions assessments during the Plan's timeframe and incorporate findings in the AMP

The Town's Asset Management Policy outlines its purpose and approach to managing capital assets, including indoor and outdoor sport, recreation, heritage facilities and land improvements. The Town's current Asset Management Plan (2022) covers core assets: roads, storm, bridges and structural culverts. It does not include

parks and recreation assets, which will be incorporated in the Asset Management Plan to comply with current legislation.

In updating building and facility conditions, including functional assessments will be beneficial to determining the potential for existing spaces to meet intended programming purposes. This will inform work on the potential to repurpose/renovate existing spaces to meet current and future program needs vs. replacing existing infrastructure. This work should also include a review of cooling/fresh air input options for summer use of the arena floors.

Prioritize facility upgrades/improvements from the AMP in the 10-year capital budget

The AMP will identify facility capital repair needs to be incorporated in the 10-year capital budget. Some of these will be critical to implement in the short term and should be assigned priority. Those that are not essential and/or may be deferred until facility studies are complete should be identified. In some cases, it may be less costly to implement potentially non-essential upgrades while attending to mandatory repairs rather than coming back later to address the former. Opportunities to do so can be considered at the time professional services to do the work are engaged.

Prepare studies and concept plans to confirm facility needs, locations and approaches to phased provision

The following outlines a comprehensive approach to future facility provision in Tillsonburg. It is intended to provide a high level framework for decisions on developing more detailed plans for changes/additions to facility supply and distribution by:

1. Confirming provision of indoor facilities at Tillsonburg Community Centre
2. Determining facilities improvements/additions at other locations
3. Preparing phased development projects, priorities, and budgets

Each of these items is discussed further below.

1.0 Tillsonburg Community Centre Indoor Facilities

Purpose: confirming provision of indoor facilities at the Community Centre, through a combination of repurposing and/or expanding existing spaces, and adding new facilities to the complex.

Table 3-5 summarizes the Plan's recommendations on indoor facility needs and notes the likely direction of changes at a very high level and pending further studies to confirm detailed plans, in separate feasibility studies for a third ice pad and for the remaining community centre components.

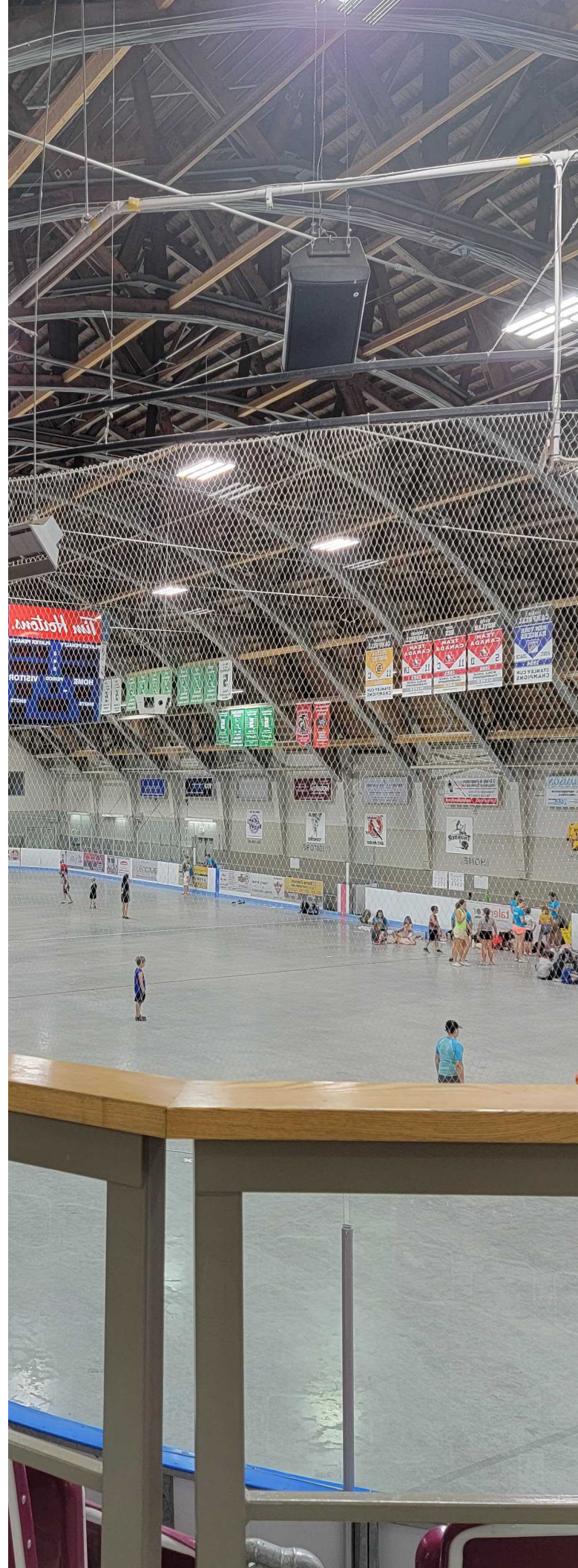


Table 3-5: High level directions for indoor facility changes and additions

Indoor Facilities	New	Repurposed	Expanded	Possibly Expand
gymnasium (single or double TBD)	X			
track	X			
ice pad	X			
multi-purpose space	X	X	X	
health/fitness		X (or relocated)		X
staff offices		X	X	
rink dressing rooms		X	X	
storage		X	X	
seniors space		X		

Adding both a gymnasium and a third ice pad to the Community Centre would mean a considerable increase in the building footprint, which might not fit on the existing site, without some outdoor facility losses. Ideally, a gym and a track (combined with either the gym or the ice pad) should also be added here to improve the Community Centre’s range of facilities, cross programming potential, and operating efficiencies. As noted above, adding a track as part of a third ice pad may be preferable if this expansion occurs first. Other key facilities that could combine repurposing and expansion include ice pad dressing rooms, multi-purpose space, health/fitness centre, and seniors space.

Other high level facility planning and design considerations may include (but are not limited to):

- Taking the opportunity of adding a third pad to also improve the number, design and accessibility/inclusivity of change rooms, storage, etc., designed and located to be shared by one of the existing pads and the new ice surface (as noted in Section 3.2.1)
- Repurposing existing spaces (e.g., squash courts, Lions Den, mini rink) to modernize facilities, reduce the amount of space that assigns priority to rentals over programming, and minimize need to expand building footprint
- Evaluating the cost-benefit of providing a single or double gymnasium, given intended purposes for a wide range of uses (Town delivered and community based) that may require parallel programming

- Designing multi-purpose spaces to accommodate both sports/recreation and arts-related activities, including performing arts
- Incorporating requirements to provide 24/7 electronic access from outside to fitness club members, in an area of the complex that can be secured from the remainder of the building after hours
- Providing washrooms in the Community Centre that are (also) directly accessible to park users from outside the building

2.0 Facilities at Other Locations

Purpose: to determine facility provision needs at other locations in Town

Arts, Culture and Heritage Facilities

Like most municipalities, the majority of facilities in the Town’s inventory are for sports and recreation. At the same time, Station Arts and the Tillsonburg Museum are valuable and unique assets for both community programming and visitor experiences. The Town recognizes the need to also invest in facilities that serve these different interests/markets. The reported need for facility expansion at Station Arts should be addressed and detailed in a proposed plan that complements potential arts related components that are included in plans for the redeveloped Community Centre.

Diamonds, Fields, and Courts

Table 3-6 summarizes provision recommendations and approaches for outdoor scheduled facilities. These will be further detailed in two feasibility studies: one for a major outdoor sports complex for ball diamonds and multi-use playing fields and a second court needs study for tennis and pickleball facilities.

Table 3-6: Summary of outdoor facility supply and provision directions

Facility	Existing Supply	Projected Additional Requirements to Accommodate Population Growth	Other Considerations	Approach to Provision
Hardball diamonds	2 (1 lit)	1 unlit	decisions on Community Centre expansion re: possible need to relocate diamonds, and potential to co-locate facilities in a major outdoor sports complex, along with multi-purpose playing fields	feasibility study for a major outdoor sports complex, including needs assessment, land requirements, design concept and costing, and phasing development
Softball diamonds	7* (1 lit)	4 unlit (or equivalent lit)		
Soccer/multi-purpose fields	non-municipal	provide municipal facilities as needed based on confirmation of unmet demand		
Tennis courts	3	up to 2	preliminary projections; rotate monitoring to determine impact of new facilities on use; apply results to a court study to confirm needs for both types	court needs study to confirm facility requirements, the potential role of volunteer clubs in using Town facilities, and the need to co-locate courts for organized, and potential tournament use.
Pickleball courts	7 (3 permanent + 4 pop-ups)	up to 3, in addition to making pop-ups permanent		

*#3 Annandale hardball counted as softball due to use

3.0 Phasing, Priorities, and Budgets

Purpose: to determine project 'packages', their phasing, and assign priorities and budgets to each initiative.

Each feasibility study will provide direction on next steps in the design and development process, associated costs and timing, which can be assigned priority in the Town's capital budget. The identified project packages and their phasing will be influenced by funding opportunities that emerge over the course of implementation. Taking advantage of funding programs will require flexibility in implementing plans and may require compliance with eligibility criteria that will influence final design and construction.

Recommendations

- F 19. As required, update building and outdoor facilities conditions assessments as part of asset management planning and include in capital budget.
- F 20. Focus on essential building/facility repairs in instances where future upgrades/additions are still to be determined.
- F 21. Prepare detailed studies to confirm facility needs at the Community Centre and other locations, and the priorities, concepts, phasing and budgets associated with each resulting initiative.



GIBSON HOUSE

24



GIBSON HOUSE
BUILT IN 1914
BY THE GIBSON FAMILY
AS A MEMORIAL TO
THEIR SON
GIBSON HOUSE
SEA SCOUTS
1914



4.0 PARKS, CEMETERY, AND TRAILS

4.1 Introduction & Assessment Background

4.1.1 Overview of Supply

The Town of Tillsonburg has more than 80 hectares of outdoor open space including 30 parks, approximately 40 kilometers of trails, and two cemeteries. Park amenities include basketball courts, playgrounds, picnic/shade shelters, a splash pad, an outdoor pool, a skatepark, a BMX pump track, outdoor fitness stations, multi-purpose/outdoor skating pads, and a leash-free dog park (Table 4-1). The Town's 30 parks are inventoried in detail in Appendix B.

Existing Provision Rates and Service Levels

A comparative analysis of parkland and outdoor park amenity provision in other municipalities was conducted for benchmarking purposes (Table 4-2 and Table 4-3). Data was collected from publicly-accessible inventories, planning documents, and open data on municipal websites.

Table 4-1: Total number of park amenities for casual use

Amenity	Total #	Location(s)
Boat Launch	1	Summer Place (Memorial Park)
Disc Golf	1	Kiwanis Coronation Park
Dock	2	Summer Place (Memorial Park), Gibson House
Leash-Free Dog Park	1	Memorial Park
Multi-purpose Pad/Outdoor Rink/Basketball Court	3	Southridge Park, Memorial Park, Oak Park
Outdoor Fitness Stations	1	Rotary Park, Veterans Memorial Walkway
Outdoor Pool	1	Lake Lisgar Water Park (Memorial Park)
Picnic Shelter/ Shade Structure	3	Memorial Park, Community Garden, Tillsonburg Soccer Park
Play Equipment	13	Glendale Park, Gyulveszi Park, Kinsmen Participark, Kiwanis Coronation Park, Library Park, Optimist Park, Rotary Park, Southridge Park, Borden Crescent, Trottier Park, Westmount Park, Northcrest Park, Elliot Fairbairn park
Play Equipment (Accessible)	1	Memorial Park
Pump Track	1	Optimist Park
Skatepark	1	Optimist Park
Splash Pad	1	Memorial Park

The municipalities (Innisfil, Collingwood, and Wasaga Beach) were chosen for comparison because they share some key similarities with Tillsonburg: similar population size; act as a service centre for surrounding rural municipalities, and all experienced substantial growth (between 13 and 21%) between the 2016 and 2021 censuses.

Tillsonburg’s current parkland provision of 4.3 hectares per 1,000 residents is in line with provision in comparable municipalities (Table 4-2). The comparative analysis of amenities (Table 4-3) suggests that Tillsonburg is within range of its counterparts for key park amenities as well. A notable exception would be outdoor pools, where Tillsonburg is the only Town to have one in this comparison.

Table 4-2: Parkland provision in Tillsonburg and comparable municipalities

Parkland	Town of Tillsonburg (pop: 19,503*)		Town of Innisfil (pop: 29,464)		Town of Collingwood (pop: 22,983)		Town of Wasaga Beach (pop: 22,194)	
	ha	ha/1,000	ha	ha/1,000	ha	ha/1,000	ha	ha/1,000
Current Supply	83 ¹⁶	4.3:1000	150	5.1:1,000	123.5	5.4:1,000	79.5	3.4:1,000

Note: Parkland supply (in ha) excludes greenlands such as natural heritage features, conservation lands, and school board lands.

*The population used for Tillsonburg is the 2024 projection, while for the others, the Census 2021 data used.

Table 4-3: Current service levels for outdoor facilities in Tillsonburg and comparable municipalities

Outdoor Amenity	Town of Tillsonburg (pop: 19,503*)	Town of Innisfil (pop: 29,464)	City of Collingwood (pop: 22,983)	City of Wasaga Beach (pop: 22,194)
	Total #	Total #	Total #	Total #
Playgrounds	9	31	14	13
Splash Pads	1	2	0	1
Outdoor Pools	1	0	0	0
Basketball/ Multi-sport Courts	3	5	3	2.5
Skateparks	1	2	1	1
BMX Pump Tracks	1	3	0	1
Leash-free Areas	1	1	0	2

16 Total hectares does not include Northcrest Park, Oak Park, Cadman Park, Mineral Springs Park, Cranberry Park, and Oxford, Harvey, and Pine Street Parkettes as sizes were not available for these locations.

4.1.2 What We Heard

The following pages provide an overview of what we heard during consultations about parks and trails, from a high level (i.e. opinions and use of parks and trails “overall”). Additional more specific feedback is also included throughout this assessment. Common sentiments among all consultation activities include:

- Need for new and updated park amenities (e.g. playgrounds, water stations, shade structures, picnic tables)
- Improvements to trails including wayfinding, lighting, connectivity and accessibility, along with suggestions for new segments
- Specific sites identified as in need of attention, or with untapped potential, including Lake Lisgar, Annandale Diamonds, Memorial Park, Coronation Park
- Number of park buildings that are underused: Gibson House, Summer Palace, Pigeon Barn, Crystal Palace among them
- Strong support for environmentally focused park practices including protecting water quality at Lake Lisgar, planting more native trees, and naturalization

43%

Of respondents use parks, trails, and outdoor facilities*

Top four parks used:

- David Johnson Memorial Dog Park (22%)
- Memorial Park (18%)
- Coronation Park (18%)
- Elliot Fairbairn Park (11%)

38%

Of respondents were satisfied with parks and trails in Tillsonburg**

61%

Indicated that they do not think the Town’s parks or trails require improvements*

Of those who responded yes improvements are needed (15% or 45 respondents), the top improvements listed were:

- increased maintenance/beautification (30%)
- more shade, seating, lighting, etc (26%)
- and dog off-leash areas (24%)

52%

Felt improvement and/or expansion in parks, outdoor sports facilities, trails and open space should be top priority**

- 68% use trails
- 66% participate in self-directed sports/physical activity (e.g. cycling, running/walking, swimming, etc.)
- 52% participate in organized sports

*Random Household Telephone Survey

** Online Survey

"I'm so blessed to have access to these parks"

- **Open house attendee**

"More dog park space would be amazing. We use the park every day all year round"

- **Online submission**

"Please start planting more trees in Town and recognizing the heritage trees and protecting them."

- **Open house attendee**

"We are in dire need of a dedicated pickleball facility for both summer and winter (as an example see Pinafore Park in St. Thomas)"

- **Open house attendee**

"Water bottle filling stations at all parks. Washroom facilities at parks, more garbage containers at trails"

- **Open house attendees (comment "voted up" by others)**

"Splash pad was a great idea. Would be good to have another – maybe west end"

- **Open house attendee**

4.2 General Recommendations

4.2.1 Accessibility, Safety, Comfort and Usability

Accessibility is often discussed as a standalone issue, with the focus on meeting minimum requirements – usually this means complying with AODA standards. However, the general improvements discussed here have multiple, overlapping benefits that not only address accessibility, but serve to support public health and make the spaces safer, more comfortable, and more usable (e.g. in different seasons, and for different activities).

AODA Accessibility

Parks need to be upgraded over time to address accessibility. This is an important component of integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion in Tillsonburg's parks and recreation system. Infrastructure must meet Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standard requirements regarding seating (benches and picnic tables), playground equipment, playground safety surface, and pavement surface/path of travel (including tactile warning strips, handrails, and ramps). Safe and accessible paths of travel should be provided through parks with connections to amenities.

Currently, Tillsonburg has an accessible play structure at Memorial Park, and will have another at Library Park once it is completed. Tillsonburg has an unofficial playground replacement plan, with three parks updated in 2023. As part of this process, the Town aims to include accessible play features and pathways in all new parks. As parks are updated and made accessible, the Town inventory and website should be updated to reflect this and notify the community.

Examples of upgrades to playground accessibility include:

- Poured in place rubber or rubber tile safety/fall surface
- Cast in place flush concrete curb around perimeter of playground to retain safety surface and allow for barrier free access
- Playground design that meets minimum accessibility requirements as per CAN/CSA Z614-07 Annex H: Children's Playspaces and equipment that are accessible to persons with disabilities

Further, all new development parks should incorporate accessibility in the design phase. This can be accomplished by updating the Tillsonburg Development Guidelines and Design Criteria to include accessible models. For example, section 15.16 Park Benches should be updated to include an accessible bench model, and specifications for how many of the benches provided by the developer must be accessible. Updates to the guidelines, and park accessibility updates should be made in discussion with the Town's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

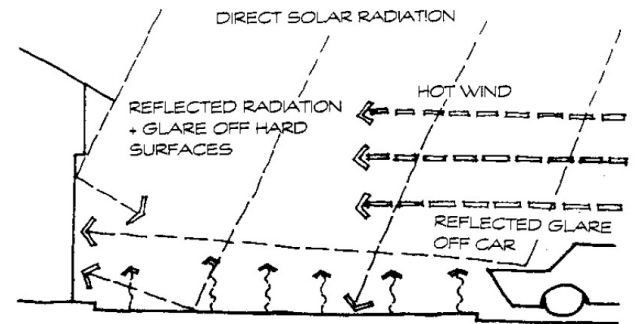
AODA-compliant signage that is consistent with the Town's Design Guidelines should be provided at all parks, trail access points, facility entrances, throughout the sites as needed, and along major routes.

Shelter from Sun and Rain

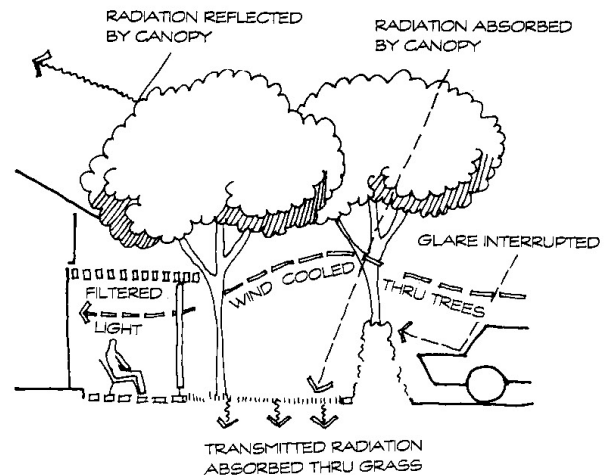
As a matter of community health and safety, and to support use of parks in all weather, adequate shelter needs to be provided in each park, either through the tree canopy or a built structure. This is particularly important in playgrounds, picnic areas, and sport fields where people often spend considerable time exposed to the sun, especially vulnerable populations such as children and seniors. Given the importance of providing shade in parks, shade structures and/or additional tree planting should be incorporated into all parks. Strategic tree planting should be a priority for the myriad benefits provided (e.g., shade, carbon sequestration, stormwater management, etc.).

The New South Wales Health Department (of Australia) and Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc. developed a comprehensive and helpful guide to sun protection entitled “Under Cover: Guidelines for Shade Planning and Design.” It is a technical guide that describes how different structures (different built structures as well as different tree types) provide shade (Figure 4-1), how to conduct a shade audit of a park, site-specific considerations (e.g., for sports fields and for parks), and more.

The National Program for Playground Safety at the University of Northern Iowa also prepared a study for the Standards Council of Canada on this subject, entitled “Thermally Comfortable Playgrounds: A Review of Literature and Survey of Experts” (2020). This study contains valuable background research and provides



without planting



with planting

Figure 4-1: Diagram of canopy shade from under cover: guidelines for shade planning and design¹⁶

16 The New South Wales Health Department and Cancer Society of New Zealand Inc, 1998

guidelines for design of playgrounds, water features, and shade provision. Both guides can be valuable resources for the Town.

Lighting

At this latitude, winter days can be fully dark by 5:00 pm. In order to encourage use of parks and facilities in winter months, this should be taken into account to ensure selected parks and facilities targeted for winter/shoulder season use are sufficiently lit (e.g., including sport fields/courts, outdoor rinks, etc.).

Sustainable lighting options such as LED or solar should be used. A challenge associated with solar lights has been that the lights lack the ability to retain their full intensity for the duration of the night. This may not be an issue for parks and facilities that are officially open/used until 11:00 pm. However, if the purpose of the lights is for safety and they need to remain bright all night, it may be problematic. Solar technology is evolving quickly, and it is now possible to address this issue by setting lighting profiles: pre-set schedules that dictate when the lights operate and the extent of their brightness, and the ability to switch to a motion sensor setting during the least used hours of the night.

Seating

Seating should be provided at all parks, in line with the type of use. Picnic tables are sometimes preferred as they allow groups to eat, play games, and converse. If picnic tables are fixed to the ground to prevent theft, they should be placed in a variety of formations to allow smaller and larger groups to sit together as needed.

It is occasionally the practice to remove seating and picnic tables during winter months to protect them from the elements, but seating should be selected and placed so that it can be used year-round to allow people to sit and socialize outdoors. As winters become milder due to climate change, the need for all-season seating will be greater as people will walk and gather outdoors more often in the winter months.

Recommendations

- PCT 1. As parks and playgrounds are updated for accessibility, update Town inventories and webpages to include the new information.
- PCT 2. Provide shelter (in the form of tree planting) and seating at all parks, that is adequate for the amount and type of use.
- PCT 3. Provide lighting during the shoulder seasons and winter months at parks that host activities year-round.

Naturalization and Tree Planting

In consultations with Council, community stakeholders and residents, there was strong support for environmentally sensitive practices in parks. Two impactful ways of improving the ecological function of greenspaces, as well as mitigating impacts from climate change, include naturalization and tree planting. It is noted that in consultations there was a preference for tree planting over naturalization. At the same time, there were many comments received related to “beautification”. Beauty is subjective, so it is not known exactly what commenters envision as a beautified space. Most likely this includes clean spaces, and plantings and furnishings that are newer and/or well maintained. At times however, naturalized spaces, including those with young trees, are sometimes viewed as “unkempt”. The sidebar titled Intentional Naturalization discusses this issue, and proposes some strategies for satisfying both sides.

INTENTIONAL NATURALIZATION

Naturalization is the process of allowing natural plant growth to occur, while managing that growth typically by removing/limiting non-native and invasive species and planting and encouraging the growth of desired native species. Naturalization is an important strategy for improving ecosystem health, and, in turn, building climate change resilience. Naturalization, for all its benefits, comes with two main challenges. First, some residents interpret naturalized landscapes as messy and unkempt, leading them to request the municipality remove them. Second, contrary to appearances, in the early stages of plant growth, naturalized spaces can require more maintenance and specialized knowledge than mowed lawns. However, within a couple of years, naturalized spaces should require less maintenance and resources than mowed areas.

Municipalities are often caught in the middle as they attempt to moderate between residents who dislike naturalization in parks and residents who want more naturalization for its environmental benefits. Joan Iverson Nassauer is a landscape architect in the field of ecological design who has studied this problem extensively:

“Novel landscape designs that improve ecological quality may not be appreciated or maintained if recognizable landscape language that communicates human intention is not part of the landscape. Similarly, ecologically valuable remnant landscapes may not be protected or maintained if the human intention to care for the landscape is not apparent. Landscape language that communicates human intention, particularly intention to care for the landscape, offers a powerful vocabulary for design to improve ecological quality. Ecological function is not readily recognizable to those who are not educated to look for it. Furthermore, the appearance of many indigenous ecosystems and wildlife habitats violates cultural norms for the neat appearance of landscapes.”¹⁶

A key direction from that paper that can support efforts in naturalization is to implement “cues to care” – actions that increase the intentionality of naturalized spaces so that it is obvious that the space is deliberate and someone is caring for and grooming it. Some of these “cues” or grooming practices include:

- **Bold patterns/clean lines:** While naturalized areas will naturally drift and change over time, the initial plantings should be laid out and confined to clear patterns or lines. This will help slowly introduce the idea to residents who request neat gardens.
- **Bird feeders and pollinator gardens:** Bird feeders and plants for pollinators (e.g., butterfly and bee gardens) communicate the intention of the place (a place for nature), and reinforce that it is not abandoned or neglected. Also, encouraging birds could increase wildlife sighting and appreciation by residents.
- **Borders:** Borders have the quick ability to make any collection of plants look neater, and can be made by fences, plantings, shrubs, or by mowing around the edges.
- **Signage:** Educational signage describing the plants and/or process in the naturalized area may also help increase community understanding and, therefore, acceptance. Signage should also encourage visitors to stay out of the area to avoid trampling plants and exposure to ticks. Educational signage could be provided in collaboration with local groups and partners if interested.

¹⁶ Nassauer, J. I. 1995. Messy ecosystems, orderly frames. *Landscape Journal*. 14(2): pp. 161-170.

Potential sites for naturalization should be chosen in consultation with the community, as consultation is an opportunity to educate about naturalization and develop a design plan that pleases residents. A naturalized garden, border, or section could be added to almost any park, however, consideration should be given to the risk of ticks. The taller grasses and plants in naturalized areas are a prime habitat for ticks, so they should not be designed in such a way that forces people to walk too closely to or through the area, and signage should be posted that provides notice and education on ticks.

For tree planting, the Oxford County Managed Forest Plan, 2018 – 2027 is an in-depth report that contains information about soil types and suitable forestry species and practices specific to Oxford County. This guide should be consulted and followed as appropriate for any forestry efforts undertaken by the Town.

Given the specialized knowledge required for successful naturalization and tree planting (i.e. plantings that thrive, look appealing, and are embraced by the community), the Town may consider adding a staff horticulturist (or with similar qualifications). As an example, Sault Ste. Marie has multiple horticulture positions which are year round. In the winter, they grow all the plants and trees that will be planted in gardens and planters around the City, in City-owned greenhouses. The horticultural staff also piloted a program recently to grow leafy greens for donation to local food banks. That program yielded

a significant amount of food, while using minimal staff time, so they have opted to continue the project. In Tillsonburg, this staff person could lead the naturalization and tree planting projects, help train operations staff, liaise with community organizations and volunteers regarding gardens, plantings, etc., and assist with community gardens as needed. To start, this could be a seasonal position, but could be segued into a year round role.

Recommendations:

- PCT 4. Implement managed naturalization practices, consulting with the community before embarking on projects.
- PCT 5. Provide educational signage about the benefits and methods of naturalization, along with warning signs for ticks.
- PCT 6. Hire a seasonal horticulturist, with potential to grow it to a year-round position.



4.2.2 Provision and Access

Classification

Table 4-4 provides an updated Parkland Classification system adapted from the County of Oxford’s Official Plan classification system that is currently in place for the Town.

Table 4-4: Updated Tillsonburg parkland classification system

Park Type	Typical Size	Description	Location	Examples
Community Park/Trail	5.0 Ha or greater Serves the whole Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> support a range of activities serve the whole community major recreation facilities/amenities parking has support amenities (e.g., washrooms, drinking water, concessions, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessible along collector or arterial roads street frontage pedestrian and bicycle access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorial Park Annandale Park Veterans Walkway Kinsmen Participark
Neighbourhood Park/Trail	1.0-2.0 Ha Serves 4,000-5,000 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supports a smaller range of activities typically geared for local use (800m radius) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> centrally located within neighbourhoods street frontage pedestrian and bicycle access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Southridge Park Northcrest Trail
Parkette	0.6 Ha or less Serves 1,000-2,000 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> passive activities, seating, gardens sizable urban squares should be designed to accommodate a range of events such as markets and live music/performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be in neighbourhoods, commercial, and institutional areas street frontage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bert Newman Parkette
Natural Areas/ Trails	Undefined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> naturally significant lands in need of protections may contain trails and other recreation amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> topographic variations, ravines, water ways ideally located to create a connected network throughout Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tillsonburg Conservation Area

The updates to the classification system include:

- Change of name of “sub-neighbourhood park” to the commonly used term “parkette”
- Trails have been integrated into the classification system to reflect their importance in the community, and to facilitate provision of trail systems as part of developer parkland dedication
- Sizes have been adjusted to reflect commonly used size ranges, as well as taking into consideration the sizes of currently existing parks in Tillsonburg
- Tweaks to language in the description and location columns

The Facility assessment (section 3.0) identified that new outdoor sport facilities are likely not needed in the short or medium term of this Plan. Near the end of the term the following may be needed, depending on use and interest:

- Potential need for four more softball diamonds (approximately 4 ha total)
- Undetermined need for soccer/sport fields
- Two pickleball courts (approximately 0.05 ha total)
- Two tennis courts (approximately 0.05 ha total)

Therefore, the total land needs for outdoor sport facilities is approximately 4.1 ha. It should be noted that sport facilities should be provided in groups - the four courts together, and the four softball diamonds together - rather than the courts or diamonds spread among a number of parks. The pickleball and tennis courts can be easily accommodated at new or existing neighbourhood or community parks, due to their relatively small footprint. In order to be able to accommodate the four diamonds and associated amenities (parking, washrooms, playground etc.), consideration should be made when planning new development parks. The need for Community Parks (which should be 5.0 ha or greater) in the North, West and Southeast of the Town is discussed further below. One of these parks would be large enough to accommodate the four diamonds, if it is determined they are needed at that point.

Many municipalities will be challenged in the future to provide sufficient parkland to maintain current provision levels due to reductions in parkland dedication from Bill 23. In this case, the Town should focus on providing access to parkland for all residents within reasonable walking distance (typically defined as 400 - 800m). Figure 4-2 shows the areas of future growth overlaid with the park walking distance map. The areas of future growth are on the edges of the Town, and correlate exactly with areas that currently lack parks (likely because the land is not currently developed). The total additional parkland/trails needed (35.8 ha) does not necessarily have to all be located within the new growth areas, however, as these lands

are developed for housing, they should be provided with adequate parkland or trail systems, meaning:

1. Aim for sufficient parkland to meet the existing park provision ratio of 4.3:1,000 people
2. Parkland provided by developers should be large enough to provide the environmental, recreational and social benefits that are expected to be provided by a park: that is, large enough for tree plantings, gardens, play and/or picnic areas etc. Leftover landscaped spaces such as awkward slivers of land, boulevard medians, round-a-bout centres, or traffic island gateway features should not qualify as park space as part of parkland dedication from developers.
3. Parkland should be located with consideration of the access map (Figure 4-2), to provide parks or trails to those in areas who are not currently within 800 metres of an existing park.
4. New parks must also abide by the County of Oxford's Official Plan Policies for Tillsonburg, section 8.6.2.2 Development Standards for Parks and section 8.6.2.3 Parkland Acquisition, as well as the Town's Parklands and Streetscaping Development Guidelines and Design Criteria.

Referring again to the overlay map in Figure 4-2, there are a number of areas that fall outside of any 400 or 800 metre radius and are not expected to see development in the future. To better serve these areas, the parks provided in the new developments should include a Community Park (one in each area) from parkland dedication. A Community Park would serve the local residents as well as those outside the 800 metre radius that do not have local access to parks. Given the overall size of the consolidated areas to be developed, each can likely accommodate a Community Park, plus one or two Neighbourhood Parks.

Recommendations:

- PCT 7. Adopt the updated parkland classification system.
- PCT 8. Leftover landscaped spaces such as awkward slivers of land, boulevard medians, round-a-bout centres, or traffic island gateway features should not qualify as park space as part of parkland dedication from developers.
- PCT 9. New parkland should be located with consideration of the access map (Figure 4-2), to provide parks or trails to those in areas who are not currently within 800 metres of an existing park.
- PCT 10. Parkland from new developments should include at minimum a Community Park in each area.

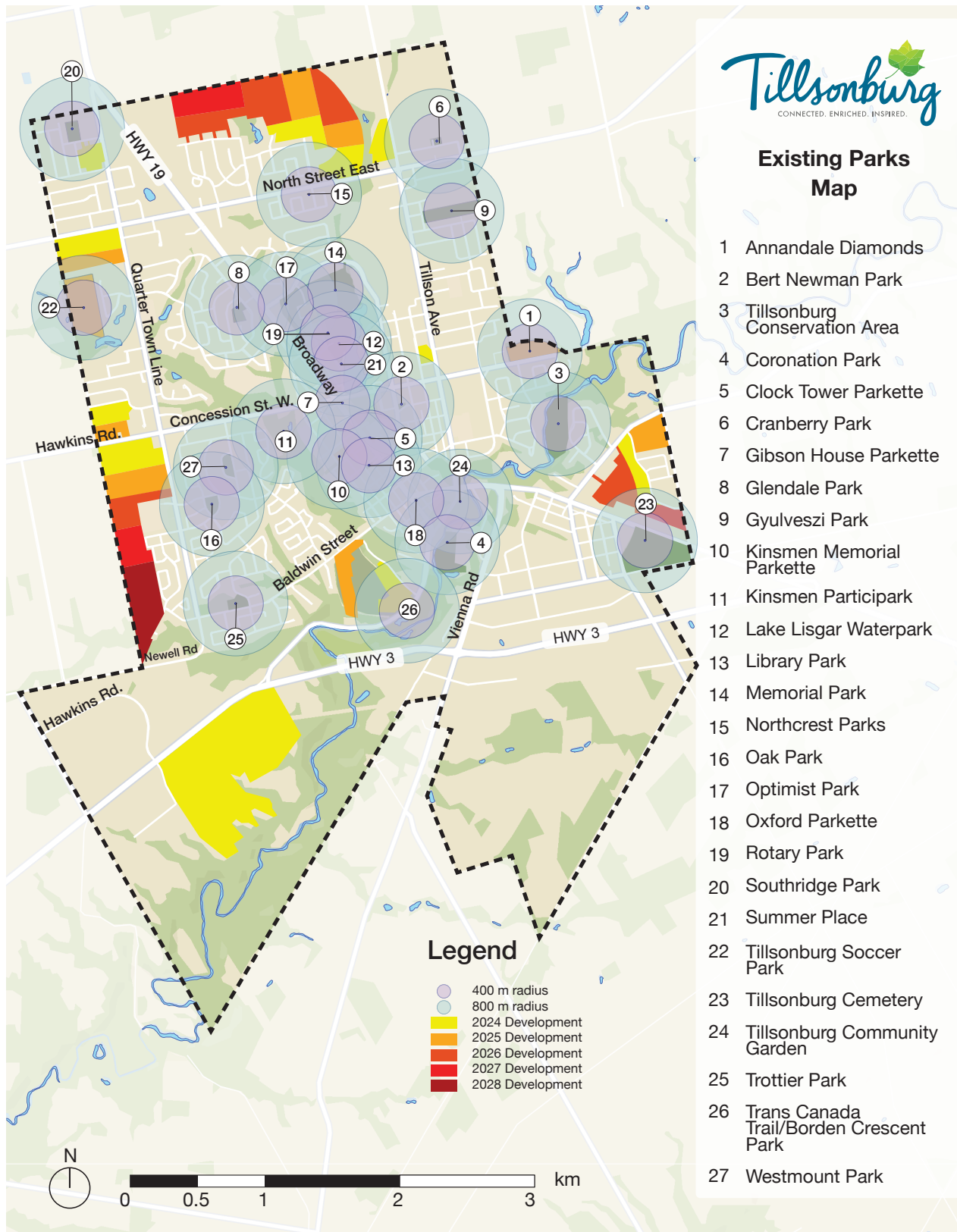


Figure 4-2: Map of Tillsonburg showing the 400m and 800m radii around each park, and areas of future residential growth

4.3 Site-Specific Recommendations

4.3.1 Lake Lisgar, Gibson House, and Kinsmen Memorial Parkette

The Lake Lisgar park assemblage includes Lake Lisgar, Gibson House and dock, and the Kinsmen Memorial Parkette. The Lake has 2 docks (at Gibson house and at Summer Palace), a boat launch (at Summer Palace), six bubblers, and a small boardwalk with gazebo. The Lake is mostly used for fishing, with some boating such as kayaking, canoeing and paddle boarding (no motors over 10 horsepower allowed), and swimming. Lake Lisgar Revitalization Committee (LLRC) is a dedicated group of volunteers that arranges for water testing, provides and installs the bubblers, dredges/clears plants every three years, stocks the Lake with trout, and otherwise monitors and protects the ecosystem of Lake Lisgar.

As a central destination for recreation and nature enjoyment in the Town, the community has indicated a need for increased maintenance along the Lake Lisgar pathway and shoreline, to ensure the path is clear of brush, and the views to the lake are not obstructed.

Recommendations:

- PCT 11. Continue to support the efforts to maintain/improve the Lake's water quality.
- PCT 12. Ensure the pathways along the Lake are maintained, and that brush and plants are kept clear of the path and do not block views of the Lake.

4.3.2 Community Centre Hub: Memorial Park (includes Summer Palace and Lake Lisgar Water Park), Optimist Park, Rotary Park

The Community Centre Hub includes Memorial Park (includes Summer Palace and Lake Lisgar Water Park), Optimist Park, and Rotary Park, which are all clustered around the Community Centre and also border Lake Lisgar. There are many facilities and amenities at this site, as summarized in Table 4-5 (excerpted from Appendix B:).

Table 4-5: Summary of Facilities and Amenities at the Community Centre Hub

Park Details	Supporting Amenities	Facilities/amenities for Self-directed Use	Facilities for Organized Use	Other Notes
Memorial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Lisgar Water Park Summer Palace, dock and boat launch Basketball court Pavilion Playground (accessible) Splash pad Multi-purpose pad/ skating rink Off leash dog park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hardball (2) Slo-pitch (1) 	<p>Lake Lisgar Water Park has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Permanent washrooms/ change rooms Concessions
Optimist Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Seasonal portolet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground Skate park Pump track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth baseball (2) 	
Rotary Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground Outdoor fitness equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennis/ Pickleball (3) 	

**Memorial Park
Community Hub Map**

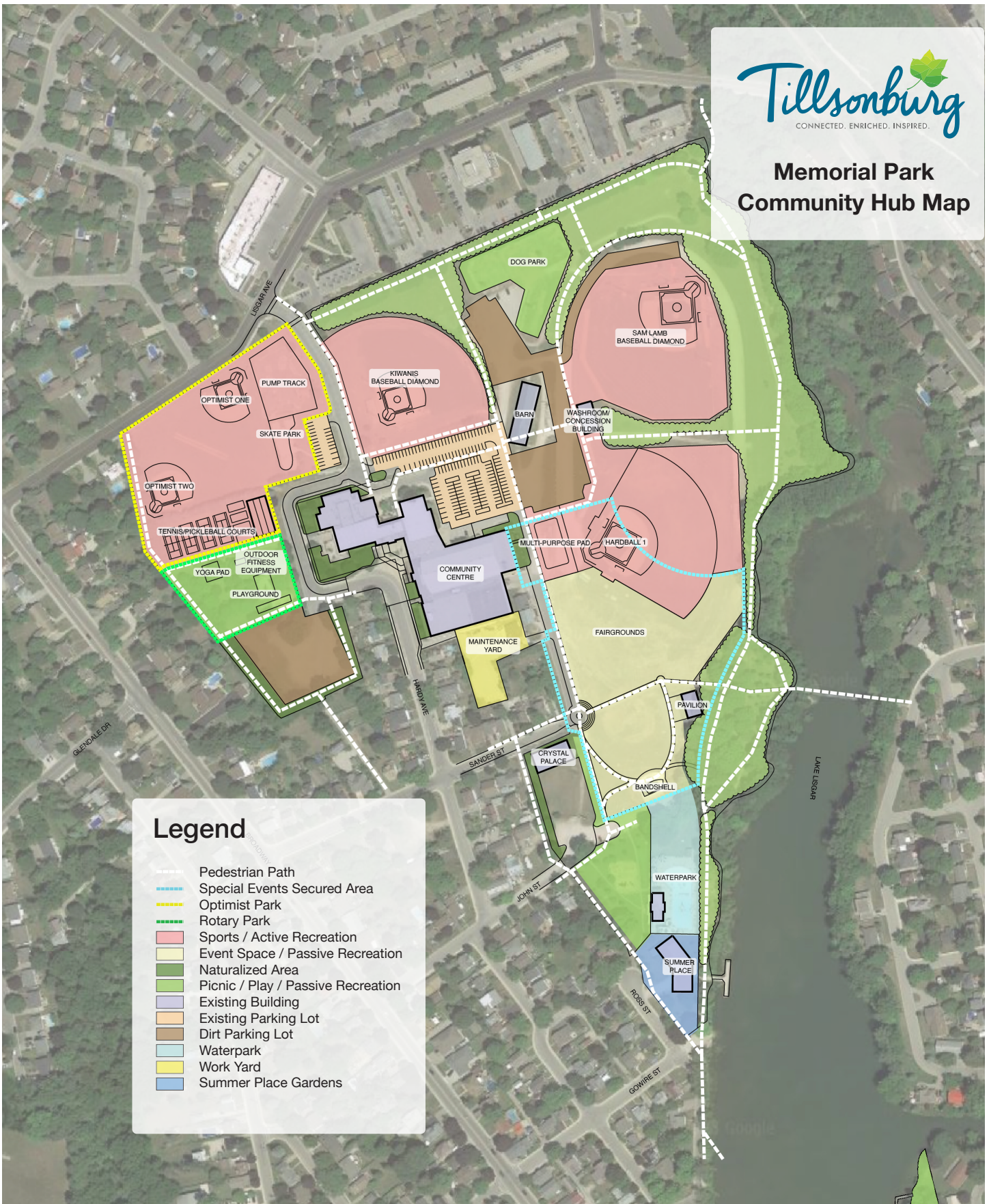


Figure 4-3: Current layout of Community Centre hub site

A Master Plan was created for the site in 2017, and since then, many of the recommendations have been implemented, along with additional improvements (all shown in Figure 4-3).

Based on consultations for this project, there are a few major outstanding requests/issues from users for the site:

- Improve circulation
- Increase parking and improve layout (challenging to access facilities, and not enough parking for events and the amount of users at peak times)
- Suggestions that the dog-off leash area could be relocated elsewhere in the park to provide parking in a more optimal location
- Improve signage and wayfinding
- Improve the bandshell
- Provide a building with washrooms, drinking water and concessions near Sam Lamb and Hardball #2 diamonds (see discussion in the Facilities section)
- Provide storage for Parks Department
- Optimize use of Summer Palace

In addition to this, the Facilities Assessment of this Plan (Section 3) noted the following:

- The need to consider how indoor facility needs (i.e., potential Community Centre expansion or redevelopment) would impact existing outdoor facilities

- Likely the parking adjacent to the Kinsmen Arena and the Kiwanis Diamond would be displaced and would need to be considered for relocation

The Lake Lisgar Water Park features a beach-entry pool, 186 foot twister slide, and other water play features. The Town recently completed (spring 2024) a 1.2 million renovation of the building with concession, washrooms and change rooms. The water play features were not part of the upgrades, and they are aged, and in need of replacement. It should be noted the splash pad is nearby, so the same water features should not be duplicated.

Summer Place is a Town-owned building located just outside of the Water Park, near the shore of Lake Lisgar. It has two levels, and a large balcony on the upper level. The lower level is used by the Rowing Club. Outside, at the Lake, there is a boat launch and docks, which are used by the Rowing Club as well as the general public. The building has been leased to E&E McLaughlin for 10 years, with the use retained for Summer Camp programming, and Rowing Club use in the building. The McLaughlin family undertook renovations of the building to address mold and other concerns. As the lease is 10 years, the building will remain in use by the McLaughlin family for the majority of the term of this Master Plan. The Town should continue to work with the McLaughlin family to ensure the building remains available for summer camp, and for use by the Rowing Club. The Town should encourage use of the building by the

community, assisting the McLaughlin family in doing so (e.g., offering to advertise the space, or events occurring there).

The Tillsonburg Fair is held annually at Memorial Park. The Fair uses a number of buildings and spaces onsite: the home show is held in the Crystal Palace, the rabbit shows are in the Pigeon Barn, the office is used as a food booth, and the Cattle Barn is used for 4H. Open space, the pavilion, and bandshell in Memorial Park are used for midway rides, vendors, agricultural displays, food trucks, kids area, and other activities.

There are two considerations for the Fair buildings that arose during consultations:

1. The Pigeon Barn is in fact condemned, and should not be used for any purposes. Given the infrequent use of the Pigeon Barn, and its condemned state, it should be removed from Town supply. Pigeon races and rabbit shows should be accommodated elsewhere.
2. Town Parks staff are in need of storage space and central location for their operations. Currently Town Parks staff are based at the Cemetery, on the edge of Town, and all equipment is stored there. Housing staff and equipment far from the locations they service is inefficient, and prevents staff from "keeping a pulse" on parks needs and concerns. Parks staff and equipment should be moved to a more central location, Memorial Park being ideal for its space and centrality.



The Facilities section recommends a facility fit study to determine options for expanding the Community Centre. Any expansion to the Community Centre would likely impact the two existing fair buildings closest to the arena (office and canteen), and potentially the Crystal Palace (the Pigeon Barn will be removed). Once a determination is made on an expansion (if any), the site should be designed with park operations base in mind (with adequate and appropriate storage space and access), and space for the continued operation of the annual Fair.

The Outdoor Multi-Purpose Rink was donated by the McLean Family. Originally it was meant to be a community-run facility, but the Town has assumed complete responsibility of operations and maintenance. The rink is very well used in the winter, however there have been consistent concerns about vandalism and arguments between users. The schedule is set for alternate days of hockey or family skating, but the schedule is often not respected, leading to calls to police and conflicts. For the 2023/24 season, staff time is being dedicated to monitoring the rink, a practice that should likely continue in future years. The Town should install lights and cameras to discourage vandalism of the facility.

The basketball court, accessible playground and splash pad require no changes, and should continue to be provided and maintained throughout the term of this Plan. The addition of a washroom and concessions building near the diamonds is discussed under the Facilities Section.

Recommendations

- PCT 13. Provide wayfinding signage through the Community Centre hub directing people to the various facilities, amenities, and connections.
- PCT 14. Update the water features at Lake Lisgar Water Park.
- PCT 15. Review agreements for Fair buildings.
- PCT 16. Remove the condemned Pigeon Barn from Town facility supply.
- PCT 17. Install lights and cameras at the McLean rink to discourage vandalism.

4.3.4 Coronation Park

Coronation Park was identified as an area of opportunity to increase use. Currently the park has a new playground, green space, a disc golf course, community garden, parking lot, and access to the Carroll trail. The primary concern regarding developing the Park is that it occasionally floods, and on two occasions has been completely submerged. At the same time, Coronation Park is an asset to the community, as a large green space towards the south of Town, where parks are more limited. There are existing plans to expand the community garden area to add more plots, and this would be beneficial for residents and a suitable use for the Park. The Town should limit any developments at this park that conflict with its natural processes and that would be at risk for damage if flooding occurs. The Town should have the site assessed by a Landscape Architect and, if determined to be feasible, undertake grading work to protect existing assets (such as the playground and community garden plots) in the event of flooding.

Recommendation

- PCT 18. Continue with plans to add additional community garden plots at Coronation Park.
- PCT 19. Assess the feasibility of undertaking grading work to protect existing assets at Coronation Park from flooding.



4.4 Trail Recommendations

Existing Trail System

Tillsonburg has approximately 19 trails or distinct trail segments that are owned by the Town and/or maintained by the Town. The existing trails are mapped in Figure 4-4, and summarized in detail in Appendix B:

4.4.1 What We Heard

Trails were a popular topic during consultations, with many comments received in support of more investment into trail maintenance and expanding the network. Below are some highlights of comments received:

- Interest in more multi-use trails that are paved to satisfy multiple users
- Interest in expanding trails network to connect communities and create smaller walkable trail loops within larger trail paths (e.g., Memorial Park)
- Interest in enhancing trail features (e.g., lighting, shade, winter maintenance) in order to support more walkable communities
- South end of the Town identified as an area in need of connectivity and integration into the trail systems
- Need to invest in beautification along trails, naturalization, removal of invasive species, garbage clean up etc.
- Need for clear wayfinding signage along trails and at points of connection

- Need for porta potties at key locations
- When asked to identify which trails members of their household use, the top three indicated were: Trans Canada Trail (33%), Kinsmen Participark (22%), Tillsonburg Conservation Area Trail (15%).
- “Winterize more trails” - Open house attendee
- “Trails are great (trails at Southland used for mountain biking)” - Open house attendee
- “Washrooms on trails! Walking everyday need some at parking areas” - Open house attendee

Beautification, naturalization, tree planting, washroom access, and signage were all discussed previously in section.

Winter Use

Currently there are two trails available for winter use: Veterans Trail (Rolph Street to Quarter Town Line), which is maintained by the Roads Department; and a segment of the Trans Canada Trail (East of Tillson Ave.), which is groomed by the County for cross country skiing and snowmobile use. Some years ago, there was also cross country skiing at Kinsmen Participark.

The popularity of outdoor winter activities greatly increased during the pandemic, a trend that many in the parks and recreation industry think is here to stay (see following page).



IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON OUTDOOR RECREATION

The Canadian City Parks Report: Centring Equity & Resilience (2021) by Park People included a survey with 3,500 responses received, including representation from all provinces and territories. The survey results showed a renewed interest in parks, a trend that was anecdotally reported throughout the pandemic, as well as continued support for expanded parks-based activities:

89% had tried a new activity in a park in 2020, with top activities including regular walks through parks and trails (56%) and socializing with friends and family (40%).

50% reported their winter park use increased during COVID-19 compared to pre-pandemic winters with 73% saying they expected this use to continue or increase in post-pandemic winter seasons.

The community in Tillsonburg strongly voiced the same desire for more outdoor activities in winter, and comments particularly focused on winter trail maintenance. Clearing trails not only provides more opportunities for activity, it also improves accessibility for those with mobility restrictions or using mobility devices (including strollers). As the Roads Department is charged with the task of snow removal, Parks should approach them and discuss the possibility of clearing other trail segments. Which segments could be determined in discussion with Roads, based on levels of use of the trail(s), proximity to schools and older adult communities, and feasibility of snow removal and salting.

Recommendations

PCT 20. Discuss the possibility of clearing additional trail segments with the roads department. Select segments based on level of use, proximity to schools and older adult communities, and feasibility for Roads crew.

4.4.2 New Trail Segments

The 2015 Trails Plan recommended a number of proposed trails that would contribute to connectivity within the Town and promote active and healthy lifestyles. One proposed trail from the 2015 Plan is carried through as a recommendation in this Master Plan. The continuation of the Participark trail north of Concession St. W through the natural area to Quarter Town Line (Proposed Trail #1 in Figure 4-4).

The Town should also consider providing on or off-road bike lanes along key routes transecting north-south and east-west (this would be under the purview of the Roads Department).

Adding new trail segments through neighbourhoods is nearly impossible when there is not an existing natural corridor to follow. For this reason, it is very important that trail systems are provided at the time of design and development of new residential areas. Parkland dedication in the form of trail systems should be considered, and strongly encouraged in areas of Town that are not well connected to the trail system otherwise, and where larger recreation facilities (e.g., sport fields) are not required. It can be argued that a trail system through a subdivision provides greater recreation value than the typical small park with playground, as people of all ages can make use of a trail for a variety of activities (e.g., walking, running, biking, skating, dog walking etc.), and play equipment can still be provided at a parkette at the trailhead.

Trail systems that connect to shopping, schools, and other facilities also encourage and support active transportation.

Recommendations

- PCT 21. Develop a trail continuation of the Participark trail north of Concession St. W through the natural area to Quarter Town Line.
- PCT 22. Parkland dedication in the form of trail systems should be considered, and strongly encouraged in areas of Town that are not well connected to the trail system otherwise, and where larger recreation facilities (e.g., sport fields) are not required.



Figure 4-4: Map of existing trails in Tillsonburg



4.5 Tillsonburg Cemetery

The Tillsonburg Cemetery is the only active cemetery in the Town. The Pioneer Cemetery operated from 1830 - 1870, and is now a historic site. The Tillsonburg Cemetery features mature trees, gardens, seating areas, burial plots (including the option for green burial) and columbaria (see Figure 4-6).

4.5.1 What We Heard

- There is growing interest in cremation as a burial method. Columbariums are also gaining popularity, and the Town needs to provide more to support interest
- Suggestion for providing a variety of designs and configurations of columbariums to provide more choice, and a more visually appealing landscape
- Additional parking and road paving are needed to support visitors for celebration of life events
- Additional accessibility considerations are needed. Accessibility should include more than wheelchairs, but consider walkers, cane, and walking distances
- Green burial options are available in Tillsonburg, and can offer a more affordable option relative to neighbouring municipalities/towns
- Aesthetic maintenance of Tillsonburg cemeteries is a primary concern/area for improvement. More investment in planning and designing the cemetery with beautification in mind is critical

Columbaria and Scattering Grounds Columbariums offer a range of benefits (e.g., sheltered areas for visitations, affordability, etc.) for those seeking a unique and dignified way to memorialize their loved ones. The Town has noted an increase in request for columbarium niches, and is responding by adding more columbaria, and keeping wait lists. Columbaria are also space-efficient, making efficient use of land resources.

To enhance future columbarium additions in the Cemetery, the Town should focus on implementing an indoor/outdoor style in their designs. This style combines the benefits of being sheltered and protected while maintaining a connection to the outdoors, providing visitors with a comforting and contemplative space. It is also essential to include comfortable seating in the area, allowing visitors a peaceful and restful space for reflection. The option for fixtures at each niche to leave flowers, photos, or other mementos creates a personal touch, allowing families to celebrate the lives of their dearly departed in a tangible and meaningful manner.

In designing future columbarium and burial areas, the Town should provide a variety of columbarium types, seating types, arrangements of seating, and pathways, to add uniqueness to different resting areas, and offer a variety of choices. Safety and security is also a concern, and lighting should be provided.

Scattering gardens can be incorporated around the cemetery where residents are invited to lay their loved ones cremains to

**Existing Cemetary
Map**

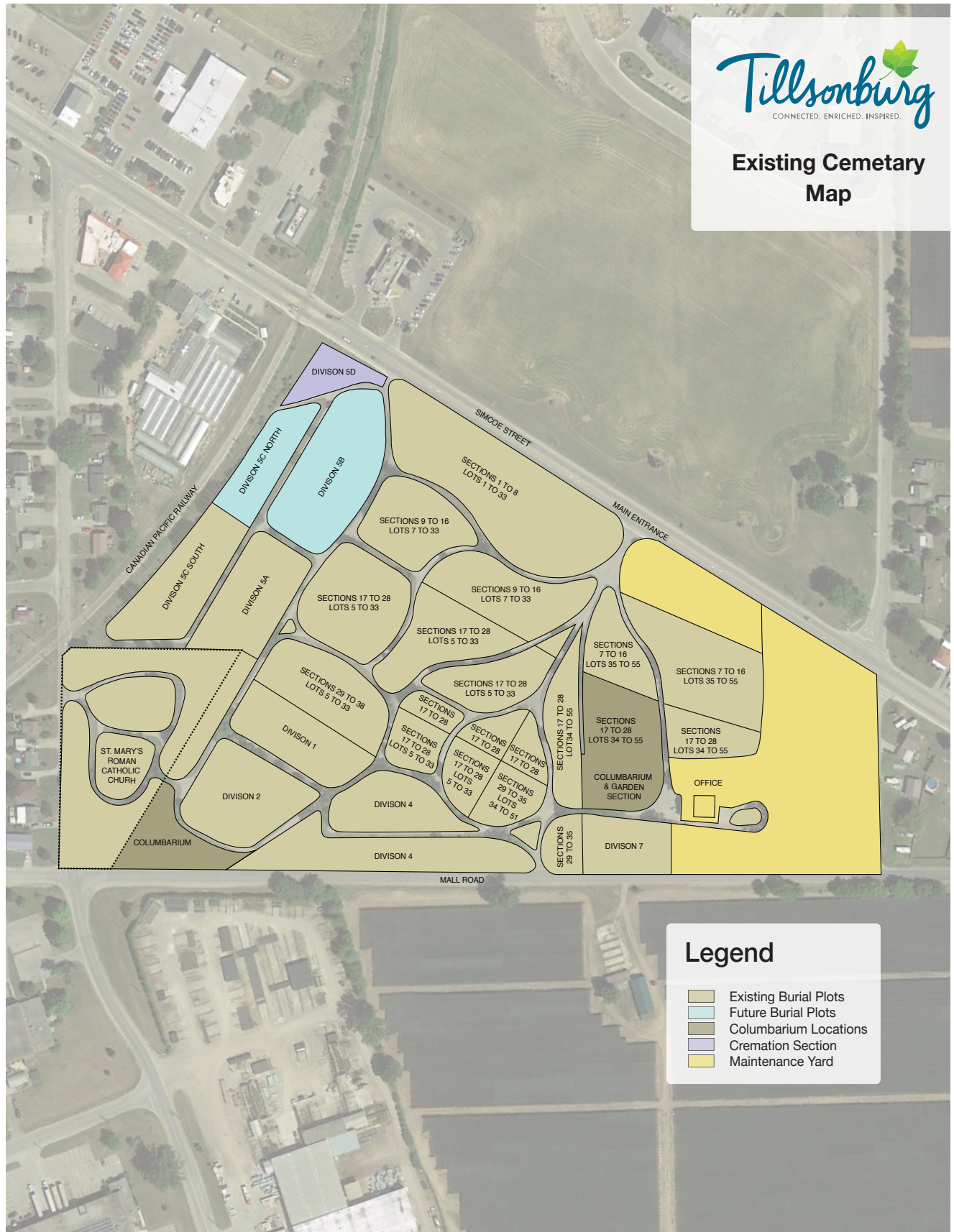


Figure 4-6: Map of existing cemeteries in Tillsonburg

rest. These gardens should be located with consideration to having access to privacy, and seating areas.

Green/Natural Burials

Green or natural burials are another popular alternative to traditional burials and cremation. In a natural burial, the body is placed in a wood or wicker casket, or wrapped in a shroud, and buried in a natural setting like a forest or meadow. The Green Burial Society of Canada outlines the five principles of green burial:

1. No Embalming
2. Direct Earth Burial
3. Ecological Restoration & Conservation
4. Simple Memorialization
5. Optimized Land Use¹⁷

Green/natural burials are better for the environment, and are typically more affordable than traditional burials. The Town should consider assigning an undeveloped area of the cemetery as a green burial area, and certifying it through the Green Burial Society of Canada.

Memorial Benches and Trees

The Town should consider expanding its program for memorial benches and trees, further enriching the options available for those seeking an enduring tribute. Tree varieties should be offered in accordance with the Oxford County Managed Forest Plan, 2018 – 2027 as discussed previously, and memorial benches should include accessible options. Additional options can include larger items like gazebos or other shade structures.

Visiting the Cemetery

In other municipalities, historic and mature cemeteries like both of Tillsonburg’s cemeteries have constituted an important part of the green space system, particularly in dense/land-limited municipalities. For example, both Meadowvale Cemetery in Brampton, and Streetsville Memorial in Mississauga, include walking paths and nature-observation areas together with more formal gardens, encouraging people to visit and spend time on the grounds.

Picturesque cemeteries have increasingly been used for wedding photos, and even wedding ceremonies. The Williamsburg Cemetery in Kitchener, for example, also includes a chapel that can be rented for weddings. The City planned the development of the cemetery with this goal in mind and markets the rentals on a variety of wedding sites:

¹⁷ <https://greenburialcanada.ca/the-five-principles/>

“We’re trying to encourage people to see this area as more than just a place where we bury our dead,” [the Cemeteries Manager] said. “I see this cemetery as multi-use. It’s here for the community to enjoy... Kitchener doesn’t have an abundance of land,... The city planned very carefully to make the site inviting, with ponds, extensive landscaping, a long bridge snaking across the water, a wooden pergola and gazebo.”¹⁸

Tillsonburg is also a geographically small municipality that should make the most of its greenspace assets, including the cemeteries. In addition to creating a beautifully landscaped space with walking paths, the Town can encourage people to visit the cemetery by attending one of the events that occur annually, such as Remembrance Day and Decoration Day. In both cases, cemetery staff and visitors make efforts to beautify the space, and residents should be made aware of the opportunity to participate and enjoy the space.

Recommendations

- PCT 23. Focus on providing more unique columbaria options in future cemetery development.
- PCT 24. Design the cemetery with variety in mind - in terms of landscapes, burial options, columbaria types, seating types etc. with appropriate safety and security measures.
- PCT 25. Provide a green burial area.
- PCT 26. Develop the cemetery as an accessible, beautified greenspace with gardens and paths throughout.
- PCT 27. Increase promotion of events that occur at the cemetery such as Decoration Day and Remembrance Day.

18 https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/news/till-death-do-us-part-kitchener-cemetery-a-hot-spot-for-weddings/article_99d9ffa7-2f70-5b88-b3bd-f7a52c232e69.html



5.0 SERVICE DELIVERY

5.1 Introduction & Assessment Background

Service delivery addresses resources needed to ensure successful implementation of the Master Plan's recommendations in each of the foregoing service areas. The assessment and recommendations for the Town of Tillsonburg are presented under the following topic headings:

- role of the municipality in service delivery
- Recreation, Culture and Parks Department and Committees of Council
- collaborations and agreements
- policy requirements
- revenue generating programs
- service planning and evaluation
- service marketing, communications, and promotions



5.1.1 What We Heard

- Parks, culture and recreation services in Tillsonburg require both improvements to existing supply and further development to bring them up-to-date and to serve a growing, increasingly diverse population.
- The capacity of the municipality to respond to community needs and interests must be weighed against ongoing or new funding/legislative constraints from upper levels of government, expanded mandates in other areas of service provision (e.g., affordable housing), and general reluctance among residents to entertain tax increases for parks and recreation services.

5.2 Role of the Municipality in Service Delivery

Table 5-1 provides a general model of recreation service delivery, categorized as three primary approaches: sole provision by the municipality, municipal collaboration with other parties, and sole provision by the commercial sector. In the first instance, the municipality is a direct service provider. In collaborating with other agencies and organizations, it becomes an indirect service provider by assuming an enabling/supporting role.

The Town of Tillsonburg is engaged in both direct and indirect roles in service delivery. In direct provision, the Town works autonomously in delivering services to the community. Facilities fully owned and operated by the Town (e.g., Community Centre), and services provided by Town staff (e.g., swim instruction, museum programs, etc.) are examples of this category.

Table 5-1: General model of recreation service delivery

Sector	Municipal		Private
Role	municipal provision	collaborative provision	
Municipal Role	direct	indirect	
Method	municipality works autonomously	service agreements	partnerships
Method description		municipality works with other party(ies) to deliver services to the community using public facilities/spaces through agreements such as program contracts, leases, licenses, MOUs, etc.	municipality and another public, not for profit, or commercial sector party provide services through corporate partnerships for joint development, joint operating, etc.

Collaborative provision includes several approaches. The Town may enable another party - e.g., volunteer community group, private instructor, commercial program provider, not-for-profit agency - to deliver its services through agreements to run programs. Typically, these agreements provide access to municipal space for a specified period (e.g., fall/winter program session). They can cover arrangements with commercial providers, not-for-profit agencies and community-based volunteer groups to deliver programs and events. Agreements with commercial parties typically specify any cost/revenue sharing that is to occur between the Town and the provider.

Consultation with the municipality and the need to serve a growing population with increasingly sophisticated services will require developing both its direct and indirect activities in provision, while respecting the Town's commercial sector that provides recreation services. Of particular interest to the Town is further developing its indirect role to leverage both the resources of the municipality and other parties agencies/organizations in mutually beneficial collaborations. Section 5.4 below on collaborations and agreements with non-municipal parties addresses existing and potential arrangements to support indirect service delivery.

Recommendations

- SD 1. In developing its services and meeting the needs of a growing population, the Town will continue to act in both direct and indirect capacities.
- SD 2. In further developing programs, events, parks and facilities within the Town's mandate, pursue opportunities to leverage both the resources of the municipality and other parties, agencies/ organizations in mutually beneficial collaborations.

5.3 Recreation, Culture and Parks Department and Committees of Council

5.3.1 Recreation, Culture and Parks Department Staffing

The Town's Director of Recreation, Culture and Parks, supported by an Administrative Assistant is responsible for three major divisions within the Department: Culture and Heritage, Parks and Facilities, and Recreation Programs and Services. Each of these divisions is led by a manager and supported by supervisors and coordinators responsible for parks and facility operations, and program/service delivery. Appendix C contains the Department's organizational chart. The following outlines staffing considerations to support the Master Plan's implementation, under each of the three divisions.

The Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review noted that "RCP makes extensive use of best-practices including...service contracts, extensive use of seasonal and part time staff..." (Executive Summary, p.1). These practices, however, are now under review due to changes in the economy post-Covid that are reflected in challenges with respect to attracting and retaining staff. Consultation with the Town indicated that the municipality is working towards becoming more competitive in the job market - and reducing turnover - by offering more full time, salaried positions to replace contractual, part time and seasonal hires. Investing in staff - balancing service provision with the correct number of people needed to deliver it in all areas - along with more training and succession planning were areas noted for development.

The Town recently underwent a market review to assess needs in this area. If the results of this work provide a 'baseline' for a 2024 staff complement, it can be used to project needs over the term of the Plan due to both infrastructure (parks and facilities) and program/event service development. The following sections highlight key areas of staff requirements based on the Master Plan's recommendations. In some cases, additional staff may be needed while in others existing positions may require new/enhanced competencies.

Programs and Services

Programs and Services includes Sports League Facilitators. As the scope of services offered by the Town increases, and collaborations extend to groups beyond sport interests, facilitation work will need to include these providers. Existing staff positions may be able take on additional work in this area, although it is likely that sport and non-sport interests would also be engaged separately due to differences in the types of services they offer. Additional facilitation activities will be most important in policy development directed to supporting volunteer organizations, and in ongoing service planning and evaluation work. These topics are discussed in Sections 5.5 and 5.7, respectively.

The Programs and Services Division is backed by Business Services. The Communications staff position is responsible for parks and recreation services communication and promotion. Service

planning and evaluation, however, should be further developed. Service planning and evaluation will require preparing processes and data collection tools, in consultation with other departments (e.g., IT, Finance) as well as ongoing work to activate these functions. The Business Services Division is likely the best location for these functions, as they can integrate all three areas - Parks and Facilities, Culture and Heritage, Programs and Services in this work.

Parks and Facilities

The Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review “proposed some relatively minor modifications [to the Department’s organizational structure including improvements to] clarify responsibilities, reduce overlaps, and address gaps” (p. 3). To this end, the Review recommended assigning additional resources to the Department since, “managing the heightened workload associated with aging sports and recreation infrastructure - coupled with expanded opportunities for infrastructure renewal funding from higher levels of government - has ramped up the workload associated with capital upkeep and capital improvement projects” (p.3). It recommended either moving Project Management responsibilities to another department (ideally one with in-house engineering capacity) or contracting a professional organization” for this work (p. 3). Should these responsibilities remain within the Department, establishing a separate project management function with one dedicated employee reporting to the Director was recommended. In addition to these considerations, the parks assessment of the Master Plan recommends a seasonal (potentially full-time/year round) Horticulturalist (see page 73).



Culture and Heritage

It was noted that to optimize the visitor-draw of the Town’s unique assets in culture (including Station Arts) and heritage, additional operating hours and staffing are needed. Three full-time staff were recently added to the Museum, and the Town should ensure that the staff schedule covers the busiest periods e.g., summer, weekends, Christmas, etc.

Recommendations

- SD 3. Additional Department staff or enhanced competencies are required to develop the following areas of service: facilitation work with volunteer community groups; planning and evaluation; and horticulture.
- SD 4. Additional contracted instructors will be required to allow programs to be diversified and added to supply.

5.3.2 Advisory Committees of Council

The Town’s existing advisory committees for the Council term 2022 to 2026 with mandates related to parks, culture and recreation services include:

- Recreation and Sports Advisory Committee
- Museum, Culture, Heritage and Special Awards Advisory Committee
- Tillsonburg Youth Advisory Council
- Parks, Beautification and Cemeteries Advisory Committee
- Accessibility Advisory Committee

Table 5-2 summarizes their mandates and structures, which are detailed in Terms of Reference on the Town’s website for each Committee.

Table 5-2: Tillsonburg committee mandate and structure summary

Recreation and Sports Advisory Committee
<p>Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise and make recommendations to Council on the implementation of recreational programming and sports in relation to the Community Parks, Recreation and Cultural Strategic Master Plan • To develop and maintain working relationships with sport and recreation user groups • To advise and inform Council of matters related to: recreation programs, grants, funding initiatives and legislation <p>Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven to 12 members: one Council and remainder public with one youth under the age of 18. Municipal staff: Recreation Programs and Services Manager.

Table 5-2 Continued: Tillsonburg committee mandate and structure summary

Museum, Culture, Heritage and Special Awards Advisory Committee
<p>Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise and make recommendations to Council on all matters with respect to tourism and culture in the Town of Tillsonburg • To advise and inform Council on new legislation and funding initiatives • To develop relations for coordinating events with local service groups • To advise and make recommendations to Council on all matters related to properties of architectural and historical significance <p>Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven to 12 members: one Council and remainder public with one representative from the Tillsonburg District Craft Guild. Municipal staff: Curator/Manager of Culture & Heritage and Records & Legislative Coordinator
Tillsonburg Youth Advisory Council
<p>Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise and make recommendations to Council on all matters with respect to youth recreational and social issues in the Town of Tillsonburg • This will provide a communication link between the youth in Tillsonburg and Tillsonburg Town Council • The needs of the youth shall be addressed with recommended action to Council to enrich the quality of life and well-being for the youth in the community <p>Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight to 13 members: one Council, Oxford OPP Community Resource Officer, two community members 20+ years old, and a minimum of four members aged 15 to 19. Municipal staff: Executive Assistant
Parks, Beautification and Cemeteries Advisory Committee
<p>Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise and make recommendations to Council on all matters with respect to the utilization and beautification of public parks, trails, trees, green space (including Memorial Park Revitalization Project), and Tillsonburg cemeteries. <p>Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven to 13 members: one Council. Municipal staff: Parks and Facilities Manager
Accessibility Advisory Committee
<p>Mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To fulfill duties of a Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee as outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 • To provide advice to Council with respect to the accessibility for persons with disabilities to a municipal building, structure, premises and transit • To promote awareness about accessibility issues within Tillsonburg, to identify where barriers exist within the Town, and provide advice to Council on how barriers can be removed <p>Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven to 12 members: one Council; majority self-identify as a person with a disability. Municipal staff: Deputy Clerk and a member from the by-law department

As shown in the table, the committees have clear mandates and structures. In each case, the committee's Terms of Reference note that collectively, its members should bring relevant technical and professional expertise, as well as strong advocacy, communication, and organizational skills. Each also has municipal staff representation that acts in an advisory capacity to the committee, and the role of staff liaison is fulfilled according to the Committee's service focus. All committees comprise between a minimum of seven (7) to 13 members, with specifications on qualifications (e.g., age) where appropriate.

Consultation did not reveal concerns with the committees in performing their roles that support Council in parks, culture and recreation services decision-making. In future versions of mandates, however, the Town may wish to include reference to the current Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan in all the committees that are engaged in advising on implementing its recommendations.

The Town has a Special Events Manual to guide organizers through the required municipal processes, and has part-time staff on crews to cover set-up/take-down and facility custodial duties for special events. In Section 5.5.4, the Master Plan discusses the need for a policy to preface the Manual.

Recommendations

- SD 5. Include reference to the current Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan in all committees that are engaged in advising on implementing its recommendations.

5.4 Collaborations and Agreements

The Town of Tillsonburg currently has several agreements in place with various non-municipal organizations for service delivery including MOUs with Tillsonburg District Craft Guild and the BIA, and an agreement with the Tillsonburg Soccer Club.

The 2023 MOU with the BIA specifies Town funding for the next three years (2023-2025) for itemized beautification and maintenance tasks to be conducted by the BIA in the downtown. The MOU with Tillsonburg District Craft Guild for the operation of Station Arts is for the period 2022 to 2024. Its purpose is to continue and expand the Guild's work at Station Arts - providing arts and culture programming, and tourism information services to both residents and visitors. A specified annual budget from the Town is allocated to the Guild for this purpose, along with the detailed responsibilities of the two parties with respect to buildings, maintenance, repairs and contracts.

As the Town expands existing and develops new services, it will very likely enter a variety of collaborations for which formal agreements should be prepared. Table 5-3 outlines the general types of agreements that align with collaborative service provision outlined in Table 5-1. This is not meant to represent an exhaustive list of the types of agreements that may be required

to support service delivery. The Town’s legal services is the primary lead on the specifics of agreement preparation and execution.

Section 2.0 discusses the need for additional contracted instructors to build the Town’s program supply, and possible ways to facilitate engaging individuals who can offer services in specialized areas. If a process outline to promote/advertise the need for instructors and a contract template to hire their services do not exist, these should be prepared for execution.

Recommendations

- SD 6. Prepare a process and contract for engaging program instructors.
- SD 7. Ensure all collaborations are supported by appropriate agreements.

Table 5-3: Characteristics of agreements supporting collaboration

Agreement characteristics	Service agreement			Partnership
	program/service contract	license or lease, reciprocal use	corporate sponsorship /advertising	
Type				joint facility development and/or joint operating/use agreement
Nature of relationship	shared program/ service	'landlord / tenant', facility use	revenue generating	financial partnership (capital, operating or both)
Term of commitment	short	short to long	varies	long, ongoing
Type of service /project	program / event	facility / space use	brand marketing through Town services (facilities, programs, events)	major facility / infrastructure
Level of municipal financial investment	varies	varies	low	medium to high

5.5 Policy Requirements

Policy supports clear and consistent application of Town interests in day-to-day service management and operations.

Table 5-4 lists existing and proposed policies related to parks, culture and recreation.

The Town’s existing policies on Sports Facility Allocation, Municipal Alcohol, Accessibility and Strategic Asset Management are particularly relevant to parks, culture and recreation services. They appear to be sufficiently comprehensive and working effectively. Its Commemorative Naming Policy is under review for required updates and will be finalized in the near future. Council has recently given direction to develop a policy on grants to volunteer community groups.

There is potential for parks and recreation policy work, as the Town further develops its services. Areas to develop, and associated existing and proposed policy, are discussed below. Related existing and proposed policy areas are colour-coded and discussed together and should be considered concurrently.

5.5.1 Service Pricing, Affordable Access and Inclusion

- To be developed in conjunction with reviewing the existing FARE Policy

The primary goal of pricing policy is to ensure consistency in the relative proportions of service costs to be financed through the tax base or user fees, based on targeted cost recovery objectives. The recovery objectives are based on the financial capacity of the municipality to provide all the services within its mandate, given available budgets and the need for judicious spending. Pricing for parks and recreation services is often part of a corporate-wide policy. The following discussion is limited to parks, culture and recreation services.

Table 5-4: Proposed and existing Town parks, culture and recreation policies

Proposed	Existing
Service Pricing	FARE
Inclusion	Sports Facility Allocation
Collaboration and Partnerships	Accessibility (corporate wide)
Special Event Policy	Municipal Alcohol Policy (MAP)
Event Support	Special Event Manual
	Strategic Asset Management
	Commemorative Naming (under review)
	Grants Community Groups (new)

The Town of Tillsonburg would benefit from a pricing policy. While municipal recreation services are typically subsidized to some degree, fees should be rationalized in terms of cost-benefit. There are currently no parameters in place to identify the point at which services should be charged at higher fees.

As the program supply is further developed, it will also be important to be able to determine minimum levels of enrolment/ registration needed to offer a program, based on the costs to deliver it in relation to pre-determined recovery rates. In some cases, this will mean services are not viable to introduce or continue to operate.

For all services, there is a finite pool of municipal funds to provide them.¹⁹ Decisions on how services are financed, therefore, always represent opportunity-costs. This will be particularly important to the enabling the municipality to direct investment to upgrading and adding to its facility supply, and to diversify services to reflect a broader range of community needs.

The Master Plan supports the general direction of the 2020 Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review. The Town requires a policy that relates pricing to both service objectives and the costs of provision. The detail and complexity of this work suggests the need to contract a professional to assist the Town with:

- Detailed accounting on the full cost of providing services by type²⁰
- Confirming the Town's service objectives
- Establishing the types and proportions of costs that should be targeted for recovery through user fees, based on the Town's service objectives (i.e., where services fall on a 'continuum' ranging from fully subsidized to cost recovery +), a simple example of which is outlined in Table 5-5.
- Setting fees to recover targeted costs
- Allocating services by type to recovery categories
- Establishing a timetable for incremental introduction of changes to the pricing structure

The 2020 Review includes consideration on pricing (see page 120).

¹⁹ While grants are available from time to time, they cannot be relied upon to meet the Town's responsibility for ongoing financial obligations.

²⁰ In the Town of Cobourg Study, this was called Full Cost Assessment and included: the direct costs of providing services such as resource costs of Town staff involved, materials and supplies, and operating costs of equipment and facilities used in service delivery; indirect costs from supporting Town departments (e.g., IT); capital costs such as those to rehabilitate and replace facilities being used to provide services (<https://engagecobourg.ca/town-of-cobourg-comprehensive-user-fee-study>).

Table 5-5: Example of service pricing categories²¹

Category	Programs/Services/ Facilities	Pricing	Aquatic Program/Service Examples
Cost recovery +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> competitive/elite programs private lessons personal fitness programs specialized facilities 	priced to cover costs and generate net revenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> private or semi-private lessons at any program level private pool rental
Full cost recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> intermediate, advanced recreation programs semi-private lessons group programs for limited markets non-specialized facilities 	priced to cover costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other group instruction levels beyond 'swim to survive' recreational swim team, aquafit, etc. not-for-profit agency pool rental
Subsidized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fundamental, basic, introductory, all inclusive non-specialized facilities 	no or low cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'swim to survive' levels instructor/lifeguard training due to staff shortages public swim

This example shows the types of aquatic services that could be priced to generate revenues to subsidize others. This approach could also support service objectives related to affordable access and inclusion, which are discussed below.

In arriving at a pricing policy for Tillsonburg, the Town may choose to consult with the community to determine the service objectives to be reflected in the policy, which would inform the ultimate allocation of services to each category. Consultation with the community would also promote understanding of the true costs of service provision.

- 25% of 400 responses indicate residents would pay more fees to use services
- 6% of 400 responses indicate residents would accept an increase in property taxes
- 50% of groups (7) would start paying/paying higher user fees to improve the quality of recreation facilities they use, 29% (4 groups) disagreed, and 21% (3 groups) were uncertain

²¹ Based on Greenplay's Pyramid Model for Resource Allocation/Cost Recovery© in pricing parks and recreation services: <https://greenplayllc.com>



SERVICE PRICING

The 2020 Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review proposed Tillsonburg “adopt the following cost recovery model:

- Use full cost recovery where possible.
- Set fees to recover operating costs where this is possible but full-cost recovery is not.
- Use fees set to recover partial operating costs where there are significant community benefits from participation, or when below operating cost fees allow the service to be provided with the lowest overall level of support from the levy” (Executive Summary, p.3).

Challenges related to the Town’s role as a regional centre were also noted in the review, and charging higher fees for non-resident use of services was recommended in view of this position (Executive Summary, p.1).²²

²² Source: Town of Tillsonburg. Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review – Final Report Abstract April 22, 2020. The Clarico Group Inc

FARE: Affordable Access

The Town's Fee Assisted Recreation Experiences (FARE) program will ensure continued equity in service provision.

Available information includes a welcome letter and an application form, which notes the program is funded by community fundraised dollars. To provide a guaranteed source of funding, the Town should supplement the fundraised portion by allocating an annual budget to FARE. Existing criteria for eligibility and evaluation can be applied to this 'combined' allowance.

Opportunities to provide fully subsidized, no-cost services that are open to all in the community should also be further investigated. In this way, the potential stigma of needing assistance and/or reluctance to apply is removed. A policy that sets out the Town's purpose and approach to affordable access would be beneficial, particularly if it is envisioned as part of an inclusion policy.

Inclusion

Parks and Recreation Ontario's audit of the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada²³ references several policy areas for consideration by municipalities. These encompass the need to address concerns regarding affordability, diversity, and inclusion. While attention may be paid in practice to some or all of these concerns, interest in documented policy is becoming more apparent in Ontario municipalities.

²³ <https://www.prontario.org/public/policy/Framework%20Audit%20Tool%20V%201.pdf>

Inclusion policy can be corporate-wide or specific to recreation services. The latter focuses on the topics addressed in the Framework:

- Affordable access (discussed above)
- Enabling people of all ages to participate in recreation
- Actively engaging persons of diverse and racialized backgrounds in developing, leading, and evaluating recreation and park activities
- Working with Indigenous communities in pursuit of all five goals in the Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015
- Applying a gender equity lens when developing and monitoring policies, programs, and practices to facilitate full participation of women and girls in all types of recreation
- Ensuring non-discrimination of, and providing a welcoming and safe environment for, people of all sexual orientations and sexual identities
- Working with persons with disabilities to facilitate their full participation in recreation across all settings by removing physical and emotional barriers

This policy would look to build on legislated requirements of the AODA. It could also be used to link efforts on inclusion that the Town pursues in the areas of facilities and programs.

Inclusion can be narrowly or broadly defined. In formulating relevant policy, therefore, the meaning of 'inclusion' and what it will encompass is important to clarify as it represents a promise to the community. It should, therefore, be tied to the capacity of the municipality to realize stated goals and objectives and specify where this will require assistance from other public or not-for-profit agencies to achieve.

Event Support

- To be developed in conjunction with reviewing the existing Special Event Manual & Policy

Events - including community-specific and visitor-oriented ones - are becoming a larger component of municipal parks and recreation services. They require careful planning and coordination to implement, and all incur costs to deliver. At the same time, all events can be potential revenue-generators. To this end, there is an increasing emphasis on hosting visitor-attractive events in most communities.

The Town's Special Event Manual & Policy combines both policy and procedures and provides event organizers with detailed direction on the steps required to host an event. An increasing emphasis on larger events with larger geographic draw supports separating community-serving events from those designed to attract visitors to the Town. This can help ensure the municipality's contributions are in line with its capacity and the anticipated 'return on investment.'

Moreover, an event designed to attract visitors to the community may warrant assistance (financial or in-kind) from other organizations and agencies that also stand to benefit (e.g., surrounding municipalities, regional agencies). The following criteria are suggested for determining an event's designation as visitor attractive. It:

- Must be open to the public and is expected to bring a substantial number of people into the community, and
- Is expected to create a positive economic development impact for the community, and
- Is expected to promote the area regionally, provincially, nationally, or internationally.

It is recommended that the Town preface its Manual with a separate 'Policy' chapter, which could also be published online. This section would include the existing text from the Manual that relates to an overarching policy on the Town's purpose, role, etc. in supporting event provision, and definitions of terms. The policy could be further developed to make the distinction between community and visitor-attractive events and any differences in the Town's involvement in each. It should also note the requirement to perform a post-event evaluation, with the manual providing the details regarding the evaluation process. The purpose of this exercise would be to determine the costs of delivering the event in relation to benefits to the community, along with feedback on the delivery of the

event and metrics on attendance, etc. The outcomes would be used as guidance on hosting the same/similar events in future. Additional discussion on service planning and evaluation is contained in Section 5.7.

Collaborations and Partnerships

A policy on collaborations and partnerships can provide guidance on the circumstances that prompt agreements with non-municipal agencies/organizations in service delivery, and the purpose, scope and terms of the Town's involvement. It should cover items related to:

- Why the Town is interested in, and encourages these relationships
- The types of relationships it envisions
- The need to align with the Town's image, values and standards, and its goals, objectives, policies and by-laws
- A framework that describes the types of collaborations/partnerships to be considered and that align with the agreements that will support them (e.g., program/service contracts, license or lease, reciprocal use, corporate sponsorship /advertising, joint facility development and/or joint operating/use agreement) and the relevant agencies/organizations (e.g., other public, not-for-profit, small commercial, corporate)

- Requisite compliances (e.g., statutes, by-laws, standards, no conflict of interest, etc.)
- Non-eligible potential partners (e.g., businesses in - alcoholic beverages in services directed those under legal drinking age; weapons production, distribution, sales)

Recommendations

- SD 8. Conduct a service pricing study as the basis for setting fees in relation to cost recovery targets, and to inform a pricing policy, in conjunction with reviewing the existing FARE Policy and incorporating other aspects of inclusion.
- SD 9. Make an annual Town budget allocation to the FARE program to provide stability to the donated portion.
- SD 10. Develop an overarching policy on municipal support for events to supplement the Special Events Manual and to guide support to providers for, and evaluation of, community-oriented and visitor-attractive events.
- SD 11. Develop a Collaboration and Partnerships Policy to guide the Town in working with other providers to deliver recreation, culture and parks services.

5.6 Revenue Generating Programs

There are potential opportunities to enhance revenue generation to offset the costs of parks and recreation service provision. Certain of these practices are in place now, and other opportunities are also discussed, along with the possible need for policy to support revenue generation. Existing programs include memorial tree and bench, advertising, sponsorship and donations. Suggested programs include kitchen rentals and community capital campaigns. Among those that the Town opts to pursue, priority should be assigned in order of the ease with which each can be implemented.

Memorial Tree and Bench Program

These types of programs are designed to encourage citizens to commemorate people or events through donations that 'purchase' parks-based amenities, some of which are eligible for charitable tax receipts. The Town's program is currently under review. As part of that process, consider discontinuing the stone memorial program due to concerns with theft and maintenance issues.

For comparative purposes, the Master Plan provides a sample of municipal programs - some of which encompass a potentially broader scope for community support, while others are more specific. Components of these policies that the Town does not currently include can be considered as part of the current, or a future, review.

The City of Greater Sudbury's Parks Services Donation and Memorial Program allows the public to "make donations to commemorate a special person, a momentous occasion or

simply donate as a philanthropic gesture to beautify a community park. Donations towards the purchase of park enhancements or memorial gifts can include park benches, trees (hardwood and conifers), bike racks, picnic tables, sun shelters, sports equipment (basketball standards, tennis nets, soccer goals, etc.), playground structures, other options to be discussed with Parks Services."²⁴ The policy also notes that donations for parks are guided by site-specific plans.

Strathcona County's (Alberta) Parkland Memorial Program notes: "The Parkland Memorial Program provides individuals, groups, and organizations with the opportunity to beautify Parkland in Strathcona County by planting trees or installing Parkland Amenities in remembrance, observance or acknowledgment of an appropriate event, occasion or individual. Approval of applications will be based on aesthetic considerations, improvements to the level of service to our Parkland users and with the intention of facilitating planned development in our Parkland. "Amenity" means any bench, table, park furnishing or other structure or development that increases the physical or material comfort of the park. It may include a memorial plaque."²⁵

24 <https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=5992.pdf>

25 https://storagecdn.strathcona.ca/files/files/lls-ser-011-023_parkland_memorial_program.pdf

Indicators from Community Survey

- 22% of 400 responses indicate residents would donate an amenity for a park (e.g., bench, tree, picnic table)

Sponsorship, Advertising and Donations

Tillsonburg's website provides information and forms on opportunities for "advertising and sponsorship opportunities to assist with promoting your business." Advertising opportunities are available for signs on rink boards, and interested parties can sponsor a swim, skate or recreation special event. A third way to support recreation, culture and parks is through donations.

Advertising and Sponsorship is an area that can be supported by overarching policy that outlines the content, locations, types, processes, and fees for purchasing advertising space in municipal buildings or on municipal properties or for sponsoring projects and events. They are designed to generate revenue for the corporation while ensuring acceptability from various perspectives: legal, appropriate content/images/messages, etc. The fees charged for advertising and sponsorship should be set within the policy including a process(es) for setting rates, and reviewing them on a regular basis.

A general donation program could be considered to support parks and recreation service development. The City of Toronto includes an opportunity to donate to specific service areas with its property tax bills.²⁶ Through the Voluntary Contribution

²⁶ <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/property-taxes-utilities/property-tax/voluntary-contribution/>

Option on Property Tax Bills, “donations can be made in any amount from \$1 up to \$50,000... for which a receipt for tax purposes is issued.”²⁷ At the time the program was instituted, areas that were identified for contributions included children’s services; cultural services and museums; parks, forestry and recreation; public libraries.

Currently, there are several year-round initiatives and programs specifically related to parks and recreation and the environment listed on the City’s website to which donors can contribute. These include PollinateTO; Urban Forestry; Cultural Vibrancy (includes public art); Senior-Friendly Outdoor Fitness Equipment; Seniors’ Centres (Recreation Material).²⁸ The City’s Policy on Donations to the City for Community Benefits governs the collection and processing of all donations.

Potential donation categories for the Town of Tillsonburg could include recreation services in general (i.e., most needed) as well as allowing contributions to be directed to specific infrastructure improvement projects in parks, facilities, waterfront locations, and trails, or in specific program areas that require development.

Kitchen Rentals

Commercial kitchens within municipal facilities are increasingly being used to generate new revenue streams. A Health Unit certified kitchen can be used for a variety of food and nutrition programs, as well as projects/activities related to communal and/or commercial use of the kitchen. The Township of North Glengarry has embarked on this type of initiative. Their website notes,

“Now accepting bookings: The Township of North Glengarry has partnered with the Eastern Ontario Health Unit to launch the new “North Glengarry Community Kitchen” pilot project. This initiative will enable food producers to rent time at the North Glengarry Community Kitchen, located at the Maxville & District Sports Complex (25 Fair Street, Maxville) so that they can produce food items for resale. The cost is \$50 per day and food producers are required to have their Food Handlers Certificate and have their recipe validated by the EOHU.”²⁹

27 Source: Staff report P:\2011\Internal Services\rev\gm11018rev (AFS 14621). October 25, 2011.

28 <https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/partnerships-sponsorships-donations/donate/>

29 <https://www.northglengarry.ca/en/things-to-do/community-kitchens-program.aspx>

Community Capital Campaigns

Capital campaigns can be used to raise funds for large building projects, as well as for smaller, community-supported initiatives that contribute to parks and recreation infrastructure. Key elements of this approach to planned fundraising include: a predetermined monetary goal attached to providing a concrete project, sufficient lead time to raise funds, a timeframe for closing the campaign, broad-based community involvement in the effort, and ongoing communications about its progress. Incentives are sometimes provided to motivate contributions (e.g., matching funds, public recognition of donors, etc.). Where possible, fundraising campaigns should be coordinated with other similar initiatives in the community to minimize the negative impact of concurrent requests for monetary contributions.

The Town does not have the capacity to take on major fundraising projects. Moreover, designing and operationalizing capital campaigns is a specialized field. These initiatives, therefore, should be contracted through an RFP process.

Indicators from Community Surveys

- 50% of 400 responses indicate residents would donate money to a capital campaign
- 8% of 400 responses indicate residents would organize/assist with local fundraising events
- 7% of 400 responses indicate residents would volunteer to source private sector grants/donors/sponsors
- 57% of user groups (8) were uncertain about contributing to the capital costs of developing new facilities for their use, 29% (4 groups) disagreed and 14% (2 groups) agreed
- 79% of user groups (11) would help with fundraising activities for facility development, 21% (3 groups) are uncertain, and none disagreed.

Recommendations

- SD 12. Investigate new revenue generating programs to help offset the costs of recreation service provision.
- SD 13. Consider preparing overarching policies to cover revenue generating practices.
- SD 14. Assign priority to revenue generating programs according to ease of implementation.

5.7 Service Planning and Evaluation

5.7.1 Process and Information Requirements

The overarching goal of planning, monitoring and evaluating recreation, culture and parks services is to contribute to informed decision-making.

The process works to distinguish between community 'needs' and 'wants', to respond to 'needs' in the most judicious way, and to monitor the success of the response. The overall process is illustrated in Figure 5-1.

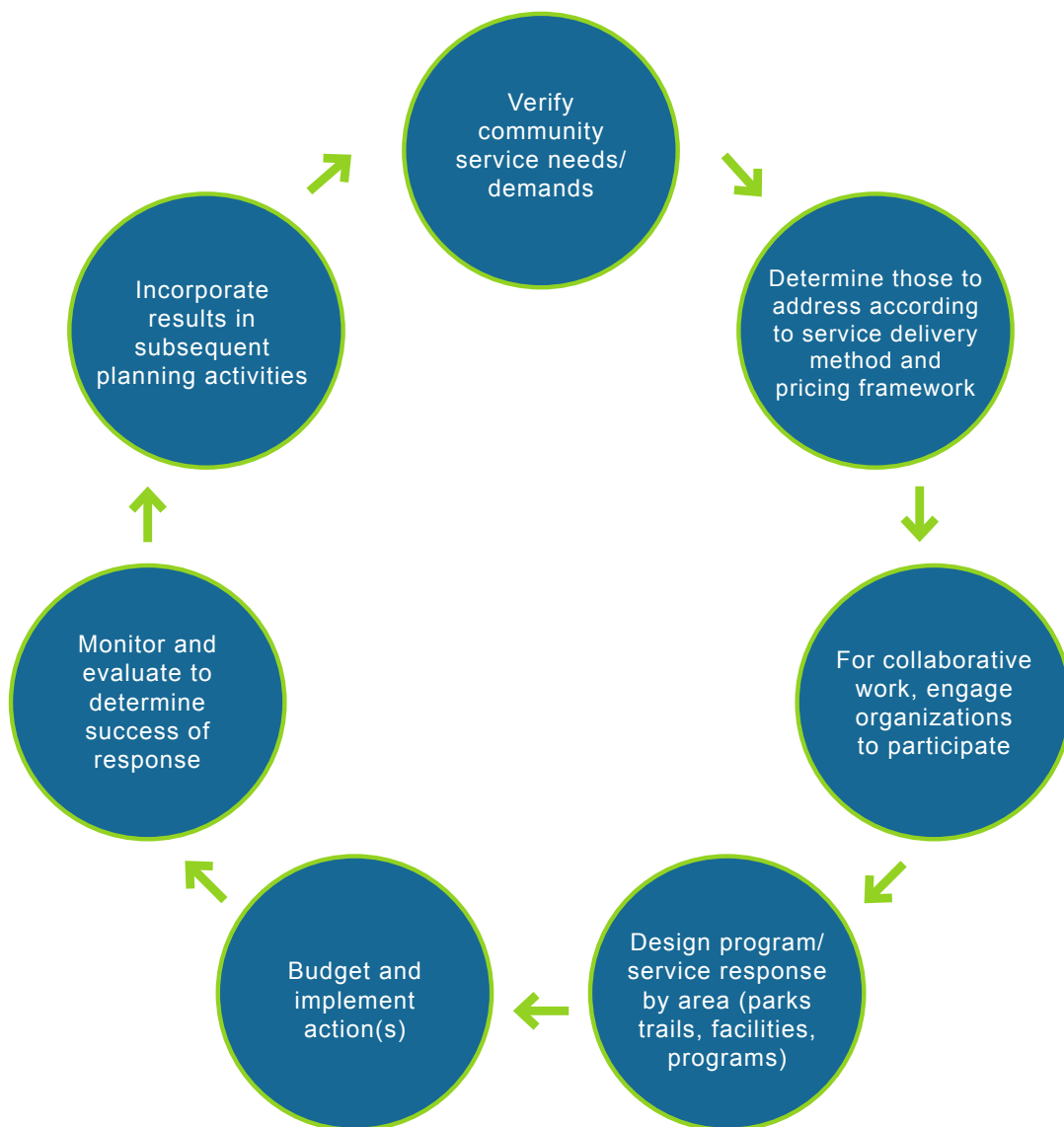


Figure 5-1: Planning and evaluation process



The focus of this discussion is areas of information collection and application. The remaining components of the planning process outlined in Figure 3-1 are the topics of other Master Plan discussions (e.g., collaborative work) and/or are ongoing Town functions (e.g., budgeting and implementing actions).

Table 5-6 on the following page summarizes the key components of information collection and use in needs-based services planning to:

- Verify community service needs
- Monitor and evaluate the success of the service response
- Incorporate results in subsequent planning activities

Although it deals with both facilities and programs/services under the same headings, it is noted that facility (infrastructure) planning is typically a longer-term endeavor than program planning, which is annual or even seasonal. The relationship between programs/services and facility needs is an iterative process, which is not conveyed in the distinction the table makes for the purposes of this discussion. Additional discussion on program planning and evaluation is contained in Section 2.0. The table also includes tasks that may already be conducted by the Town to show where they fit in relation to other activities.

Table 5-6: Services planning information requirements and application

Verify community service needs		
	Facilities	Programs/Services
Maintain a Single, Comprehensive Inventory	Document and regularly update an inventory of all facilities and relevant information by type. Ideally, all facilities now or potentially available for community use in the Town should be included in a single, integrated data base	Document and regularly update an inventory of all programs and relevant information by type. Ideally, all programs/services available either directly or indirectly through collaborations with the Town should be included.
Document Data on Use Related to Capacity	Track actual hours of facility use in relation to capacity (within total prime and non-prime time hours, where applicable). ³⁰ Institute periodic, rotating checks on unscheduled facilities to document use at different times	Track program/service fill rates in instances with a capacity limit or simple counts of participants / users / attendees when no limit on capacity.
Develop Indicators of Unmet Demand	Document information on unmet demand for facilities, programs and services from organized users, community engagement via an online community engagement tool, resident inquiries/requests to the Town, and formal market research.	
Monitor and evaluate to determine success of response		
Measure Service Performance Against Targets	Using tools noted above to gather feedback, evaluate success of individual facilities and programs/services on an ongoing basis with organized and casual users, program participants and instructors, in relation to pre-determined performance targets.	
Incorporate results in subsequent planning activities		
Adjust Service Plans According to Evaluation Findings	As a cyclical activity covering both short and long-term service provision, the findings on evaluation can be used to maintain alignment between the supply/delivery of services and community needs.	

Recreation management software enables information collection on service use and trends in performance to inform the planning and evaluation process. The Town has invested in software that it uses for certain recreation services management functions. In expanding its planning and evaluation capacity, Department staff can develop a comprehensive menu of information requirements - based on needed indicators in all service areas. Using these needs as a

guide, the Town can decide on the potential to upgrade existing or the need to introduce new recreation management software to fulfill its requirements. Other considerations with respect to recreation management software improvements will be its working compatibility with other corporate systems, and particularly those that relate to budgeting.

³⁰ Actual use is the same as scheduled use if all hours scheduled are used.

5.7.2 Incorporating Data in Services Planning

The results of this work will reveal patterns of use/participation over time, available facility/program capacity that is not being used, and measures of outstanding demand. The Town can determine if the response to unmet demand will be adding more facilities/programs to supply or improving the performance of existing services. Facility options to this might include lighting unlit fields, repurposing facilities, reallocating use, financial incentives to push use to less preferred times, etc. Program/service options might be adding more sessions of particularly popular programs or adding new programs.

For underused services, feedback through evaluations might reveal a range of factors leading to offering fewer times or locations for the same program, rescheduling to more convenient times, or discontinuing the service. Facility implications might include consolidation of similar facilities, relocation or removal from supply.

The results of the monitoring and evaluation will also inform annual planning and budgeting and can be used to update relevant components of the Master Plan (e.g., revise population-based planning ratios when sufficient data is available to base projections on actual use of all facilities by type).

The extent that these measures can be used to project into the future will also assist in confirming longer-term facility requirements. At the same time, long-term projections must be subject to ongoing monitoring, verification and, if required, adjusted to

reflect changing levels of participation and use. A sport or activity that shows high growth in participation today may level off or decline in future years and initially projected facility needs might require reduction.

5.7.3 Engaging Other Service Providers

As the Town's work with other non-municipal providers grows, joint service planning by all key providers in the community should occur on a regular basis, with a view to integrating the efforts of all in developing facilities, programs and services. The municipality can take a leadership role in facilitating joint planning activities. This will help ensure a comprehensive, whole community approach to service planning and provision, especially as Tillsonburg grows and services expand.

The number of sessions per year in which all participants should engage can be determined collectively. At least one full group session per year, however, would be required. Ideally, it should be scheduled to align with both service and budget planning but this might not be possible with multiple participants.

Smaller group planning sessions, therefore, by specific service area may be more reasonable in terms of accommodating other organizations, with the Town then feeding this information into internal planning activities. Engagement in major project planning/development or one-time events can be more narrowly defined in terms of the parties involved and the number of 'sessions' needed. Periodic joint sessions may also be needed to address new/unforeseen topics of relevance to the parties involved. A process that works for the Town and other providers, therefore, should be developed and implemented in the short-term and it can grow over time, as needed.

Recommendations

- SD 15. Using recreation management software, develop an enhanced data base to apply in a formal recreation facilities and programs/ services planning to: verify community service needs, monitor and evaluate the success of the service response, and incorporate results in subsequent planning activities.
- SD 16. Take the lead in developing and implementing regularly occurring joint facilities, programs, and service planning sessions with all key non-municipal providers in Tillsonburg.
- SD 17. Conduct project, program or service specific planning sessions with other providers, as required.



The 2020 Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review noted that “RCP makes extensive use of best-practices including service... the use of specialized equipment and software, partnering with community groups, use of online registration, use of social media for outreach...” (Executive Summary, p.1).³¹

At the same time, it recommends reviewing a number of services and service levels, and utilizing technology for cost-avoidance, improved communication, and improved cost-effectiveness, which is in line with the findings of the Master Plan.

³¹ Source: Town of Tillsonburg. Recreation, Culture, Parks Service Review – Final Report Abstract April 22, 2020. The Clarico Group Inc.

5.8 Marketing, Communications and Promotion

The Town’s work would benefit from a marketing plan that clearly establishes its business objectives in recreation, culture and parks services and develops a comprehensive strategy to achieve them. The long-standing 4Ps of marketing are product, price, place and promotion.

While pricing public services differs from that of the private sector, the other aspects of marketing are important to shaping the municipal role in service delivery in the face of increasing demands/expectations and fiscal constraints in responding to these.

Of particular importance in Tillsonburg is the communications component of service delivery. This emerged as a key area for improvement. While together, the marketing staff person and the Department produce a high quality, informative Recreation Guide, the potential for real time communications through social media is lacking. Table 5-7 demonstrates these limits to community awareness of/learning about recreation services, as reported by survey respondents.

Table 5-7: Use of information sources about recreation services

Source	% of 400 responses
Town website	45%
Recreation Guide	33%
Facebook	22%
Tillsonburg News	16%
Word of mouth	3%
Instagram	2%
None of the above/ do not use	12%

As shown in Table 5-7, there is considerable potential to build social media use for communication purposes, which could include creating social media accounts specific to recreation. Residents who are interested in recreation services may be more likely to follow/subscribe to an account dedicated to this topic than general municipal updates. Staff operating these accounts can also quickly re-share upcoming programs, events, and news from other community providers. This is particularly useful for community events that are not regular occurrences and so are not published in the Recreation Guide. Those that are spontaneously organized or occur only once can be quickly promoted via dedicated social media channels.

As noted in Section 5.3, however, the current part time allocation does not provide sufficient coverage for both creating promotional material and communicating with the public on a day-to-day basis.

Communications channels can also be used by the Town to promote its work in parks, culture and recreation services. The Municipality of Port Hope, for example, produces an annual graphically portrayed Parks, Recreation and Culture Year-in-Review³² that summarizes the past year’s work in developing, operating, and maintaining these services. Much of this information is already available or would be captured in monitoring activities and could be used to produce an ‘annual report’ to Town residents.

³² <https://www.porthope.ca/en/your-municipal-government/prc-year-in-review.aspx>

To develop the range of functions/products needed in marketing, communications and promotion, the Town should prepare a marketing strategy to include the scope of responsibilities to be assigned to a dedicated full time position (see Section 5.3). It should also provide guidance on a suite of communications and promotion methods/tools to be used by the Town in a program designed to deliver comprehensive coverage and real time information. The Town can also take the lead role in facilitating awareness and promotion of all parks, culture and recreation services in the community - Town, other public, not-for-profit and private sector, as appropriate. A marketing strategy can outline the networking process(es) to encompass both municipal and non-municipal service providers in promotion activities.

Recommendations

- SD 18. Prepare a marketing and communications strategy for the Recreation, Culture and Parks Department to provide direction on effective processes and tools for these functions.
- SD 19. Develop social media channels specifically for the Recreation, Culture and Parks Department.
- SD 20. Prepare and post an annual services 'year-in-review' that summarizes and informs the community about the Town's achievements in parks, recreation, and culture services.





6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Implementation Considerations

The proposed roll-out of recommendations is based on the information available at the time of Strategy development and includes the following considerations.

Operations vs. Capital Projects

Of the 78 recommendations, 55 are operational in nature. This means the implementation of these recommendations would be undertaken by staff as part of their day-to-day activities. The remaining 10 capital recommendations and 13 recommendations to undertake supplementary studies require discrete

budget allocations for execution. This includes both improvements/repairs to existing facilities, as well as the design and construction of new facilities and amenities.

Dependencies and Efficiencies

While recommendations are described as individual initiatives, many are interrelated and need to be considered in the larger context of achieving efficiencies in implementation. Some recommendations must be initiated and completed before other recommendations can begin, while others may benefit from being undertaken simultaneously in terms of process efficiency and providing a more fulsome approach to physical improvements.

Budget Considerations

The implementation sequence attempts to evenly distribute the costs of recommendations over the Master Plan's 10-year time frame. It should also be noted that costs for some recommendations are not available and are yet to be determined. These have been noted in the forecast and would be in addition to the numbers provided in the Master Plan. Another factor to consider are cost premiums/fluctuations due to inflation. The current economic situation makes it especially difficult to attach reliable estimates to recommendations.

Staff Resources

The need for staff resources to do the work requires both a distribution of tasks over time and, in some cases, may require hiring additional staff to take responsibility for implementation. It will also require coordinated efforts both internally and externally.

Flexibility

The proposed schedule reflects a reasonable roll-out, assuming no major obstacles to activation. However, it is expected that some projects may need to be delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. There may also be opportunities to "fast-track" other initiatives.

Ongoing initiatives are to be carried through each year to the end of the Plan term. Their applicability throughout the entire period, however, will depend on evolving needs in relation to service development. For example, program expansion for specific interests may be sufficient to meet demand in considerably less than 10 years (subject to potential changes based on continuation of monitoring and verification needs). The point at which this will happen, however, is unknown and thus not identified as an "end-date" in implementation. The recommendations shown as time-limited endeavors may also extend beyond the years shown. It may take longer to complete the identified activities and/or the completion of a recommendation may result in a new system component or procedure. Recommendations to establish formal agreements or contracts, for example, are shown as time-limited for negotiating arrangements that will create new, ongoing relationships between the municipality and other providers (e.g., volunteers, agencies, businesses, etc.)

Bill 23 Implications and Financing Considerations

In 2022, the provincial government passed Bill 23, the “More Homes Built Faster Act,” to increase the supply of Ontario’s market housing over the next ten years. The legislation revised ten provincial Acts including but not limited to the Conservation Authorities Act, Development Charges Act, and Planning Act, which resulted in significant implications for Ontario’s land use planning regime. Bill 23 overrides zoning by-laws to increase density but simultaneously limits municipalities’ ability to use development charges and parkland requirements toward concurrent infrastructure and services that support that density. For municipalities experiencing residential growth, adherence to Bill 23 has a disproportionate impact on finances.

Specifically, parkland dedication caps have been altered under Bill 23 such that the maximum alternative rate was cut in half from 1 hectare per 300 dwelling units to 1 hectare per 600 net residential units; likewise, the cash-in-lieu parkland rate for medium- and high-density developments was cut in half from 1 hectare per 500 dwelling units to 1 hectare per 1,000 net residential units. Sites of five hectares or larger are now capped at 15% parkland dedication, while sites less than five hectares are capped at 10% parkland dedication. Municipalities must also accept encumbered lands (e.g., land with below-grade infrastructure) or privately-owned publicly-accessible open spaces (POPS) as parkland conveyance.

Similarly, Bill 23 reduces the amount of development charges permitted under municipalities' existing and future development charges by-laws. Development charges for rental housing units have been further reduced. Municipalities can no longer use development charges to purchase land for growth-related infrastructure or fund planning studies or assessments. In addition, a variety of new housing units – affordable, attainable, non-profit, and inclusionary zoning housing units, as well as gentle density (up to three units per lot) and rental buildings with four or more units – are exempt from development charges and parkland dedication fees. Revised definitions of these housing typologies may result in larger proportions of housing supply considered eligible for these exemptions.

Consequently, the revenue shortfalls resulting from Bill 23 present significant challenges to delivering current, planned, and future infrastructure necessary in residential communities. The quality and location of new parkland and facilities will be compromised, with fewer amenities, pressure to collaborate on shared space, and more reliance placed on the existing parks system. This will result in increased maintenance needs and negative effects on the environment that dispel the Town's efforts to mitigate the risks and impacts associated with climate change. In response to communities' concerns, the Province will be conducting an audit of municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area to assess Bill 23's impact on municipal revenues. Results

are expected in 2024. Until any additional changes are made, other revenue-generating tools, innovative financing, and collaborative partnerships will be crucial for addressing financial deficiencies and creating complete communities that meet provincial pledge targets. Appendix D contains a supplementary discussion on various revenue generating tools or initiatives Tillsonburg may wish to consider.

6.2 Implementation Strategy

This section outlines the proposed implementation plan for the Strategy’s recommendations. Following a discussion of key considerations, the recommendations are presented by the service areas of the Strategy: Programs and Events (PE), Facilities (F), Parks, Trails and Cemetery (PCT), and Service Delivery (SD). Recommendations are accompanied by anticipated costs and timelines for completion of discrete tasks.

For a more complete explanation of each recommendation, please refer to the corresponding discussion in the appendices.

This Master Plan should be considered part of a living document. In monitoring and evaluating the Master Plan, changes that result from work completed should be reflected in systematic reviews that track the initiation, progress, and completion of all items as they are implemented in annual work plans and budgets.

Table 6-1: Summary of Implementation Costs

Service Area	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
PE	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
F	\$155,000	\$115,000	\$0	\$270,000
PCT	\$617,060	\$602,060	\$536,080	\$1,755,200
SD	\$155,000	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$295,000
Total Cost	\$927,060	\$777,060	\$616,080	\$2,320,200

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS					
PE 1	Continue to conduct recreation program evaluation procedures to document and track participant feedback. Continue to widely promote survey to the community through various channels and broaden accessibility of survey for diverse audiences.				
PE 8	To better align with the evolving interests of adults and seniors in Tillsonburg, the Town should conduct annual or bi-annual community feedback sessions to tailor recreational programs to community interests, and perform an inventory of existing local programs to identify and fill gaps without duplicating services.				
PE 3	Continue to implement pilot programs to assess long-term program interests, and explore alternative programming models (e.g. short-duration programming). Programs can include both active and non-sports related programs (e.g. culinary courses, adult crafting, photography, youth coding, adult trail walking groups).				
PE 4	Explore opportunities to increase participation and engagement for new residents through the volunteer recruitment strategy. Approaches can include creating a database of volunteer opportunities that organizations can access and update as opportunities arise.				
PE 5	Assess opportunities for the Town to expand preschool and toddler programs (e.g. parent and child social activities, and early literacy programs) in current indoor and outdoor facilities.				
PE 6	Explore development of a youth leisure space.				

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
PE 7	Explore Oxford County Library (Tillsonburg branch) partnership for equipment lending initiatives. Consider sponsorship opportunities with service clubs.				
PE 8	To better align with the evolving interests of adults and seniors in Tillsonburg, the Town should conduct annual or bi-annual community feedback sessions to tailor recreational programs to community interests, and perform an inventory of existing local programs to identify and fill gaps without duplicating services.				
PE 9	Explore opportunities to expand trail-based recreation programs and activities (e.g. local heritage plaques, arts and culture, early childhood education, community stewardship and leadership, and local ecology focused programs) in collaboration with local organizations (e.g. Tillsonburg Historical Society, Long Point Region Conservation Authority.)				
PE 10	Explore opportunities to introduce non-motorized water-based programs (e.g. canoe, kayak) on Lake Lisgar.				
Total Programming and Events		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
RECREATION FACILITIES					
Indoor Facilities					
F 1	Conduct a detailed feasibility study for a third ice pad at the Community Centre.	\$70,000			\$70,000
F 2	In advance of providing a third ice pad, work with ice users to determine the cost-benefit of approaches to optimizing the use of the two existing pads to better meet scheduling requirements.				
F 3	Conduct a detailed feasibility study to determine the need for new/updated Community Centre facility components including existing (health/fitness club, senior centre, rental space), and new (multi-purpose program space, gymnasium) facilities.	\$85,000			\$85,000
F 4	When the new pool opens, determine and set a pool water temperature that meets the needs of both warm and cool water uses/programs, and communicate it through a standard operating procedure.				
F 5	As part of the feasibility study, determine additional health club facility/ access requirements, in relation to the Town's position within the local commercial market for these services.	see F3			
F 6	Upon evaluating the relative impacts of doing so, designate the Lions Den or the Marwood Lounge as a program room first, with rentals taking second priority, to provide more guaranteed program space in the short-term.				
F 7	Plan to add a gym and more multi-purpose space(s) to future facility supply, to be assessed as part of the feasibility study.	see F3			
F 8	Include the Tillsonburg Senior Centre as part of planned integrated design and functional improvements to the Community Centre.	see F3			

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
F 9	Consult with the Station Arts Centre and Tillsonburg Museum interests to consider the potential for capital cost contributions from other municipalities that benefit from the regional tourism role of these facilities.				
Outdoor Facilities					
F 10	Plan to provide one additional hardball diamond and four additional softball diamonds.		see F15		
F 11	Conduct a study to determine the potential to provide a ball diamond complex to accommodate both community and regional tournament use.		see F15		
F 12	Except for essential improvements, defer upgrades to existing ball diamonds until the complex study is complete.				33
F 13	If evidence of need for additional soccer fields to meet organized community activity is presented to the Town, develop municipal fields that can be leased to organized users for their programs.				34
F 14	The needs of all community groups for access to multi-use facilities for lacrosse, field hockey, football, etc. should also be considered in designing and constructing new fields.		see F15		
F 15	Consider the potential to develop a major outdoor sports park - including a ball diamond complex and multi-use playing fields - in a single study, including an indoor artificial turf fieldhouse.		\$75,000		\$75,000
F 16	Introduce a rotating monitoring program to start with the opening of the new pickleball and resurfaced tennis courts, including the pop-up courts, to document the use of all courts and indicators of unmet demand.				

33 Costs to be determined based on required upgrades

34 Based on monitoring demand, and phasing development of fields, as needed

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
F 17	Use the results of the monitoring program to inform a court study to confirm future need for both types of courts based on findings related to actual use, interest in community club formation, and the location/ configuration of future courts.				
F 18	Preliminary supply projections for the term of the Plan, to be confirmed in the court study, comprise providing up to two more dedicated tennis courts (for a total of 5) and three more dedicated pickleball courts (for a total of 10).		\$40,000		\$40,000
Strategic Approach to Facility Provision					
F 19	As required, update building and outdoor facilities conditions assessments as part of asset management planning and include in capital budget.				
F 20	Focus on essential building/ facility repairs in instances where future upgrades/additions are still to be determined. ³⁵				
F 21	Prepare detailed studies to confirm facility needs at the Community Centre and other locations, and the priorities, concepts, phasing and budgets associated with each resulting initiative.				
Total Costs of Recreation Facilities		\$155,000	\$115,000	\$0	\$270,000

³⁵ See also F12

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
PARKS, CEMETERY, AND TRAILS					
Accessibility, Safety, Comfort and Usability					
PCT 1	As parks and playgrounds are updated for accessibility, update Town inventories and webpages to include the new information.				
PCT 2	Provide shelter (in the form of tree planting) and seating at all parks, that is adequate for the amount and type of use.	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$160,000	\$400,000 ³⁶
PCT 3	Provide lighting during the shoulder seasons and winter months at parks that host activities year-round.	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$300,000 ³⁷
Naturalization and Tree Planting					
PCT 4	Implement managed naturalization practices, consulting with the community before embarking on projects.				
PCT 5	Provide educational signage about the benefits and methods of naturalization, along with warning signs for ticks.	\$25,000			\$25,000
PCT 6	Hire a seasonal horticulturist, with potential to grow it to a year-round position.	\$102,060	\$102,060	\$136,080	\$340,200 ³⁸
Provision and Access					
PCT 7	Adopt the updated parkland classification system.				
PCT 8	Leftover landscaped spaces such as awkward slivers of land, boulevard medians, round-a-bout centres, or traffic island gateway features should not qualify as park space as part of parkland dedication from developers.				
PCT 9	New parkland should be located with consideration of the access map (Figure 4-2), to provide parks or trails to those in areas who are not currently within 800 metres of an existing park.				
PCT 10	Parkland from new developments should include at minimum a Community Park in each area.				

36 Based on a budget of \$40,000 per year

37 Based on a budget of \$30,000 per year

38 Based on an hourly rate of \$31.50, 40 hours a week, from May to October (27 weeks)

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
Lake Lisgar, Gibson House, and Kinsmen Memorial Parkette					
PCT 11	Continue to support the efforts to maintain/improve the Lake's water quality.				
PCT 12	Ensure the pathways along the Lake are maintained, and that brush and plants are kept clear of the path and do not block views of the Lake.				
Community Centre Hub: Memorial Park (includes Summer Palace and Lake Lisgar Water Park), Optimist Park, Rotary Park					
PCT 13	Provide wayfinding signage through the Community Centre hub directing people to the various facilities, amenities, and connections.	\$25,000			\$25,000
PCT 14	Update the water features at Lake Lisgar Water Park.		\$150,000		\$150,000
PCT 15	Review agreements for Fair buildings.				
PCT 16	Remove the condemned Pigeon Barn from Town facility supply.				
PCT 17	Install lights and cameras at the McLean rink to discourage vandalism.	\$125,000			\$125,000
Coronation Park					
PCT 18	Continue with plans to add additional community garden plots at Coronation Park.				
PCT 19	Assess the feasibility of undertaking grading work to protect existing assets at Coronation Park from flooding.	\$40,000	TBD based on results of study		\$40,000
Trail Recommendations					
PCT 20	Discuss the possibility of clearing additional trail segments with the roads department. Select segments based on level of use, proximity to schools and older adult communities, and feasibility for Roads crew.				
New Trail Segments					
PCT 21	Develop a trail continuation of the Participark trail north of Concession St. W through the natural area to Quarter Town Line.		\$50,000		\$50,000

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
PCT 22	Parkland dedication in the form of trail systems should be considered, and strongly encouraged in areas of Town that are not well connected to the trail system otherwise, and where larger recreation facilities (e.g., sport fields) are not required.				
Cemetery					
PCT 23	Focus on providing more unique columbaria options in future cemetery development.				
PCT 24	Design the cemetery with variety in mind - in terms of landscapes, burial options, columbaria types, seating types etc. with appropriate safety and security measures.				
PCT 25	Provide a green burial area.				
PCT 26	Develop the cemetery as an accessible, beautified greenspace with gardens and paths throughout.	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$300,000 ³⁹
PCT 27	Increase promotion of events that occur at the cemetery such as Decoration Day and Remembrance Day.				
Total Cost Parks, Trails, & Cemetery		\$617,060	\$602,060	\$536,080	\$1,755,200

39 Based on a budget of \$30,000/year

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
SERVICE DELIVERY					
ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY IN SERVICE DELIVERY					
SD 1	In developing its services and meeting the needs of a growing population, the Town will continue to act in both direct and indirect capacities.				
SD 2	In further developing programs, events, parks and facilities within the Town's mandate, pursue opportunities to leverage both the resources of the municipality and other parties, agencies/organizations in mutually beneficial collaborations.				
Recreation, Culture and Parks Department and Committees of Council					
SD 3	Additional Department staff or enhanced competencies are required to develop the following areas of service: facilitation work with volunteer community groups; planning and evaluation; and horticulture.				
SD 4	Additional contracted instructors will be required to allow programs to be diversified and added to supply. ⁴⁰				
SD 5	Include reference to the current Recreation, Culture and Parks Master Plan in all committees that are engaged in advising on implementing its recommendations.				
SD 6	Prepare a process and contract for engaging program instructors.				
SD 7	Ensure all collaborations are supported by appropriate agreements.				
Policy Requirements					
SD 8	Conduct a service pricing study as the basis for setting fees in relation to cost recovery targets, and to inform a pricing policy, in conjunction with reviewing the existing FARE Policy and incorporating other aspects of inclusion.	\$40,000			\$40,000 ⁴¹

⁴⁰ Costs will fluctuate depending on nature and extent of hiring in each program session.

⁴¹ Cost is for parks and recreation services only; a corporate wide study would increase the cost

Operations



Capital



Studies



#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
SD 9	Make an annual Town budget allocation to the FARE program to provide stability to the donated portion.	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$200,000 ⁴²
SD 10	Develop an overarching policy on municipal support for events to supplement the Special Events Manual and to guide support to providers for, and evaluation of, community-oriented and visitor-attractive events.				
SD 11	Develop a Collaboration and Partnerships Policy to guide the Town in working with other providers to deliver recreation, culture and parks services.				
Revenue Generating Programs					
SD 12	Investigate new revenue generating programs to help offset the costs of recreation service provision.				
SD 13	Consider preparing overarching policies to cover revenue generating practices.				
SD 14	Assign priority to revenue generating programs according to ease of implementation.				
Service Planning and Evaluation					
SD 15	Using recreation management software, develop an enhanced data base to apply in a formal recreation facilities and programs/services planning to: verify community service needs, monitor and evaluate the success of the service response, and incorporate results in subsequent planning activities.				
SD 16	Take the lead in developing and implementing regularly occurring joint facilities, programs, and service planning sessions with all key non-municipal providers in Tillsonburg.				
SD 17	Conduct project, program or service specific planning sessions with other providers, as required.				

42 \$20,000 annual anticipates expanded programming, population growth and need to provide stability to donation component; budget allocation may increase over time, as required

Operations



Capital



Studies

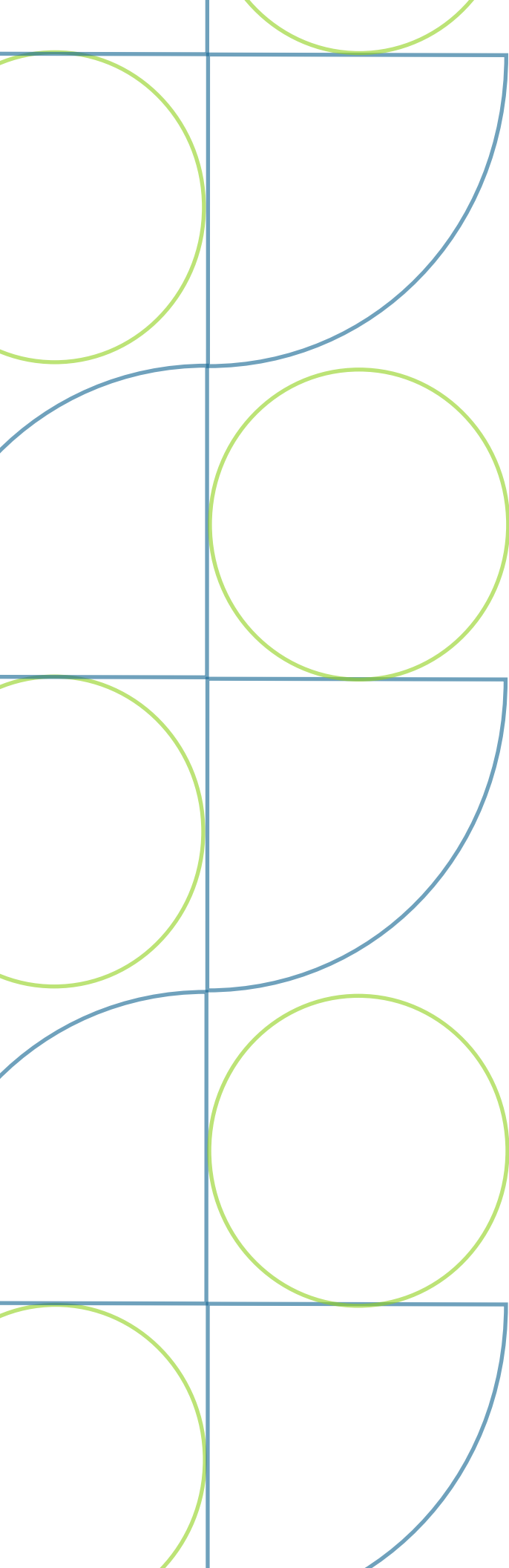


#	Recommendation	Short-Term (1-3 years)	Mid-Term (4-6 years)	Long-Term (7-10 years)	Total Cost
Marketing, Communications and Promotion					
SD 18	Prepare a marketing and communications strategy for the Recreation, Culture and Parks Department to provide direction on effective processes and tools for these functions.	\$55,000			\$55,000
SD 19	Develop social media channels specifically for the Recreation, Culture and Parks Department.				
SD 20	Prepare and post an annual services 'year-in-review' that summarizes and informs the community about the Town's achievements in parks, recreation, and culture services.				
Total Cost for Service Delivery		\$155,000	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$295,000

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Girls
74 BEACH & FUN



**APPENDIX A:
FACILITIES ICE SCHEDULE
AND USE**

Table A-1: Community arena ice schedule

2023/24 - COMMUNITY ARENA SCHEDULE

Prime Time 
Booked 
Available Prime Time 

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
6:30AM							
6:45							
7:00							
7:15							
7:30							
7:45							
8:00							
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11:00							
11:15							
11:30							
11:45							

Table A-2: Memorial arena ice schedule

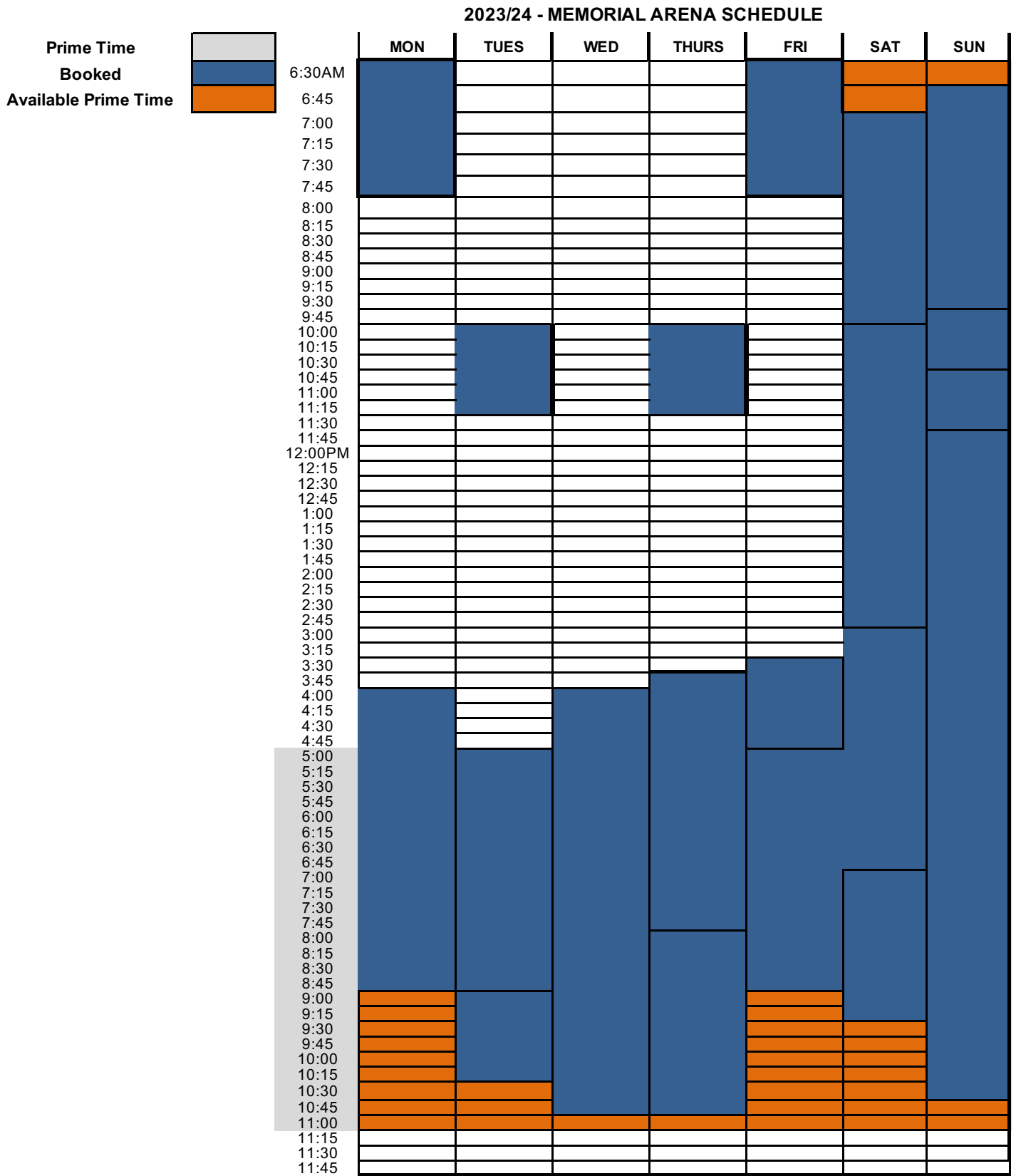


Table A-3: Memorial arena ice schedule (prime time use)

Memorial Arena 2023/24: Prime Time Used



		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
		Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive
Arena Time Booked By User Groups		6.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	8.0	7.0	4.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	9.0	7.0	14.5	14.0
		1.5	0			2.0	0.0			1.5	0.0	6.0	5.0	2.0	2.0
		0	1.0					4.0	4.0	0.0	1.0				
				1.5	1.5							2.5	2.5		
		1.0	0.0												
		8.5	6.0	6.50	5.50	10.0	7.0	8.0	7.0	6.5	5.0	17.5	14.5	16.5	16.0
unused prime time															
Weekday AM			2.25		1.75		0.25		0.25		2.25		~		~
Weekday PM			~		1.0		1.0		1.0		~		~		~
Saturday			~		~		~		~		~		2.25		~
Sunday			~		~		~		~		~		~		1.0

Community Arena 2023/24: Prime Time Used


		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday		Sunday	
		Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive	Prime time Request	Prime time Receive
Arena Time Booked By User Groups		8.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0	10.75	10.25	6.0	4.0
		3.25	2.25	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.0					3.75	3.75	6.0	4.0
		0.75	0.75	1.0	1.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0			2.0	2.0	6.0	6.0
				3.75	4.25										
							1.0	1.0							
		12.0	7.0	8.75	8.25	9.0	8.0	7.0	7.0	6.0	6.0	16.5	16	18.0	14.0
public skate															
unused prime time															
Weekday AM			1.25		1.0		0		1.25		2.25		~		~
Weekday PM			0		0		0		0		~		~		~
Saturday			~		~		~		~		~		2.0		~
Sunday			~		~		~		~		~		~		1.25

Table A-4: 2023 Peak Ball Diamond Schedule

2023 Peak Ball Diamond Schedule (cont'd)


 weeknight scheduled time  weekend scheduled time

Annadale #4 (unlit)

time	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat	sun
4:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							

prime time

Sam Lamb (lit)

time	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat	sun
8:00							
4:00							8 hours
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							

prime time

* alternating weeks

Annadale #5 (unlit)

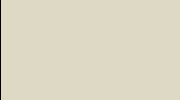
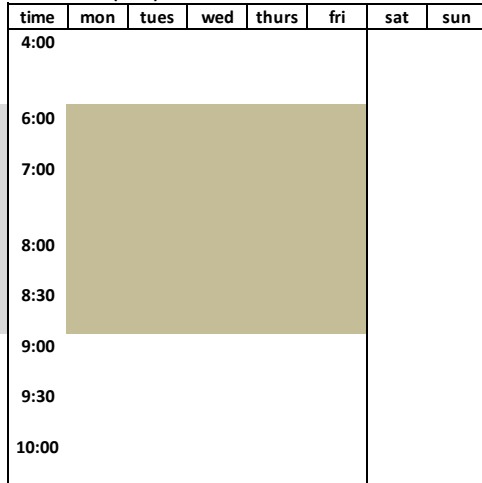
time	mon	tues	wed	thurs	fri	sat	sun
8:00							

Table A-3 Continued: 2023 Peak Ball Diamond Schedule

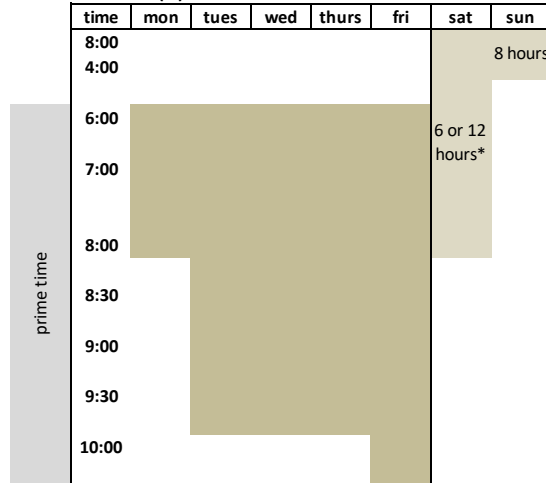
2023 Peak Ball Diamond Schedule (cont'd)

■ weeknight scheduled time ■ weekend scheduled time

Annadale #4 (unlit)

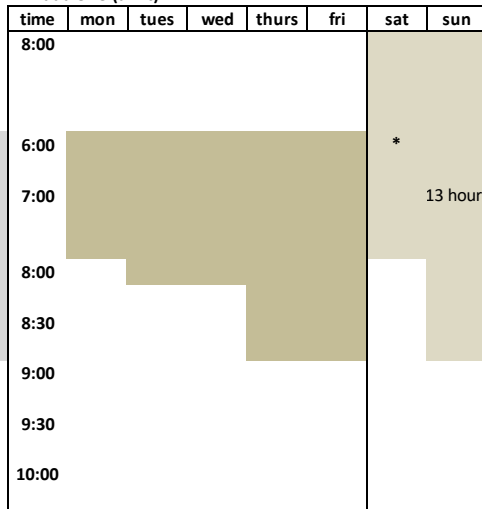


Sam Lamb (lit)



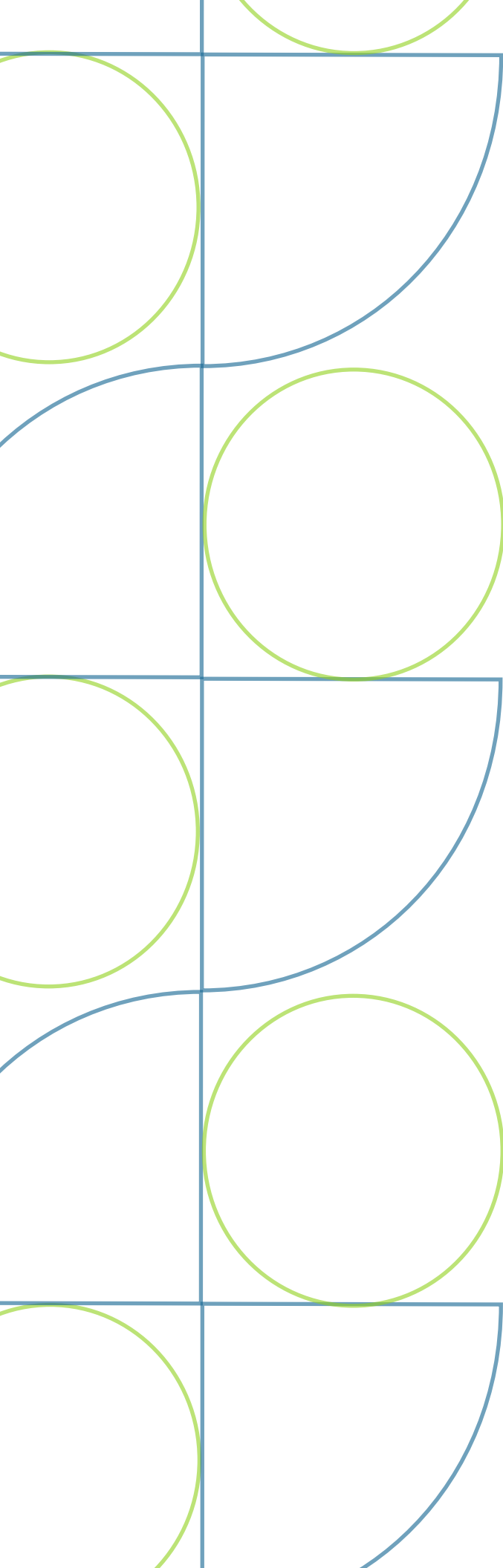
* alternating weeks

Annadale #5 (unlit)



* when available

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**APPENDIX B:
PARKS & TRAIL
INVENTORY**

Table B-1: Inventory of Town parks

	Park Details	Supporting amenities	Facilities/ amenities for self-directed use	Facilities for rental use	Other notes
1	Annandale Diamonds (Concession St. East)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking permanent washrooms concessions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth baseball (4) slo-pitch (4) t-ball (4) soft ball (4) 	
2	Bert Newman Park (14 Lisgar Ave.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open space 		
3	Cadman Park		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> swing set trails 		
4	Clock Tower Parkette (Corner of Bridge and Broadway)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating tables gardens clock tower 			The clock tower may be moved to the location of the new town hall - 10 Lisgar
5	Cranberry Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground 		Part of park is a road allowance
6	Elliot Fairbairn Park (4 Earle Street)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> swing set play structure 		
7	Gibson House Parkette (48 Sanders St.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking seating seasonal washroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dock gazebo 		
8	Glendale Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground 		Heavy teenage use
9	Gyulveszi Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practice fields (soccer) 	
10	Kinsmen Memorial Parkette (48 Sanders St.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating 			Lake views
11	Kinsmen Participark (55 Concession St. West)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking seasonal portolet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> play equipment trail green space 		

Table B-1 Continued: Inventory of Town parks

	Park Details	Supporting amenities	Facilities/ amenities for self-directed use	Facilities for rental use	Other notes
12	Kiwanis Coronation Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking seasonal portolet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground disc golf community garden plots 		
13	Library Park		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AODA Accessible playground gazebo 		installed in 2023
14	Memorial Park (48 Sanders St.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lake Lisgar Water Park Summer house, dock and boat launch basketball court pavilion playground (accessible) splash pad multi-purpose pad/ skating rink off leash dog park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hardball (2) slo-pitch (1) bandshell pavilion 	<p>Lake Lisgar Water Park has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking permanent washrooms/ change rooms concessions connections to Trans Canada Trail and McLaughlin Way Trail home site of Tillsonburg Fair Turtle garden
15	Northcrest Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating concrete path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground 		Installed in 2023
16	Oak Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground basketball court trail 		stormwater management pond at north end

Table B-1 Continued: Inventory of Town parks

	Park Details	Supporting amenities	Facilities/ amenities for self-directed use	Facilities for rental use	Other notes
17	Optimist Park (50 Hardy Ave.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking seasonal portolet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground skate park pump track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth baseball (2) 	<p>Optimist and Rotary parks are sometimes considered one, and referred to as Rotary Park</p> <p>There is a committee for the redesign of the area</p>
18	Oxford Parkette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating (benches and picnic tables) flag poles water feature 			
19	Rotary Park (45 Hardy Ave.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground outdoor fitness equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tennis/ pickleball (3) 	
20	Southridge Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> benches and picnic tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground multipurpose pad/basketball court Trail 		Located beside Southridge Public School; heavy use by students
21	Tillsonburg Community Garden (26 Bloomer St.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> picnic shelter 		Volunteer funded and operated
22	Tillsonburg Soccer Park (275 Quarter Town Line)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking permanent washrooms concessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> picnic shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regulation soccer (6) junior soccer (2) 	Operated and leased by Tillsonburg Soccer Club. Town has no role.
23	Trans Canada Trail - Borden Crescent (27 Hillydale Ave.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground trail 		Tillsonburg maintains; LPRCA owns land.
24	Trottier Park (3 Trottier Dr.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> parking benches, picnic tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground trails 		Located on main road (Baldwin)
25	Westmount Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> playground large open space 		Used by Special Olympics for Lawn Bowling practice

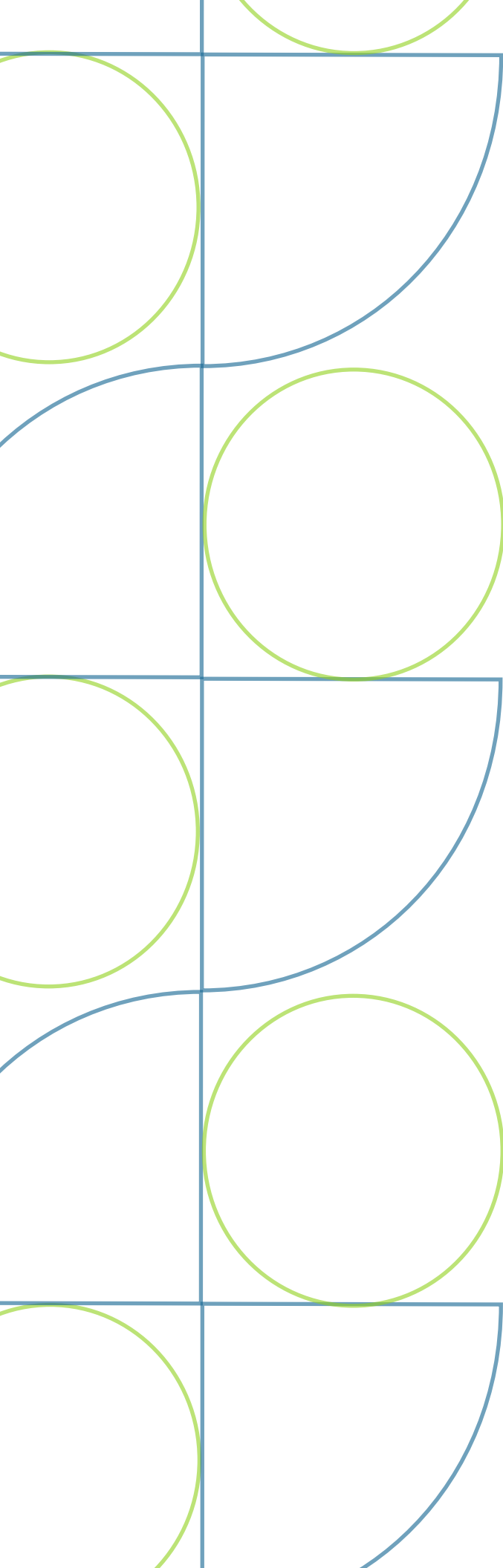
Table B-2: Inventory of Town trails

#	Trail Name	Length	Amenities	Notes
1	Carroll Trail (21 Van St)	786.7m (4.39km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trail head signage • river lookout • benches • shared bridge with golf course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gravel and paved pathways • donated land and money from Pat Carroll and Family • shared land with golf course • shares space with Trans Canada Trail (TCT) • unmaintained Nov-May
2	Trottier Woods Trail (3 Trottier Dr.)	162.2m (0.13km)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gravel pathway • maintained by Parks staff • room for expansion • unmaintained Nov-May
3	South Ridge Trail (20 South Ridge Rd)	221.1m (0.22km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to playground access to basketball nets • benches • garbage cans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paved pathway, • unmaintained Nov-May • heavily used by South Ridge Public School
4	Northcrest 2 Trail (44 Martin St)	357.3m (0.47km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches • bike racks • garbage cans, access to playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new from 2022 • trail is concrete • trail will connect to future trails in the area • can gain access to TCT • unmaintained Nov-May
5	Northcrest 2 Trail – North St Connector (No civic address – beside 56 North St E)	246.3m (0.34km)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gravel path way • skirts drainage ditch • unmaintained Nov-May

#	Trail Name	Length	Amenities	Notes
6	Trans Canada Trail – North St. Collector (No civic address – beside 53 North St E)	249.3m (0.31km)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> paved pathway (2021) switch back leads to TCT volunteers have planted many native tree/shrubs in area trail connection to Livingston Dr water management pond located on south end of trail unmaintained Nov-May
7	TCT - North St Trail - Cranberry Rd to North St. (No civic address – beside 132 North St. E)	525 m (1.67km)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gravel pathway part of the Trans Canada Trail maintained by Parks staff bollards to stop motorized vehicles gates at both entrances private fence for two neighbours located on N end of trail unmaintained Nov-May
8	North St - Trans Canada Trail Collector (No civic address)	198.2m (0.23km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trail head signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gravel pathway erosion issues from Lisgar Creek new AODA ramp being installed by Oxford County to connect with TCT (2023) new bridge being installed over the path by Oxford County (2023) unmaintained Nov-May
9	McLaughlin Way (48 Sanders St)	497.3m (0.73km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> turtle garden benches lit pathway lake views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gravel path access from Lisgar Ave major route for apartment residence home of “Turtle Garden” reclaimed in 2023 unmaintained Nov-May
10	Rotary Park Trail (No civic address – across from 45 Hardy)	226.1m (0.35km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to tennis/pickles court, horseshoe pits, Optimist baseball fields, playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> installed in 2021 unmaintained Nov-May

#	Trail Name	Length	Amenities	Notes
11	Oak Park Trail (79 Sander Cres)	98.8m (0.09km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to basketball courts, playground, bench, garbage can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gravel unmaintained Nov-May
12	Trans Canada Trail – Town Limits (QTL-Tilson) (No civic address)	2082.5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> garbage cans parking lot at Tillson Ave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> paved, accessible, newest section of TCT – 2018 old CN rail line gates at entrances/exits unmaintained Nov-May
13	Trans Canada Trail – Tillsonburg to Hawtrey (No civic address)	16369.1 m (19.2km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> signage bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> multiple gates Oxford owned, Town maintained Oxford replace bridge on section 4 years ago maintained in winter by a snowmobile group Old CN rail line unmaintained by Parks Staff - Nov-May
14	Trans Canada Trail – 4th St to Participark (No civic address)	2591.7m (1.69km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> garbage cans trailhead Signage naturalized areas Hawkins Bridge Lake Lisgar water fountain views access to Memorial Park benches signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> combination of trails and sidewalks gravel, concrete and pavement Lions Grove is located on path

#	Trail Name	Length	Amenities	Notes
15	Trans Canada Trail – Participark to Borden Cres (55 Concession St)	2011.1m (2.18km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lot at Participark • trailhead signage • Kinsmen Bridge views • marshes and ponds • swings • access to downtown via Bridge St entrance • memorial trees & benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trillium Fund paid for park • Kinsmen has their name attached to the park • skirts Stoney Creek • natural setting • unmaintained Nov-May • use to be home to a cross country skiing course • path used to cross river and had another pathway system
16	Trans Canada Trail/ Carroll Trail Section (101 John Pound Rd.)	2571m (4.39km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to golf course • access to Coronation Park via Carroll Trail benches • garbage cans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paved and gravel sections • elevation changes • adjacent to Big Otter River • shared space with golf course • in flood plain
17	Veteran’s Memorial Trail (131 Rolph St.)	1660.7m (1.66km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • benches • Vet’s Gardens “Freedom” selfie site • Kinsmen Bridge fitness equipment access to Hickory Hills and Baldwin Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks maintains signage, grass, garbage, gardens • Roads maintains bridge and walking surfaces • heavily used by retirement community
18	Tillsonburg Conservation Area Trail (27 Hillyndale Rd)	498.47m (0.4km)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking • garbage can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on flood plain of Big Otter River • Tillsonburg’s only conservation area • owned by LPRCA, Town maintains pathways, garbage can • Parks Department contractors maintain grass • unmaintained Nov-May

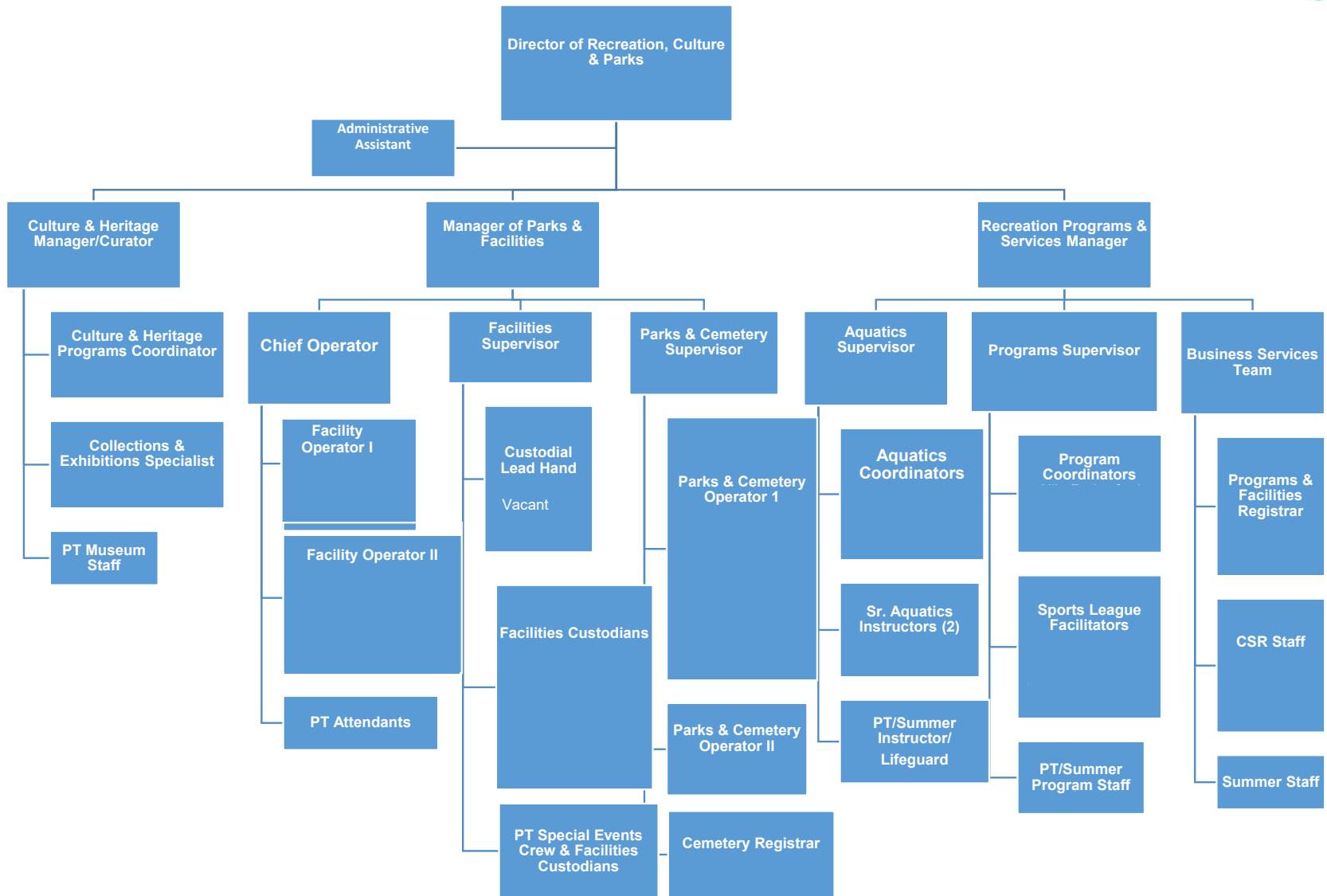


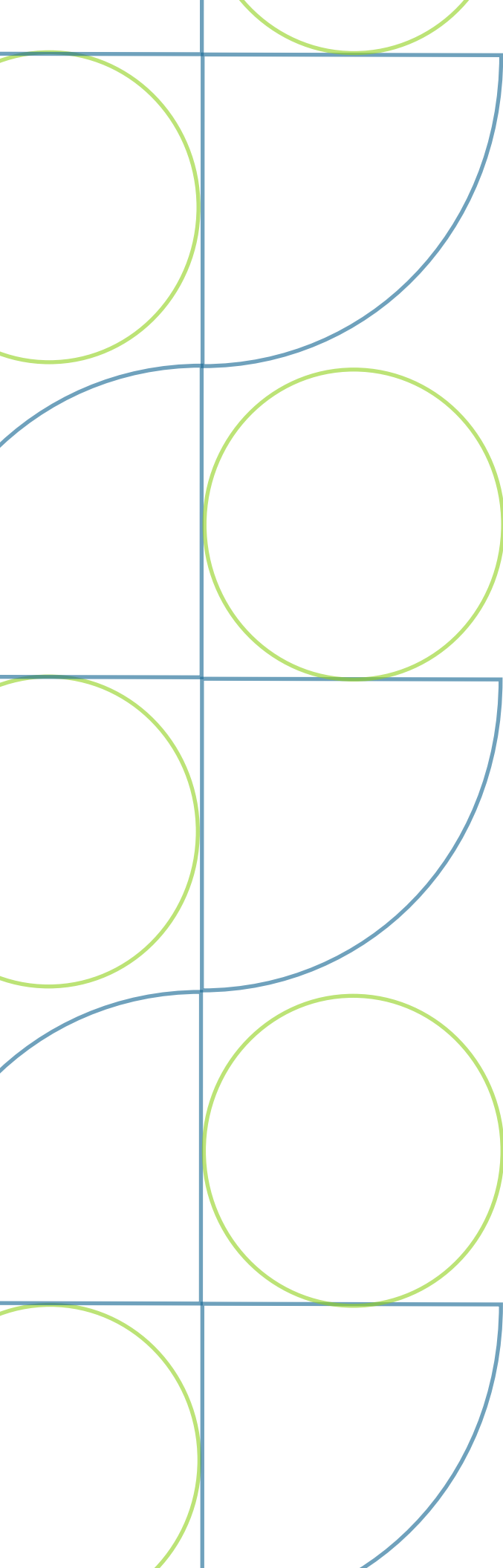
APPENDIX C: DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Figure C-1: Departmental organizational chart



Recreation, Culture & Parks Department





APPENDIX D:
REVENUE GENERATING
TOOLS AND INITIATIVES
FOR PARKS AND
RECREATION

Property Tax Increases

While typically not politically popular, a straightforward property tax increase could help offset some of the funds lost due to the changes from Bill 23.

Special Assessments/Green Benefit Districts

Harry Kitchen, professor emeritus at Trent University and an expert in Canadian municipal finance, recently reported on park financing in Canada. Special assessments have been used in some American cities to pay for park development. Kitchen writes,

“A special assessment is a specific charge or levy added to the general property tax on residential and/or commercial/ industrial properties to pay for new and improved neighbourhood parks. These properties are deemed to benefit from the park, either through usage and/or higher property values, and hence could be expected to pay higher taxes to cover some of the park costs” (p. 9)³³

A Business Improvement District (BID) or Business Improvement Area (BIA) is a public-private partnership that taxes businesses within a designated area based on property assessment; funds from that revenue are then pooled for parks, open spaces, neighbourhood beautification,

and other public realm improvements and maintenance, over and above baseline City service levels and budget allocation. In San Francisco, there are 14 “Green Benefit Districts” (GBD) focused on park improvements, the majority of which are located in commercial districts.³⁴ Each property owner pays an assessment based on property size and type of use, which is collected twice annually. The GBD also applies for grants and solicits donations. One of San Francisco’s Green Benefit Districts was created by community members in two residential neighbourhoods (Dogpatch and Northwest Potrero Hill) comprising a 200-acre (70 blocks) area. The Dogpatch and Potrero Hill Green Benefit District includes 1,403 properties and 1,150 property owners.³⁵ Its website reads,

33 Kitchen, H. (2017). “Financing parks in Canada: What might be done?” Heart of the City Papers. Park People. Retrieved from https://parkpeople.ca/cms/custom/uploads/2019/11/Park-People_Financing-City-Parks-2017-2.pdf

34 <https://cityparksalliance.org/funding-hub/local-funding/>

35 <https://greenbenefit.org/about-gbd>

“The GBD augments baseline City services like sidewalk cleaning, graffiti abatement and trash removal. We maintain, improve and expand community-created public green spaces and aid in maintenance of and improvements to Esprit Park (the district’s sole Recreation & Parks Department-owned public park) and the Woods Yard play area (the district’s only children’s playground). The GBD adds street trees and sidewalk gardens and advocates for pedestrian and bicycle routes and other streetscape improvements. We advocate for the needs of the district with a wide variety of City and State agencies, with charitable organizations and private companies and individuals. We encourage and support neighbourhood volunteerism to further enhance our public realm. The GBD helps ensure that the needs of our district are being considered, addressed and funded.”

In 2014, Seattle residents voted to form an independent Seattle Parks District with taxing authority.³⁶ Known as Proposition 1, it replaced an expiring parks levy to authorize an additional regular property tax levy to fund the County’s parks, trails, and green spaces as well as environmental education programs, capital and major facility maintenance projects, and flood mitigation measures. The levy’s duration is six years and began in 2020 at \$0.1832 per \$1,000 of

assessed valuation.³⁷ All parks and recreation lands, facilities, and equipment are the property of the City of Seattle. The Park District is a separate local government than the City, but shares the same boundaries and is governed by City Council under an interlocal agreement such that the City’s Parks and Recreation Department provides services with the District’s funding.³⁸ A Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners provides oversight for the Park District’s investments and activities.

Community Benefit Charges

Introduced in 2020 under section 37 of the Planning Act, Community Benefit Charges (CBCs) are a mechanism for funding capital costs for the provision of public services not otherwise covered by development charges. Prior to Bill 23, CBCs were based on a maximum rate of 4% of the land value. Under Bill 23, the maximum CBC amount is based only on the land proposed for new development, not the entire parcel of land that may have existing developments on it. CBCs are also now excluded from affordable, attainable, and non-profit housing units.

³⁶ <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/cities-money-parks-funding-ideas>

³⁷ <https://info.kingcounty.gov/kcelections/Vote/contests/ballotmeasures.aspx?cid=90156>

³⁸ <https://www.seattle.gov/seattle-park-district/about>

Use of Other Public Budgets

Health

Given the growing trend of green prescribing as a medical treatment, there may be emerging opportunities to direct public health budgets toward supporting greenspace development and improvements.

Canadian physicians are permitted to issue “green prescriptions” to patients whose medical conditions might benefit from ecotherapy.³⁹ Nature therapy or “shinrin yoku” (forest bathing) and its benefits were first pioneered by the Japanese government in 1982⁴⁰, and green prescriptions have been formally part of New Zealand’s health care system since the late 1990s⁴¹. Park Rx America was established in 2017 as a grassroots movement. In Canada, Park Prescriptions (PaRx) launched in 2019 as an initiative of the B.C. Parks Foundation; it has since expanded across all provinces. PaRx facilitates written prescriptions that advise patients to get outdoors for at least two hours a week (at least 20 minutes at a time).

PaRx has been endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association and is scaling at a rapid pace according to the Ontario Public Health Association. Over 10,000 health care providers have registered across Canada

and 4,000 prescriptions have been written.⁴² Collaborations with organizations such as Parks Canada, local conservatories, and botanical gardens have provided patients with free or discounted access to spaces that fulfill their green prescriptions.

The PaRx website advises patients to “make easy green tweaks” to their routine such as booking a lunchtime walk in the park, doing cardio workouts on a trail, choosing an active commute to work or school along a greenway, and planning a weekend getaway around an outdoor experience.⁴³

Presence in nature has been shown to improve mental and physical health including depression, anxiety, stress, inflammation, blood pressure, diabetes, cancer care, cardiovascular health, respiratory health, ADHD, pregnancy, asthma, and obesity.⁴⁴ Given this growing evidence, there may be creative opportunities to channel funding from other relevant government departments toward the development, improvement, and/or maintenance of parkland. Drayson (2014) suggests that there is “a potential case for local authority public health budgets to directly support urban green space maintenance and improvement” (p. 37-38). This was introduced in Sunderland, England in 2014: as parks funding declined sharply, public health funds were directed to wider services including parks to explore how facilities such as picnic benches, outdoor gyms, or connected cycle routes would promote more use of existing green spaces

39 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/victoriaforster/2022/02/08/canadian-physicians-can-now-prescribe-nature-to-patients/?sh=2fe8a5bd6f20>

40 <https://www.doseofnature.org.uk/around-the-world1>

41 Pringle R: Green Prescriptions: effective health promotion?. *J Phys Educ N Z*. 1998, 31: 7-16.

42 <https://reasonstobecheerful.world/green-prescriptions-health-nature-parks/>

43 <https://www.parkprescriptions.ca/en/prescribers#Tips-for-creating-a-nature-habit>

44 <https://www.parkprescriptions.ca/en/whynature>

and improve physical activity levels in the community. A similar model has been used in the borough of Hillingdon, London: Healthy Hillingdon is a partnership between the parks department and the local primary health care trust, pooling resources to encourage greater use of green spaces to promote public health and prevent illness.⁴⁵ In Birmingham, Alabama, the Red Rock Trail System was developed with a blend of funding sources and partnerships from civic, environmental and health organizations. The 750-mile bike and pedestrian path system was funded through grants from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and investment from the local Department of Health.⁴⁶

As additional pilots explore how this innovative model can be implemented, it appears that using public budgets in partnership with health programs/providers can deliver greenspace with cross-sectoral benefits.⁴⁷

45 <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/paying-for-parks.pdf>

46 <https://givingcompass.org/article/how-to-secure-new-funding-for-parks-and-green-space>

47 Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. (2006). "Paying for Parks: Eight Models of Funding Urban Green Spaces." Retrieved from https://growgreenproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Working-Document_Financing-NBS-in-cities.pdf

Dividends

ENMAX is a City of Calgary-owned provider of electricity, natural gas, and renewable energy. Since 2003, a dedicated portion of the annual ENMAX dividend has been directed to a capital funding program used to enhance existing parks and acquire and develop new parks.⁴⁸ Funds in this account are earmarked for regional parks that serve multiple communities and large catchment areas and are not acquired, funded, or constructed through the development and subdivision process. In 2022, \$71 million was earmarked for new regional parks over a 5-year period to 2026. To date, Council has invested over \$136 million through the ENMAX Legacy Parks Fund through projects including:

- Enhancement of the 100-year-old Bowness Park with a new central square, wading pool, washrooms, change rooms, miniature train, river access, parking lots, winter skate rentals, summer boat rentals, bridge, interpretive signage, and historic elements a year-round facility for summer boating and picnicking as well as winter outdoor skating
- Renovation of Devonian Gardens, North America's largest (1 ha/2 acre) indoor public botanical gardens
- Modest enhancements to 50 small projects in community-level parks in older communities, dedicating a \$3.25M budget toward updated site furniture, plant materials, local pathways, irrigation

48 <https://www.calgary.ca/planning/parks-rec/enmax-parks-program.html> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-s-parks-wish-list-exceeds-available-money-1.6425419>

Community Partnership Capital Program

The City of Ottawa has two initiatives for implementing minor and major capital improvements to its parks, recreation, and cultural facilities on a cost-sharing basis with non-profit community partners such as community associations, sports organizations, cultural groups, clubs, and school councils.

The Community Partnership Minor Capital Program implements minor capital improvements such as play equipment, basketball courts, park furniture, and tree planting. Projects on school board land and other public lands that are accessible to the public may also be eligible. For projects on City property, the City matches the community contribution to a maximum of \$10,000 or 50% of the total cost of the project. For projects on school board land or other public land, the City contributes up to 33% of the total cost to a maximum of \$7,500.

The Community Partnership Major Capital Program implements major capital improvements such as new facilities, additions, renovations, and expansions to fixed assets that are open and accessible to all residents of Ottawa. The project may relate to an asset that is owned by the City, or operated by a community partner who delivers service on behalf of the City or assists the City in the delivery of programs and services. The City contributes up to 50% of the eligible capital project cost of recreation and sports projects in City-owned facilities, and up to 25% in non City-owned facilities. Costs eligible for cost sharing within the program include concept and detailed design costs, construction costs

including contingencies, site development costs, development and building permits, and fixed equipment. The City's contribution may be provided in grants paid in cash, land or other services in kind, or waiver of applicable municipal fees

Voluntary Contributions

Foundations/Conservancies

In some cities, foundations or conservancies fund new and existing parkland/maintenance through voluntary contributions/donations and grants. A single foundation for all parks and recreation services enables larger projects to proceed by bringing the various contributors together to build one "account" from which to draw. A cursory web-based review revealed that parks foundations are more prevalent in western Canada and in the United States than in the mid/eastern provinces. The few that were identified in Ontario were park-specific, as opposed to collective funds.

Parks Foundation Calgary is a citizen-led non-profit organization that has fundraised for and completed over 250 major outdoor projects across Calgary including parks, playgrounds, gardens, sport courts, rinks, and bicycle pump tracks. The largest project to date has been the 145-km Rotary/Mattamy Greenway, a pathway system that encircles Calgary. Parks Foundation Calgary has been active for 35 years and includes a 13-member Board of Governors. The foundation supports community-driven initiatives through grants, accounting services, and connecting donors and partners with projects, facilitated through one-time, monthly recurring, or project-specific donations in addition to the gift of

stocks/shares, life insurance beneficiaries, planned giving, endowment funds, and fundraising events.

Donation Program

A general donation program could be considered to support recreation services, although it would likely need to include other areas to which residents could donate. The City of Toronto includes an opportunity to donate to specific service areas in its tax mailouts. This Voluntary Contribution program notes, "You can make a voluntary contribution (donation) to support a variety of City programs and services that matter to you. You can make a donation in any amount from \$1 up to \$50,000 [to specified categories, which include]: children; youth and parenting; history, art, and culture; parks, gardens and beaches."⁴⁹

These are only four of 12 categories listed on the insert, including general revenues. Potential categories could include recreation services in general or be refined to allow contributions to be directed to specific facility improvement projects or program areas.

Community Capital Campaigns

Capital campaigns can be used to raise funds for large building projects, as well as for smaller, community-supported initiatives that contribute to parks and recreation infrastructure. Key elements of this approach to planned fundraising include: a predetermined monetary goal attached to providing a concrete project, sufficient lead time to raise funds, an end date to fundraising, broad-based community involvement in the effort, and ongoing communications about its progress. Often, incentives are provided to motivate contributions (e.g., matching funds, public recognition of donors, etc.). Where possible, coordinating these campaigns with other similar initiatives in the community should also be considered to minimize the risk of detracting from multiple requests for monetary contributions. Major projects merit considering issuing an RFP for professional services to design a structured campaign plan.

49 <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/property-taxes-utilities/property-tax/voluntary-contributionoption/>

Private Partnerships

Increasingly, the public realm is being enhanced through Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPS). POPS are open/landscaped spaces that are privately owned and maintained but legally required to be open and accessible to the public.⁵⁰ They are typically provided in exchange for additional height and density and often feature public art pieces, street furniture, and landscaping. Although POPS contribute to the public realm – particularly in urban environments – most municipalities consider them to be insufficient as parkland.

However, since the passing of Bill 23, POPS and encumbered lands (e.g., public spaces developed on parking garages) must now be accepted as parkland conveyance. The Province has not released details or direction on an appropriate value for municipalities to credit POPS toward parkland dedication requirements. A look at other municipalities' requirements related to POPS could provide insight for the Town in developing its own POPS policy. For example, the City of Mississauga's 2019 Parks and Forestry Master Plan recommends covenanting these private lands as public space and requiring the building and maintenance of POPS to meet municipal standards and specifications. The City of Toronto also has extensive urban design guidelines for the provision of POPS that can be a good resource for the Town.

50 <https://www.oba.org/Sections/Municipal-Law/Articles/Articles-2023/June-2023/From-Plazas-To-Parkland-Ontario%E2%80%99s-Bill-23-and>

