



Town of Tillsonburg  
**Aquatics Facility Study**

February 2019



**Monteith + Brown**  
planning consultants



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**Town of Tillsonburg**

# Aquatics Facility Study

**February 1, 2019**  
**FINAL REPORT**



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# Overview of Aquatics in Tillsonburg

For over 70 years, the Town of Tillsonburg has provided high quality indoor and outdoor aquatic experiences to residents and people living in surrounding areas. The Lake Lisgar Waterpark was opened in 1948 as a rectangular swimming pool (then known as the Kinsmen Pool) and was converted into the water park as it now stands in the mid-1990s, while the indoor aquatic centre at the Tillsonburg Community Centre was constructed in 1972.

Both aquatic centres are located within a five minute walk of one another, forming part of a broad civic recreational campus that is bounded by Lisgar Avenue to the north, Gowrie Street to the south, Broadway to the west, and Lake Lisgar to the east.

Figure 1: Geographic Context of the Tillsonburg Community Centre & Lake Lisgar Water Park



Image Source: Google Maps, 2019

## Tillsonburg Community Centre

The indoor aquatic centre contains a 25 metre, six lane rectangular lap pool with competition starting blocks, male and female change rooms (shared with the fitness centre), a lifeguard office, storage room, and a separated viewing gallery. There is also an exterior entrance providing direct access to the pool deck in addition to the interior access found at the basement level which can be beneficial for persons with disabilities and restricted mobility.

While the aquatic centre has serviced the community and surrounding region well over the years, it lacks modern amenities and requires improvements to basic elements such as pool decking, tiling of the pool tank, filtration systems, and accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities.



Tillsonburg Community Centre  
Image Source: Monteith Brown Planning Consultants

## Lake Lisgar Water Park

Lake Lisgar Waterpark's outdoor swimming area offers beach entry, inflatable and spray features, a large water slide, change rooms and a canteen. There is a shaded grassed area north of the pool deck that is well suited for picnicking and pool viewing while the adjacent Memorial Park contains a quality playground structure and pavilion that complement the water play activities.

Recently the Waterpark's usage has declined from historical levels due in part to equipment failures. The bath house was built near the time of the original pool construction and is in an antiquated state despite ongoing efforts of the Town to maintain its aging structure. It contains male and female change rooms, a control desk, lifeguard office, and a small storage area.



Lake Lisgar Waterpark  
Image Source: Tourism Oxford

## Purpose of the Aquatics Facility Study

In recent years, the Town of Tillsonburg has been faced with greater infrastructure lifecycle pressures to keep up a state of good repair within its aging stock of aquatic facilities. Work is required to retile the Tillsonburg Community Centre's pool deck, repair the pool basin and replace mechanical systems but doing so requires a considerable capital expenditure. The Lake Lisgar Waterpark is also faced with substantial capital renewal works, notably for replacement of the water slide tower.

With limitations and financial renewal costs associated with the Town's aging aquatics infrastructure, the Town of Tillsonburg has undertaken this Aquatic Facility Study. The intent of the Study is to help the Town make decisions that result in municipal dollars being efficiently spent, focused on priority aquatic facility needs, and hopefully results in more effective operations (including through stimulating greater aquatic use/participation). The Town of Tillsonburg Parks, Recreation & Cultural Strategic Master Plan also provides rationale for undertaking this analysis, particularly for the indoor aquatics centre.<sup>1</sup>

The Aquatics Facility Study was prepared in conjunction with a separate, but concurrent architectural conceptual design process. The Aquatics Facility Study will be used by Town Staff to inform the preliminary design initiative, but is in no way intended to limit functional design and programming considerations deemed to be appropriate through the architectural assessment.

## Project Methodology & Timeline

The Aquatics Facility Study involved an analysis of community demographics and selected trends applicable to the municipal aquatics sector, as well as engaging the community via a survey and review of comments (received through emails, written submissions and the Town's social media). A workshop was also held with the Town's aquatic staff. Using this information, assessments provide the recommended direction for aquatics in Tillsonburg to be considered as part of the preliminary architectural design. The project schedule is as follows:

- November 6, 2018      Project initiated with Town Staff and Consultants
- November 7, 2018      Background research commences
- November 12, 2018     Site Tours of Tillsonburg Community Centre and Lake Lisgar Waterpark
- November 12, 2018     Tillsonburg Aquatics Staff Workshop
- November 21, 2018     Community Survey and commenting opens to the public
- January 1, 2019        Community Survey closes
- January 5, 2019        Needs assessments commence
- January 16, 2019      Draft Study circulated for Town review
- February 1, 2019      Final Study

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Tillsonburg. 2011. Parks, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan. pp. 60-63.

## Tillsonburg Community Profile

Tillsonburg's indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities are used by local residents but also capture a degree of regional use. The following market characteristics focus primarily upon the Town of Tillsonburg using data derived from Statistics Canada.

The Town of Tillsonburg grew by 3.7% between the 2011 and 2016 Census periods, reaching a population of 15,872 (exclusive of net Census undercount). The Town's ongoing Development Charges Study establishes a mid-year 2019 estimate of 16,576 persons, growing to 18,510 persons by the year 2031 which amounts to a 12% increase (1,600 persons).

The median age of Tillsonburg residents is 48.5 years while the average age is 46.2 years, as recorded through the 2016 Census. Between 2011 and 2016:

- The number of children (1,500 persons between the ages of 0 and 9) and youth/teens (1,600 persons between the ages of 10 and 19) in the community was relatively unchanged.
- The number of younger adults between the ages of 20 and 34 was also relatively unchanged.
- There were 225 fewer adults between 35 and 54 years of age, declining by 6%.
- Older adults ages 55 years and over represented the largest growth segment, adding 770 persons (12%) and presently consists of more than 6,600 Tillsonburg residents.

Town staff indicate that Tillsonburg has attracted new subdivision growth since the 2016 Census and thus additional younger populations may be reflected when the 2021 Census is undertaken and released. Other notable socio-demographic characteristics include:

- Tillsonburg's average household size of 2.2 persons is lower than averages in Oxford County (2.5) and Ontario (2.6), with two-person households accounting for over 60% of local households.
- Median household income of \$58,000 is 19% lower than the County median and 21% lower than the provincial median.
- There are 2,200 residents (14% of the population) living at or below the Low Income Measure (LIM-AT), a greater rate than the County (11%) and similar to Ontario (14%); nearly one in five Tillsonburg children and youth below the age of 18 live in LIM-AT households (17%).
- Most residents are well established Canadians; 87% of the population was born in Canada and 88% of all immigrants in the Town arrived prior to the year 2001.

While Tillsonburg's indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities are used by residents, the Town's role as a regional service centre results in its pools being used by people living in area municipalities throughout Oxford, Elgin and Norfolk County. The Lake Lisgar Waterpark is marketed as a tourist destination and accordingly attracts a degree of visits beyond the regional catchment. The Town has not yet established a formal "trade area" boundary for the indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities to define their catchments and market characteristics, however, the contributions of non-residents are recognized in this Study.

## Selected Trends in the Municipal Aquatics Sector

### The Value of Aquatics

Municipalities deliver aquatic services because of the value they bring to residents from a variety of perspectives including safety, accessibility / inclusion, health and wellness, sports and competition, and a sense of community. Although private and backyard pools are gaining popularity, aquatics would be inaccessible for many people if not provided by the municipal sector.

Swimming and aquatic programming provide the public with valuable water safety programs and offer services to teach interested persons swimming skills. Using a health and wellness lens, swimming and other aquatic activities are excellent low-impact exercise opportunities to develop mobility, endurance, and strength training.



Tillsonburg Community Centre  
Image Source: Town of Tillsonburg

Swimming pools are popular facilities, offering a variety of options for all ages and abilities. Swimming has low-barriers to participation in that little equipment is required (appropriate bathing attire), it is low-to-no cost for drop-in activities (fees are usually associated with scheduled or registered programs), and anyone can participate in some form.

From a municipal service and facility perspective, aquatic facilities complement fitness and recreational atmospheres and pair well with other facilities such as community centres, seniors' centres, arenas, gymnasiums and libraries. Swimming facilities often anchor major community centres and can be used to build a community hub of activity (i.e., multiple municipal and / or private service providers located at a single site), much like the way that Tillsonburg's indoor and outdoor pools anchor the Memorial Park campus of recreation facilities/amenities.

In light of these benefits, the Town of Tillsonburg and a number of area municipalities operate indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities.



### Regional Indoor Aquatic Centres

Tillsonburg and Ingersoll are the smallest area municipalities by population that offer indoor pools; other regional benchmarks that provide indoor aquatic facilities have populations above 40,000 persons. With the exception of Brantford’s Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre (offering a 65 metre and 25 metre pool), municipalities have employed a 25 metre pool design that are rectangular (except for Woodstock which is L-shaped), contain between 4 and 6 lanes, and whose gendered changerooms are supplemented by family changerooms (except for Tillsonburg).

Municipality	Population	No. of Indoor Aquatic Centres	Facility Type
Tillsonburg	16,000	1	<b>Tillsonburg Community Centre</b> 25 metre, 6 lane rectangular pool with competition starting blocks
Bayham	7,500	0	n/a
Brant County	37,000	0	n/a
Brantford	97,000	1	<b>Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre</b> 65 metre rectangular pool, 25 metre pool, warm water pool, hydrotherapy pool
Ingersoll	13,000	1	<b>Victoria Park Community Centre</b> 25 metre, 4 lane rectangular pool
Norfolk	64,000	1	<b>Annaleise Carr Aquatics Centre</b> 25 metre, 5 lane rectangular pool
Norwich	11,000	0	n/a
St. Thomas	39,000	0	n/a
Thames Centre	13,000	0	n/a
Woodstock	41,000	1	<b>Southside Aquatic Centre</b> 25 metre, 6 lane, “L-Shaped” pool

Note: Supply excludes non-municipal aquatic centres (e.g. private sector, YMCA, educational institutions, etc.)

### Regional Outdoor Aquatic Centres

All but two of the benchmarked area municipalities provide outdoor aquatics facilities. Tillsonburg and Brantford are the only two comparators that operate a waterpark, though Woodstock provides a unique splash structure that offers a smaller scale version of the water park experience. Other municipalities operate rectangular pools that are between 25 metres and 33 metres in length.

Municipality	Population	No. of Outdoor Aquatic Facilities	Facility Type
Tillsonburg	16,000	1	<b>Lake Lisgar Waterpark</b> Swimming pool, waterplay features, slide
Bayham	7,500	0	n/a
Brant County	37,000	1	<b>Paris Community Pool</b> 25 metre, 4 lane rectangular pool
Brantford	97,000	1	<b>Earl Haig Family Fun Park</b> Swimming pool and waterplay features, slide
Ingersoll	13,000	0	n/a
Norfolk	64,000	1	<b>Delhi Kinsmen Pool</b> 33 metre, 8 lane rectangular pool
Norwich	11,000	1	<b>Otterville Pool</b> 30 metre, 6 lane rectangular pool
St. Thomas	39,000	1	<b>Jaycees Pool</b> 25 metre, 6-lane rectangular pool, diving well
Thames Centre	13,000	1	<b>Dorchester Community Pool</b> 25 metre, 6-lane rectangular pool
Woodstock	41,000	2	<b>Lions Pool</b> 32 metre, 6-lane rectangular pool <b>Southside Aquatic Centre</b> Wading pool with splash structure and various spray features

Note: Supply excludes non-municipal aquatic centres (e.g. private sector, educational institutions, etc.) and splash pads

In addition to outdoor pools, the majority of area municipalities also provide splash pads and/or wading pools as part of their outdoor aquatics system. These splash pads vary in size, scale and the number of features contained in them and are thus not directly comparable in all instances. In lieu of splash pad provision, the Town of Tillsonburg has chosen to provide a more comprehensive, unique outdoor waterplay experience through Lake Lisgar Waterpark; if the Town were to provide a splash pad in the future, its design would likely need to be scaled to a more basic template so that it would not directly compete with Waterpark operations should this facility continue to serve the Town.

## Program Trends

Swimming pools can be designed and programmed for a wide range of aquatic sports and community activities, ranging from parent and tot introduction to swimming all the way to competitive fitness swimming (and everything in between). Listed below is a summary of the most common aquatic program types along with a brief description of those activities.

Activity/Program	Description
<b>Leisure Swimming</b>	Opportunities for free play in the water with lifeguard supervision. These programs are often labeled as “free swim”, “open swim”, “rec swim” or “family swim”.
<b>Fitness Swimming</b>	Pool patrons may visit the facility specifically to benefit their personal health and wellness objectives by participating in aquafit, lane swimming, triathlon training, or masters swimming.
<b>Swimming Lessons</b>	Many facilities offer progressive swimming lessons ranging from parent and tot lessons (ages 4 months to 3 years), preschool-age lessons (3 years to 6 years), school-age lessons (5 years to 12 years). These are often offered through the Red Cross or Lifesaving Society lesson programs.
<b>Leadership Programs</b>	Swim Patrol, Bronze-level courses (Star, Medallion, Cross), Lifeguard certifications (National Lifeguard), swimming instructor certifications (Water Safety Instructor, Swim Instructor, Lifesaving Instructor), and advanced courses such as Examiner and Instructor Trainer.
<b>Aquatic Sports</b>	Aquatic athletics requires significant dedication of pool space for training and competition. Common aquatic sports include competitive lane swimming (swim team), water polo, diving, and synchronized swimming.
<b>Specialized Aquatic Programs &amp; Activities</b>	Some aquatic facilities have developed or introduced niche/specialized aquatic programs, either by request or to introduce new programs and skill-development opportunities. These may include (but are not limited to): aqua-jogging, water walking, aqua-cycling, aquapole, stand-up paddle boarding, paddleboard yoga, underwater hockey, innertube water polo, and more.
<b>Therapeutic Programs</b>	Certain municipalities have partnered with hospitals and rehabilitative care providers such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, kinesiologists, athletic therapists, etc. to deliver programs designed for post-surgical operation rehab, heart disease and stroke prevention/recovery, or to support limited-mobility exercise.

The Town of Tillsonburg offers programs within all of the above noted categories with the exception of therapeutic/rehabilitative programming. The result is a diverse range of program and rental opportunities within the Tillsonburg Community Centre and the Lake Lisgar Waterpark. Competitive swimming was previously offered at the indoor pool by a community-based organization, however, that group is no longer active though the Tillsonburg Community Centre remains capable of accommodating a competitive program if/when a new group emerges.

## Facility Design

Modern aquatic facility design has evolved from the provision of a single, basic rectangular swimming tank. Many aquatic environments now offer multiple tanks to serve a variety of programming options and user groups. These may be shallow, deep or transition spaces, sometimes in unique shapes and sizes (e.g., a “guppy pool” for parent and tot programming).

Some popular examples of modern pool designs and features include:

- **Moveable pool floors:** these provide the operator with the ability to raise and lower the pool depth to suit a variety of programs (generally 0.0 – 2.7m or deeper). This may include shallow programs such as swimming lessons or parent and tot swim, or deep-water programs such as aquafit (option for chest-depth water or full-depth).
- **Therapy pools:** these warm-water (occasionally also salt-water) pools provide a therapeutic option for users seeking a space to benefit from aquatic therapy (e.g., stroke recovery, physical therapy, or older adults and seniors’ programs).
- **Family pools:** these are a consistent shallow depth (0.5 – 0.7m) and are designed with the pool’s youngest swimmers in mind. The shallow depth enables toddlers and young children to explore buoyancy in a comfortable environment. They are often warmer than pools designed for fitness swimming. These pools also often include a beach-style or ramp entry and stepped transitions (benches for adults to sit or “teaching steps”).

**Traditional rectangular pools** for lane swimming are also very functional and well-used facilities. The standard dimensions for these tanks are 25 metres in length while pool widths vary dependent upon the number of lanes available and whether the tank supports other uses or accessibility features. Most often, pools transition from shallow ends (suitable for school-age swimming lessons) to deeper water (suitable for dive-entries) and may include start blocks to accommodate competitive swimming.

**Wave pools and splash parks** remain common aquatic destinations, but are more commonly operated by private service providers. However, some municipal facilities (particularly outdoor pools) provide adventure play options (e.g., water slides, spray features, rock climbing walls, etc.). Some less-risky and smaller-scale aquatic play features available in municipal facilities may include: Tarzan ropes, (retractable) climbing walls, spray features, and bubblers.

**Universal (accessible) design standards** are a requirement of new (or significant changes to existing) pool development. This would include, but is not limited to, the following features:

- **Ramp entries** provide sloped entry from zero-depth to the pool floor (able to be used by water wheelchairs and persons with limited mobility)
- **Clear and accessible path** from the facility entrance to the change rooms and pool deck
- **Changerooms** containing change tables with adjustable height and dimensions/weight carrying capacity for adults, sufficient widths between doorways, grab bars, emergency call buttons, etc.
- **High contrast** colours used for surface markings and equipment
- **Colour and texture cues** to assist persons with visual impairments

## Other Considerations

**Aging infrastructure** is a common issue across municipalities and municipal aquatic facilities are no exception. Many pools in Ontario have been in operation for decades and require significant investment for maintenance or repair. Challenges associated with aging aquatics infrastructure may include: the ability or lack thereof to retrofit older pool designs to meet modern accessibility standards; servicing dated parts and equipment that are no longer produced; inefficient operations from a cost or environmental perspective relative to new technologies; older pool designs that are not conducive to current aquatic activity/program preferences.

Pool operation and maintenance considerations should evaluate opportunities for environmental or high-efficiency designs and implementation of **new technologies**. This may include water treatment, filtration, air and water heating and circulation, air quality monitoring, etc. A best-practice example is the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex which was among the first in Ontario to use a heat-recovery system that directs excess heat from arena operations to warm its indoor aquatic centre. Tillsonburg has recently completed a Combined Heat & Power project where waste heat from electricity generation is recovered to heat pool water and other building uses.

The design of **environmentally friendly facilities** is promoted by the Canadian Green Building Council, which governs the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system in Canada. To obtain LEED certification, a facility must meet rating standards in sustainable development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials, and indoor environmental quality. BOMA BEST is another sustainability certification program that is a voluntary, national program designed to assess environmental performance and management of existing (primarily commercial) buildings.

Pool design should also consider **spaces for staff and patrons** as well as **equipment and chemical / operational storage**. Aquatic staff need space to keep their personal and work-related items (clothing, towels, swimming lesson attendance and worksheets, etc.) and a space to perform first aid (treatment supplies, chair/bed for patron use, easily washed floor surface). Facilities that offer a variety of programs (particularly swimming lesson programs and aquatic fitness) require significant space for storage of equipment (pool noodles, water belts, lifejackets, toys, lane ropes, etc.). This may take the form of shelving and racks on deck to make equipment available to pool patrons or may be a secure storage closet or cabinet. Other storage considerations may include: deck cleaning equipment, a wash basin or sink, and storage of pool treatment chemical (if not housed elsewhere in the facility).

**Splash pads** have become highly sought amenities for young families seeking a fun, affordable and accessible experience on hot days. They tend to be more cost effective than outdoor pools to build and operate as they can be integrated into most park configurations and do not require regular staffing as there is no standing water. Splash pads can be designed in a wide variety of ways with a range of different apparatuses that provide an enhanced aquatic experience for residents of all ages.

# Community Input Received

Consultation for this Study spanned a six-week period between November 12, 2018 and January 1, 2019, consisting of the following feedback opportunities:

1. Community Survey
2. Online & Emailed Feedback
3. Aquatics Staff Workshop

A summary of themes from each consultation activity is summarized in the pages that follow.

## Community Survey

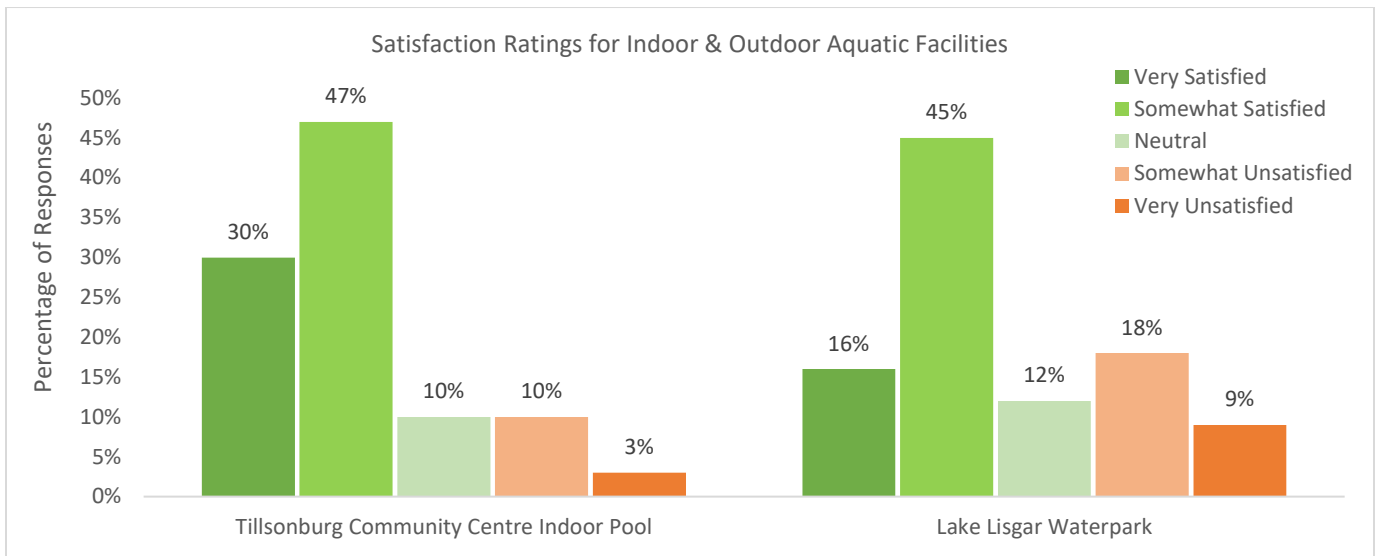
### Survey Sample Characteristics

The survey generated responses from 652 individuals, noting that the total number of responses per question varied (i.e. respondents were not obligated to answer any particular question). The survey sample was comprised of both Tillsonburg residents (78%) and non-residents (22%), was more likely to be completed by females (82%), and 58% reported an annual household income over \$75,000. The average age of survey respondents was 44 years with an average household size of 2.2 persons, slightly younger than the Town’s Census average age (46 years) and the same Census average household size.

Approximately four out of five respondents (83%) used the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool during the past year. A total of 54% of respondents visited the Lake Lisgar Waterpark over the past twelve months. When expanded to visits over the past two years, 57% of survey respondents visited the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool more than 16 times while 68% of responses visited the Lake Lisgar Waterpark less than 6 times.

### Overall Experience at Tillsonburg Aquatics Facilities

Three out of four respondents’ reported being *satisfied* with their last visit to the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool (77%). The Lake Lisgar Waterpark received a slightly lower satisfaction rating of 61%.



### Reasons for Not Visiting a Tillsonburg Aquatic Facility

For the 96 survey respondents that had not visited the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool in the past year, 23% reported the reason as being that *programs were not offered at a time convenient to them* while another 20% were simply *not interested* in swimming. Other reasons included those that felt the design of the pool is *outdated*, programs were *too expensive*, or that they *did not know enough* about the indoor pool or its programs (these other reasons each amounted to between 10% and 12% of responses among non-visitors).

Among the 239 respondents reporting that they did not use the Lake Lisgar Waterpark in the past year, 34% indicated that admission is *too expensive* or that they *prefer to use free splash pads* found within parks (in other municipalities). Another 19% stated that the facility is *too busy* while 12% indicated that they are *not interested* in swimming or waterplay.

### Importance of Selected Indoor Aquatic Activities & Amenities

Respondents prioritized a number of indoor aquatic programs and activities. Frequently cited examples of activities that were somewhat important or very important included *swimming lessons* (90%), *leisure swims* (88%), *lifeguarding and leadership programs* (85%), *aquafit* (84%), and *family/parent-tot swims* (83%).

Within an indoor pool setting, survey respondents were most likely to place importance on having *deep water* (84% rated this as somewhat or very important), *special needs and accessibility features* (83%), *warm water* (83%) and *family changerooms* (82%). In total, 86% of respondents indicated that they would likely *use the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool more frequently than they do at present* if it were modernized/enhanced with amenities that were appealing to them.

### Importance of Selected Outdoor Aquatic Activities & Amenities

Respondents also prioritized a number of outdoor aquatic programs and activities. Whereas respondents placed strong priority on lessons and aquatic leadership in an indoor pool setting, this was less so for outdoor pools. Instead, respondents placed the greatest importance on *waterplay* programs and activities with 83% rating outdoor waterplay as somewhat important or very important. Others stated some level of importance for *leisure swims* (78%) and *family/parent-tot swims* (76%), which were followed by *aquatic leadership* and *lessons* (at 64% and 52%, respectively).

Within an outdoor aquatics setting, survey respondents were most likely to place importance on *shaded areas* (93% rated this as somewhat or very important), *family changerooms* (85%), *on-deck viewing space* (84%), *zero-depth entry* (83%), and *special needs and accessibility features* (82%). In total, 86% of respondents indicated that they would likely *use the Lake Lisgar Waterpark more frequently than they do at present* if it were modernized/enhanced with amenities that were appealing to them.

### Values and Future Directions

Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of value statements and potential future directions. The following is a summary of responses.

- 97% agreed in some form that it is important that the Tillsonburg Community Centre *indoor pool continues to serve current and future residents*; another 96% agreed that the indoor pool is an important part of the *quality of life* that is afforded in Tillsonburg.
- By comparison, 83% agreed in some form that it is important that the *Lake Lisgar Waterpark should continue to serve current and future residents* while 82% agreed that it is an important part of the *quality of life* that is afforded in Tillsonburg.

- 89% of respondents agreed that the indoor pool provides a *fun and enjoyable experience*, similar to the 85% that agreed with the same for the Lake Lisgar Waterpark.
- 87% agreed with the preliminary thought of *expanding* the Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor aquatic pool to allow new types of activities to be offered while 78% agreed in principle with the idea of *refurbishing the Lake Lisgar Waterpark* to bring it up to a modern level of quality.
- 86% agreed that the indoor pool provides their household with *good value in relation to its program and admission fees* (8% disagreed in some form); by comparison, 70% agreed that Lake Lisgar Waterpark provides good value in relation to its admission rate (15% disagreed).
- 71% agree that the indoor pool is *accessible* to persons with disabilities, seniors, families with young children and others with special needs (18% disagree in some form); by comparison 80% of responses agree with the same for the Lake Lisgar Waterpark (6% disagreed).
- While over half of responses (53%) support *replacing Lake Lisgar Waterpark with an expanded indoor aquatic centre at the Tillsonburg Community Centre*, this concept also generated the highest level of disagreement with 34% somewhat or strongly disagreeing with such direction (14% neither agreed nor disagreed).

For additional information regarding the community survey, the complete summary of tabulated survey responses is contained in **Appendix A**.

## Online & Emailed Feedback

Written submissions were accepted via email and reviewed from the Town's Facebook page. A summary of themes from written submissions is as follows:

- Lake Lisgar Waterpark is a *valued feature for all ages* that is fun and affordable so that residents can enjoy without having to travel long distances for other water parks.
- Conversely, another resident had a different view with respect to the Waterpark and suggested it be *converted to a splash pad* as their impression was that the appeal of the existing waterpark is primarily to young children.
- *Lane swimming* opportunities should continue to be made available, along with competitive swimming programs.
- *Barrier-free accessibility features* within the pools should be a strong consideration.
- Exploring ways to *expand hours for certain programs* (e.g. lane swims, lessons) and if possible adding new programs into the aquatic schedule.
- A desire for a therapeutic pool, improved and larger changerooms, a family changeroom, and a larger viewing area.



## Aquatics Staff Workshop

A workshop was held with Tillsonburg aquatics staff on November 12, 2018 including lifeguards, instructors, coordinators and supervisors. Staff have direct, firsthand knowledge of trends and best practices in their field in addition to regularly receiving comments on the frontline from Tillsonburg's aquatic customers/users. Aquatics staff emphasized the following points.

- The Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool provides *quality services* through a broad range of programs that serve many age groups at various times throughout the week.
- The indoor pool has a number of *design and functional limitations*, largely attributable to the era of its construction. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities and the lack of a family changeroom were noted as pressing issues for the indoor aquatic centre.
- Staff's vision for the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor aquatic centre is for an *updated, aesthetically modern design with multiple pool tanks* that allow lane and leisure swimming along with waterplay. The indoor pool would benefit from having more deck space in general, additional seating on-deck and in the upper viewing gallery, more storage and having more natural light.
- Lake Lisgar Waterpark's design is *appealing to many people* due to the ability to swim, play, lounge on the deck, and socialize. The fact that food is permitted in the Waterpark and there are ample open spaces to eat make it an attractive half-day or full-day destination, particularly in relation to other opportunities available in the park.
- Lake Lisgar Waterpark's primary limitations were noted to be a result of the *age of the bath house and the pool*. The bath house is deteriorating, with little natural light and tight changing quarters; the lack of a family change room and limited accessibility for persons with disabilities were major concerns noted by staff (ranging from narrow hallways to the lack of automatic doors).
- The Waterpark is most attractive to *families whose children are elementary school age or younger*, but is much less appealing to teens as it lacks the "thrilling, adventure or fun" elements found at many privately-operated waterparks.
- Staff's future vision for Lake Lisgar Waterpark is one that *updates/enhances the waterplay elements* and possibly adds an adventure element(s) to appeal to local teens.

A more fulsome summary of the discussion is contained in **Appendix B**.

# Preliminary Assessment of Indoor Aquatics

## Service Rationalization

Indoor aquatics has long been a part of the Town's core service mandate that has resulted in thousands of residents, of many different ages and abilities, enjoying the recreational benefits of swimming over the years. The Town's Community Parks, Recreation & Cultural Strategic Master Plan rationalizes the continued provision of indoor aquatic services over its 20 year planning period; the recent consultation efforts carried out through the Aquatics Facility Study reinforce the importance that residents place on the Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor aquatic centre.

Based upon the following considerations and a demonstrated ability to meet community needs, it is recommended that the Town of Tillsonburg continue to operate an indoor aquatic centre.

### Service Level Considerations

The service level of one indoor aquatic centre per 16,000 Tillsonburg residents reflects the Town's commitment to providing quality aquatic services to the community but also recognizes that a larger regional population is being served. On that basis, the current level of provision is considered to be within a normalized range, albeit one that is on the upper end of the service level spectrum.

The Town is also providing equipment-based fitness as a level of service. The indoor aquatic centre forms a strong complement to the fitness centre contained in the Tillsonburg Community, allowing holistic delivery of dryland and water-based active living; research shows that many fitness club patrons value the inclusion of a pool and vice-versa. Performance of the fitness centre (as measured through memberships) is tied to the presence of the indoor pool.

### Participation & Use

Swimming lessons and water fitness activities have been increasing in recent years, demonstrating a growing demand for such programs; as of the end of September 2018, over 3,500 lesson registrations were accommodated in the pool representing a 15% increase over the 2014 while the nearly 9,000 aquatic fitness admissions represents an 8% increase over the same time. Anecdotal observations from Town Staff are that there are greater demands for older adult aquatics programs, lesson registrations are equally comprised of residents and non-residents, and three-quarters of aquatic fitness and adult aquatic programs are comprised of Tillsonburg residents. Public swim admissions have also increased dramatically since 2014 with a 71% increase over the past four years (there were over 12,600 public swims as of September 30, 2018).

### Financial Considerations

Like all civic facilities, there is a cost associated with maintaining infrastructure to a state of good repair. Many of the indoor aquatic centre's lifecycle renewal requirements pertain to mechanical and operational components such as deck and basin work, filtration, and change room flooring. Town staff note that such improvements would substantially increase the lifespan of the pool.<sup>2</sup> There is also an ongoing operating cost associated with civic facilities though in the case of the indoor

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<sup>2</sup> Town of Tillsonburg Staff Report RCP-17-34: Awarding RFP2017-004 Indoor Pool Deck Replacement. June 12, 2017.

aquatics centre, the Town has a strong understanding of the operating model and the operating requirements having funded the facility for a significant number of years. In 2018, program-related operating activities associated with the indoor aquatics centre incurred a \$193,000 operating deficit while building maintenance added another \$185,000 (including \$100,000 in heating, lighting and water). Virtually all indoor pools in Ontario run at an operating deficit with municipalities that provide aquatic centres accepting that the intrinsic benefits offered to many residents in a community (learn-to-swim, drowning prevention, leadership, health) do not warrant full cost recovery of those facilities.

## **Recommended Indoor Aquatic Centre Design Direction**

In the event that the Town of Tillsonburg wishes to pursue improvements beyond to state of good repair activities (i.e. renewing the aquatic centre in a manner that retains the “status quo” for design), there are a number of functional considerations as presented below.

### **Addition of Warm Water / Therapeutic Opportunities**

With a single pool tank, the Town can maintain water at a single, consistent temperature but must balance the fact that different activities and age groups prefer different temperatures. Certain aquatic sports, for example, seek a cooler water temperature than would many programs targeted to older adults or young children. Warm water activities such as aquatic fitness and therapeutic programming are growing in popularity while preferences among families with young children are also shifting to demand warmer water for lessons (with lessons still being the primary source of aquatic revenue).

The ability to address a greater number of warm water or therapeutic program opportunities is largely contingent upon having a dedicated pool tank that maintains a water temperature between 86 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The Town would also attain greater programming flexibility due to the ability to schedule simultaneous but different programs (e.g. expand the number of lane swims, schedule lessons for multiple age groups to take place at the same time which would be convenient for parents with multiple children, etc.). Addition of a warm water tank would necessitate an expansion to the existing natatorium.

In addition to programming benefits, proceeding with an expansion to the physical footprint would presumably increase opportunities to integrate other design improvements noted in the paragraphs that follow.

### **Improved Barrier-Free Accessibility**

Municipalities are required to adhere to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and all public spaces will have to comply with barrier-free design standards by the year 2025. The Tillsonburg Community Centre has a number of barrier-free features including an elevator, ramps, automated doors, etc. In terms of the indoor aquatic centre, however, persons with disabilities and their caregivers do not have access to a universal changeroom (see below) and presently access the pool using a lift if unable to enter in another way. For the pool basin itself, municipalities are incorporating zero-depth entry features through ramps which can run alongside one edge of a pool (spanning varying widths). Barrier-free entry into a pool is also conducive to therapeutic program participants and people with restricted mobility, including the Town’s growing population of seniors. Any redesign or reconfiguration of the indoor aquatics centre should consider ways to maximize accessibility for pool users.

### **Addition of Family / Universal Changerooms**

Different gendered caregivers of children or persons with disabilities can only provide assistance by making use of the lifeguard office (which already offers confined quarters, not to mention that it is a work space). The lack of a family/universal changeroom is a major limitation of the current aquatic centre design and one that should be addressed. It should be noted that the Tillsonburg Community Centre is the only facility that does not have a family/universal changeroom among the benchmarked municipalities offering indoor aquatic centres.

### **Improved Control (circulation)**

With two entrances into the aquatic centre at present, control and circulation should be factored into future design work. More specifically, the external door to the west results in any person gaining access to the facility having to navigate across the pool deck regardless of if they are using the pool or not. The staff control desk sits outside of the natatorium adjacent to the fitness centre meaning that any person entering the aquatic centre from the west entrance does so without first checking-in with customer service staff. This west access point is helpful to a certain extent for persons with mobility-related disabilities compared to gaining entry to the pool through the community centre; however, it is located around the corner from the parking lot which somewhat diminishes its effectiveness.

### **Adequate Storage**

Pool storage is largely relegated to a narrow space along the west exterior wall, running parallel to the shallow end. With new types of programming being offered (notably aquatic fitness), equipment requirements are greater than in previous years and require a place to store it.

### **Aquatics Administration Space**

Town of Tillsonburg Aquatic Administration Staff (Supervisors and Coordinators) are housed on a different floor than the aquatic centre. While arguably a less pressing concern relative to other limitations of the present configuration, the opportunity for Administration Staff to indirectly observe pool activities and interact with pool users in closer proximity could provide certain efficiencies (supervision, customer service, etc.).

### **Other Considerations**

It bears noting that the current pool tank configuration results in the changerrooms opening onto the deep-end side of the pool, something that best practices in modern aquatic design would avoid. Barring substantial renovation or redevelopment of the pool tank, however, this may be a limitation of the existing structure unless architectural designs can relocate the changerrooms elsewhere in the aquatics centre.

# Preliminary Assessment of Outdoor Aquatics

## Service Rationalization

The Lake Lisgar Waterpark and the Kinsmen Pool before it have offered a family-friendly, community-oriented outdoor swimming experience for decades. The Town's Community Parks, Recreation & Cultural Strategic Master Plan states that "the Town should continue to fully operate the Lake Lisgar Water Park in a manner that provides a high quality level of service to residents and tourists." Consultations with the public that were carried out through the Aquatics Facility Study indicate many residents continue to value the Waterpark and want to see it remain available for future generations.

Looking broadly across Ontario, municipalities are transitioning from outdoor pools and wading pools in favour of splash pads of varying sizes and configurations. The reasons for doing so tend to be financial and based on resident preferences. Municipally-operated outdoor pools were a common level of service in Ontario with peak construction occurring in the 1960s and 1970s when they were community gathering points for families during the summer months. Pools built during this era are now at or approaching the end of their useful lifecycles meaning that municipalities are weighing the financial costs of revitalization/redevelopment in relation to the usage that occurs over the three-month operating season. Furthermore, outdoor pool operating costs tend to be higher than a splash pad (for the latter, lifeguards are not required where there is no standing water and there is less volume of water to heat/treat).

In the past 20 years, municipalities have also been developing indoor aquatics centres that have shifted programming away from the outdoor pools. Whereas lessons were historically a core part of outdoor programming, the ability to easily maintain a constant temperature and not be affected by weather resulted in indoor pools becoming the preferred venue for programs. Today, much outdoor pool usage is driven by a desire to cool off on hot days as well as a regular following of outdoor lane swimmers. The greater affordability and popularity of backyard pools along with young families looking for animated, interactive splash pads has also contributed towards diminished usage of the rectangular outdoor pool in many parts of the province.

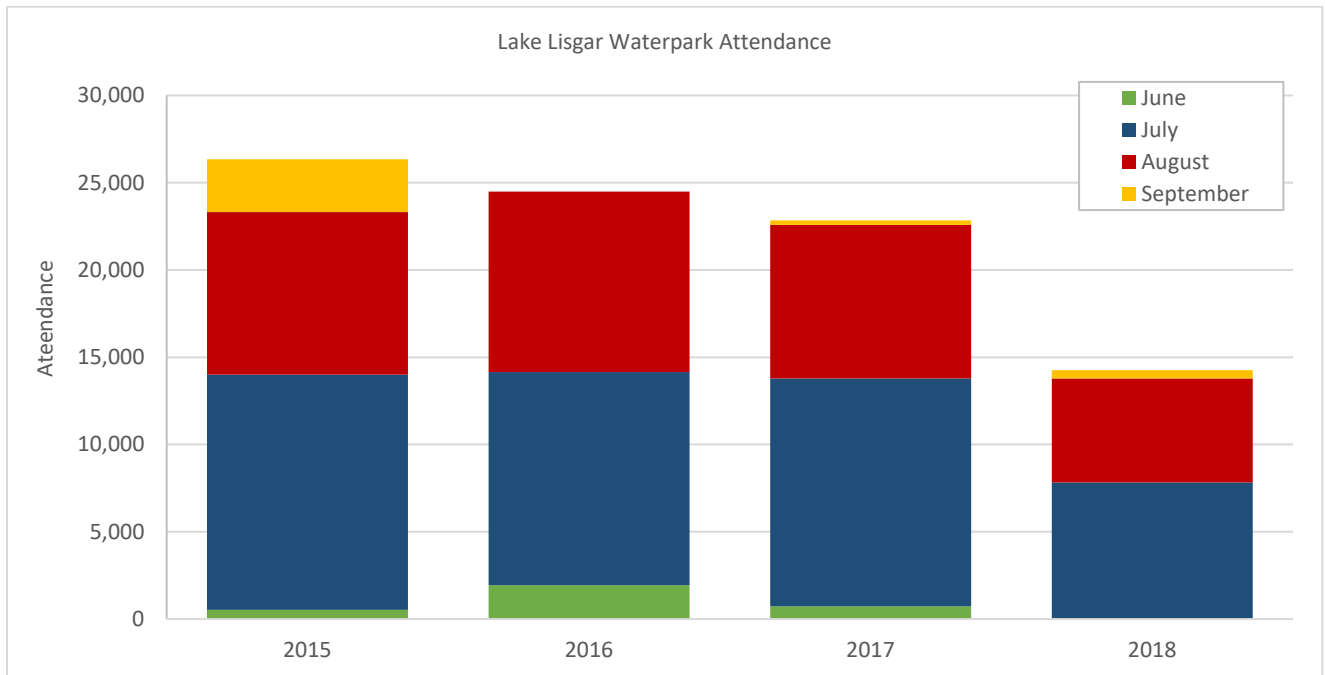
That being said, there are examples of municipalities that are reinvesting in their aging outdoor pools as well as selected others that have constructed new outdoor pools. London and Mississauga are a couple of examples that substantially renewed existing outdoor pools, with Mississauga in particular seeing an increasing in use since its reinvestment efforts (that City benefitted from senior government grants to fund renewals). More regionally, Woodstock has budgeted for a renewal of its outdoor pool in 2019.

## Service Level Considerations

The Lake Lisgar Waterpark is a unique facility that does not have many municipal comparators. Outdoor waterparks are now typically a private sector endeavour, albeit those tend to be designed to a larger scale and of a different quality compared to what is found at Lake Lisgar Waterpark. Within the immediate area, only Tillsonburg and Brantford operate their own waterparks.

**Participation & Use**

Lake Lisgar Water Park offers outdoor aquatic opportunities to local and regional residents, as well as tourists. The increasing number of spray pad facilities within other communities may be competing for those simply wishing to cool off in the heat of the summer. Attendance at the Waterpark has been declining in recent years with approximately 14,000 visits in 2018 compared to 25,000 visits in 2014. The 2018 attendance was slightly impacted by a shorter operating season due to repairs undertaken in the first month, though June does not tend to be a peak attendance month so the repairs alone do not account for the 45% decline since 2015.



Notes: figures exclude June rentals; waterpark closed early in September 2016 and did not operate in June 2018 for maintenance

**Financial Considerations**

The Town recently reinvested approximately \$200,000 in Lake Lisgar Waterpark’s deck and filtration which is expected to extend useful life. However, there are a number of other lifecycle reinvestments that will be required to address various structural and mechanical components (including the building) if the waterpark is to operate for a longer-term period, some of which will require replacement in the next two to five years. In March 2018, the Town found that the cost to undertake multiple repair and replacement services at the Waterpark could range from \$500,000 to \$600,000; separate work and capital cost would be required if replacing the slide tower which could bring the total refurbishment/renewal costs closer to the \$1 million mark.

In terms of operating, the Waterpark required an operating subsidy of \$79,000 in 2018 (including an atypical \$20,000 repair expenditure). Between 2014 and 2017, the Waterpark incurred annual operating losses between \$27,000 and \$55,000. There has been a trend of declining admission, rental and concession revenues, along with escalating repair and maintenance expenditures which have contributed to the growing subsidy requirement.

Based upon the above noted considerations, the Town has two options to consider depending upon its desired objectives and financial capabilities.

## Outdoor Aquatic Facility Design Direction – Option 1: Refurbish

Residents indicate that the Lake Lisgar Waterpark is a fun and affordable place to cool down on hot days, and somewhere that they can enjoy for hours at a time. The Waterpark continues to function as a tourist draw, although perhaps to a lesser degree than in the past due to greater competition from privately operated entertainment destinations in southern Ontario, but nevertheless contributes towards tourism and economic development objectives. The scale of the current Lake Lisgar Waterpark allows the Town to operate it at a competitive price point relative to the private sector, thereby making it attractive to a niche market of day-trippers looking for an affordable waterpark option. The facility also provides an outdoor venue for relaxation and picnicking which can be appealing to some. It continues to be a local employment opportunity for local youth during the summer months when they are not in school.



Lake Lisgar Waterpark  
Image Source: Monteith Brown

Therefore, a case can be made to retain the Waterpark in its current form on the basis of providing an outdoor aquatic experience, continued quality of life contributions, and contributing towards tourism and economic development objectives to a certain extent.

In the event that the Town of Tillsonburg wishes to refurbish/modernize the Lake Lisgar Waterpark in its current form (i.e. renewing the aquatic centre in a manner that retains the “status quo” for design), the following functional considerations as presented below.

### **Structural & Mechanical repairs**

The requisite structural and mechanical repairs would be undertaken along with renewal of spray features and other functional components. No alterations to the pool basin's physical footprint are contemplated under this scenario.

### **Improved Barrier-Free Accessibility**

Should the Town pursue this option, it should investigate ways to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities both in terms of gaining access to the bath house (e.g. from the parking lot or other areas to entrance) as well as circulation within the Waterpark itself.

### **Bath House Redevelopment / Expansion**

A replacement or expansion of the bath house would be recommended in order to facilitate aforementioned barrier-free access but also to enlarge existing changerooms and add a family/universal changeroom. Part of the “destination” waterpark experience will require clean and

modern impression to be imparted upon visitors and prospective guests, something that the age and design of the current bath house does not lend itself well to providing. Depending upon capital feasibility, a new façade for the bath house may be contemplated if working with the existing building structure.

## **Outdoor Aquatic Facility Design Direction – Option 2: Reimagine**

As an alternative to refurbishment of the Waterpark according to its current design, it would be remiss not to advance the possibility of a more substantial redevelopment/redesign of the facility. Doing so would likely carry a higher price tag given that a reconfiguration of the space, purchase of new equipment, etc. would be likely if designing a waterpark to modern design and programming standards.

Re-imagination of the Waterpark would bring about the same – if not more – quality of life benefits as noted under Option 1 such as tourism, employment, and a family-centred experience. Further, a re-imagination is consistent with the Memorial Park and Lake Lisgar Conceptual Master Plan<sup>3</sup> which recommended an expansion and redevelopment of the Waterpark to the north, addition of a free splash pad adjacent to the existing playground, new entrance building, and an enlarged parking lot. There may also be an opportunity to combine certain functions with the Conceptual Master Plan's directions for Summer Place. If implementing the Conceptual Master Plan's splash pad recommendation, the Town will need to fully rationalize the scale of that facility to understand the extent that its free-use might affect admissions/use of the re-imagined/redeveloped Waterpark; it bears noting that the Conceptual Master Plan also did not include capital costs of implementation thus these would need to be undertaken by the Town.

A more comprehensive re-imagination and redevelopment project is not recommended until a more fulsome lifecycle costing assessment and trade area penetration study is completed, along with an analysis of capital and operating costs, and other market factors (e.g. competition). That same assessment will also provide the Town with information that it can use when rationalizing an alternative refurbishment project (Option 1) or a potential closure (Option 3).

## **Outdoor Aquatic Facility Design Direction – Option 3: Closure & Replacement**

If the Town determines that the capital renewal costs of refurbishing Lake Lisgar Waterpark are not feasible or that it would prefer to consolidate waterplay activities at one location, the option exists to decommission Lake Lisgar Waterpark and relocate some of its functions/activities to the Tillsonburg Community Centre. With a complete refurbishment of the Lake Lisgar Waterpark potentially requiring significant capital reinvestment, the Town may deem it more financially-feasible to reallocate those resources towards the indoor aquatic centre expansion.

The Tillsonburg Community Centre expansion project, if pursued, would add a second indoor pool tank which could be designed to integrate certain waterplay features. This would not result in the same size/scale of waterplay features at an indoor pool as would be found currently at the Lake Lisgar Waterpark. An exterior splash pad (whether located adjacent to the community centre or elsewhere in Memorial Park) should also be considered to allow outdoor waterplay opportunities to continue, granted at a significantly reduced scale compared to what exists through the Waterpark at present.

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<sup>3</sup> Town of Tillsonburg, February 2015. Conceptual Master Plan for Memorial Park & Lake Lisgar



Should the Town of Tillsonburg see a greater benefit in redeploing Lake Lisgar Waterpark's lifecycle renewal and improvement costs towards expansion of the indoor aquatic centre, the functional considerations arising from the previously noted preliminary indoor aquatics facility analysis should be explored.

Separate from the expansion of the indoor aquatics centre, however, would be the construction of a new splash pad which would provide a free, outdoor waterplay activity. If locating the proposed splash pad reasonably near or adjacent to the Tillsonburg Community, residents and visitors would have access to changerooms/washrooms which would reduce the need for the Town to construct a separate structure or rely on portable toilets compared to constructing the splash pad further away.

## Concluding Remarks

Aquatics will continue to remain an integral part of the Town of Tillsonburg's core service mandate given the physical, social and economic benefits stemming from municipal aquatic facilities and programs. Consultations undertaken for this Aquatics Facility Study reaffirm findings from the Community Parks, Recreation & Cultural Strategic Plan that indoor and outdoor aquatics experiences are highly valued by residents and that there is a desire for modernized facilities for the future.

### Indoor Aquatics Strategy

By expanding the Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor aquatics centre, the Town is positioning itself to respond to community needs and preferences for decades to come. The **addition of another pool tank** will allow considerable program flexibility to be added, particularly for a growing population of seniors, while **enlarged and added changerooms (including a family changeroom)** will greatly contribute to the user experience. An expansion also provides opportunity to carry out various **accessibility and aesthetic improvements** that will be attractive to pool users.

### Outdoor Aquatics Strategy

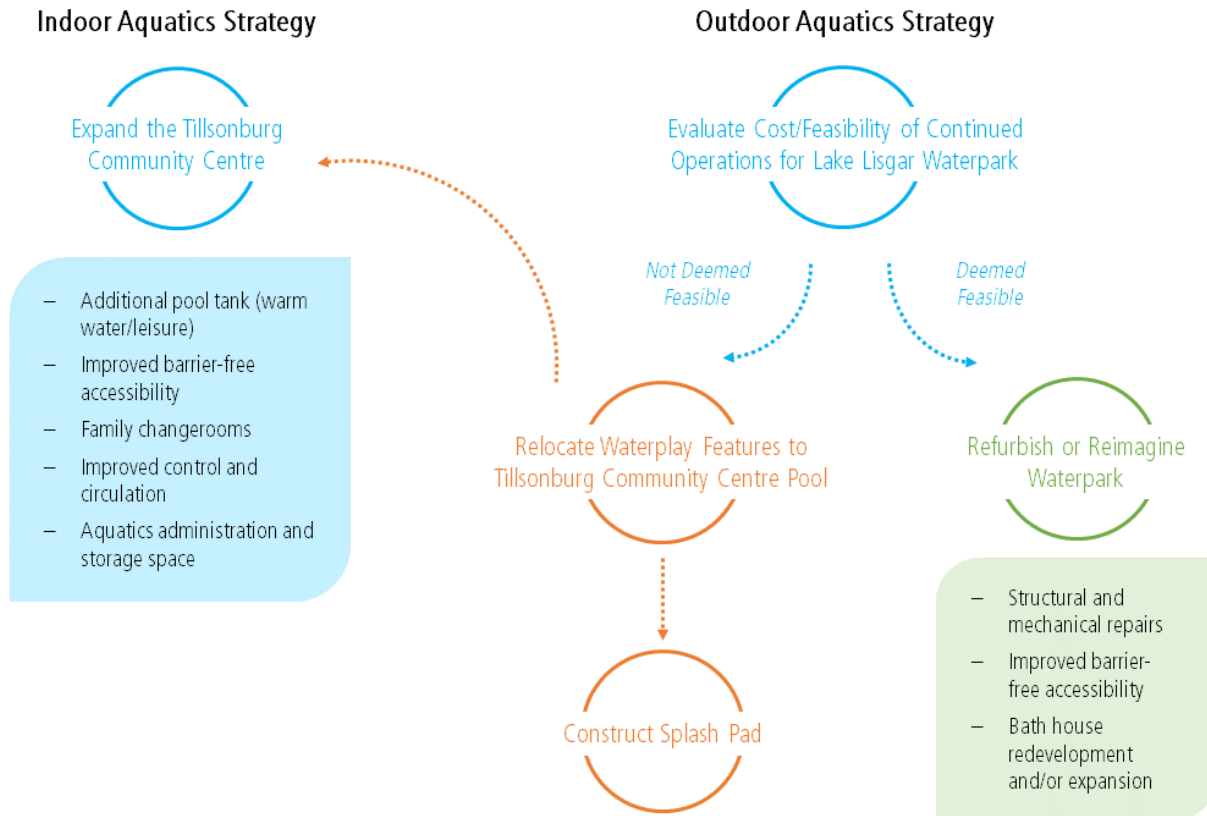
In recognition of the capital costs of renewal and improvement for the Lake Lisgar Waterpark, **the Town will need to make a decision as to whether the Waterpark continues to form part of its infrastructure portfolio.** There is merit in retaining the Waterpark when it comes to serving community needs and forming a piece of Tillsonburg's tourism strategy. However, this Study recognizes that there is a cost of doing so in an increasingly competitive entertainment destination market and the opinion/decision to reinvest capital must be carefully weighed by Town officials.



Tillsonburg Community Centre  
Image Source: Town of Tillsonburg

**Implementation Summary**

The following schematic chart illustrates the inter-related indoor and outdoor aquatic provision strategies, largely contingent upon the Town’s chosen course of action for operating the Lake Lisgar Waterpark.



**Next Steps**

The Tillsonburg Aquatics Facility Study represents a first step in determining needs and preferences of residents. An architectural feasibility study presently underway and any subsequent explorations undertaken by the Town should consider the preliminary design directions contained herein and conduct additional investigations/consultations as more information becomes available. For example, site-specific analyses, engineering and geotechnical works, capital and operating forecasts, etc. should be considered prior to coming to a final decision. In doing so, the Town will have undertaken the necessary quantitative and qualitative investigations to pursue a fiscally-responsible and community-focused path for implementation.

# **Appendix A: Community Survey Results**

**Tillsonburg Community Centre & Indoor Aquatics**

**1. Has anybody in your household used the indoor pool located inside the Tillsonburg Community Centre during the past year?**

	#	%
Yes	538	83%
No	114	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>652</b>	

**2. If you answered “No” to the previous question, please tell us what has prevented you from swimming here (select up to two reasons).**

	#	%
Programs are not offered at the convenient time	24	23%
Not interested in swimming	21	20%
Programs are too expensive	13	12%
I don't know enough about the pool or its programs	12	11%
The pool design is outdated	11	10%
Cleanliness of the pool or changerooms is not up to my level of expectation	11	10%
Programs are too busy	9	8%
No longer able to swim due to health condition / injury	6	6%
The pool is located too far away from my home or place of work	6	6%
The water temperature is uncomfortable	5	5%
The pool is not fully accessible for persons with disabilities or limited mobility	4	4%
There are no family changerooms	3	3%
Don't know how to swim	1	1%
Not enough parking	1	1%
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>Number of People Answering</b>	<b>96</b>	

**Other Reasons**

- Lack of Time (4)
- Have my own pool (2)
- Not a Tillsonburg resident (2)
- Age-related limitation
- Just moved to Tillsonburg
- Cannot go with my young children

**3. How would you rate your overall experience during your last visit to the Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor pool?**

	#	%
Very Satisfied	158	30%
Somewhat Satisfied	251	47%
Neither Satisfied or Unsatisfied	53	10%
Somewhat Unsatisfied	51	10%
Very Unsatisfied	18	3%
I Have Never Used the Pool	1	0%
Don't Know / Unsure	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>532</b>	

**4. Please rate how important the following types of aquatic activities are to you in an indoor pool setting.**

	Not Important at All / Not Important		Neutral		Somewhat Important / Very Important		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Swimming Lessons	38	7%	21	4%	507	90%	<b>566</b>
Leisure Swims	21	4%	48	9%	490	88%	<b>559</b>
Lifeguarding / Leadership Programs	38	7%	46	8%	473	85%	<b>557</b>
Aquatic Fitness (Aquafit) Programs	36	6%	58	10%	479	84%	<b>573</b>
Family / Parent and Tot Swims	52	9%	44	8%	460	83%	<b>556</b>
Therapeutic Programs	42	8%	78	14%	437	78%	<b>557</b>
Water Play (Shallow Water)	77	14%	76	14%	398	72%	<b>551</b>
Competitive Swimming (Masters, Swim Teams, etc.)	108	20%	126	23%	308	57%	<b>542</b>
Lane Swimming	112	20%	127	23%	313	57%	<b>552</b>
Aquatic Sports (e.g., Synchro, Water Polo, etc.)	106	20%	142	26%	292	54%	<b>540</b>
Platform Diving	177	33%	171	32%	189	35%	<b>537</b>
Scuba Diving	204	38%	186	35%	143	27%	<b>533</b>

**Other Activities**

- Aqua Jogging & Bicycling (2)
- Fun swims
- Community swims
- Special Needs programs
- Free swims

**5. Please rate how important the following types of aquatic amenities are to you in an indoor pool setting.**

	Not Important at All / Not Important		Neutral		Somewhat Important / Very Important		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Deepwater	36	6%	56	10%	481	84%	<b>573</b>
Special Needs / Accessibility Features	37	6%	58	10%	480	83%	<b>575</b>
Warm Water (30 degrees Celsius or 86 degrees Fahrenheit)	53	9%	46	8%	484	83%	<b>583</b>
Family Changerooms	52	9%	49	9%	475	82%	<b>576</b>
On-deck Viewing Space	87	15%	87	15%	402	70%	<b>576</b>
Ramp / Beach / Zero Depth Entry	114	20%	102	18%	347	62%	<b>563</b>
Hot Tub	214	37%	104	18%	254	44%	<b>572</b>
Waterslide	212	37%	109	19%	247	43%	<b>568</b>
Interactive Spray Features in the Pool	227	40%	125	22%	219	38%	<b>571</b>

**Other Amenities**

- Larger/better changerooms (5)
- Therapeutic pool (2)
- Better viewing area (2)
- Clean and welcoming areas
- Competition sport designs/features
- Non-slip flooring
- Float belts for deep-water exercise
- Food concession

**6. If the indoor pool at the Tillsonburg Community Centre is modernized or enhanced with some of the amenities or activities that you chose in the previous questions, how likely would your household be to USE THE POOL MORE OFTEN than you do right now?**

	#	%
Very Likely	324	55%
Likely	180	31%
Neither Likely or Unlikely	46	8%
Unlikely	18	3%
Very Unlikely	14	2%
I Have Never Used the Indoor Pool Before	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>584</b>	

**Lake Lisgar Waterpark & Outdoor Aquatics**

**7. Has anybody in your household used the Lake Lisgar Waterpark during the past year?**

	#	%
Yes	320	54%
No	273	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>593</b>	

**8. If you answered “No” to the previous question, please tell us what has prevented you from swimming here (select up to two reasons).**

	#	%
The Waterpark is too busy	46	19%
Prefer to use a free splash pad in a park	45	19%
Admission is too expensive	36	15%
Not interested in swimming / waterplay	28	12%
The Waterpark design is outdated	20	8%
Cleanliness of the Waterpark or changerooms is not up to my level of expectation	19	8%
The water temperature is uncomfortable	15	6%
The Waterpark was closed for maintenance when I wanted to use it	15	6%
I don't know enough about the Water Park	9	4%
No longer able to swim due to health condition / injury	5	2%
Don't know how to swim	4	2%
The Waterpark is not fully accessible for persons with disabilities or limited mobility	4	2%
Not enough parking	4	2%
Prefer to use privately operated Waterparks (e.g., East Park in London)	4	2%
The Waterpark is located too far from my home or place of work	4	2%
There are no family changerooms	4	2%
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>30</b>	
<b>Number of People Answering</b>	<b>239</b>	

**Other Reasons**

- Don't have children / grandchildren that would use it (17)
- Only participate in lane swims or aquafit (6)
- Too “old” to use a waterpark (6)
- My children are too young (5)
- Hours of operation do not work for me (5)
- Have my own pool (5)
- My children are too old for it (4)
- Prefer to use indoor pools (3)
- Too busy (2)
- Just moved to Tillsonburg
- Not enough waterplay features
- No aquafit programs are offered
- Too many unsupervised youth



**9. How would you rate your overall experience during your last visit to the Lake Lisgar Waterpark?**

	#	%
Very Satisfied	50	16%
Somewhat Satisfied	143	45%
Neither Satisfied or Unsatisfied	37	12%
Somewhat Unsatisfied	58	18%
Very Unsatisfied	30	9%
I Have Never Used the Waterpark	3	1%
Don't Know / Unsure	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	

**10. Please rate how important the following types of aquatic activities are to you in an outdoor pool setting.**

	Not Important at All / Not Important		Neutral		Somewhat Important / Very Important		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Water Play (Shallow Water)	58	11%	31	6%	448	83%	<b>537</b>
Leisure Swims	63	12%	54	10%	414	78%	<b>531</b>
Family / Parent and Tot Swims	72	13%	57	11%	408	76%	<b>537</b>
Lifeguarding / Leadership Programs	94	18%	98	18%	341	64%	<b>533</b>
Swimming Lessons	155	29%	106	20%	279	52%	<b>540</b>
Aquatic Fitness (Aquafit) Programs	175	33%	121	23%	241	45%	<b>537</b>
Competitive Swimming (Masters, Swim Teams, etc.)	253	49%	158	30%	109	21%	<b>520</b>
Lane Swimming	284	54%	133	25%	107	20%	<b>524</b>

**11. Please rate how important the following types of aquatic amenities are to you in an outdoor pool setting.**

	Not Important at All / Not Important		Neutral		Somewhat Important / Very Important		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Shade / Sun-Shelters	23	4%	13	2%	501	93%	<b>537</b>
Family Changerooms	45	8%	35	7%	453	85%	<b>533</b>
On-deck Viewing Space	54	10%	33	6%	445	84%	<b>532</b>
Beach / Zero Depth Entry	56	10%	35	7%	443	83%	<b>534</b>
Special Needs / Accessibility Features	44	8%	49	9%	437	82%	<b>530</b>
Waterslide	70	13%	42	8%	420	79%	<b>532</b>
Interactive Spray Features in the Pool	63	12%	53	10%	420	78%	<b>536</b>
Warm Water (30 degrees Celsius or 86 degrees Fahrenheit)	58	11%	81	15%	396	74%	<b>535</b>

	Not Important at All / Not Important		Neutral		Somewhat Important / Very Important		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Concessions / Food Area	76	14%	72	13%	388	72%	<b>536</b>
Inflatable Toys	110	21%	57	11%	366	69%	<b>533</b>
Deepwater	100	19%	89	17%	345	65%	<b>534</b>

**12. If Lake Lisgar Waterpark is modernized or enhanced with some of the amenities or activities that your chose in the previous questions, how likely would you household be to use the Waterpark more often than you do right now?**

	#	%
Very Likely	225	40%
Likely	180	32%
Neither Likely or Unlikely	74	13%
Unlikely	26	5%
Very Unlikely	31	5%
I Have Never Used the Waterpark Before	17	3%
Don't Know / Unsure	15	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>553</b>	

**Statements regarding Indoor and Outdoor Aquatics**

**13. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.**

	Strongly Disagree / Somewhat Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree / Somewhat Agree		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
<b>Tillsonburg Community Centre</b>							
It is important to me and my household that the Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor swimming pool continues to serve current and future residents of Tillsonburg.	10	2%	8	1%	540	97%	<b>558</b>
The Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor pool is an important part of the quality of life for the Town as a whole.	4	1%	21	4%	532	96%	<b>557</b>
I support the refurbishment of the Tillsonburg Community Centre's existing indoor pool to bring it and its supporting features up to a modern level of quality.	23	4%	34	6%	490	90%	<b>547</b>

	Strongly Disagree / Somewhat Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree / Somewhat Agree		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
The Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor pool provides a fun and enjoyable aquatic experience.	21	4%	38	7%	489	89%	<b>548</b>
I support the expansion of the Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor pool and supporting features to allow new types of aquatic programs and activities to be offered.	34	6%	35	6%	481	87%	<b>550</b>
The Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor pool provides my household with good value in relation to its program and admission fees.	41	8%	33	6%	472	86%	<b>546</b>
The Tillsonburg Community Centre's indoor pool is accessible to persons with disabilities, seniors, families with young children, and others with special needs.	96	18%	58	11%	370	71%	<b>524</b>
<b>Lake Lisgar Waterpark</b>							
The Lake Lisgar Waterpark provides a fun and enjoyable outdoor aquatic experience.	28	5%	51	10%	452	85%	<b>531</b>
It is important to me and my household that the Lake Lisgar Waterpark continues to serve current and future residents of Tillsonburg.	36	7%	55	10%	458	83%	<b>549</b>
The Lake Lisgar Waterpark is an important part of the quality of life for the town as a whole.	21	4%	74	14%	446	82%	<b>541</b>
The Lake Lisgar Waterpark is accessible to persons with disabilities, seniors, families with young children, and others with special needs.	31	6%	66	14%	390	80%	<b>487</b>
I support the refurbishment of the Lake Lisgar Waterpark to bring its existing pool and supporting features up to a modern level of quality.	48	9%	68	13%	420	78%	<b>536</b>
The Lake Lisgar Waterpark provides good value in relation to its admission rate.	76	15%	75	15%	360	70%	<b>511</b>
I support replacing the Lake Lisgar Waterpark with an expanded indoor aquatic centre at the Tillsonburg Community Centre (that is, having one centralized location for aquatic programs and waterplay is preferable to having two separate locations).	180	34%	74	14%	281	53%	<b>535</b>

## Characteristics of Survey Respondents

### 14. In what year were you born?

	#	%
1990 and After	83	15%
1980 - 1989	178	33%
1970 - 1979	115	21%
1960 - 1969	68	12%
1950 - 1959	63	12%
1940 - 1949	30	5%
1930 - 1939	10	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>547</b>	
<b>Average Age</b>	<b>44</b>	

### 15. Please indicate the number of people in the following age groups that currently live in your household.

Age Group	#	%
0 to 4 years	177	15%
5 to 9 years	166	14%
10 to 19 years	171	14%
20 to 34 years	199	17%
35 to 54 years	296	25%
55 to 69 years	128	11%
70+ years	55	5%
<b>Number of People Answering</b>	<b>551</b>	
<b>Total Persons Reported</b>	<b>1,192</b>	
<b>Persons Per Household</b>	<b>2.2</b>	

### 16. How many times have you visited the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor pool and the Lake Lisgar Waterpark during the past two years?

Tillsonburg Community Centre Indoor Pool	#	%
0 times	42	8%
1 to 5 times	88	16%
6 to 15 times	102	19%
16 to 30 times	86	16%
30+ times	220	41%
Don't Know / Unsure	5	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>538</b>	

Lake Lisgar Waterpark	#	%
0 times	163	30%
1 to 5 times	204	38%
6 to 15 times	91	17%
16 to 30 times	44	8%
30+ times	31	6%
Don't Know / Unsure	3	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	

17. As an optional question, please indicate the range applicable to your household's annual income.

	#	%
Less than \$35,000	32	8%
\$35,000 to \$74,999	130	33%
\$75,000 to \$124,999	146	37%
\$125,000 and over	84	21%
<b>Number of People Answering</b>	<b>392</b>	
<b>Don't Know / Prefer Not to Answer</b>	<b>122</b>	

18. As an optional question, please indicate your gender.

	#	%
Male	87	17%
Female	431	82%
Non-Binary/Other	5	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	

19. Are you a Tillsonburg resident?

	#	%
Yes	438	78%
No	120	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>558</b>	

**20. If you are not a Tillsonburg resident, please indicate where you are visiting us from.**

	#	%
Norwich, Norfolk County, or Thames Centre	54	46%
Southwest Oxford	25	21%
Bayham	17	14%
Aylmer	7	6%
Malahide	5	4%
London	3	3%
Woodstock	2	2%
Brant County	1	1%
Zorra Township	1	1%
Other (please specify)	3	
<b>Answered</b>	<b>118</b>	

**Other Municipalities**

- St. Thomas
- East Zorra-Tavistock
- Greater Toronto Area

## **Appendix B: Staff Workshop Summary**

**Date:** November 12, 2018  
**Time:** 5:00pm to 6:30pm,  
**Location:** Tillsonburg Community Centre, Marland Room

### **Tillsonburg Community Centre**

The Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor aquatics centre provides quality services through a broad range of programs that serve many age groups at various times throughout the week. Programming is viewed as innovative with a willingness of staff to try different programs – the aqua-bike program is a good example of this. Staff are excellent and many work here for a long time, and get to know pool users by name which also results in users coming back. The pool is easy to lifeguard with good sightlines.

A number of design and functional limitations were noted, largely associated with the era of the pool's original design in 1972. The pool was originally designed to accommodate competitive swimming rather than recreational/leisure swims that are more popular today and the storage room is undersized by modern standards. With the competitive design, the depth of the pool in the shallow end is such that tables have to be dropped in for young children's programs and lessons. While the pool gutters are sometimes useful for people to hold on to, they can make it awkward for children to climb out of the pool. Certain mechanical components are original or very old and the pool deck is in an aged state, while some structural components (e.g. the roof) are deteriorating as well. Staff noted that the pool deck needs to be replaced, and ideally would have deck drains to allow for easier cleaning and drying.

Staff noted that the multiple entrance/access points to the pool are challenging, particularly the back entrance (west side) that creates control issues (no swiping) as well as anybody being able to come from outside and walk directly on the pool deck. There was a thought about creating a new entrance, control desk and new changerooms at the west end by way of an expansion.

Accessibility for persons with disabilities was noted as a pressing issue of the aquatic centre. The absence of a family changeroom and supportive devices the male/female change rooms leads to persons with disabilities and their caregivers having to change in the guard office, or sometimes the arena changerooms. The lack of a family change room also poses a challenge for some parents whose children are of a different gender. While there is a portable lift to allow persons with disabilities to gain access, this can lead to an impression of being singled out or embarrassment for some users if they have a form of disability or exceed the weight limit, and thus they are unlikely to use the pool.

A better option for accessible entry would be to have a ramp entry into the pool to allow easier and more independent access into the pool (and would also make it easier for staff to bring the aqua-cycles into the pool as well). Staff noted that it would be important that adding a ramp should not result in a loss of a swimming lane and cited pools in Woodstock, Ingersoll and Waterloo as examples.

Other functional challenges relating to the changerooms include the fact that they walk out to the deep end of the pool which is not ideal. The changerooms are shared with the fitness centre and can become crowded at times, and clearer signage is needed to denote the changerooms as people frequently walk into the wrong one. The lifeguard office is small and becomes very crowded during peak program times, while aquatics administration staff noted that it would be ideal if they were located closer to the pool as they are disconnected at times from the front-line staff and the pool users.

The vision for the Tillsonburg Community Centre indoor aquatic centre was for an updated, aesthetically modern design with multiple pool tanks that allow lane and leisure swimming along with waterplay. The pool would benefit from having more deck space in general, additional seating on-deck and in the



upper viewing gallery, more storage and having more natural light come in (so long as it does not cause glare for guards and spectators). Staff tools such as improved lane rope attachment systems, guard chairs, tools to inflate the inflatable toys, and bathing suit dryers were also suggested. The possibility of having a retractable roof was also raised to allow indoor and outdoor aquatic activities to take place, while synergies with the rest of the community centre were also discussed particularly as it related to creating a holistic wellness experience by adding an indoor walking track and hot tub to complement the existing aquatic and fitness centre facilities.

### **Lake Lisgar Waterpark**

The Lake Lisgar Waterpark was noted as being a concept that many people like due to the ability to swim, play, lounge on the deck, and socialize. It creates a family friendly environment where people can spend a few hours in an affordable setting, particularly since outside food is permitted. The zero-depth entry, a good sound system, “conversation nook” in the southeast corner of the pool, and slide (when it is open) were noted as strengths of the pool design. The Waterpark has historically been popular for school trips and day camps, though recent changes in pool safety regulations (relating to aquatic admission standards and parent to child ratios) has likely affected attendance in recent years.

Much like earlier conversations, Lake Lisgar Waterpark’s primary limitations were noted to be a result of the age of the bath house (circa 1946) and the pool (circa 1995). The bath house is old and deteriorating, with little natural light and tight changing quarters; the lack of a family change room and limited accessibility for persons with disabilities was a major concern noted by staff (ranging from narrow hallways to the lack of automatic doors). The Waterpark is most appealing to families whose children are elementary school age or younger, but is much less appealing to teens as it lacks the “thrilling, adventure or fun” elements found at waterparks such as the privately-operated East Park in London. Teens are also reluctant to use the Waterpark because of the number of families that go there. Functional concerns were raised relating to the condition of the pool deck and pool tank even after the most recent repairs (some pool users were cutting their feet on chips and raised bumps), spray features are deteriorating and some are no longer working, and showers being left on in the bath house (a timed push button would be better).

The future vision for Lake Lisgar Waterpark was one that updated/enhanced the waterplay elements and possibly adding an adventure element(s) to appeal to local teens. The current configuration of the pool has made it difficult to run programs in the past but staff could see demand for certain programs such as morning aquafit provided that the overall aesthetics of the bath house and pool were improved. However, there was consensus that the future success of the pool would be centred upon delivering leisure and waterplay experience.

### **Future Options & Implementation Strategy**

To wrap-up the discussion regarding Tillsonburg’s indoor and outdoor aquatics, future implementation strategies were contemplated. Options generally revolved around the following three points:

- 1) Continuing to operate the indoor pool and waterpark as separate entities;
- 2) Integrating waterplay elements into an expanded indoor aquatic centre at the Tillsonburg Community Centre, and subsequently closing the Lake Lisgar Waterpark; and
- 3) Relocating outdoor waterplay components beside the Tillsonburg Community Centre and subsequently closing the Lake Lisgar Waterpark.

Benefits and challenges were raised for all three future options. Staff noted that there is a strong appeal to swimming outdoors during the summer among many pool users and residents, but recognized that inclement or cold weather would nevertheless potentially keep swimmers indoors at times. Some staff noted a historical sentiment with the Waterpark and spending their summers there but understood that preferences of today's customer may be different and has contributed to less use of the waterpark. If consolidating all aquatic opportunities indoors, a major facility expansion or complete reconstruction was identified as the primary way forward so that there could be sufficient space for multiple tanks (including for hydrotherapy), a waterslide and Tarzan rope, rock climbing walls, bulkheads to divide the pool into lane and leisure swimming zones, etc. Also finding ways to make the pool more attractive to people in their 20s and 30s is important by ensuring a future design or programming considers activities such as paddleboard yoga or aquatic pole dancing.